

VOL 01 - NOVEMBER 2022

VISION 2voice

MAGAZINE

BOUNDLESS KNOWLEDGE - UNBOUND EXPERIENCE



**“ATTRACT THE RIGHT AUDIENCE
TO THE RIGHT MARKET”**

-MICHAEL APPLETON-
HIGH COMMISSIONER NEW ZEALAND



“WHAT WORKED YESTERDAY MIGHT NOT WORK TOMORROW.
Going Digital is the Key”

HERVE DUBOSCOQ

GENERAL MANAGER
SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO AND ONE GALLE FACE

FEATURED

- Sri Lanka Tourism Expo
- A way forward for Sustainable Tourism
- Rethinking Tourism

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MESSAGE FROM
PROF D.A.C SURANGA SILVA
 Executive Chairman Alumni ATEHM

It is with my great pleasure to send this message for the Trend-Setting MAGAZINE for Sri Lanka Tourism: The "VISION 2 VOICE" as being the Founder and Coordinator of the Tourism Study Program at the Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo and also the Executive Chairman of the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM).

One of the major reasons for the Story of Success of Tourism Study Programmes at the Department of Economics has been the great contribution of the Alumni.

Since the inception of Alumni ATEHM in 2014, which has been showing such a tremendous contribution as one of the outstanding and result-driven knowledge leaders for Sri Lanka Tourism, successfully made a significant contribution through its innovative knowledge products, namely the International Tourism Leaders' Summit (ITLS), International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC), International Buddhist Tourism Conference (IBTC), Sri Lanka Tea Tourism and Culinary Competition (SLTTCC), Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE) and Sri Lanka Tourism Job Fair (SLTJF) for Sri Lanka Tourism.

I trust that the "VISION 2 VOICE" of the Alumni ATEHM will create an impact on strategic, evidenced-based, analytical decision making and innovative management, effective marketing and responsible leadership for taking Sri Lanka Tourism to the pinnacle of global tourism by ensuring more resilient, inclusive and sustainable development of the industry.

With my delighted feeling, on behalf of the University of Colombo I wish to congratulate the Editorial Committee, Contributors, and more specifically for the Publication and Presentation Subcommittee of the Alumni ATEHM for creating this trend setting MAGAZINE 'VISION 2 VOICE' which has been in fact long awaited by the industry. I am sure that the "VISION 2 VOICE" will be a great platform for the academics and professionals to share their synergized knowledge and experiences to magnify the growth and development of Sri Lanka Tourism.

Wish you all the very best..!

Prof D A C Suranga Silva

Executive Chairman

Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management
 (Alumni ATEHM)
 University of Colombo





**MESSAGE FROM
President
- Alumni ATEHM -**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure I present you the first edition of "VISION 2 VOICE" MAGAZINE in benefit of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry of Sri Lanka. It is a humbly proud moment as the publication of "VISION 2 VOICE" MAGAZINE of The Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (AATEHM) marks another milestone by opening its doors to industry stakeholders.

In this fast paced era, the knowledge is as valuable as ever. Unfortunately, not everyone has access to purchase educational reading material due to various factors such as financial, network or sufficient knowledge sharing opportunities. The vision of the AATEHM executive committee is to connect with industry veterans and hospitality educators to share their knowledge to industry stakeholders which comes alive through the VISION 2 VOICE newsletter. Therefore, I am glad that we are able to provide this quarterly compendium of articles and write ups of renowned industry personalities and institutions free of charge to everyone. The advisory board headed by Professor D.A.C. Suranga Silva, editor, steering committee and myself expect this MAGAZINE to serve as a resource of information and knowledge rather than an entertaining literature.

I hope you will enjoy the content on this first issue of our magazine as much as we do and would very much appreciate to receive your feedback, comments and suggestion by e-mails to editor.aatehm@uoc.lk. I would like to encourage you to send us the latest news from your company as well as your own articles for us to be able to publish in the coming issues of this magazine.

Happy Reading!

**Nihal Muhandiram
President**

Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and
Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM)



**MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL SECRETARY
- Alumni ATEHM -**

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management and all the members at this important milestone. It is a timely opportunity for us to find pragmatic and innovative solutions for the students in our respective Tourism Study Program to continue the education at University of Colombo.

The VISION TO VOICE MAGAZINE gives the students of the Tourism Study program and the Alumni yet another opportunity to be connected with various individuals who share their expertise and the knowledge in the global tourism industry.

Especially I take this opportunity to thank Professor Suranga Silva for the continuous support and the 2022/2023 Publication and the Presentation subcommittee for their innovative ideas and the dedication towards the MAGAZINE project as this is a historical juncture for the Tourism Study Programs, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.

**Madushan Jayathilake
General Secretary**

Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and
Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM)

Editor's Note

It is indeed a great honor to be the Chief Editor of the "Vision 2 Voice" and it gives me immense pleasure to launch this first printed edition of the debut MAGAZINE unveiled by the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM) of University of Colombo.



It is indeed a great honor to be the Chief Editor of the "Vision 2 Voice" and it gives me immense pleasure to launch this first printed edition of the debut MAGAZINE unveiled by the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM) of University of Colombo.

This MAGAZINE is an outlet to share the pertinent information of the industry bringing together all the tourism industry experts, academics and students who have a thirst to quench about tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Also, it is a platform generated for all the students to obtain knowledge and for the blooming writers to show up their creativity, writing skills and potentials outside the classroom.

During the challenging time period in the country, it has been undoubtably one of the defying tasks that we decided to do for the very first time. Though it was time consuming, as the team leader, seeing the outcome of the MAGAZINE now make me extremely proud of my subcommittee "Publications and Presentations" for their continuous hard work leading towards the successful outcome of the MAGAZINE. While I sincerely extend my thanks to all my team members, I would like to acknowledge the pillar of strength, Professor (Dr.) Suranga Silva who guided the team from the very initial stage of the development of the MAGAZINE. He has been a mentor directing towards the right path as always. I'm extremely grateful for the outstanding contribution received from him.

As we are all aware Tourism and Hospitality industry in Sri Lanka is trying to rise amidst economic challenges. The Easter Sunday Attack, COVID -19 pandemic and now the economic crisis has made the tourism industry in Sri Lanka in a catastrophic. The calamities generated through the external situations have directly influenced the vulnerabilities the industry has been facing which have directed towards the loss of employment opportunities and shutting down of several businesses. With the current context, the inclusive growth and inclusive development have become driving forces in the world economy. Therefore rethinking, redesigning, and redirecting tourism towards sustainable tourism are the most prominent factors for the development of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka inculcating exposure from the industry, knowledge, values, research, and dissemination.

It is evident that with the current context, amidst different changes that have occurred in the external environment, the business environment now consists of modern management techniques. A solid paradigm shift with strong leadership and good governing bodies and policies will ultimately be able to take the industry into the next stance.

This MAGAZINE is surely an eye opener for the students, industry experts who are eager to collect new knowledge of the industry. For this debut issue, we have included several interviews and articles covering up the theme of "Rethinking Tourism". I'm very confident that all you readers will obtain maximum knowledge by reading this MAGAZINE.

A huge thank to all the writers who took time and effort to write inspiring articles with whose effort the "Vision 2 Voice" is releasing today.

Last but not least I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude towards the President of the Alumni ATEHM Mr. Nihal Muhandiram and his committee for all the support provided to make this a success.

Thank You,

Damsi Dharmaratne

Damsi Dharmaratne

(Chief Editor of "Vision 2 Voice", Editor of Alumni ATEHM)

Vision2Voice

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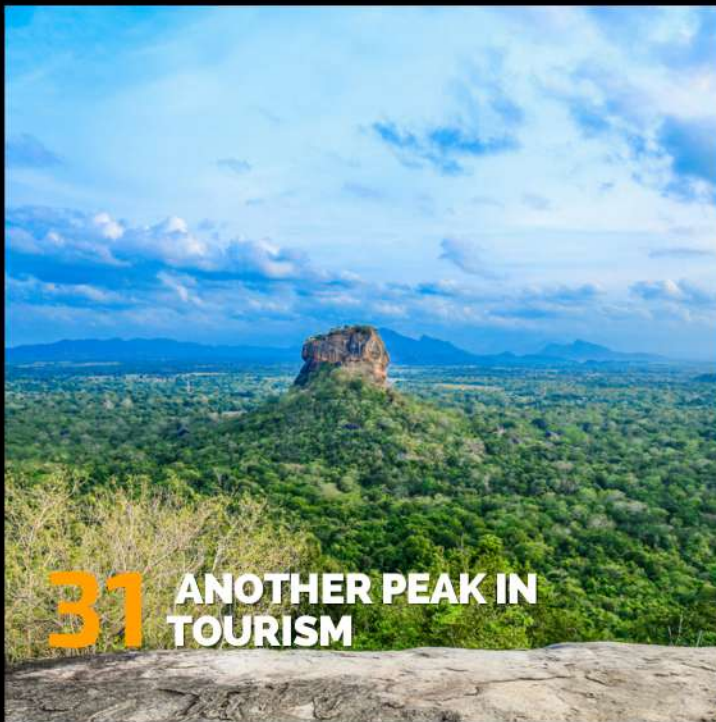
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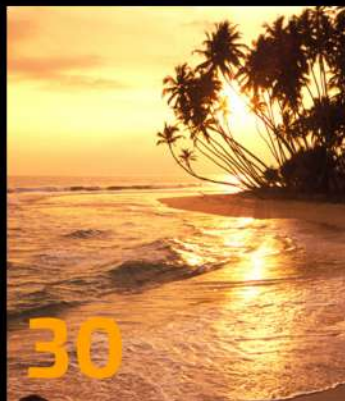
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Rethinking Tourism from Global to Local...



Sri Lanka is a rich country with potential. 26 National parks (including Yala, Minneriya, Kumana, wasgamuwa etc), coastal belt (including Unawatuna, nilaweli, pasikudah.. etc), Mountain range (including Knuckles, central highlands), water bodies (water-falls, rivers, and tanks) and many more potential attractions can be identified under man-made and natural attractions. More than 2500 years of history, tradition, and historical monuments, UNESCO world heritage sites, and events are highlighting Sri Lankan cultural and heritage importance to the sector.

According to CNN Travel and Lonely Planet, Sri Lanka is the world's top destination to travel. International recognized destination attributes in Sri Lanka are creating pull factors for the international tourism market. Also "SO Sri Lanka" is positioned in the market. Composite tourism products and varieties of experiences are available in this destination.

The tourism industry positively impacts on Sri Lankan economy. According to Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority statics, the following information can be identified.

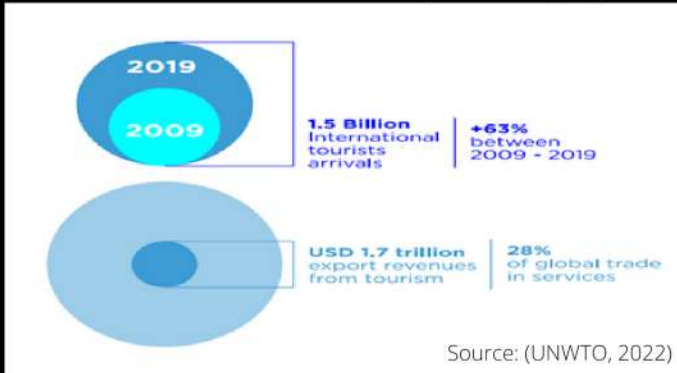
	2018	2019	2020
Number of international tourists to VSri Lanka	2,333,796	1,913,702	507,704
Foreign exchange earning	USD 4380.6 Million	USD 3606.9 Million	USD 682.5 Million
Direct contribution to GDP	4.9 %	4.3%	0.8%
Foreign exchange receipt per tourists per day	USD 173.8	USD 181.2	USD 158.1
Average duration of stay	10.8 Nights	10.4 Nights	8.5 Nights
Total foreign guest nights	25,204,996	19,902,501	4,315,000
Room occupancy rate of graded accommodation	72.77%	57.09%	14.96%
Total Employment generation (Direct & indirect)	388,487	402,607	347,757
Top 05 tourists source markets	India, China, UK, Germany, Australia	India, UK, China, Germany, France	India, UK, Russia, German, China

Source (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Statics Reports - 2018, 2019, 2020)

Rethinking tourism from global to local.. Continue..

The Easter Sunday attack, the COVID-19 pandemic, Existing economic crisis are mainly significant to the Sri Lankan tourism industry. Based on the above information, Sri Lankan tourism illustrate a critical situation from the 2020 year onward. Even though there are so many risk factors for the tourism industry, still we are a rich country with sufficient potential.

When concerning the global tourism industry, the Tourism industry can be identified as a treasurable sector of around US\$ 1.3 billion annually at the international level. It creates one in every ten people job opportunities to enhance their living standards. Before the shock for the tourism industry, UNWTO highlighted the followings.



