



DHARAVANDHOO

B A A A T O L L

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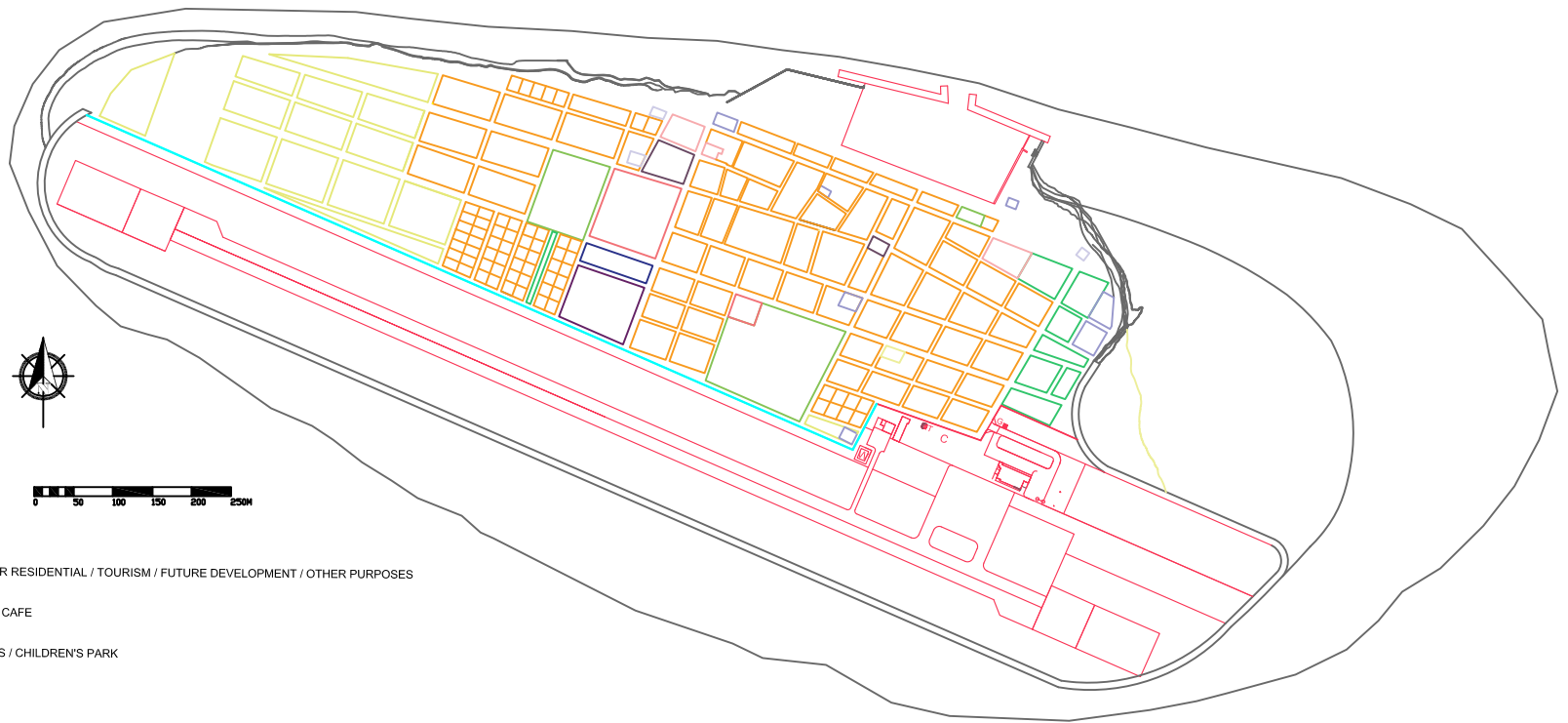
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Introduction

Dharavandhoo is one of the populated islands of Baa Atoll, Maldives. Even though the island is not so huge in area, there are several specialities about the island. We can see the developments of Dharavandhoo day by day. Their education system, Health services and other public services are also at a good standard comparing most of the other islands and is being improved with the time. Also Dharavandhoo is very well known among divers globally and is a very popular destination among tourists, as Dharavandoo is surrounded by clear waters known as 'Dharavandhoo Thila' and 'Hanifaru Bay'. These waters provide a safe haven for marine life including Mantas, Whale Sharks. The people of the island is well known for their respect for their culture and for their hard work for their living. Moreover the people have a very friendly and respectful behavior towards their visitors. We will give a little more detail about all these things and more about Dharavandhoo in the coming pages of the book.



