

Södertörns University College | School of Science, Environment &  
Technology – Department of Tourism Studies  
Master Thesis 15 hp | Master's Dissertation | Spring 2014



## Sri Lanka

– Towards a better tourism destination in Asia

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# Acknowledgement

First of all, the author would like to express special thanks of gratitude to mentor *Anders Steene* for all the guidance through this semester to accomplish this dissertation with the topic Sri Lanka – Towards a better tourism destination in Asia.

The author wants also to thank the participants for their interest in wanting to participate in the interviews and help to implement a good study;

*Göran Olsson, former employee of Ving*

*David Wolde, Product Manager of South East Asia, Middle East and Indian Ocean from Jambo Tours*

*Claes Pellvik, Marketing Manager of Ving*

*Linda Persson, Travel Consultant from Lotus Travel*

*Leif Ohlson, owner of the website “Best of Sri Lanka” and “Sri Lanka Guiden”*

Thank you,

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Jessika Ziarkowska

## Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to research into Sri Lanka's tourism and study the development over the last five years, 2009-2014. The author did a small contradistinction between Sri Lanka and Thailand to see the difference between both countries in Asia. Following years was chosen because of the ended war in Sri Lanka.

Interviews that have been done to accomplish this dissertation were expert interviews with three tour operators/agencies and two individuals. All five persons that were interviewed work within promoting or selling trips to Sri Lanka for Swedish travelers.

Sri Lanka could be improved and market by using the 8P factors in the Marketing Mix by Morrison. Factors as Promotion, Partnership, Packaging and Impact should be prioritizing while promoting Sri Lanka as a tourist destination in Asia.

During their development towards a tourism destination they have reached the Involvement stage in the Butler's sequence model. They are developing roads, hotels and striving towards a better marketing and they will surely increase their inbound tourism as soon as the development is finished.

**Key Words:** Marketing Mix, Destination Development, Tourism, South-East Asia, Swedish, SWOT-analysis, Promoting

## Sammanfattning

Syftet med uppsatsen var att forska om Sri Lankas turism och dess utveckling kring the senaste fem åren, 2009-2014. Skribenten har valt att göra en liten jämförelse mellan Sri Lanka och Thailand för att se vad som skiljer sig åt mellan båda Asien länderna. Fokus ligger på svenskarnas resor till vardera av länderna. Statistiskt har de fem valda åren undersökts och skribenten valde dessa år för att kriget i Sri Lanka slutade 2009 och man kan lägga fokus på att forska kring utvecklingen av turismen.

Intervjuer, så kallade expert intervjuer, har gjorts för att slutföra denna uppsats. Skribenten intervjuade tre touroperatörer/resebyråer och två individer. Alla fem personer som blev intervjuade till denna uppsats jobbar med Sri Lanka genom att marknadsföra och sälja resor till svenska resenärer.

Sri Lanka skulle kunna förbättras och marknadsföras bättre genom att använda sig av de 8P faktorerna ur Marketing Mix av Morrison.

Faktorerna så som Promotion, Partnership, Packaging och Impact bör prioriteras vid marknadsföring av Sri Lanka som turism destination i Asien.

**Nyckelord:** Marketing Mix, Destinationsutveckling, Turism, Sydöst Asien, Svenskar, SWOT-analys, Marknadsföring

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# Disposition

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Order to facilitate the readers about what the thesis is about; this disposition will line up each chapter and clarify with a brief summary.

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

This chapter presents a background of Sri Lanka and how the Civil War and their early tourism begun. The author chosen to do a little contradistinction with Thailand that has also been affected by colonialism and therefore a little background about Thailand is presented.

It also mention about the purpose, issues and problem identification in the dissertation. Readers will also find a short glossary of word that will be common in the essay.

## **Chapter 2 – Methodological framework**

This chapter describes the approach of the dissertation. The author tells about the chosen qualitative method, which kind of interviews was done and the approach of formulation of questions and transcribing the interviews afterwards and how the observation was made. The author also discusses ethical and critical assessment.

## **Chapter 3 – Theoretical framework**

In this chapter you can read about the chosen theories applied on the study. The models presented in this chapter are SWOT-analysis, Butler Sequence Model, 8-P Marketing Mix and Push & Pull Factors. The author has also found previous studies about Sri Lanka and linked it with this dissertation.

## **Chapter 4 – Empirical framework**

This chapter presents the results of the five interviews and two observations. The interviews are written in narrative form, but are also attached as original documents in the appendix.

Observations were written from the author's own experience and evaluations regarding Sri Lanka.

## **Chapter 5 – Analysis**

In this chapter the discussions are made and form the conclusions of the dissertation and its questions. By using the selected theories and the result from the interviews and observation the author apply each theory and analyze it.

It also includes a proposal for further research about Sri Lanka.

## **Chapter 6 – Results**

This chapter presents clearly the conclusions and the purpose of the dissertation is also responded.

# 1. Introduction

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*This chapter presents a background of Sri Lanka and how the Civil War and their early tourism begun. The author chosen to do a little contradistinction with Thailand that has also been affected by colonialism and therefore a little background about Thailand is presented.*

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## 1.1 Background

### **History of Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is located in South-East Asia.

Before 1972 Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon which was a part of old British empire with the main religion being Buddhism (Landguiden, 2012).

During the 1500 century Portugal colonized coastal areas in Sri Lanka's coastal and this lasted until the Netherlands took over the control in the mid- 1600 century (Landguiden, 2012). In 1802 the British arrived in Sri Lanka and defeated the Dutch and therefore gaining control over Sri Lanka. During British rule they changed the whole economic and social system of Sri Lanka by devastated large forest areas in their need for rubber due to the growing rubber industry on the island label was needed British enslaved a large influx of people of Sri Lanka and encouraged them to move to this areas (Landguiden, 2012).

### **Civil war**

Sri Lanka was involved in the civil war for over 26 years. The war was fought between the Singhalese, the biggest ethnic group of Sri Lanka, government and the group known as Tamils. The Tamils consist of two groups; those who have lived in Sri Lanka for thousands of years and others that have moved over from southern India looking for job and those who have been brought to work in the rubber and tea industry (Landguiden, 2012).

The Tamils were considered to be discriminated by the British while the Singhalese were favored and this created a big divide between the two ethnic groups which eventually broke out in to war. The Tamils organizations decided to work as an independent Tamil state. The Tamils led their own guerilla group called LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Konflikt analys - Sri Lanka, 2009). In 1983 a full-scale war broke out between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils and lasted almost twenty years (Konflikt analys - Sri Lanka, 2009)

In February 2002 both parties started peace negotiations and agreed upon a mutual ceasefire, but negotiations broke up and the ceasefire was suspended in 2003 (Konflikt analys - Sri Lanka, 2009). The war between the two parts escalated in 2005-2006 (Konflikt analys - Sri Lanka, 2009). In 2009 the LTTE leader, Vellupilai Prabhakaran, was found dead, that's ending the 26 years' war (Landguiden, 2011).

### **Tourism in Sri Lanka**

In the early years international tourism was unknown in Sri Lanka, the only visitors Sri Lanka had were sailors, boats restocking for stops in Colombo port. (Sri Lanka – Wonder of Asia, 2014).

During early 2000 their tourism reached half a million visitors a year, most visitors were from India and England (Landguiden, 2011).

Due to the 2004 tsunami there was a major reversal in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka was not a prior tourism destination because of the tsunami and ongoing civil war in 2009.

The war had caused economic crisis. But at the present time it seems that Sri Lanka have resurged their tourism (Landguiden, 2011).

## **Thailand**

Thailand was formerly called Siam up until 1939. The capital, Bangkok, was founded in 1782, but was formerly known as Ayutthaya. The country was mainly made up by tropical and subtropical forest areas (C.Baker & P.Phongpaichit, 2005, p. 1). Thailand began to develop as a country; growing their own rice, trading between other countries, raise families, hunt and spread along the country to settle down.

Thailand and India started to trade between each other, which gave Thailand opportunity to develop as a country because they shared the same ideas and technology (C.Baker & P.Phongpaichit, 2005, p. 3).

In the 1300 century internal war broke up in Thailand between the different states. It was the warfare revolution which gave the opportunity for the rulers to expand their rule but also gave them access to weapons (C.Baker & P.Phongpaichit, 2005, p. 7). When war started to occur in the cities, people started to join the military and the armies escalated. They started to divide the landscape, destroy the cities, devastate crops and chase away people (C.Baker & P.Phongpaichit, 2005, p. 10)

## **Tourism**

Thailand has not always had a strong tourism income. During the 1990s, Thailand created deterrence among tourist, this was due to the sex tourism that emerged and have grown over the coming years. But the authorities lift up Thailand as a charter destination with its family-friendly resorts and attract tourist by erasing the bad image of the country (Landguiden, 2014).

Besides the sex tourism appearance, Thailand had also a disease, Sars, which prevailed around the country in 2003. Sars is a disease can appear in different symptoms. The disease causes breathing difficulties and even death (Sars Virus, 2013).

Following disasters and instability such as tsunami, occupations and demonstrations affected Thailand and made tourists chose other destinations because of the insecure society (Landguiden, 2014).

However, Thailand has attracted tourist from all parts of the world even due the circumstances and their tourism is positive in the long-term (Landguiden, 2014).

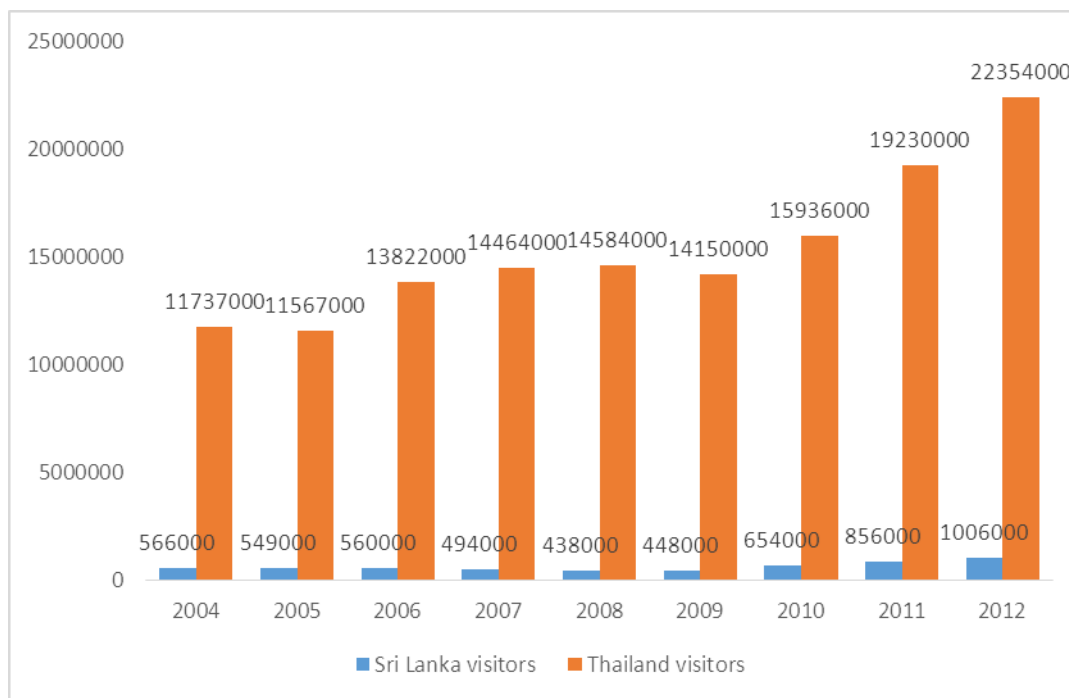
## **1.2 Problematisation**

This dissertation is about developing Sri Lanka as a tourist destination among Swedish travelers in a small contradistinction with Thailand. Thailand attracts several Swedish travelers and has been for long time a Swedish destination during the winter seasons according to Tourism Authority of Thailand in Sweden (Tourism Authority of Thailand – Amazing Thailand, 2013)

Sri Lanka which offers sun and sea, as well as explorations during all seasons attracts still not as many travelers and neither swedes in comparison to Thailand (See Table 1). During the war and tsunami, people are anxious that the hospitality industry is declining, but Thailand has lifted

extremely lately even after the tsunami catastrophe and swedes are feeling comfortable with choosing Thailand as their holiday destinations (Landguiden, 2014).

**Table 1: International tourism - Number of arrivals in comparison between Sri Lanka & Thailand (The World Bank Group, 2014)**



Based on author’s interviews and observations it has been noted which stage Sri Lanka is in their development phase and if the sales of travels to Sri Lanka will increase among swedes. The purpose of this dissertation is divided into two parts, how to market a destination and the factors that are needed to attract more Swedish travelers.

Morrison tells us about the marketing mix containing eight factors that affect a person’s purchase of service or goods. These eight factors is about product, price, place, promotion, packaging, programming, impact and partnership.

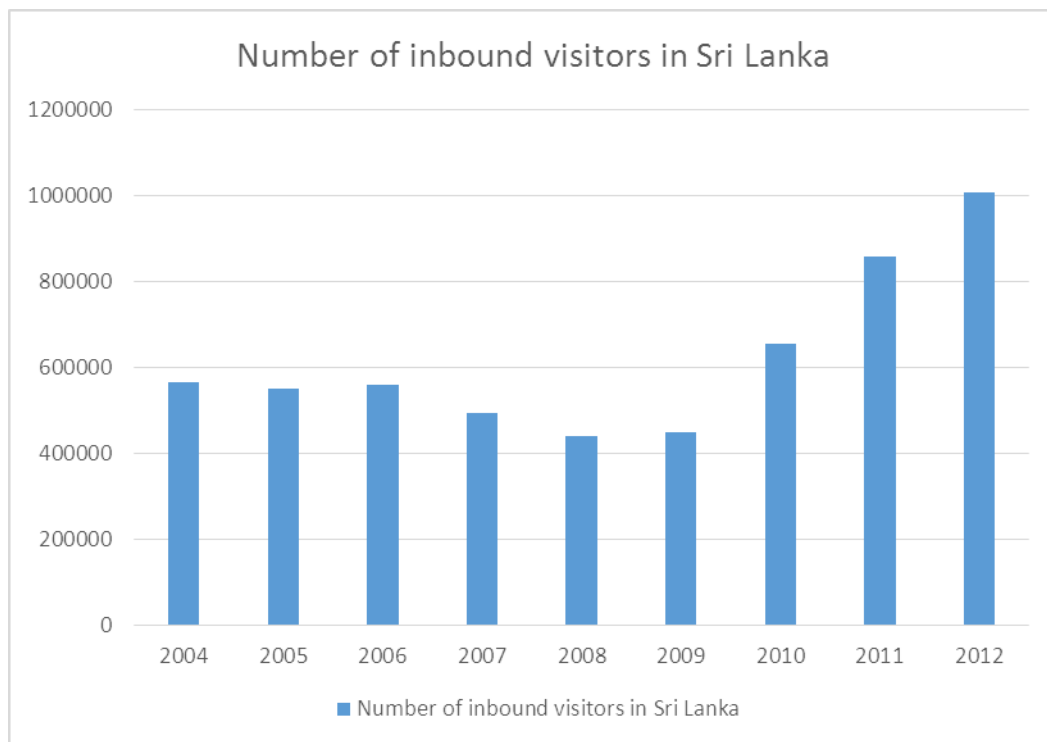
In this study, the author will apply these factors on Sri Lanka and then analyze what needs to be lifted up to get the attention of consumers.

*“Tourism contributes to the country and make it earn more money, which means that the country is more stable within economy from where it can expand and develop” (Turistdelegationen, 1998, p. 18)*

The author chose this topic for examination because she thought that destination development is an interesting subject and the selection of Sri Lanka fascinated the author when it was considered she was going to travel to the destination for ten days. When telling everybody about the trip that was going to be utilized people were surprised of the choice of the destination. That gave the author a wake-up call to examine why Sri Lanka is tucked away from the Swedes when it basically offers the same sea, sand and even experiences as Thailand.

Three travel agencies and two individuals have been interviewed during this research. The author wanted to know about their opinion of Sri Lanka and what they would want to improve to attract more Swedish tourists. Their opinion would make this thesis more deepen because they are experts in this field and the theory used in this dissertation would be put on the destination and analyzed concerning Sri Lanka’s tourism nowadays.

