

# **The Attractiveness of Tourist Destinations: A Comparative Study of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa**

**S.N.C. Jayaweera<sup>1,\*</sup> and R.K.D. Randeni<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

\*Corresponding author: nuwanchathu071@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

Considering the benefits of tourism, increasing destination attractiveness is one of the key strategies employed by tourist destinations around the globe. Since tourism is a vital foreign currency generator most developing economies are concerned about increasing the destination attractiveness including Sri Lanka. Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa are two UNESCO World Heritage sites with a plethora of tourism potentials which are located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. However, as per the SLTDA annual reports in the last five years, there is a significant difference between the tourist arrivals between these two destinations. The purpose of this study is to assess the destination attractiveness in comparative terms through the lenses of accessibility, attractions, accommodations, and activities between Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Variables were identified 5A's in tourism which were used to measure destination attractiveness and selected exact variable through a pilot study, and were employed in the main study. The sample consisted of 58 respondents who were selected using a convenient sampling technique. The study employed Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-21) for the data analysis. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), independent sample T-test, regression, and correlation analysis were the main analytical tools. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in destination attractiveness between the two destinations. Differences in the variables are explained by descriptive statistics as well as independent sample T-test. Correlation results show that all variables have a positive and significant relationship with destination attractiveness. Further, the regression analysis revealed that accessibility, attractions, accommodations, and activities positively and significantly impact destination attractiveness.

*Keywords:* Activities, attractiveness, destination attractiveness, tourist destinations