

Application of Ecotourism Guidelines and Standards in Sri Lankan Resorts with Special Reference to Bolgoda Area

JAMY Jayasuriya^{1#}, WAPS Kumara², and KNK Pathirana²

¹Architect - ISS Architects (PVT)Ltd

²Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment and Spatial Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

#malakajay0@gmail.com

This study investigated the application of ecotourism guidelines and standards in Sri Lankan resorts, focusing on Bolgoda area. Ecotourism, aimed at minimizing environmental impacts while promoting conservation and cultural understanding, is critical for countries like Sri Lanka, rich in biodiversity and natural beauty. However, the increasing tourist influx poses significant environmental threats. This study assessed the effectiveness of local eco-tourism guidelines established by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, hypothesizing their adequacy in ensuring eco-friendly resort designs. The primary objective of this study was to assess the contribution of these guidelines to ecotourism in Sri Lanka. Secondary objectives included understanding the global and local context of ecotourism, the necessity of regulatory measures, and the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's regulatory system. Through case studies of eight resorts in Bolgoda area, data were collected using a detailed checklist based on international and local standards. Results indicated that resorts adhering closely to ecotourism principles scored higher in these areas. However, common weaknesses were found in environmental management and safety measures across all resorts, suggesting the need for more rigorous guidelines and better implementation. Main limitations of this study are its focus on a single geographical area and a small sample size, which may not be representative of all Sri Lankan resorts. Despite this limitation, the findings provide valuable insights into the current state of ecotourism practices in Sri Lanka and highlight areas for improvement. The paper concludes with recommendations for enhanced environmental management, improved safety protocols, and increased local community involvement to promote sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka.

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