Map of B.Dharavandhoo



- RESERVED LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL / TOURISM / FUTURE DEVELOPMENT / OTHER PURPOSES
- RESIDENTIAL AREA / CAFE
- FOOTBALL STADIUMS / CHILDREN'S PARK
- GREEN ZONE
- ATOLL SCHOOLS
- CEMETRY
- MOSQUE
- CNLC
- GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION
- COMMUNICATION TOWERS
- UTILITY ZONE
- HARBOUR AND AIRPORT

HISTORY

Early Settlement

While it is unknown when exactly the first settlers of Baa.Dharavandhoo came, it is said that people from Baa.Maalhos were the first. They migrated to Dharavandhoo because of its pure and sweet water. According to the locals, people first settled in the southern side of the island. It was during the 1950s that people started settling towards the northern side.

Though there isn't any evidence or recorded history of origins, folklores mention about a woman named *Bibi* who came to the island with her forty children. There used to be her *Ziyaaraiy* at the island but was later on ruined and built on eventually.

However, the area where the '*midhili* trees' were grown, it was an area where settlement could not take place. Evidence of people living all over the island is present except for the area near the main mosque of Dharavandhoo known as 'The *Hukuru Miskiy*'.

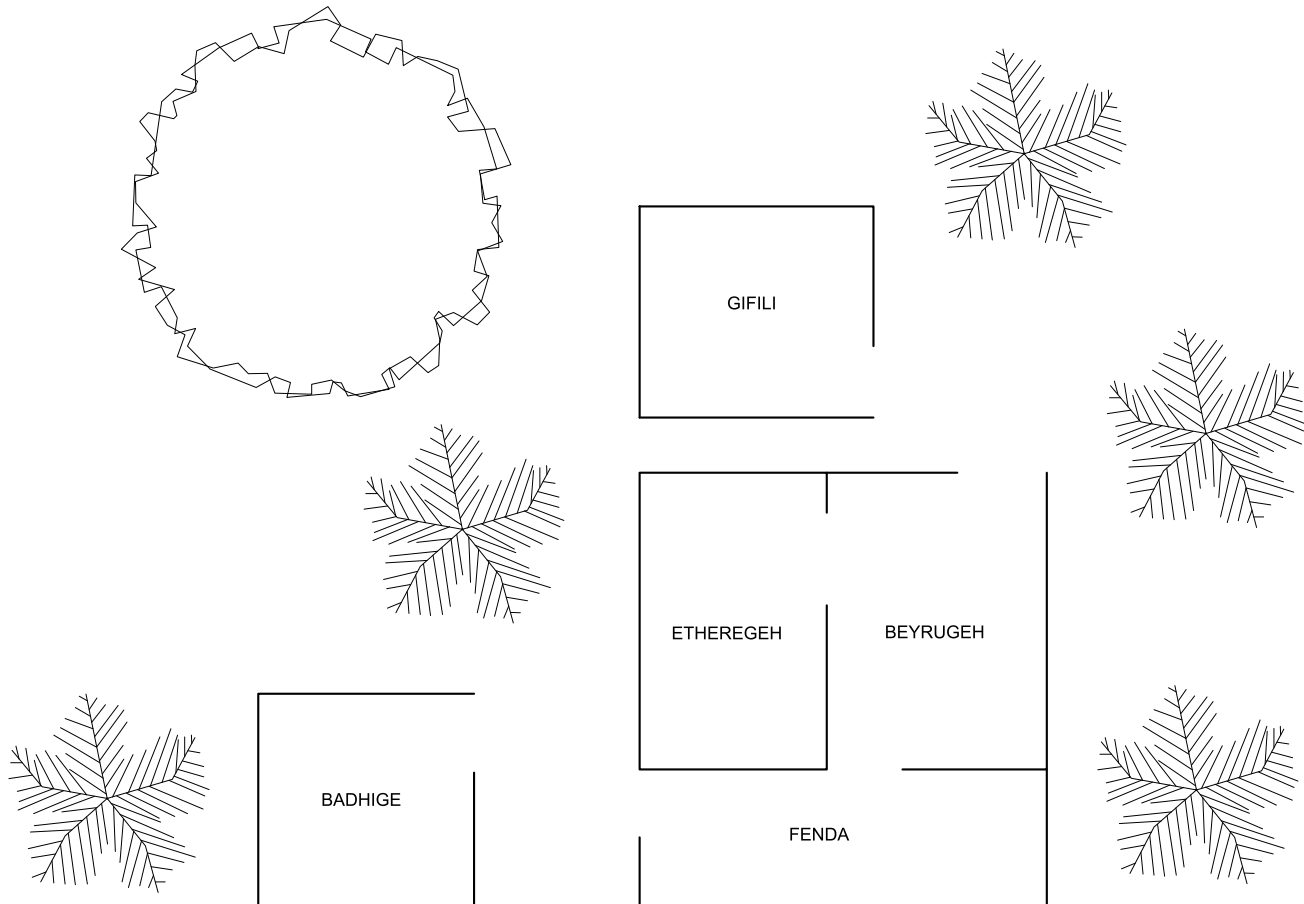
Land was abundant in ancient times so it was previously assigned to people according to how much vegetation was cleared by them and the spacing between the houses were such that when a huge fire took place it cleared the whole island. This fire was known as '*Bodu Hulhu*'.