**Table 2: International tourism - Number of arrivals (The World Bank Group, 2014)**

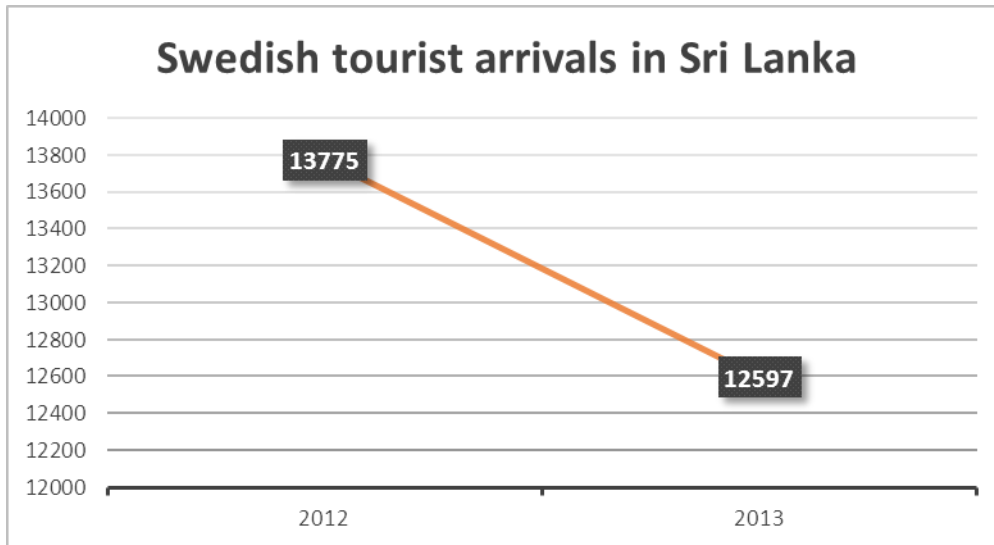


The author used statistics on inbound tourists, from all different countries, to Sri Lanka from year 2004-2012 to see how the tourism has changed during the civil war and tsunami (See Table 2). The chosen years on the chart was the only available statistics the author could find. The chart is showing the number of international inbound tourist visiting Sri Lanka, these are the tourist that have not their usual residence in the country. The data indicates the number of arrivals not persons, it means that if one person is traveling to Sri Lanka several times during one year that would be count as a new arrival each time (The World Bank Group, 2014).

In comparison to, Sri Lanka had 1,006,000 arrivals in 2012 unlike Thailand that had 22,354,000 tourist arrivals, mediates The World Bank Group.

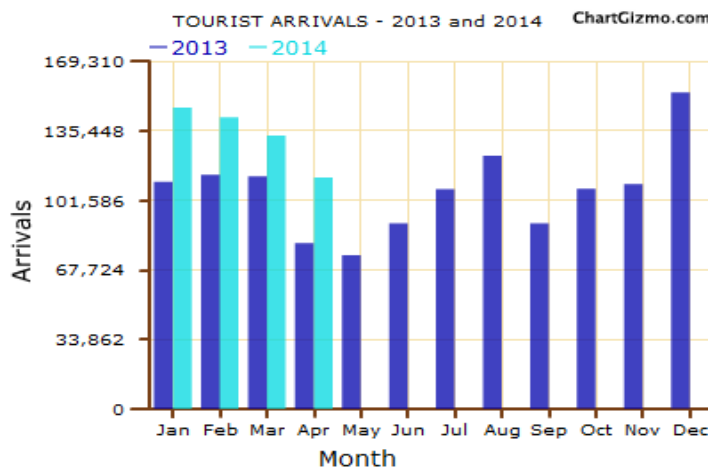
The author has found statistics through the website Sri Lanka – Wonder of Asia regarding tourist arrivals among Swedish travelers. Table: 3 show the readers how the arrivals have decreased with four percent in one year within Swedish travelers. According to Veronica Lundström Kristensen, contributor for Vagabond, the tourist amount has increased four times double after the civil war ended. But she mentions that mostly the tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka are from India, China and Russia.

**Table 3: Swedish tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka 2012-2013 (Sri Lanka – Wonder of Asia, 2014)**



According to Lonely Planet (October 2012) Sri Lanka was published as number one within “*Best in travel 2013 – Top 10 countries*”. They market Sri Lanka as one of the planet’s best value destinations even due the civil war from 1983-2009 and tsunami attack in 2004. It’s mentioned that the number of visitors increase continuously and the conflicts are over and the tourism industry have been “lifted from the ground” (Best in Travel 2013 – Top 10 countries, 2014). The author found statistics of tourist arrivals in between 2013-2014 and it has gladly increased from the past year. In comparison of the years 2009-2014 it’s towards an overall great tourist destination. The charts are showing the number of arrivals to Sri Lanka from all different countries.

**Table 4: Tourist Arrivals in Sri Lanka between 2013 and 2014 (Sri Lanka – Wonder of Asia, 2014)**



### 1.3 Purpose

My purpose in this dissertation is to research into Sri Lanka’s tourism and see how it has been developed over the last five years (2009-2014). The study was done in comparison with Thailand

because of the more experience they have within tourism. This makes me use the benefit of Thailand to apply on Sri Lanka regarding tourism development.

### ***1.4 Research questions***

- How requested is Sri Lanka in the Swedish travel industry in contradistinction to Thailand?
- How developed is Sri Lanka currently within the tourism sector?
- What kind of factors could help to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination?

### ***1.5 Delimitations***

#### ***Swedish market***

The author has chosen to limit this dissertation to the Swedish market of travel agencies and tour operators and go further into how they promote Sri Lanka towards Swedish population. To make this research the author had expert interviews with three agencies/operators and two individual people who are working with the tourism of Sri Lanka among Scandinavia.

SWOT-analysis has been used as a key in obtaining Sri Lankan strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from a Swedish perspective.

#### ***Year delimitations from 2009-2013***

The author has also chosen to delimit themselves to the year of 2009-2013. The war lasted for 26 years and ended in 2009 and the tsunami occurred in 2004, but the chosen year in this dissertation has been deducted into 2009-2013 to focus on the nowadays tourism after the crisis and catastrophe. Statistics from 2014 are difficult to access since they have not been published therefore it defines the author to focus on the last published statistic from 2013.

## **1.6 Definitions**

### **Tourism**

Tourism is formed when people travel to other places in business or leisure purpose. It could be for a long or a short period (Turistdelegationen, 1995, p. 5).

Tourism is divided in three categories; 1) Internal tourism, 2) National tourism and 3) International tourism. Difference between those three categories is that the internal tourism is made up of domestic tourism, national tourism is buildup by inbound tourism and the last one international tourism is about outbound tourism. People travelling due domestic tourism are those who live in the country but visit other parts of it (Turistdelegationen, 1995, p. 5).

Inbound tourism are tourists coming in to a country outside their country of origin and outbound tourism are tourists traveling out from their country of origin, both have their purpose of a leisure or business trip (R. Davidson, 1989, p. 8).

### **Tourist/Traveler**

To be called a tourist/traveler you need to travel to countries outside your home country or travel to places within your country and stay at least one night during your visit (Turistdelegationen, 1995, p. 5-6).

### **Tourist destination**

Destination is a denomination for a place where tourist travel in the purpose of leisure or business. The place differs from their origin country (Davidson, 1989, p. 8)

### **Positioning & branding**

Market the company or the brand in different steps, for example use a marketing mix with the 4 nor 8 different factors to create a strategy for the company. Branding the image or the product is an element within the marketing mix (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014)

## 2. Methodological framework

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*This chapter describes the approach of the dissertation. The author tells about the chosen qualitative method, which kind of interviews was done and the approach of formulation of questions and transcribing the interviews afterwards and how the observation was made. The author also discusses ethical and critical assessment.*

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### 2.1 Qualitative method

By choosing the qualitative method in this paper gives the author possibility to answer the purpose and question researches. It gives the author and the readers a deeper understanding about the topic as in the paper will be Sri Lanka and the opportunities of the country (Bryman, 2011, p.150).

The author is concerned that the research could've been done in a quantitative way, but to strengthen the thesis the qualitative method corresponds more to my research and it's the tool that will be used in the analysis. (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p. 23)

According to Hjerm and Lindgren the qualitative research is based on text while the quantitative method is based on digits where figures and tables are counting. Choosing the qualitative research you will need to do transcriptions of interviews, use notes from different media texts and other documents relevant to the inquiry (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p. 83).

This method was used to make a depth clarification from the respondents and the collected material. Difference between the qualitative and quantitative method is not only based on text and digits. The whole procedure is more different from each other. Qualitative method is more flexible and gives the author possibility to have an open conversation during the interviews and if the quantitative method would be chosen the author would need to do arithmetical analysis instead of interpretation (Johannesson & Tufte, 2003, p. 70).

### 2.2 Hermeneutic approach

The qualitative analysis is known as hermeneutics approach. Interpretation is growing and allows the author compile the collected data materials until the results get staunch (Hjerm & Lingren, 2010, p. 88). To make sure that the conclusions are correct the author need to verify the material and with that go back to the research and control if the interpretation complies with the results (Hjerm & Lingren, 2010, p. 89). The hermeneutic approach is mostly applied on studies within human-, cultural- and social science (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p.28). Within the qualitative research the hermeneutic approach relate to a more open research. It is said that by studying hermeneutic you get knowledge through language and society (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 29). Through people's expressions and actions the hermeneutic approach gives us opportunity to interpret and understand humans (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 29).

Unlike the scientific approach *positivism*, the author can use their own understanding and then follow-up with upcoming interpretations. If choosing the positivism as an approach in your research you need to follow it piece by piece (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 29). To summarize the hermeneutic approach, one can say that you study the whole object, the author's own understanding, perspectives, interpretations, new interpretations and with this evolving thoughts and

research. The hermeneutic interpretation has neither a starting nor an ending point (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 30).

### **2.3 Qualitative interview**

The interview is intended for respondents who have a depth understanding and a lot of information about the paper topic. That's why it's more appropriate to use it in this paper.

The task is to explain my purpose of this research and prepare the respondents what the interview will include before it starts and how the given information will be used (Bell, 2006, p.157).

Deeper interviews do not have to have structured questions for the respondents, they could be flexible and that gives the author possibility to come up with follow-up questions. If the paper would have been done in the quantitative way the survey and the answers could not be transcribed (Bell, 2006, p.158).

The author will give the opportunity for the respondents to talk freely about the subject, which will give answers that the author probably haven't thought about while creating the interview questions.

The questions are of course the priority during the interview because it will need to have the answers the author is searching for to the research and to strengthen the paper (Bell, 2006, p.162).

By interviewing different people with the same questions forms different answers and the author could comprise the answer to each other (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 97).

Interview will be partly structured because the questions are based on the research and the participants are able to provide in-depth information beyond the questions that will be given (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 98). The author sent the transcriptions of the interview to the participating persons to give them possibility to read through the summarized interview and also gave them an opportunity to respond with a feedback.

#### **2.3.1 Background of the participants**

By having interviews with Göran Olsson, Ving, Leif Ohlson, Jambo Tours and Lotus Travel the author got a wide prospective sight of how Sri Lanka should be lifted up to an tourism destination. These five participants are relevant in this paper because they work or have been working with Sri Lanka and promoting the country. The authors choose to have different questions to Göran Olsson and Leif Ohlson than the questions that were asked to the tour operators. This is because they work and have different tasks and experiences about Sri Lanka.

#### **Göran Olsson & Ving Travel Agency**

**Göran Olsson** is a former employee of VingResor and Vice Director – Chief Executive Officer of Sunwing in 1984-1989 (Ving Sverige AB, 2014) He had worked for VingResor as it was called when they opened up the travel bureau.

VingResor or Ving as it is called nowadays is a part of the Thomas Cook Group, a leisure travel group selling trips all over the world. In 1970 he was given the task to open up or rather work with Sri Lanka as a destination through VingResor. It was the manager of the travel bureau that opened up the destination and Göran Olsson were not in the decision he only started up the tourism functions. Göran Olsson worked in Sri Lanka for five years every winter season with his wife Laila and he still goes back to Sri Lanka even if he doesn't work for Ving anymore.

The information that the author received by interviewing Göran Olsson was more regarding the opening of the first charter travels to Sri Lanka by VingResor. The author interviewed also the current marketing manager Claes Pellvik of **Ving Travel Agency**, former VingResor, to see how

they work with Sri Lanka and promote the country nowadays and compare with how it was before when it all started.

### **Jambo Tours**

David Wolde is a product manager of SouthEast Asia, Middle East and the Indian Ocean for the tour operator Jambo Tours. He even works with the destination development.

Jambo Tours are not a categorized agency and that's the difference between being a travel bureau and tour operator.

Jambo Tours have been working for 40 years (1974-2014) now and since the company started their focus have been on places that are located far away from Europe example Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. They offer 350 trips and different travel bureau cooperate with Jambo Tours, therefore they don't have an personal office were they sell in such manner as travel bureaus do.

But customers can call them directly or visit their own office for personal assistance.

Jambo Tours have 5 producers and they ensure the customers that the products are created and added.

They have maintained the seven concepts since they opened up Jambo Tours. The seven concepts is seven different ways of travelling with Jambo Tours, they sell Jambo Safari, Jambo Ensemble, Jambo Kompass, Jambo Junior, Jambo Explorer, Jambo Cruises and Jambo Relax.

### **Lotus Travel**

Lotus Travel AB is a tourist agency selling trips to different countries in Asia.

Customers can choose to go on their directory trips, special themed trips, business trips or fully customized trips regarding to your own requirements.

Lotus Travel is located on Kungsgatan 36 in Stockholm, Sweden.

Linda Persson is a travel consultant for Lotus Travel and she had some minutes to have an e-mail interview with the author regarding their trips to Sri Lanka and how they work to promote the destination as opposed to other selling routes.

### **Leif Ohlson**

Leif Ohlson has worked in the military for seventeen years. He came to Sri Lanka in 2005 as a monitor in the East Coast. Despite the war and misery he fell in love with Sri Lanka, it became his passion. In 2010 he started "Best of Sri Lanka" because he discovered the beautiful places Sri Lanka had to offer. He also met Swedes on the plane that produced porcelain in Sri Lanka. Leif Ohlson has a background in the art industry, so he decided to arrange three art exhibitions in Stockholm where swedes were able to buy the arts without being in Sri Lanka. This was something more like a hobby for him. Beside the art exhibitions he had also arranged food exhibitions were Sri Lankan food was served for swedes.

Then after the website "Best of Sri Lanka" he opened another website called [Srilankaguiden.se](http://Srilankaguiden.se), its noncommercial and you will find more recommendations of different hotels in Sri Lanka.

In March 2013 a mini expo was arranged at the Sri Lankan Embassy, located at Strandvägen 39, Stockholm. This gave Leif Ohlson a wide network to access the tourism industry.

## **2.4 Observation**

The author decided to do an observation in Sri Lanka during this thesis. Observation in this context means that the author is at the destination and sees the country from a perspective of a tourist. The collected data from the observation will be used in the empirical framework and analysis. There is

different kind of fields that could be observed but the author chose to focus on the society, infrastructure, service, attractions because the limited time that was available on the trip (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 88-89).

Apart from the observation on the destination, the author has been invited to participate at a seminar about Sri Lanka. Aitken Spence Travel arranged a seminar on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 for all the travel agents where they will give them the latest information about the development in Sri Lanka and how the country has become an all year destination for the Swedish market. The author received the invitation to this seminar through Leif Ohlson, one of the participants in this dissertation. The seminar was held in the World Trade Center, Klarabergsviadukten 70 in Stockholm, Sweden.

## 2.5 Research approach

The research has been made with help of doing interviews and collect relevant data responding to the purpose and research questions; How requested is Sri Lanka in the Swedish travel industry unlike Thailand? How could it be improved and market as a tourist destination?

It will show the readers the understanding of the method the author has chosen.

By doing case studies the author will collect as much data as possible about the research (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 56).

The selection of persons to this interview has been done by using the *snowball method*. This method is focusing on people with high knowledge about the research and which can give advice of other people that could be a part of the interview because the information they know (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 85).

## 2.6 Ethical guidelines

Research has four main general requirements that must be fulfilled when it comes to ethical guidelines. These are the information requirement, the requirement of consent, confidentiality obligations and utilization requirement (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p.59-66).

During the information requirement the author is responsible to inform the participants in the interview about the ongoing research. Participants may terminate the interview whenever they want because they have agreed to it voluntarily (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p.62).

Requirement of consent means that the participants could choose by their own if they want to take part of the interview without the author forcing anyone to it. The author needs to retrieve consent from all the participants before having interview (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 62).

A confidentiality obligation gives the participants opportunity to be anonymous in the interview. All personal data is not given out for anyone only the author has access to it and it should be clear in the papers that the participant is anonymous without recognizing the person by reading the interview (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p.62).

The last guideline is utilization requirement; it means that all collected data from the participants could only be used in the research. It is important that all data is securely stored and must not be given to any third party if the participants haven't given permission (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p.62).

## 2.7 Qualitative analysis

The description of the qualitative analysis is likely a description of an interpretation work (Hjerm & Lingren, 2010, p. 83). The analysis in this paper is seen as an assessment and the material will be

produced in written text (Hjerm & Lingren, 2010, p. 84).

The interviews that the author has done is going to be transcribed and redone to an more analysis text, of course the whole sentence of the interview will not be used, only the necessary words that have been brought up during the interview (Hjerm & Lingren, 2010, p.84-85).

