

# PLANNING IMPLICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HIKKADUWA AND BENTOTA, SRI LANKA

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon and it has many activities in a community or region with ecological, economic, social and cultural effects which require planning and coordination. On the other hand, for effective sustainable tourism, careful planning, adaptation of the principles of sustainability and the implications of plans are required to gain maximum economic benefits and tourist satisfaction, while managing the natural resources of the destination. Systematically planned, equity-oriented tourism development may aid governments in building infrastructure, help the balance of payments, and generate foreign exchange which could be used to sustain the nation. The reality of the present situation is that in most developing countries' tourism development often proceeds in an *ad hoc* way which is unreliable for the nation in search of quick and substantial economic gains. Hikkaduwa in Sri Lanka has undertaken *ad hoc* planning for tourism development. On the other hand the tourism industry in Bentota proceeded according to a tourism development plan. The question is the sustainability of the tourism industry in both destinations. This paper mainly focuses on evaluating the issues related to sustainability of tourism and planning implications and their effects on sustainable tourism development, using two case studies Hikkaduwa and Bentota. Tourism development in both tourist resorts is unsustainable in terms of the trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable tourism development. Comprehensive, flexible, community driven, sustainable and systematic planning approaches therefore need to be implemented to achieve sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** tourism industry, sustainability, planning implications, trio-fundamental requirements

## INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage provide a wide range of tourism opportunities, ranging from "sun and sand" holidays, wildlife excursions and cultural tours. The governments recognize this potential and are continuing with their attempts to promote tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange and employment opportunities, and for expanding economic activities. As more regions and countries develop their tourism industry, it produces a number of

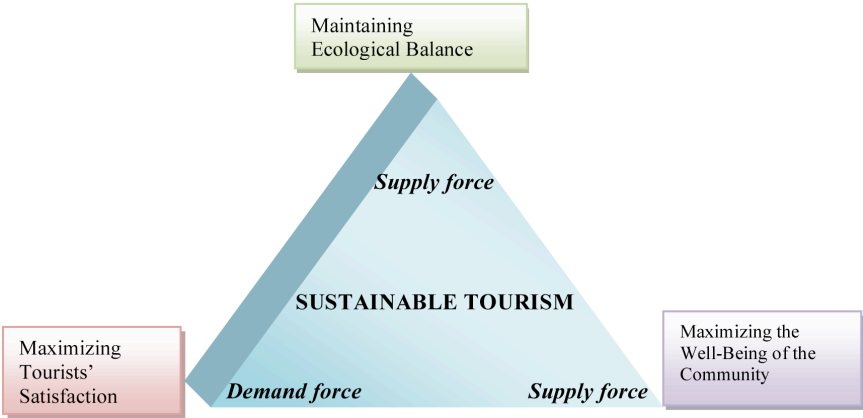
issues. The influx of visitors and uncontrolled growth accompanied by mass tourism development, has generated a number of negative economic, social and environmental effects on the host communities (Lai, 2006). According to Daniel, et al, (1998), tourism is one of many activities in a community or region that require planning and coordination. The reality of the present situation is that in most developing countries tourism development often proceeds in an *ad hoc* way. Unplanned tourism is of dubious value to a nation in search of quick and substantial economic gains. Carefully planned, equity-oriented tourism development may aid governments in building needed infrastructure (roads, sanitation and communications), help with balance of payments, and generate foreign exchange which could be used to develop a nation's social infrastructure (i.e., improved health and education) (Hundt, A ). Although there are some regions which have planned tourism development, the sustainability of the tourism industry is questionable. Sustainable tourism development is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in a way that can fulfill economic, social, and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. (Globe '90 Conference, 1991). According to Holden, 1997, for sustainable tourism development it is essential to integrate the three major components, namely physical environment (place), socio-cultural environment (host community) and tourists. It is the maintaining of the ecological balance, maximizing the well-being of local community without the one compromising the other (Silva, 2002). With the exception of one component, all the other components are insufficient to reach sustainable tourism development. Therefore it requires careful/responsible and systematic planning and management for the industry to achieve sustainable tourism development and to survive as a whole.

The present paper is an attempt to understand the issues of the area and sustainability of tourism development, particularly in Sri Lankan coastal tourism sites and identify issues relating to the proper planning and management of such sites to ensure sustainable tourism.

## PLANNING OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The trend in tourism development has been to use comprehensive, flexible, community driven, sustainable and systematic planning approaches. Carefully planned, equity-oriented tourism development may aid governments in building needed infrastructure (roads, sanitation and communications), help with the balance of payments, and generate foreign exchange which could be used to develop a nation's social infrastructure (i.e., improved health and education) (Hundt, A ). She added that historically, tourism development planning has been concentrated either on the physical requirements or on the economic considerations relevant to an area. Tourism development planning was not prepared systematically until the 1960s. Apparently, *ad hoc* planning for tourism development was undertaken in a number of tourist destinations (Getz, 1984). This unplanned and uncontrolled

