Community Based Sustainable Tourism Development in Sri Lanka: Special Reference to Moneragala District

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ABSTRACT

The article is mainly based on a field survey conducted by authors to explore the potentials for Community Based Sustainable Tourism (CBST) Promotion in Monaragala District, Sri Lanka. This district is considered as the poorest district in Sri Lanka although it has abundant untapped resources to develop a number of key economic activities including tourism to accelerate the economic growth and development. Unfortunately tourism industry in the district is still at its infancy, while the huge resource base suitable for the purpose has been left unused. Ironically, one of the most popular domestic tourist destinations in Sri Lanka, Kataragama is located in this district itself, although its impact is confined to a tiny pocket of the district bordering to Hambantota District. That is not all; some popular tourist districts in the island such as Baticaloa, Nuwara Eliya, and Badulla are located along the border or in close proximity to the district. A large number of tourists, foreign and local, travel through the district to reach such popular destinations making little or nor tangible contribution to the district. They seem really unimpressed with what the district could offer for them. Overwhelming majority of them even does not hang around for a while in the district and to spend some money to buy local products and services. Similarly ancient sites and scenes of the district which are closely related to the island’s history and Buddhist culture do not get their fair shares. This article examine the tourism potentials as well as the propose strategies to promote the industry in the district with the community participation in sustainable manner.
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1. Introduction

Although tourism has become one of the major stimulators for economic growth and development in many countries, its benefits are being increasingly questioned, especially by the end of 1980’s due its unsustainable components and their growing trends. It is pointed out that the unchecked and unbridled mass tourism development has been responsible not only for environmental and socio-cultural degradation but also to less value added contribution to the developing countries. It is alleged that even the limited economic gains have not been equally distributed among the different social groups in those countries. The quite disturbing fact is that the contacts between mass tourists and the local community are insignificant. Even the rare contacts have been established not because of economic facts but because of the sharing of the same facilities such as the beach, park, roads and other common facilities. The well being of the local community has been shamefully ignored though the considerable amount of the cost of providing such facilities were borne by the local communities, either directly or indirectly.

Sri Lanka’s tourism development experience suggests that it has been very much on the promotion of mass tourism development. It is suggested that various types of government stimulation for foreign and local large-scale investment, huge rebates given to tourists and the promotion of low quality cheap holiday packages reduce not only earning capacity of the industry but also create high import leakages. The situation is likely to be serious when the community participation in tourism and the well being of the community under tourism development are taken into account. For many instances, if not all, the community well being has significantly been ignored and their participation with the industry is quite low in Sri Lanka. That is not all, even the locals are employed; low wages, temporary employment, lack of job-security, long working hours, and unpaid overtime not only cultivate the frustration and antagonistic attitudes among community members on present tourism practices but also develop high polarization between hosts-guests under such circumstances.

It is reasonable to think that the tourism is neither a savage wild beast nor an innocent familial pet. It can deliver both positive and negative results like many other forms of economic activities. It may generate problems, such as social dislocation, loss of cultural heritage, social unrest, spread of virus and diseases, economic dependency and ecological degradation. However, insemination of the knowledge and awareness about the adverse impacts of the tourism and related activities have led many tourists and hosts to be more responsible travels and tours and to take prudent initiatives to arrest bad effects to a great extent. These include various forms of sustainable tourism such as: ‘nature-based tourism’, ‘ecotourism’ ‘responsible tourism’ and ‘cultural tourism’. In the long run sustainable aspects are taken into consideration, and has become the center of gravity in the industry. It is proposed that slight motivation is required in all travels and tourisms such as pilgrimages, educational trips, holiday packages, business and official travels, conference and
seminars, adventure travels to maintain the sustainability. The maximization of tourist satisfaction, maintaining of the ecological balance, and well-being of the community members are considered as the trio fundamental requirements to achieve sustainable tourism development. Sustainability is on the balance, if community’s well-being is overlooked and benefits are siphoned by a few alien interested individuals.

Sri Lanka has a huge amount of tourism resources to become one of the popular tourism destinations. The blue coastal water and very attractive sandy, palm-fringed beaches, bio-diversity, fascinating landscapes, well-preserved ruins, olden cities dating from the fifth century BC are some of the major attractions. However, the country has promoted mass tourism paying little or no attention to its environmental impact and benefits trickling down to the bottom of the society.

This report intends to explore the potentials and possibilities to promote CBST in Monaragala district and its surroundings. The study will focus on the capacity of the communities, natural and man made resources, institutions, merits/demerits of the destination sites in the district, administrative and policy environment, and infrastructure facilities etc to a successful launch of CBST. It will finely formulate strategic plans, prudent policy initiatives, entrepreneurial and community awareness programs that would be extremely helpful to address the possible challenges and to exploit the warranted potentials of tourism within the district in a sustainable manner.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine potentials of the rural economy to promote the community-based sustainable tourism to improve the well-being of the rural community. The specific objective of this study is to evaluate the tourism potentials in Monaragala district and to find out suitable strategies that may promote CBSTD satisfying the community’s needs, expectations and its well-being through their active and productive participation and also by ensuring the ecological balance and tourist satisfaction. As complementary to these objectives, the viable tourism themes, tactical areas, practical programs, workable projects, and strategic policies will also be examined and evaluated.

The demand driven tourism development is beyond reach in the district under the prevailing situation. A carefully nursed and nurtured supply driven strategy would do the justice to fill the vacuum. Therefore, the objective will also be expanded to identify strategic tourism promotional activities in a few carefully selected sites and their peripheral locations for a kick off start of CBSTD to the district to achieve long term sustainable takeover of the industry. The improvement of the well-being of communities who dwell close to those sites is expected to achieve by the way of generating new employment opportunities, creating markets for their products and services, and developing infrastructure facilities etc. Environmental and cultural ill effects of such a rapid development are expected to minimize through the awareness programs for communities and other relevant parties.
1.2. Methodology

Obviously this is a multidisciplinary exercise since the study has to address various types of theoretical as well as practical issues. The impact of the tourism and related activities essentially spread over the wide spectrum of geopolitical, socioeconomic web of any country. No isolated single discipline would do the justice to identify the cumulative impact of the industry. Our study on CBSTD in Monaragala District is to carry out in two phases to accommodate the complicated requirements of the industry.

In the first phase, literature and field surveys were carried out. In the first part of this phase, the existing literature of the focused area was surveyed and analyzed before embarking upon the field survey. Administrative reports, research reports, articles, books, magazines, and news reports etc. were taken into consideration in this endeavour. This exercise is of extremely useful to formulate / reformulate of the research techniques and conduct the preliminary surveys in the field.

In the second part of the first stage field survey was carried out with the help of research assistants. They are trained and supervised by the researchers for the purpose. Alternative strategies such as telephone conversations and postal questionnaire methods were employed when interviewees are not available for face-to-face interviews.

In addition to this, consulting of specialists, especially those who are settled in the district or interested on the district affairs, informal discussions with knowledgeable individuals, community leaders, public officials, tour operators, hotel and restaurant owners/keepers, are of useful to get insight information about the district. Observation visits of researchers too were helpful to identify the potential localities/sites in the district.

In the second phase of the study, a strategic plan is designed to promote the community-based sustainable tourism in the focused area. It examines the major strategies to be formulated/implemented, parties and individual to be consulted and involved, resource bases to be taped, sites/localities to be promoted. The study pays a special attention to promote the local products and services such as dry grain, vegetable and fruits, bee honey, handicrafts, local cuisine, traditional music and dance along with the tourism industry on a sustainable manner to improve the living standards of the community.

