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## **Case Based Model Design for Green Yoga Destination in Sri Lankan Wellness Tourism**

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### **Abstract**

With the increasing global shift towards sustainable tourism, Sri Lanka holds immense potential to emerge as a destination that harmonizes nature, culture, and healing traditions. The objective is to create an Eco-conscious, health-oriented tourism space that integrates traditional yoga practices with environmental sustainability. This research focuses on establishing a Green Yoga Destination Model in the southern coastal region of Sri Lanka, with a focused site selection based on ecological and biological assessment. To determine the most suitable location several potential sites in the Galle district were analyzed using specific biological indicators such as greenery, air quality, biodiversity, noise levels, and accessibility. After assessment of indicators, Jungle Beach scored high, for the study site. The model proposes the construction of a nature-integrated yoga shala to align with core concept of harmonizing nature, culture, and healing tradition. It includes several Eco-sensitive features mainly, open circular yoga platform, water pond with fish therapy, meditation zone in stone paved forest clearing with stony walkways, traditional herbal therapy huts, and Eco-craft center by using cinnamon bark fibers. Each facility is designed to reflect traditional Sri Lankan architecture and Ayurvedic healing values, using sustainable materials and eco-friendly construction practices. The model also incorporates waste management system, water conservation, and locally guided wellness experiences that honor both environmental preservation and cultural heritage. This proposed model can serve as a blueprint for other potential sites across the country. This initiative not only supports the physical and mental well-being of participants but also protects the environment and empowers local communities, and advocates for a mindful tourism approach, positioning Sri Lanka as a global hub for sustainable wellness travel.

Keywords - Yoga, Galle, Green Destination, Jungle Beach, Traditional Sri Lankan architecture

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism has evolved beyond leisure and entertainment to embrace sustainability, wellness, and environmental responsibility. The concept of Green Destinations has gained prominence as a framework that integrates ecological, cultural, and economic sustainability into tourism planning and management. A green destination is defined as a location that actively promotes sustainability by adopting practices and policies aligned with the G.R.E.E.N values. Genuine

and authentic, Responsible and respectful, Economically sustainable, Environment and climate friendly and Nature and scenery friendly. Globally, Green Destinations Standard developed under the Green Destinations Organization serves as a benchmark to assess and certify sustainable tourism destinations. These standards cover areas such as environmental protection, waste management, biodiversity conservation, cultural preservation, and community involvement.

Parallely, Yoga has emerged as a powerful holistic practice that promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Rooted in ancient Indian tradition, yoga emphasizes harmony between the individual and the environment, making it inherently aligned with sustainability principles.

The integration of yoga with green destinations forms a compelling synergy where wellness tourism meets environmental consciousness. Establishing Green Yoga Destinations not only promotes mindful travel but also supports local economies, reduces tourism-related impacts, and cultivates a deeper connection between humans and nature. This research aims to explore the feasibility and model development for establishing Green Yoga Destinations in Sri Lanka, aligning with global sustainability standards while celebrating the island's rich natural and spiritual heritage.

## **2. Literature Review**

Sustainable tourism has emerged as a key response to the environmental and sociocultural challenges caused by mass tourism. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018) defines sustainable tourism as tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It emphasizes three main pillars: environmental integrity, sociocultural preservation, and economic viability. Environmental sustainability in tourism includes minimizing resource consumption, protecting biodiversity, and reducing pollution. Social sustainability focuses on respecting local cultures and enhancing the quality of life for host communities. Economic sustainability ensures that tourism provides equitable benefits, supports local economies, and maintains economic viability over time. Sustainable tourism is not merely about adopting "green" practices but requires embedding sustainability within policy frameworks and ensuring enforcement at the local level. Community participation is viewed as essential to fostering responsible tourism development, empowering local stakeholders, and preserving cultural heritage. In the context of developing countries like Sri Lanka, sustainable tourism presents both opportunities and challenges. The country's rich biodiversity, coastal zones, and heritage sites offer significant potential for Eco-conscious tourism. However, issues such as poor waste management, over-tourism, and lack of regulatory enforcement hinder sustainable progress.