tourism aiming at short-term benefits often results in negative impacts, harming the environment and societies, and destroying the very basis on which tourism is built and thrives. Tourism should not be developed for its own sake; rather it should be part of an overall plan that aims to improve a country's regional or national development (Hundt, A ). Besides economic viability, the feasibility of socio cultural and environmentally responsible tourism development has to be taken into account. Yunis (2004), added on the contrary, when tourism is planned, developed and managed using sustainable criteria; its benefits can spread through society and the natural and cultural environments. Sustainable tourism development can be thought of as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future (Waterson, 1974; Rose, 1984). However, effective sustainable tourism requires careful planning, adaptation of the principles of sustainability and implementation of practices that respect the particular characteristics of the destination (Harril R.) Principally, sustainable tourism development is based on the fulfillment of trio-fundamental requirements, that is to say the maximization of tourist satisfaction, maintaining the ecological balance and improvement of the well being of the local community (Silva, S. 2002). This is explained in figure 1. According to that, if only the maximizing of tourist satisfaction is considered, sometimes the maintenance of ecological balance and of the well-being of the society have been ignored. Mass tourism development in Asia Pacific Regions mostly provides examples of this point. On the other hand, tourism activities that consider only the protection and enhancement of the natural environment could be ignoring tourist satisfaction and the well-being of the local community.



**Figure 1**  
Trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable development adopted from Silva, S. 2002.

Thirdly if the tourism industry considers only the well-being of the local community then maximization of tourist satisfaction and maintaining of ecological balance can be neglected. However all three of these cases are extreme cases of tourism development and have hardly ever been seen in reality (Silva, S. 2002). In reality we can observe unsustainable tourism development in the world, firstly because some tourist regions maximize the satisfaction of tourists while maintaining the ecological balance, but ignoring the well-being of the local community. In those places the tourism industry could be handled by external organizations or companies. As a result, benefits do not filter down to the local community. Secondly tourism activities are ecologically viable and socially acceptable, but ignore tourist satisfaction. Small scale poor quality, guest house based tourism supply the evidence for that. Thirdly uncontrolled unplanned mass tourism provides large scale job opportunities for the local community. Most of these jobs are unskilled underemployment provided by the informal sector. The desirable approach to achieve a sustainable tourism industry requires fulfilling all three components of the triangle at the same time.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper focuses on two coastal tourism sites as case studies - Hikkaduwa, and Bentota in the southern coastal belt of Sri Lanka. Hikkaduwa is the most popular coastal tourism site in Sri Lanka and the most striking example of unplanned development. The informal sector tourism is more popular than the formal sector tourism in the area. Bentota owing to its location was attractive for tourism as the estuary of the Bentota River and the narrow land surrounding it, along with the mangroves, the wide beautiful sandy sea beach and the scenic beauty of the place made it a famous sea side resort. The long historic background of Bentota was a sensitive cultural experience for tourists. In both places tourism development in Bentota proceeded in the presence of a plan aiming at star class tourism. Therefore formal sector tourism is more dominant in the area. Although both sea side resorts emerged in the same period of time, they proceeded in two different ways as planned and unplanned. While making a detailed analysis of issues of sustainable tourism development and problems relating to planning implementation in relation to the two sites, a comparative assessment is carried out to arrive at more appropriate planning strategies in relation to other similar coastal tourism sites in the region.

The data for the study were collected from primary sources as well as from secondary sources. Primary data collection was based on field investigations, personal interviews and questionnaire surveys. The two separate questionnaires were adapted to the survey: one questionnaire for foreign tourists, and a separate one for the other four stakeholders 1) hotels, guest houses, restaurants owners, shop owners, 2) tourist guides, 3) glass bottomed boat owners and 4) different organizations, were used for the survey. The interviewees were arbitrarily selected

and interviewed using a structured questionnaire. For each site there were 200 respondents for the first category 55 males and 45 females. For the second category 35 females and 65 males were selected. The diagram of trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable development was used as a tool to evaluate the sustainability of the tourism development in both sites.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Attractions and Tourism Development**

Past experience has shown that long hours of sunshine and warm seas are the basic ingredients for the successful development of a seaside resort. There are different kinds of factors that promote tourism in an area such as attractions (landforms, fauna and flora, historical heritage), transport, accommodation and supporting facilities. In the Hikkaduwa area existing and potential tourist attractions were the relatively wide beach, coral reef, water sports, eco-system, food and customs and shopping. The natural beauty of Hikkaduwa makes it an ideal place for nature lovers including coral for snorkellers, waves for surfers and white pristine beaches for those who want to relax and enjoy sun and sand. Scuba diving is a popular tourist leisure activity in the area. According to the survey, the tourists have been questioned about their individual attraction to the study area. 88% are attracted to the area because of the natural environment including corals and the related activities. Mainly, the quality of the beach is an aspect of the physical environment that cannot be ignored in a sea side resort.

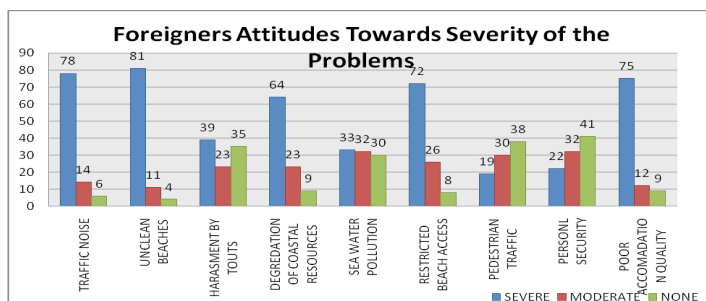
Hikkaduwa attracts both local and foreign tourists to the area, offering a wide range of accommodation and prices to suit every type of tourist, starting from a handful of top-end hotels to a large number of comfortable or laidback guesthouses for backpackers or low budget tourists. Low budget tourism (informal) is more popular in Hikkaduwa than graded tourism or star class tourism (formal). As the number of tourist arrivals increased dramatically during the 1970s the informal tourism sector grew. This situation provided more and more opportunities for common people to become involved in tourism, and led to it becoming the centre of the informal tourism industry.