While the author collects all data that is relevant to the research it will need to go through three points before being completed (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p. 87);

### **1. Reduction of the collected data (Coding)**

After submitting the interviews the author need to code them, it means searching within the collected data after any particular pattern (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p. 91)

The author needs to reduce the collected data to highlight the key in the paper so it's important that follow it up carefully for the analysis. While coding the collected data the author finds specific and interesting answers (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p. 91-93).

### **2. Presentation of data (Thematisation)**

When the collected data is done and formatted to code, next step is to thematize them, in other words refine the analysis. The author needs to dispose the information that is necessary and important in this thesis and the rest is removed. Helping yourself with the codes you designed before forms a structure in the material (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.114). Inserting codes in different concepts forms a thematisation because the questions “what does it ask for?” is formed by the respective code, that gives the author an eye-opener. Different categories are formed; you put the codes in comparison with your thoughts and see if they correspond each other. Patterns and theories are formed by research the author is doing through reading, interpreting, re-reading and reflection (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.114-115).

Thematisation is coding the existing codes you already got in the first step and sort out what's relevant to the ongoing research (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.116-117). To find themes in the codes it's required to ask yourself questions that are relevant in the research and which will help you build up the analysis doesn't matter how many themes you get from your codes, the important thing is that they need to be relevant (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.121-122).

### **3. Conclusion and verification (Summation)**

When the codes and thematisation is finished you reach the summation in your methodological part. It's when you compile everything you've done and collected in one analysis. The analysis could be presented in figures and tables but even in written text (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.122-124). In the analysis part you need to analyze and interpret and the results will come of what you've found and reflected through your research and your own experience (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.126). After submitting the analysis you're next step will be to verify it. This means that the author is required to consider testing their results with selected theories (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.134). The four main points you look at is *credibility*, *originality*, *resonance* and *usefulness* of the material and result (Hjerm & Lindgren, 2010, p.135).

## **2.8 Validity & Reliability**

Validity is about if the collected data is relevant to the study case (Johannesson & Tufte, 2003, p.267). In this thesis the collected data is the answers from the respondents during the interviews. All the questions in the interview were linked with the papers purpose, therefore is it relevant.

Reliability is how credible the collected data is (Johannesson & Tufte, 2003, p.265). In this case the

author will compare the results with previous researches to see if there is any comparison or new results.

## **2.9 Critical review**

### **Resources**

By using internet resources and literature books the author will strengthen the research with the own collected data. Internet resources are considered as less reliable unlike print resources such as books and articles (Denscombe, 2009, p. 422). But the author believes that the information from the internet that has been used is serious material because it has been taken from websites created by trusted organizations or authorities.

The papers are taken from journals from other schools that have been published. The information is relevant because it strengthens the paper within the title of the previous researches.

The books are written by authors who are deeply inserted in those substances such as crisis, marketing and development. These resources will help the author to answer the purpose of this paper.

### **Collecting data - Primary & Secondary**

The paper contains qualitative data and with that the author has a responsibility to make sure that it doesn't convey wrong information. Focusing on data that does have been published within five years will make it more serious in connection to the purpose and research questions.

Interviews that have been done are the primary data in this paper because it's the author itself that have collected the material (Bell, 2006, p. 125).

The secondary data consists of theories, journals, literature and Internet that the author considered was relevant to the research. To make sure the research hasn't been done before the author responsibility is to search within the schools database to see if any similar thesis will be found (Bell, 2006, p. 125).

### **Analysis**

The analysis is based on the answers the author got from the interview and observations.

In this paper it's the analysis of meaningful content, what the respondent in the interview would answer during the interview. That will later be transcribed and used in the analysis. The author searches after relevant and interesting themes that will be useful in this paper and compared with the theoretical models (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 109-110).

### 3. Theoretical framework

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*In this chapter you can read about the chosen theories applied on the study. The models presented in this chapter are SWOT-analysis, Butler Sequence Model, 8-P Marketing Mix and Push & Pull Factors. The author has also found previous studies about Sri Lanka and linked it with this dissertation.*

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#### 3.1 SWOT-analysis

SWOT is an analysis that provides strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a company or destination. The strength and weaknesses is a part of the internal environment, those elements occur within the destination nor company, and the external environment includes opportunities and threats, which occurs outside the destination (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 194-95)

The SWOT-analysis is a tool that helps to shows us where they, in this case, destination are standing and how it could improve to gain more visitors and be more an attractive tourist destination. This SWOT-analysis will show the issues of a country as a tourism destination in this paper (Holloway, 2004, p.30).



**Figure 1: SWOT-analysis**  
Idea taken from Marketing for Tourism in Holloway (2004)

#### 3.2 Marketing Mix 8-P

The marketing mix is one of the important models to use in a marketing planning. It define the budget of a market, forms a marketing strategy and provides the marketing manager or in this case the tourist offices how they can promote Sri Lanka. The four tools in this marketing mix are what the tourist travel industry is delivering for their tourists (Holloway, 2004, p. 52).

But instead of the four tools the author chose to extend to the 8P marketing mix by Morrison. This will help the author and the readers to see what the government of Sri Lanka should focus on to deliver to their tourists and attract them more to the destination. The 8P marketing mix consists product, price, place, promotion and the other four components are people, packaging, programming, impact and partnership. By choosing the 8P the government and destination can market themselves resplendent towards tourists (Morrison, 1996, p. 192).

### ***Product***

Product is something that could be consumed by the consumers.

The tourist travel office is having a design, quality, range, brand name and what features them, tourists, travel to the destination (Holloway, 2004, p. 52).

### ***Price***

Price is the amount of the product or service that the tourist travel office is offering for their consumers/tourists. The price is always variable when it comes in the tourism industry (Holloway, 2004, p. 53). The price is also making the product available for the consumers.

### ***Place***

Place is very variegated, but in general it's represented as a place where the product can be inspected and purchased. In tourism it's difficult to inspect the product before you've been at the destination. But the tourist offices offer a lot of information such as brochures etc. they hand to their tourist to read and inspect the destination from books and others view before buying the product. (Holloway, 2004, p.53)

### ***Promotion***

Promotion is the component that provides the tourists the information about the destination and for the tourists travel industry this component brings them more selling products to the specific destination they try to sell to their consumers/tourists. (Holloway, 2004, p. 53)

### ***Packaging***

Packaging means that two or more products/services have been packaged together into one product. This may include accommodation, transport, attractions and other complementary touristic components. Packaging is a comfortable choice because it gives consumers comfort and safety before traveling and on the location (Morrison, 1996, p. 288)

### ***Programming***

Programming is a supplement to packaging and contains events, activities or various programs to keep a product more attractive. This gives the customer to keep a low budget during their travel (Morrison, 1996, p.288)

### ***Impact***

Using impact a positive image of the products are attempted to be emphasized by consumers demand, needs, tastes, values and attitudes. Impact can be seen as personal selling, sales, publicity, marketing, brand licensing etc. (Morrison, 1996, p.365, 403, 428 & 457)

Impact can be the service staff of a hotel for example; if a hotel provides a good impression to the visitors they would pass this positive image further on (Morrison, 1996, p. 337)

## **Partnership**

Partnerships can exist between individual companies, industries, organizations, schools, associations, customers and more. Partnerships are particularly important for small businesses that lack scale distribution that is an enhanced production leading to reduced cost; therefore, it requires commitment to the individual, effective work. Partnerships can also be created between suppliers and their products and their customers (Morrison, 1996 p.262).

## **3.3 Butler's Sequence model**

Butler's sequence model describes the specific destination development within the tourism industry. (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 266). This model gives the author possibility to distinguish where the destination is in the progress.

It's a so-called cycle followed by five phases within the frames of economic, social and cultural embrace. This model do have an invisible phase called "*Critical carrying capacity of threshold*", but that phase those not have any kind of influence of a better development. The destination or company can be stuck and go nowhere in their development and would need a transformation. The growth would be slow and any kind of development of the tourism industry will be avoided (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 278). The five following phases are described as:

### **Exploration**

Explore the destination and their services. In this phase a small number of visitors go to a "nonexistent" destination. These visitors are not affected by others and want to explore the destination on their own, regardless of all consequences.

Exploration phase could be described as an informal "pre-tourism" stage because the visitors need to serve the local residents due when they accommodate themselves to their lifestyle, services and other facilities. Visitors need to use the local shops and the local systems; they won't have anything that's reminding of them of their own home-country. In one way or another, you are helping the destination to earn money into the purpose of tourism (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.270).

### **Involvement**

The destination is known by a large number of visitors. The tourist resort is growing so does the infrastructure and the public sector. The environmental impact on the destination is still small but it starts to increase.

Services such as hotel formed as guesthouses, restaurants, small guide-tours and tour-operators start their activity to build a larger tourism industry with attractions.

Factors that are used to increase the tourism on a destination can be *internal* and *external*.

The internal factors are extracted by the destination itself, for an example building and advertising a new attraction to increase the tourism within the destination.

The external factors are created outside the destination, such as word-of-mouth, when visitors recommend the destination to family and friends. But it's not only the visitors word that counts to attract other tourist, but even the magazines, pictures, commercials and newspaper capture the visitors willingness to visit the destination (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 273).

## Development

In this stage the expansion of the destination is “under construction”. The tourism development is in a fast growth and large-scale changes are formed in a short period; from small resorts to mega-resorts.

The public sector is trying to attract as much tourist as possible to increase their tourist attraction so that it would the visitors interested to visit the destination and for those visitors that have been there before; they’re trying to make them return to the destination (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 273).

## Consolidation

The growth of the tourism and visitors reduces although the production of activity in the country continues to multiply. The local culture and villages becomes unattractive and local industries such as agricultural suffer. The hotels and other facilities need to interact and attract more tourists if they don’t manage to do that they will lose customers. The consolidation stage is more likely showing on what scale the tourism industry need to work hard on to increase better facilities and tourism activities (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 273-274).

## Stagnation

If a destination reaches the stagnation stage then the industries, public sector and the residents need to change their development towards something better and attractive (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 274-275). They need to cooperate with each other for a better balanced tourism industry. The destination may be well built for the visitors but it does not attract the tourist as it did before, they would think it’s out of fashion and that’s when the tourism industry need to tempt the visitors with something new (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 274-275).

The stagnation stage is followed by three other small phases; *rejuvenation*, *continued stagnation* and *decline*. It can end up good or bad for the destination if they don’t try to build it up. For an example, if the country end up in a *decline* is because the visitors are no longer attracted to what the destination offers and the locals and the hotels around closes. The destination gets a reputation and the antagonism reaches a level where the residents don’t want to be around tourists (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 275).

If the destination happens to be in *rejuvenation* then they need to attract the visitors with a new tourist attraction or product. The visitors are satisfied of what the destination has to offer but still to make them come back they need to capture their willingness of coming back with something new (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 276).

But if none of these alternatives will be chosen by the destination then they will be in a *continued stagnation*.

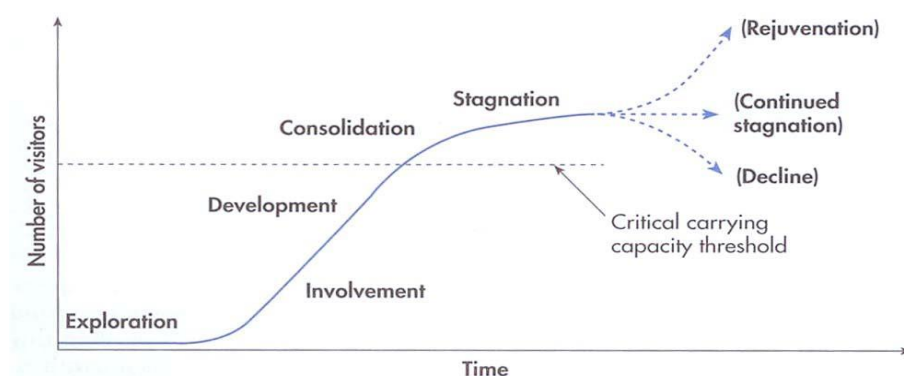


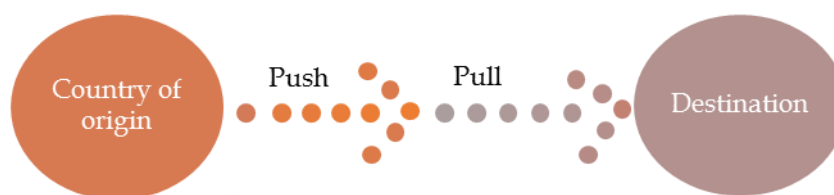
Figure 2: The Butler Sequence model (Butler, 1980) in Weaver & Lawton (2010)

### 3.4 Push- and Pull Factors

Push- and pull factors are associated with migration and emigration. In this case the author use the two factors to ensure what makes people decide to not go to the destination and instead chose other countries as an option.

Push factors are factors that push the people away from staying or choosing certain locations, some examples of problems that affect people are political issues, natural disasters, war, inadequate conditions, robbery, slavery etc. In contrast to the pull factors that brightens up the good conditions in a destination and attract people to it, such as security, living conditions, medical care, nature, sun and bath, industry, language skills, friendly staff and population etc.

(Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 86)



**Figure 3: Push & Pull Model**

Idea taken from the descriptions of Push & Pull factors in Weaver & Lawton (2010)

#### 3.4.1 Push

People travel from their origin place to another because of the bad conditions in the country of origin. Push is a part of the economic, social, demographic, technological and political factors used by attracting tourists and by using it they can expand the demand of tourism in the county (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 59-70)

#### **Economic factors**

Economic factors set the destination into operation to develop it as a more functional tourism destination and increase its demand. If a country have a bad economic condition the locals seeks out of it to find a better job and to have a better economy in order to survive. If more inbound tourist comes to a country to spend their leisure or business time they have to spend money on accommodation, transportation and food. This brings money into the country and helps the country to develop but to make this possible the destination needs to offer products and marketing that attract tourists. (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 59).

#### **Social factors**

This factor explains the social between individuals. Time and attitude are two main concepts within the social factors. Destinations need to analyze the needs of their tourists and then market towards their target group. The target group should be tourists that are going to spend money on the product and services that the country offers.

However, to receive the tourist arrivals the travelers need to have time for vacation for couple of days to travel outside their country of origin. Work and leisure time should cooperate and make it able for people to have a few weeks off (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 61-63).

## **Demographic factors**

Demographical factors are describing the way of life. If the population is wide, the country can over years create and improve the tourism industry. More jobs and more buildings must be expanded thereof will also the tourism-related product be selling. Children that have grown up will keep the culture they had when they were young and forward it to their children and even preserve it for the tourists (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 63-67).

### **3.4.2 Pull**

The pull factors make people travel into a place/country where the destination offer better conditions than origin place. It has a huge impact on a destination and this factor consist of the geographical proximity to markets, accessibility to markets, availability of attractions, cultural links, availability of service, affordability, peace, stability and safety. (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p. 87-92)

## **Geographical proximity to markets**

If the destination is nearby of the origin country tourist seeks to get there because of the proximity (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.87).

## **Accessibility to markets**

But the distance can decrease due to accessibility of infrastructure and political. If the destination have a useful transportation such as airplane, highways and harbor then the tourist can be safe and can in any possible way get to the destination without any complications.

Regarding the political accessibility, if the destination has good conditions in the country they allow tourist to come. Political access is controlling the country.

They decide if the borders should be open or closed and determines whether the VISA should be bought before arrival or just use the passport (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.88).

## **Availability of attractions**

Destinations should have attractions that attracts tourist. But tourist still has different expectations of what they really want to see and explore. It depends also on how the destination markets themselves towards tourists. There are different kinds of attractions; some of them can be the climate, culture and historical places that have been established since long time ago. They are called pre-existing attractions. But there are attractions that have been built up over the years such as theme parks, shopping malls, safari, museums etc. The destination should offer a wide range of attractions to the tourist because of the different kind of needs. Some of the tourist prefer sun and sea while other craves after exploration of the country (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.89-90).

## **Cultural links**

Every country has their own culture and they differ from different continents. Some tourist seeks to explore the life and culture of a country. But also countries with similar culture and language attract tourists, and this is the main factor as a draw card. Religion is a huge impact as well, some destinations have sacred places and this can attract tourist that are more interested in religion (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.90)

### **Availability of service**

If the service at hotels, attractions and other managements doesn't offer the qualities then the tourist avoids pursuing the product. For an example, the hotels should satisfy the guest by offering different facilities. Beyond the hotel management the government should build up different information offices in the country to facilitate the tourist by helping them with questions and requirements (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.91).

### **Affordability**

Tourist arrivals increase due to the cost of the decreased on travels to a destination.

Tourists are attracted to destinations where the accommodation, transportation and different products nor services are cheap. If a destination wants to attract more tourists that care less about the price then they need to change their marketing but still be having different of prices for each tourist (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.91).

