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A STUDY ON THE WHEREABOUTS AND INTERESTS OF ANCIENT TOURISTS WHO HAD VISITED SIGIRIYA DURING THE 6TH - 11TH CENTURIES CE

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ABSTRACT

Main purpose of archaeology is to reconstruct the human past based on the archaeological record. Travelling to visit exotic places have been a practice of humans since early ages. Even though Tourism is considered as a quite modern human activity, its roots are far too old. In spite of that, few researches are carried out to understand about this forever present activity. Even those few studies are done mostly based on Greece, Rome and Egypt. Sri Lanka being a major tourism destination in the present world should conduct studies about its tourism past as well. In Sri Lankan context, most papers are written about Pilgrimage. However, Sigiriya plays a prominent role in Sri Lankan tourism industry now and archaeological records also show that it had been no different in the past. Therefore, this study took an attempt to understand about the nature of Ancient Tourism based on Sigiriya especially during the 6th - 11th Centuries AD. There were two objectives of this study which were to generate a map marking the whereabouts ancient tourists came from and to understand the features that were mostly admired by ancient tourists. 685 Sigiri graffiti deciphered by Prof. Paranavithana were used to extract data about ancient tourists. Journal written by C.W. Nicholas was used to understand the present locations of the village names mentioned by ancient visitors. Data were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics. Data analysis shows

that ancient tourists have come to visit Sigiriya from various places of the countries. Those people have even come from areas like Jaffna, Mannar, Kalapitiya, Ampara, Trincomalee, Tissamaharama, Kirinda etc. They have also come from areas nearby Sigiriya such as Polonnaruwa, Ritigala, Places around Dambulla, Kibissa, Raththota, Malasna. Ancient tourists have mostly admired Sigiri frescoes making it the dominant feature. Natural beauty of Sigiriya, Entertainment Events, Lion's Structure, Mirror Wall and Remains of the Royal Palace have been admired by ancient tourists.

Key Words: Ancient Tourism, Main Tourist Attraction, Sigiriya, Sigiri Graffiti, Tourist Profile, Visitor Map

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Archaeology is a field of study which mainly aims to reconstruct the culture histories, lifeways, cultural process and their meanings. In the core of archaeology, it is always that undeniable interest of humans to have a clear picture of how their ancestors lived and, how they exploited their environment. We, as humans are fond of learning how the same world we live today had been utilized by the past humans and to learn about their stories as humans more or less resemble the behaviors and life patterns of their ancestors.

People leave their traces, even slightest ones when they finally become past. Those traces are found as remains most of the times. Those are considered as 'Archaeological Records' which help archaeologists in achieving above mentioned aims. Based on these archaeological records, an archaeologist tries to reconstruct the human past.

Tourism can be defined as the act and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation, and pleasure while hospitality is providing facilities to those who travel (UNWTO). Therefore, when people travel for recreation, tourism origins. And whenever tourism exists, different services are generated in order to cater to those who travel.

Travelling to visit exotic places and getting away from the day to day stress is not a newly found practice of the modern world people. It can be considered as a long-term phenomenon practiced by the humankind since early ages. Although from the perspective of today's tourism it seems that the ancient period does not appear to be the most appropriate time to consider the emergence of tourism (Vukonić, 2012), it gave birth to the trips which are by their features and participants' motivation and behavior quite similar to today's travel.

When it comes to Sri Lanka, it was forever referred to as a paradise by many people especially by travelers like Iban Battuta and Fa-Hien etc. And it is highly likely that Sri Lanka also had an early form of tourism as it is mentioned above about the world context. It is highly possible to find evidence of past tourism and hospitality occurrence in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is a leading tourism destination now and it operates as an industry in a wide scale. And any tourist who visits Sri Lanka has this prime purpose of visiting Sigiriya during their visit. Sigiriya is considered as a key tourist attraction that should not be missed when visiting Sri

Lanka. Archaeological records of Sigiriya tells stories about an existence of tourism in ancient Sri Lanka. Those Archaeological records give away several data which support the reconstruction of tourism in Ancient Sri Lanka.