Bentota's famous strand has long been a favourite of foreign tourists, many of whom become enthusiastic repeaters. The broad, sandy, gently shelving beach has calm, warm waters on two fronts- the sea where the swimming is generally safe and deep sea fishing and diving can be arranged, and the river where you may try water skiing, wind surfing or take a cooling, lazy boat ride up stream and through the mangroves. There are enough wide beaches in front of the hotels, and walkways within the mangroves enhance the natural quality of the sea beaches. Actually the riverbanks are densely clothed with the most beautiful tropical flora. The historic Galapatha Raja Maha Vihare (royal patronage temple) and the ancient forest hermitage the Wanawasa Temple provide the culture and history of Bentota. According to the survey 95% of the foreign respondents are attracted to the area

by the quality of the natural and built environment. Star class tourism or numerous top-end hotels are more common in the Bentota resort area. The formal sector is more prominent than the informal sector and all the facilities provided are very comfortable and grand.

### Issues of The Study Areas And the Sustainability Of Tourism.

Although the tourism industry succeeded until 1994, now it is in a situation of conflict owing to unplanned and uncontrolled development. The government recognized the potential of tourism development in Sri Lanka and continued with their attempts to promote tourism as a means of expanding economic activities. This outward looking policy will certainly attract more tourists to the country. But unfortunately the government was not prepared with a proper management plan to accommodate and cater for them. Owing to the government's lack of response, the community in the Hikkaduwa area eventually offered accommodation and catering facilities for them without guidance from the government or any other responsible body. So tourism development in Hikkaduwa proceeded in the absence of a plan. Today Hikkaduwa is the most striking example in Sri Lanka of the problems resulting from unplanned and uncontrolled tourism development (Nakatani et al, 1994). Figure 2 indicates the tourists' attitudes towards the issues and their severity.



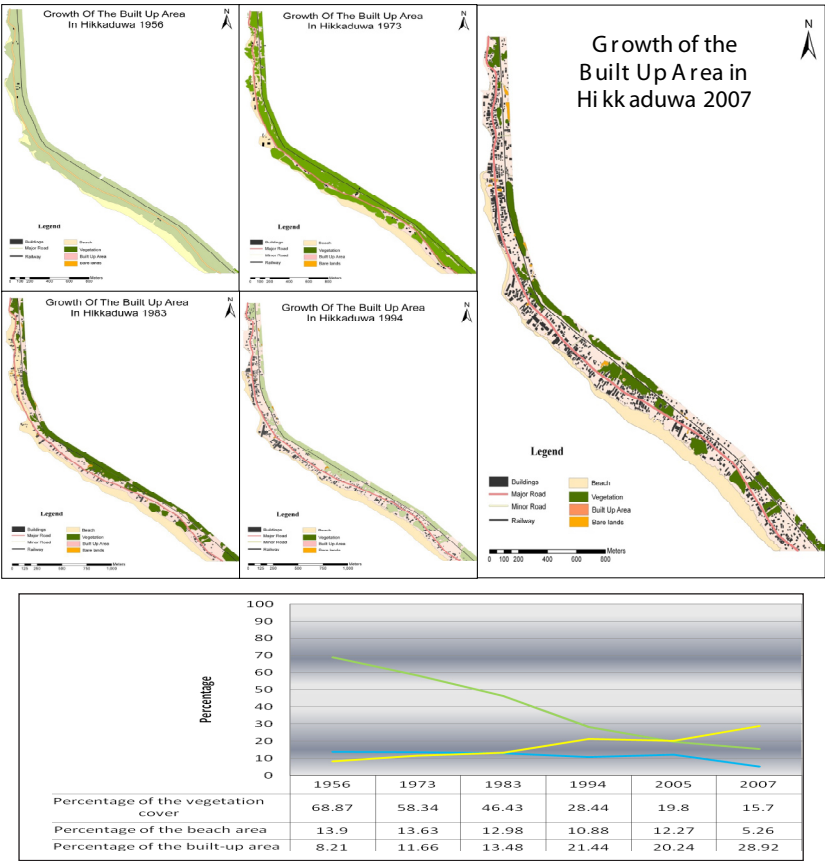
**Figure 2**

Foreign tourists' attitudes towards the severity of the problems

First the study identifies the issues which can affect the maximizing of tourist satisfaction. Most of the narrow strips of land between the A2 road and the beach have been used for hotel construction because of the ready access to the beach. As the tourist arrivals boomed, all the residential houses were converted to guest houses and eating places without considering building regulations. There are very many buildings along the Galle Road and the beach front, which have not followed building standards or architectural guidelines and which have been introduced by the specific authorities. These buildings appear as a wall along both sides of the road providing an unpleasant view for the visitors, blocking the view of the sea and preventing the free blowing of sea breezes. This has resulted in visual blight and in many cases blocking of the potentially attractive views of the coastline.