In the current context, the whole world is suffering from a crisis. Therefore Sri Lanka is one country that is suffering from a crisis especially based on the economic sector. Therefore it's about an overall matter to solve by focusing on possible solutions. The tourism industry and global potential are changing different tourism activities. It may create both positive and negative impacts. People's sustainable actions and climate change is creating considerable changes in the tourism industry.

UNWTO celebrated world tourism day on 27/September/2022 under the Rethinking tourism concept. It's about reassessing every part of the global tourism industry. Also, it clearly emphasizes what we rethink and why we rethink the tourism industry. Because COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis which raised last few years made significant damage to the tourism industry.

Various countries are practicing strategies to overcome existing crises such as innovation, climate action, and financing and investments. Global best practices are most crucial for Sri Lankan tourism because it is positioned developing country which suffered from different crises. This factor also made certain damage to the country's reputation. Therefore isolation and doing alone concepts do not apply to Sri Lanka. As a country, we need to understand the voice of international tourism practices.

Understanding of suitable coordination, preparation of proper mechanisms, guidelines, and policy development to sustain job security in the industry while ensuring trustworthiness for the sector can be identified few examples of UNWTO contribution. Public-private partnerships and knowledge sharing are one of the major strategies to overcome this situation. UNWTO global tourism committee is an example. Based on the committee, building trust and mutual understanding for Promoting Safe and Ethical Tourism can be beneficial for a sustainable future for the tourism industry. Rethinking tourism ethics while ensuring equity for both stakeholders and travelers in tourism, accessibility, protection, human rights and privacy of the tourism customers are making a favorable environment for Sri Lanka.



The understanding critical role of media in the sustainable tourism industry is a critical role. CNN, BBC, and other accurate media channels including social media can change negative perceptions. Also, we should move forward from traditional patterns to eliminate existing circumstances. It's challenging to interpret the media landscape for a country like Sri Lanka. But current preventive actions are the prevailing future for the Sri Lankan tourism industry.

Formulating guidelines to ensure human resources in the tourism industry is a continuous process. Ensuring tourism education with the development of capacities and competencies of tourism professionals is a compulsory activity. (UNWTO - tourism education programs) Because if we consider about Sri Lankan tourism industry, skillful employees leave the industry because of the pandemic. Opening national and international professional opportunities can be an ad-hoc solution for the country.



Rethinking tourism from global to local.. Continue..

Telecommunication and big data analysis are identified as other strategies to rethink tourism. Spain is making Big Data and Artificial Intelligence within the tourism industry. IoT application in the Tourism industry is needed to move further. Additionally, the health sector and tourism sector interconnection within IOT make it convenient for international, inbound tourists.

Effective decision-making processes mainly impact on short-term development of the country. For this process, information sharing creates a valuable effect. For example, more than 30 countries in Europe signed to share their best practices with others, which enhances the competitiveness of tourism by ensuring tourism recovery in the region. South Asian region also can practice the same strategy to make competitiveness of the tourism industry. Financial support can be gained from regional countries to develop the industry for the short-term process. Different financial funding organizations available in the world including World Bank, Asian Bank, etc. with a proper plan and focused area, will be practically applicable to the industry.

Rethinking tourism is not just a concept. Its practical application for Sri Lanka to accelerate the transformation of the tourism industry. When considering UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit, facilitated gathering and knowledge sharing for more than 20,000 global leaders from 180 countries to share information about how to do tourism business. Different global forums and knowledge-sharing sessions are useful for listening to voices of best practices in the competitive countries which are representing the tourism development index. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are hardly hit by crises and pandemics. Sri Lanka is also one of them. Rethinking the tourism concept contributes to sustainable tourism development goals. This means the same time it accelerates SGD and sustainable considerations. Reducing socio-economic consideration of livelihood with female employment, building resilience via diversification, encouragement of SMEs, digital transformation and innovation, green concept, and responsible leading are identified as significant for the above-identified countries. Reboot tourism, resilience, and recovery tourism can be ensured via above mentioned sustainable way. Female employment enhancement is another strategy. UNWTO in partnership with UN Women released a "Inclusive Recovery Guide for Women in Tourism". By referring to various policies and implications, Sri Lanka needs to address the issues raised for female employees in the tourism industry.

UNWTO focusing "Brand Africa" while developing infrastructure, and boosting air transportation connectivity with easy facilities for visa formalities. Safety and security, human capital development, and working with the private sector may challengeable activities to brand Africa. From when concerned Sri Lanka, has already positioned in the tourism market. SO Sri Lanka brand name is popular. It needed to take certain actions to protect SO Sri Lanka's brand name.

The stronger, Greener and More Innovative Tourism concept was implemented by the American region during the rethinking tourism era. Digitalization with innovative business ideas generating sustainable recovery approach.

Also, UNWTO focus to ensure benefits distribution for indigenous peoples in the region by empowering females in the responsible tourism industry. Therefore Sri Lankan locals and indigenous communities can imply a responsible CBT concept for further development of the industry. In the Asia Pacific region, countries and their tourism industries were negatively affected by form pandemic. The enhanced corporation is a suitable strategy to rethink about tourism industry for collaboratively moving forward with the region.

Europe region takes leading to tourism's restart. It centralized with taking leadership, sharing knowledge, collaboratively rethink about resilience recovery, and moving forward from the crisis. Middle East countries are practicing Innovation and Digital Transformation to apply to rethink tourism. This region is made the approach to female and youth employment opportunities within the tourism and hospitality supply chain.

The private sector is the leading sector for the tourism industry in the majority for majority countries. Some countries are practicing with PPP (Public Private Partnerships) for tourism development. Harnessing of the Private Sector to the development of the tourism sector is a crucial factor. Also, both parties can practice a global code of ethics to protect both the host and guests. The understanding industry needs, and listening to industry voices can be identified as good practices.

Existing inflation, food crisis, fuel crisis, transportation matters, electricity, and power matters are also negative for the tourism industry. Therefore when we re-think the tourism industry, we should focus to find sustainable solutions for the above-identified. Marketing and promotion factors are also strategies to rethink and move forward to the future.

Still, Sri Lanka is a rich country with tourism potential. The Sri Lankan tourism industry needs to move forward by listening to global best practices and realistically bringing those practices. The sector cannot realize the pre-pandemic era. Due to this factor, it is the suitable way to drive the tourism industry with a sustainable approach while rethinking people, profit, and planet.



- Author

Sumithra Nandana

MTEHM - BATCH 08





Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management, University of Colombo

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Tourism Study Program

STUDY

Sri Lanka Tourism is on a strive to maintain its resilience amidst of many internal and external shocks. In such circumstances the importance of creative decision making, innovative management, effective marketing and responsible leadership is increasing. In an aim to maintain the industry's prosperity and sustainability, the University of Colombo, the country's pioneer higher education leader takes up the task of developing new breeds of industry professionals and decision makers who combine their industry expertise with excellent academic vigor.

The Economics Department of the University of Colombo offers

multi-disciplinary programmes in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management from Diploma to Masters level with the objective of providing knowledge and skills in an internationally acceptable and competitive manner. They are especially designed to respond to the increasing demand for multi skilled practitioners and professionals who are able to take responsibility for a wide range of complex industry processes in contributing towards the growth of sustainability in the industry. The programmes provide practical and analytical competence in socio- economic, ecological, marketing, managerial, accounting, information technological and legal disciplines related to the the travel and tourism industry.



The programmes are tailor made considering the industry human capital requirements with an aim of creating dynamic professionals. The students are able to assent through the academic stages starting with the Certificate level and continue respectively with the Diploma, Executive Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma to rise upto the Masters level.

Tourism Study Program Continued..

The Certificate Course in Travel and Tour Operation Management (CTTOM) is an academic offering provided by the University of Colombo and Sri Lankan Aviation College (SLAC) in partnership with the Travel Agents Association of Sri Lanka (TAASL) bringing out a unique industry -interactive and professionally recognized academic program that synergizes the strengths of the industry, academia and associations to offer a solid world recognized academic foundation to the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industries. The program open doors for the individuals who wish to pursue attractive careers in Travel and Tourism Industry and groom them in becoming academically sound industry professionals.

The multi-disciplinary diploma level programme of Diploma in Travel, Tourism Economics and Hotel Management offered by the UOC is designed to cater to those who are actively involved in various activities related to the Travel & Tourism Economics and Hotel Management industry. Through a correlative approach to the delivery, the program intends to improve the competencies of the students in meeting the contemporary requirements of the travel and tourism industry.

The Executive Diploma in Tourism and Events & Hospitality Management introduced by the UOC, is designed to sharpen the knowledge and skills essential for middle level managers, marketers, and other related categories in industry decision making, policy designing, planning and researcher works as well. This executive diploma is expected to meet the demanding needs of highly motivated, experienced and educated people in senior management positions within the industry. And the successful completion of this programme opens a reliable pathway to complete the studies at postgraduate and master levels from the world recognized and No1 university in Sri Lanka. Both the Postgraduate Diploma and Masters programme in Tourism Economics and Hotel Management is structured to provide the knowledge and skills in tourism economics and hotel management to those people whose activities will have a positive impact on development of the tourism industry in sustainable manner, but who have as yet not had the opportunity of obtaining a structured understanding and critical analyses of the relevant issues of tourism development and hotel management and related practices. The programmes are intended to provide an ideal platform for Sri Lanka Tourism to reach global excellence.

All the programmes are constructed to provide practical and analytical skills in a range of disciplines to improve the knowledge through interactive and application oriented approach. The tourism study programmes are constantly seeking to develop and alter the curriculams to fit to the industry's changing trends. The programmes equip you with the right set of skills, knowledge and attitude needed to execute the industrial strategies to support the unprecedented growth.

Tourism development is more than just a powerful economic benefit. The tourism industry is inherently multifaceted and interdependent industry, connected with socio-economic, cultural and natural environment of the country. Therefore, sustainable tourism is based on trio-fundamental requirement of sustainable development, namely Maximizing Economic Benefits while Maintaining Ecological Balance and Community Well-Being simultaneously. Therefore, another interdisciplinary program is introduced by the UOC designed to prepare the students for leadership roles in tourism organizations looking to commit to sustainable practices. The Certificate in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management (CSTDM) is to provide a strategic management skills and competencies in sustainable destination management along with practical applications.

As an industry that has the opportunity to create change, help the economy, and achive balance and prosperity for communities, the deepened understanding of the industrial aspects would position oneself in the center of a dynamic environment.





**WORLD
TOURISM
DAY 2022**

**RETHINKING
TOURISM**

**A WAY FORWARD
FOR SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM
WEBINAR**



Celebration of UNWTO world Tourism Day 2022 “RETHINKING TOURISM” a way forward for Sustainable Tourism is the most important part of the tourism industry. Speakers made values with international-level knowledge and experience to rethink tourism in the Sri Lankan context. It made a certain conclusion for the Sri Lankan context. The webinar was moderated by Ms. Gayathri Randeni on 28th September 2022.

Following resource persons contributed make industry recommendations to reality while ensuring global tourism best practices.



Professor Christof Pforr,

Professor (Tourism), Discipline Leader (Tourism Hospitality & Events), School of Management and Marketing, Curtin Business School, Faculty of Business & Law, Curtin University RTH, Western Australia.

Professor Christof Pforr highlighted rethinking tourism from pre and post-pandemic perspectives. Also, tourism day is an internationally recognized day. Due to this reason, all industry participants can gain the global opportunity to reflect on the significance of tourism. It's a greater opportunity to discuss the future of tourism. Almost three years of the pandemic direct us on how far we can get tourism back on a sustainable path.

But people can see positive signs from the recovery of international tourism. Some areas in the world present number of tourist arrivals higher than during the pre-pandemic era. Rethinking is important for a dynamic sector like the tourism industry as well as the hardest-hit sector globally. Recovery will be circular for the future of tourism. Also, the present day's global tourism system faces critical challenges instance vulnerability to climate change, transformation behind the sharing economy, etc. The environmental and social economic crisis is creating different opportunities to rethink tourism and future of the tourism.

Post-COVID-19 tourism rethinks about the history of the 6 decades ago. It was a mass tourism concept and travel has become a basic need and it was increased with the number of travelers around the world. When concerned about COVID-19 reality, the world can't go back pre COVID-19. It is well clear.

Changing resident attitudes, consumer behaviors (Ex - awareness of positive and negative impacts of uncontrolled mass tourism in Sweden), and continuous environmental changes can be determined as the main impacts. Also this created mirror of social concerns for environmental problems and the quality of the community. The world needs to shift from traditional patterns to modern management techniques to meet more transformational management goals. COBRA & PYTHON (long-term approach) may be impacted by sudden disaster with a defensive response.

A suitable framework is essential for climate emergencies and its part of the reevaluation of how to respond to identified challenges. It will benefit the gradual increment of the tourism sector. Decarbonization actions including immediate and concrete measurement toward emissions, addressing high growth in aviation emissions, and identifying the importance of short-term tourism destination management are significant factors. Paradigm shifts over the next decade need to be accompanied by a strong government with high-quality leadership. For the next ten years working together from the local level to the global level is important. It will impact tourism future.