Therefore, this paper aims to consider, the archaeological findings about Sigiriya and thereby extract details to make a conclusion on two important features of the profile of ancient tourists who visited Sigiriya.

Problem Statement

Travelling to visit exotic places and getting away from the day to day stress is not a newly found practice of the modern world people. It can be considered as a long-term phenomenon practiced by the humankind since early ages. In spite of that, a very limited number of studies are found in order to understand the ancient tourism practices. Humans have this tendency of leaving their mark behind whenever they travel. These traces could be either archaeological records and written records. Both of these helps to get an idea about the past human activities. Studying the material culture helps to understand about past human activities. Material culture consists of things as they are understood in relation to specific cultural and historic contexts, communities, and belief systems. Therefore, studying both written records and archaeological records these helps to reconstruct the past. The existing literature shows a huge gap in this field of study in Sri Lankan context. The fact is that the limited links between tourism research and history have led people to believe that tourism is a new phenomenon to Sri Lanka. Many researches have been carried out about Sigiriya but very less attempts are taken to interpret these archaeological records and written records in terms of reconstructing the nature of ancient tourism. Therefore, an investigation would be useful to reconstruct the past of this

phenomenon which is considered by many people as modern practice

Research Objectives

Researcher of the present study aimed at fulfilling two objectives. Those were, to generate a map by illustrating the areas of Sri Lanka from which the ancient tourists have come to visit Sigiriya and to understand the features of Sigiriya which were mostly admired by ancient tourists.

Significance of the Study

The potential findings of this research aim to reconstruct the nature of tourism in ancient Sri Lanka. This will help to understand Tourism as an ever-presented human activity even in Sri Lanka, not a mere industry which was developed in the modern world. Moreover, the finding of this research would shed a light to understand the earliest utility of Sigiriya in terms of tourism as it is not discussed up to now widely. This search for utility will also reveal the travel interests of ancient tourists as well. Moreover, as it is mentioned in the literature review since there is a lack of literature on this field of study, this will contribute to the existing limited literature to enhance the knowledge base. The study will further give a sight to the future researches to explore the various aspects of ancient travel and hospitality practices in Sri Lanka as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on Ancient Travel in International Context

Few studies are conducted to look into the archaeological findings in order to establish a knowledge base on ancient travel. Most of them are conducted based on Ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt Etc.

Travel is one of the most ancient and common aspects of human life and it can be traced back to mythical times (Rabotić,

2014). Tourism is generally regarded as a quite recent phenomenon, but researchers and scholars do not agree on its historical roots. Some relate them to the mid-nineteenth century progress of transport infrastructure and the availability of leisure time, others to the Grand Tour as a particular type of aristocratic travel in the 17-18th centuries, and some even to mediaeval pilgrimages. However, trips similar to today's tourism were made as early as during the ancient period, when people travelled not only for trade and business, religion, sports, health, education and other specific reasons, but also for leisure and pleasure involving sightseeing of the new and unfamiliar areas (Rabotić, 2014).

The fact is that the limited links between tourism research and history have led people to believe that tourism is a new phenomenon. The relevance of tourism history will often go back long before the immediate past, as phenomena regarded as new or recent have much deeper, and more revealing, roots than appear at first sight (Andriotis, 2009). Although modern-day tourism industry could not have existed in the previous centuries, on no account can one claim that so-called tourist did not exist back in the ancient past. Thus, Gyr (2012) argues that recreational and educational travel already existed in the classical world and, even earlier.

Ancient travelers had many of the characteristics of their later counterparts. In the same manner, tourists carved their graffiti signs in the stones of the Egyptian pyramids and other monuments as a testimony of their visit, whereas local stonecutters made such inscriptions for high-class visitors, exemplified by the Colossi of Memnon (Pharaoh Amenhotep III) in the Theban necropolis (Casson, 1994).