The concept of green destinations has emerged as a global framework to foster sustainability within the tourism industry. It promotes the integration of environmental responsibility, cultural preservation, and community involvement into tourism development and management. This approach is a response to the growing concerns about the negative effects of mass tourism on ecosystems, local cultures, and resource sustainability. A green destination is generally

understood as a place that actively manages its natural and cultural assets through responsible tourism practices. This includes transparent governance, efficient resource use, conservation of biodiversity, and the involvement of local communities in decision-making processes. Green destinations also aim to provide travelers with authentic, locally grounded experiences that benefit both the visitor and the host community. Implementation of sustainable tourism practices requires collaboration among governments, private stakeholders, local communities, and tourists themselves. It involves not only adopting eco-friendly infrastructure and responsible travel behaviors but also embedding sustainability into tourism policies, education, and management frameworks.

Yoga tourism is an emerging branch of wellness tourism that blends physical postures, mental clarity, and spiritual exploration with travel experiences. Travelers engaging in yoga tourism often seek destinations that promote inner peace, personal transformation, and holistic well-being. These journeys typically involve participation in yoga retreats, teacher training courses, or wellness-centered programs held in calm, nature-rich environments. Yoga tourists are usually motivated by the desire for mindfulness, stress relief, lifestyle enhancement, and spiritual connection. Unlike conventional tourists, they often prefer eco-friendly accommodations, organic food, and meaningful interactions with local cultures. Their travel choices reflect simplicity, sustainability, and authenticity, positioning yoga tourism closely with the principles of responsible and green tourism. This form of tourism often intersects with broader wellness trends and is commonly found in destinations that offer natural beauty, peaceful surroundings, and cultural depth. The appeal of such destinations lies in their ability to foster personal growth while respecting and preserving the natural and cultural environment. Yoga tourism contributes positively to host communities through economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and environmental awareness. Additionally, it encourages the development of infrastructure that supports sustainable practices and community-based tourism.

The green yoga destination model integrates two growing global trends such as sustainable tourism and yoga tourism to create Eco friendly, health centered travel experiences that foster both environmental stewardship and personal well - being. Integrating both concepts, the green yoga destination model aims to offer a mindful travel experience while preserving the ecological integrity of the host environment. Combining yoga with sustainable practices enhance the authenticity and appeal of wellness destinations, especially in nature rich area. These destinations incorporate natural elements such as open air yoga shala, herbal garden, meditation area, ponds. In Sri Lanka with its cultural richness, biodiversity, and growing interest in wellness tourism, implementing a green yoga destination model could position the country as a leader in Eco conscious wellness tourism in South Asia.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Site Selection And Environmental Assessment

Galle was selected based on its ecological diversity, coastal beauty, historical significance, and growing appeal as a wellness tourism spot.

A detailed site analysis was conducted at the proposed outdoor Green yoga center using observational checklists and environmental indicators such as Greenery and biodiversity, air quality, noise level and accessibility ).

Place in galle District	Greenery and biodiversity	Air quality	Noise level	Accessibility
Jungle Beach	95%	95%	90%	70%
Rumassala	90%	90%	85%	65%
Unawatuna	70%	85%	60%	90%
Talpe	65%	80%	80%	85%
Bentota Beach	75%	85%	70%	95%

*(The percentages are estimations based on available information )*

Considering above key environmental indicators Jungle Beach in the Galle district has been selected as the most appropriate site for establishing a Green yoga destination.