### **Peace, stability and safety**

This component is important for the tourists. The social and political instability within a country control the destinations tourist arrivals. If a country is affected by war, conflicts, natural disasters and terrorism the tourism industry don't increase their numbers of visitors. Tourists wants to feel safe at a destination and knowing that no problem will arise while they are traveling and any help from the locals will be given (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, p.91-92).

## ***3.5 Previous researches related to Sri Lankan tourism***

### **Branding Sri Lanka**

Eriksson and Rudell say that if Sri Lanka focused more on infrastructure, stakeholders and evaluation, but also the identity, brand experience, WOM, architecture, communication and articulation they would be positively developed (2013). Those components are included in the SPBM-model, Statetgic Place Brand Management Model, used on branding neither countries nor companies. Eriksson and Rudell did a research to see how Sri Lanka uses their branding according the SPBM-model and also which of the components could be useful for Sri Lanka for their current condition. These components are connected to each other but according to Eriksson and Rudell some of them may be more important than others (2013).

The most operative component Sri Lanka is active within is the infrastructure (Eriksson & Rudell, 2013). Sri Lanka focuses at the moment to develop and expand the roads, hotels and service schools (2013). If they put some effort in the service management they would definitely enhance their brand experience and WOM, word of mouth (2013). But according to Eriksson & Rudell those two components, brand experience and WOM seems not to be taking hold. If Sri Lanka would have cooperation with their stakeholders, it could be organization, company and individuals, they would have increased their support of the brand strategy and that would give them motivation to convey their wanted request of brand experience (2013). Additionally the populations are seen as brand ambassadors and if Sri Lanka would strive to have cooperation with them they would have achieved a positive image by customers using WOM (2013).

Eriksson & Rudell say that the cooperation with stakeholders establish a brand identity, therefore they say that the brand communication is one of the key aspects to create relation with those

stakeholders. But according to Eriksson & Rudell's study of Sri Lanka they analyzed that the components communication and articulation does not seem to evolve (2013).

### **Towards a positioning strategy for tourism in in post-war Sri Lanka**

Liyanag & Jayawardena wants to tell the readers how to position a strategy for inbound tourism in Sri Lanka. Positioning as the authors describes in their paper is one of the components in the marketing and should be improved to lift up the post-war Sri Lanka within the tourism industry and change the negative image and perception of Sri Lanka that tourists could have. Liyanag & Jayawardena says that the early image of Sri Lanka was branded as "Land like no other" but it didn't convince tourists so according to Liyanag & Jayawardena they think that the new positioning "Asia's diverse, authentic and compact island" will attract tourist and evoke a positive image of Sri Lanka, but the post-war has put its mark and is a main problem inverse the image of crisis (2013) In the paper "Towards a positioning strategy for tourism in post-war Sri Lanka" the authors Liyanag & Jayawardena presents five steps towards a positioning strategy of a positive image. The following steps should be pursued;

The first step is to clarify and profile the image of the destination together with the target group. This would help consumers know about what is going to be offered.

The marketer of the destination needs to put visual glasses and see through consumer's needs to understand their demand so that they can locate nor positioning the destination appropriately.

The marketers need to convince the consumer of what they offer, clarify the points of the offering product and make it stand out and that it gives a value for the consumer.

The marketer needs to provide proof/evidence and convince the consumer that its distinctive, desirable, sustainable and credible.

The last step is for the marketer to develop the network of the brand image. The consumer should be entertained by destinations offers as soon as the branding image appears, and the consumers should associate it every time with positive thoughts.

Sri Lanka is still in process to develop their positioning strategy. Liyanag & Jayawardena has used published data of tourist arrivals from 2012 and put it together to see which kind of tourist visit Sri Lanka and which they then marked as Sri Lanka's target group (Vol.5, No. 5, 2013)

India 176, 340

United Kingdom 114,218

Germany 71,632

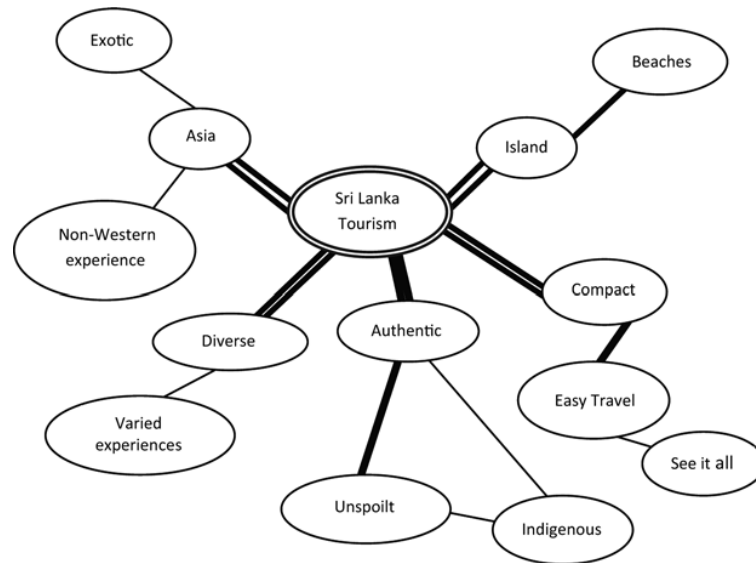
France 56,863

Australia 51,614

Under these recent years Sri Lanka has been branding themselves with two different slogans, such as;

*"Land like no other"* and *"A small miracle"*. But Liyanag & Jayawardena propose that if the tourism should enlarge they should position themselves with *"Asia's diverse, authentic and compact island"*. This would market them and make them unique apart from the competitors. The

authors of the paper “Towards a positioning strategy for tourism in in post-war Sri Lanka” have done a mind map of Sri Lanka to see what the destination offers to all kind of tourists (Vol.5, No. 5, 2013).



**Figure 4: Towards a positioning strategy for tourism in post-war Sri Lanka by Liyanag & Jayawardena (2013, Vol.5, p. 477-485)**

### Future development in Sri Lanka

Jayawardena did a research to find innovative solutions for future tourism development in Sri Lanka during 2013-2026. The paper is bundled together with the last paper regarding positioning strategy. In this paper Jayawardena writes about the solutions and her conclusion for future tourism in Sri Lanka up to year 2026. The author of the paper has analyzed inputs, viewpoints, comments and suggestion from experts about Sri Lanka and has summarized eleven recommendations to enlarge the tourism in Sri Lanka (2013);

The government and different tourist related companies should be a part of improving Sri Lanka’s world ranking.

Develop the infrastructure, human resources, communication and environmental sustainability.

Build up more and fresh hotels and rooms. The quality of rooms should increase and of course it would be hard to remove all the low quality rooms but they should definitely decrease the amount of them.

Focus on sustainable hotels and attract eco-tourists.

Work against problems regarding human resources development.

Deal with sustainable tourism by following seven and as well four concept.

Keep the brand image of the destination unchanged long-termed. Use the “Asia’s diverse, authentic and compact island” as the brand image.

Make a new master plan that would attract more tourists and integrate the six strategies.

Learn from the past, analyze the present and ambitious to effect the future. This is the three steps do realize the master plan.

Important aspects and initiatives should be placed high importance if you want to reach the future- and sustainable tourism targets.

Incorporate the master plan every time to refresh the tourism targets and future- and sustainable development.

(Jayawardena, 2013)

Jayawardena says that the master plan for Sri Lankan tourism has been processed and with the following six challenges and six strategies;

**Destination challenges**

- Infrastructure development
- Attracting investors
- Finding appropriate people for good service i.e. trained staff
- Protect the fauna and flora
- Clarify the image of Sri Lanka
- Remove the harassment of tourists

**Destination strategies**

- Reconstruction of work
- Conservation
- Rebuilding communities
- Rebuilding tourism brand
- Expanding tourism research
- Restructuring tourism bureaucracies (Lokuhetty et al., 2013).

## 4. Empirical framework

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*This chapter presents the results of the five interviews and two observations. The interviews are written in narrative form, but are also attached as original documents in the appendix.*

*Observations were written from the author's own experience and evaluations regarding Sri Lanka.*

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### 4.1 Göran Olsson about Sri Lanka in 1971

In the beginning, the late 60's, when VingResor opened up the route to Sri Lanka they had allotment of certain amount of seats in the Swiss Tour Operator Kuoni charter flight, their own Caravelle flying over from Zurich to Sri Lanka once a week during winter season.

They began with the 14-days stay over in Sri Lanka in 1971 and after one year since they opened the route, 189 persons was traveling every week. The flight was going from Stockholm to Copenhagen and then to Colombo. These trips to Sri Lanka were arranged in late October until April. The majority of travelers were Swedish than Danish because Swedes made a huge impression on Sri Lanka. Even the newspaper and press people wanted to go there and write about the destination. Back then VingResor could only market themselves in brochures and directories. It was a lot of troubles before opening up a route to Sri Lanka. Scandinavian Airlines, SAS, had made sure that you couldn't fly long distance charter, and if SAS didn't fly over to Sri Lanka then VingResor were also not able to do to that. The first charter flights with long distance was opened up to Gambia and when Kuoni Travel Agency opened up Sri Lanka former called Ceylon, SAS and Civil Aviation Authority decided to approve the destination among other destinations. They reached 6.000 travelers travelling to Sri Lanka after opening up the route. But somewhere between the 80's the charter flights were shut down due the war and that's when Thailand got up on the ranking list as charter travel.

Göran Olsson told the author that he read in an article that they are aiming for one million travelers to Sri Lanka in 2016. He thinks that they're able to reach the goal because unlike Thailand that have 20 million travelers, Sri Lanka have not yet reached the tourist break down.

Before Thailand came in the picture of most wanted charter trip, Sri Lanka had served a lot of money on their travels. VingResor had a lot of tourists travelling through them and one of them for example is the "Early Explorer" – tourist travelling to new opened destinations. For a reasonable monetary the tourists got to experience sun, culture, wilderness and sea. Except for the small amount of Swedish travelers Sri Lanka have two big categories of tourists travelling to Sri Lanka. The biggest nationality among it are the Indians but Australians and Chinese people are also a big source for the destination, but on the second category of tourists.

*"Maldives were a draw card for the Sri Lankan charter" – Göran Olsson.*

After a couple of years when they had opened Sri Lanka a combined charter with Maldives was marketed as a new destination in combination with Sri Lanka. But only twelve people could go on this trip to Maldives.

Vingresor was forced to market this as one week in Sri Lanka and a “one week excursion” to the Maldives. The Swedish Civil aviation authority did not allow a charter combination Sri Lanka/Maldives, as the charter permission was only to Sri Lanka, so there was a hotel contracted in Colombo as a “fake” but in fact the twelve Maldives passengers didn’t spend the “Maldives combination week” in Sri Lanka.

They arranged a small hotel in Sri Lanka to cooperate with VingResor and they paid the nights for twelve beds but which they didn’t really have use of. They needed to do that so the Civil Aviation Authority would believe that this was a combined charter with Sri Lanka because if they didn’t they wouldn’t be able to retain the Maldives as a destination.

## **4.2 Three tourist operators working with Sri Lanka**

### **Ving Tour Operator**

Ving opened up Sri Lanka as a destination in the beginning of 1971. They saw the possibility to fly over and the infrastructure was quite good. Ving begun to have cooperation with excursion companies in Sri Lanka and saw that it could be combined with sun, bath and cheap hotels. That’s some of the factors Ving had searched for to satisfy their customers.

Even if the possibility of excursion is on place they don’t have any packages if you want to travel to Sri Lanka with Ving. They use regular flights and hotels instead.

The customers of Ving can combine their Sri Lankan trip with Maldives or Dubai. The first days can be spent in Dubai or Qatar and then the rest of the trip in Sri Lanka. Maldives could be reached from Sri Lanka with boat or flight.

*“We don’t fly our own charter aviation; we offer flexible packages to Sri Lanka instead” – Claes Pellvik, Marketing manager for Ving*

When they started up with Sri Lanka in the beginning of 1971 they had their own charter flight from Copenhagen directly to Sri Lanka but then they needed to change and have now scheduled flights.

*“We had it for many years, except when the civil war broke up then we were forced to pause our trips” – Claes Pellvik, Marketing manager for Ving.*

Sri Lanka is not well known by many people but in 1971 when Ving started with their charter flight to Sri Lanka they had about 5000 travelers but decreased with 4000 travelers when they began with the regular flights. Claes Pellvik tells the author that this is linked with the competition with Thailand. The country have built up modern hotels that are pricewise good according to swedes demand in contradistinction to Sri Lanka, they haven’t kept the same pace with developments as in Thailand.

The combination of beaches, sun and swimming are better in Thailand and it’s infinitely greater

demand for the country because they have travelers such as families with children, elderly, youths etc. Sri Lanka offers more round trips and their tourism types are therefore smaller.

*“Sri Lanka have no pricewise good hotels and has not offered attractiveness as for example Jamaica and Aruba has, that’s why Sri Lanka lost their numbers of visitors” – Claes Pellvik, Marketing manager for Ving*

But this decrease of travelers doesn’t mean that they don’t like the country nor their trip was a failure, says Claes Pellvik. Ving do quality surveys every time their customers have been on a trip through Ving Travel Agency. Claes Pellvik tells the author that he had read the surveys and what he remembers from them regarding Sri Lanka is that enjoyable country, good attractions and cozy small hotels. He is anxious about the service the hotels provide for their guests.

*“The service depends on the hotel standard but they thought it was good. Of course there are hotels that may not be the best top marks” – Claes Pellvik, Marketing manager for Ving*

To attract more tourist to Sri Lanka their hotels and infrastructure should be improved. Because this small demand for travelling to Sri Lanka makes Ving chose to offer regular services, says Claes Pellvik. He knows that the demand will not raise because Sri Lanka’s economic crisis; they can’t do anything without a stable economic unlike Thailand who hasn’t had any problems with their economy therefore they can always improve their tourism development.

But only because Ving thinks Sri Lanka will not raise within the tourism market they still do the best to market the destination to attract more tourists. Primarily they use their website and newsletter which is send to their customers. They do have catalogues but its secondary use because now Internet is an important marketing channel, says Claes Pellvik.

## **Jambo Tours**

David Wolde explained for the author how it all began with the opening of trips to Sri Lanka. The tour operator Jambo Tours is so old that they had Sri Lanka in the company’s product range since 1979-80 when the charter was greatest. It was mostly in the form of sun and sea package which they sold and a form of compass round trips on your own with a local guide. Jambo Tours sold trips to Sri Lanka until the civil war broke up, then the state department advised them to cancel their trips because the war was ongoing and the Travel Agencies/Operators need to follow their advice. The state department has information and knowledge about the political and stability in different countries, they give travel recommendation for all Travel Agencies and it should be followed. The war ended in 2009 and Jambo Tours could start with their trips to Sri Lanka again after a break due to the war, says David Wolde.

Jambo Tours offer packages and present it in their seven concepts, everything they present, no matter what you choose that you want to explore in Sri Lanka is packaged, besides the safari and cruises that they don’t offer in Sri Lanka. The seven concepts include seven different types of trips;

**Jambo Safari** – For people interested in Safari trips. Jambo Tours offers a Swedish or English speaking guide and you travel with a group of maximum 14 people. The trip is always taking you

with a jeep through the national park.

**Jambo Ensemble** – touring with Swedish speaking tour guide/Jambo guide. This product is important for Jambo Tours and you must at least travel 10 people and maximum people they can take in to a group like this is 26 people.

**Jambo Kompass** – Round trips, it's more for an individual traveling example two persons, but they won't have any Swedish speaking guide because they use the local citizens that have been trained by their own education system do the guide trip in English.

**Jambo Junior** – This concept is towards the families, but mainly for the children. The children/youths can bring their parents, because of the law children less than 18 years old are not allowed to travel on their own without permission.

**Jambo Explorer** – Adventure related trips, for those who are interested in wandering, rafting but Jambo Tours offer also offer tours where they put together packages for each person inquiries.

**Jambo Kryssning** – They offer cruise trips but are focusing on small cruises instead of big cruise ships. The boats they use take maximum 30 persons and take them to various places.

**Jambo Relax** – This kind of trip is almost like charter but Jambo Tours wants to believe it is better. They use scheduled flights and if you compare with the charter companies they don't. They package these trips with sun and sea at example Philippines where they can assemble 11-12 days and the Travel Agencies with charter can't set this up because you need at least 7 or 14 days abroad. In addition to this people ask about customized trips and so does Jambo Tours, but they don't lift it up and shows us only what they're strong and good with – Round- and Group tours.

Jambo Tours lift up the same aspects with their trips to Sri Lanka now and before the war. They focus on highlighting the forces that have been experienced in the tour Great Sri Lankan trip, especially all animals. The whales and leopard combination is one of the main attractions that are very unique and they have the possibility to give that to their customers. Except that they also highlight the hinterland with tea plantation which differs slightly from before. Jambo Tours always try to clarify their aspects of every destination.

Jambo Tours wants to help everyone to have their great trip in different countries; if they want to have a tailored trip they help them to sew it up.

