

## **Identification of The Potentials to Diversify the Cultural Tourism Product by Promoting Agri Tourism (Special reference to Polonnaruwa Region)**

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Tourism industry is one of the phenomenon in generating foreign currency to a developing country. Sri Lanka where the massive amount of resources can be identified also has already entered to the industry to get rid of many development issues. The country has huge potentials to diversify the tourism product by using different types of natural and man-made attractions. Polonnaruwa where the cultural tourism products have been already well-established is one of the attractive world heritage sites in attracting tourists to cultural sites in Sri Lanka. Gigantic reservoirs, monuments, artifacts and pagodas are attracted cultural tourists by showing heritage values to the world. Nevertheless, the ancient city has not been focused to diversify the tourism product by paying attention on other resources in Polonnaruwa district where the Agriculture industry is a major livelihood of the villagers. Polonnaruwa region encompasses hundreds of paddy fields where the high possibilities can be identified to Agri tourism to diversify the cultural tourism product. The major objective of the research is to identify the potentials in promoting Agri- Tourism in the Ancient city of Polonnaruwa and identifying the problems to develop the Agri tourism in Polonnaruwa region. The study was conducted in Polonnaruwa district using questionnaires and group conversations. Conversations were held among 50 farmers in the region and questionnaires were distributed among 50 randomly selected tourists in the Ancient city. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were used in combination in analyzing the data. Thereby, 74% of tourists responded that they prefer to engage in Agri based activities to have different experiences apart from travelling to cultural sites. Further discussions with farmers in polonnaruwa region, 62% of them satisfied to contribute to the suggested programme in order to enhance the life statues and income. Several problems were identified relevant to infrastructure development, less knowledge on tourism industry as the major issues in promoting Agri tourism in Polonnaruwa heritage site. Introducing to travel agencies to include Agri based activities into their tour packages, creating documentaries and well attracted videos by emphasizing the attractions relevant to agriculture, development of infrastructure facilities and informing farmers and villagers on the tourism industry and its benefits to community were identified as the recommendations for the above study.

**Keywords:** Agri Tourism, Tourism Industry, Tourists, Farmers

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