

# STRATEGIC APPROACHES FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TANK TOURISM IN THE HISTORIC PANDUWASNUWARA REGION

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**Abstract:** Sri Lanka stands as one of the eminent tourist destinations in South Asia, delineated by six primary tourist zones: North Jaffna, East Zone, South Coast Zone, West Zone, Central Highlands, and Rajarata. The North-Western province, however, has witnessed a gradual decline in its tourism sector over the past decade. This study endeavours to propose a strategic plan for the development of a foreign tourism industry centered around the Panduwasnuwara archaeological site. The principal aim was to identify opportunities and provide recommendations for the concept of tank tourism within Panduwasnuwara. The methodology employed in this study comprises data collection, analysis, and information dissemination. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized, integrating questionnaires, interviews, and observational methods for primary data collection. A sample of 75 households was randomly selected to gather primary data. Within this region, an impressive count of 404 ancient tanks exists, with over 317 tanks demonstrating potential for fostering the tourism industry. Notably, 57% of individuals in the area have pursued no further education post their vocational schooling and engage in non-permanent, informal occupations. Approximately 67% of the population earns a monthly income below Rs. 50,000. Encouragingly, 71% of the sample expressed keen interest in the proposed tank tourism industry. A sustainable tank tourism industry could be established by employing manually operated boats that eschew fossil fuels and constructing tourist accommodations using temporary materials like wood, canvas cloth, and coconut fronds. Furthermore, Panduwasnuwara, Kanathalawa, Hettipola, Nagollagoda villages are specializing in pottery, coconut products, reed, and textile industries can facilitate the sale of handicrafts to foreign visitors, potentially ameliorating rural poverty. Recommendations for this initiative encompass the promotion of tanks conservation through training tourist guides, imparting foreign language proficiency, extending hospitality services, and governmental intervention to steer the youth toward this industry. This initiative also acts as a promotion for fostering the foreign tourism industry in the North-West Province.

**Keywords:** Ancient tanks; Foreign tourism; North-west province; Panduwasnuwara; Tank tourism