Traditional housing methods

Traditional houses in B.Dharavandhoo were built using locally available materials like timber, coral stones, lime stone and mainly thatch. The houses have a large plot and only required spaces are built. The houses were oriented towards *qiblah*.

The house plan in a traditional Dharavandhoo house consist of *fenda*, *etheregeh*, *beyrugeh*, *gifili* and *badhige*. The kitchen(*Badhige*) is always separated from the house to prevent any fire outburst. The plot have lots of trees to prevent sun islands.



Folk Stories

There are no records of when exactly people started living in Dharavandhoo. All we can say is it was a long time ago, based on the stories and some facts. There were old graves on different areas of the island and many house wrecks in the jungle which are believed to be many years old after it was abandoned.

STORY #1

Fifteen years ago, Dharavandhoo wasn't developed and had a low population. Also the facilities such as transportation and electricity were limited. A large area was uninhabited and covered with jungle.

Back then, one of the main work people did in order to earn money was selling woven coconut leaves. The leaves were collected from the deep jungle. In this manner, one fine day a women went to the jungle to collect coconut leaves for weaving them. She was collecting the leaves as usual until she felt like someone is pulling to the leaves from behind. But still she first thought, it was just a thought since she was alone and didn't give much interest and carried on with the work. After a while, she turned to take something and realized someone wearing a long red libaas (traditional dress) was standing beside her kind of staring at her. She saw her face and she knew she wasn't someone from the island. She knew it wasn't something normal and so she didn't even wait for a minute. She just quickly walked out from the jungle. Fifteen years ago, the transportation facilities were not developed so it is unbelievable that a foreigner would just appear so sudden. Even if a foreigner visited to the island, almost everyone would be aware of their presence. Moreover, why would a lady just stand in the middle of the jungle alone?

STORY #2

One fine day, on the beach side some ladies were making coconut husk fiber from coconut husk. The things were going very normal until a 'fureytha' appeared from the deep sea. They first saw the head and as it came nearer the body was clearly appearing. The creature was hideous. Everyone started screaming and running leaving everything to save their own selves. All the ladies barely escaped except for a pregnant lady who couldn't catch up with the others. She cried for help but no one was able to help her. The creature grabbed her and started eating her alive.

Those who escaped went asking for help from the islanders. As soon as they knew about the news everyone rushed to help. An old man arranged some kind of a dark magic. With the risk of dying he faced it with the help of the other citizens of the island. As the creature was huge and strong, he couldn't kill it, but was able to curse it away as it wouldn't be able to come back to the island ever. By the time they reached the beach only half of the head was left without being eaten. They buried her head and carried out her funeral. No one has seen the creature ever since.

