

**PROMOTE UVA AS A REMARKABLE TOURIST DESTINATION; WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BADULLA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**

Imali N. Fernando

Lecturer, Faculty of Management

Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

pimalifernando@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka is considered as one of the most wonderful tourist destination partly due to the compact physical diversity of its nature, surrounded by various top ranked beaches into mountain plains, rivers and water Falls, wild life as well as misty mountains. From East to West in the central highlands, the picture changes in to rainforests, misty mountains and plains and from green Tea plantations. Small miracle waterways as well as wonderful waterfalls riches the natural picture of the Island.

Uva province, one of the most salubrious environment regions of the Island, is an area full of waterfalls, misty mountains including giant Namunukula Mountains and surrounded by Tea plantations. The climate of the triangle formed by Ella, Haputale and Welimada is regarded by many local and foreign tourists as the most favorable climatic area in Island. Salubrious environment enriched the area with many kinds of vegetables, fruits and flower gardens and make the way to tourism attraction from ancient times.

Uva consists of two districts as Badulla and Monaragala and Badulla is the district that consists with salubrious environment and surroundings. Ella, Haputale , Bandarawela and Welimada areas enriched with natural beauty as well as potentiality to attract tourists as their tour destination. Also Badulla town is one of the oldest town in Sri Lanka with proven traces of the earlier settlement and surrounded by tea estates, paddy fields along the banks of the Badulu oya and Namunukula mountains. Badulla is also popularized for its ancient stories and tails as “ Rama-Rawana legend” and have some hidden places and caves to prove that legend archeologically. If tourist visit to Badulla, he can impressively experience the eco-tourism, pilgrim tourism, tea tourism, adventure tourism and historical tourism at one place. Eco tourism could experience by natural salubrious environment and Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya , Mahiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya and other important religious places provides pilgrim tourism experiences. Surrounding Tea plantations has potentiality to promote Tea tourism. Adventure tourism could experience by hiking in mountains, climbing waterfalls and other adventure experiences, Dowa Temple, Demodara station, Bogoda wooden bridge implies the historical tourism. Ancient legend of “Uva Wellassa” heroes reflects the historical heritage in the region.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Uva province is not attracted by many tourists as their tourist destination even with a vast collection of tourism possibilities. Haputale, Ella and Bandarawela areas are attracted by tourists, but they not consider it as their destination. Tourists visit those places for few days or weeks as when they travel from Nuwara Eliya to Kataragama and Down South. Badulla is an area rich with all possibilities of tourism to enjoy the visit to Sri Lanka by foreigners and to enjoy the leisure by local tourists in the salubrious, cold climate. But its rarely cold see that tourists visiting the area specially foreigners. Local tourists normally visit Badulla and to Bandarawela and Haputale areas when they travel to Nuwara Eliya as their tourism destination.

Hence this research is focused on important research problem as;

“Why Uva region is neglected by tourists as remarkable tourism destination? What causes for the less attractions as a top class tourism destination even with huge tourism possibilities?”

In here the focus is to find out the reasons for neglecting Uva as a famous tourism destination as well as to provide suggestions to promote the area as a world famous destination in tourism.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study to identify the reasons to neglect Uva region as a top class tourism destination by tourists both local and foreign.

The specific objectives of the study can be stated as:

- ✚ To identify the tourism locations that has good market opportunities to promote. Normally Uva is famous for some specific tourism locations as Dunhinda Falls, Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya and Adhisam Bungalow. But there are many places that have the potentiality to attract many tourists such as Dowa ancient Temple, Bogoda bridge, Demodara station and Namunukula mountains.
- ✚ Identify the factors that results on tour to be more delighted of tourists. Satisfied customers are the main asset to an industry. Catering beyond the expectations of tourists will develop the Uva as one of the top class tourism destination and lead to the delightedness of customers.
- ✚ Identify the reasons to the less attraction of Uva area. The present conditions on tourism and expectations of tourists have been concerned to identify the reasons to the less attraction. The ultimate objective is to address to the shortcomings of the service and to promote tourism in the area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

Sample is consists of 30 respondents, both local and foreigners, who visit Badulla area. Equal number of respondents has taken into the sample as 15 foreign tourists and 15 local tourists. The data collection done by visiting popularized places in Badulla district as Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya, Dunhinda Falls, Ravana Ella , Dowa temple, Diyaluma falls and Adhisam Bungalow.