Appropriate policies and regulations to promote rural enterprises, lodging and restaurants, amusement park etc. on sustainable manner are also discussed. An identified few specific projects are proposed to launch the CBSTD in the district. Community awareness programs, workshops, lectures, activities are proposed to enhance community participation and their capacity building.
2. Conceptual Overview

Etymologically, the word ‘tour’ in English is derived from Latin. In Greek ‘tornos’ conveys the meaning ‘circle’. The general meaning of these two words is the movement around a central points or axis. In French “traveli”, the English equivalent of travel means hardship. This may reflect the early period of history when travel is not easy as today. In a historical perspective, tourism started to develop when the conditions of both supply and demand were met by economic development from industrial revolutions. By the 1970s, mass recreational tourism and its large-scale packaging of little differentiated or homogeneous holiday services could dominate the global tourism. This trend in the industry came to know as mass tourism development. An immense competitiveness arose among the suppliers of these services mainly due to the homogeneity of their holiday services. In addition, mass tourism has generated considerable unsustainable components in tourism development.

A number of alternative tourism development strategies came up, as a result of problems created by the mass tourism. A plethora of terms such as adventure tourism, ecotourism, responsible tourism, culture tourism, community tourism, nature tourism, soft tourism, MICE tourism and green tourism came up to practice. Different subject disciplines or perspectives offered by scholars have influenced these different terms.

Tourism industry is an important alternative to diversify and develop poverty ridden regional economies in developing countries. Remote hinterlands of many developing countries have unique attraction for tourists due to their unspoiled culture, fauna and flora, landscapes, historical monuments, wholesome rural products and clam and quite life style. This industry offers labor-intensive and small-scale production opportunities for rural communities along with their agricultural and related activities. The tourism industry generates job opportunities for village community while giving higher priority and values for hither to marginalized resources and skills. This will bring higher living standards for the local community by forcing them to nurse and nature the very sources of their income, especially the environment they live and the culture and values they have fostered for generations.

The CBST is a mutually beneficial visitor-host interaction which facilitate for win-win cooperation among all stakeholders to maximize collective as well as individual benefits on a sustainable manner. This is further enhanced by the tourism and related activities owned and managed by one or more defined communities, or community-private partnerships as a vehicle of utilizing the delicate resources such natural endowments, historical and cultural heritages on a prudent manner in order to improve community’s well-being while ensuring the tourist’s satisfaction. It is pointed out that alternative tourism development approaches, contrary to the profit centered...
mass tourism, have succeeded to minimize the ill effects of the industry to a great extent while maximizing the visitor-host requirements.

The CBST is considered as the best alternative tourism promotion approach, especially for developing countries, which carries, among others, the following characteristics.

- Undeniable role for the community on cost-benefits sharing principle.
- Community consultation in tourism related legislations and planning.
- Projects implemented with the consent and active participation of the community.
- Community initiated, owned, and managed projects.
- Community and private/public partnerships.
- Economically viable and ecologically sound projects.
- Fair distribution of costs and benefits among involved parties.
- Institutional consolidation and well-developed institutional environment.
- Accountability and transparency of all activities.

In a nutshell, the community-based sustainable tourism development supposed to deliver benefits to the community while they are encouraged to develop tourism enterprises. Incentives will be created to enable community to get benefits from tourism and conserve wildlife and natural resources. Community members’ skills and capacity will be utilized in tourism development while enhancing them in order to improve their income levels and well-being. Community members’ ethic, norms and social values are protected. Arts, music, traditional dance, folklore and other socio-cultural heritages are promoted for tourism development while preserving and enhancing them. Tourism development will work hand-in-hand with conservation of the environment and socio-cultural heritage. This undeniable interrelationship is summarized in Figure 1.
In case of Sri Lanka, the rapid development of mass tourism has ignored the community and its well-being. As a result, the interaction between mass tourists and the local community is insignificant. Even the prevailing trivial contacts are mostly limited to the sharing of same facilities such as the beach, parks, streets and lanes and perhaps the local market. In particular, economic interactions between the tourist and the local community are very limited. The tourist very rarely goes to the local community to purchase goods and services. Similarly the local community is alienated from the hotels and other facilities developed for the tourist. It is a well-known fact that there are plenty of untapped tourism resources in rural Sri Lanka to
develop as popular tourist on CBST approach to improve the living standards of the poor.

2.1. Rationale for CBSTD in Monaragala

The overwhelming majority of the people live in the rural areas of the district. They engage in agricultural or related activities such as paddy, vegetable, fruits and dry grain cultivation, dairy/poultry farming and cottage industries as main sources of livelihoods. Some people have involved with sugar cane cultivation and sugar production since recently. The percentage of population who engaged in industries such as working in sugar factories, rice mills, bakeries, garment factories, and fruit processing factories are very low compared to the huge agricultural sector. The limited service sector jobs, mostly in the public sector, are mainly dominated by the migrant people from other districts with higher education levels. The rubber cultivation in the district, though it represents a small fraction of the total cultivated lands, provides job opportunities mainly for the migrant Tamil communities. Small holding cultivation is the main source of income for many households in which not only men and women but also children get involved in farming and related activities. It is estimated that agriculture is the main source of employment for about 75 per cent of the employed in the district. There are extremely limited opportunities for non farm income generation activities in the district.

Agriculture, the pulsing heart of the district, is curtailed by infinite number of natural and man made restrictions and barriers. Above all unavailability of sufficient water imposes the greatest challenge for the agricultural development in the district. As the rainfall is not sufficient for agriculture, people have to depend on irrigation facilities although such facilities are extremely limited. The Senanyaka Samudra, one of Sri Lanka’s largest irrigation projects, is situated in between Monaragala and Ampara districts while Mutukandiya another large irrigation project located in Monaragala District. In addition to that, the district is home to a number of small and medium size ancient and recently built irrigation systems for small holding agriculture, mainly for the rice cultivation. Still the lack of water checks the progress of agriculture and related economic activities in the district to great the extent.
Farmers without irrigation lands for cultivation are depending on rainwater. During the monsoon seasons farmers cultivate rice, vegetable and dry grain while some find seasonal jobs in such farm lands. For many occasions farmers neither produce bountiful harvest nor rewarded with a substantial income out of the cultivation due to a number of problems such as extremely poor marketing network. However, their fluctuating and meager income is supplemented by the government's subsidy schemes such as Samurdhi, free health, and free education programs. As a rule people living in Monaragala have to depend on the mercy of vagrant climatic conditions as well as ruthless marketing arrangements. Failure of seasonal rains as well as unwelcome off-seasonal rains brings misery, wretchedness, and melancholy to the farming communities. Even the better weather conditions do not necessarily guarantee the comfortable living environment due to host of other problems engulfed in the rural sector. It is maintained that the poverty is overwhelmingly a rural problem in Sri Lanka, especially district as Monara-gala where domestic agriculture dominates in the rural economy.

It is estimated that Monaragala is the poorest district in Sri Lanka where poverty headcount ratio is estimated be as 37% contrast to the national average of 22.7%. When the district is ranked in terms of Human Poverty Index (HPI), it shares the last place with Nuwara Eliya District. This remorseful situation is further aggravated by the weaker socioeconomic overhead facilities. For example; Colombo District has the best ratio of hospital beds and medical officers to population whereas a medical officer in Monaragala serves over 10639 population compared to Colombo’s 1016
population. Similarly such dry zone districts as Monaragala, Badulla and Hambantota have reported poverty and associated agrarian crisis throughout the post-independent period, warning us against a simplistic and biased analysis of dry zone socio-economic problems. Sustainable tourism development not only provides environment protection but also improvement of the well-being of the community members in the district. If CBST is correctly introduced and property managed, it will

- Provide manifold opportunities to improve the community’s income
- Creates environment where rural communities have their own sources of income rather than depending on government handouts.
- Become a reliable complementary income source to volatile agricultural income.
- Encourage the community to find a strategy to protect natural, culture and historical heritage, which are now under a heavy pressure due to poverty.