Casson (1994) also states that "Tourist behavior" included purchasing souvenirs as travel mementos, shopping items for friends and relatives, and, as it is the case

of a mass gathering of today's tourists, dropping the litter behind.

Travelling by land was more challenging, since, all the way until the Roman times, roads were of poor quality, more or less trodden paths. Traders carried their goods in pack-saddles of a donkey or a mule which could be harnessed into a two-wheeled cart or a four-wheeled wagon, both of which had been invented by the third millennium BCE (Garland, 2007). Wealthy travelers made trips on a horse. Others usually travelled on foot, even covering long distances, often as long as 30 kilometers per day (Crowther, 2007).

Travelers rarely had the opportunity to stay over at inns, with a burden of food self-provision. Such accommodation was not comfortable or appropriate, judging by Aristophanes' comments that Piraeus inns had a reputation for discomfort, prostitution, and bedbugs (Garland, 2007). In the Roman times, the number of lodging facilities was by far larger, in cities in particular but, most inns were probably third-rate (Friedlander, 1965). It does not seem to be strange at all that it was widely held among the ancient nations, the Romans as well, that making a trip was a necessary evil, having in mind how people travelled, where they spent the night, the food they consumed, and the means of transport at their disposal (Vasoli, 1967).

There were also guides referred to on several occasions by Herodotus in his History. They lived and worked not only in Egypt, but in Greece as well, where they were seen by Pausanias. He refers to them as to ἐξηγηταί (expounders), with one guide's name noted down ("Aristarchus, the guide to the sights at Olympia"). They led people around, pointed out notable sights – temples, altars and statues, described the local rituals, explained customs, and told traditional stories of historical and mythical events associated with the place. Therefore, Lomine (2005) claims that guides also had an important function as culture brokers.

To satisfy the demand of 'ancient travelers', basic facilities were provided. For instance, in Crete, the remains of the earliest hostel have been found, which is dated sometime around 1500 B.C. This hostel was a small elegant structure placed alongside the highway from the south coast just at its approach to the palace at Knossos (Casson, 1974).

Many of the features of early travelers to Greece can add depth to the understanding of aspects of modern tourism. Although much of the best work on tourism history has come from historians, their findings rarely penetrate to tourism (Towner 1988, Towner and Wall 1991). Thus, certain aspects of contemporary tourism which may be related to early traveling to Greece remain unclear.

As a result, it is not clear yet whether the refined early Greek travelers with their predilection for art and letters have, or have not been removed from their contemporary counterparts. When this perspective receives further research interest, it will then be possible to gain a better understanding of the legacy of the early travelers to Greece, and to assess their contribution to the evolution of modern tourism.

Studies on Ancient Travel in Sri Lankan Context

Pilgrimage

When considering about tourism in ancient Sri Lanka, mostly well-known and familiar phenomenon is 'Pilgrimage' which is referred to as 'Vata Vandanawa' in native language. These pilgrimages were organized in order to visit sacred places around Sri Lanka. Most of the time, people have visited these places with a large group of people. In a time where modern and comfortable transportation facilities were not available, these people have travelled by foot or bullock carts. These pilgrimages took weeks and months

for the devotees to travel back to their homes. And these travels have been difficult and risky.

Archaeological findings that imply Ancient Tourism in Sigiriya

Sigiriya built by the King Kashyapa in the 5th century AD, that is more than 1500 years ago, was nominated as a world heritage by the government of Sri Lanka and it was accepted by the UNESCO and inscribed on the world heritage list in 1982 (De Silva, 2012).

Sigiriya is a unique product of many disciplines, nature, city planning, landscape architecture, architecture, hydraulic engineering, structural engineering, craftsmanship, painting, sculpture, Sinhala calligraphy and literature. It is a good example to show that inter disciplinary approach to design can produce a unique and excellent product (De Silva, 2012).