Associate Professor Michael Volgger,

School of Management and marketing, Co- Director, Tourism research cluster, Research lead, Australia's South West Sustainable Tourism observatory and Acthr Series editor.



The concept of sustainability help to rethink tourism. Balanced tourism is the way to meet future tourism needs while satisfying present tourism needs. People need to apply it effectively. Five main recommendation highlight rethinking tourism for the global and local context. Those are,

- Supporting evidence-based decision making
- Crisis: recovery, prevention, and preparation
- Avoiding over tourism
- Collaborative governed – ask people to join (commitment and support through participation)
- Opportunities for more collaboration in the Indian ocean context

Working together is the best way to redesign tourism while rethinking about industry's future.

Rethinking tourism is the theme of this year's UNWTO tourism day. We all need to re-look at the tourism industry. Because all of us learned many new lessons.

The tourism industry is worth more than 13 billion annually. It creates one employment opportunity in every 10 people. Also over 20% of the GDP of most countries. After 2020 – 2021, there is a positive sign that can be identified after the travel restriction era. Sri Lanka is a well-known destination and global tourist spot. The 2018 year was the last normal year for Sri Lanka tourism. But Sri Lanka has rich tourism potential with warm hospitality. It helps Sri Lankan to become a top tourism destination. When considering factors affecting to Dubai as a must-visit destination, Hotels, and hospitality lifestyle mixture with the local, world-class shopping experience, get snow experience and sand dunes within one minute, Arabic architecture, swimming with dolphins and riding with camels, enjoying water park and balloon adventure, etc. This means tourists need to become repeat customers to get more experience. No language and cultural barriers because over 190 nationalities stayed in the country.



Mr Dunston Periera,

Coo to the Private office of HH Sheikh Ahamed Bin Faisal Al Qassimi, Dubai.



When concerned with rethinking tourism, the Pandemic created different online gatherings for industry participants, unique tourism experiences and offers for locals, bileisure travels, medical tourism, contactless payments system, virtual reality, active eco-tourism, transformative travels, experience tourism, longer trips, solo travels, and local experience customer experience 2.0 can be highlighted.

The following suggestions are important for Sri Lankan tourism. Those are moving to electric vehicles, food security, and Air transportation infrastructure development, eliminating middleman/brokers position in tourism, focusing to develop facilities for budget tourists, language development for supportive services like police and guides, and adequate promotion campaigns. It helps us to rethink tourism in this movement.



Dr Mariyam Shakeela,

CEO of SIMDI Group of Companies in Maldives and Former Cabinet Minister of Government of Maldives.

Maldives has and is one of the most successful tourism destinations.

Some of the strategies they have used are basically to maintain the destination presence and increase brand visibility. It helps to promote Maldives as the most preferred tourist destination in the world. When compare to other countries, the resources in the Maldives are very limited. Sun, sea, and sand are all that the Maldives has.

Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation was to reassure travelers that Maldives remains one of the safest destinations to travel during this pandemic. It is significant because Maldives is positioned as a honeymoon and luxury destination rich with community tourism and guest houses. Sustainability creates benefits for industry participants. Safety, natural isolation, and geographical location help in positioning activities. Personal definition of rethinking tourism theme is fragmented and diverse sector and the ongoing crisis has exposed even ongoing prices in Sri Lanka. It impacted the economic crisis. This led to an increase in habitat destruction and wildlife poaching in many parts of the world. Rethinking tourism brings the need to re-evaluate and promote tourism around the world and in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. It is required to make appropriate strategies, and policies, mitigate covid impacts, recover tourism core-pillar, fair opportunities for women and children, natural habitats protection and development, the proper relationship between the public and private sector, safety can the security of the tourism industry are the highlighted Ares which can be used as the pathway, branding, supply chain development, digital analytical transformation, to help rethink tourism for lifelong. Also, Sri Lankan unique characteristics need to be promoted.





Dr Sulochana Segera,

Founding Chairperson of Women in Management-International participation and marketing sector to rethink tourism in Sri Lankan Tourism industry

The discussion focused on rethinking tourism with women's involvement. Because Sri Lanka has huge potential to encourage females into the tourism sector. Also, it's essential to a new branding for Sri Lankan tourism by amalgamating the public and private sectors. Sustainable concepts and uniqueness are the most sensitive factors to rethink while ensuring its benefits to the industry. Sri Lanka's economy should not be stopped because of COVID-19 and the political crisis. Female participation increment can be determined as the main strategy and best practice. Also promoting the entrepreneurship concept help to rethink the tourism industry.

Also, Sri Lanka needs to position well-known and lesser-known attractions. (we have Nallur Jaffna north are we promoting those things but we only speak about the Kandy). Destination promotion with innovativeness is also another point to be considered.

Therefore Celebration of UNWTO world Tourism Day 2022 "RETHINKING TOURISM" a way forward for Sustainable Tourism was a valuable approach to addressing tourism industry issues and redesigning the industry structure.



“way forward for sustainable Tourism was a valuable approach to addressing tourism industry issues and redesigning the industry structure”



- Author



Dhanushi Isanka Perera
MTEHM - BATCH 08

THE INSPIRED TEA EXPERIENCE



by
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Sri Lanka Tourism



The Boundless Knowledge & Experience



f SRI LANKA TOURISM EXPO (SLTE)

“Future of Sri Lanka Tourism: Resilience and Sustainable”

The Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE) is a series of events planned for industry professionals. It is a valuable platform for all key stakeholders in the tourism industry. The first event was held from 15th November 2021 to 21st November 2021 at One Galle Face Mall (Official venue partner). The primary objective of the Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE)-2021 was to create a strong platform for tourism stakeholders to get together to synergize collective solutions to uplift the industry despite the downfall caused by the pandemic to the tourism industry. “Way forward Sri Lanka Tourism: Be Resilient and Sustainable” was determined as a theme for (SLTE)-2021. Travel Shows extended Industry-Policy Dialogue Forums, and Culinary Fests (host of interactive programmes such as live cooking competitions, cocktail and mocktail competitions by industry professionals, and cake decorating and cake structure competitions by professionals) were successfully conducted by the organizing committee. The following sponsors contributed to making this event successful. Emirates Holidays, Meadowlea, and Rasarco were contributed as Main Sponsors. PVR and Ceylon Tea Tribe were co-sponsors for the event. Media partnership was provided by SIRASA TV, TV 1, and YES FM. Also, One Galle Face Mall was the official venue partner.

Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE) 2022 is an annual industry-policy integrated event in parallel to the UNWTO Tourism Day Celebration under the theme of “Rethinking Tourism”, organized by the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (Alumni ATEHM) and the Tourism Study Programs, Department of Economics, University of Colombo with the Strategic Partnership of One Galle Face Mall and the industry partnership with the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO).

The principal objective of organizing the 2nd Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE)-2022 is to create an industry interactive platform for the tourism stakeholders to synergize their collective and cumulative effort to rebuild Sri Lankan Tourism as a more resilient and sustainable industry. Sri Lanka Tourism Expo (SLTE) 2022 provides an influential and robust platform for all the tourism industry stakeholders ranging from accommodation, hotels, associations, destination management companies, and service providers to interact and to build long-lasting business networks & connections by effectively engaging with each other throughout the variety of events during this four-day event starting from 17th of November to 20th of November.

In line with the theme of “Rethinking Tourism”, “Mini Travel Mart” (MTM) organized by Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), the Extended Industry-Policy Dialogue Forums of International Tourism Leaders’ Summit (ITLS) and Culinary, Cocktail Competitions, Mystery Box Culinary Challenge and an exhibition of Sri Lankan Cultural Entertainment will be held as some of the key events to showcase the great potential of Sri Lanka Tourism. The SLTE-2022 is to open new growing and emerging opportunities to the industry practitioners to make their inroads to recovery and to strengthen the resilience building.

The event will ceremoniously commence on 17th of November with a live cooking competition starring seasoned chefs eager to flaunt their talents in creating stand-out dishes on the spot. Several other interactive programs like food festival, cocktail competition, cake structure competition, dress the cake competition and mystery box challenge will occur from 17th to 20th November.

Under the theme of “Future of Sri Lanka Tourism: Resilience and Sustainable” the discussion forum will take place on 17th November, 6.30 pm onwards touching the topics of fostering sustainability and inclusive growth, boost competitiveness and build resilience in the hospitality industry, realign tourism: recovery and transformation, strengthening coordination, partnerships and solidarity for economic recovery and advance innovation and the digitalization of the tourism eco system. The sessions will be highly interactive with a wide cross section of industry experts actively sharing valuable insights across multiple domains.

Mini Travel Mart (MTM) organized by Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) will feature many travel industry stakeholders showcasing their offerings on 18th Friday 10 am onwards.

All of these would be free of charge and open to the public at the One Galle Face Mall, the venue partner.

2022 from 17th -20th November on one Gallaface



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RETHINKING TOURISM

Wellness and Sustainability

COLOMBO UNI. TOURISM PROGRAMS HOSTS MULTIPLE EVENTS IN WELIGAMA TO CELEBRATE WORLD TOURISM DAY

The University of Colombo, Department of Economics, Tourism Study Program, and the Alumni Association of Tourism Economics and Hospitality Management (AATEHM), with the strategic partnership of Barberyn Ayurveda Resorts, successfully concluded an industry-interactive event to celebrate the UNWTO World Tourism Day 2022.

A full-day event themed 'Rethinking Tourism: Wellness and Sustainability' was held on 2nd October from 9.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. at the Barberyn Beach Ayurveda Resort, Weligama under the patronage of Indigenous Medicine State Minister Sisira Jayakody, Sri Lanka Police Senior DIG, Southern Province Ajith Rohana, Sri Lanka Navy Deputy Director-General of Coast Guard Rear Admiral Pujitha Viithana, Barberyn Beach Ayurveda Resort Director Geetha Karandawela, Masters in Tourism study program Founder/Coordinator Prof. Suranga Silva and Barberyn Ayurveda Resorts International Medical Coordinator Dr. Asanga Rodrigo.

Purpose

This year's World Tourism Day 2022 themed 'Rethinking Tourism' revolved around the opportunities to rethink how the world could engage in tourism by prioritising people and the planet.

The parallel global events to celebrate World Tourism Day 2022 effortlessly brought all the governments, businesses, and communities around a shared vision for a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient industry. The key objective of the event in Weligama was to create a platform for industry-policy dialogue to design effective policy measures and strategic management applications to promote sustainable wellness tourism in Sri Lanka by sharing contemporary knowledge of global best practices. Speaking at the inauguration Prof. Silva stated that every crisis has many opportunities and Sri Lanka Tourism should capitalise on the untapped potential with effective policies. "As students and future tourism leaders of the industry, each of you must apply the theoretical knowledge into practical use to identify opportunities and implement effective strategies and policies," he explained. Noting that sustainability should not be limited to a buzzword for the industry, every stakeholder must start implementing them to avoid late realisation. "Sustainability is everything. The new world travellers are highly concerned about sustainable policies of the destinations and it is an integral part of the tourism industry too. Hence, today's program will be a great opportunity for all of you representing the future of the tourism industry, to rethink and learn lessons from the best practices to develop Sri Lanka Tourism," he added. Prof. Silva also highlighted the potential of wellness tourism amidst the rising interest among western countries. "By implying sustainable practices, we can build a resilient, inclusive and sustainable tourism industry," he noted.

Senior DIG Rohana outlined the importance of the right attitude to be the next global tourism hotspot. Comparing regional competitors of the tourism industry, he emphasised that the sheer development of their industries is due to the right mindset and discipline of the people along with consistent policies.

"Despite having the most knowledgeable human capital, we as a country still struggle to reach our true potential because our people do not have the right mindset and discipline. Therefore, it is important to identify the opportunities and stick to a clear vision till we reach our goal post is critical to developing the country. If Sri Lanka Tourism can become the benchmark, I am confident, other industries will follow," he explained.

Senior DIG Rohana also said that Sri Lanka Police has stepped up their efforts to strengthen the Tourist Police in identified hotspots to ensure safety for globetrotters.

Barberyn Beach Ayurveda Resort Director Geetha Karandawela recalled how Barberyn was built over time on the vision of its founder Sudana Rodrigo in 1984. She explained how Barberyn's founder sought to provide overseas guests with something more valuable than sun and fun, by establishing an Ayurveda Health Centre at Barberyn Reef —pioneering the resort concept of Ayurveda and promoting the ancient science to the Western world. "At the outset, not even the policymakers supported or understood the concept. They laughed saying 'who will come to soak in stinky oil', but in reality wellness tourism is one of the emerging and niche areas that Sri Lanka Tourism can thrive on based on its expertise in Ayurveda as well as Helawedakama," Karandawela stressed.