STORY #3

According to Jaufar, *Bibi* was an immigrant. She first married a person from Kelaa and had her first child. After she got divorced with her husband, at Kelaa, she moved to Ba.Dharavandho and married a person from there and got settled in the south west side of the island. Years passed and now *Bibi* was the mother of 40 children (although some say that not all those kids were her children).



One day during *hukuru* prayer time, while *Bibi* was hanging cloths to dry, *Bibi* was visited by Eudhafushi *bodu Mohamed bey*. He asks *Bibi* about the 40 *fosha* she was hanging and who it belonged to. Then he asked whether all of her children were healthy and if anybody has passed away. Few days after the strange encounter *bibi's* children started getting sick and some of them passed away. During this time *Bibi* was informed that her son at *kela* was also sick and is in critical condition.

Bibi decided to go to *kela* and bring her son home to Ba.Dharavandhoo. But no one agreed to take her to *kela* so she starts the journey to *kela* by herself. She broads to a nearby island named *Dhafanu* to see whether she gets any volunteers but sadly she didn't get any even from there. Then she goes to *kiha dhoo* and luckily got two volunteers from there.

Finally, *Bibi* reaches *kela* and starts the journey back to Ba.Dharavandhoo with her son. But by the time they reached *shaviyani* atoll her son died. Two days later, the smell of her dead son's body had become contiguous. So, she stops at a nearby island and takes *Dhonkashikeyo* to neutralize the rotten smell.

After days of travel she finally reaches Ba.Dharavandhoo. While she was away even more of her children had passed away and eventually all of them passed away. The tomb stones of her sons are still found in the area.

Some other stories

- Gadi ekolhukolhun jehun

Higher authorities decided that the grandfather clock that was kept in one of their meeting arenas looked much better being upside down rather than its actual way.

- Neru hihkun

They fixed a big oil can into the ocean floor and tried filling the can by pumping concrete.

Transport

There are two ways in which we can travel to the island. Either with sea transport or air transport. We can say the transport systems to the island is good and easy.

Dharavandhoo Airport

Dharavandhoo Airport was commenced on 17th October 2012 and is a domestic airport which helps the visitors or people to travel to the island more easily. The airport is mainly operational to two airlines, Flyme and Maldivian. There are 12-13 flights on a normal basis, where the latest flight arrives at around midnight.

The airport consists of an ATM, Lounge, Dhiraagu hut and accommodation for manager, staff and police.

They initially started with a total of 50 employees, where 95% of the staff were estimated to be from Dharavandhoo. The safety of the airport is managed by MNDF.



Dharavandhoo Airport

Travelling To The Island By Ferry

Ferry services were introduced to the island few years back. The service made the travel easy and cheap to the nearby islands. There are no boats of Dharavandhoo in and out from the island to the capital, but can travel by sea on boats of other islands and some speed launch services nearby. This is said to be due to the start of airport service and as the demand for sea travel went down. Anyways, most of the people use ferry service to travel to the nearby islands everyday.

Transportation inside the island

To travel inside the island, there are taxi services in the island. As the island is not huge in area, most of the people prefers to walk to the places but some people owns bicycles and motor vehicles too.