Half way along the vertical western side of the rock surface was pasted with a two-meter-wide path way connecting and climbing from South to the North. Outer edge of the path was protected with a two-meter-high cavity wall. In the construction bricks were laid on the steps cut on the sloping rock surface using a thick layer of clay mortar. (De Silva, 2012).

This wall is plastered with a special lime mortar and the inner surface is burnished to a reflective mirror finished in such a way that the painting on the opposite rock surface is perfectly reflected creating a special ambience to feel that the ladies are on both sides when the king walk along. Because of that reflecting surface, this was known as the mirror wall or “kata path paura”. Among the many thousands of visitors who climbed Sigiriya from the 6th century to 14th century to see and admire the painting gallery and the palace buildings, more than thousand five hundred have written poems, names. Many have also mentioned occupations,

social status and where they came from. From the 6th century onwards Sigiriya has become a place of natural, cultural and historic interest. Who heard about the beauty of the Sigiriya Royal Precincts and the painting gallery, specially visited and climbed Sigiriya as tourists to enjoy the setting and got their mind stimulated with poetic thoughts and carefully inscribed poems on the shining mirror wall (De Silva, 2012).

Moreover, Bandaranayake (1993) states that archaeologists have found remains of terracotta figurines which are similar to the Sigiri Frescoes and he suggests that those must be sort of ‘souvenirs’ which were crafted to taken away by visitors.

These figurines were found among the rubble of collapsed structures in the boulder (rock) garden area, at the base of the rock, at a depth of between 150 and 250 centimeters. These structures are believed to be Buddhist monastic complexes dating back to around 500AD, after the reign of King Kasyapa. From their archaeological context and style, experts have dated them to a period between the 7th and 10th centuries.

Although all the figurines are damaged and some are in pieces, with heads and limbs missing, some of them have retained enough of their original form to testify to their high artistic quality and intricate design. Most of the figurines are of women and are usually between 10 and 20 centimeters tall. They are believed to be models or representations of the frescoes known as Sigiri apsaras painted on the walls of the rock. Although terracotta figures of this particular type have been found only from Sigiriya, they are somewhat similar in design to terracotta sculpture associated with other sites in the area, such as Manikdena and Dambulla. Archaeologists, believe that the sculpture was designed much later than the actual Sigiri paintings.

There are some differences as well as similarities between the figurines and the

paintings. Experts think that these objects were not part of any fixed architectural decoration, but rather objects which were meant to be carried. This has led some to believe that they may have been given as souvenirs to visitors in the olden days. Yet others think they may have decorated nooks and corners of the rock fortress. Although it was a common practice in Asia to present souvenirs to pilgrims visiting religious sites, these souvenirs are unique as Sigiriya was visited and appreciated for its aesthetic and archaeological importance and not for the religious aspect. Bandara, R. reveals about finding remains of terracotta musical instruments which were scattered around the gardens of Sigiriya. He suggests that, those musical instruments must have been owned by the people who visited Sigiriya back then and they might have left the broken terracotta instruments when they left the precinct. Based on the literature survey, researcher found following similarities between the archaeological findings about ancient tourism in international context and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the facts that should be investigated further in Sri Lankan context are also identified compared to the archaeological findings in international context.

Similarities of International Context and Sri Lanka (Sigiriya) according to the facts in literature review

- Carving graffiti on surfaces as a testimony of their visit
- Purchasing souvenirs as travel mementos
- Mass Gatherings of visitors which mean these tourist attractions have been packed with people

Facts that are not still revealed about Sigiriya compared to international context

- Profile of the tourists
- Accommodation facilities used by visitors who came from faraway places

- Any reference about the existence of tour guides
- Food and beverage providers who catered to visitors such as remains of pottery used by visitors.
- Travelling routes and facilities
- Evidence for entertainment events which are said to be held at Sigiriya.

