PROMOTING KANDY CITY AS AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

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INTRODUCTION

The International Council of Museums (ICOM)'s official website states, "The definition of a museum has evolved, in line with societal developments." Since its creation in 1946, ICOM has updated this definition following the realities of the global museum community. Previously, ICOM has defined a museum as "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM, 2007, p.9).

Recently, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM approved the proposal for the new museum definition in Prague on 24th August 2022. According to the new definition, "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (ICOM, 2022). The term 'museum' may mean either the institution, the establishment, or the place generally designed to select, study and display the tangible and intangible evidence of man and his environment. The form and the functions of museums have varied considerably over the centuries. Their contents have diversified, as have their mission, way of operating, and management (Desvallees & Mairesse, 2010).

According to the definition given by the Association of European Open Air Museums, "Open air museum is scientific collections in the open air various types of structures, which as constructional and functional entities, illustrate settlement patterns, dwellings, economic and technology." Further, Ali and Zawawi (2016) stated that "Various names have known open air museums according to their specific focus: agricultural, folk, living history, heritage village (in Australia), museum village, living farm, living or out-door architectural (in America) and eco-museum (in France)." This research highlighted both tangible and intangible aspects of Kandy Sacred City to establish the open-air museum.

Several researchers have conducted studies on cultural heritage related to Kandy Sacred City. However, no previous research was conducted on promoting Kandy Sacred City as an open-air museum by considering cultural heritage by focusing on the entire tangible and intangible cultural heritage as museum objects. Therefore, the general objective of this research is to develop and propose to implement a model for promoting tourism through the open-air museum concept at Sacred Kandy City. Further, this research focuses on identifying the museum objects with more narrative strength to exhibit the significance of the cultural heritage of Sacred Kandy City through open-air museums. This research introduces the appropriate

method to function Sacred Kandy City as an active heritage tourism hub throughout the year by promoting the sense of place to experience the historical narration and present context.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, a literature survey, a field survey, and fifteen interviews have been conducted as data collecting methods. Collected data were analyzed through SWOT analysis and identified the narrative strength of museum objects. In this research, the word 'Museum objects' referred to buildings, landscapes, streets, sites, and intangible heritage. Through this methodology, this qualitative research developed and proposed to implement a model for promoting tourism through the open-air museum concept at Kandy Sacred City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The city of Kandy lies at an altitude of 488.6 meters (1629 feet) above sea level in the center of the island, surrounded by hills in the valley of the Mahaveli (Senevirathna, 1993). The last capital of the Sinhala Kings, Kandy, is remarkable for both natural beauty and cultural significance. Kandy was the capital of the Kandyan Kingdom (Senevirathna, 1993). The Kandy Kingdom functioned as the last bastion of the nation-state during 1592 - 1815 (Abeywardana, 2004; Senevirathna, 1993). The Kingdom was founded by Vimaladharmasuriya I in 1592 and ended when the British took captive its last King, Sri Vikrama Rajasingha, in 1815 (Senevirathna, 1993).

The official website of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre introduced Kandy as "This sacred Buddhist site, popularly known as the city of *Senkadagalapura*, was the last capital of the Sinhala kings whose patronage enabled the Sinhala culture to flourish for more than 2,500 years until the occupation of Sri Lanka by the British in 1815. It is also the site of the Temple of the Tooth Relic (the sacred tooth of the Buddha), which is a famous pilgrimage site." UNESCO declared Kandy as a World Heritage site in 1988, under the criteria for selection (IV) & (VI).

Criteria (IV)
"To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history."

Criteria (VI)
"To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)."

Based on the definition of open-air museums, a new model for promoting open-air museums for living heritage cities is developed by this study. The model is presented in Figure 1.

Buildings

Sites

Streets

Arts and Crafts

Landscape

Economy

OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Cultural event

Religious aspects

Identities

Folklores

People

Figure 1 The new model for promoting open air museum for living heritage cities

When implementing this proposed model in Sacred Kandy City, the existing tangible and intangible cultural heritage could be categorized as mentioned below.