3. Tourism Potentials in Monaragala

Area covered by the Monaragala district is well known for its own unique natural endowments, especially rich soil, climatic and bio diversity, and plenty of uncultivated tracks of virgin forest lands. It is also loaded with ancient and modern man made structures with a great appeal for local and international tourists. Obviously this district has a plenty of under utilized and untapped tourist resources with different qualities, varieties, and potential to develop CBST. Such historical sites as old monasteries, fortresses, pagodas, and statues are some of the sites with sentimental attraction of the local tourist. These are the places surrounded by scattered ruins, artificial irrigation tanks and canal systems, rich fauna and flora, and also village communities with numerous talents and skills. They are the people with traditional knowledge and practices of traditional healing methods, folk music and dances handed down from generation to generation. Uva province where the Monaragala district is located has made a name and fame not only for such historical sites but also for its gorgeous natural forests, greenish paddy fields, beautiful mountain ranges, conspicuous sanctuaries, sacred places of deities, and also succulent fruits, delicious vegetable, heterogeneous climate and landscapes, multi culture and multi ethnicity, mouth watering cuisines and talented and skillful village communities with courteous disposition.

It is and obvious fact that Monaragala is one of the resourceful districts in Sri Lanka with huge potentials for the promotion of tourism. Some localities in the district such as Kataragama, and Yala are extremely popular tourist destinations among local and foreign tourists. There are number of other places in the district with great local tourist attractions such as Yudaganawa, Maligawila, Buduruwagala, and Dembatamala Viharaya. It is a pity that none of the warranted potentials of these designations have been fully utilized yet. It is sorry to say that many other places with huge tourist potentials such as Nilgala herbal forest, Ratugala aborigine settlements, Maragala mountain ranges, and the Westminster Abbey (Govindu Hela/ Small Sigiriya) are unknown even to the local tourist.
3.1. Agro-Based Tourism

Agriculture is the strongest and perhaps the weakest sector in the Monaragala District. It could be turned into a real stronger sector if warranted resources are exploited prudently in viable alternative areas rather than being confined to traditional narrow boundaries. Agro-based tourism is one such alternative area that has potentials to raise the living standards of the rural communities while maintaining the ecological and socio-cultural equilibrium.

The rural agriculture centered on artificial irrigation tanks and complex irrigation canal system with smiling tracks of paddy fields, especially during the great season that coincides with the tourist season of the country. It also consists of fruit and vegetable gardens, mixed home gardens, shifting cultivations and many other closely and distantly related activities. The harvesting period of most of these crops, vegetable and fruits also falls during the tourist season making the sector more attractive to the tourist. A number of adventure parks and tourism villages for foreigners could be developed close to huge irrigation tanks to promote the agro-based tourism. These types of tourism are mostly designed to cater to the niche segment of the guests and they are rich enough to afford sea planes which could be employed to ferry them from Colombo to their respective hotel villages in the remote Monaragala district. Developing of tourism villages close to irrigation tanks will carry some added advantages since they offer wide opportunities for tourism related products. Boating and other water sports in tanks, fun fishing, birds and animal watching are some of them. The low temperature, calm and quite environment, and fresh air close to reservoirs are some of the welcome factors to promote the inbound tourism in the district.
It seems that the accessible to the Monaragala district is difficult and time consuming when compared to some other such localities in Sri Lanka. Still there are plenty of potentials to develop tourism within the prevailing setup itself when such advantages as mentioned below are taken into account.

- The district is located bordering/close to popular tourist destinations in Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Matara, Hambantota, and Batticaloa districts.
- In fact foreign tourists travel to Batticaloa's popular beaches cum surfing locations via Monaragala district.
- One of the most popular local tourist detonations, Kataragama deity's Temple, is also located in the district bordering to Hambantota.
- Standard road networks are available up to Embilipitiya. It is not difficult to develop a major road from there to Monaragala city or beyond.
- Rail road link could easily be extended either from Badualla or Batticaloa.
- The district is surrounded by attractive both dry and wet forests with their birds, wild animals and mountain ranges in addition to historical monuments and ancient ruins.
- The district is rich of skillful and courteous village communities with their agricultural products, arts and crafts etc. Huge irrigation tanks and canal systems are also another tourist attraction in the district.

It is pointed out that the growth of domestic tourism could lay down a concrete economic foundation for the development of international tourism, particularly for the inbound international tourism development. Opportunities open for local communities to get involve with tourism industry would be higher under such circumstances. It is safe to say that the domestic tourism would create socio-economic environment for the promotion of international tourism. Similarly, it would generate a well experienced, properly stabilized, and adequately informed tourism culture among the local community. Above all, the potential spill over effects created by strong forward and backward linkages would improve the well being of the poorer segments of the society, if policies are well focused, finely formulated, and timely executed.

A few alternative tourism promotional themes are highlighted below for the sake of promotional purposes. This does not necessarily mean that such themes and their activities are not crossing over to other areas. For example there are each other overlapping areas in such specialized tourism areas as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, green tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, and sports tourism. There are substantial opportunities meant for the rural community in each and every sector in these alternative fields rather than hither to emphasized mass tourism industry.
Monaragala district already has two excellent tourist villages for inbound tourists, in Tanamalvila and at the 19th mile post, Buttala. Both have extremely limited relationship with the community but it is quite easy to build a strong bridge between the village community and these types of tourism villages. This would be only after some awareness programs for the village communities as well as for the hotel management and employees. The two hotel villages referred here are facing to some sever threats from the nearby villagers due to weak linkages with community. In contrast to many tourist villages in the country, one village called Ulpatha in Ehetuwewa of Kurunegala district provides an excellent example how to make inroads to the local community to develop tourism on CBST approach. It is worth to follow this example by inbound tourism promotion village projects such as in Monaragala.

Another attraction for the foreign tourists would be organic agricultural products if the practice carefully nurse and nurtured. A growing number of tourists prefer natural products to chemically processed products. It is not difficult to promote chemical free farms close to tourist villages, if the producers are rewarded with fair dividends.

Community based products such as vegetable, fruits, bee honey, herbs, yoghurts, curd, tickle, cane and wood products, coconut cell based products, pottery, jewelries, handlooms have great market potentials if the production is properly organized and supervised. These products could easily be linked to the agro based tourism projects since such products are dwell in the same traditional agriculture.

The sugar cane cultivation and sugar production plants are another tourist attraction in the district. Two plants located at Sevanagala and Pelwatte are the only sugar production factories in Sri Lanka at the moment. These two locations have great potentials to promote local tourism, especially educational trips form the universities and school students.

A few traditional local villages can either be created or preserved in their pristine form to attract the inbound and local tourists. It may contain of small irrigation tank with canals, track of paddy field, reserve forest for animals, forest for fire woods and shifting cultivation, gravel road, temple, temple for deity, indigenous doctor, homesteads with gardens, granary, oxen, bullock carts, traditional oil mill(s), grinding mills, clay pots, mats etc.

For the promotion of agro based tourism, the following initiatives, among others, need to be emphasized.

