

# **The Evaluation of Factors Influencing Cycle Trips in a Heritage City. A Case Study on Cycling Tourist in Anuradhapura Sacred City**

S.S. Wanniarachchi<sup>1</sup> and G.L.D.I. De Silva<sup>2</sup>

## **Abstract**

As the world endures an energy dilemma, most developing communities advance toward energy efficient modes and non-motorised transport modes such as walking, roller skate, skateboard and cycling. Cycling is an environmentally friendly mode that enables the commuter to experience the surroundings. Other than commuting, cycling-tourism is about a long to medium distance cycling trip for pleasure, experience, and liberty rather than exercise or sports. Being one of the major tourist attraction zones in Asian region, Sri Lanka experiences over two million tourists' arrivals every year to visit South and East Coast, Ancient Cities, Hill Country and Northern Region. Anuradhapura is one of the well-known ancient cities with many historical monuments connected with roadway links. This study identifies the design and influencing factors of local and foreign tourists to encourage cycling within the Anuradhapura ancient sacred city rather than using 3-wheeler taxi or other motorised travel methods.

As phase 1 of the research, an initial survey was carried out inside the Anuradhapura sacred city with a sample of twenty-one respondents out of the target population of local and foreign tourists. Data has collected through a questionnaire survey and discussions. The factorial extraction has been run to determine the factors influencing cycling tourism, and descriptive statistics have used to present the socio-demographical features of the study sample. The secondary aim of the research is to review the variations in soft mobility choices by local and foreign tourists based on the design and the extracted manipulating factors.

The analysis of data has generated factors with very strong loadings to represent the variables used in the survey. The descriptive analysis shows that the majority of the tourist visit Anuradhapura for pleasure, religious and business. Most of the tourist respondents had arrived from East Asia and Europe. The study explains that majority of them has used motorised transport to arrive at Anuradhapura and after arriving has used cycling within the sacred city. The analysis has highlighted that greater number of tourists prefer to use cycling for a short distance journey. The respondents have commented that safety and security issues have been a major tragedy in riding cycles inside the sacred city. It had mentioned that potholes in the road and the areas where the road has been damaged and unpaved had caused notable

accidents to the cycling tourists. The risk of theft and the awful surroundings in some areas of the sacred city has discouraged cyclists from riding through the area. The further discussions with cycling renters and cyclists have highlighted that the cycling tourist, both local and foreign have been relying on verbal instructions of landmarks and road, as the Anuradhapura tourist city map provided by the Ministry of Tourism - North Central Province and the google maps has not been providing the accurate information on the routes and pathways inside the sacred city.

The effort of the research is to help town planners prioritise services and improvements designated to the location to promote cycling tourism. Sri Lanka's tourism is one of the revenue generations industries through cycling tourism in the early stages of development. This study has taken a general view concerning the influencing factors of Anuradhapura scared city cycling tourism to develop the cycling within the sacred city and to develop the soft mobility within the Anuradhapura district ensuring more eco-friendly urban surrounding.

**Keywords:** Anuradhapura, Factorial analysis, Cycling tourism

#### **Author Details**

1. Postgraduate Student, Transport Engineering Division, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, ssewvandi@gmail.com
2. Senior Lecturer, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, dds@hbaspecto.com