

Sustainable tourism development in Negombo coastline: An option for co-management

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The Negombo coastline is a highly populous area on the west coast of *Sri Lanka*, and its northern sandy extremity is very popular among the local and foreign tourists. A field survey based on face-to-face interviews with the stakeholder segments was conducted in August 2015 to assess their role and contribution to the management, utilization and governance of this coastline and, to propose suitable management options. In this survey, information from the local stakeholder coastal community (n = 15) including a leading tourist hotel in the area was collected. In addition, information from the chief executive officers of Regional office of the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department (CC & CRMD), *Negombo* Municipal Council (MC) and the Police Station (PS) were collected. The information from the survey were analysed and a SWOT analysis was carried out.

The major strengths of the coastline were the presence of an extensive sandy beach and fish resources (78%) and utilization of these resource for income generation (98%), involvement of a large proportion of the local population in tourism (75%), high income gained by tourism (73%), frequent beach cleaning programmes performed the stakeholders (69%), high cleanliness of the beach (75%), high level of education of the local community (63%) and community participation in beach cleaning programmes (62%). The local government authorities are responsible for managing the beach; the CC & CRMD is responsible for preventing coastal erosion and illegal constructions within the beach façade; the MC regularly monitors the sewage discharges and cleanliness of the coastline; the local PS strictly ensures law and peace in the area. The major weaknesses were inadequate government involvement in beach maintenance (69%), lack of awareness and commitment (58%) and willingness (24%) of the local community in community based management (24%). Lack of coordination among CC & CRMD, MC and police over the governance of the coastline was another major weakness. The major opportunities were the possibility expand tourism related activities (25%) and improve cleanliness of the beach (25%). The major threats were the improper solid waste disposal in the coastline (48%), and high taxes against tourism related income generation activities (70%). In addition, child abuse by tourists, drug and liquor trafficking, high coliform count in sea water and coastal erosion were other the major threats. This survey highlights the importance of reinforcing an understanding between the local community and local government authorities over the management and governance of coastal resources in *Negombo* coastline. Therefore, formulating and strengthening a genuine co-management strategy is highly recommended for the sustainable tourism in this coastline.

Keywords: *Negombo* coastline, Co-management, SWOT analysis, Sustainable tourism