- Accommodation facilities with traditional local flavor
- Supportive services such as renting bicycles, guide services etc.
- Promotion of old modes of transport such as bullock cards, elephant and horse riding.
- Infrastructure facilities development
- Awareness programs for the community and other involved parties
- Seasonal markets and fairs
- Cultural shows and pageants portraying local identity
- Special cycle routes development
- Marinating cleaner environment
- Special zones for fruit gardens
- Tree planting campaigns

3.2. Nature-Based Tourism

The district has a vast resource base for the promotion of nature-based tourism promotion. A number of sanctuaries and national parks in the district with virgin tropical forests, rich wildlife, and beautiful landscapes including mountain ranges, water streams, and abandoned ancient irrigation tanks are welcome resources for this purpose. In addition to this; other special resources such as extremely rare Nilgala herbal forest, Handapanagala elephant corridor, Makaraya site, Arawakumbura waterfall (seasonal), Mini World’s End, Westminster Abbey etc. provide immense opportunities to promote nature-based tourism in the district.

Wildlife safari by autos, bullock carts, elephants, horses, and push bicycles, bird and reptile watching, camping with day/night animal watching (living in ground huts, tree top huts, hill top huts, huts close to water pools), trekking, nature study tours etc. really attract the inbound and local tourists. A very few investors such as Task adventure cum tourist village in Tanamalvila are capitalizing it's resources although they have problems with the sustainability due destruction caused by the neighboring village communities and outsiders. The community participation is an essential element, if this type of tourism is to promote further on sustainable manner.

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<td>Bibila</td>
<td>• Galoya National Park</td>
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<td>• Nilgala medicinal forest and sanctuary</td>
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<td>• Makaraya site</td>
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<td>• Arawakumbura waterfall</td>
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<td>• Mini World’s End</td>
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<td>• Hot Water Springs (located at the district boundary</td>
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<td>• Maligatenna Sanctuary</td>
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<td>Wellaway</td>
<td>• Handapanagala Lake and Elephant corridor</td>
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<td>Badalkumbura</td>
<td>• Pareyyan Ella</td>
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As a complementary to the nature based tourism promotion, an open zoo, a restricted zoo, a bird paradise, a botanical garden, a park, an elephant orphanage could be developed taking into consideration the availability of vast land areas, animals and other resources. Community participation is an essential component in all these developmental work. Their income will grow up as a community supplies to the industry such as local products, labor and other services supply.

### 3.3. Cultural Tourism

The cultural diversity and uniqueness of the district provides a competitive edge over many other districts to promote culture tourism. The cultural multiplicity ranges from Rathugala aborigines people to a common worship place of all faiths in the country. The district is a home for all the major three communities and all the four major religions. All the major faith followers make pilgrimages to Kataragama. It is a kind of magnet among all races and faiths of Sri Lanka. There are still vast potentials to promote cultural tourism to improve the well-being of the community.

Kataragama has a potential to be developed as the universal holy city of Sri Lanka to attract more visitors not only locals but also foreigners from countries like India. The improvement of basic facilities for visitors, clean and tidy city, purging of all vices, standardization of accommodation and other facilities are urgent needs in this endeavour. The environmental pollution, unorganized stalls; dirty streets and parks are some of the obvious challenges in the city now.

The lack of infrastructure and basic facilities including the accommodation are major challenges in most of the cultural attractions in the districts. A tri-partied, public-private-community approach actively participates and cooperation to improve the
facilities in the area. Among others, the following critical issues have to be taken into account in promoting the culture tourism.

- The cultural and aesthetic values of the locations should be preserved when new constructions are done.
- The promotion of open theatre system for the traditional cultural shows.
- Special site for the aboriginal people at Ratugala.
- Encourage using traditional building and material for certain types of construction.
- Promoting of local cultural/art societies
- Preserving and promoting the traditional musical instruments and attire production

The community-owned resources and skills could be employed for the culture tourism related activities such as traditional dancing, arts, music, religious practices, handicraft, especially during the religious festival periods. The traditional cultural society in the district would be helpful to find a suitable individual for this purpose.

3.4. Heritage and Spiritual Tourism

The promotion of heritage and spiritual tourism by capitalizing the warranted resources on sustainable manner will generate benefits not only for these sites themselves but also for the communities, especially those who are living close to these places. The available resources suggest that Buddhist and Hindu religious practices could be promoted to develop spiritual tourism. When pilgrimage tourism is taken into account, the local demand seems to hold a key stake of the potential market. A number of meditation centers similar to Budugallena could be developed to attract more local tourists.

Educational tours and excursions among school and university students and also other interested parties could be promoted to visit historical heritage in the district. Most of them are not aware of the educational values and heritage of the district. A well-designed promotional campaign, perhaps with the help of the ministries of education, cultural affairs, and mass media, would produce the desired results.

It is also possible to promote these kinds heritage and spiritual tourism products among a certain percentage of the inbound tourists. Tourism packages consisting of meditation, Yoga, non-alcohol and vegetarian foods, specially designed accommodation facilities in a clam and quite locations, possibly close to historical sites or in woods, could easily be promoted among foreign tourists. Tours to visit important religious and historical sites in the district could also be incorporated to the package.
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<tr>
<th>D.S. Division</th>
<th>Archaeological and Cultural</th>
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| **Monaragala** | ▪ Monaragala Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Muppane Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Kambana Sri Thislane Viharaya  
▪ Budugalge  
▪ Weheragala Purana Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Kaudawa Purana Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Ganulpotha Purana Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Lolehela Aranaya Senasanaya  
▪ Seethakanda Aranaya Senasanaya  
▪ Therapuththabhaya Aranya Senasanaya  
▪ Weliyaya Aranaya Senasanaya  
▪ Sangamisththarama Aranya Senasanaya  
▪ Obbegoda  
▪ Wadikumbura Veheragala Viharaya  
▪ Biso-Kotuwa & Pokuna (Siyambalanduwa) |
| **Kataragama** | ▪ Katharagama Dewalaya  
▪ Kiriwehwra Viharaya  
▪ Sella Katharagama  
▪ Wadihitikanda  
▪ Seemapawwa Senasanaya  
▪ Galge  
▪ Katharagama Festivals |
| **Bibila** | ▪ Maligakanda Kanavegalla (site)  
▪ Villathigdoa Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Arangala Ancient Quirrier  
▪ Madapitiya Neelagiri Viharaya  
▪ Kotasara Piyangala Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Wilson Memorial Statute  
▪ Nagala Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Badulla Gammana Viharaya  
▪ Ahugoda Viharaya  
▪ Tangoda Viharaya  
▪ Maligatenna Archaeological site |
| **Wellawaya** | ▪ Buduruwagala Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Kurugama Kande Viharaya  
▪ Warunagama Kotaveheragala Rajamaha Viharaya  
▪ Kinkini Viharaya  
▪ Wehere Yaya  
▪ Kanabio Rajamaha Viharaya |
3.5. Health Tourism

There is a great demand for alternative health related tourism products in the world. The indigenous medical treatment based health tourism could be developed by exploiting the know-how and talents of the local communities. Still there are a quite sufficient number of people practices the traditional healing and treatment methods. Potential health tourism activities for community benefits can be developed through development of Ayurvedic centers such as Ayurvedic Hospital in Kiriara and development of medicinal herbal and other medicinal resources such as the medical parks like Pita Kumbura Herbal plantation; promotion of Ayurvedic Spa and massage treatment Resorts; development of teaching centers for Ayurveda philosophy and Ayurvedic studies; promotion of traditional oil baths for various ailments;
strengthening of community’s involvement for the supply of various inputs for these holiday services; conducting community awareness programs such as protecting of medicinal trees and plants and harvesting on sustainable manner; promotion of indigenous medical practices among community members; developing of walking tracks for health purposes such as walking around water tanks, river banks and grass lands etc. The promotion of health tourism would help to

- Create job opportunities for local community members
- Produce herbal medicines and other products
- Preserve medicinal and other plants and trees
- Propagate and promote traditional healing methods
- Link with other alternative/complimentary methods such as Yogi and meditation practices and acupuncture treatments.

