

AN ANALYSIS OF FLOWER-BASED MARKETING STRUCTURE IN THE SACRED CITY OF ANURADHAPURA

G. S. P. Gunarathne,¹ B. M. N. C. B. Wijerathne, R. K. L. W. Radaliyagoda

Introduction

There are many industries and business around archaeological and religious places; handicraft, sweets, statues, flowers and toys etc. Especially flower based marketing become a well-known business type. At present large-scale flower-based marketing can be seen in Sri Lanka, for the purpose of exports, other special occasions, and religious observances. This study is mainly focused on the flower-based marketing structure for religious purposes in Anuradhapura sacred city. Anuradhapura is the capital city of North Central Province, Sri Lanka. It was the first capital city in Sri Lankan history, famous for its well-preserved ruins of an ancient civilization. It is also a UNESCO world heritage site (Seneviratne, 1994). Flower-based marketing in Anuradhapura is very specific because it is focusing on archaeological and religious places in Anuradhapura sacred city. Marketing stalls can be seen mainly near Sri Maha Bodhi, Ruwanweliseya, Mirisawetiya, Thuparamaya, Abhayagiriya, and Jethawanaya etc. The value and attraction of those places are directly caused to exist the flower-business. It is therefore important to empirically examine the marketing structure and behavior of the flower-based market, particularly in Anuradhapura Sacred City. The general objective of this study is to understand the flower-based marketing structure in Anuradhapura sacred city. Specific objectives are to; identify the profile of the florist, investigate trends of the flower-based market, estimate average income, costs and profits of the flower-sellers.

Methodology

The study site is Anuradhapura ancient city which lies 205km north of the current Capital city of Colombo in Sri Lanka in the North Central Province. Both primary and secondary data were used for this study.

¹ Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sajaanpraveen7@gmail.com

Primary data were collected by field observations & surveying of 30 of flower businessmen out of a total of 62 flower businessmen in Anuradhapura sacred city. As secondary data articles, journals and internet websites were used. Descriptive statistical methods; Graphics, charts, tables and percentages in SPSS software were used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

This field survey covered six archaeological sites; Mirisawetiya, Thuparamaya, Abhayagiriya, Jethawanaramaya, Ruwanweliseya and Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura sacred city. The sample profile included 33.3% of female respondents and 66.7% of male respondent. Survey data revealed that the sample of the male is higher than female as a result of more male are interested in doing flower business than female. According to age differences among salesmen, 10% florists were below 18 years, 46.7% between 19-45 years and 43.3% over 46. When considering the education level of the florist in Anuradhapura sacred city, 63.3% have got primary education, 30% of them have reached Ordinary Level and only 6.7% have passed the advanced level. According to the experience of the florist, 40% of them have 21 to 30 years of experiences and 20% of them have over 31 years of experiences.

When considering the trends of the flower-based market; the business situation in different seasons, 63.3% of florists indicated that there is more customer arrivals in weekends, Poya days and other special holidays. It is interesting things such as 100% of florists indicate that there is a higher favorable profit on Buddhist festival days; Poson and Vesak Poya days in May and June. Almost 80% of flower businessmen revealed that morning and evening time are good for the flower business.

While there are 76.6% of flower businesses related to Sri Maha Bodhi and Ruwanweliseya, there were only 23.3% of flower businesses related to Mirisawetiya, Thuparamaya, Abhayagiriya and Jethawanaya sites. This is because there is a high propensity of people to worship Sri Maha Bodhi and Ruwanweliseya than other sacred places in the Anuradhapura Sacred City. However, according to UNESCO world heritage criteria, the whole sacred city is a world heritage (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017). Although, due to religious perception

Buddhists have an attraction towards & higher willingness to worship Sri Maha Bodhi and Ruwanweliseya than other sites.