Data collection

Primary data has collected by conducting a sample survey and to identify the tourism locations, secondary data have used. To collect the data following both methods have used.

- Detailed questionnaire
- Direct interviews

The sample size is comparably small as 30 and to collect data from tourism locations, following locations have used as they are famous among tourists.

-  Dunhinda Falls
-  Rawana Ella
-  Dowa Temple
-  Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya
-  Edhisam Bungalow
-  Diyaluma Ella

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics have used to analyze the responses and the survey conducted in a qualitative manner. 5 point Likert scale have used to rank the data by assigning point 5 to most preferred in to point 1 for most non preferred. As to analysis the scaled data, Kruskal – Wallis test have used as a non-parametric analysis. Descriptive statistics as graphs and percentages among the variables have used.

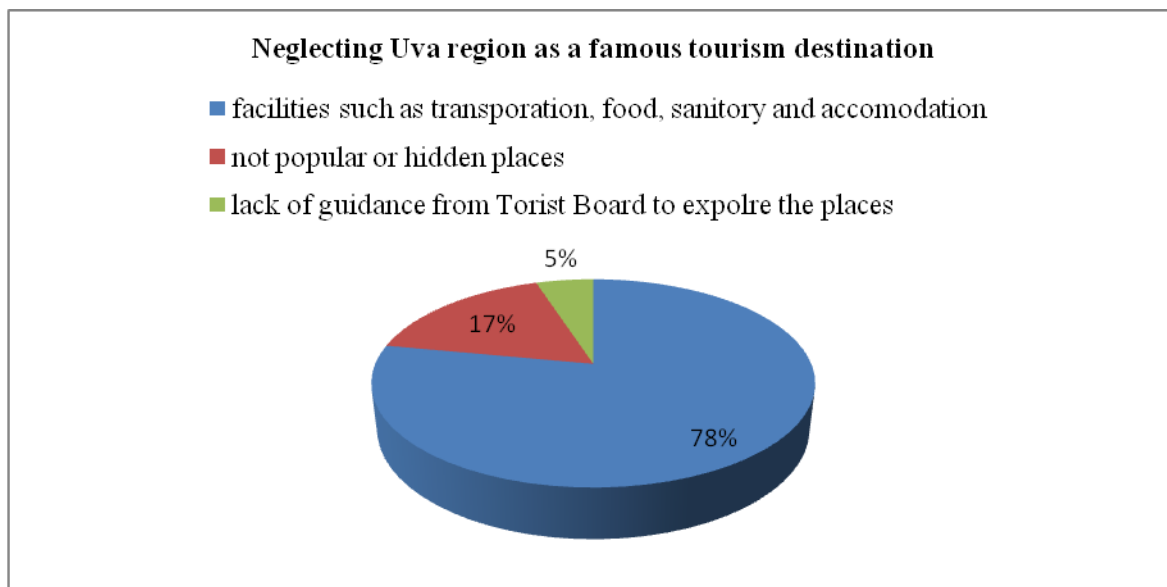
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to the study, the negligence of Uva region as a tourism destination is mainly because of poor facilities. It can categorize as transportation, food, sanitary and accommodation facilities that haven't in sufficient levels. Even if consider a famous tourists attractive place as Dunhinda falls, there are less facilities for drinking water and sanitary along the way from main road to the water fall. Road itself is also narrow and slippery and parking facilities for vehicles are also limited.