After the war ended, we reintroduced Sri Lanka in our product range, now with the new concept Jambo Ensemble, says David Wolde.

*“When I go there and check on the hotels, I always think and see through our customer's visions” – David Wolde*

“Major Sri Lankan trip” opened up last season and David Wolde flew over to Sri Lanka to ensure the quality, the cooperation with hotels, how the round trips should look like, meet their partners, see what kind of transportation they should use etc. When everything was set they opened up the round trip to Sri Lanka, those trips are the most important trip of packages, says David Wolde.

Customers can combine their Sri Lankan trip with another destination if they want to for extra cost. Jambo Tours ensemble round trip can be combined with a trip to the Maldives but also their package “Major Sri Lankan trip” is quite common to use when you want to combine with Maldives. If you choose to fly with Thai Airways, commercial flight, you can have a ticket which admits you to stop on the way home for example in Thailand or Bangkok. Qatar and Doha is also two places where you can stay and explore but maybe not as much as in Bangkok, says David Wolde.

Jambo Tours had since 2009 approximately 500 persons travelling to Sri Lanka. The season of 2010/11 when they opened up the Sri Lankan product again they had less/more people traveling with them; everything depends on the trends, but a couple hundred more since 2009.

In 2012 I believe it was 13 000 swedes from the whole country who traveled to Sri Lanka and in 2013 it went down to 7-8 percent so approximately it went down 1000 persons, says David Wolde. The trend causes such fluctuations. It's like fashion on some places, when the King and Queen went to Mauritius everyone started to go there too and then it collapsed. It's difficult to say why it's up and down with some trends, says David Wolde.

To summarize customers feedback on their trips they send questionnaire surveys to all of them, says David Wolde. Based on the answers they get from their customers David Wolde has seen positive feedback when it comes about Sri Lanka. Many people surprises themselves when they go to Sri Lanka and when they come back. The questionnaire survey includes more yes or no questions rather than deep evaluated questions, says David Wolde.

David Wolde tells the author that this positive image is produced by the local people in Sri Lanka, they create the country. Their religion Buddhism is representing humility and that's why it's pretty safe in the country. It's not only sun and sea that represents Sri Lanka, they have a lot of things to explore as nature, surfing, whales, elephants, says David Wolde.

*“The nature and the countryside affected us positively very much” - says David Wolde.*

David Wolde and some of the employees at Jambo Tours have been in Sri Lanka and their impression was also positive.

David Wolde tells the author that when he talks with the customers that have been in Sri Lanka he gets the image of them that the situation seems calm and pleasant at the destination.

There may well be individual accidents, but it happens in Sweden as well, says David Wolde.

According to David Wolde tourist shouldn't be worried about going to Sri Lanka as it looks now. They shouldn't be naive when they go there or elsewhere. People lose much judgment when they go abroad, they do things differently than how they might have done at home and that's causing troubles, says David Wolde.

*“We focus on packaged tours based on individuals and groups, which is our strength, rather than a sun & beach stay” – David Wolde*

Jambo Tours choose to not compare Sri Lanka with Thailand because they work with experience traveling and when it comes to Thailand it is a lot of sun and bath travelers and therefore our Thailand trips are decreasing constantly.

Everyone has been in Thailand and anyone can offer their favorite spots in the country, it's pretty easy to book flight ticket and hotels in Thailand, says David Wolde.

The promoting and marketing is very important and every Travel Agency or Operator has their way to promote and market the destinations to attract more tourists. Jambo Tours have their retail channels which are market through Travel Agencies in Sweden and Norway. They do market their destinations in their own directory but also on the website, through newsletters but beside that Jambo Tours advertise in Swedish newspapers such as Dagens Nyheter (DN) and Svenska

Dagbladet (SVD). Except the advertising Sri Lanka should definitely improve their infrastructure, as they already begun to do, and build more hotels to attract more tourist, says David Wolde. The roads need to polish up and build up. The government has set aside quite a lot to improve the infrastructure; the highways are being built up, including Mirissa, and it should be broadened out to Kandy and the north. This means that they are working on it and as soon it's done I think it will attract more tourist when they know that it's easy to get around in the country. They should also pull in more airlines that go to Sri Lanka such as Qatar Airways. I think that Sri Lankan Airlines should open up the routes from Sweden, says David Wolde.

*“They are constantly in progress with their projects and road construction. Their tourism has increased all the time if you look at the incoming tourism to the country” – David Wolde*

David Wolde said that the Sri Lankan tourism will increase. He thinks that they are aiming to reach two million tourist in a few years, around 2015-2016. To aim that number of tourists you need to build more hotels, because it would be needed for every person visiting Sri Lanka. The number may be too high, but they will increase, they will definitely do, says David Wolde.

Regarding if another civil war will occur in Sri Lanka, David Wolde tells the author that he personally think it could occur but as a company we don't dig into countries politics, instead they are following the recommendations of The State Department.

### **Lotus Travel**

Lotus Travel began selling trips to Sri Lanka because they needed to expand their range of destinations for travels in Asia and they thought that Sri Lanka seemed to be an interesting destination that complemented with their other destinations. We planned our first departure to Sri Lanka in January 2013, which unfortunately had to be canceled due few bookings, but the first group we got could go in November 2013. We have had around 60 persons traveling with Lotus Travel since we opened the trip, says Linda Persson.

Linda Persson and other employees of Lotus Travel have been in Sri Lanka and their image of the country is positive.

*“I think the destination is very interesting, the food is fantastic and it's easy to get around in the country because everyone speak English” – Linda Persson*

They offer both packages and trips from the website and directory, you can choose between Swedish speaking guide trips and tailor-made individual trips. If you choose to combine Sri Lanka with Maldives you choose the tailor-made option, says Linda Persson.

The travelers that have gone on a trip through Lotus Travel have been positive about Sri Lanka and what the country has to offer, both in the terms of culture, nature, wildlife and beaches. Customer evaluations shows us that everyone has a positive answer to the question about their expectation during the trip since it materialized, says Linda Persson.

Linda Persson thinks Sri Lanka should market them more generally, as the charter companies are coming back and it needs to be visible. Lotus Travel advertises their trips and destinations in the daily newspaper, on the website and by sending out their newsletter to their subscribers.

### **4.3 Leif Ohlson promoting Sri Lanka**

*“I automatically got a job as advertising because no one didn’t care about it before” - Leif Ohlson.*

Leif Ohlson worked in Sri Lanka and fell in love with the country. He tells the author that they have been bad to raise the country, quality of products and the marketing was so poor when he was there. That made him see that the country has so much more to discover. Because of the wide opportunity of attractions he began to investigate and help people advertising Sri Lanka. Leif Ohlson created a non-profit website and started to inform about Sri Lanka which he also use now.

*“Many people have not discovered what Sri Lanka has to offer; surfing, whale watching, Ayurveda, yoga, food, bird watching, Sri Lanka design festival etc. All of these attractions need to spread between people, and this requires cooperation between all agencies and companies such as Ving and Apollo who sell any form of trips to Sri Lanka”. – Leif Ohlson*

The agencies should package everything that Sri Lanka has to offer for the customer’s interest, market other places and not only Hikkaduwa and Negombo.

There is a total experience, everything is available in Sri Lanka; beaches, food, big cities, design and art. You should go there because it’s an undiscovered pearl, besides this it’s cheap, affordable and not as far away as we think, says Leif Ohlson.

The main task to lift up a destination is to wider the accommodation, there must be a wide selection of the hotels, says Leif Ohlson. Except that they should focus on advertising more for example on public transport like Tunisia, Morocco and Croatia does in Stockholm. If Sri Lanka tourist industry had a better supporting hand from the government and various embassies it would have been easier to lift up their tourism.

They should market themselves in brochures as well, and unfortunately there is none of them, says Leif Ohlson. He submits questions for families and individuals who have been in Sri Lanka and then use their answers as a reference in his newsletter as a way to market and promote the country. The second thing that would help Sri Lanka to advertise more is the Internet; a good search in Google would give people ability to get all the information they may need before their trip to Sri Lanka, says Leif Ohlson.

Until the huge travel agencies don’t take hold of leisure travel to Sri Lanka the attraction will not raise. It would be standing in the same place as it does now if the Sri Lankan Tourist Board doesn’t decide to do something about the tourism and marketing for Sri Lanka, says Leif Ohlson.

Leif Ohlson helps the destination but also the embassies and different agencies to market Sri Lanka. He markets it through his website, newsletter, various events, press releases and contacts with travel

agents, airlines and journalists. The author asked about the subscribers of the newsletter and Leif Ohlson told that he has reached 2500 subscribers. But for him its more relevant how many people are accessing his website.

I post all news that I write on my website on all social media; Twitter, Facebook etc. I have around 6-7000 views per day. It's important for a destination development to advertise everywhere, talk all the time and be high up on Google search, says Leif Ohlson.

*“Unfortunately money is not worth having in tourism industry, it is the volume of tourism that count for the government statistics” - Leif Ohlson.*

Leif Ohlson works independent; it means he doesn't get any financial help from vendors and operators. There were travel agencies in Sri Lanka who wanted to cooperate with me but I declined because so much money would make me lose my independence. If they want to be profitable and make money they should use someone with more knowledge about the tourist industry, says Leif Ohlson.

Sri Lankan tourism is nowadays as Thailand had for 20 years ago. Thailand is a popular destination in Asia and according to Leif Ohlson he never understood why Thailand is such a great destination. It must be the food and the heat, because 'I've only been in Bangkok and can't say so much more about the country, says Leif Ohlson.

Leif Ohlson told the author four standpoints that cause that Sri Lanka is not the top one destination in Asia.

1. Sri Lanka had a civil war in quarter-century, it's one of the basic causes why Thailand still leads within tourism if comparing those two countries with each other.
2. They don't have direct flights because Travel Agencies have not taken their responsibility to widen it up.
3. No celebrities are traveling to Sri Lanka. Travel agencies have not actively promoted the country, and I believe Thailand's travel agencies are quite active in the marketing area, says Leif Ohlson.
4. The fourth cause is the product Thailand offer; good hotel and lot different hotels to choose between. In Sri Lanka there are no all-inclusive such as in Thailand, they have a great complex of hotels, says Leif Ohlson.

## **4.4 Observations**

### **4.4.1 From the author's perspective - Sri Lankan trip 2014**

Author of this dissertation decided to travel to Sri Lanka for ten days in February 2014 during this research. It took twelve hours to reach the destination with one stop in Doha, Qatar. It was not a flawless flight because when the author reached Doha the staff at the boarding desk didn't have the flight ticket to Colombo. Qatar Airways fully booked their flight to Sri Lanka. The staff offered the author money, free accommodation and transfer to the hotel in Doha and then back to the airport for

the next flight that was departing late afternoon the day after. It was a lot of hassle but it didn't prevent the author from having a good trip anyway. Arriving to Sri Lanka at night the author and her colleagues decided to hire a car with a driver because it was a three hours long journey that awaited the author and her friends. Heading to Hikkaduwa, the South of Sri Lanka, they couldn't see the beautiful nature and sea because of the darkness. When they reached Hikkaduwa, with no reservation at any hotel the search of accommodation began. Every hotel in Hikkaduwa was fully booked because of the high-season in the South. But they found one hotel with an available double room for 80 dollar per night, even if they were three people they decided to stay, but changed their room after two days because of the mold. Some of the rooms were renovated and other was still ancient. Hotel staff offered to have a suit with beach view for only 150 dollar for the last five days and they did not hesitate to change (see appendix, picture 1). The room was renovated, with fridge, air-conditioning and fresh bathroom.

The first day after woken up the author and her colleagues met some Swedish elder people staying at the hotel; they were on a six months trip in Asia. First they began in Thailand and they didn't plan to come to Sri Lanka but because of the free time, availability and accessibility to the country they decided to explore it. But they were only staying a couple of weeks in Sri Lanka and afterwards they were planning to travel to Thailand again. They were positive about Sri Lanka but the woman was terrified about the traffic so even if she wanted to visit some attractions like the author and her colleagues did she didn't want to take the tuk-tuk, car-cycle, out from the city. She was aware of the same kind of traffic in Thailand but told the author that it still wasn't the same fear of using traffic.

From the author's perspective of Sri Lanka, she liked it very much, nice weather, clean beach, nature and lot of various restaurants. It was cheap in the South; restaurants, hotels and souvenirs unlike in Colombo. But as in some other Asian and African countries, you can definitely haggle down to lower price if their ordinary price doesn't satisfy you.

If tourists in youth age are looking for some parties in Sri Lanka and not for the adventure and relaxation then they have arrived to the wrong country, according to the author. They do have parties but you shouldn't have high hopes regarding nightlife. In the South, Hikkaduwa, where the author was for eight days, they saw one big festival at the beach but it was mostly Indians traveling from their resident country to have some fun. The author spent the days with her colleagues at beach and visiting attractions during the day. During the evening they went to different restaurants every night to try the spicy and tasty food.

The plan was to ride an elephant, visit the turtle farm and the Buddha temple. Riding an elephant was unable, the farm was closed and therefore they went to the Buddha temple in Bentota, one hour from Hikkaduwa (see appendix, picture 1). At the Buddha temple the author and her colleague had to wear a scarf around the hips to cover the legs, but this only applies to women and no shoes on which applied to all visitors (see appendix, picture 2). Inside of the temple the walls were painted into pictures which represented the history of Sri Lanka (see appendix, picture 3). Even a wall dedicated for the victims of the tsunami can be seen. The driver that took them to the temple told that everything was renovated after being destroyed of the tsunami. Even the big Buddha statue on the temple was renovated (see appendix, picture 4).

It is said that the Buddha statue rescued lots of people from the tsunami because they climbed up on

him to avoid the coming waves. The author opened up her mind during the excursion at the Temple. They had to see an elephant but visitors couldn't ride it because of the horn it had.

When the author and her colleagues came back in the evening to Hikkaduwa they decided to go to the turtle farm where they were able to see different species of turtles, big and small and even the turtle eggs. They were lucky because one turtle was hatched when the owner dug it up (see appendix, pictures 5-7).

During the evenings the baby turtles are released into the sea. The author and her colleagues got to release ten turtles into the sea. It is an excitement and happiness. It's hard to explain the feeling but it's worth doing it, it's like giving them freedom even if they have a good life at the farm because of the owner taking care of them (see appendix, picture 8). It is said that if someone finds a turtle on the beach, eggs or adults, they sell it to the market to get money but the owner explained that he pays a little bit more than the grocery shops and therefore people leave the turtles to the farm. He wants to preserve the turtles.

During the eight days in Hikkaduwa, the author could note the population's manner in the South, the service at the restaurants, mode of life in Sri Lanka and the traffic. The traffic was horrible but the author was not afraid, even if there were moments which could be explained as near death experience. They drive like any human being but very fast, some people are bad drivers but actually it's the highway that needs to be expanded. They have no pavement so you're always looking around to make sure that no cars are driving at you (see appendix, picture 9).

The author saw many tourists, no mass tourism but still quite a lot. Listening to the tourist while they were speaking the author could tell that most of them were from Russia, Germany and England.

Sri Lanka is aware of the large number of visitors from Germany because there were a lot of signs written in German and when the author and her colleagues went to the book store to find some Swedish books the majority was written in German. People leave their books at the bookstore, two stores in Hikkaduwa, and therefore the author could imagine the large number of Germans visiting Sri Lanka.

The last two days were spent in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. From staying in a two star hotel it was time to change to a five star hotel (see appendix, picture 10). The author and her colleagues are both working at a five star hotel in Stockholm, Sweden. Therefore you get blind and see everything from another perspective.

Entering the hotel in Colombo showed the good service within the porter service. They took the luggage and the guests were shown to the front desk. At the reception the guests are served juice and a warm, wet small towel. Sri Lanka is known as a clean country. That was seen in Hikkaduwa where some of the toilets have a shower hose, as the residents use it to clean themselves after they have been at the toilet. They do have toilet paper, because as a tourist you are quite unsure to try it. After checking in at the five star hotel, the author and her colleagues were shown to the room with one of the Lobby staff. The room was facing the pool on the third floor. Nice view and nice rooms, they represented a five star quality. The author and her colleagues couldn't complain at all. But after one hour they started to complain among themselves about the luggage that wasn't brought up. But after some calls they received the forgotten luggage, it was quite annoying to not know if they had it or not. This was the hotel the author and her colleagues had pre-booked, so they were anxious about the stay. The breakfast should have been included but when asking the front desk

they didn't put it up even if the guests had e-mail conversation with the employees. They asked to put the breakfast on the bill but it took a few minutes until the receptionist did that, because he was focused on something else.

The concierge department was not flawless either, when one of the colleagues wanted to arrange cakes and flowers on the room the concierge said he couldn't help him and showed where it could be bought. It was supposed to be a surprise and as other concierge department is the task to arrange whether shops are open and even if the request comes in last minute.