Above all the facts discussed in literature create are a solid basis to support an archaeological study to reconstruct the ancient tourism in Sigiriya.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the facts discussed in the literature review, it can be said that those facts strongly support the idea of an existence of ancient tourism based on Sigiriya. Therefore, the researcher tries to construct an archaeological map of areas from which ancient travelers have come to visit Sigiriya the features of mostly admired by them. To full these objectives, the bellow methodology was used.

Research Area

This study is based on the Sigiriya Archaeological Site. Graffiti written on the surface of the Mirror Wall were taken into consideration.

Research Model

As this study based on the facts already found from previous archaeological findings, a Library Survey or a Desk Based Study was conducted. Prescribed Readings were used to extract needed to data fulfill the objectives of present research. Therefore, the study took a qualitative approach.

Data Collection

The articles found from the internet and PGIAR library were used to do the literature survey. Some of them were The

Settlement Archaeology of the Sigiriya - Dambulla Region by Senake Bandaranayake and A catalogue of Ancient Pottery from Sri Lanka by Nimal De Silva and Ranjith Bandara Dissanayake. Data were collected from Prescribed Readings as it is mentioned above. Seegiri Gee Siri by V.J.Mu Lokubandara and Sigiri Gee Nirmana by K. Jayathilake were the used by researcher to retrieve data about ancient tourists of Sigiriya. These books are based on the 685 of the verses on the mirror wall which were deciphered by Prof. Senarath Paranavithana as the researcher could not able to find the two Volumes of books which were written by Prof. Paranavithana based on Sigiri Graffiti. Since the modern place names of ancient names written on the mirror wall should also be identified, publications regarding ancient territories of Sri Lanka were referred.

In order to fulfill the study objectives, data collection was done under the below mentioned steps,

Readings graffiti one by one and noting down the whereabouts visitors came from if there are mentioned any.

Examples for whereabouts;

- Graffiti No: 01 – From Elenela-Kuli
- Graffiti No:02 – from Eastern Side of the country
- Graffiti No 03 – Not Mentioned

Examples for features that ancient tourists admired;

- Graffiti No:01 – Environmental Beauty
- Graffiti No: 02 – Frescoes
- Graffiti No: 45 – Lion

If the same Village Name was mentioned in more than one graffiti, researcher mentioned the repeated number accordingly.

Examples;

- Graffiti No: 26 – From Ruhuna / 02
- Graffiti No: 36 – From Ruhuna / 02
- Graffiti No: 43 – From Ruhuna / 03

Then the ancient village names which were almost similar to the modern names were extracted from the list and they were noted down separately and then entered to a MS. Excel sheet.

Examples;

- Polonnaru
- Ritgal
- Rakawana

Unfamiliar names were extracted into a separate MS. Excel sheet.

Finally, out of the 685 verses, ones that mention the features admired by ancient tourists were entered into another MS. Excel sheet separately.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

After collecting data that were needed to draw the conclusions, they were analyzed as follows. Researcher went through the whole document of C.W. Nicholas to find if there are any names mentioned similar to the ones in Sigiri graffiti thereby an attempt was taken to get an idea about the unfamiliar names by referring the writings of C.W. Nicholas and their modern locations were noted down so that those can be marked on the map. The major features of Sigiriya that were appreciated by the ancient tourists were considered as different categories and for that descriptive analysis was used.

Finally, researcher generated a visitor map by considering the identified village names. If the same name found from several graffiti, those places were not marked several times respectively. Instead of that, only one time was marked to

represent the place. A pie chart was generated by using Ms. Excel to demonstrate findings on major attractions of Sigiriya.

