

Involvement of Travel Agencies in Sri Lanka to promote Museums in tourism industry through the medium of tour packages

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ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, travel agencies are prominent in tourism industry in promoting cultural heritages through the medium of tour packages. A tour package is an effective promotional method in attracting tourists at the popular and even lesser known heritage attractions. Though there are more than 100 private and state museums located in the country, mostly Colombo National Museum is being highly promoted in tourism industry. This study discusses how the museums are being promoted for the tourists in the industry via tour packages. Tour packages are offered as two categories such as tailor-made and ready-made packages, but the research is based on the ready-made tour packages offered by the travel agencies. Research problem is 'how far do travel agencies in Sri Lanka support in promoting museums through tour packages?' Major objective of the research is to identify the involvement of the travel agencies in promoting museums in Sri Lanka. Minor objectives are to identify 'what are the travel agencies involving in promoting museums, to observe particular museum which are being promoted by the agencies and to identify promotional strategies practiced by the travel agencies in promoting museums'. Both primary and secondary data were used while primary data were collected from a sample of 25 travel agencies with their official web sites where culture based tour packages are advertised in several ways. It was identified that a considerable amount of travel agencies have not included museums in their tour packages and mostly 90% of agencies promote Colombo National Museum and it is only 20% of agencies have included museum as a symbol of promoting tour packages. Since museum is prominent in cultural heritage in a country, it is the responsible of the travel agencies as a service provider in the tourism sector, to promote not only the Colombo National Museum but also the other national museums, site museums, private museums, and state museums which are significant in various aspects of heritage in Sri Lanka.

Key Words: Travel Agency, Tourism, Tour Packages, Museums, Promotion