To enter the beach there are some narrow entrances in between the shops and hotels. Out of a total, 74% of them pointed out restricted beach access as a severe problem for the development of the tourism in the area. And 76% viewed the poor accommodation quality as a severe issue. In the short term, the local setting of the area satisfied the tourists, supplying a cheap tourist product for low prices. But today the quality of the accommodation and environment has badly affected the satisfaction of the tourists.

Traffic and congestion also reduce the satisfaction of the tourists. The narrow highway between Colombo and Matara goes through the tourism area. There has been little provision for pavement facilities, and no provisions for cycling, and owing to the ribbon development no parking facilities, bus bays or service lanes. There are no speed limit signs, drivers are careless, and no speed bumps or other methods of traffic control are in place. For these reasons roads are congested in the town area. Tourists have voiced negative feelings about traffic congestion and noise which disturbs the quiet environment and the peacefulness of the area.



**Figure 3**  
The decline of the vegetation cover and beach area from 1956 to 2007



Unplanned development associated with tourism has led to over exploitation and misuse of the resources. It has affected the maintaining of the ecological balance of the trio-fundamental requirements of the sustainable development. 64% of the tourists stated that degradation of the coastal environmental resources is a major issue in the area. Because of the rapid growth of the built up area the vegetation cover in the in the coast has deteriorated at an alarming rate. According the map analysis of figures 3 and 4 that built up area increased from 1956 to 2007 from 8% to 29% out of the total land area, and the percentage of the vegetation cover was reduced from 69% to 16% and also, the open beach area was reduced from 14% to 5%. Vegetation cover work is a natural barrier to control the extensive damage from a tsunami event as well as protecting the beach against beach erosion. Furthermore, the building construction close to the beach has resulted in extensive sea erosion leading the loss of the land and has clearly contributed to reducing the density of the beach.

Not only that, now only seven percent of the coral reef remains alive in Hikkaduwa. This is caused by a number of factors such as the use of glass bottom boats to view the corals. The over-loaded boats, swimmers, snorkellers and surfers damage the top of the corals in various ways. Increasing pressure without paying attention to the proper management of resources will only aggravate the existing problems and the result will be further degradation of natural environmental resources

Another serious problem that limits and retards the sustainable development of seaside resorts is that of pollution. According to the respondents 83% of them stated that pollution of the beach is severe in Hikkaduwa. There are tourism related business establishments set up, but there is no proper management system for the solid waste and sewerage disposal. To dispose of the solid waste they use the beach or sites adjacent to the sewerage plant or the mangrove land. It is unfortunate that the garbage collection system of the local authority is not efficient enough to keep the beach free from garbage. The appearance of the beach and the resort has no attraction as a peaceful resting place.

Sewerage disposal is a major problem now because the sewerage collection scheme along the A2 road which serves the main tourism area was severely damaged by the tsunami. Although most of the hotels have some sort of septic system, untreated or minimally treated water is directly discharged to the beach or the dune estuary, polluting the sea, and the beach. Maintenance of the ecological balance in Hikkaduwa is in jeopardy.

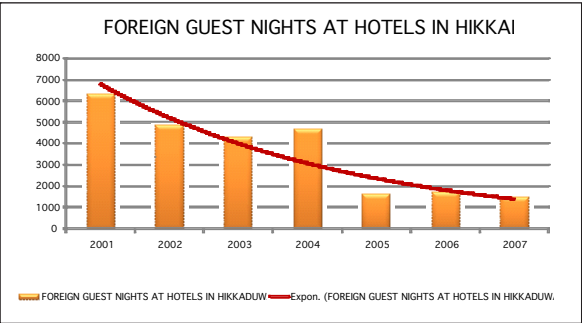
Originally the attractions of the natural environment pulled the tourists to Hikkaduwa but destruction of the natural environment and the poor quality of the accommodation and infrastructure push the tourists to surrounding holiday destinations, threatening the local economy of the area. Environmental protection as an integral component of economic development – economic development without environmental conservation is no longer acceptable

The final trio-fundamental requirement of the sustainable development is maintaining the well being of the local community. It can be achieved by giving