Karandawela acknowledged that it was her brother Manic Rodrigo who is also a Director of Barberyn, who developed the business into what it is now after their father passed away. "In 2003 we opened Barberyn Beach Resort, it was a time investment climate on tourism was very dull and nobody was interested in funding. However, we decided to still build this resort and it was a financial success," she stated.



ICEBREAKER SESSIONS

Followed by the inauguration, an interactive knowledge-sharing presentation by the Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo Senior Lecturer Dr. Himalee De Silva, outlined the vast spectrum of Hela Wedakama (indigenous medicine) and how it can be turned into a great opportunity for Sri Lanka Tourism to build on the niche market going forward.

“Wellness tourism is traveling for the purpose of promoting one’s health and well-being through physical, psychological, or spiritual activities. Some like mindfulness and meditation while others yearn for energising escapes. However, the common denominator in all of this is the opportunity to connect with mother nature,” Dr. De Silva pointed out.

An ice-breaking interactive competition titled ‘Innovative Wellness Tourism Packages along with Sustainability’ was conducted thereafter, shuffling students from all batches present at the event. The three groups presented novel ideas for travellers to be included in their travel itineraries to promote wellness tourism in Sri Lanka.

The morning sessions concluded with an authentic live cooking experience, inventing all for a nutritious lunch buffet.



INDUSTRY POLICY DIALOGUE

Titled ‘Inclusive business and sustainable wellness tourism: A way forward’ a panel discussion was held featuring Sri Lanka Inbound Tour Operators Association President Nishad Wijetunga, Social Scientist and Tourism Expert Dr. Dietmar Doering, Barbelyn Group of Companies Chairman and Managing Director Manick Rodrigo, AATHEM President and EKHO Hotels and Resorts Vice President - Operations Nihal Muhandiram. Dr. Himalee De Silva moderated the discussion.

In response to ideas about the ways to promote responsible travels to wellness travellers through DMCs, Wijetunga said: “The government can help in the overall promotion of the country as a medical tourism destination by way of visa facilitation, trade fairs organisation and participation, and marketing efforts by its consular offices abroad, or facilitation of inbound cross-border movement of medical professionals. It can encourage the upgrading of medical facilities through various fiscal incentives. The government can also support the medical tourism industry by addressing infrastructure bottlenecks especially those closely related to tourism, for example, airports, roads and transport that facilitate access to tourist destinations.”

He also added that airport infrastructure is particularly important as it acts as a ‘marketing’ tool giving initial favourable or unfavourable impressions to foreign tourists.

Pointing out that tourism planning is vital to multiply the positive effects of the industry, he said industry stakeholders need to identify and agree on the selected tourist destinations as well as the diversification of tourism products to attract more tourists through a varied consumer choice.

“Within an assigned budget, stakeholders have to plan the creation and provision of adequate facilities as well as the strengthening of the existing infrastructure and amenities,” Wijetunga added. Sharing perspectives on branding and promotion of wellness tourism in Sri Lanka for Europeans Dr. Doering said: “There are some common misconceptions about Sri Lanka. Don’t let its size fool you. Sri Lanka has every single type of traveller covered. Sri Lanka is a tropical country and travellers can expect lots of blissful sunshine and blue skies practically year-round, though not marketed enough. If we are being technical, the island experience monsoon seasons which include; the northeast monsoon from NOVEMBER to March and the southwest monsoon from June to October. However, you can visit Sri Lanka anytime during the year.”

Further elaborating on the year-round attractions for European visitors, he said Sri Lanka is a blessed country with an abundance of natural resources from the beautiful landscape, water bodies, wildlife, eight UNESCO heritage sites such as Kandy, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, Sinharaja forest, as well as the most hospitable and friendly people on earth.

“I told a friend of mine recently, who wanted to come and experience the ground situations in Sri Lanka following the exaggerated negative publicity that if your bike breaks, at least 10 or more people will offer help to fix it and even serve you with a warm cuppa tea — that is the Sri Lankan hospitality we need to brand to the world,” he emphasised.

He also said Sri Lanka’s many national parks like Yala or Udawalawe are the only places visitors can see leopards and Asian elephants in their natural habitat, which is a dream safari for wildlife tourist enthusiasts who are willing to pay a premium price to experience them in first hand. Diving among crumbling shipwrecks; and surfing on uncrowded waves were also cited as new areas European visitors can be drawn to Sri Lanka.

“Dual-pricing of destinations to a tourist is a sensitive current issue among travellers, industry experts, and policy developers. This practice is mostly observed in the developing countries, to which Sri Lanka belongs. Thus, there is a concern about the ethical aspect of it and address it before too late,” Dr. Doering pointed out.



Outlining the experiences gained during COVID-pandemic, fuel crisis and promotion strategies implemented to maintain a client base, Rodrigo said: "In the tourism and hospitality industry, the success or failure of our businesses and destinations depends on service. Some, however, deliver consistently high levels of customer service. Quality customer service is always a key intangible component of why a guest may prefer one hospitality provider over another. There is something about quality customer service that you often can't put your finger on, but you know it's there. This was a critical factor for our success, both as a means of satisfying ever-increasing customer expectations and as a way to achieve business profitability."

He also said controlling the media and being truthful is a key factor for effective marketing, adding that one client can bring 10 new customers by word of mouth, which still remains a powerful marketing tool. However, he cautioned that similarly, it can have an adverse impact on clients for bad service.

"With most Sri Lankans having hospitality in their DNAs, but as specialists representing the destination, we must treat our guests like 'angels' not as humans," Rodrigo quipped.

Highlighting on contribution to promoting and advancement towards the segment of wellness tourism as industry leader, Muhandiram said: "Natural resources constitute an important element of tourism assets and are considered as determining factors of a destination's attractiveness. Segmentation of the tourism market provides conditions for the creation of competitive tourism products. These conditions are based on demand studies focusing on consumer needs while maintaining mass tourism."

He said the 2004 tsunami led to high levels of social progress and prosperity achieved in recent years by the Maldives. "The attitude of the people and the nationalism helped the island nation to rebuild its main foreign exchange earning industry. It helped to shape In long-term development strategies for the Maldivian government. The tsunami reinforced the policies, encouraging voluntary movements to less vulnerable islands, which has now assumed even greater urgency than in the past," he added.

He said the tourism industry is broad and varied, with many businesses promising wandering travellers a slice of paradise on their trip. "However, when developing your tourism-based business, it is important to conduct market research to have a comprehensive understanding of the industry, your customers, your competition and your growth strategy. Through research, tourism businesses can gain a better understanding of their visitor expectations and build the local tourism industry to cater to the emerging demands," Muhandiram explained.

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Director Upali Ratnayake appreciated the service contribution of regional sustainable tourism development.

The full-day event concluded with Sri Lankan music therapy for wellness, followed by a networking session.



- Author

PGDTEHM - BATCH 10





DISCUSSION

BEST PRACTICES STRIVING EXCELLENCE

A snippet from Shangri-La



MADUSHA PIHILLADENIYA

Director of Human Resources
at Shangri-La Group

At Shangri-La, our Best Practices are strictly followed through with, in order to ensure that we as an organization deliver the best possible services and experiences to our guests. To ensure that this is carried out in a consistent, effective and efficient manner, the Shangri-La Group follows the Balanced Score Card (BSC) model. This BSC entails a balanced approach towards achieving collective success and is broken down and categorized in a manner that it best meets our strategies. A majority of the best practices that Shangri-La follows are created internally by our Global Management through research, to set benchmarks, which all properties are required to adhere to. The key focus behind the BSC lies in 3 strategic priorities, which differ annually based on a number of internal and external factors.

The three strategic priorities of the BSC for 2022 are

1. Profitable Growth and Positive Operative Cash flow
2. Foundation for Future Growth
3. Enabled by People and Technology.

The above are aligned with our vision to be the best-loved hospitality group, building a foundation for us to pioneer new horizons and set new benchmarks. The weightage of the metrics to achieve the aforementioned strategies are financial and non-financial factors, 40% and 60% respectively. The base metrics in place to achieve these Best Practices and Strategies are formed keeping the five Shangri-La Beliefs in mind; Own our Success, Compete to Win, Never Give Up, Obsess over Customer Experience and Do Good.

Through the BSC, we as a property are given an annual scoring based on our performance throughout a specific year, by analyzing how well we have lived up to the standardized Best Practices that the Shangri-La Group has established.

Some such metrics are as mentioned below

- Increased Enrollments - Increased guest enrollments in our loyalty program: Shangri-La Circle
- Core Learning Programs - a series of online courses conducted through our internal learning platform, to ensure that employees are constantly developing
- Safety and Security - Provide assurance of Safety and Security of our hotel to all our stakeholders
- Volunteer and Community Engagement - our role played in contributing to the Community and Environment
- Sustainability - Saving of energy and water and doing our part in reducing our Carbon Footprint as a global establishment

As clearly evident in the metrics mentioned above, Shangri-La is not only business centric, but also takes in to account the impact it has on its surrounding entities. In maintaining a global standard and consistency throughout all 106 property of the Shangri-La Group, the Balanced Score Card and Best Practices in place, greatly contribute towards streamlining our policies and procedures in the organization to better serve our Guests. As these metrics are annually developed for the group to carry out, they are also proven to be the most effective and sensible in reaching optimal efficiency and results.



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Worth of Unlocking Niches in Tourism for

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



DISCUSSION

Tourism, a widely spoken topic and a key contributor for economic development indeed open doors for immense opportunities. Hence, the reason a thoughtfully developed plan and an execution of the same is much needed today for Sri Lanka. This article pens down the significance of such developments and the need of Re-Thinking Tourism for Sustainable Development.

DR. SHARMINI PERERA

Founder Director, Medical Tourism (Pvt) Ltd
Senior Lecturer, SLTC Research University

WHAT IS THE NEED OF RE-THINKING TOURISM IN AN INNOVATIVE MANNER?

Well, tourism is an industry that cannot be isolated from the nature, society and economy. As much as all of its activities are connected with another it has both positive and negative consequences. Thus, it is important to think of innovative approaches to make the maximum of this industry yet to be assured its negative impacts on nature and society is kept at minimal.

HOW CAN SRI LANKA DRIVE THIS VIBRANT INDUSTRY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Sri Lanka as a tourism destination has won the hearts of many across the world simply for its Natural beauty, People and Heritage. It is now the time to make a call to decide what the priority should be. Whether it is about the total number of visitors or the higher receipts by unlocking niches in tourism that may yield higher revenues. Therefore, visitor carrying capacity management is crucial to ensure sustainability in tourism that has an impact on nature and society.

IF, MOVING TOWARDS THE NICHE WHAT ARE THE TOURISM NICHE CONCEPTS THAT SRI LANKA COULD DEVELOP?

Carrying capacity management will determine the maximum number of visitors that may visit a destination as defined by UNWTO. There are many techniques that the tourism planners and decision makers could consider to manage the carrying capacity. Increasing the supply of various experiences and recreational activities, regularizing and limiting the use of specific sites (wildlife national parks, heritage sites etc.), creating awareness and training the visitors about responsible travelling and modifying their behavior to contribute to be a responsible traveler, maintaining the site or attractions to enhance durability and rehabilitation, proper site management with facilities and site layouts that includes sign boards, garbage collection, vegetation banners etc., use of technology and automation for reservations made per day and restrict capacity by issuing of tickets and right pricing strategies would be some key things that could be applied.

OVERALL, WHAT POTENTIAL DOES "SO SRI LANKA" HAS TO BE A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION?

Sri Lanka has a significant potential to be a sustainable tourism destination provided that every stakeholder, tourism planners and policy makers contribute towards a common goal to practice sustainable tourism approaches and to enhance visitor experience. This requires an attitudinal change, be long term goal focus, learning faster and adopting sustainable tourism practices while engaging visitors in such practices.

ANOTHER CHANCE FOR BRAND SRI LANKA WILL WE BLOW THIS AWAY?

Sri Lanka is a classic example to the world where a tattered brand after a thirty year war was built with the nation coming together and there after the world saw how the notion power corrupts power absolutely becoming a reality.

Sri Lanka today

The reality today is that the economy will shrink by -9.3%, people living below the poverty belt at touching 9.6 million people and inflation touching 94%. Top cap it all, Sri Lanka as a country has been rated 'Default' which is the lowest ebb that a country can become on the global stage.

Sri Lanka will become a 'case study' at every business school for poor governance, defying economic theory and chaotic leadership. Let me try to bring this story together. But a point to note is that I yet believe in brand 'Sri Lanka'. I yet know that together we can rebuild the country to be the "Miracle of Asia". Let me explain.

Sri Lanka....beaten by Ukraine & Algeria...

Country	2017		2018		%
	Value(\$ bill)	Rank	Value(\$ bill)	Rank	
Sri Lanka	77	59	83	61	8%
Algeria	70	60	89	58	27%
Ukraine	68	61	84	60	24%

(Source: Brand Finance)

Sri Lanka may be bankrupt nation but rich in the assets it's posses



Author-

Dr Rohantha Athukorala

President- Sri Lanka, Maldives & Pakistan
Cloorack Software Labs





SL brand value treble

Way back in 2011 Sri Lanka was a mere 23 billion dollar brand with the economy worth \$ 65 billion. By 2014 the brand value had almost trebled to \$61 billion due to pent-up demand in the areas of Tourism, Investment, Exports and Sports which happen to be the key pillars of Nation brand building.