Levels of satisfaction based on the perception of florists followings are recorded; 56.7% satisfied, 16.7% moderate, 13.3% are highly satisfied and 13.3% are strongly not satisfied in flower business. Florists attitudes of satisfaction on government support to the flower market in the Anuradhapura sacred city, indicated that 96.6% of businessmen are not satisfied with government support. According to their point of view, they are not given any support by the government and not satisfied with the new urban planning in the business areas. Especially, the business scheme near Ruwanweliseya is not well-planned. Therefore, it does not provide a sound business environment to acquire more customers into their shops. There is a significant difference in income, cost and profit levels between festival days and other days. Profit differentials in festival days and other special holidays can be shown in following figure one.

Figure 1: Profit levels in festival and normal days

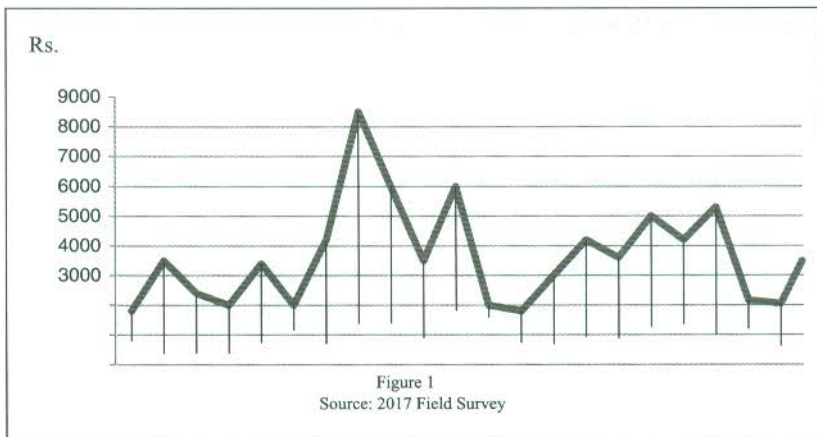


Table 1 shows the average income, cost and net income levels per day according to normal days and Buddhist festival days.

Table 1: Daily average income, cost and net income levels.

	In Normal Days (Rs.)	In Festival Days (Rs.)
Average Income	2114.00	7727.00
Average Cost	1032.00	3755.00
Net Income	1082.00	3972.00

Source: 2017 Field Survey

The investigation of the behavior of the flower-based market in the Anuradhapura Sacred city conducted for the purpose of identifying the market structure revealed the following; Entering the flower market is not so easy, 80% of florists enter to market by inheritance and by the support of relations. There are some regulations to enter the market; Municipal Council, Anuradhapura has limited flower business in the sacred city; only 23 shops at the Sri Maha Bodhi, 22 shops at Ruwanweliseya and 10 shops near to Thuparamaya. The price of a lotus flower is Rs.10.00 in normal days and it is changed to Rs.8.00 in Buddhist festival days. The price is decided by themselves due to the consensus of all Florists & they can influence the price. Therefore, the price is always equal in any flower shop in the sacred city. There are few wholesale suppliers who supply flowers to the businessmen: Survey data revealed only 4 suppliers in the Sri Maha Bodhi & Ruwanweliseya & 2 suppliers in the other places. Florists near the Thuparamaya supply flowers by themselves.

Conclusion

When considering the profiles of the flower businessmen, males have more interest to do flower business than females. Most of the florists are in their middle age and majority had only primary education. According to trends of flower-based market, most of the florists have over 21 years of experience. More people visit the sacred sites in weekends, Poya Days and other special holidays and Buddhist festival days than weekdays. Morning times and evenings are the best for flower business. There are many flower shops & more customers in Sri Maha Bodhi and Ruwanweliseya than other sacred places. High Levels of satisfaction are reported, most of the florist is satisfied doing flower business although most of them are not satisfied with the government support. When considering the income, cost, and profits from the business, there is a huge gap between profit levels in Buddhist festival days and other normal days. According to the behavior & marketing

structure of the flower-based market in Anuradhapura sacred city, characterize an oligopolistic market.

Some recommendations to promote the flower based market are introducing well organized urban planning related to sacred sites by considering the sites of flower business; minimizing entry points to enter the sacred places and construct one-way road across the flower market & encourage private floriculture system to increase flower supply.

Keywords : Anuradhapura sacred city, Flower-based market, Private floriculture system, Government Support

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