RESULTS

The map that shows the whereabouts of ancient tourists who visited Sigiriya

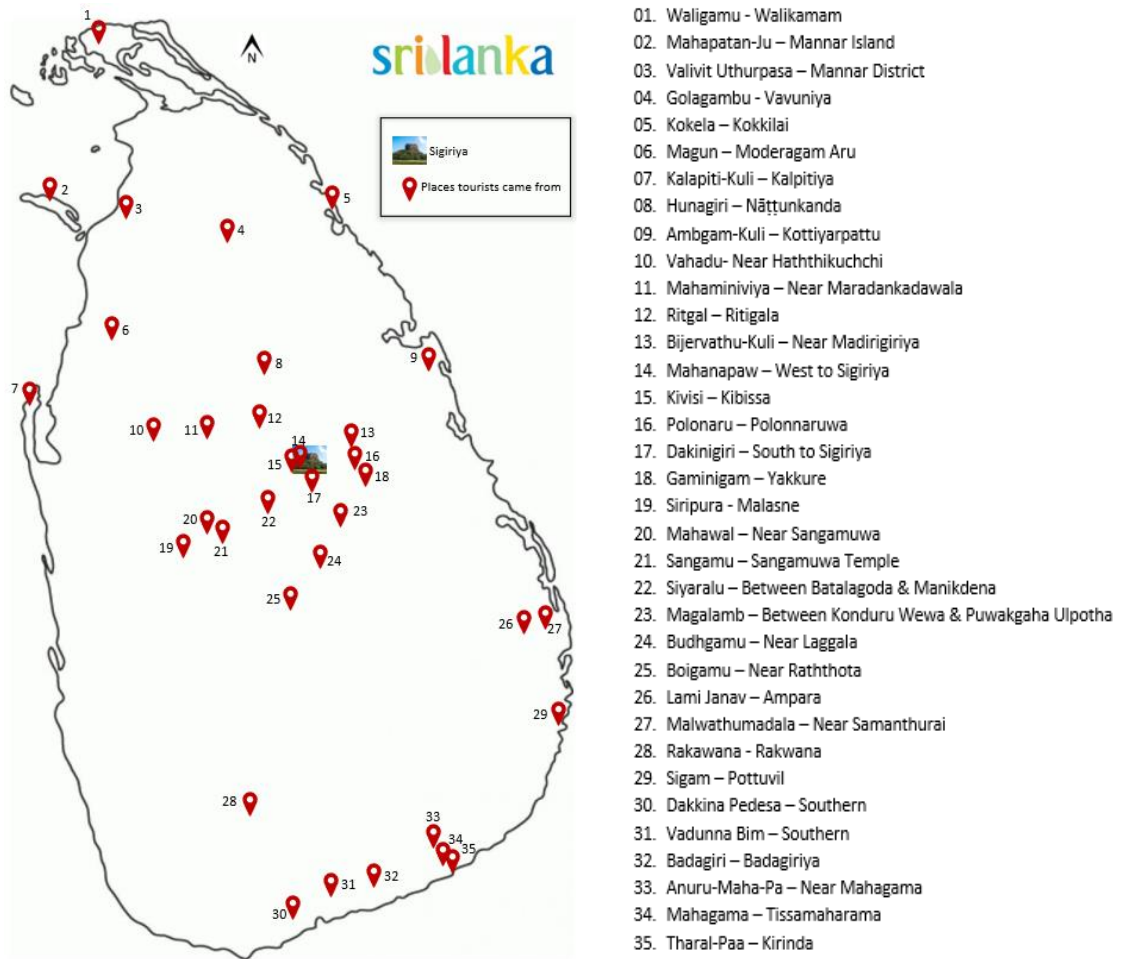


Figure 01: The map that shows the whereabouts of ancient tourists who visited Sigiriya

This map shows that ancient visitors have come from many the regions of the country to visit Sigiriya. 36 places have been recognized. Since all the places

mentioned in Sigiri graffiti could not be understood with modern names it is difficult to draw the complete conclusion though.