#### 3.2 Planing of the Green Yoga Destination Model



*(Created by using Gemini AI Tool)*

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Main Features</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.Yoga Shala	Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Circular natural wooden platform ( symbol of wholeness).</li> <li>● Use organic cotton yoga mats.</li> <li>● Elevated yoga shala slightly to prevent moisture damage.</li> </ul>
	Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In day time use natural sun light</li> <li>● For evening sessions and dark weather use solar lamps.</li> </ul>
	Ceiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wooden beams paneling on ceilings</li> </ul>
	Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cross ventilation through open area.</li> <li>● Ceiling mounted eco friendly fans for dry season.</li> </ul>
	Furnishings and Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wooden shelves with yoga props such as blocks, straps, bolsters.</li> <li>● Storage for mats and blankets made from recycled materials.</li> <li>● Water station with clay pots</li> <li>● Indoor plants like snake plant, aloe vera, and peace lily for air purification.</li> </ul>
2.Pond and Fish Therapy Area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Man made pond around the yoga shala with clean water</li> <li>● Add Garr rufa fish for foot therapy ( in separate shallow section).</li> <li>● Create a small waterfall at the edge of the pond to maintain the oxygenation in the pond</li> </ul>
3.Stony Meditation Area		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use large flat stones in a circular formation under trees.</li> </ul>
4.Traditional Herbal Therapy Hut	Structural Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Built with Eco friendly materials like clay, mud bricks, bamboo,thatched roof (coconut palm, illuk grass ).</li> <li>● Natural ventilation and lighting</li> <li>● Low seating and earthy tones for a calming ambiance.</li> </ul>
	Interior zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Herbal preparation area - wooden shelves with dried herbs, grinding stone, traditional vessels, pestel and mortar.</li> <li>● Therapy area - stone slab for treatments like oil massage ( Abhyanga ), herbal packs.</li> <li>● Steam therapy corner - small herbal steam chamber for steaming.</li> <li>● Foot soak station - clay pots for herbal foot therapy.</li> </ul>
	Herbal display and storage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Display of locally grown and dried herbs.</li> <li>● Hanging bundles of herbs for aroma and decor.</li> </ul>
	Additional facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clay pots for herbal oils and decoction.</li> <li>● Clay stove for boiling herbal decoction.</li> <li>● Eco hand washing station</li> <li>● Natural flooring - polished mud with herbal infusion like turmeric or neem for antiseptic properties.</li> </ul>

5.Eco Craft Hut	Eco craft hut design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Made from sustainable materials like bamboo, coconut timber, clay walls and a thatched roof.</li> <li>● Natural ventilation with shaded workspace.</li> <li>● Flooring- polished mud</li> </ul>
	Cinnamon fiber processing area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soaking tubs- for softening cinnamon bark</li> <li>● Drying racks- for sun drying softened fiber.</li> <li>● Hand tools - for scraping, twisting and refining the fiber manually.</li> </ul>
	Bag making section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hand looms frames for crafting the bag structure.</li> <li>● Sewing corner- using Eco friendly thread and natural dyes.</li> <li>● Decor section- with coconut shell buttons, wooden beads, and herbal stamped prints.</li> </ul>
	Educational display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Informative panels - showing steps fro cinnamon bark to finished bags.</li> <li>● Live demo area- for tourists to observe or participate.</li> </ul>
	Product display and sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small sales counter to display finished Eco bags, pouches, bookmarks.</li> <li>● Recycled paper packaging for sustainable takeaway.</li> </ul>
6.Additional Features	Walkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● use stones paths connecting all zones ( stones pathways give massage to the foot)</li> </ul>
	Small tanks for rain water collection	
	Changing Rooms with Eco friendly composting Toilets,Hand washing station. and Shower areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● provide simple cabanas made of woods</li> </ul>
	Waste managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● segregated bins ( organic, recyclable, non-recyclable)</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Actions Taken To Maintain The Health Of Nature And Participant

#### Actions To Protect Nature

- Preservation of Natural environment

Each participant plants a small plant in the surrounding area to contribute to a zero carbon environment

- Use of Eco friendly materials ( woods, stones) for the yoga platform, fish therapy area and pond
- Create a small waterfall to maintain the oxygenation in the pond
- Rain water collection system and solar panels were installed to minimize the use of external resources
- Proper waste separation system and composting system were established to handle biodegradable and non biodegradable waste