A point to note is that we cannot build brand value in a country. How a nation brand is build is how "Sri Lanka" behaves in the global stage. We have to earn the reputation and cannot demand it. This is exactly what happened post 2009.

We could summarize that we unleashed the brand Sri Lanka and the world experienced it. What most people forget is that the 'People' of Sri Lanka and 'Culture' are key pivots of branding a Nation brand. This is what the world experienced just after with war. Nation brand guru Simon Anholt say that "people of the country must talk well of their motherland. You must be seen as a good global citizen. It is only then that the value of the Country brand can grow."



I yet remember the words of Simon Anholt at one of my meetings he said "If Sri Lanka was deleted from the celestial key board, the way it will be missed is what the real value of a nation brand is". Meaning a country be relevant to the world. People outside your country must see the value of your countries - exports, sports teams, tourism sites and unique culture. It is only then that the value of the Nation brand increase. In other words, sexy glitzy advertising and brand endorsement does not build sustainable brands. You have to perform in the global stage and earn respect.

Values in \$ billion

Year	Brand Value	% growth	GDP Value
2011	23	31%	65
2012	31	35%	68
2013	45	45%	74
2014	61	35%	79
2015	68	11%	80
2016	74	9%	81
2017	77	4%	84

Source: Brand Finance

Decline- post 2017

Then we saw the emergence of a new trait of Sri Lanka 'power corrupting power absolutely'. The country brand value growth started plummeting. The pillar that was becoming a drag was 'Governance'. The government in power was alleged with governance issues and it was proved later with almost 19 corruption files opened by the attorney general. On the 8th of January, 2015 the party in power was thrown out by the people of the country on the key criteria - Governance. The ripples were felt across the world by this time and the icing on the cake was the call by economists that Sri Lanka must request for an IMF for a bail out as the debt was more than what the country can repay.

By this time the brand value of Sri Lanka was badly dented. Countries like even Algeria and Ukraine over took Sri Lanka with a performance of +27% and +24% on brand value whilst Sri Lanka was trailing at a low +8%.

By 2018 all the said countries had beaten Sri Lanka on rank which meant that the slide had begun on the global stage but sadly the policy makers were stubborn and did not want to accept the writing on the wall- the crash of Sri Lanka had started.

Arrogance - post 2019

Then came the 'Easter Attack' which claimed 259 people's lives. At the elections of 2019 the government in power was once again thrown out with just a 1 concessionary seat which showed the power of the people of Sri Lanka. The new government was voted in on the promise of 'Good Governance' and the person who won the LTTE war was given a clear mandate that includes a two thirds majority. It was a strong mandate for the person who freed the country from the clutches of the LTTE.

Sri Lanka then experienced a new challenge - the arrogance in leadership of president elect Gotabaya Rajapakse government. Decisions were taken against the grain of economics, agriculture and good governance. The country was helpless and so was the world. Let me capture the details so that history will not repeat itself.

The first sense of arrogance that the world saw was when the blatant decision to implement the election promise on taxation was implemented without understanding the ramification of the decision. In fact I would say, it was the biggest blunder made where an unsolicited tax concession to income tax and VAT payers was made that costed the country 600 billion rupees of a 4% of GDP. Many top policy makers advised the government not to pursue to this initiative as it will lead to a liquidity issue. The decision led to the country ratings being pegged down and finally we lost the ability of raising money from the global market. The hit on the brand credibility of Sri Lanka cannot be quantified as the hit on the global stage was too severe.

The second key blunder that hit brand Sri Lanka, was the wild float of the rupee. It was done without proper advise from the Monetary board or following basic guidelines that one must follow in the country economy management with strategies like sequencing. The Central Bank Governor repeatedly mentioned that his road map was on track which was a blatant lie. As we speak there are many airlines/ stock market investors awaiting their payments due to the dollar crunch. The policy makers continued to say that Sri Lanka will NOT to the IMF. I would call this economic terrorism which must be dealt with legal action just like what was done in Malaysia. Sadly, this will further hit the \$83 billion brand value of the country. But it's better to correct the system than putting it under the rug is my view.

The third key decision that hurt the brand was the artificial peg of the sri Lanka rupee at Rs.200 per dollar. Even though IMF had suggested a planned float, Sri Lanka went on to pursue the dirty float and burnt out almost two billion dollars. This led to the foreign reserves falling from \$ 7.6 billion in NOVEMBER 2019 to \$ 1.9 billion at end-March 2022. As at today we have below a \$300 million which is essentially unusable. We do not have milk powder, fuel for the transport of vegetables, import of gas for cooking, medicine for the cancer hospital. The food inflation is at 48% but global research agencies state that inflation is as high as 125%. Speculation is that over 30% of the 5.8 million households are on the brink of falling below the poverty line. This can lead to social unrest which is will have severe repercussions to brand Sri Lanka. But no one is understanding this reality.

The fourth decision that killed brand Sri Lanka was the blatant decision of the President to ban the use of chemical fertilizer. This was against the fundamentals of good agricultural policy where phasing out of the decision should have been done. 32 agricultural experts had met the President but with absolute arrogance the decision was kept on force that ultimately led to paddy farmers revolting and the loss of paddy production by almost 45% and tea production declining by 30%. The collateral damage to the country cannot be quantified. This is the reality.



Impact to the \$83 billion brand Sri Lanka

Strictly from a Nation Brand perspective, we see that in each pillar poor governance has impacted and hurt the brand. On the 'Exports' front too, we see how Tea export revenue worth 1.5 billion dollars have been impacted due to the bad decision on fertilizer. Due to the social unrest and power generation issues we see how the Apparel Industry is seeing the movement of global orders from Sri Lanka to Bangladesh or Vietnam. This decision can have impact to the \$5 billion-dollar apparel to Sri Lanka.

On the area of ICT/ BPO which is a booming global business. Here again we see that companies seeing a huge attrition. Youngsters are moving to other countries due to the uncertainties and this is impacting the companies that had plans of making this industry \$5 billion. The proposed 30% corporate tax and the 36% payee tax will be the nail in the coffin is what analysts say.

The final hit

The real hit on the brand Sri Lanka was when the government led group attacked the peaceful demonstrators at the Gotagogama and the sequence of events that happened post that. Sri Lanka saw virtual civil riots with 74 houses of the political hierarchy burnt, 296 people injured and 9 people killed. More importantly, the Prime Minister resigned due to pressure from the masses and subsequently the President had to flee the country that hit all global media headlines.

9th May will go down in history as the darkest day in the history of brand Sri Lanka that destroyed the already tattered brand due to the economic downturn. Most countries have announced a travel restriction and 43 airlines withdrew their operations into Sri Lanka except just two. Sri Lanka is now limping back with 17 of the said airlines returning to the country.

2023 and beyond

Whilst the above is the reality, in my view Sri Lanka has got a golden opportunity to rebuild a new image globally post the IMF bail-out takes place. An opportunity very few countries EVER get to develop a new economic model and a new imagery globally like what Estonia did. The question is will Sri Lanka let this opportunity slip by.



DISCUSSION

Untouched Nature, Majestic Sites

SRI LANKA HAS SO MUCH TO OFFER TO FOREIGN GUESTS

How did you get started? Can you tell about your hospitality journey?

After my hospitality degree in Les Roches, Switzerland, I started my career working with Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts. I spent a total of 16 years with them and over the span of this time, had the fortunate opportunity to work in some interesting locations, including London, Punta Mita (Mexico), Caracas (Venezuela), Los Angeles, Miami, Las Vegas, Shanghai and Beijing. It was in Beijing where I got the opportunity to join Rosewood Hotels & Resorts as a Hotel Manager to open the first Rosewood property in Asia. I ended up spending six years with the company. My last property before coming to Colombo was Rosewood Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where I was the opening Managing Director. I have now been at the Galle Face hotel since late January 2020 and despite the global and local difficulties we continue to have, I am very happy to be here and to be a part of this team.

Can you tell us about your role at the Galle Face Hotel Colombo as the General Manager?

I am given the responsibility to oversee all the operational aspects of the hotel. This includes building a great team to help develop a true culture of growth, inclusivity and innovation as well as understanding the overall environment which ultimately looks out for the health of the hotel and our associates.

What challenges have you faced at the Galle Face Hotel compared to your previous experiences?

The past three years have been particularly challenging. I do not claim this to have been more challenging than most hotels around the world. We have all been through a roller-coaster of a ride. The lack of visibility has made it virtually impossible to accurately forecast and therefore without answers as to what the near future had in store. It did however teach us to remain optimistic. In the long run we always seem to find a way. Aside from this, operational challenges are always present wherever you land. The key with this is to have fun with it. I am confident in what we can achieve.



DANIEL GRAU
General Manager
Galle Face Hotel

What are the significant consumer behaviours of the guests and what can guests expect when they visit this heritage hotel?

In the age of Social Media, consumer behaviour and attitudes are prone to change faster than what we have been used to. Having said that, within the framework, it will always come down to how we manage to make people feel. Good, attentive (and authentically 'you') service as well as a good Wi-Fi connection are part of a good recipe to cater to most (and good coffee...).

Galle Face hotel is a special place indeed. From the moment you walk through the doors of this magnificent building, you cannot help but to submerge yourself in the past and imagine a bygone era and the notable guests that spent time here. In fact, the hotel has been the subject of a number of books and been part of historical moments of notice that add to its weight and charm. Not to mention our location, which we are very fortunate to have - unobstructed seafront views and spectacular sunsets.

"Travelers priorities are changing", what are the strategies of Galle Face Group in maintaining a successful business?

A solid foundation of standards that make sense and that the team can understand sprinkled with freedom of the associates to be able to express their unscripted creative side. People are looking for experiences and the less scripted these are, the better. Of course, aiming to be as environmentally friendly and being part of a responsible organization are always key.

How can you make the Sri Lankan hospitality sector in Sri Lanka more attractive by rethinking the new challenges?

Sri Lanka has so much to offer to foreign guests. In my case, when I first visited the country, I wondered why in the world I waited this long to visit this paradise. Untouched nature, majestic sites, the availability of stillness to reflect, surrounded by all of this and under the tropical sun. Firmly, I believe that there is an opportunity to bring about more awareness of what is already here. Much of what Sri Lanka offers is in fact what people are longing for.



INTERVIEWD BY 
Madushan Jayathilake
MTEHM BATCH 07

ANOTHER

PEAK IN TOURISM

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy bringing new opportunities for many countries & regions, helping people, places and cultures connect and in turn helping millions to run their livelihood. We are all travelers and as humans we love the idea of travelling and exploration. I recollect as a child getting excited whenever my dad used to talk of a holiday and exploring another destination, even though they were short however still had a greater value as in those times accessibility to many places were a challenge.

Humans overcame all challenges to make sure as explorers we experience and learn more. Sky as they say is not our limit, we want to be limitless. While we think, feel and work towards it, sometimes it slips our minds to ask ourselves some relevant questions, questions that could threaten our livelihood or our existence. Are we causing pressure on our nature with our infrastructure, the environment, local communities, other economic sectors, and wider societies, which could put significant impact on everyone? We say we love nature and we want to preserve our forests, tress, flora, fauna, rivers, mountains, however we have human lives co-exist with them and we forget that these humans, might not understand the 21st century, the so called 5G world but, they are a part and parcel of our ecosystem. Are we impacting on sensitive cultural, heritage and environmental sites, as well as the day-to-day lives of such habitats, often resulting in negative outcomes?

Creating the balance

These are a few thoughts that cross my mind when we review & rethink tourism. Tourism is a driver of sustainability as we hold hands to support and build what we have lost first and foremost, we need to clear our minds and decide what we want to achieve. On one hand, we want to be the best in our economic performance, secondly we want to preserve and protect and thirdly we want to scale and grow. While all these are great motives we also need to choose on how we prioritize these key dimensions and which one helps the other to level up the efficiency.



Most destinations have seen a feed of pent-up demand in the post-Covid19 era, and such an experience has also been seen in some other related industries such as airlines, hotels, and so on. Even today, as we continue to observe such a surge, we are more inclined to flow with it rather than correct our course, which would aid in the construction of our next 50 years. We need to start thinking about what we want to accomplish in the next 25 years. That leads me to the conclusion that if we do not have a strategy in place to develop the blueprint, we will face a serious challenge that will set us back another 50 years. Are we capable of doing so? That's certainly a big "No". Our strategies should begin with our thoughts, with critical thinking about what we want to achieve. It is not a framework, but it can be a mindset. Our observations and mindset should steer us in the right direction. So we'll need OKRs, Objectives, and Key Results for that. The Objective tells us where we want to go, and the Key Results help us understand the results we need to achieve to get there. All of the actions and tasks that will help us achieve our Key Results are referred to as key initiatives. Returning to where we left off, we are at a crossroad and must decide how to proceed. Many countries rely on tourism as a source of income for many people; however, while we acknowledge this, we do little to improve and chart a course for our future.

