

**EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABILITY OF A TOURISM
DESTINATION: CASE OF PIGEON ISLAND IN
TRINCOMALEE**

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Master of Spatial Planning, Management & Design (2014/2016)

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University of Moratuwa

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Spatial Planning, Management & Design degree

Department of Town & Country Planning

University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka

May 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement of any materials previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify herewith that D. M. T. Dillhara Dissanayake (Index No: 148701C) of the 2014/2016 group has prepared this research study under my supervision.

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Signature of the Principle Supervisor
Date..... /..... /.....

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Head of the Department
Town & Country Planning
Date..... /..... /.....

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry is a fast-growing industry in the world and in Sri Lanka. To meet the growing demand, a large number of destinations are being exposed and developed rapidly without proper planning and management harming the natural environment and excluding local communities and local content – the very foundation and uniqueness of the Sri Lankan travel experience. Hikkaduwa tourism destination, where 75 % of live corals have been destroyed due to overcrowded tourists visits and unplanned activities and also Pigeon Island Marine National Park (PIMNP) at Trincomalee which indicate same threats to the live corals are major examples of damages to environment and host communities due to disregard of sustainability aspects in planning and management of tourism activities in Sri Lanka.

Although Sustainable tourism is a huge concern, its practical applicability has limitations due to lack of a method to evaluate the implications of sustainable principles. This study attempts to develop a framework of indicators to evaluate sustainability in a tourism destination based on three pillars of sustainable tourism; economic, environment and socio-cultural which were selected as the mandates of the framework. Components of three base pillars in terms of tourism presented by WTO in 2004 were selected as the expressions of each mandate. The indicators of each expression were initially developed based on existing indicators of sustainable tourism and further narrowed down as appropriate for Sri Lankan context. Then the proposed framework was applied to PIMNP at Trincomalee. The data was collected through past records, field surveys, perception surveys, analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods and presented using a descriptive method. After quantifying all indicators based on a scaling method and weighted sum method was used to derive overall and thematic sustainability levels. The results indicated; overall sustainability level of PIMNP as 42% composing of 47% of economic, 35% of environmental and 44% of socio-cultural thematic sustainability levels. PIMNP has relatively high economic sustainability and lower environment sustainability. Since PIMNP is a tourist attraction based on natural asset, the environment sustainability plays a major role in making the overall venture a sustainable tourism venture.

Key words – Sustainability, sustainable tourism principles, framework of indicators

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

| |
|---|
| World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) |
| Pigeon Island Marine National Park (PIMNP) |
| International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI) |
| World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) |
| The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) |
| Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) |
| Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage (PEO) |
| The National Environmental Act (NEA) |
| Return of Investment (ROI) |
| Pigeon Island Marine National Park Conservation Project (PIMNPCP) |
| Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act (FARA) |
| Department of Wild Life Conservation (DWLC) |
| Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations (ISDTD) |