

# Booking system of the Forest Department

### 2.1 Introduction

The first chapter provides the general overview of the entire thesis. This chapter discusses the background of the Forest Department booking system.

### 2.2 Issues in the Forest Department

Sri Lanka is rich in Bio diversity. It has acquired this status because some areas are of intense bio-geographic value and high species endemism with restricted distribution. In today's world, extinction of flora and fauna is progressing at an alarming rate, although this is a natural process. Awareness among the people about the valuable ecosystems is essential for the conservation of these species. Local people as well as foreigners, all over the world, visit these areas, for recreation and educational purposes.

The Forest Department of Sri Lanka is responsible for the natural forests and plantations. They include some MAB reserves, Biodiversity hotspots as well as a World heritage site [3].

Both Sinharaja and Kanneliya are tropical rain forests located in the southwest of Sri Lanka. They are declared as man and biosphere reserves.

These forests are rich in flora and fauna endemic to Sri Lanka. Sinharaja forest reserve is also considered as one of the world heritage sites [3, 4]. From an ecological point of view Kanneliya with Dediya and Nakiyadeniya forests form a single block of tropical rain forest (KDN forest complex). They are being treated as single forest reserves for administrative convenience. A forester is appointed to each forest to look after it by the forest department. He works under the Beat Forest Officer. District Forest officers are appointed for each district in Sri Lanka. The Conservator of Forest is the top level person in the forest department hierarchy.

The manual booking system for those visiting these areas is currently operated by the Forest Department Head office. The Sinharaja Booking Unit of the Forest Department practices this manual system. There are no facilities in the District offices, to elicit information about bookings or even about the cost of a ticket. A computerized database is not handled and bookings are through reference to their book.

The need for an automated database system has arisen for the forest Department. There is an information centre at the Forest Department. They do not have a web site for the dissemination of the information. Leaflets, potted plants, posters are sold in the information centers at the main office. Only some leaflets about some sites are sold in the other branches of the Forest Department.

A website is maintained in the Department of Wildlife Conservation of Sri Lanka to publicise the areas they need to be protected. They also do not have an automated booking system. They are responsible for National Parks, Elephant corridors etc. Their aim is different from that of the Forest Department. Nobody has attempted to create a web site for the Forest Department and provide a solution for the time consuming, inefficient, inconvenient, manual booking system of the Forest Department.

Above data were gathered from various people through an interview (Appendix B) by the existing manual booking system in the Forest Department of Sri Lanka.

### **2.3 Current approach**

The current website has attempted to solve this real problem and to gradually replace the manual booking system which is inconvenient to Sri Lankans in suburban areas and to foreigners.

### **2.4 Problem in detail**

The user needs to come to the head office of the Forest Department, at Rajamalwatta in Battaramulla for each booking and to get information on sites. Some have to remain in the waiting list. Users are given forms to fill in their information. Users are never able to get a booking in the course of a day. They have to spend a day to get information and forms (Appendix C) to fill. Forms should be certified by a known officer of the Forest Department. For Schools, a list of participants certified by the Principal is needed. For this purpose users need to come to the head office at least two days, and this is a time consuming task. Provincial branches do not take responsibility for bookings. Users cannot even get information from the Provincial branches. Therefore it is important to design an automated system where users can receive accommodation and tickets at his/her home or workplace in view of this inconvenience. The current website attempts to

solve a real problem and to replace the present manual booking system which is inconvenient to Sri-Lankans in suburb areas and foreigners gradually.

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter discusses various approaches to solve the major problems in the Forest Department and identified problems which have still not been solved. More importantly, the problem of not having an on line booking system has been identified. The next chapter will discuss web technology as a new approach to the solution of this problem.



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