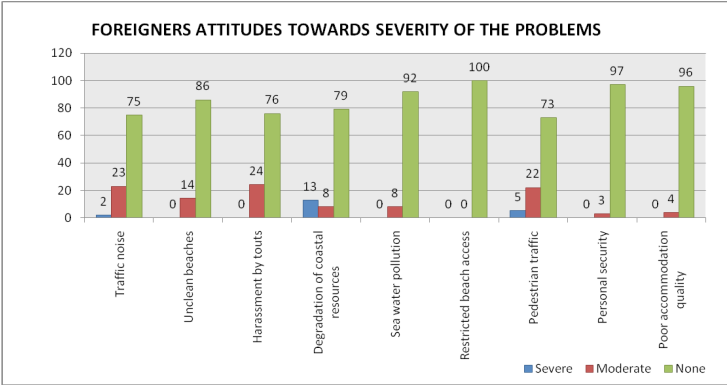
a high priority to the community interest. In Hikkaduwa, community interest and the involvement of the tourism industry was at the top level. The informal sector is popular in Hikkaduwa due to the government's lack of planning and Hikkaduwa is the centre of the informal tourism industry. However, these informal establishments play a major role by contributing a large share to the local economic sector. According to the literature survey nearly 60 % of the employers work in the formal sector and only 40% of employers in the informal sector, but when we consider the economic contribution to the local economy, the informal sector contribution is larger than the formal sector contribution, because the employers in the formal sector come from outside the area, but the informal sector absorbs locals. Ideally the small-scale nature and the community based tourism development may provide many opportunities for the local community to generate an income. It provides more than 3500 jobs and the indirect benefits add more than Rs.900 million to the local community. The problem is that the process of this kind of *ad-hoc* tourism development may create irreversible damage to the natural environment and the cultural heritage of the destination. It also creates social problems such as young teenagers being lured into various types of vice for financial rewards. The introduction of drugs, prostitution and other activities are also evident in the area. All these issues badly affect tourism satisfaction, threatening the whole tourism industry. Therefore, the maximizing of the well-being of the local community which is one of the trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable development is far beyond its paradigm.

In Hikkaduwa there are severe issues which disrupt the maintaining of ecological balance, and reduce the tourist satisfaction because without maintaining the quality of the environment and quality of the built fabric tourists fail to be attracted to the area. The decline of tourist arrivals reduces the down flow of benefits to the society. On the other hand short-term remedies which have served to facilitate the increasing tourist arrivals have created *ad-hoc* development and irreversible damage to the environment and to the culture. Tourist arrivals are continually declining threatening the sustainability. Figure 5 shows the decline in tourist arrivals using foreign guest nights of two star class hotels and informal guest houses. So three of the trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable development have failed to achieve sustainable tourism development in Hikkaduwa.

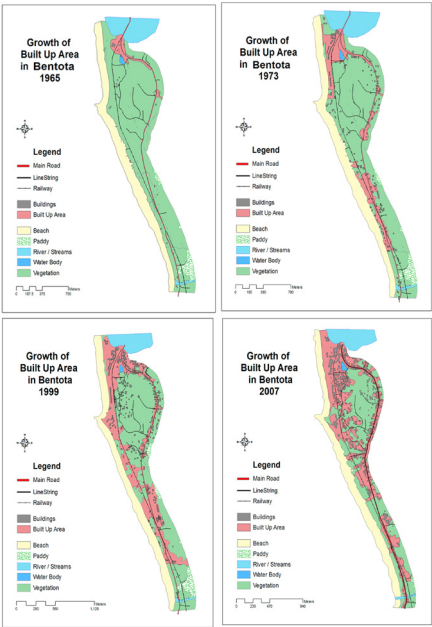


**Figure 5**  
Foreign guest nights for selected 4 hotels

When Bentota’s potential for tourism was first recognised in the 1970s, a National Tourist Resort was created there, using the beach frontage land for a structured 100-acre complex. So from the beginning Bentota was a well planned tourist resort in Sri Lanka. Hotels have sprung up on the shore, mostly built under Bawa’s influence, the solidity of its buildings helps to create Bentota’s aura of respectability. The rail road and the sea are well defined factors in the physical form of this land. Because the resort area has been separated from inland by the main road, it provides a well defined and very convenient and calm situation in the tourist resort area, without any disturbances from the outside. There are enough wide beaches in front of the hotels and walkways within the mangroves enhance the quality of the sea beaches. Figure 6 explains foreign respondents’ attitudes to the issues of the area and the severity of these issues. Maintaining the ecological balance is well practised in the area. Out of the total respondents, 79% said that the degradation of the coastal resources is not an issue in the area. 86% stated there were no unclean beaches, and 97% indicated no sea water pollution. The resort supplies plenty of white pristine beaches for sun and sand for fun seekers. The pure unspoiled environment including the beach, river, the estuary with mangroves, and Dedduwa Island, maximise the satisfaction of the tourists. According to the maps in figure 6, although there was some decline in the vegetation cover from 1965 to 2007, it has not been cleared only to establish the tourist resort, but also for the development of the Beruwala residential area and the small commercial area. 90% of the tourists indicated that they are totally satisfied with the area in terms of the quality of the environment and the services which are provided by the hotel sector.



**Figure 5**  
Foreigners' attitudes to the issues and their severity



**Figure 6**  
Growth of the built up area and decline of the vegetation cover

Although there are some problems in the Bentota residential area, such as traffic congestion, drainage, garbage disposal, no parking plots, etc., these problems do not affect the tourist resort because the resort and the residential area are separated from the Galle Road.

This separation is an obstacle in terms of the well-being of the local community. Involvement of the local community in the tourism industry is minimal in Bentota.