3.6. Sports Tourism

The growing international interest on sports and the travel for sport entertainment can be utilized to promote sport tourism in the district. This mode of tourism products would generate benefits to the community in a number of ways. Among others there would be demand for local resources, peasant products, and labour. The following sports could be promoted in the district for this purpose.

- Cricket: international cricket stadium in Monaragala district similar to Rangiri Dambulla International cricket stadium
- Water sports: A number of huge reservoirs in the district could be utilized to promote such water sports as boating, swimming, and fun fishing.
- Golf courses: There are potentials to develop seasonal golf courses close to huge reservoirs without wasting valuable water as tourist season coincides with the wet season.
- Promotion of tradition sports such as Elle, Volleyball, Cart Races, elephant races, elephant play polo & football etc.
- Special track for motor races
- Flying school cum fun flying tarmac close to the proposed international airport
- Cabal car system linking top of the Geelon mountain and Monaragala city
- A horse racecourse close to Buttala

3.7. Adventure Tourism

The adventure tourism came to the limelight recently as a way of generating the sense of discovery by using largely un-spoilt areas with very little or nor man-made infrastructure or facilities. Mountain and rock climbing, cycling in hilly areas and difficult terrains, elephant and horse riding in forests, wild camping and wild safari are some of the activities related to the adventure tourism. Moneragala district has immense potentials for adventure tourism if we target the correct sites. Among many others, the following locations will generate a special attraction to the tourist.

- Westminster Abbey: Interchangeably ‘small Sigiriya’ or ‘Govindu Hela’ terms are used to refer to this attractive location.
• Maragala-Geelon mountain range with special climatic condition closer to Bandarawela and special kinds of birds and animals would be another attraction.
• Makaraya site where the water of Gal oya vanishing into the earth another special attraction. It is located in the thick forest of upper Senanayake reservoir.
• Sanctuaries such as Gal oya and Yala, Elephant corridors such as Handapanagala, mini world’s end are some other interesting locations to promote adventure tourism in the district.

Obviously Monaragala is a resourceful district for community based sustainable tourism development where a number of alternative tourism could be developed simultaneously. Unfortunately neither an accurate assessment of warranted potentials nor significantly effective attempt has been taken to exploit any one of these.

4. Success Factors of CBSTD

Like any other economic activity, growth of tourism is not a spontaneous penchant. It is attributable to a number of closely and distantly related factors. Any successful sustainable development of tourism has to focus on crucial factors to achieve the planned objectives. In this study we have identified a number of such important factors, which we are examining in brief here.

4.1 Markets Issues

This concerns whether there is a potential demand for products based on CBST development and can it be supplied continuously, qualitatively, and sufficiently. There is an increasing demand for this type of holiday services with the emerging of new types of tourists. It is obvious that the demand itself would not guarantee a faster growth in the industry in an unknown backward area like Monaragala district. Supply led approach would make a difference under such circumstances where new destinations and fresh products induce the tourist to taste the difference. You have to identify the real tourist attractions first in this endeavor and then make them more attractive by transforming such places into tourist friendly locations. The gap between the host and tourist would be bridged by information of different modes. It is pointed out that the CBST have special advantages over traditional mass tourism in this exercise.

1. Each destination has its own uniqueness that provides special protection from severe completion in the industry.

2. Quality of the product is vital not because of mass production but for mass customization. Product diversification addresses the individualistic interests and demand patterns.
3. The tailor made approach for this type of tourism promotion is important rather than the ready made approach where sameness of the product make no fresh feelings of curiosity.

4. Upper top segment of the tourists with higher purchasing power would demand the unique products at a special price. They as exceptional persons would naturally expect exceptional products with higher quality.

5. The niche market carries little or no negative effects to the society and environment of the destination since it is easily manageable even at a higher cost.

The CBST has an exceptional potential to cater to the tourism market at different levels and categories.

Firstly, it can promote existing tourism products for existing tourism markets and it involves with selling more of the existing products to the same consumers such as domestic pilgrimage to Kataragama temple.

Secondly, existing tourism products could be promoted for new markets where new markets are tapped for existing tourism products such as the promotion of Indian tourists to Kataragama temple.

Thirdly, there are possibilities to introduce new products for the existing markets where similar products are sold at different locations such as the promotion of Dewathura Sellakataragama Devalaya, Ampitiya Devalaya along with the Kataragama Devalaya to same tourists.

Fourthly, promoting of new tourism products among new tourists where potentials are existed. Instead of traditional mass homogeneous tourism products, individualistic and heterogeneous tourism products could be introduced and developed to exploit the emerging niche market opportunities such as ecotourism, sport tourism, adventure tourism, and agro-based tourism. The hybrid nature of such products promotes the objectives CBST as well. One of the major problems of promoting CBST in Monaragal district is lack of proper marketing and promotional strategies to capitalize the comparative advantageous offered by the district.

4.2 Environmental Impact

One of the priority areas of the CBST is sustainable environment where every effort is made to maximize the positive impacts while minimizing the negative impacts. Every project related renewable and non-renewable resources and inputs such as energy, labor, and forest are assessed and employed in the industry with utmost care to maintain the delicate balance. Awareness and training programs are organized for
the community and other stakeholders, eco-friendly societies are formed and maintained, special programs are organized for the school children to get their support and to put them on the sustainable track of economic activities in the future. Public seminars, speeches, essay/drawing competitions on environment protection are organized to bring the message to every walk of life in the areas are concerned.

Not only the wild life, forest, water resources, and mountains but also social and cultural heritages are being checked in such areas as Buttala, Bibila, Tanamalvila, Rathugala, Nilgala, Siyabalanduwa, Kataragama, and Geelon areas due to ruthless hunting, logging, forest clearing and burning, and vandalism etc. Urgent measures have to be taken to arrest this disastrous trend to maintain sustainability in these areas. Field information suggest that properly planned hotels in the areas of Tanamalvila, Galapita in Kataragama and community based meditation center at Budugallena have been helpful to protect wild and wildlife to a great extent, if the said two hotels have successful in community participation to the project the environmental protection objective would have been fully realized.

Field findings further suggest that neither the wild life department nor the forest department would be able achieved their respective goals as long as failure to participate the community as a whole-heartedly. The immediate concern of the community is their livelihood, which is intrinsically involved with forest and wild life. They also badly need awareness and training in these two areas in addition to providing them with alternative income sources. CBST can make a real change in achieving these twin goals since it generates income for the community out of the forest, wild life, and cultural heritages etc.