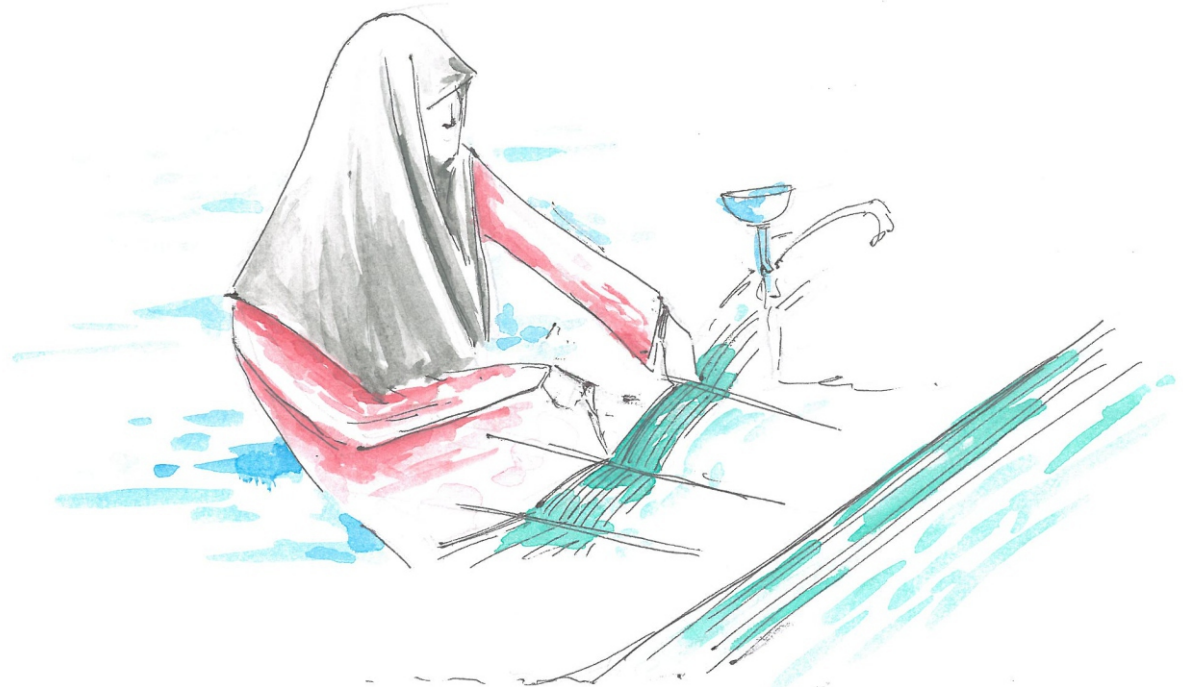
Economy

The people of dharavandhoo is known as very hardworking for their living.

- Weaving coconut leaves (*Fangi Vinun*)

A bundle of these woven leaves is usually made by combining around 4 pieces of woven leaves. Mostly woven leaves are supplied to the resorts where it is used to make houses, as it gives a very good aesthetic look. In earlier years, the price range of a bundle was between RF20 to RF30. However, as the tourism sector is getting wider and due to high demand for the product the price of a bundle now is above RF80. Even though the prices are raised, people who does the work is getting fewer day by day. The reason that is said to be is that the work is hard and there are easier job opportunities available now. Two

types of weaving were done back then. The first one was *feyli viyun* (weaving mats using *kashikeyo faiy*), and the other one was *fangi vinun*.



- Fishing

Since Maldives is surrounded by sea, from the very beginning, fishing was the most common work done for living. Like any other Maldivian island the men of Dharavandhoo used to rise earlier than the sun and head out in the ocean in hopes of catching fish.

Fish products are one of the few items that are exported from the Maldives to the foreign countries in order to earn an income. Years back people used to go fishing on sailing boats as technology developed they have shifted to using engine vessels.

In this generation, younger people sees fishing as strenuous and low-graded occupation. Hence, they choose other job opportunities, like in tourism sector which they believe are easy. Even though fishing is not that popular among younger people in present days, it is still popular among middle aged and older people.

In Dharavandhoo, fishing seems to be much more less compared to the other islands and is likely to vanish in upcoming years. There are only two fishing boats, both with very few number of people working in them.



- Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the most common economical field in all around the Maldives. Intensive crop farming was one of the main occupation of Dharavandhoo ancestors. They used to have four huge farms to grow binbi. The food last until the next harvesting. In previous years, the rent for the land used for agricultural purposes was nil or very less. So almost every family had a land for farming. By then, they made a huge profit with the work and that was enough to fulfill their living needs. But nowadays, due to high payments of the land, they do not get enough profit from the work. Therefore, most of the families gave up farming and switched to other kinds of works.

Vegetation

Different types of trees are found all around Dharavandhoo. Each block where the locals lived had at least 3 or 4 Banbukeyo (Bread fruit trees), Hithi gas (Neem Tree) and Madhoshi which was used as food and shade. The vegetation area where the locals named 'as the Jungle area' had copious amounts of Madhu gas, Nika gas (Banyan tree), Kashikeyo Gas, Pine and Funa. Palm trees were found in abundance all over the island. Kunnaru Gas (Indian Jojeba tree), Feyru, Muranga gas, Hirundhu gas and falho gas were found less in common. Two mango trees were observed and Sakkeyo (Jack fruit trees) was not found in Dharavandhoo.