With government interference the National Tourist Resort was established there in the 1970s, taking the beach frontage land for a structured 100-acre complex. With the help of large investments from outsiders the formal sector sprang up in the area. Bentota is famous for package tourism inclusive of all facilities such as banking, internet facilities, tour guides, health facilities, sports, and even an Ayurvedic Spa. So there was not much room to develop an informal sector as the means of providing supporting facilities for the tourists. Although some guest houses, restaurants, bars, batik shops, souvenir shops and jewellery shops etc. are located outside the hotel, the resort prevents tourists from patronising them by providing for their each and every need. The local community is ready to supply boat trips for foreigners, but they are allowed to hire only the hotel owned boats. The local community earn a few coins by selling fish, vegetables and fruits to the hotel owners. According to the survey, community involvement in the tourist industry is only around 30%. From the hotel owners' point of view there is unavailability of skilled labour in the village and because of the problems of reliability they don't like to employ them. To be sustainable, the benefits of the tourism industry should filter down to the local community to diversify the local economy, improve their living standards and quality of life. Tourism has not stimulated improvements to local transportation, communications, and other basic community infrastructure, because it is not integrated into local economic development and the tourism industry has developed as a separate system within the area.

In general, compared to Hikkaduwa, Bentota tourism development has proceeded according to a plan, so a steady tourism industry can be seen. According to the survey the room occupancy rate of the Bentota Beach Hotel is 100% during the New Year Season. Tourists are well satisfied with the quality of the natural and built environment, culture and services. Maintaining the ecological balance is practised to a satisfactory level. But the tourism industry is not contributing sufficient economic and social benefits to the society. For too long, tourism developers and planners have focused on the needs of the tourist, ignoring the rights and needs of the native (Hundt, A). Therefore the tourism industry in Bentota is not sustainable in terms of the maximization of the well-being of the local community. The tourism industry in Hikkaduwa from the beginning has proceeded in the absence of a plan. Unplanned development In Hikkaduwa has impaired environmental quality, destroyed the cultural identity and decreased economic benefits. So all the three fundamental requirements of sustainable development have failed to be met in Hikkaduwa.

Both tourist destinations failed to achieve sustainable tourism development from different perspectives. Both societies have become progressively aware of the problems of sustainability. Increasingly, sustainability concerns should be addressed in national, regional and local tourism policies, strategies and plans. Although there were several attempts to implement different kind of planning solutions, the problems are until now, unchanged. Therefore it is necessary to discover the planning attempts and the issues of planning implementation.

## Issues of The Planning Implementations

Considering the unplanned development of the Hikkaduwa area and its unique features different plans have been prepared by various agencies such as:

- Tourism Master Plan for Hikkaduwa 1963 National Tourism Master Plan 1993
- Future for Ruhuna 1995
- Special Area Management Plan for Hikkaduwa 1996
- Jica Plan 1997
- Ruhuna Development Strategy 1998
- Southwest Coast Tourism And Community Infrastructure Strategy
- Coast Conservation Act 1980
- The UDA Plans 1982 and 1998
- National Physical Plan

PLANNING AREA	PROPOSALS
Road & Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RDA is in the process of widening the A2 road south of Hikkaduwa.</li> <li>• Under the Southern Provincial Road Improvement Project, road improvement is taking place over 2.2km of the Thiranagama Pinkanda Road.</li> <li>• Improvements to Hikkaduwa land drainage. The canal between Hikkaduwa River and the sea will be upgraded.</li> <li>• The Hikkaduwa- Baddegama Road has been identified to serve as an access Road from Hikkaduwa to the Southern Highway.</li> </ul>
Water Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NWSDB has launched an expansion programme to increase the Baddegama plant capacity to 18000cu.m/day. A duplication of transmission lines is also under construction within this programme.</li> <li>• The Greater Galle project will be implemented, to increase the water supply to Hikkaduwa.</li> </ul>
Electricity Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At Ambalangoda, it is proposed to install a 132 kv grid sub-station.</li> <li>• Two sub stations are planned for installation at Ambalangoda and Hikkaduwa by LECO.</li> </ul>
Sewage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Waste Disposal Study was carried out by Devenco Ltd, in 1993-1994.</li> <li>• The Hikkaduwa Coastal Zone Waste Management Project started in 1999 with the aim of providing sewage and solid waste facilities</li> <li>• Hikkaduwa.</li> </ul>
Solid Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .However, the HCZWMP will cover all aspects of solid waste management.</li> </ul>
Coastal Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the severity of coastal issues and the significance of biodiversity in Hikkaduwa, the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) was prepared in 1996 and approved for implementation.</li> <li>• The 1986 Master Plan for Coastal Erosion Management has recommended a number of small scale costal protection measures in this stretch but they have not been implemented.</li> </ul>

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The SAMP was prepared in 1996 with the support of the CCD, National Aquatic Resources Agency (NARA) and USAID. The plan aims at guiding the protection and management of the coastal resources of Hikkaduwa with the coordinated efforts of various stakeholders. The plan focused in particular on the local community, tourism and fishing industries. The SAMP lists various actions and responsible bodies under the following categories.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Sanctuary management</li><li>➤ Management of water quality and waste disposal</li><li>➤ Shoreline development, infrastructure and environmental improvements</li><li>➤ Tourism development and livelihood opportunities</li></ul></li><li>• Implementation of the SAMP has been slow due to lack of initiative and leadership. No agency or organization is assigned responsibility.</li></ul>
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**Table 1**  
Planning review of Hikkaduwa

All the issues are addressed by different kind of plans and solutions also were proposed with most of them implemented. But Hikkaduwa is still suffering from *ad-hoc* development and its related socio-economic, environmental problems. Therefore it is better to understand problems of planning implementation.