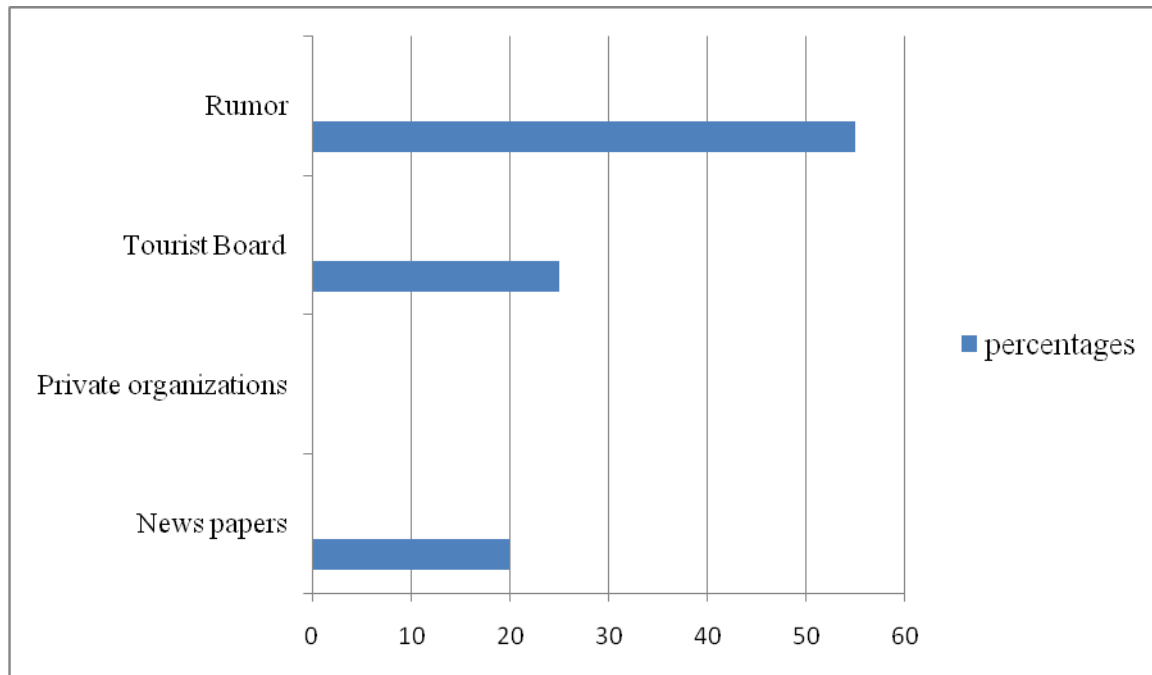
Thus not enough facilities such as transportation, food, sanitary and accommodation accounted for 78% among all the other factors. Not popular or hidden places accounted for 17 % while 5% is for lack of guidance for tourists to explore the places. Also in some cases they mentioned that the places are not developed to emphasize its historical value.

There are many attractive locations exists in the region but tourists tend to visit only the popularized places. No proper guidance from Tourists Board provided for them and in some cases they mentioned that it is better if guide boards could display the directions. The Namunukula mountains, the highest mountain peak of the area is having many potentialities to promote eco tourism, adventure tourism such as hiking and tea tourism from surrounding tea plantations like Spring Welly.

The data can be summarized from below pie chart.



The information sources that cater them into the Uva region is also analyzed and presented in following bar chart.



According to the bar chart, majority of tourists getting information from the rumor as 55%. Among all 25% is contributed by Tourist Board and 20% accounted for News papers. This clearly reflects the gap that could be fulfilled by improving the marketing information about tourism locations.

Satisfaction of tourists by visiting Uva region

In the sample, satisfaction level of tourists also analyzed by asking about their experience. According to the responses, 80% of tourists have highly satisfied about their visit, either it's for few days or weeks, to Uva region.

To increase the delightedness of tourists, following events also contributing as it is included in the questionnaire.

- a) visit hidden places to get the adventure tourism experience
- b) visit religious places
- c) visit historical places – places in ancient heritage
- d) visit see waterfalls and other natural places to get the eco-tourism experience

Respondents rank their responses among each of the event by using Likert scale (5 point). Tourists have to rank their present experiences and future expectations and Likert scale used to measure the qualitative data. Data has analyzed using non-parametric tests, Kruskal – Wallis test. The results can be explained as below.

Hypotheses testing

H0 : Average preferences for all reasons (a,b,c,d) are equal

H1 : At least average preference of one reason differ from another

Kruskal-Wallis Test: res versus trt

Kruskal-Wallis Test on res

trt	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
1	30	4.000	68.4	1.44
2	30	3.000	53.3	-1.32
3	30	3.000	52.5	-1.45
4	30	4.000	67.8	1.33
Overall	120		60.5	

H = 5.76 DF = 3 P = 0.124

H = 6.05 DF = 3 P = 0.109 (adjusted for ties)

Analyzing the data

According to the Kruskal- Wallis test, P value is 0.109.