- Guest house

As tourism sector in the Maldives is getting wider, guest house business is highly increasing in the island.

There are around total of 80 rooms in all guest houses combined. There are also several higher standard guest houses built in the island. The business is likely to get more common in Dharavandhoo in coming days, as there is a high demand from the tourists visiting.

Many from the younger generation have started working in this field as it provided many job opportunities and a chance to get a good income by staying in the island. The people of the island believes that guesthouse business is a positive change to the island as it supports other businesses that runs in the island.

- Raaverikan

In the earlier days there were around eleven raaverins in Dharavandhoo and selling dhiyaa hakuru (which is a product of raa) was a profitable business.



Tourism

Dharavandhoo is now heading to a fully-fledged local tourism. Currently the island has 11 guest houses and there are approximately 5 resorts nearby.

Due to the inauguration of Dharavandhoo airport in 2012, the demand for tourism market started booming in the island and soon Dharavandhoo became the main hub tourism in the B. atoll. As a result, large numbers of job opportunities were created and the level of income increased significantly.

The main asset of local tourism of Dharavandhoo, is the B. atoll biosphere reserve. Most famously the 'Hanifarufu' bay nearby Dharavandhoo. It is a protected marine area populated by whale sharks and manta rays. This also led to establish diving centers in Dharavandhoo as tourists are eager to see the marine life.



Food

There are some special food items of the island which were made only in Dharavandhoo and few others which are also made in some other island too, but with a little change.

The most common one is *Ahtha paaparu*, which was introduced to the island by an old lady. It was a really common food item in previous years, but now it's only made for some special occasions or days only. Moreover, it was also made for business purposes and was exported to other islands. It was said that there was a high demand for the item as it was only made in Dharavandhoo.

Some other known food items made in the island were *Ulhaali*, *kulhi roshi* and *tharafana*. These food items are also made in some other islands too.

Health

Back in days there were no hospitals. Women in labour were helped by mid-wives and if anyones gets sick, they are helped by a well-known health assistant called *hakeem*.

STO has established a pharmacy in B. Dharavandhoo on the 31st of December, 2014. The establishment is an initiative by STO, in association with the government to provide easy healthcare services throughout all populated islands in the Maldives. STO has stated that all pharmacies under the project will provide medication under the Aasandha health scheme.

Available facilities in Dharavandhoo Health Centre:

- Laboratory
- Emergency room
- 2 doctors
- 11 nurses
- 1 ambulance
- Pharmacy
- 8 beds

Education

Education Before

When there were no schools, the education system was pretty much the same in all around the maldives. There were usually only one to two people who teaches the whole island who is known as *Edhurube* or *Edhuru dhaita*. Sometimes the job is carried by the island chief. They didn't had much facilities to teach back then. No books, pens or no boards too. They used an own writing method known as *voshifilaa elhun*. They use a wooden rectangular box filled with white sand as a book. They used to write on that sand and then shake it of to erase.