The need for integrated management to conserve and develop a sustainable use of the natural and built environment has long been identified, and accordingly a comprehensive Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) was prepared by the coast conservation department in 1990. CZMP has been revised many times i.e. 1993, 2003 etc as has the Special Area Management Plan for Hikkaduwa in 1996. However either the implementation of these plans has not been undertaken in an effective manner, or the plans to date remain dormant resulting in unchanged existing *ad-hoc* development. Overlapping/ conflicting coastal resource management responsibilities of government agencies also led to unplanned development in the area remaining an issue without any action taken. It has been found to be difficult sometimes to reconcile different local, regional and national level organizations in an attempt to design and implement suitable management policies and plans.

Proper guidelines for set backs were not available. With the safety of the residents of the affected areas uppermost in mind, the coastal zone has been zoned into many parts; 100m to 300m from the high waterline. The first hundred metres are extremely vulnerable and restricted for building construction, in the next 200m zone construction is permitted on a restricted level. The central environment authority and the forest department had taken the leader in planning the 100m set back in the coastal zone, but they also could not implement it. This was because almost 80 percent of the tourism related economic activities were concentrated within the 300m and 60% of the highly tourism related buildings were established within the 100m zone. The local community protested against the decision of the set back, because the majority of the people totally depend on the coastal resources and they have to find alternative income sources according

to the relocation programme. To avoid the construction of permanent buildings in the restricted coastal zone, the Coast Conservation Department introduced a permit system, but unfortunately it is not very strictly implemented, to control the unnecessary and ill-designed building construction in the area.

Lack of suitable land for construction of hotels and other tourism related businesses is a problem of planning. The Colombo Matara A2 road and the Southern Rail Way track are physical barriers for expansion of the area landwards. From the local communities' point of view the coastal resource based economic activities, such as tourism and fishery need a land area immediately adjacent to the sea for their economic activities. Therefore people do not like a relocation plan.

While Hikkaduwa seeks proper planning and management to rebuild the already lost tourism in the area, post tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction provided a window of opportunity for a fresh approach to reshape and rebuild the Hikkaduwa in order to achieve sustainable tourism development. The enormity of the tragedy has awakened us all to the potential vulnerability of the coastal belt to the same event in the future. It was essential to learn from other destinations which maintain sustainable tourism practices how to develop a tourism product and to promote tourism in a sustainable manner. It would have strong resistance to natural disasters, be environmentally friendly, have more community involvement, and provide revenue from the tourism for the local economy. It is high time to look back at the coast line, understand what has gone wrong and rectify mistakes before taking a forward step, as it is almost always never too late to say sorry and rectify. But unfortunately there is no chance for a sustainable tourism development. This opportunity failed because the Sri Lankan government failed to take decisions within a short period of time. There should have been a resurgence of effort for greater collaboration, not only among the government institutions but also with the other stakeholder parties. But unfortunately it was very hard to get collaboration and proper coordination among the institutions. And also the local community in the area could not wait for a long time to resettle. They have proceeded in the absence of a plan as previously. Proper guidelines for set backs were not available and the government decision over the set back also could not be implemented. Instead of shifting from a vulnerable area to a safer place, after the tsunami the number of buildings increased from nearly 200 exposing them to a greater economic loss in the next tsunami event.

So now it is obvious that further pressure, if attention is not paid to the proper management of resources, will aggravate the existing problems and as a result of that Hikkaduwa will be a tragedy in the future. The tourism industry in Bentota developed according to a tourism development plan in early 1970s. There was not much planning in Bentota except the draft development plan which has not been implemented yet. The issues have been recognised and the planning guidelines for road and drainage, water supply, electricity supply, sewage, solid waste, coastal protection and the environment have been set up. But the drafted plan only addresses the requirements of the local area not specifically the tourism industry or its lack of requirements. The problem of the Bentota is a lack of local