4.3 Financial Matters

Financial aspect could be considered as the center of gravity in any commercial venture in the modern liberal economic environment. The underlying philosophy of the CBST is not essentially promoting the profit maximization motive but fair profits plus environmental and social responsibility. Three major financial concerns have to be addressed in the process of CBST promotion.

a) Funds for Infrastructure Development: The provincial council and the central government have to take the collective responsibility regarding the infrastructure development, while only marginal areas are given to the private investors. Transport, electricity, water supply, telecommunication are the most critical areas in this regard. Among all, transport comes first, not because of sheer distance between Colombo and Monaragala but it is the only mode of transport available at the moment. It is well known fact that the time you have to spend to get to Monaragala is somewhat close to your travel time from Europe to Colombo airport. That is a serious challenge in developing the tourism industry or any other sector in this district. A few alternative strategies could be implemented to counter this situation to a great extent.
a. Development work of the proposed international airport in Wellawaya has to be accelerated.

b. Fairly good road network need to be built from Colombo to Embilipitiya. This has to be extended at least to Bibile town via Monaragala town.

c. Sea plane transport could be developed to ferry niche tourist from Colombo to Monaragala. Larger reservoirs such as Senanayka Samudra and Mutukandiya would be useful in this exercise since these reservoirs have sufficient water throughout the year. Even smaller irrigations tanks are available during the peak tourist season as most of these tanks are at their full capacity during the period.

d. Selected byroads have to be developed not only to facilitate the tourism industry but also to develop agriculture, livestock and small industries of the district.

e. Gravel roads have to be maintained properly in areas where nature tourism is promoted.

f. Clean city concept has to be adopted at least every major city in the district. Monaragala could be developed as the center of clean city while selected few others as satellite clean cities.

g. Electricity, water supply, and telecommunication facilities have to be developed on priority basis in selected areas.

h. Maintenance activities have to be undertaken with same vigor as they are built up. The community participation and awareness is extremely essential in this endeavour.

b) Capital for Tourism Products: Investment in the hotels and related tourism activities is a responsibility of the local and international investors. The provincial council and central government and their agencies have to work as facilitators and service providers to the investors becoming investors by themselves.

a. The service of national/regional chambers of commerce/industries, ministry of tourism, board of tourism, board of investment, NGOs and other interested groups could be utilized to attract private investments to the district.

b. A token of issued shares of quoted companies could either be gifted or sold at a reduced price to well focused community members/community based societies. The community will develop the sense ownership of hotels under this scheme in addition to getting opportunities to air their views at shareholders meetings.

The district neither have sufficient number of entrepreneurs to invest in the tourist related activities nor specialists in the field of leisure industry. Tour operators and tourists do not have sufficient information about the exciting facilities in the Monaragala District and they are in the view that the district has not hotel and other recreational facilities to develop the tourism industry. Only the limited number of restaurants and tea/coffee shops are
not up to the expected levels of the industry. The collaborative commercial ventures with investors from other districts and other countries would be important in this regard. Such small investors as Kinkini hotel in Bibile, Victoria Hotel in Monaragala, and Nethmini in Siyambalaanduwa will get benefits out of this and it would carry the spread over effects to other investors as well.

c. The dissemination of investment opportunities in the district would attract local and foreign investors with their market networks. A dedicated website, information booklets, media advertisements, press conferences, investors’ conference are some of the strategies to attract potential investors to the district.

c) Distribution Effects: Small-scale, locally originated, community-based tourism products are promoted under the CBST development along with the medium/large-scale foreign/local owned tourism projects. This kind of strategy would create its own mechanism to trickle down the fortunes generated by the industry among the down trodden groups of the society such as in Monaragala district.

a. Community will have an opportunity to dispose their products at a reasonable price while they get avenues to earn income from their cultural heritages. Among many other products, the excess fruits and vegetables in the district will find good market, if the local and inbound tourism industry is developed.
b. Direct employment opportunities will generate income to the community members. They could be prepared to accept the challenges posed by unknown and unskilled jobs by providing with necessary training and skills. The community in the district already has the skill to work as tourist guides, room attendants, cooks, garden keepers. They need a little fine tuning for these types of jobs. In the long run they could be prepared to accept even top most posts of the industry as they have the necessary skills and talents to accept any challenging career in the industry.
c. Such small scale tourism production units as kiosks, shops, bakeries, and cab services could be started and managed by the community members in many parts of the district. In addition to that the traditional goldsmith, blacksmith, handloom maker will have opportunities to modernize and expand their production units.
d. Infrastructure development would help to create higher values for community’s wealth, higher prices for community products, lower cost for production inputs and related services, and easy access to essential services such as education and health to the community members. Similarly local government will have new revenue sources coming out of profit making tourist related ventures which would be channeled to improve the living standards of the community where the projects are located. The highly backward isolated villages in Monaragala district will benefit out of the tourism industry.
4.4. Skills and Resources-Based Issues

Monaragala district is far behind to many other districts in a number of socioeconomic indicators including the quality of human capital.

a. The capacity building and skill development of the community members are the important supply oriented benefit that Monaragala district could accrue out of the CBST.

b. This is an important area that has to be emphasized when the long term sustainability is taken into account.

c. The warranted resources in the district could be economically exploited while improving the living standards of community, only if human skills and capacity are improved.

5. Pilot CBST Development Projects

At present Monaragala is not a popular tourist attraction in Sri Lanka. It is clear that the promotion of a massive multi-faceted tourism plan with essential infrastructure and other facilities is beyond reach, at least in the short-run. Neither it is reasonable under the prevailing resource constraints nor the existing capacity of the district itself.

Two-phase strategic plans consist of short-term and medium-term strategies would be a practical solution at the early stages of tourism promotion in the district.

A few carefully selected locations with higher tourism potentials are to be developed and to be promoted along with the minimum infrastructural development. This initial phase could also be considered as the trial and error period of a long-term tourism development strategy in the district. A few well known and straightforwardly marketable, easily accessible sites with lower investment expenditure are selected for this phase. A sound long-term strategic plan has to be prepared after a careful and extensive research in the field by considering the national and global trends of tourism development. It will consume more resources, time and energy than a short-term exercise. The following tourism projects are proposed to kick-off the tourism development in the district within a manageable limit.

5.1. Pilgrimage to Wellassa

The main focus of this project is the local market which mainly consists of pilgrimage and educational tourists. A few well-known religious sites that are well-connected and easily accessible to tourists will be developed and promoted under this project. We propose the few selected major sites, namely Maligawila, Dematamalviharaya, Yudaganawa, Buduruwagala, and Budugallena Hermitage are suitable for this purpose (see Table 3)
At least Minimum basic facilities required for the tourists have to be developed in these sites. Among others such facilities as mass rest houses for local tourists (at least in two locations), water and electricity supply, telecommunication facilities (optional), clean eating houses/restaurants instead of thatched huts with dirty environment, hygienically prepared foods and drinks, clean and pleasant environment is important in this endeavour.

The existing facilities do not tempt the tourist to stay longer in and around at these sites and to purchase local goods and services. It is worth to take into account that at some sites that unorganized chaotic arrangements are simply chasing away the tourist from local products and services. The main entrances are nearly blocked by stalls, and there are no proper toilet, parking, water, and resting house facilities.

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<th>D.S. Division</th>
<th>Spiritual Sites</th>
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<td>Monaragala</td>
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It is sensible to plant drought resistant flower trees such as *ehela*, *araliya*, and iron trees to make these sites more attractive to the tourists. Innocent animals like spotted deer could be introduced to the sites to make them more fascinating. However, no development work should alter the historical identity of these sites, which it has been the practice in the past.

To enhance the community participation there should be well focused awareness programs for the community as well as other involved parties in these sites. The streamlining of administration and management are extremely important not only to attract the tourist but also for the sustainability of the industry and the sites themselves.

The proposed project and products could be introduced to Kataragama temple premises to which many people visit throughout the year and a huge influx during the festive season. A dedicated information centre maintaining on commercial basis, billboards, tour packages, especially during the festive seasons would be some productive initiatives to promote the pilgrimage to Wellassa project. The prevailing peaceful environment of the country will enhance the flow of pilgrimages to Katargama site and the horrible Tsunami experience will force them to find accommodation in the places away from the sea. This rewarding opportunity could easily be exploited, if pilgrimage to Wellassa project is properly planned and timely executed.

5.2. Take a Break in the Nature

The main focus of this project is foreign and local niche tourist markets. This district has the highest concentration of sanctuaries and national parks with full of virgin forests, wild animals, birds, herbs and wild berries. These localities are straightforwardly connectable and developed as tourist magnets under the project. We propose the following parks, sanctuaries, and reservoirs are ideal for this project.