However, from what is depicted in above map it can be said that highest concentration is shown from nearby areas of Sigiriya. It is highly likely to think that people from nearby areas were interested in visiting this place. These nearby places include Polonnaruwa, Ritigala, Places around Dambulla, Kibissa, Raththota, Malasna Etc. Other than these nearby places, visitors from northern most parts of the country have also visited Sigiriya during the ancient times. ‘Uththara pedesa’ or Uthur’ was frequently mentioned graffiti. C.W. Nicholas suggests that this ‘Uthur Pedes’ must be present Northern Coast including Mannar district. Moreover, Walikamaam of Jaffna was mentioned as ‘Weligam’. Kapitiya and Mannar island was also mentioned as ‘Kalapiti-Kuli’ and ‘Mahapatan-Ju’. Present Vanniya was also mentioned as ‘Golgambu’. It can be seen from the map that ancient visitors have also come from Eastern part of the country as well. Eastern was mentioned as ‘Pajin’ in graffiti. Proving this, the map shows that visitors have come from places like around Trincomalee.

They have also come from places now considered as Ampara, Samanthurai, Pottuvil etc. Ancient names of those places were ‘Lami Janav’, ‘Malvathu-Mandal’ and ‘Sigam’ respectively. These were belonged to ancient Rohana back then. The name ‘Rohana or Ruhuna’ was also frequently mentioned in graffiti. ‘Dakinipasa’ or ‘Dakunu-Pedes’ was also mentioned several times. Apart from that visitors have come from areas representing present places like Tissamaharama, Kirinda, Badagiriya. Rakwana was also mentioned as a whereabouts of a visitor. Hunnasgiriya was also mentioned.

According to the names identified, there is nothing mentioned about present Western Province. However, it is not fair to conclude that ancient visitors have not

come from these areas as there are many names still left unidentified.

Features of Sigiriya which were mostly admired by Ancient Tourists

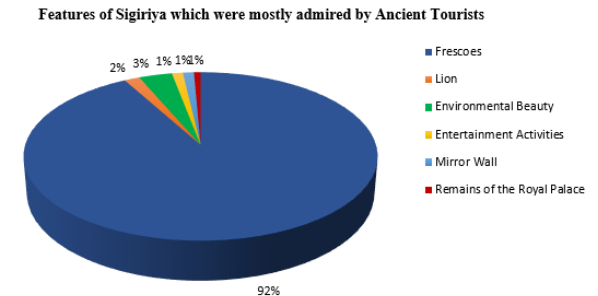


Figure 02: Features of Sigiriya which were mostly admired by Ancient Tourists

Above pie chart shows that there were mainly six features admired by the ancient tourists who visited Sigiriya. Those are Frescoes, Lion, Environmental Beauty, Entertainment activities or events, Mirror Wall and Remains of the Royal Palace. Out of those categories, Frescoes takes a percentage of 92 while supporting facts discussed in literature review. When getting the total amount of people who admired features, researcher did not consider the graffiti mere mentioning about frescoes. Only the ones that were written in a form of appreciation were taken into consideration as some of those visitors have placed resentful comments about frescoes as well. All the rest of the categories owns up small percentages. ‘Lion’ or ‘Lion King’ have been appreciated by 2% of ancient visitors while the natural beauty around Sigiriya was admired by 3%. Entertainment activities, Mirror Wall itself and Remains of the Royal Palace were appreciated by 1% each of ancient visitors.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to understand about ancient tourism of Sri Lanka with

special reference to Sigiriya. Under that, two very important aspects helping to understand the profile of visitors who came to see Sigiriya were studied. Whereabouts of the ancient visitors and what they mostly admired about Sigiriya or what attracted them the most in Sigiriya were those two aspects. Things written in Sigiri Graffiti was taken into consideration in this regard and books on Sigiri Graffiti were used as data collection tools.

After data analysis 35 place names were identified as the places those visitors came from. These places were marked on a map. The Map shows that people have come to visit Sigiriya from many parts of the country and it was mostly visited by the people who lived in areas near Sigiriya. Apart from that tourists have even come from the northernmost areas as well as southern most areas indicating that Sigiriya was a well-known tourist attraction during that period of time and people have come from very far-away places to visit this attraction. This also proves the verses seen among Sigiri graffiti which say that “Sigiriya is famous around the entire country and it is visited by many people who come from all around the country”.