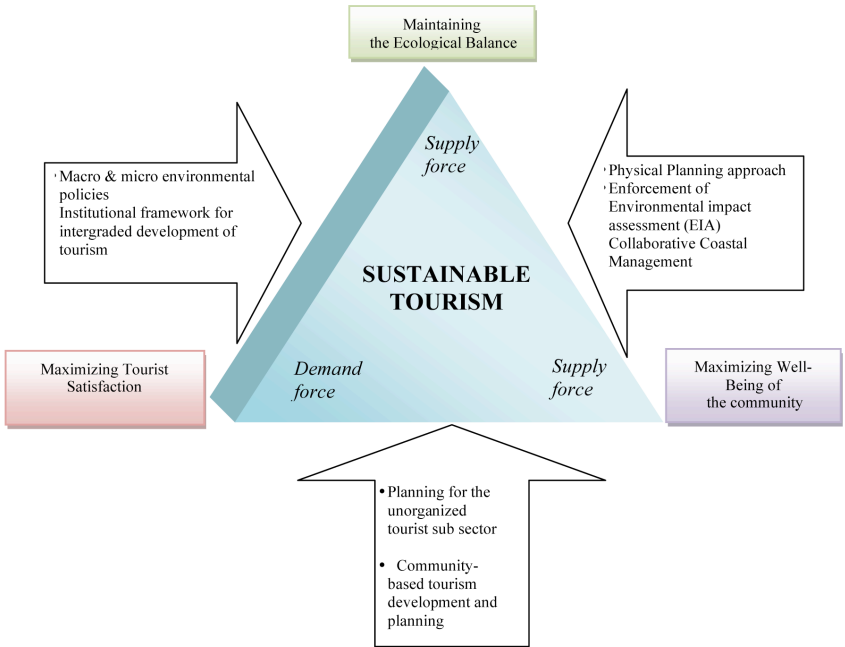


involvement for the tourism industry. But the proposed development plan did not address this issue to get the maximum benefits for the local community. Planning for this type of resort requires more than using catchy phrases such as “achieving the maximum involvement of local people.” It must be planned in conjunction with the native people and natives should be the main beneficiaries of any tourism revenue (Papapavlou., S. 2008) . Public participation – which means that all share a role to play and that communities need to collectively make decisions rather than having them imposed by external forces.

The lessons learned from the two case studies lead us to think about the appropriate strategy for the development of tourism which takes into consideration the specific nature of the problems that different sites are faced with, as mentioned below.

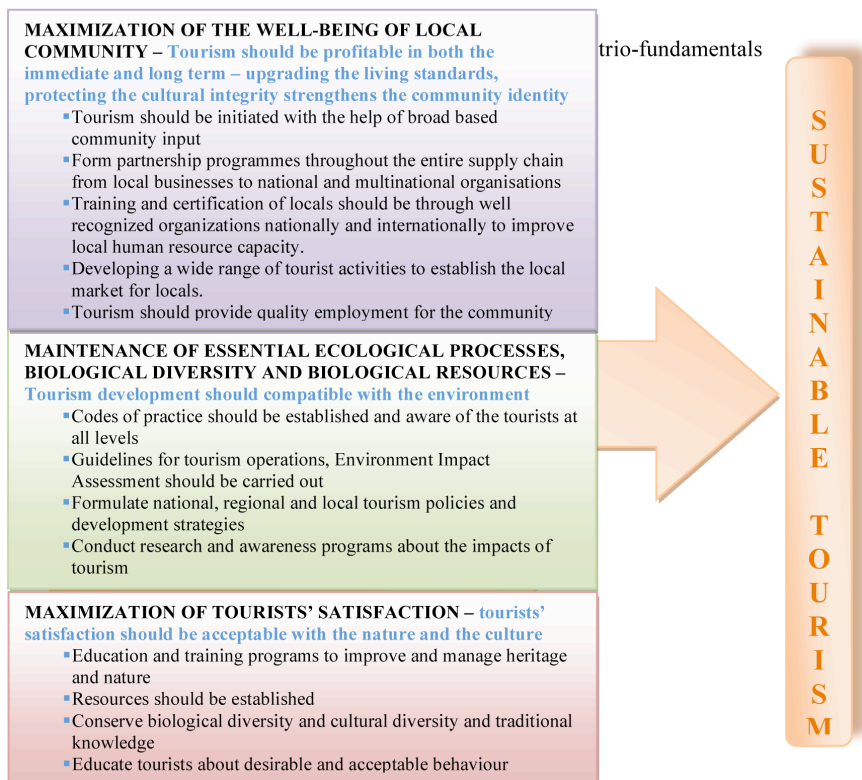
- A lack of a strong national sustainable tourism development framework under which tourism can fit even Bentota or Hikkaduwa
- A weak institutional framework with inadequate control mechanisms
- A failure to plan comprehensively for large numbers of tourists to resort areas in relation to natural resources, infrastructure and human resources

To achieve sustainable tourism development trio-fundamental requirements with proper planning guidelines and policies are necessary.



**Figure 7**  
Developed diagram for sustainable tourism

Three fundamental requirements of sustainable tourism development should be achieved by using the following planning guidelines and policies to achieve the trio-fundamental requirements of sustainable development as shown in figures 7 and 8.



**Figure 8**

Planning Guidelines for sustainable tourism based on trio-fundamentals

The Hikkaduwa tourism industry needs to take into account all the above guidance when planning, managing and developing tourism in order to achieve a more sustainable equity oriented tourism industry. But in Bentota more attention should be given to maximising of well being of the local community, but also, considering the future impacts on the natural environment with the rapid increase of tourist arrivals, the guidelines to maintaining ecological balance also should be considered. Then socio-economic benefits of the tourism industry can spread through society and the natural and cultural environments. Apart from this guidance the involvement and support of the local government authorities in sustainable tourism development are especially crucial because they have immediate responsibility for implementing policies and plans, enforcing regulations and monitoring development.

## CONCLUSION

Hikkaduwa and Bentota are two different examples of unsustainable tourism development. Hikkaduwa was unplanned and unstable and unsustainable, but Bentota was systematically planned and very stable but unsustainable. Different kinds of planning have been implemented for both destinations. But the implementation of most of the recommended actions was not satisfactorily undertaken. And also issues are not ideologically addressed by plans. Planning as well as implementation should be institutionalized at the local authority level to get maximum benefits from a plan. In the context of tourism, sustainable development involves management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs are fulfilled while maintaining the cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. The trend in tourism development has been to use comprehensive, flexible, community driven, sustainable and systematic planning approaches based on trio- fundamental requirements.

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