A country in the midst of a political and economic crisis would always want tourism to recover; however, what the requirements are is a debatable topic when millions of people want to get out of the crisis.



Branding with impactful value perception

Tourism is an important component of capitalism, and recent concerns about "over tourism" in many tourist destinations are one symptom of the problem. In such cases, how do we maintain control and achieve long-term growth with a greater emphasis on equity? As a result, it is critical that we understand, analyze, and redefine tourism in order to make it sustainable, to support the rights of local communities, and to rebuild tourism's social capacities so that it can offer much more dimensions and contribute to a stronger future.

However, before rebuilding any destination, it is critical to consider where we want to go and how we can get there within the time constraints. Coming from an analytical and marketing background, understanding how we highlight the value proposition and create the message is critical. A message that will raise awareness and generate excitement.

Creating a distinct brand that embodies a destination's spirit must be capable of inspiring travelers, the industry, and key stakeholders. Creating a complete and distinct story, brand, and reputation for a tourist destination is a significant challenge in modern tourism, but we must include key points of view while keeping our goal in mind. The only requirement for the destinations is that they shift their tourism mindset from a government-run product to a business run by a "entity," which, like any business, has many aspects at stake. This approach would first help to clear the mind and then help to build the story.

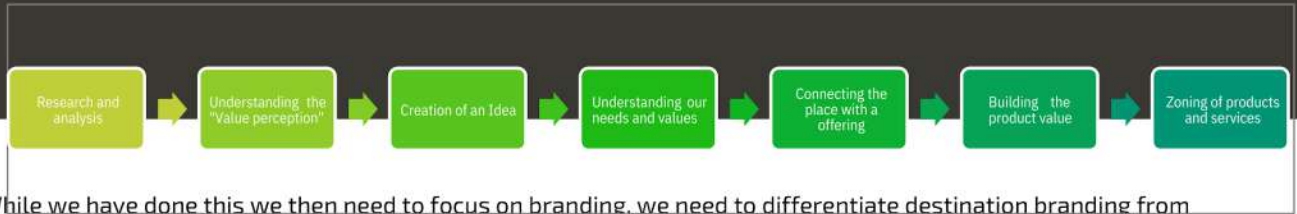
The development of a model would first present all deliverables that must be met in order to create a product or service. The Business Model Canvas is a strategic management and entrepreneurship tool for describing, designing, challenging, inventing, and pivoting business models. This model will capture the "big picture," which includes a wide range of products or services (value proposition). In today's times, with multiple challenges, we must ensure public-private partnerships in many areas, as this will help build the model.

Finally, any CEO in charge of the business of a "company" would always prioritize sales once he has a product and is confident in it. He would then have to "promote and sell" its own "products or services" - (tourism, investment opportunities, strategic partnerships with various stakeholders, etc.) in order to add value and growth to its organization. When developing our product, we must keep the following in mind:

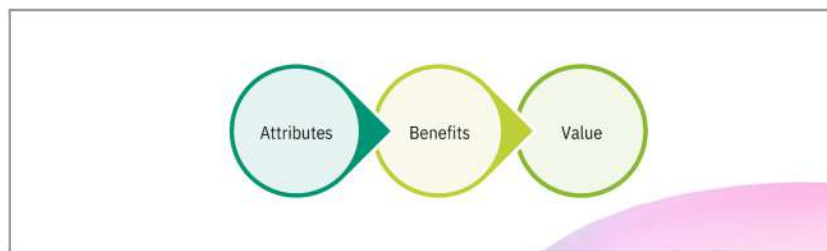
motives, which will eventually aid in the development of the business. If we are thinking about sustainability while building our business, we must keep our dimensions in mind because they will serve as a support structure for the model.

Create the value:

What kind of value do you want to provide? Your products and services that meet the needs of your customers are your value proposition. It is critical to define your company's added value, or the distinct value you provide to customers. A destination can develop its own value proposition by determining how we want our history, culture, people, and, most importantly, nature and offerings to influence the product development process. We must ensure that our products are deeply rooted as a destination. Why does it have to be firmly established? The value proposition of a destination can change depending on time, season, and the nature of our offerings. What I consider to be the value of a destination product may not be the same as what someone else considers to be the value; thus, we must go deeper and make the products dynamic and deeply rooted in order to offer a wider variety. A culturist might find it strange to go for water sports products, whereas a mythologist or historian might be enchanted by the wealth of the destination and the storytelling but, may be disappointed with trekking. A-Z- To create value for a broader range of products for a destination, one must begin with the coldest places, darkest zones, unknown facts, connecting stories of people, place, nature, and culture, and help build offerings. Once, a destination began their product development exercise from their deepest point of a tribal area depicting "people, place, nature, and culture" was how they connected to create a product that had merit as it narrated a story of human mankind. The destination marketing campaign began with this product and connected other areas, leading to the development of other products. Not all of the most populous zones and the most popular products will always yield, so it's critical to understand value perception while developing products, elements, and experiences.



While we have done this we then need to focus on branding, we need to differentiate destination branding from product/service branding because of our diverse approach used in the branding process. A "destination branding" is the bigger task and needs a strategic plan to build a brand identity based upon destination attributes selected on the basis of competitiveness, uniqueness and desired identity." Whereas for a product or an experience it could be different as it would tie down to people involved and in part of the process who would have a very close emotional tie, the community or even the end recipient speaking about the experiential journey/ while recommending the product/ elements of the experience. Similarly, when developing products for a destination, it is critical to consider zoning and the time frame for activations. For a tourist, a zone could be a "area of discovery" with experiences, but only at certain times of the year, if not all year. A better support structure would benefit from a creative approach to value perception with multiple zones for a destination. Finally, when it comes to value perception, "pricing is always a key element in it." Perceived value pricing is not based on the product's cost, but on the value that the customer believes he or she derives from consuming a product or service. Customers frequently compare the value they deduce from a product or service and end up paying more. Marketers must demonstrate to customers the true value they will receive after using the product. This is significant because it is linked to a competitive comparison of destination brand positioning, product offerings, experiences, and motivation, ultimately leading to decision making.



Value Delivery System

One notch higher: Develop a niche market

In today's world, we must be leaders and stand out rather than followers. Although the term "niche" implies a small market, this is not always the case. Niche markets can be sizable, as evidenced by Ireland's golf and Game of Thrones tourism industries. With the demand for niche tourism steadily increasing, businesses must be ready to capitalize on new and emerging opportunities. Food tourism, golf tourism, craft tourism, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage triangle tourism zoning, sport experiential tourism, and so on are examples of niche market tourism. It also considers creating meaningful tourism experiences for visitors. The new age niche is highly focused on age, time, and generation, resulting in "lifetime experiences" for our target audiences. A "tour operator specializing in retired citizen tours" has evolved into a "tour operator specializing in silver age travelers over 60 years with a keen interest in trekking, hiking, and photography." The desire of tour operators to sell tours tailored to a specific subset of travelers is not new; however, selling something as specific as 'Vegan friendly Coral reef itineraries' or simply in the Indian context a "Vegetarian Shakahari Char Dham pilgrimage tour" appears very basic and cannot be a viable business strategy.

Today, travel is more accessible, the world is more connected, and a tour operator can finally profit by selling to a very specific niche. They say that there is an opportunity in every aspect of life if you look at it in the right way. Taking Silver Age tourism as an example, by 2030, the global population of people aged 60 and over is expected to grow by 56%, from 901 million to 1.4 billion, and by 2050, the global population of older people is expected to more than double its size in 2015, reaching nearly 2.1 billion. The population is living longer and, most likely, healthier lives than our elders. The demographic consequence of improved quality of life and health for our fellow citizens, in particular, invites us to construct a new vision of the future in which old age is neither a social handicap nor a factor of exclusion.

According to one of the most recent surveys conducted in 2021 by Silver Travel Advisor, 77% of senior travelers plan to book and travel within 6 months of getting vaccinated, and 46% plan to make the most of it by traveling as much as possible. They've even gone so far as to say that they miss overseas travel more than they miss hugging their grandchildren. As a result, our society must adapt to ensure that everyone benefits from this incredible progress in the best possible social, economic, and health conditions. Aging is everyone's business, and it's a business opportunity where the end client has a substantial disposable income to support and fulfill their dreams.

In the new age of 2022, we must distinguish ourselves as a destination by focusing on niche interests that will lead to business propositions. Increase your visibility, break up the monotony of your work, and go digital. In today's world, your end client expects to see and feel the experiences with a single swipe of a screen.

Technology and the referral system are key drivers as humans are social creatures, and that is true for groups and communities that share common interests and passions, particularly when those passions intersect with travel. People who are drawn to a very specific niche are often highly connected to other people who share the same interests (often belong to communities, organizations, societies, hobby clubs or online networks). A classic would be an avid motor biker who was thrilled by their recent tailor made motor biking 7 day tour around will no doubt leap at the opportunity to rave about their fabulous travel experience at their next local motor biking huddle.

Marketing the message and creating the impact: This means that your messaging can be more specific and directed to a highly targeted demographic. Communicating with potential customers also becomes much more meaningful. Focusing on a specific segment means that your marketing strategy will be influenced by the demographics and buying behavior of the people you are targeting. Taking time to understand what advertising mechanisms work (and more importantly, which ones don't work) for your niche will result in less of your budget being wasted on less effective methods of advertising.

Using the specialist's expertise to tailor the opportunity: Take advantage of the opportunity to specialize your business offering and establish yourself as a leader in your niche field. Whether it be wine tasting in the Bordeaux region, dog sledding in Scandinavia or motor biking through the Himalayan valley in India, chances are there are people out there wanting to share your passion and more specifically your expert knowledge.

Innovate, there is never an end we need to continuously improvising: In one of the HBR studies it's questioned on why is it so hard to build and maintain the capacity to innovate? The reason is not simply a failure to execute but a failure to articulate an innovation strategy that aligns innovation efforts with the overall business strategy. Innovation does not create value unless it induces potential customers to pay more, saves them money, provides an improved experience, more safety and a cleaner environment, an approach to environmental friendliness and sustainability, or provides some larger societal benefit such as improved health or cleaner water. Of course, innovation can generate value in a variety of ways. All said in today's times we build a model that would support our key strategy with focus on building on the dimensions in a sustainable manner supporting people, culture and livelihood while also paving the way for development. The stakeholders and their intention to make things work in a holistic way are the most important part of a model's survival and success. As world citizens as we embark on the journey to explore and discover the world we need to embrace global travelers as a guests. Like how they live by the principle of "Atithi Devo Bhava" which means "Guest is God". A wise man once said "the world is a book, and those who don't travel they read only one page". We humans enjoy the thrill of the unknown, unseen, untasted, and unexperienced, so why not rethink, rekindle, and create experiences for our audiences who are eager to learn more? The journey of a traveler/ wanderer to have key elements embedded, by merely following principles of sustainability, by being friendly, by being deeply rooted, being culture centric and focusing on things where our hearts, minds & experience and joy merge to create memories. Where one could unwind by the silver sandy of Uppuveli beach in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka or go trekking in the jungles of Thekkady in India or witness the turtle hatching in Ras al Jinz beach of Oman. Galle is a paradise for sunset lovers, it offers the travelers a sojourn to the historical fort, rocky beaches and many more blissful moments to remember. Let's recreate the magic with a refreshed value proposition for the new generation of travelers.



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from

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Ms Randima Krishnaratne
Mr Yeshan Krishnaratne

to the first issue of the VISION@VOICE Magazine

FEATURING...

“ATTRACT THE RIGHT AUDIENCE TO THE RIGHT MARKET”

The current economic situation has led to a significant brain drain where lots of skillful employees from the industry is migrating, creating a vacuum on skilled human resources to run the tourism and hospitality industry.

WHAT IS THE VIEW OF NEW ZEALAND ON THE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES?

New Zealand consciously applies modern sustainable practices in agriculture, tourism, education and other economic sectors understanding the positive and negative impacts, as we are looking forward on the next 20 years. Sustainable practices are significant in all of the New Zealand sectors. We have a clean, beautiful country with rich natural locations which is our USP. We need to ensure a sustainable country for future generations as well as the tourism industry. I think Sri Lankan people also can refer to videos to understand New Zealand best practices. We are practicing proper destination conservation practices.

WHAT IS THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

New Zealand history demonstrates the particular policy structure from 1970 onwards. Natural heritage value is also added to this economic system. Human activities with a sustainable approach is the most important factor for the economy. Mainly, the linear economy approach is the common one (what we take, make, use and dispose of). But the circular economy is quite different (What we take, make, use, reuse).

