

Awareness of the Domestic Tourists on Historical Paintings At Dambulla Cave Temple

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The Dambulla Cave Temple is in existence since 300 B.C. and has been occupied continuously until the present. The paintings at the site are considered the largest collection of ancient paintings in Sri Lanka. The site has attracted international tourists due to it being named a UNESCO World Heritage site while it has attracted domestic tourists due to its religious significance. Domestic tourists are not entirely aware of the historical and heritage value of the site or the paintings. This study focuses on the extent to which domestic visitors have been aware of the paintings of Dambulla Cave Temple. The main objective of the study was to identify the awareness, knowledge, and perception of the domestic visitors on the paintings. Another objective was to identify the effectiveness of the information provided at the site for the domestic visitors. The research was based on field survey methodology where 50 domestic visitors were interviewed using structured questionnaires. The sample was randomly selected at the site and represented both the younger generation and senior citizens. Most of the domestic visitors lack knowledge of the historical value and they are not provided basic information on the paintings. The younger generation has acquired basic knowledge on the paintings unlike the senior citizens who have been attracted to the site only due to its religious value. Though the site management has implemented an adequate approach to information dissemination, most of the domestic visitors do not access this information. Domestic tourists need to be provided with the services of local guides in order to understand the value of the paintings.

Key Words: Dambulla Cave Temple, domestic visitors, paintings, awareness, site management