Among them, six national parks and Nilgala medicinal sanctuary (see Box 2) and Makaraya site, Iniginiyagala reservoir area, Mutukandiya reservoir area, Handapanagala area, Ethimale lake area and some other natural attractions (see table 1) are greatly useful.

Activities and accommodation have to be organized within the premises of eco and adventure tourism approach, which has gained popularity in recent years in response to the worldwide trend of preserving the natural environment. This has been further enhanced by recent Tsunami disaster in Asia. All the opportunities could be exploited to promote this type of tourism.

Major attractions of such type of tourism would be trekking trails for nature, hiking, elephant riding, horse riding, cycling, night camping, animal and bird watching, accommodation in jungle cottages. Supervision and controlling of these holiday
activities in sustainable manner should be carried by public-private cooperation comprising of the stakeholders such as wild life and forest departments, the ministry of tourism, tourist board, hotels associations, NGOs and community organizations and other interested parties. Although the most of the national parks currently provide facilities for nature explorers, more facilities could also be introduced/improved as mentioned before, keeping the focus on CBST development.

The task of promoting eco-tourism lies heavily on the ability of the local communities in managing the resources and tourist products. The degree of community’s capacity to manage the eco-tourism resources and services at local levels will ultimately decide the national target in this sector of tourism.

Few important facilities have to be developed in promoting and achieving of the local and national goals of eco-tourism projects.

- Camping sites for those who want to stay overnight in parks.
- Trekking along the marked trails, with hired local guides trained from nearby villages to take a tour deeper into a forest to explore off-the-beaten-track routes.
- Developing the community-based information centers and community-products selling centers.
- Improving the community skills and capacities for CBST development.
- To ensure a rewarding system according to the contribution of community members while improving their sources of income and job opportunities.
- To promote cottage type accommodation facilities concerning the environmental sustainability.
- Development of infrastructure and supportive services taking into account the requirements of the location.
- Develop unique holiday services and activities under the slogan of “Heritage of Wellassa”.
- To improve the public awareness of CBST development and its activities through the involvement of all stakeholders.
- Providing of proper orientation programs for all the stakeholders about their new role in CBST development.
- To form well organized societies providing with their members proper training on eco-tourism, resource sharing, rights and responsibilities.
- Opening up of new income generating avenues for the rural folk as an incentive for the conservation of natural environment, local cultural heritage.
1. YALA WILDLIFE SANTUARY
Yala or the Ruhuna National Park which stands out in popularity located deep south about 175 miles from Colombo. Also its location fairly close to the other sanctuaries like Boondala, Situlpahuwa and Lunugamwehera. This park has been recognized as one of the best places in Asia to see Asian Elephants, the largest terrestrial mammal on the Asian continent and also many other rare animals and birds.

2. GAL-OYA NATIONAL PARK
With rich fauna diversity, the Gal Oya National Park located at the boundary with Amapara and Badulla districts, has one of the most beautiful scenic settings. Established in 1954, the 25, 9000 hectare park, mainly designed to protect the catchments area of Senanayake Reservoir. The park was handed over to the Department of wildlife conservation in 1965.

3. LUNUGAMWEHERA NATIONAL PARK:
This national park falls within the D.S divisions of Thanamalvila, Wellawaya, Kataragama, Lunugamwehera and Buttala in the Moneragala district. The total extent of the park is 23, 498 hectares. Around 14% of the park is occupied by the Lunugamwehera reservoir. At the full capacity the reservoir occupies 3283 hectares of land. Other small tanks within the park cover an area of 50 hectares. The total dry land areas of the park are 20,156 hectares.

4. UDAWALAWA NATIONAL PARK
Udawalawa was declared third national park of Sri Lanka in 1972. The total land area of the Udawalawa National Park is 30,821 ha distance from Colombo is about 165km. This is the nearest National Park to Colombo.

5. LAHUGALA NATIONAL PARK:
The park is situated in the basin of the Heda Oya, 16 km inland form the coastal town of Pottuwil in the Eastern province. The park is just outside of the Moneragala district.

6. NILGALA SANCTUARY:
Unlike other such national sanctuaries/national parks, Nilgala has to be approached on foot, as wondrous as the sudden sighting of an elephant is as one weaves one’s path around the Aralu, Bulu, Nelli and through the tall mana grass, a certain degree of caution has to be exercised as the dangers are many.

Box 2
NATIONAL PARKS IN MONARAGALA DISTRICTS
5.3. Nature cum Culture Tourism

*Nilgala* medicinal forest and *Rathugala* indigenous culture could be developed as a new-eco-tourism site. Development of tourism activities such as bird watching, night camping, edu-tourism in the medicinal forest plus culture-based holiday activities at Rathugala aboriginal settlement would be included to this project in addition to the visiting of some other cultural heritages in the province. Aboriginal and local cultural shows, indigenous medicinal practices, religious ceremonies, voodoo practices, and unspoiled traditional village life would be some of the attractive for the promotion of such type tourism development in the area.

5.4. A Trip to Hill Tops

This is proposed to promote popular adventure tourism trend in the world in the vicinity of Monaragala city itself where the twin hills Maragala and Geelon are located. A cable car project could be implemented in parallel to this project to promote the product among inbound tourists as well as the local tourists. An independent and extensive environmental evaluation should be carried out prior to giving green light to the cable car project.

5.5. Development of Corresponding Tourist Attractions

As a complementary measure to develop CBST in the district of Monaragala, few strategically important facilities could be developed in parallel to the promotion of selected tourism destinations. The following facilities could be developed in medium and long term with the participation of private sector.

i. Botanical Gardens
   The bio diversity in Monaragal city area itself makes a strong claim for a botanical garden in its vicinity. This could easily be created close to Maragala/Geelon areas. The garden may consist of cycle routes, kiosks, walking paths, nursery and plant sale center.

ii. Parks with Open Zoos
   Two parks could be developed at the initial stage as one at Maragala and the other closer to the Buttala campus. These parks will consist of cycle routes, children parks, flower gardens, walking paths, ponds, kiosks, cycle renting shops, parking space, lodging facilities for large and small groups, reception halls for special occasions, horse/pony riding facilities, telecommunication cum tourist information centers, tourist guide facilities, badminton and volleyball courts, sale centers of local products such as handicrafts, handlooms, herbs and herbal products.
Some of these facilities such as children parks, flower gardens, tourist information centers, cycle routs could be build in suitable other localities.

iii. Domestic Airports:
Air Taxi service and Sea Plane services could be introduced to arrest the weak roads and transport facilities. The proposed Wellawaya international airport could first be developed as a domestic airport cater to the small aircrafts and helicopters. The service of larger reservoirs in the district could be available for the sea planes.

iv. Ayurvedic Health Clinics
Ayurvedic treatment centers, spa & massage treatments resort could be developed attached to the tourist hotels. In addition to that potentials should be explored to setup such facilities at existing ayurvedic hospitals/clinics such as at Pitakumbura and in medicinal forests such as Nilgala. These facilities could also be introduced in specially designed meditation centers meant for niche tourists.

v. International Cricket Stadium
International cricket stadium similar to Rangiri Dambulla could be developed close to the proposed international airport in Kudaoya, Wellawaya. A small town with modern facilities has to be developed near to this site to provide facilities for the seasonal huge crowds gather for crickets.

vi. International Airport
The development work of proposed international airport in Kudaoya, Wellawaya has to be accelerated with private sector participation. This will not only fulfill the long felt need for alternate International airport to Katunayake but also will, bring a tremendous development to Uva-Wellassa areas.

vii. Road and Rail Road Development
Poor transport facility is the major obstacle to access the district rather than the actual distance from Colombo. This problem could be solved successfully, if roads, connecting highways, and rail roads are developed to meet the modern requirements. The following projects could be considered seriously in this endeavour.

a. Connecting of Colombo-Badulla rail road with the proposed Kataragama rail road via Bibile, Monaragala and Buttala.
b. Extending of Colombo-Embilipitya highway up to Bibile via Buttala and Monaragala.
c. Upgrading of other roads in the district

viii. Elephant Shelter
Elephant shelter could be developed in a suitable place in the district. Such locations as Tanamalwila, Handapanagala, Nilgala, Mutukandiya, Ethimale could
be considered seriously for this project. The elephant shelter will consist of elephant orphanage in addition to providing such services as elephant safari (Wildlife Safari) and elephant play (e.g. Polo & foot ball).