Overall the stay was great, but as it was mentioned above, when you work in a hotel industry you see things from different perspective, you are pickier when it comes to service. But the author had a great time and did not want to leave the country, it has so much to explore but she couldn't stay longer. The author left her colleagues that were traveling in Sri Lanka for one month and left back home to Stockholm, Sweden. Fortunately, there were no complications with the flight on the way back. The author will definitely come back for more adventures and without limited time.

#### ***4.4.2 Seminar about Sri Lanka***

Tuesday, May 20th the author was invited to a seminar about Sri Lanka that was arranged by Aitken Spence Travel, Leif Ohlson and Star for Life (see appendix, picture 11). The seminar was towards travel agencies because of giving them a hint about Sri Lanka and why they should promote it among their Scandinavian stakeholders. During the seminar the guests were served Ceylon tea and cake from Sri Lanka. The author was the only student there, because the seminar was dedicated to travel agencies and tour operators. It is intended that they should keep in contact with Aitken Spence Travel because they want to cooperate and attract more Scandinavian travelers.

First speaker was Leif Ohlson talking about his experience about Sri Lanka and how it all begun with his hobby about the country and why he promote it among swedes. The author had interviews with Leif Ohlson during the dissertation and more facts about him and his work is shown in the beginning of the empirical studies.

The second speaker was Kapila Abeywardane from Aitken Spence Travel Agency; he came directly from Sri Lanka to Stockholm for this seminar and wanted to talk about the East-Coast. He told the guests that Sri Lanka has so much more to discover than Colombo and the South and he wanted to lift the East-Coast up and show what it offers. The other parts of Sri Lanka have been trite for a long time and to show the guests what the East-Coast offer they could arrange trips there as well. If travelers are interested in history, wildlife, whale, turtle and dolphin watching, elephant rides, cycling, trekking, waterfalls, tea plantations or experience the Sri Lankan lifestyle they can do it all at one place; East-Coast in Sri Lanka.

He wants to see more Scandinavians visiting Sri Lanka and not only for the sun and sea but also for exploration, make them notice that it offers several of attractions for every age.

The last speaker was Christina Riddebäck, working for Star for Life. Their goal is to strengthen children's self-esteem and teach them about life, nutrition, health and sex and relationships. It started in Africa but then they began and opened up in Sri Lanka. They improve the schools, one school in Sri Lanka opened up in January 2014 in Colombo and Christina told the guest at the seminar that their work really functions. She explained how they could be so sure about that, when they first arrive at a school they do tests among the children to see their knowledge about different

subjects that are going to be studied for three years. After one year, the children do the same test to see if the knowledge has improved and the last final test is done at the end of the third year. By doing these tests, they have noticed the improvement of children's knowledge, it has been strengthened and they feel competent about the future.

In the end of the seminar everyone was discussing about Sri Lanka. People were telling what they thought about their visit there and what they disliked. The traffic came up as for discussion and everyone agreed that it's horrible, but still getting better. We can see that under the on-site observation and the people's view of how they perceived can be connected to each other because of the same response of what the author got during her trip.

## 5. Content analysis of the research questions

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*In this chapter the discussions are made and form the conclusions of the dissertation and its questions. By using the selected theories and the result from the interviews and observation the author apply each theory and analyze it.*

*It also includes a proposal for further development of Sri Lanka.*

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### 5.1 Answers to the research questions

The author has applied the theory on the empirical studies to answer the research questions.

#### **How requested is Sri Lanka in the Swedish travel industry in contradistinction to Thailand?**

Sri Lanka in contradistinction to Thailand has not gained a lot of tourist arrivals during these five years, 2009-2014. Both countries have been affected of the natural disaster in 2004 and both of them have had political instability but still Thailand attracts more Swedish and overall travelers (See Promblematisation; Table 1). That's because of the cooperation between the government and authorities. They promote Thailand as a charter destination for all kind of tourist; families, individuals, youths, elders etc. and tuck away the bad conditions. People travel to a destination because of what they offer and what they have heard about it. Thailand has long been spoken off and conveys their experience to family and friends (David Wolde, 2014).

In comparison to Sri Lanka, less swedes travel to the destination and this can be one of the reasons why it isn't well-known among swedes because of the poor marketing between family and friends. Travel agencies and tour operator advertise and market Sri Lanka towards Swedish people in Sweden but Thailand is still the competitor among Asian countries, probably because it offer charter package and if you want to travel to Sri Lanka the option is a flexible package, such packages are offered by Ving as the author were told by having the interview with Claes Pellvik, marketing manager of Ving. Charter is a great product lure to attract people according to the author after compiling the interview answer. In the beginning when Sri Lanka opened up their first charter flights through Ving, it was 5.000 tourists that had traveled to Sri Lanka same year, but shortly after when the charter travels were shut down and the flexible packages opened up the amount of tourist decreased to 4.000, according to the information Claes Pellvik from Ving announced during the interview. Already at that time when they saw the decreased number of travelers, one might have thought that the charter should begin again because of better sales of the travels. Shortly thereafter, travel agencies and tour operators were forced to close their travels to Sri Lanka due the war. This caused that swedes were not able to visit the country for a longer period where conflict prevails. It's not easy to attract tourist back to a country where conflict and economic crisis exists. Sri Lanka need to attract with a new product or refresh their pre-attractions with a good offer within Swedish market.

According to Veronica Lundström Kristensen (Vagabond, 2014) Sri Lanka are investing to attract 2, 5 million visitors in 2016.

Besides the option of travels to Sri Lanka another problem is the accommodation, they do have hotels but not enough and if they want to reach the amount of 2.5 million tourist arrivals in 2016 they need to expand their hotels and make more “beds” to fill it out. The author sees the ability and willingness because of the reconstructions of hotels in Colombo. But we can only hope that the hotels will be completed in 2015, as it is said on the signs.

It is quite possible and all the participants in the interviews that the author had during the study believe that an increase will occur. David Wolde mention that the number they are investing in may be too high in such short time, but they will definitely raise the number of arrivals to the country, slowly but surely because of the ongoing development of hotels and infrastructure. Visitors would feel comfortable knowing that the infrastructure is safe, every road is open and that they can get around the country in every possible way (David Wolde, 2014).

Göran Olsson has also a positive attitude towards an increase in Sri Lanka and he mention that in comparison to Thailand, Sri Lanka haven't reach the mass tourism and that's why it isn't probed by tourists as Thailand is nowadays. Eventually the tourist is going to get away from the mass tourism and search after countries where tourism hasn't reached the breakdown yet.

Hopefully, a large number of swedes will be a part of the 2.5 million visitors. But to achieve this it is required to focus on the marketing, infrastructure and of course the development of service within the locals in the country. The author believes that the development of the service management should be done as soon the hotels are built and more people in Sri Lanka will apply for the position of an employee in the hotels. All hotels should cooperate with the private sector to offer free education within service in order to convey the best quality to the tourist of their stay. Service is a strong factor that provides a good image of the locals and if tourist had their good visit in the country they will probably return. The author works in a five star hotel in Stockholm and after ten days of observation in Sri Lanka and two days of nights at the five star hotel Kingsbury she could see the lack of service. They do a good job but still in comparison to how we work in Sweden within five star hotels, they had deficiencies.

After submitting the SWOT-analysis by using participant answers from the interview, below is a lined up SWOT-analysis and the author wants to show readers what Sri Lanka should focus on to improve and what they have to offer.

### ***Strenghts***

- Short distance between all attractions
- Tree Plantation
- Tropical forest
- Sun & Sea
- Diversity
- Culture
- Religion
- Round trips
- Different unique animals
- Health – Ayurveda
- Various wildlife
- Accessibility

Good language skills in English  
All year around destination

### ***Weaknesses***

Infrastructure  
Service  
Hotels  
Price setting  
English language skills among younger residents  
Tourist not returning back to the destination

### ***Opportunities***

Sustainable tourism  
More airlines with direct flights  
Infrastructure  
Modern hotels  
New international airport  
Offer different combined trips

### ***Threats***

Political instability  
Civil war  
Thailand's price-setting  
Natural disaster  
Service

## **What kind of factors could help to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination?**

The author has applied the SWOT-analysis and Marketing Mix in order to obtain the factors that Sri Lanka should focus on in order to highlight their marketing to be seen as an all year destination among the swedes. When using the 8P-factors of Marketing Mix by Morrison, these factors have been applied with the SWOT-analysis as the author compiled according to the responses from the interviews. Sri Lanka will be split up in all the eight factors; price, product, place, promotion, packaging, programming, impact and partnership and thereof describe the marketing of Sri Lanka based on the information the author gained during the studies from the interviews and observations. The author wants to ease for the reader in how considerable the weight of the factors are and which factors are needed to develop Sri Lanka as a tourist destination in Sweden.

### ***Product***

Sri Lanka does not need to focus on developing more attractions as they already offer a wide and strong range for every type of tourists. According to the SWOT-analysis, the strength of Sri Lanka is their wide selection of attractions at one location, they offer such as; sun and sea, culture, religion, health, tree plantation, tropical forest, wildlife and roundtrips. But the product includes not only range but also the quality of product, branding and design. To be seen and heard they require a great branding that attracts tourists. According to Eriksson & Rudell (2013) Sri Lanka need to

develop their branding but focus on getting more visitors to the country. For an example, using word-of-mouth would help Sri Lanka achieve more visitors because of the marketing within family and friends. In comparison to Thailand, Sri Lanka has not a strong image unlike Thailand that cooperates with authorities and the government to develop a positive image towards tourists. Eriksson & Rudell says that the collaboration provides motivation for developing and creating. Sri Lanka has a good product but it needs to be launched better to reach out to Scandinavia.

### ***Price***

During the observations, the author saw the way of life in Sri Lanka to be cheap, especially in the Southern part of Sri Lanka. But as soon as you arrive into the big cities such as Colombo the price-setting change dramatically. Prices are higher than in the South and shopping opportunities are a little bit more but of course expensive in comparison to the Southern part. In these small cities outside Colombo, there are small shops owned by the locals and the price-setting is according to their way of life, but of course as a tourist you can negotiate to a lower price and this applied even to the hotels. Under the observation the author and her colleagues were able to negotiate to a lower price when changing from a mold room to a suite. Unlike Thailand that has that little extra for their tourist is because of that they change the prices after consumers demand. David Wolde (2014) from Jambo Tours mentioned that people in Sri Lanka are greedy now when the tourism has begun to increase and they want to earn as much as possible in a short term.

### ***Place***

Tourists can not pursue attractions in Sri Lanka if they haven't been at the destination. In this case the author wants to lift up the tasks of agencies and tour operators to evoke the image of Sri Lanka in various brochures, books and advertising before the consumer buy the product or in this case a travel to Sri Lanka. According to Leif Ohlson, the owner of "BestofSriLanka.se" and "SriLankaGuiden.se" he thinks that Sri Lanka needs to get more search results on Google. He promotes Sri Lanka towards swedes and tries to convey as much information about Sri Lanka as possible for his stakeholders as well as new people visiting his website. In his newsletter that he sends out to his subscribers, he mention updates in Sri Lanka, traditions, tourism, food, culture, number of visitors etc. Leif Ohlson is doing this on his leisure time; he doesn't feel compelled to do this because this is his hobby and doesn't want to get paid by promoting Sri Lanka even if he cooperates with the Embassy.

He also says that guidebooks and brochures are missing about Sri Lanka. It requires that the authorities in Sri Lanka decides to cooperate with Sweden so we can reach out to the Swedish population through various channels and especially advertising on different products such as buses, restaurants etc. If they choose to advertise on buses people would notice it and if Sri Lankan restaurants would have opened in Sweden people would try their food and probably get interested to visit the country later on. The author agrees with Leif Ohlson, when the trip was pursued to Sri Lanka and the author waited at the airport in Sweden no guidebooks was found in the bookstore. It is a matter of principle to have guidebooks in pocket format about every country at the airport if someone wants to buy at the last minute on the way down to Sri Lanka.

### ***Promotion***

This factor is important for attracting tourists. Travel agencies, tour operators and authorities need to cooperate in order to sell Sri Lanka to Swedish population. Positive image of the country creates interest for tourists to explore the country more closely. Leif Ohlson is working hard to market as it was mentioned before, and even the tour operators Ving, Jambo Tours and Lotus Travel as the author got to know by having the interview. All of them market themselves in the traditional way through catalogues but the priority is on the Internet because it is a strong channel to reach everyone on according to Claes Pellvik (2014).

### ***Packaging***

As the author mentioned earlier, it is important that, for example offer charter to Sri Lanka. Linda Persson from Lotus Travel and the rest of the participants in the interview wants to see Sri Lanka as a charter destination. There are plenty of countries opening up charter travels and it will be a competition between them.

Jambo Tours which offer various of packages and also the Major Sri Lankan trip doesn't see themselves compete with Thailand since according to David Wolde (2014) Thailand have more sun and sea travelers and Jambo Tours are aiming to attract explorers. They want to focus on experiences in the country therefore they don't sell charter travels.

### ***Programming***

Programming is merged with packaging. This factor provides accessories to the product. If Sri Lanka would have opened up charter trips they would include different activities for children at the hotel or different shows every evening. All-Inclusive is a programming because of the different options you have while choosing all-inclusive. Another option according to Leif Ohlson would be if Sri Lanka opened up health trips because of their known Ayurveda treatments all over the country. They have hotels connected to health but no packages including health trips. Sweden could promote an event of making a small trip to Sri Lanka regarding health. Even trips regarding food culture could be packaged in their product.

### ***Impact***

Impact includes attitudes, service, marketing and branding. Sri Lanka needs to focus on their service and image towards tourist. They have deficiencies in the English language and their service knowledge is poor as well. Providing a good service and quality towards tourist they obtain a good image of Sri Lanka and would definitely recommend it. If you don't have a good stay then the temptation of returning back will disappear. The author works at a hotel and from their observation at Sri Lanka it was known directly wherever you stayed in the country that they have lack in their service business. They are trying the best to provide it but still it would be good to have free education for all employees at the hotels.

Branding is also an element that catches the eye of a tourist. Liyang & Jayawardena mentions that a positioning strategy would lift up the country within the tourism industry but they need to find a good branding and the authors Liyang & Jayawardena recommend to follow five steps within the strategy to gain a positive image. Sri Lanka is aiming for so many tourists but they need to focus on the development on how they are going to gain these tourist. Government and the authorities should do a plan and discuss how they should work together to make Sri Lanka an attractive tourist destination for everyone to know.

## ***Partnership***

Swedish travel agencies, tour operators and Embassies need to start cooperate with Sri Lankan authorities, embassy, tourist information bureau, hotels and all different organization within the tourism sector if they want to gain Swedish tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka. The previous researched about future development in Sri Lanka by Jayawardena tells us about the solutions for a tourism development in the country. The main task is the cooperation between the government and different tourist related companies. If organizations help each other the development would be accelerated and cooperation means a helping hand in the economic crisis.

## **How developed is Sri Lanka currently within the tourism sector?**

Sri Lanka has had ups and downs regarding their tourism during the war and natural disaster but so has Thailand too, but it is still the favorite among swedes within Asian countries.

Sri Lanka has a strong tourism but attracts mainly tourist from Germany, Russia, India, Japan and Australia. There are various purposes of their travel among these tourists why they are traveling to Sri Lanka.

According to David Wolde (2014), he explained that Germany have a good cooperation with Sri Lanka and every year they are announcing their own fair regarding travels and tourism, on this fair Sri Lanka and Germany have a good opportunity to negotiate a good price and deal. Sweden need to wait until the price-setting for Germany is done before they can receive their deal but it can take months and tour operators don't want to wait too long because of the deadline to have a catalogue done for the coming year.

But if you go back to the Swedish market that prefer Thailand during their winter half-year; Thailand is number one Asia destination among Swedes. The country has the capital to expand its hotels and attractions. Sri Lanka who don't earn as much on their tourism because of the not returning tourists, can therefore not extend its tourist attractions or hotels. According to the author, Sri Lanka provides all possible attractions but should refresh their hotels and service within it. Service is very poor in Sri Lanka. It takes a long time to order food at restaurants, their English among younger population is a little bit weak but some of the population are very good at English and can hold a discussion.

To see where Sri Lanka is currently within their tourism the author used the Butler's Sequence Model. This model have different stages and provides how developed the destination is and on which stage in the model it stands. If applying Butler's Sequence Model on Sri Lanka according to the interviews and observations, the author thinks that Sri Lanka has reached the stage Involvement. Sri Lanka has taken hold of their development and expanding infrastructure, even if it takes time to expand the highways. Hotels are also expanding and this will provide more visitors for long-or short overnight stays.

These expansions are within the internal factors. In terms of marketing we talk about the external factors which include agencies and tour operators marketing among tourists and tourists own experience of the country as they recommend it by word-of-mouth to their family and friends.