### **Action To Ensure Participant's Health**

- Clean toilets, hand washing stations, and shower area by using natural cleaning agents
- Boiled drinking water was provided in clay dispensers
- Daily meditation, pranayama and mindfulness session were included to support mental health
- Provide Ayurveda based wellness consultations
- A trained first aid team and herbal emergency response kits were made available on site

### **4. Findings**

1. The research revealed that Sri Lanka has significant potential to develop a sustainable, Eco conscious yoga tourism model that integrates wellness, environmental preservation, and community participation.
2. After evaluating several sites in the southern coastal region using key environmental indicators, jungle beach in Galle was identified as the most suitable location.
3. Creating a Yoga Shala with minimal environmental impact using natural materials, solar lighting, rainwater harvesting, and Eco-toilets proves feasible.
4. Elements like circular yoga platforms, fish therapy ponds, and stony walking zones enhance the healing experience.
5. Measures such as waste separation, composting, energy conservation, and educational programs support the green destination criteria established by global institutions. Regular monitoring is necessary to maintain these standards.
6. The blend of yoga, nature, and sustainability positions Sri Lanka as a unique wellness destination. This model not only boosts tourism but also promotes mindfulness, health, and ecological responsibility.
7. As part of the zero waste initiative, the green yoga destination model incorporates cinnamon bark waste sourced from nearby spice gardens in Galle district. This not only helps in waste reduction but also promotes local circular economy practices.
8. This model can be adapted to other Eco-sensitive zones across the country, encouraging a network of green wellness hubs under a unified sustainable tourism strategy.

## **4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

This research successfully establishes that developing a green yoga destination model in Sri Lanka, specifically at jungle beach in Galle, is a viable and impactful approach to promote sustainable wellness tourism. Through environmental assessment, stakeholder engagement, and cultural integration, the study highlights how Eco conscious yoga tourism can create a balanced relationship between nature, community, and health.

The model not only preserves and utilizes natural resources mindfully but also uplifts local communities through Eco crafts, traditional therapies, and employment opportunities. The integration of yoga, herbal healing and Eco friendly design elements like a yoga shala, therapy hut, fish therapy pond, and craft hut reflects harmony between spiritual well being and ecological sustainability

In conclusion, this green yoga destination framework serves as a replicable tourism model that can be expanded to other regions in Sri Lanka and beyond, helping the country align with global sustainability goals while preserving its cultural heritage and natural beauty.

## **Recommendations**

1. **Policy Integration:**  
Authorities should integrate green yoga tourism into national tourism and environmental policies to promote sustainable development.
2. **Infrastructure Guidelines:**  
Establish clear eco-friendly construction guidelines (e.g., natural materials, waste management, water conservation) for future yoga retreats.
3. **Community Engagement:**  
Actively involve local communities in training, employment, and management to ensure sustainability and socio-economic upliftment.
4. **Environmental Monitoring:**  
Set up continuous monitoring of air quality, biodiversity, water use, and waste disposal to maintain green destination standards.
5. **Certification & Standards:**  
Work with green tourism organizations (e.g., Green Destinations, EarthCheck) to certify the yoga site as an official Eco-tourism destination.
6. **Awareness & Education:**  
Conduct educational workshops for tourists and locals about Eco-conscious behavior, Ayurveda, yoga, and conservation.
7. **Research Expansion:**  
Encourage further research to test this model in other biodiversity-rich areas in Sri Lanka, such as Ella, Arugam Bay, or Knuckles.
8. **Eco-Product Development:**  
Promote the production of eco-friendly souvenirs (e.g., cinnamon fiber bags) and traditional herbal products within the yoga destination.
9. **Digital Promotion:**  
Use digital platforms to promote the destination, highlight its sustainability efforts, and attract responsible global tourists.
10. **Regular Review & Feedback:**  
Implement a feedback system from visitors and stakeholders to continuously improve the model and adapt to emerging needs.

These recommendations aim to ensure that the Green Yoga Destination remains sustainable, culturally respectful, and economically beneficial in the long term.

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