When concerned with New Zealand, the sustainable economy concept is applied. Because New Zealand strongly uses reuse, recycle, reduce, etc concepts. It is a more sustainable economy in New Zealand.

IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, DO THEY MEASURE ALL CRITERIA - ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION AND GUEST NIGHT, WATER CONSUMPTION AND GUEST NIGHT, AND GARBAGE/ WASTE MANAGEMENT?

Carbon emissions etc. are measured by New Zealand. Because those are mainly impacted by sustainable tourism development. Different measures are created by the New Zealand economy. Based on that, tourism environment, job creation, economic impacts, etc,

New Zealand is a clean country. You can identify how we measure all the things.

WHAT KIND OF AN IMPRESSION DO YOU HAVE OF SRI LANKA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION?

It is an amazing country, Small Island, and a tourism destination with rich potential. It's a small country that can cover within a short period in one vehicle. Also, the number of tourist arrivals from Europe, China, etc. Sri Lanka has good, high price accommodation. You can involve with different activities including a hiking, adventure activities, tea plantation, and many more. You can come here easily.

Sri Lanka was hardly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis, inflation, etc. During the economic crisis, New Zealand tourists may face problems while they are traveling. I believe that the tourism industry will recover. Also, the Sri Lanka government encourages tourists to visit SL.

ACCORDING TO YOUR PERCEPTION, HOW ARE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY PRACTICES OF SRI LANKA? BECAUSE YOU HAVE VISITED MANY PLACES.

Yes, few things to be concerned about. The first one is the fuel consumption. Lots of New Zealand tourists faced difficulties during the economic crisis travel. Both positive and negative factors can be identified. Also, during travel, safety and security factors should be more considered.



-MICHAEL APPLETON-
HIGH COMMISSIONER
NEW ZEALAND



HOW THE POLITICAL UNREST IS AFFECTING TOURIST ARRIVALS TO SRI LANKA?

Social security is a key factor. When concerning about the Sri Lanka tourism, it is a prime responsibility of the government to protect its smooth operation. Especially, New Zealand is practicing it effectively. Security threats, unpredictable incidents in Sri Lankan streets, etc. negatively impacted the country. These could have an adverse impact on the national image. But I believe this situation will recover soon. Tourist arrivals will be back to normal. It is important to be transparent to make the revival fast.

SRI LANKA HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE WITH THE EASTER SUNDAY ATTACK. I THINK NEW ZEALAND ALSO FACED THE SAME FATE. HOW DID YOU ALL REVIVE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY TO SAME AS EARLIER?

Wrong decisions should not be taken by the authorities. Easter Sunday created a range of negative impacts to the Sri Lanka tourism industry. Similar circumstances in New Zealand also can be considered in reference to this question. Therefore, a well-defined protocol should be developed for locals. Slowly approaching to international tourism market is an important factor for further development.

IN SRI LANKA, RECOVERY IS CONSIDERABLY SLOWER, COMPARED TO WHAT IN YOUR COUNTRY HAS ACHIEVED IN A SHORTER PERIOD. STILL, DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

Dependable on the people and their perceptions. Last period LTTE war created a considerable impact on the country. Different factors affect the perceptions of tourists. They may develop negative thoughts about the country. A research approach is also good to find a solution to the existing situation. Tourists also believe that the situation will be sorted, and things will be back normal soon.

DO YOU THINK SRI LANKA IS SUFFICIENTLY PROMOTING IT AS A TOURISM DESTINATION ? I THINK THERE IS A LACK OF A PROPER MARKETING STRATEGY IN THIS REGARD.

Focusing promotions on the wrong countries may lead to damage. Government and the authorized private companies should focus on the the prospective markets and use the supporting factors of the industry as a marketing tool.

WHAT TYPE OF STRATEGIES SHOULD WE USE TO PROMOTE SL TOURISM IN NEW ZEALAND? ACCORDING TO YOUR IDEA, HOW CAN WE INDUCE THEM TO VISIT HERE?

Most of New Zealand come here because of specific tourism products. There should be a big promotional campaign. If you focus a particular target group, it is worth it. Sri Lanka tourism needs to re-bare the functions for promotions. Because the target audience may lose its effectiveness. Trying to build a network or connections is another important aspect. People who are visited here may face risk. The cost of the product, existing economic crisis, and product value may be comparable. But the Sri Lanka government also tries to promote Sri Lanka as a remarkable tourism destination.

WE DON'T HAVE SUFFICIENT NIGHTLIFE TOURISM PRODUCTS IN SL LIKE A CASINO, NIGHT SHOPPING, ETC. SOME MARIAN WORKERS ARRIVE IN SL, THEY DON'T HAVE A PLACE TO PURCHASE ANYTHING AT NIGHT IN COLOMBO. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

Yes - Sri Lanka has not had proper night activities, because of various reasons. But some countries offer nightlife including casinos etc., but some countries are not offering. Still, Sri Lanka does not have a proper market for nightlife. Mainly cultural factors are a reason.





NEW ZEALAND VERY EVIDENTLY CONTROLLED THE COVID PANDEMIC IN A SMOOTH MANNER. SRI LANKA TOO MANAGED TO COPE WITH IT BY PROMOTING NICHE MARKETS LIKE WELLNESS TOURISM. IN YOUR COUNTRY HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? (PRE COVID AND POST COVID)

We are also involved with re-developing tourism activities while enhancing the awareness to the tourists. This will emphasize how the government help to contribute to save Sri Lanka's tourism. Re-open, Rebuilding, and other factors, hundreds of thousands of people are looking forward because of tourism experience. During this period, different expenses are increased. People are suffered because of the above matter. But Re branding tourism is also an important factor.

HOW SHOULD WE DIFFERENTIATE THE PRE-COVID TOURISM PRODUCTS AND POST-COVID TOURISM PRODUCTS?

Different strategic products and niche products can be introduced to the tourism industry to suit the new industrial trends. Also, people are awaiting new products and new experiences.

STILL, THE INDUSTRY IS STRUGGLING. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE RETHINKING TOURISM THEME? WHAT ARE THE SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUR SIDE?

"Rebranding", the immediate solution for the existing economic crisis, to find a smooth way to run the Sri Lankan Economy. For instance, the wellness tourism niche market that was developed during the Covid pandemic is gaining force with the novel consumer patterns. This could be capitalized to add value to the existing brand of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination.

Sri Lanka should focus more on offering what's inherent to Sri Lanka. The visitors are looking forward for the hospitality of Sri Lankans, to experience the unique culture and the incomparable diverse natural resources. Sri Lanka should rebrand it on its exclusivity



INTERVIEWD BY

DAMSI DHARMARATNE

MTEHM - BATCH 08





Sri Lanka

INCREASE INWARDS REMITTANCE THROUGH CRUISE SEAFARERS

A SHORT TERM SOLUTION FOR DOLLAR DEFICIT IN SRI LANKA

Workers' remittances have been a key pillar of Sri Lanka's foreign currency earnings, providing a substantial cushion against the widening trade deficit and thereby enhancing the external sector resilience of the country. Workers' remittances exceeded \$8 billion USD in late 2020 but dropped to \$2 billion USD due to Sri Lanka's economic crisis. Most of the inward remittances come from the Middle East region, with quite a substantial number of workers remitting smaller amounts of dollars as they get paid close to the minimum wage rate. The person who is employed on a cargo or passenger ship is called a seafarer. Cruise ship tourism can be defined as a luxurious form of travel involving an all-inclusive holiday on a cruise ship calling at many ports around the world. Workers' remittances have been a key pillar of Sri Lanka's foreign currency earnings, providing a substantial cushion against the widening trade deficit and thereby enhancing the external sector resilience of the country.

Workers' remittances exceeded \$8 billion USD in late 2020 but dropped to \$2 billion USD due to Sri Lanka's economic crisis. Most of the inward remittances come from the Middle East region, with quite a substantial number of workers remitting smaller amounts of dollars as they get paid close to the minimum wage rate. The person who is employed on a cargo or passenger ship is called a seafarer.



Cruise ship tourism can be defined as a luxurious form of travel involving an all-inclusive holiday on a cruise ship calling at many ports around the world. In 2018, there were 314 cruise ships operating around the world, with a total capacity of 537,000 passengers and over 1 million jobs.

Because of the high demand for the cruise tourism segment around the world, there is a huge demand for cruise ship labor as the size and capacity of the cruise increase day by day. Countries such as the Philippines, India, and North and South America consistently share the majority of the world cruise labor market. Sri Lanka currently supplies nearly 16000 seafarers to the global maritime transportation industry, but the vast majority of them work on containerships and only a small number on cruise ships. Providing labor for cruise ships would bring in a lot of money to the island. Apparently, there is a huge demand for the Hospitality, Operations, Engineering, Culinary, Housekeeping, Beverage, Entertainment, Casino, Plumbers, Electricians, Mechanics, Painters, Polishers, Bar, Cabin Crew, and laundry departments on a cruise ship. Currently, approximately 350 million USD are generated from the 16000 seafarers and increasing them up to 50,000 would generate approximately 1.5 billion USD annually.

Training certificates, health clearance certificates, seaman books, passports, and security clearances are the basic required documents to enter into a contract with cruise seafarers recruiting agents anywhere in the world. Therefore, Sri Lanka needs to consider training and supplying skilled cruise ship seamen to attract more dollars to the country. This would be a short-term solution for the dollar deficit of the country, and it would create a host of benefits, both directly and indirectly, especially increasing the living standards of domestic households. The government of Sri Lanka and private education institutes, especially maritime education institutes, need to strategically tap the potential, and the absolute potential should not remain as a potential forever.



SAMPATH SIRIWARDENA

SENIOR LECTURER - UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO





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INTERVIEW

HERVE DUBOSCQ HAS OVER 27 YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, INCLUDING MANAGEMENT POSITIONS WITHIN SHANGRI-LA ACROSS SINGAPORE, INDONESIA AND OMAN. PRIOR TO JOINING SHANGRI-LA, HERVE WORKED IN OTHER LEADING INTERNATIONAL HOTEL CHAINS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, MAURITIUS, FRENCH POLYNESIA, SEYCHELLES AND NEW CALEDONIA. HIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE IN LUXURY HOSPITALITY, CURATING INTIMATE CELEBRATIONS OR LARGE-SCALE EVENTS COUPLED WITH HIS WEALTH OF INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE, ENABLES HIM TO LEAD DYNAMIC TEAMS TO DEVELOP CREATIVE AND THOUGHTFUL GUEST AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES.

ONE GALLE FACE IS AN INTEGRATED LIFESTYLE DESTINATION ENCOMPASSING A LEADING LUXURY LIFESTYLE HOTEL, MALL, OFFICE AND RESIDENCES IN THE HEART OF AN ISLAND METROPOLIS WHERE THE VIBRANT SPIRIT AND STYLE OF COLOMBO COMES ALIVE. AS GENERAL MANAGER, HERVE IS INSTRUMENTAL IN CRAFTING ADAPTIVE SOLUTIONS TO UNLOCK NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN TODAY'S EVOLVING AND COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE.



HERVE DUBOSCQ
GENERAL MANAGER
 SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO AND
 ONE GALLE FACE

“ What worked yesterday might not work tomorrow. Going Digital is the Key ”

WHAT WERE YOUR MAIN CONCERNS DURING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND HOW DID YOU MANAGED TO OPERATE AS YOU ARE NOW



SINCE I ARRIVED IN SRI LANKA THREE YEARS AGO, I AM CONTINUOUSLY IMPRESSED BY THE DEDICATION OF MY TEAMS AT SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO AND ONE GALLE FACE WHO HAVE ALL COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR COLLEAGUES WHO WERE FEELING THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC AND TRANSPORTATION CRISIS THE MOST . JOINED BY COLLEAGUES WITHIN THE SHANGRI-LA FAMILY INTERNATIONALLY, WE HAVE PUT IN PLACE SEVERAL INITIATIVES TO MITIGATE WHERE POSSIBLE SOME OF THE HARDSHIPS THAT HAVE COME ABOUT DUE TO SEVERAL CRISES.

THE CHALLENGES OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS WERE NOT ISOLATED TO SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO AS THE TOURISM INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE WAS GREATLY IMPACTED. WE SHARE IN THE COLLECTIVE HOPE OF THE WHOLE NATION THAT WE SHALL SEE MORE AND MORE INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS RETURNING TO OUR BEAUTIFUL ISLAND.

CURRENTLY SRI LANKA TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY FACES A LACK OF TALENT AND EMPLOYEES IN ALMOST ALL SECTORS. WHAT IS SHANGRI - LA COLOMBO APPROACH TO SUSTAIN TO SITUATION



AT SHANGRI-LA WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT OUR PEOPLE IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY. REGRETTABLY DUE TO THE SUCCESSIVE CRISES, THE TOURISM INDUSTRY HAS SEEN YOUNG DYNAMIC HOTELIERS EXPLORING OVERSEAS OPPORTUNITIES MORE AND MORE. WHILST THIS MAY RESULT IN A LABOUR CHALLENGE IN THE SHORT TERM, I FEEL THAT IN THE LONG TERM IT WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE SRI LANKAN HOSPITALITY SECTOR AS THESE YOUNGSTERS WILL RETURN HOME ONE DAY WITH A WEALTH OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE.