The author was invited to a seminar held in Stockholm for the tour operators where information was shared on how to attract Swedish travelers to Sri Lanka. Instead of attracting them to the areas that are open during winter season, the Aitken Spence Travel wants to lift the Eastern part as a functional tourist destination during spring/summer. But it is not enough to inform everyone, you

need to start cooperate with Swedish organizations. Thailand has a wide network unlike Sri Lanka and that's why swedes have heard about Thailand because of their cooperation between the government and different authorities that are helping to promote the country. The affordable charter is the main tasks that the whole Swedish family chooses it. Sri Lanka doesn't have charter trips and only offer flexible packages. This is positive because some people wants to travel on their own but charter would be good for those who wants to travel with their family and have all-inclusive and everything included in their trip. The flight time to Sri Lanka don't bother anyone as Thailand basically has the same amount of hours of travel.

But Thailand has now a direct flight and Sri Lanka doesn't have it yet and the tourists need to stop in example Doha, Qatar and wait for the flight to Colombo. According to David Wolde (2014) it would be good if they started up with direct flight to Sri Lanka from Stockholm, especially Sri Lankan Airlines could open up.

## 6. Results

### **Swedish travelers to Sri Lanka**

After applying the theory with the empirical data the author have achieved the results of this research question. Sri Lanka is still not a requested destination within Swedish travelers. It may not only be because of the crisis and war that occurred in the country but also because of the poor marketing. Number of visitors are high but not as in Thailand. But still the numbers are increasing and it is slowly developing towards a tourism destination, but the most visitors are from Germany, India, Australia and Russia. There is no demand of travels to Sri Lanka from Swedish people. It needs to be market and promoted among them to make them open their eyes and try something new. Charter trips would definitely attract Swedish travelers if you compare with Thailand that is an charter destination and attract swedes every winter half-year.

They are aiming for 2.5 million visitors in 2016. For it to be achieved organizations from Sweden and Sri Lanka need to cooperate so that they can have the capital for hotels, service education and advertisement. Sri Lanka is an all year destination and instead of traveling during the winter half-year people could travel all year around and experience culture, sun and sea, lifestyle, nature, surfing, whale watching, wildlife and much more at one location.

Thailand is still going to be the Asia destination among Swedes it depends on the word-of-mouth from their family and friends. People travel to places they have heard about, positive image attracts them and especially if people they know recommend the place.

### **Improvement**

The author has concluded that within the 8P factors only five factors could help them develop more as a tourism destination. These five factors are; Promotion, Packaging, Partnership and Impact.

Promotion - will help them promote and send a positive image towards Swedish tourist. They need to think that people haven't been at the destination before and if they want to advertise they need to bring up the strong elements of Sri Lanka, something that will attract the Swedes. Promoting as a all year destination will definitely help them reach an large amount of tourists.

Packaging - They need to start with the charter trips to Sri Lanka. That will definitely increase the number of Swedish travelers. According to how it was when they opened up through Ving with the charter trips, 5.000 persons had gone to Sri Lanka but as soon as they changed to flexible packages it decreased to 4.000 persons. I think they should begin with the charter destination all year around.

Partnership - Cooperating with government, authorities and different tourist organizations will help them to gain the capital and this would allow them to build better hotels, highways and advertise in different kind of newspaper and on the Internet. They need to have brochures and websites so people can read about Sri Lanka. They can't pursue a destination before they have got information about it.

Impact - Locals and employees need to improve their service within hotels. If they give good service to tourists, they would surely recommend the place to their family and friends and return back to the country. It's warming and welcoming to show your knowledge and help tourists.

Infrastructure needs to develop as well, they're developing the roads and building hotels and when its ready tourists wouldn't feel insecure of how to get around the country or that they wouldn't find any hotel to stay the night if they are backpacking for example.

## **Sri Lankan tourism**

They are constantly under development. Hotels are building out and infrastructure is slowly improved. The product range is wide so they don't need to expand their attractions because of all the things that they offer; health, surfing, wildlife, elephant riding, turtle farm, nature etc. They just need to advertise themselves little bit better among tourists and especially swedes. Thailand is not going to be a charter destination for swedes for long and it's time for Sri Lanka to take the initiative to take the place.

### ***6.1 Conclusion***

After the war and crisis the inbound tourism has decreased but it has slowly got up from 2013. This is still the overall statistics among tourists. If we talk about swedes visiting Sri Lanka, the number of arrivals are still small in contradistinction to Thailand. This poor marketing of Sri Lanka and this war that paused their tourism has caused that it has been almost forgotten, especially in Sweden. People don't get why you travel to Sri Lanka but as soon as you say Thailand they envy you, the author have been through it and knows from it own experiences.

### ***6.2 Future development for Sri Lanka***

The author would like to see a increased number of swedish visitors to Sri Lanka within couple of years and a better service management within the hotels. Because of the hotels building out they could invest in educate their staff. Good service brings returning tourist.

Besides that, Sweden should cooperate with Sri Lanka and open up charter destinations now when the hotels are expanding. Sri Lanka offers lot of attractions and that could be packaging into health trips, hiking trips, charter trips etc.

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# Appendix

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## Interview with Göran Olsson

### **What made you open up Sri Lanka as a tourism destination? When did you do that? How was the procedure?**

I had worked for VingResor as it was called when they opened up the travel agency.

I worked in Sri Lanka for five years every winter season with my wife Laila and I still go back to Sri Lanka even when I don't work for Ving anymore.

VingResor or Ving as it is called nowadays is a part of the Thomas Cook Group, a leisure travel group selling trips all over the world. In 1970 I was given the task to open up or rather was told to work with Sri Lanka as a destination through VingResor. It was the manager of the travel agency that opened up the destination, so I was not inserted in the decision, I only helped to build up their tourism functions.

In the beginning, the late 60's, when we opened up the route to Sri Lanka we had allotment of certain amount of seats in the Swiss Tour Operator Kuoni charter flight, their own Caravelle flying over from Zurich to Sri Lanka once a week during winter season. We began with the 14-days stay over in Sri Lanka in 1971 and after one year since opening the route, 189 persons was traveling every week. The flight was going from Stockholm to Copenhagen and then to Colombo. We stopped in Copenhagen to pick up Danish travelers. These trips to Sri Lanka were arranged in late October until April.

It was a lot of troubles before opening up a route to Sri Lanka. SAS had made sure that you couldn't fly long distance charter, and if SAS, Scandinavian Airlines System, didn't fly over to Sri Lanka then VingResor were also not able to do to that. The first charter flights with long distance was opened up to Gambia and when Kuoni Travel Agency opened up Sri Lanka former called Ceylon it's when SAS and Civil Aviation Authority decided to approve Sri Lanka.

After a couple of years when we had opened Sri Lanka a combined charter with Maldives were opened up as a route. But only twelve people could go on this trip.

VingResor needed to market this as one week in Sri Lanka and one week in Maldives but in fact they didn't even spend their days in Sri Lanka. They arranged a small hotel in Sri Lanka to cooperate with VingResor and they paid the nights for twelve beds but which they didn't really have use of. They needed to do that so the Civil Aviation Authority would believe that this was a combined charter with Sri Lanka because if they didn't they wouldn't be able to retain the Maldives as a destination, and the Maldives were a draw card for the Sri Lankan charter.

### **How did you market Sri Lanka 40 years ago and how is it market now?**

Back then VingResor could only market themselves in brochures and directories. Now it is market through all different channels.

### **What kind of tourists did visit Sri Lanka then?**

The majority of travelers were Swedish than Danish. Swedes made a huge impression in Sri Lanka. Even the newspaper and press people wanted to go there and write about the destination.

VingResor reached 6.000 travelers travelling to Sri Lanka when they first opened up the destination. But somewhere between the 80's the charter flights were shut down due the war and that's when Thailand got up on the ranking list as charter travel.

I read in an article that they are aiming for one million travelers to Sri Lanka in 2016. He thinks that they're able to reach the goal because unlike Thailand that have 20 million travelers, Sri Lanka have not yet reached the tourist break down.

Before Thailand came in the picture of most wanted charter trip, Sri Lanka had served a lot of money on their travels. VingResor had a lot of tourists travelling through them and one of them for example is the "Early Explorer" – tourist travelling to new opened destinations. For a reasonable monetary the tourists got to experience sun, culture, wilderness and sea. Except for the small amount of Swedish travelers Sri Lanka have two big categories of tourists travelling to Sri Lanka. The biggest nationality among it are the Indians but Australians and Chinese people are also a big source for the destination, but on the second category of tourists.

### **What's the strength of Sri Lanka according to you?**

I think that the strengths of Sri Lanka is the same as it was when we opened up the destination. It's a compact country; short distance from all the attractions, tree plantation, sea and the tropical forest, culture ruins, all different religions and you only have five hours to all the different cities. Sri Lanka has everything for all interest.

### **–“- opportunities?**

JetWing who corporate with Ving, their main task is to provide accommodation but they are now focusing on sustainable tourism. This because Sri Lanka have a lot of nature and could be used as a nursery-garden to make lean tourism, hotels with air-conditioning by using solar and biogas. The area of Sri Lanka could be at the forefront if they develop sustainable tourism.

### **–“- threats?**

Threats in Sri Lanka would be if the current president makes the country to his own company regarding constructions. In long-term this would have caused opposition against family business and a political instability. But currently no tangible threats and I don't think the civil war will start again, but if they press and are too harsh on the Tamils other disturbances will begin.

Another threat is the service management, they require good leadership.

**-“- weaknesses?**

Their weaknesses are definitely the *highway*. They have built up new roads but it doesn't help because the traffic has increased drastically. It's crowded on the road, that's part of the charm but also of the problem.

*Service* is the same as it was for 40 years ago but of course little bit better. The standard of living is better and the service is mediocre but that's because we hire people from the villages and train them to be employees at the hotels and different tourism activities.

## **Interview with Claes Pellvik, marketing manager for Ving Travel Agency**

### **1. When did you open up trips to Sri Lanka? What got you to open it to Sri Lanka? How did it come that you chose Sri Lanka as a destination?**

We opened up Sri Lanka as a destination in the beginning of 1971. It had to do with the possibility to fly over, it wasn't too far away and the infrastructure was quite good. We had a good cooperation with excursion companies so we could offer excursion on place, it was scattered so they could choose different places. They also had the combination with sun and bath, excursion trips and cheap hotels.

### **2. Do you have package trips to Sri Lanka? What kind of trips to you offer?**

We don't fly our own charter aviation; we offer flexible packages to Sri Lanka instead. Ving use regular flights and hotels that we work with. It is common that we fly with Dubai or Qatar and may be gone for how long you want. In the 70's we settled up our own charter flight from Copenhagen directly to Sri Lanka, we had it for many years, except when the Civil War broke up, then we were forced to pause our trips there. In recent years we use scheduled flights and its working fine.

### **3. How many persons have traveled with Ving to Sri Lanka? What do you think has caused the decreased number of travelers to Sri Lanka?**

I have no statistic of numbers of travelers but when we started with charter flight to Sri Lanka we had around 5000 persons and it has now reduced to 1000 persons when we began with our regular flights.

Sri Lanka has in recent years had the competition with Thailand. It has increased multi dual to travel from Sweden to Thailand. The hotels are now in 2014 offering what Swedes want unlike Sri Lanka, because they haven't kept pace with developments as Thailand has. Sri Lanka have no pricewise good hotels and has not offered attractiveness as for example Jamaica and Aruba has, that's why Sri Lanka lost their numbers of visitors.

### **4. Have you got any feedback from travelers? What was their impression of Sri Lanka?**

We do a quality survey every time our customers have been on a trip through us. What I know from reading those surveys they have said that they like the country, attractions, cozy small hotels. The service depends on the hotel standard but they thought it was good. Of course there are hotels that may not be the best top marks.

### **5. Why do you think Thailand is the popular destination in Asia and not Sri Lanka? Ving sell trips to Thailand as well, how does the demand look like if you compare both countries?**

The combination of beaches, sun and swimming opportunities are better in Thailand. Thailand has new and modern hotels and there are pricewise good. It's infinitely greater demand for Thailand because they have travelers such as families with children, elderly,

youths etc.

Sri Lanka offers more round trips and their tourism types are therefore smaller.

**6. What could Sri Lanka improve to attract more tourists? And how do you think Sri Lanka will develop in few years?**

The hotels and their infrastructure should be improved. We see that we have a small demand for Sri Lanka and that's why we chose to offer regular services, we know that it will not be raised. Sri Lanka has an economic crisis unlike Thailand that doesn't have any problems with the economic therefore they can improve their tourism development.

**7. How did you promote Sri Lanka to attract more tourists? How did you market the destination from the start?**

Now we market primarily through our website <http://www.ving.se> and our newsletter that we send to our customers, but 40 years ago the catalogues was very important marketing channel.

**8. Can you combine Sri Lanka with other trips that Ving offers? Do you stop at one of the destinations before you go directly to Sri Lanka?**

Yes, it can be done with the Maldives and Dubai. You fly via Dubai or Qatar and stay there for a few days and then you spend the rest of your trip in Sri Lanka.

**9. What's the strength of Sri Lanka according to you?**

Sri Lankan strength is their attractions, round trips, culture, history, sun and bath.

**10. -- opportunities?**

The opportunities are very much about the capital in the country to develop infrastructure and modern hotels.

**11. -- threats?**

The first threat is their political situation, during many years of civil war it caused a negative impact thereof the difficult access to get the capital they need to have. The second thing is that they are in need of capital to develop while other countries have capital and can build more modern hotels adapted to tourists demand.

**12. -- weaknesses?**

The weakness of Sri Lanka is their product including infrastructure and hotels.

**13. Have someone of your staff been in Sri Lanka and experienced what the destination has to offer? How was the first impression?**

We have been there for many years and we still go. Sri Lanka has lovely people who really stand out and we saw that the infrastructure and the hotels have not kept pace with the developments.

**14. Are you aware of the competition with other companies that sell trips to Sri Lanka?**

We are aware that there are several companies offering Sri Lanka but none of them has excelled tremendously. There is no great destination for Sweden. It is us and our competitors selling Sri Lanka as a destination and it's quite similar for all of us on the market, Sri Lanka is not so requested.

**15. How do you think Sri Lankan tourism will look in about 3 years? And how will your sales on travels to Sri Lanka increased or decreased?**

Unchanged

**16. Do you think that a civil war may occur in Sri Lanka again?**

I don't dare to say anything about the civil war. I don't have the political insight, but I hope not.

**17. How do you think the war have affected the tourism in Sri Lanka? Do you think Swedes should have a particular concern not to go there?**

Certainly I have seen Swedes being concerned to go to a country where the civil war broke up, especially because Sri Lanka is a small country.

**18. Do you lift up other aspects of the country Sri Lanka that you haven't done before the civil war?**

No, we have emphasized the same aspects of the combination of sun and bath, sightseeing, culture and history as we have done previously over couple of years.

**19. How do you think the security is build up in Sri Lanka? Should tourist be worried when they travel there?**

Our perception of Sri Lankan security is absolutely quiet and we haven't received any reports from our travelers according problems in the country.

## Interview with David Wolde from Jambo Tours

### **Background about you and the organisation and how did you open up the trips to Sri Lanka.**

David Wolde is a product manager of SouthEast Asia, Middle East and the Indian Ocean for the tour operator Jambo Tours. He even works with the destination development.

Jambo Tours are not a categorized agency and that's the difference between being a travel bureau and tour operator.

Jambo Tours have been working for 40 years (1974-2014) now and since the company started their focus have been on places that are located far away from Europe example Africa, Kenya and Tanzania. They offer 350 trips and different travel bureau cooperate with Jambo Tours, therefore they don't have an personal office were they sell in such manner as travel bureaus do.

But customers can call them directly or visit their own office for personal assistance.

Jambo Tours have 5 producers and they ensure the customers that the products are created and added.

They have maintained the seven concept since they opened up Jambo Tours. The seven concepts is seven different ways of travelling with Jambo Tours, they sell Jambo Safari, Jambo Ensemble, Jambo Kompass, Jambo Junior, Jambo Explorer, Jambo Cruises and Jambo Relax.

### **1. When did you open up trips to Sri Lanka? What got you to open it to Sri Lanka? How did it come that you chose Sri Lanka as a destination?**

The company is so old that we had Sri Lanka in the company's product range since 1979-80 when the charter was greatest and Sri Lanka was called Ceylon. It was mostly in the form of sun and sea package which we sold and a form of compass round trips on your own with a local guide. We sold trips to Sri Lanka until the civil war broke up but when the state department advises us not to sell trips when the war was ongoing we need to follow their advice. The state department has information and knowledge about the political and stability in different countries, they give us travel recommendation and we need to follow it. The war ended in 2009 and we could start with our trips to Sri Lanka again after a break due to the war.

### **2. Do you have packages to Sri Lanka? What kind of travel do you offer?**

We offer packages in the seven concepts, everything we present in the seven concepts no matter what you choose is packages, besides the safari and cruises that we don't offer in Sri Lanka. Tailored trips works fine with us and we help everyone to make their trip.