**ix. Wellassa Museum**
The district has a reputed long history with provable artifacts and ruins. A museum could be built close to the proposed botanical garden in this report depicting the history of Wellassa.

**x. Promoting of Educational Trips**
The district has immense potentials to promote educational tours among school children in Sri Lanka. Sugar factories, historical monuments, natural heritages, bio diversities are some of the advantages that the district has to offer in this regard. The proposed projects in this report such as botanical garden, museum, elephant shelter, horse breeding centers would be added advantages in promoting educational tourism in the district.

**xi. Horse Shelter**
The bio diversity and plenty of lands in the district provides ample opportunity to keep horse shelter with suitable varieties. The horse breeding, training, hiring, sporting, racing are of the potential activities related to such shelter.

**xii. Cultural Events and Travel Exhibition**
It is possible to organize annual cultural events in the district to show the local identity. The folk dances, music, dramas, healing methods, voodoos could be parts of this event.

Annual travel exhibition could be organized in coincide with the cultural events. The ideal timing for the event seems to be Kataragama festive season.

**xiii. Water sports and Golf Courses**
There are a number of inland water reservoirs, which can be used to provide ideal and outstanding settings for recreational activities such as boating, fishing, windsurfing, sailing and other water based sports.

There are potentials to provide seasonal golf sporting facilities close to these reservoirs without disturbing environment or without any other harmful effect to the community of the district.

6. **Summary, Recommendations and Expected Outcomes**
The traditional Mass Tourism Development (MTD) practiced by many countries like Sri Lanka has ignored a number of positive aspects as proposed by the CBST. This gross negligence has led not only for environmental and cultural degradation but also to raise questions about economic viability and distribution of income generated from the tourism industry among the rightful stakeholders. This study is carried out to
examine the sustainable strategies that might facilitate the promotion of CBST of the predominantly domestic agricultural and related activities centered Monaragala District in the Uva province, Sri Lanka. The report evaluates some warranted potentials of the district to promote the industry and also win a fair share of the huge tourism market, especially global market, by attracting visitors to the natural, socio-cultural and historic localities of the district while sticking to the CBSTD approach.

It is fair to say that the Community Based Tourism (CBT) has become a growing trend in the world in recent past. The CBT, as an alternative approach, implies that the community has substantial control over and involvement in the tourism industry and the majority of benefits remain in the community itself. However, the Community Based Sustainable Tourism (CBST), an off-shoot of the CBT, does not necessarily consider only the community’s benefits but also the tourists’ satisfaction and ecological balance simultaneously. The CBST consisting of new vision and new agenda makes every effort to keep the delicate balance between tourism development, and the preservation and promotion of the nature, and socio-cultural heritage while opening avenues for the community to improve their living standards. The community is thereby forced to nurse and nurture their income earnings means for their own survival.

The potential tourism products of the Monaragala District are usually characterized by its assorted sunny climate, numerous hills and mountain ranges, breathtaking landscapes, lush green forests with their animals, birds, insects, flowers, and wild berries, spectacular historic monuments and structures, the smiling people with their unparalleled courteous disposition, cultural heritages, abundant such local products as vegetable, fruits, and dry grain. The resource abundance and their diversity have ensured an exceptional place for Monaragal district in the CBST promotion in Sri Lanka. The following key aspects need to be taken into account any tourism promotional campaign.

- Monaragala District has an infant tourism industry other than Kataragama, although the area is full of untapped tourist resources.
- The district made up of the largest concentration of wilderness and sanctuaries. There are huge potentials to create botanical and zoological gardens to attract an increasing number of tourists.
- The tropical mixed climate, fascinating landscapes, fauna and flora are favorable factors to promote nature tourism, even in a small scale.
- The district is a home for centuries-old monuments, ruins, and European colonial legacies.
- Culture, community skills and talents with their productions have a greater attraction to the tourist.
- The unspoiled rural life style with its simple and pleasant agro-based livelihood of the community has a special attraction to the tourist.
- After Tsunami destruction tourists would prefer to relax in hinterland and to be away from the sea resorts.
**Recommendations:** Forming of a coordinating body with the public, private, and community participation to promote the tourism is paramount. All stakeholders referred here have unique roles to play in promoting the CBST. Awareness programs, workshops, and guest lectures for selected stakeholders, especially for community members and small-scale tourist business entrepreneurs, are essentials to maintain the socio-cultural equilibrium while improving the living standards of the poor. In addition to this, the following has to be taken into consideration in tourism promotion in the district, to achieve the desired objectives as promoted by CBST.

- Development of minimum infrastructure facilities to meet the modern requirements.
- Dissemination of investment opportunities among investors in the field.
- Promotion of tourism products locally and internationally.
- Preparing a long term tourism plan and implement strategies accordingly.
- Preserving and promoting the local heritage and community skills.
- Strengthening the links between the community and tourists.
- Educating the community to protect their identity and cultural values.
- A few logistically important areas could be identified and developed at the early stages tourism promotional campaign such as culture and heritage tourism, spiritual tourism and nature tourism etc.
- A few cities could be developed as model tourism cities to meet the modern requirement of the tourism suit to local culture and value system.

**Expected Outcomes:** The promotion of CBST is expected to achieve the following goals to improve the living standards of the community members.

- Cooperative and constructive participation of the community in the industry.
- New employment opportunities for the community and a well-earned market for their tourism related products.
- Preserving and promotion of the local culture, historical heritage and natural resources.
- Improved socio-economic infrastructure facilities in remote localities.
- New sources of income for local authorities and governments.
- Exploitation of underutilized/unutilized community based resources.
- Develop inter and intra-cultural relations and links.
- Innovations of heterogeneous, high quality, consumer-need driven, environmentally and culturally friendly and responsible tourism products.
- Well developed hosts-guests relationships.
- Integrate local tourism development with national planning and objectives.

It will neither be able to achieve all these objectives in a short period of time or it would be a simple task. The trial and error approach would be more pragmatic in this exercise since strategies need to be reformulated, refined, and reprioritized where it's necessary. The traditional short, medium and long term strategies and planning
would be imperative in the process. It is obvious that developing the district as a demand driven tourist destination is beyond the reach at this stage. Therefore it is not a major tourist destination in the country though it has vast potentials. Supply-push strategies, therefore, are largely emphasized here for the initial stages until both supply-push and demand-pull strategies are equally applicable in the future.

The participation of community, private investors, public sector, and other related stakeholders are extremely important in achieving the targeted goals. This would ultimately ensure the prime goal by the CBST motto of ‘Tourism and Prosperous Community’ while maintaining the socio-cultural equilibrium of the region. It is quite obvious without the well-being of the community; any tourism development strategy would be a loosing battle in a hostile territory.
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