WE HAVE ENCOURAGED OUR TEAM MEMBERS TO SEEK POSITIONS WITHIN THE SHANGRI-LA NETWORK THROUGH INTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR ANY OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ONE YEAR WITH US. THIS WAY SHANGRI-LA IS ABLE TO MANAGE AND RETAIN TALENT WITHIN THE GROUP WHICH IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TO BOTH THE HOTEL AND THE EMPLOYEES.

OUR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT TEAM HAS DEDICATED INCREASED HOURS FOR TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS EXPOSURE TO KEEP OUR COLLEAGUES ENGAGED AND MOTIVATED. WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT OUR COLLEAGUES ARE CONTINUOUSLY PROGRESSING NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION IS AND THIS WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO PROMOTIONS OR OTHER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. OUR HR TEAM HAS ROLLED OUT A COMPREHENSIVE ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR OUR COLLEAGUES TO ENSURE THAT NO MATTER WHAT

INTERVIEW

“ What worked yesterday might not work tomorrow.”



Going Digital is the Key

ANYONE'S INTEREST IS, WE HAVE AN ACTIVITY SUIT THEM FROM SPORTING CARNIVALS, BOOK CLUBS TO OTHER SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

WE HAVE ALSO ENFORCED A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ENSURE THAT WE RECRUIT THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE RIGHT JOB EVEN IF THEY ARE NEWCOMERS TO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. SKILLS CAN BE TAUGHT, HOWEVER SELF-MOTIVATION, DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED AND A GENUINE LOVE TO DELIGHT GUESTS HAS TO BE WITHIN EACH INDIVIDUAL.

HOW DOES SHANGRI -LA COLOMBO KEEP UP WITH THE NEW TRAVEL TRENDS AND THE NEEDS OF THE NOVEL TRAVELER



THE ONE MAJOR POSITIVE OUTCOME OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS BEEN THE SHIFT TOWARDS DIGITAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS IN OUR INDUSTRY. ALL MAJOR HOSPITALITY CHAINS AROUND THE WORLD HAD TO QUICKLY ADAPT TO THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE CUSTOMER FROM EVEN BEFORE THEY WALK THROUGH OUR DOORS. WE ALL HAD TO ENSURE THAT WE COMMUNICATED AND ENGAGED WITH MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO WERE IN LOCKDOWN AND THEN WE HAD TO ENSURE THAT WE ALL ADHERED TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS WHEN THEY WERE WITH US. THIS HAS BEEN A VERY EXCITING TIME IN TERMS OF INNOVATION FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY WITH THE EMERGENCE OF SO MANY APPS AND OTHER DIGITAL TOOLS THAT WOULD ENSURE A SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE FOR GUESTS WHILST ALSO CUTTING DOWN ON OUR USE OF PAPER AND PLASTIC.

THE SRI LANKAN TOURISM INDUSTRY SUFFERED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. HOW DO YOU SEE SRI LANKA AND ITS POTENTIAL TO REVERT BACK



SINCE SHANGRI-LA ARRIVED IN SRI LANKA IN 2016 WITH SHANGRI-LA HAMBANTOTA, WE HAVE INCREASED OUR FOOTPRINT WITH THE OPENINGS OF SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO (2017), THE ONE GALLE FACE MALL AND THE RESIDENCES AT ONE GALLE FACE (2019) AND THE SHANGRI-LA OFFICE TOWER IN 2022. OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE SEEN OTHER LEADING LUXURY LIFESTYLE BRANDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD OPEN STUNNING HOTELS OR ANNOUNCE FUTURE OPENINGS AND THERE HAS BEEN IMMENSE INTEREST FROM THE GLOBAL MEDIA WHO HAVE REPEATEDLY NAMED SRI LANKA AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST DESTINATIONS TO VISIT.

GIVEN THE DIVERSITY OF WHAT SRI LANKA HAS TO OFFER FROM THE INCREDIBLE WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE TO THE ANCIENT RUINS AND THE VIBRANT CULTURE AND CUISINE; I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IN THE COMING YEARS, WE WILL SEE A BOOM IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY AND MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WILL COME TO REALISE HOW UNIQUE THIS ISLAND PARADISE TRULY IS.

WE HAVE SO MANY HIDDEN GEMS ALL OF WHICH ARE UNIQUE SELLING POINTS FOR SRI LANKA. WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YALA NATIONAL PARK HAD THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF WILD LEOPARDS IN THE WORLD, OR THAT ONE OF THE LARGEST ANNUAL ELEPHANT MIGRATIONS HAPPEN HERE IN MINNERIYA NATIONAL PARK OR THAT SRI LANKA IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD WHERE THE BLUE WHALES IN OUR WATERS ARE BELIEVED TO BE NON-MIGRATORY AND RESIDENTIAL ALL YEAR ROUND. WHERE ELSE CAN YOU SEE ONE OF THE LARGEST LAND MAMMAL AND ONE OF THE LARGEST OCEAN MAMMAL BOTH IN THE SAME COUNTRY?

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO THE INDUSTRY AND ITS OPERATORS IN THESE CLIMACTERIC TIMES



MY THOUGHT TO THIS INCREDIBLE INDUSTRY IS TO BE READY TO ADAPT AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE BECAUSE "WHAT WORKED YESTERDAY MAY NOT WORK TODAY". WE NEVER IMAGINED THE IMPACT COVID-19 WOULD HAVE ON THE WORLD WHERE WE WOULD HAVE TO PIVOT FROM OUR TRADITIONAL BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND MANAGE GUEST EXPECTATIONS DURING THE LARGEST HEALTH CRISIS WE HAVE EXPERIENCED. IT IS CRUCIAL TO HAVE A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR CUSTOMER AND TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE ON TOP OF THE MARKET TRENDS TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE CURVE.



INTERVIEWD BY 
Madushan Jayathilake

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STUDENT PROFILES

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM IS NOT JUST AN EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTOR BUT ALSO A CELEBRATED PLATFORM TO DISCOVER AND HIGHLIGHT HIDDEN PERSONALITIES OF THE STUDENTS.



ISURI JANIKA KANAKARATHNAM

A YOUNG, INDEPENDENT AND A HIGH POTENTIAL STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM, FOLLOWING THE DIPLOMA IN TRAVEL, TOURISM ECONOMICS AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT. SHE RECEIVES HER PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION FROM THE MATARA CENTRAL COLLEGE POST WHICH, HER INTEREST TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY LEADS TO A SEARCH OF THE BEST ACADEMIC PURSUITS TO FOLLOW IN THE SUBJECT AREA, DIRECTING TO THE UOC TOURISM STUDY PROGRAMME BY RECOMMENDATION OF A FRIEND. HER SKILLS, CAPACITY AND HER ENTHUSIASM FOR KNOWLEDGE GAINING ENABLES HER TO BE ENROLLED FOR THE DIPLOMA LEVEL PROGRAM. HER PASSION, NOT JUST LIMITED TO THE INDUSTRY BUT TO A FASCINATING WELFARE PURPOSE IS WHAT MAKES HER CURRENT FULL-TIME CAREER. SHE JOINS THE WECARE WORLDWIDE, THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, A REGISTERED VETERINARY CHARITY FOCUSED ON ACCESS TO HIGH STANDARD VETERINARY CARE PROVIDED FOR THE ESTIMATED 3 MILLION STREET DOGS AND CATS IN SRI LANKA. DURING THE COURSE OF HER EMPLOYMENT, SHE HAS ASCENDED THROUGH THE CAREER LADDER ENABLING HER TO SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE HERSELF IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. A CARING DAUGHTER, A PASSIONATE DOG LOVER AND MOREOVER A DYNAMIC STUDENT. AS AN INCREDIBLY TALENTED INDIVIDUAL, ISURI IS CURRENTLY ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE CNVR (CATCH NEUTER VACCINATE AND RELEASE) PROJECT INITIATED BY HER ORGANIZATION, THAT IS SCOOPING UP STREET DOGS IN THE SOUTH COAST FOR NEUTERING AND VACCINATION. SHE ASPIRES TO EXCEL IN NOT JUST HER CAREER BUT ALSO EDUCATION WISE TO BE A BETTER CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE COUNTRY.

MALINTHA LAKSHAN FERNANDO

A PIONEERING YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AND A PROUD PRODUCT OF THE UOC TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM, MALINTHA LAKSHAN FERNANDO. AFTER HIS PRIMARY EDUCATION AT ST PETERS COLLEGE COLOMBO MALINTHA CONTINUES HIS HIGHER STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA PURSUING A DEGREE IN FOOD TECHNOLOGY AT RMIT UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE. ADDING TO WHICH, HE GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO WITH A DIPLOMA IN TRAVEL, TOURISM ECONOMICS AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND CURRENTLY FOLLOWS THE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA AT UOC. BEING THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LIHINI SEA FOODS (PVT) LTD AND ALSO HOLDING THE DIRECTOR POST OF A DIVERSE SET OF FIRMS INCLUDING LIHINI NATURE PRODUCTS(PVT)LTD, ARANGALA FOREST LODGE(PVT)LTD, GREEN LANKA ADVENTURE TOURS(PVT)LTD TO NAME A FEW.

HIS PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IS MUCH EVIDENT AS HE STATES HIS ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP TO BE THE SECOND LARGEST SEA FOOD EXPORTER IN SRI LANKA AND BEING ACCOLADED UNDER MANY SECTORS SUCH AS GOLD - WAYAMBA VIJAYABIMANI -AGRICULTURE SECTOR BEST ENTERPRISE LARGE SCALE CATEGORY - WAYAMBA VIJAYABIMANI - BEST YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR - SILVER - AGRICULTURE VALUE ADDED SECTOR MEDIUM CATEGORY - (NCE EXPORT AWARDS) - AGRICULTURE BULK SECTOR MEDIUM CATEGORY - (NCE EXPORT AWARDS) - SRI LANKAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR - NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE - LARGE CATEGORY (FCCISL) - SRI LANKAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR - NATIONAL AWARD - LARGE CATEGORY (FCCISL) TO MENTION A FEW.

AS HE ENTERS INTO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 2019, HE HAPPENS TO FACE THE UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES SRI LANKA WENT THROUGH DUE TO THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SHOCKS. YET, HE MANAGES TO FIGHT BACK IN RESILIENCE FOR WHAT HE BUILT TODAY TO CALL A SUCCESSFUL BLOOMING ENTERPRISE. HIS VISION TO EXPAND THE HOTEL RANGE TO OTHER GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS AND TO RUN WITH THE NOVEL TRAVEL TRENDS, IS MUCH INSPIRING. HE BELIEVES THE EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE HE HAS GAINED THROUGH THE TOURISM STUDY PROGRAM NOT JUST HELP IN THE DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS BUT ESPECIALLY IN HIS STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING APPROACH.



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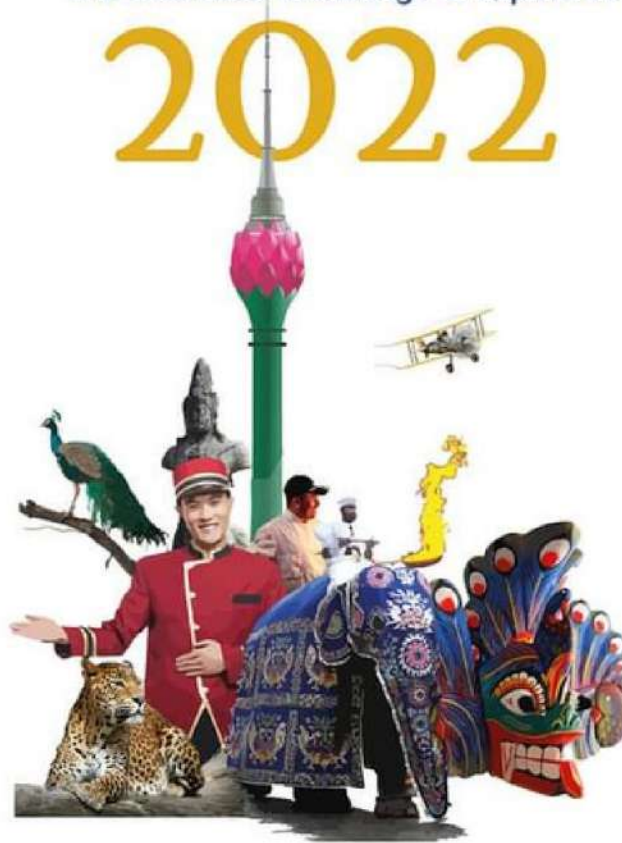


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NOVEMBER 2022 | ISSUE 01

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ISSN 2961-533X