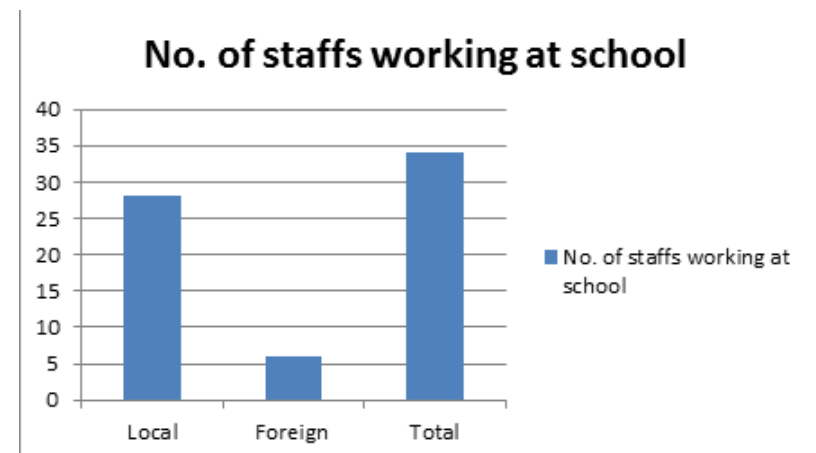


Dharavandhoo School has both primary and secondary grades. It was established in 11th March 1979. Initially the school offered education up to 5th standard which after several years got extended up to 7th standard. In the year 2000, the IGCSE O' levels were introduced in the island which continues till today. There are written rules and regulations for the students to follow that overall all the students obey. In the year 2016, 3 students from the school made it up to the National Top 10 and received the Achievers award. However, no further studies are offered above 10th grade standard in the island, such as A'levels or certificate level course nor diploma courses. Although not much of a difference can be seen in education system of Dharavandhoo when compared with other schools in the atoll, young citizens from the island goes to B. Eydhafushi or comes Male' for quality education and to pursue further studies or career.

Facilities

- 8 toilets
- Computer lab (since 2004)
- Multimedia room
- Air conditioned administrative rooms
- Library
- Science labs
- Sports

16 classrooms (12 usable)



Politics

Since democracy was introduced to Maldives a lot of things has been changing in our small country. Parties with different names came into existence which claims to fight for the rights of the citizens of the Maldives. Even with all the fusses there still are some islands that remain the same. B. Dharavandhoo is one of the islands that did not let the political dramas come between the islanders.

There hasn't been much of a difference in the lives of the islanders even after politics was introduced. The everyday tasks is almost the same. However, it is said that the competition between the supporters of the two highest majority parties, i.e. MDP and PPM, is pretty high during the election. Some supporters from both parties would raise their voices to one another to defend their parties. Despite the arguments, no violence has ever occurred among the islanders. Majority of the people in the island supports the party MDP. The three council members of the island are from the Maldives Democratic Party (MDP).

Before island councillors came into existence there was an island chief to handle everything that happens in the island and represents the islanders. The island chief will be appointed among the islanders. He must at least have the qualification of the island chief which is called 'katheebukamuge sanadhu'. The term of the island chief is on daily basis. Even though there are disagreements on some points this doesn't affect the relationships between the islanders. Moreover no case of corruption has ever come across during this.

Sports

Football is the most popular sport in the island. It plays a special role in the hearts of the islanders, especially males. Currently there is two stadiums to play football. Dharavandhoo won the gold medal in several competitions held in Baa atoll. few players from Dharavandhoo are playing in famous first division teams like New Radiant Sports club.

Second most popular sport among the locals is volley ball which is played by both men and women. Currently there is only one court in the island for both the genders to practice. Recently, women's volley team won atoll championship making it 2 times in a row.

There are many other sports as well such as Bashi and Netball which is played by women. In addition, water sports like diving, jet skiing, windsurfing, water skiing, sailing, parasailing, scuba diving, and snorkeling and adventure sports such as night fishing and big game fishing have become quite popular among the locals as well as tourist after the introduction of local tourism in the island.

Traditional sports are also played especially during Eid and on different special occasions include thin mugoali, Bodumas kulhun, Koadi kulhun, Asrafthaa jehun (Dhigumagu Hingun), bandiya jehun and boduberu jehun. There are youth groups and NGOs formed in the island to develop these cultural sports and activities.

Some of these traditional sports are special to Dharavandhoo while some are popular in all around the Maldives too. Even though these events are popular in all around the Maldives, it is said that Bandiyaa jehun jehun was first introduced to Maldives by Dharavandhoo people. Also some of these events are played differently compared to other islands.

Thuvaali Boalha is a sport which is only played in this island. They use water balloons and some small towels. It will be played among two groups. As one group throws the balloons using the towels the other group have to catch them using the towels. The group who catches more balloons without breaking them wins the game.



Problems arising in B.Dharavandhoo

Dharavandhoo was one of the islands that suffered a lot of damage during the Tsunami that occurred in 2004. Funding and aid was provided by the government to rebuild the island.

Soil Erosion

Red- Soil erosion
Green- Vegetation
Dark Blue- Tide
Cyan- Coral

Poor Waste Management System

There was no sustainable waste management system. Garbage was dumped into an allocated space on one side of the island.



Foreword

The information written in this book are the compiled works of research and interviews with locals and government officials on the island of Baa Dharavandhoo. The students were split into three separate groups, with each group given their own tasks to perform.