- Buildings - Secular buildings (Museum buildings, Queens hotel, Ulpenge),
- Religious buildings (Temple of the tooth relic, St. Paul's church)
- Streets   - Deva Vidiya, Yatinuwara Vidiya, Kotugodella Vidiya
- Landscape - Lake, Udawattakele, Mahaveli river, Hantana mountain range, Bahirawa Kanda
- Sites   - Garrison cemetery
- Cultural events - Perahera, Kandyan dancing, Food festivals, Dress, Sports
- People - Clergy, Craftsmen, Residents, Merchants, Nilames, Visitors
- Identities - Sinhala, Buddhist, Tamil, Hindu, Muslim, Christians, Aristocrats
- Religious aspects - Thevāva, Theru festival, Prayers
- Arts and Crafts - Statues, Paintings, Carvings, Music, Dancing, Lacquer artworks
- Economy - Tea, Gems, Spices, Jewelry
- Language - Dialects, Assimilations, Paleography

All the mentioned aspects are interconnected to provide the sense of Kandy in vertical and horizontal contexts. This model describes existing museums in Kandy and their exhibits as museum objects by considering their historical values, which link the heritage city and its narration. Therefore, this model will benefit from exhibiting the sense of Kandy heritage city beyond exhibiting the material evidence inside the museum cabinets.

The current visitors to museums at Kandy were interviewed to receive their opinion regarding the potential for promoting Kandy City as an Open Air Museum. The observations received through the interviews were considered in the SWOT analysis.

According to the SWOT analysis, the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats could be identified.

Table 1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Historical Value Landscape (Natural and Cultural)	Irregular construction Only focusing on the Perahera season	Museum objects Community	Overcrowding Not adhere to conservation principals
Kandy declared as a World Heritage	Cultural norms	Monitoring and funding	Social issues
Existing Museums	Exhibitions are not thematically arranged to exhibit the Kandy city	Previous researches	Depends on traditional exhibition methods and concepts
Religious aspects and Cultural events		Potential of implementing technology	Economic issues

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As per the discussion, the aspects of heritage management, sustainable tourism, museology, and archaeology will be positively affected by the proposed model. This proposed model could be practiced in the living heritage sites of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, this model will benefit from attracting visitors to Sacred Kandy City beyond the Perahera pageant season by focusing on both tangible and intangible cultural heritage exhibited within the open-air museum concept. As a result of implementing this model, Kandy city could maintain the attraction throughout the year by providing a sense of place to visitors. Through that, the economic benefits could be used for the sustainability of heritage management.

Implementing this model in the Kandy Sacred city, an appropriate policy should be developed with stakeholders to maintain the sense of place in the open-air museum and provide benefits to all parties while confirming the safeguard of heritage. Therefore, existing museums such as the Museum of Department of Archaeology, International Museum of World Buddhism, Sri Dalada Museum, Museum of Raja Tusker, Medawasala Museum, Kandy National Museum, and Museum of Ven. Sri Saranankara Sangaraja Thero, which belongs to the Malwathu Maha Viharaya, has to rearrange thematically by considering the narrative strength of objects. Moreover, a package for visiting the open-air museum Kandy could be introduced for visitors to experience the whole Kandy heritage city by considering all the aspects as museum exhibits. VR technology, audio-guided tours, conjectural reconstructions, facilities for special needs visitors, facilities for different age groups, booklets, temporary exhibitions, cultural shows, education programs, and the introduction of an app to provide a sense of place throughout the year were identified as short term and long term planning methods. Practicing this model, visitors could experience the sense of place by walking through the Kandy Sacred City with the feeling of museum walks among museum galleries.

Keywords: Heritage management, Kandy sacred city, open-air museum, sense of Place, tourism

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