

# **Impact of tourism on archaeological heritage in Sri Lanka**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Archaeological tourism has been an important niche within the adjectival tourism in the world. Both international and domestic tourism of the island highly depend on the archaeological heritage as one of the major tourist attractions.

Sri Lanka has a rich archaeological heritage including six out of the eight world heritage sites of the island are archaeological and thousands of other sites. At the present context, there is a huge potential to ameliorate archaeological tourism. In the process of development of the sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka, positive and negative impacts of tourism on archaeological heritage must be evaluated correctly and heritage management strategies should be improved.

Tourism is main potential source for development of archaeology in the island. The income of tourism gained by archaeological heritage sites and related institutions can be used for further research works such as explorations, excavations and so on. The priority must be given to conservation, maintenance of sites and welfare of employees is another important issue.

Tourist pressure badly affects to the sites and the experiences of tourists as well. It can be observed that behaviors of domestic tourists and foreign tourists make different impacts on archaeological heritage. Deterioration of archaeological heritage, exportation of artifacts and losing of authenticity are main negative factors.

Policy making, promotion, maintenance and management of sites, improvement of tourist facilities, site presentation and development of unpopular sites are major issues should be highly concerned within the sustainable development of the both forms of archaeological tourism. The collaboration of government institutions related with archaeology and tourism, community organizations and tourism agencies in private sector is very important in this process.

Key words: Archaeological tourism, Sustainable development, Heritage management, Tourist behavior, Authenticity