Therefore at Alpha level 0.05 (5%), accept the H0 (the null hypothesis)

$$P = 0.109 > \alpha \ 0.05 \ (5\%)$$

Therefore it can be stated as H0 is accepted in Alpha level of 5% and this implies all reasons are equal to each an other. (Average preference)

But if we consider Alpha level as large as 11%,

$$P = 0.109 < \alpha \ 0.11 \ (11\%)$$

Therefore H0 is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies that 11% confidence is there to consider that at least average preference for one reason is differ from each and other.

According to the test, by taking the Alpha level or acceptance level as 5%, our null hypothesis is accepted. It implies that we can assure on 95% confidence level that the average preferences for all reasons are equal. Simply defined, tourists consider all the reasons from a to d , as factors to be delighted in there tour to Uva region.

Further Analysis on expectations of future satisfactions by visiting Uva region

Event	median	average rank
(1) visit hidden places to get the adventure tourism experience	4	68.4
(2) visit religious places	3	53.3
(3) visit historical places – places in ancient heritage	3	52.5
(4) visit see waterfalls and other natural places to get the eco-tourism experience	4	67.8

The 5 point Likert scale assigned 5 points to strongly agreed, 4 to agreed, 3 to neither agreed nor disagreed, 2 to disagree and 1 to strongly disagree. As to the analysis, go to hidden places to take adventure tourism and eco tourism reflects as important factors than other two events. Adventure tourism and eco tourism both have combined with the nature and experiences, thus those two factors will delight the tourists regarding their visit in Uva region. Also the average rank level provides a much more remarkable picture by indicating 68.4% for adventure tourism

experience. Eco tourism contributed by 67.8% as a factor to increase the delightedness of tourists among their visit. Historical tourism and Pilgrim tourism accounted as 53.3% and 52.5% and both of them considered as somewhat traditional expectations by a tour. Thus it is not reflected either as to increase satisfaction or to decrease it in future.

Modern tourism is “experience hunting” and it shape up the future tourism opportunities. Uva region is full of opportunities in eco tourism and adventure tourism. This reflects the potentiality for improvement in region as to discover hidden or not popularized places as potential tourism locations. Also adventure tourism experiences could strategically build as combining the nature and natural resources. As an example, hiking experiences in Namunukula Mountains can be concerned.

As per the first objective of this study, has identified 12 tourism locations as having high potentiality to improve as top-class tourism locations. Some of them have already considered as attractive locations for many years.

According to the Alphabetical order;

- (1) Adhisam Bungalow
- (2) Bambarakanda Falls
- (3) Bogoda bridge
- (4) Demodara station and bridge
- (5) Diyaluma Falls
- (6) Dowa ancient temple
- (7) Dunhinda Falls
- (8) Ella gap
- (9) Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya
- (10) Rawana Ella
- (11) Namunukula mountains
- (12) Veddah community

The overall objective of the study to identify the reasons for neglecting Uva region as a top class tourist’s destination and to promote the area to earn higher income from tourism.

Most local tourists visit frequently few famous places in the region as Muthiyangana Raja Maha Viharaya , Adhisam Bungalow and Dunhinda falls. According to their ideas, the transportation system is very poor and in some places there is no proper explanation regarding their historical value or religious background etc. Narrow and low condition roads are exists in some places as

Bogoda Wooden Bridge. Also there are no proper sanitary facilities available in nearby. Most foreigners stay either on Ella or Bandarawela area as because the hotel facilities available in those places. Lack of accommodation facilities such as top-class hotels and restaurants is a common problem to promote tourism in the Uva region.

As to take the suggestions to promote tourism in future, below explained factors have asked from the respondents. These five factors considered as suggestions to improve potentiality in Uva region as a most facilitated tourism destination.

