The impact of corporate sector involvement in heritage conservation:
The case study of Dilmah Ceylon Tea Company PLC.

Dilhan C. Fernando, Dilmah Tea, Sri Lanka
OVERVIEW

Dilmah’s Scope of Engagement
Our Evolution: Business is a Matter of Human Service

- Ceylon Tea - *Camelia sinensis*
- 150-year old tradition - artisanal style demands expertise
- Preserving tea history and tradition

“Sri Lanka has been able to do an incredible job in marketing their tea and Dilmah is the first brand from South Asia to achieve the kind of scale it has.”

The Economic Times, August 2018, India
Ethics

Merrill J. Fernando Charitable Foundation fulfills the vision of the Dilmah Founder, Merrill J. Fernando to make business a matter of human service through its multifaceted projects aimed at addressing the foremost challenges faced by the underprivileged and marginalised communities.
Sustainability

The environment is central to Dilmah’s business, and Dilmah Conservation was established as an affirmation of this core commitment to environmental sustainability.
From tea to conservation of cultural and natural heritage

Opportunity created:
OBJECTIVE:
Fact based responsible
heritage conservation and education
Objective: Fact based responsible heritage conservation and education

**Tools and Methods**

- Collecting primary and secondary data
- Questionnaires
- On-site skill development
- Scientific research
- Social media metrics analysis
- Participatory approaches
- Livelihood and capacity development
- Establishing private-public sector partnerships
Conservation of Indigenous and Traditional Cultures and Knowledge

Protection of Cultural Minorities

Ahikuntaka Gypsy Community

Indigenous Veddah Community

Traditional Pottery Art

Indigenous Medicinal Practices

Agricultural Heritage

Safeguarding and Promotion of Traditional Knowledge
Conservation of Natural Heritage

Establishing a Nature Corridor adjacent to Sinharja WHS

Documenting Sri Lanka’s understudied caves
KEY INSIGHTS AND LESSONS LEARNED
Affordable and Informative Publications

Knowledge sharing to create an increased awareness on cultural heritage
Scientific Publications

• Research at Endana Nature Corridor (adjacent to Sinharaja WHS)
• Ahikuntaka baseline survey
• Created opportunities for students and young scientists

Provides scientific recognition while adding value to the work conducted- which may also be replicated by other organizations

Patterns of Tree Diversity in Relation to Disturbance Regimes in a Tropical Secondary Lowland Rainforest

Kahawatta, Ratnapura District, Sri Lanka

A. A. D. Sandamali¹, D. I. D. S. Benaragama¹, Srimal Rathnayake¹ and Nalaka Geekiyana⁴

¹Department of Plant Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Piliyankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.
²Department of Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Piliyankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

Degraded secondary forests are highly heterogeneous in terms of existing vegetation and resource availability. Comparative analysis of this heterogeneity makes it easier to apply standard sets of restoration strategies across various spatial scales. We studied

Characterization of Soil Chemical and Physical Properties Supporting to Forest Restoration

In Endana Tea Estate, Kahawaththa, Sri Lanka

N. G. Sriyani¹, D. M. S. Duminda¹, R. A. A. S. Rathnayaka¹ and Nalaka Geekiyana⁴

¹Department of Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science
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Spatial characterization of soil properties is an initial step in forest restoration process. This study was conducted to explore soil spatial variability in a forest restoration site of Endana Estate, Kahawaththa, Sri Lanka. A land use map and digital elevation models
**Educational Centers and Heritage Exhibitions**

Investing in better interpretation enabled us to achieve diverse outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage Centre Moratuwa</th>
<th>Endana Field Station</th>
<th>Pottery Centres</th>
<th>Ahikuntaka Resource Centre - Kudagama</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exclusive interpretation of heritage</td>
<td>Dedicated to researching the biodiversity of the adjacent Sinharaja World Heritage Site</td>
<td>Aided in conflict resolution between local communities and Institutional entities</td>
<td>Economic upliftment of communities through traditional art</td>
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Field Based Educational Programmes

Facilitating participatory approaches to channel expert knowledge with others provides the space for sustainable heritage conservation.

Medicinal Plant Conservation
Provides innovative interpretation methods for better knowledge sharing

Education on Agricultural Heritage
Illustrates how we can utilize ancestral knowledge and practice to create a more sustainable future

Cave Research
Identify and characterize key sites for conservation in terms of their biological, economic and cultural values
Cultural Programmes and Products

Commemorating significant events of minority groups to recognize their identity while bringing them together in an empowered collective decision making process.

Veddah Varigasabha
The first communal gathering in Eastern Sri Lanka which brought the East Coast Veddahs in contact with other members of the indigenous community

Ahikuntaka Varigasabha
First communal gathering of the gypsy community in 60 years
Cultural Programmes and Products

Creating a market for heritage while being respectful of tradition is an indirect way of protecting and conserving heritage.

Traditional Sri Lankan First Aid Box
Preserving dying traditions through corporate involvement

Mankada Pottery
Creating a market niche for traditional livelihood practices for native communities ensures the preservation of heritage
Effective Communication

- **Print** - Newspaper, booklets, brochures
- **Audio-visual communication tools**
- **Websites**
- **Social media**
- **Online database – Heritage tools/History of Ceylon Tea**
Digital media provides an environment to take the “past forward”

- Increases connectivity with the younger generation: permits the creation of an interest niche on heritage and its conservation

- Analysis of social media metrics is critical for effective communication on the available platforms
Creation of a holistic brand—a multilateral approach involving all stakeholders
Way Forward
• A family business, based on a sincere commitment to family values shoulders an obligation to humanitarian interventions and conservation.

• Integrating aspects linked to inequality, climate change and other fundamental aspects of life, to core business.

• Cultural values are linked directly with the success of your core business.
Branding
‘Heritage’
Conservation and Beyond

Focusing on the importance and heritage value of agricultural produce that aligns with the core business

By establishing a proprietary brand that consumers associate with desirable qualities, we have been able to “create” a market for the produce.

Establish an identity for heritage beyond touristic value.

Placing an indirect use value on heritage with “No Compromise on Traditions”

Allows the protection of an entire culture and way of life that has evolved and revolves around the product.
References

• The Economic Times, August 2018, India
Collaborators and Affiliations

- Dilhan C. Fernando
- Asanka Abayakoon
- Mariyam Begum
- Shamodi Nanayakkara

- Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Reid Avenue, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka
- Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Sri Jayawardanapura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.
For centuries, problems of mankind have been solved over a cup of tea whether they were problems between nations, amongst businesses, even in families, between husbands and wives, tea has been the soothing balm that helped their solution. The simple act of pouring a cup of tea is, in itself, an ice-breaker, providing pleasurable anticipation of the goodness that is to follow. I have dedicated my life towards providing that cup: not only to solve problems but to add sunshine, to our day, with every sip of Dilmah.

Merrill J. Fernando
Founder of Dilmah Tea
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