Despite the fact that it can be seen that people have travelled from many places, according to the places identified, no village name is mentioned to represent the present Western Province. But places representing this region could be indicated from the place names that could not be identified. Some of those names include, ‘Ranala Palla’, ‘Guttala Malunna’, ‘Benara’, ‘Galaboi’, ‘Pamini-Gamuwa’, ‘Vijurala’, ‘Sammadu’, ‘Thalaboi’, ‘Budhgam’, ‘Athulavita’, ‘Athalagama’, ‘Nilkada’, ‘Diyawana’, ‘Gatha-Bagiriya’ etc.

When it comes to the features that have been mostly admired by the ancient tourists, Frescoes take the highest frequency while proving the facts mentioned in literature review. It is said

that Sigiri graffiti were mostly written about the paintings. This also can be proved by considering the fact that Sigiriya was widely visited by men and they might have admired these female paintings. Furthermore, it can be said that the terracotta figurines found from the Sigiriya precinct which represent the Sigiri frescoes also support this finding. Frescoes must have been the key attraction of Sigiriya what drew visitors towards it. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that local craftsmen must have thought that the most suitable souvenirs to be made to sell out to visitors were something which resembles frescoes.

Sigiriya environment has also been admired by ancient visitors. Some visitors have mentioned that the view from the top of the rock was very scenic which any person who visited Sigiriya once in their lives would accept without a doubt. Sigiriya have always been a paradise for the nature lovers. Some visitors have admired the majestic ‘Lion’ or the ‘Lion King’ which must be what is known to us as the gigantic lion constructed of bricks and plaster. Chronicles like Mahavamsa also mentions about this structure similar to a Lion. Ven. Mahanama mentions that there was an entrance of the staircase to the summit was covered with a construction similar to a lion and that caused Sigiriya to be called as it is. Some visitors have mentioned that which took their attention the most was not frescoes but this Lion.

Some of the visitors mentioned things which imply probable event which took place in Sigiriya. Prof. Senarath Paranavithana suggests that this event must have been a type called ‘Giragga Samajja’ which was practiced in India as well in places situated in high contours. More studies are needed to study about these. These visitors have mentioned that summit was full of people and they were enjoying with music and all.

Mirror wall itself has been a source of attraction for the ancient visitors. Some of them have mentioned about its shining surface and its attractiveness

Remains of the royal palace on the summit of the rock has also been a feature that attracted visitors. Some of the visitors have mentioned that even the remains show the majesty of this place.

By considering all the above facts it can be said that Sigiriya just like nowadays must have been a major tourism attraction back then so that people from very faraway places came to visit and admired most of the features admired by the modern tourists as well. It can also be said that with the above findings, Sigiriya was not recognized by tourists as a place for pilgrimage but it was admired by them as a recreational centre.

CONCLUSIONS

On a concluding remark, it could be said that Sigiriya Rock Fortress had been a tourism sensation mainly for the domestic visitors during the 6th - 11th Centuries AD because arrivals from different parts of the country could be seen. And just like today, those visitors had admired the scenic nature, cultural and artistic values of Sigiriya.

Future Research

This paper was published as a part of an ongoing research that the author is conducting with the aim of identifying other aspects which help completing the profile of tourists who visited Sigiriya during given period of time; such as the occupations, gender and names etc. Furthermore, possible evidence on an existence of a primitive hospitality system around the area including accommodation facilities used by visitors who came from faraway places, any reference about the existence of tour guides, food and beverage providers who catered to visitors

such as remains of pottery used by visitors, travelling routes and facilities and evidence for entertainment events which are said to be held at Sigiriya are expected to be researched to complete the whole picture of a possible ancient tourism network around Sigiriya.

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