

HERITAGE CITY, PLACE IDENTITY AND URBAN TOURISM: SUCCESS STORY OF A WORLD HERITAGE CITY

Harsha Munasinghe

ABSTRACT

Heritage-city, Place-identity and Urban-tourism are themes that have become synonymous. Tourism, considered as a windfall gain for bringing extra revenue, reviving cultural activities and shaping positive images, dictates the place management in the heritage-city. As a result, globally-known and universally-appreciated values and activities are enforced on the heritage city, making it kitsch and standardized, thus threatening its unique identity. There are some exceptional cases where the place managers have been able to achieve a balance between place-identity and urban-tourism. By framing the research problem through a literature survey, a morphological analysis of the heritage-city of Kandy in Sri Lanka was conducted, where such a balance has been instigated. It was noted how the tourists use the city, when and where they impact place-identities, and how the city and place managers have responded. The aims were to prepare the grounds to appraise an effective management of heritage, identity and tourism, and to rephrase its success. The impact on place-identity first challenged the evolution of city-life in Kandy, but the management planning eventually changed this impact, giving the place a new lease of life. The adopted land use patterns, development screening and controls, fiscal management and organizational structures struck a win-win-win situation in Kandy.

Keywords: Heritage, Place, Tourism, Culture and Kandy