

**IMPACT OF DECLARATION OF A MONUMENT AS A
WORLD HERITAGE: A STUDY OF RITIGALA
MONASTIC COMPLEX IN SRI LANKA**

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Master of Science in Architectural Conservation of Monuments and Sites

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

Ritigala is one of the most picturesque places in Sri Lanka. This picturesque value is mainly due to its cultural and natural aspects. Ritigala mountain range is located in the Palugaswewa divisional secretariat, Kekirawa in Anuradhapura district. The most outstanding value of this Archaeological site is the Padhanaghara building tradition. Rare species of flora and fauna is found in this forest and the value of this heritage is immeasurable due to the dense forest which has been there unharmed for thousand of years.

There are more than enough reasons for Ritigala to be included in the world heritage list due to the above mentioned outstanding universal values. But it seems that no considerable attention in this regard has yet been drawn on the part of heritage conservation authorities. A long and meticulous feasibility study has to be done before Ritigala being declared a world heritage site in addition, management system which is to be submitted in this regard should be prepared in impact of declaration of monument as a world heritage: A study of Ritigala monastic complex in Sri Lanka, it is attempted to research the need for it. It is done employing the methodologies of defining what a world heritage is, how it can be applied to Ritigala and examining the advantages and disadvantages arising from that it was observed when analysing the data collected the local and foreign tourists that majority of them are of the opinion of it being declared a world heritage. A few tourists have expressed their comments against. It justifying their reasons. Both of these parties have expressed their opinions based on some facts and they can be justified depending only on the management system implemented once it had been declared a world heritage site. Some of the locals also were posed the question whether Ritigala be declared a world heritage or not. When their responses were summarized, it is clear that they have shown more inclination for it than otherwise more over attention was paid to the world heritage sites in Sri Lanka and in other countries in relation to their present condition after the inclusion of them in the world heritage category. It was revealed that there are many such sites which have been maintained minimizing the damages and conserving the heritage due to the actions taken under the world heritage concept. Thus, there is evidence that this concept has been a success. On the other hand, there are some other world heritage sites in and out of Sri Lanka, which have failed to achieve success due to the lack of a proper management system. Venice charter and Narah document provide a very wide coverage on the subject of conservation of cultural heritage. Thus, how for these charters could be utilized in relation to Ritigala has been examined here.

However, local and foreign tourists have expressed their concern over environmental issues which could be arisen due to declaring Ritigala a world heritage site. So, strict measures should be taken to protect the fauna and flora of this natural reserve. Several suggestions on how Ritigala could be carefully maintained once it is declared a world heritage site have been presented here. Deciding on the number of tourists allowed entry to the site on a day, preventing opportunities for the unnecessary tourists entering the site by increasing the value of entry tickets, closing down the site for some period of time every year for the environmental balancing are the suggestions which require attention since majority of the tourists have expressed the need for implementing rules, regulations and restrictions for conserving the site, implementation of these rules, regulations and restrictions also could lead to minimizing the damages to the site.

Keywords – The heritage of Ritigala, Ritigala monastic complex, World heritage concept, Impact of declaration of ritigala

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Ritigala archaeological site is an ancient Buddhist Monastery Complex belonging to the period 03rd century BC to 09th century AD located about 43 km (27 miles) to the north-east of the Anuradhapura town where archaeological remains are present. This is the period of the Anuradhapura Kingdom. With the transition of power for the first time in Sri Lanka Polonnaruwa becomes the main centre of administration and the Ritigala Monastery Complex is believed to have been destroyed by the Chola invasion in about the first half of 11th century AD. Ritigala which was swallowed up by the forest thus was concealed from the public until the middle of the 19th century.

Studies done on Ritigala are relatively limited and there are number of studies which could be done and should necessarily be done. This study is done for the degree of Master of Science in Architectural conservation of monuments and sites (ACOMAS) of the University of Moratuwa and the study is mainly based on a timely problem related to Ritigala. There is a suggestion that this particular site be declared a world heritage site and there are two parties who express their ideas for and against the suggestion taking a natural stance and entering into a more justifiable procedure. It was easier for me to do this study while studying in Ritigala for nearly four years. It paved the way for me to observe closely most of the important place in the site and study the ideas of the villagers and tourists while mingling with them. I got the rare opportunity of studying the wildlife and their behavior and visiting gorges and peaks of Ritigala which are banned to tourists. I should extend my gratitude to my beloved mentor's senior lecturer Dr. D. P. Chandrasekara and Prof. Samitha Manawadu in the department of Architecture of University of Moratuwa.

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