Suggestions to improve the potentiality in Uva region as a famous tourism destination

- a) food and accommodation facilities in super quality
- b) good transportation facilities to visit the locations
- c) enough sanitary facilities
- d) proper guidance on hidden or less popularized places by the Tourists Board
- e) Directions by guide boards (displayed) in Tourist locations

Respondents were ask to use the Likert scale (5 point) to mark their rank from point 5 strongly recommend to point 1 strongly not recommend. The data has analyzed by using Kruskal-Wallis test.(non-parametric measures)

Hypotheses testing

H0 : Average preferences for all reasons (a,b,c,d) are equal

H1 : At least average preference of one reason differ from another

Kruskal-Wallis Test: 1 versus C7

Kruskal-Wallis Test on 1

C7	N	Median	Ave Rank	Z
1	30	4.000	86.4	1.54
2	30	4.000	78.2	0.37
3	30	3.000	56.3	-2.70
4	30	4.000	85.0	1.34
5	30	4.000	71.6	-0.55
Overall	150		75.5	

H = 9.52 DF = 4 P = 0.049

H = 10.42 DF = 4 P = 0.034 (adjusted for ties)

Analyzing the data

According to the test, P value is 0.034.

At Alpha level of 0.05 (5%), reject the null hypothesis.

$P = 0.034 < \alpha (0.05)$

reject H_0

This implies at least average preference of one reason differ from each other. Simply, as suggestions the respondents did not consider all the facilities expected in future as equal. If we consider the median values, enough sanitary facilities are not considered by them either as a factor to improve or not. Simply, the tourists are satisfied with present conditions of sanitary as well as they may concern it as a hidden factor coming under the accommodation facilities. Average ranks given by respondents reflect a good measure regarding their importance.

Suggestions to improve the potentiality in Uva region as a top-class tourist destination

Event	median	average rank
(1) food and accommodation facilities in super quality	4	86.4
(2) good transportation facilities to visit the locations	4	78.2
(3) enough sanitary facilities	3	56.3
(4) proper guidance on hidden or less popularized places by the Tourists Board	4	85.0
(5) Directions by guide boards (displayed) in Tourist locations	4	71.6

Respondents have ranked highest value as 86.4 to improve the food and accommodation facilities in future. Also they have assigned average rank of 85 to proper guidance by Tourists Board. This clearly suggests that the highly expected facilities in future by tourism sector are super quality food and accommodations and proper guidance by Tourist Board or any other responsible local government Institution. Other factors also assigned higher values as average rank 78.2 for good transportation network and 71.6 to directions by displayed guide boards.

Respondents in the sample have assigned moderate level average rank (56.3) to the sanitary facilities as a facility to be improved in future. That may cause for their expectations regarding good accommodation facilities in future. They may have expected sanitary conditions under good accommodation facilities in future.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RELEVANCE

The present tourism attraction for the Uva region is comparably low among other areas of the country. In most cases, tourists stay in Badulla for few days as their tour from Nuwara Eliya to Down South or Kataragama. Uva region is naturally heritage many eco tourism and adventure tourism potentialities as having salubrious, cold climate as well as many attractive locations. According to the study, most tourists are delighted on adventure and eco tourism as it's directly related with the nature. Most of them are interested in visiting not popularized places that are having adventure experience by its locations. Eco tourism possibilities are also remarkable as Uva region is an area full of water falls, misty mountains and other natural flower, vegetables and fruit gardens. Also tea tourism is having high potentiality to improve as the region is surrounded by several large scale tea plantations.

As policy relevance and recommendations, this study highlights facilities to be upgraded in future. Developing transportation facilities provide directions by displaying guide boards, good accommodation and food facilities as well as proper guidance on un-popularized places are also highlighted.

It is remarkable that many tourists feel Uva region as a very attractive tourism location as having many places to visit. Most of them have visited Adhisam bungalow and Dunhinda Falls. They have a higher desire to take adventure tourism experiences such as hiking in Namunukula Mountains through Spring Welly tea plantation, visiting Diyaluma and Bambarakanda Falls.

This highlights the importance of making policies to improve tourism in region as well as facilities to both local and foreign tourists. Support from the Tourist Board is also recommended as this is a great opportunity to improve tourism in Uva region. After the end of thirty years old war, the emerging trend is there for tourism in Sri Lanka and this could contribute our national economy.

Sri Lanka is famous among foreigners as a country for "Sea and Sand" and for "Ceylon Tea" from ancient times. It is impressive to make strategies to promote adventure tourism and eco tourism potentialities in Uva region, one of the poorest areas of the country, as well as tea tourism, Pilgrim tourism and Historical tourism.