We developed the destination Sri Lanka, when the war ended we didn't have ensemble trips because we didn't know if it was stable in Sri Lanka.

Large Sri Lankan trip opened up last season and then I went to down to ensure the quality, which hotels we should be working with, how the round trips should look like, meet our

partners, see what kind of buses we should use etc. then when everything was set we opened up this round trip to Sri Lanka, those trips are the most important trip of packages.

**3. How many persons have traveled with Jambo Tours to Sri Lanka? What do you think has caused the decreased number of travelers to Sri Lanka?**

Historically I don't know, says David Wolde. But since 2009, approximately 500 persons. The season of 2010/11 when we opened up the Sri Lankan product again we had less and more person traveling with us, everything depends on the trends, but a couple hundred more since 2009.

In 2012 I believe it was 13 000 swedes who traveled with us to Sri Lanka, says David Wolde. In 2013 it went down to 7-8 percent so approximately it went down 1000 persons. The trends cause such fluctuations. It's like fashion on some places, when the King and Queen went to Mauritius everyone started to go there too and then it collapsed. It's difficult to say why it's up and down with some trends, says David Wolde.

**4. Have you got any feedback from travelers? What was their impression of Sri Lanka?**

We send questionnaire surveys and based on the answers we got from that we can see the feedback from our customers. We only had positive feedback when it comes for Sri Lanka. Many people surprises themselves when they go to Sri Lanka and when they come back. The questionnaire survey includes more yes or no questions rather than deep evaluated questions.

It more than just sun and sea and the people are creating the country. They have Buddhism religion in Sri Lanka which means humility and it's pretty safe. There are a lot of things to see and explore of Sri Lanka; nature, sun, sea, surfing, whales, elephants etc., says David Wolde

**5. Why do you think Thailand is the popular destination in Asia and not Sri Lanka? Jambo Tours sell trips to Thailand as well, how does the demand look like if you compare both countries?**

Everyone has been in Thailand and anyone offer their favorite spots in the country, it's pretty easy to book flight ticket and hotels in Thailand.

Our Thailand has decreased constantly. We work with experience traveling and when it comes to Thailand it is a lot of sun and bath travelers, maybe temple tours and elephant riding as well therefore we don't choose to compare Sri Lanka with Thailand. We have our tour and groups, and that's our strength instead of selling sun and bath.

**6. What could Sri Lanka improve to attract more tourists? And how do you think Sri Lanka will develop in few years?**

David Wolde is saying that Sri Lanka should improve their infrastructure, as they already begun to do, and build more hotels. They should also pull in more airlines that goes directly to Sri Lanka such as Qatar Airways that are flying from Sweden to Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan airlines is not flying from Sweden, and they should definitely open up.

The roads need to polish up and build up. The government has set aside quite a lot to impre

the infrastructure; the highways are being built up, including Mirissa, and it should be broadened out to Kandy and the north. This means that there will be better and I think it will attract more tourists when they know that there are easier to get around in the country.

**7. How did you promote Sri Lanka to attract more tourists? How did you market the destination from the start?**

We have our retail channels which are marketed through our travel agencies in Sweden and Norway.

Our channels are our own directory but also our website, newsletter and besides that we advertise in newspapers such as Dagens Nyheter (DN), Svenska Dagbladet (SVD) etc.

**8. Can you combine Sri Lanka with other trips that Jambo Tours offers? Do you stop at one of the destinations before you go directly to Sri Lanka?**

It can be combined in different ways. Our ensemble round trip can be combined with a trip to the Maldives, but it cost extra. Our package “Major Sri Lankan trip” is quite common to use when you want to combine with the Maldives. If you choose to fly with Thai Airways, commercial flight, you can have a ticket which admits you to stop on the way home for example in Thailand or Bangkok. Qatar and Doha is also two places where you can stay and explore but maybe not as much as in Bangkok.

**9. What’s the strength of Sri Lanka according to you?**

The old charter destination has dusted off to something little more modern today.

Unfortunately, they have introduced the must-have VISA for going to Sri Lanka but it’s easy to get it, you can have order it electronically online or buy it at the airport in Sri Lanka. The payment for VISA goes for building Sri Lanka.

1. Diversity is a strength for Sri Lanka because they offer culture, sun and bath, nature, long history in the country and besides that they have a lot of animals you can see at one place and that something unique such as; leopards, elephants, whales and sea turtles.

Not many countries that offer it and I compare it with Africa. Leopard and whale spotting is a very unique combination and we use it in our round trip.

2. What is also so unique is the health; Ayurveda is very popular in Sri Lanka and has been for many years. Ayurveda is available in many hotels, health trips in that aspect.

3. Accessibility is a strength, easy to get to Sri Lanka without changing planes 5-8 times in a row.

**10. -“- opportunities?**

David Wolde, himself, wants to see Sri Lankan Airlines fly to Scandinavia and not only to small destinations. They choose tourism from Australia instead. It should definitely be more airlines flying into the country, says David Wolde.

The infrastructure is a problem and they should get sidewalks and widen the roads.

**11. -“- threats?**

Civil war is a threat otherwise it's of course the competitors or other countries that are similar, for example Thailand. They have the same type of religion and same type of sea, sand and sun. Thailand and other countries are getting better prices as Sri Lanka themselves can put.

**12. -“- weaknesses?**

The weakness is of course the hotel prices or the price setting.

After the civil war, many hotels thought that many tourists would come and that's why they ingratiated with the hotel prices, and it became expensive further on. The greed is now low and they've calmed themselves with the price setting. Gradually you can increase little by little but not as they did before. Thailand has therefore succeeded with the tourism.

Sri Lanka is controlled very much of Germany's major travel fair which falls in mid-March, my point here is that the hotels sign contracts with charter operators for example Kuoni, then price set it after the contracts for the German tourists. The rest of us will wait patiently until they're done. We want to sell our trips to Sri Lanka now instead of waiting for them to give us the price. Our directory should be ready in January each year and Sri Lanka doesn't want to give us the prices then.

**13. Have someone of your staff been in Sri Lanka and experienced what the destination has to offer? How was the first impression?**

Me and some of the employees at Jambo Tours. From all of us the impression is positive, the nature and the countryside affected positively very much.

**14. Are you aware of the competition with other companies that sell trips to Sri Lanka?**

Yes of course we are. Charter is good but also not good that it's available in one place. Charter aviation is not flying to Sri Lanka, only regular flights but the tourist bureaus such as VING and Apollo have their hotels located in Sri Lanka.

We feel pretty safe, not everyone offer Sri Lanka, not our biggest competitors anyway.

**15. How do you think Sri Lankan tourism will look in about 3 years? And how will your sales on travels to Sri Lanka increased or decreased?**

The Sri Lankan tourism will definitely increase. They are constantly in progress with their projects and road construction. Their tourism has increased all the time if you look at the incoming tourism to the country.

I think they are aiming pretty big number about 2 million in a few years, around 2015-2016, says David Wolde. To aim that number you need to build more hotels, because more hotel beds for every persons that visit Sri Lanka. The number may be too high, but they will increase, they will definitely do.

**16. Do you think that a civil war may occur in Sri Lanka again?**

I personally think but as a company we do not go into countries politics, we follow the State Department recommendations.

**17. How do you think the war have affected the tourism in Sri Lanka? Do you think swedes should have a particular concern not to go there?**

When I talk to people in Sri Lanka I get the information that the situation seems calm and pleasant. Nothing that the company stands for. There may well be individual accidents, but it happens in Sweden as well.

**18. Do you lift up other aspects of the country Sri Lanka that you haven't done before the civil war?**

We highlight the forces that have been experienced in the tour Great Sri Lankan trip, especially all animals. The whales and leopard combination is one of the main attractions that are very unique and we have the possibility to give that to our tourists. What we highlight also is the hinterland with tea plantation which differs slightly from before. We always try to clarify our aspects.

**19. How do you think the security is build up in Sri Lanka? Should tourist be worried when they travel there?**

No, I don't think you should be worried about going to Sri Lanka. Not as it looks now. You shouldn't be naïve when you go there or elsewhere. Many lose much judgment when going abroad; they do things differently than what they might have done at home and happens you get in trouble.

Our customers are usually 50-60 years old, they are well off and they are happy to pay just to get what they are asking for. Four star hotel, the guide will be good and including meals, good restaurants.

When I go there and check on the hotels, I always think and see through our customer's visions. The level of service? Are you in a four star hotel they should hire good cooks, good staff in the front desk reception etc. You can't hire someone you think is doubtful.

## **Interview with Linda Persson from Lotus Travel AB**

### **1. When did you open up trips to Sri Lanka? What got you to open it to Sri Lanka? How did it come that you chose Sri Lanka as a destination?**

We needed to expand our range of destinations for travel to Asia and Sri Lanka seemed to be an interesting destination that complemented with our other destinations. We planned our first departure to Sri Lanka in January 2013, which unfortunately had to be canceled due few bookings, but the first group we got could go in November 2013.

### **2. Do you have package trips to Sri Lanka? What kind of trips to you offer?**

We offer both packages and trips from our directory with Swedish speaking guide and tailor-made individual trips.

### **How many persons have traveled with Lotus Travel AB to Sri Lanka from the start?**

Around 60 persons.

### **3. Have you got any feedback from travelers? What was their impression of Sri Lanka?**

Basically all customers have been positive about what Sri Lanka has to offer, both in the terms of culture, nature, wildlife and beaches. Customer evaluations show us that everyone has a positive answer to the question about their expectations during the trip since it materialized.

### **4. What could Sri Lanka improve to attract more tourists?**

Sri Lanka should market themselves more generally, as the charter companies is founding back more and more it will attract more tourists.

### **5. How did you promote Sri Lanka to attract more tourists?**

By advertising in the daily newspaper, on our website and sending our newsletter to our subscribers.

### **6. Can you combine Sri Lanka with other trips that Lotus Travel AB offers? Do you stop at one of the destinations before you go directly to Sri Lanka?**

Absolutely, as a tailor-made option! There are particular combinations with Sri Lanka and Maldives. For our catalogue journeys we offer you extension of your journey so you are able to continue on your own.

### **7. What's the strength of Sri Lanka according to you?**

Sri Lanka has so much to offer in quite a small area; fantastic nature and various wildlife, beautiful beaches and an interesting culture. You can travel all year – it's always nice weather, anywhere on the Island and it's easy to travel get around in the country because everyone speaks English.

**8. –“- opportunities?**

There is significant potential to increase the tourism and they are investing it heavily in new roads and the new international airport.

**9. –“- threats?**

That another civil war will broke up or an extensive natural disaster appears.

**10. –“- weaknesses?**

Currently the weakness is their poorly maintained roads, but it's common in many Asian countries, otherwise nothing special.

**11. Have someone of your staff been in Sri Lanka and experienced what the destination has to offer? How was the first impression?**

Yes, and from my own perception I think the destination is very interesting, the food is fantastic and it's easy to get around in the country because everyone speak English.

**12. Are you aware of the competition with other companies that sell trips to Sri Lanka?**

No, not exactly.

**13. How do you think Sri Lankan tourism will look in about 3 years? And how will your sales on travels to Sri Lanka increased or decreased?**

We believe that it will increase, especially charter trips and we predict that our sales will also increase, you can tell when looking at the mainly tailored trips that have increased in the past year.

**14. Do you think that a civil war may occur in Sri Lanka again?**

There is always a risk, but considering how the last civil war affected Sri Lankan tourism, I think they do everything that is possible to avoid the break up.

## Interview with Leif Ohlson owner of BestofSriLanka.se & SriLankaGuiden.se

### **Promoting Sri Lanka and lift up the destination**

Sri Lanka is nowadays as Thailand was for 20 years ago, that's why you can't compare those to with each other or either Maldives.

I never understood why Thailand is such great destination... It must be the food and the heat. I've only been in Bangkok so I can't say so much about Thailand as a destination.

### **Products of Sri Lanka**

Many people have not discovered what Sri Lanka has to offer; surfing, whale watching, ayurveda, yoga, food, bird watching, Sri Lanka design festival etc. All of this attractions need to spread between people, and this required cooperation between all agencies and companies such as Ving and Apollo who sell any form of trips to Sri Lanka.

In 2009 when the civil war was over the leisure travel with Ving and Apollo came back. But it was not for long until they stopped selling the trips again because it was poorly booked.

The agencies should package everything that Sri Lanka has to offer to for the customer's interest, market other places and not only Hikkaduwa and Negombo.

The main task to lift up a destination is to wider the accommodation; there must be a wide selection of the hotels.

### **How to promote Sri Lanka?**

How will Sri Lanka lift up as a destination? They should definitely advertise more, for example on buses. There should be brochures as well, and unfortunately there is none of them.

Sri Lanka and all the agencies must have a supporting hand from the government and various embassies to lift up their tourism.

The second thing that would help Sri Lanka to advertise more is the Internet; a good search in Google would give people ability to get all the information they may need before their trip to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka needs to stop looking at numbers of visitors, they need to see what people want and do and develop it according to tourists requests. They need to be an all year destination and show it for all people so they explore the country.

If we take Sweden for example, we have a lot of restaurants from different kind of cultures, but no Sri Lankan restaurants, why is that? Because no Swedes travel there so they don't know what kind of food Sri Lanka offer. But if we look at all the Chinese and Thai restaurants we will find them everywhere in Sweden.

All travel industries need to work together, they must have a responsibility to develop the country. For example, send people on business trips to Sri Lanka so they would get a glance of what the country has to offer and maybe after seeing the country they would take their family for the next trip.

You have to have a vision for example a five years development and not one year as they always have. You can't promise anything within one year and then be disappointed. The marketing of Sri Lanka must be made by swedes to a large extent, if you yourself haven't been a tourist in your own country then you can't promote it, you need to see it with your own eyes. So my suggestion is that Sri Lankan people need to travel around and see with Swedish eyes what they really require.

I put to high standards considering how good Sri Lanka could be, but I should reduce my standards. But the future for Sri Lanka looks bright; it would be great if leisure travel came back with Sri Lanka in it.

**1. What made you promote Sri Lanka? What do you want to convey with your website?**

Leif Ohlson worked in Sri Lanka and fell in love with the country. Sri Lanka has been extremely bad to raise the country, quality of products and the marketing was so poor when he was there. That made him see that the country has so much more to discover. The country has so much to offer and he began to investigate and help people advertising Sri Lanka. I automatically got a job as advertising because no one didn't care about it before.

Leif Ohlson created a non-profit website and started to market Sri Lanka which he also use now.

**2. Do you receive any financial help and cooperation from other vendors and operators who sell and take care of the destination Sri Lanka?**

No, that's also my independence, I do everything on my own, says Leif Ohlson. There are Travel Agents in Sri Lanka who have wanted to cooperate but I have declined because so money would make me lose my independence. If they want it to be profitable and make money they should use someone with more knowledge about the destination, says Leif Ohlson.

It's strange that industries are watching each other's work, you become careful with all ideas you get. Money is not worth having in tourism industry, it is the volume of tourism that counts, says Leif Ohlson.

**3. What makes you travel to Sri Lanka and why should others do it?**

There is a total experience, everything is available in Sri Lanka; beaches, food, big cities, design and art. You should go there because it's an undiscovered pearl. Two-thirds of the nicest beach areas are located where the war broke up.

Besides this it's cheap, affordable and not as far away as we think, says Leif Ohlson.

**4. How many subscribers to you have on your newsletter?**

2500 people subscribe to my newsletter but more relevant than how many people are

accessing my website. I post all news that I write on my website on all social media; Twitter, Facebook etc. I have around 6-7000 views per day, says Leif Ohlson. It's important for a destination development to advertise everywhere, talk all the time and be high up on Google search.

**5. Why do you think Thailand is the popular Asia destination instead of Sri Lanka?**

First, there has been war in quarter-century in Sri Lanka. It's one of the basic causes.

The second causes are no direct flights because travel agencies have not taken their responsibility to widen it up – it's not exactly sustainable.

The third cause, no celebrities are traveling to Sri Lanka. Travel agencies have not actively promoted the country, and I believe Thailand's travel agencies are quite active in the marketing area, says Leif Ohlson.

The fourth cause is the product Thailand offer; good hotel and lot different hotels to choose between. In Sri Lanka there are no all-inclusive such as in Thailand, they have a great complex of hotels, says Leif Ohlson.

**6. What can Sri Lanka improve to attract more tourists and how do you think that Sri Lanka will be developed within the next few years?**

I think it will become a firm interest when it comes to Sri Lanka but not until the big travel agencies takes hold of leisure travels to Sri Lanka, says Leif Ohlson. Otherwise it will be standing in the same place as it does now if the Sri Lankan Tourist Board doesn't decide to do something about the tourism and marketing for Sri Lanka.

**7. How do you market Sri Lanka to attract more tourists?**

I market through my website, newsletter, various events, press releases and a contact with travel agents, airlines and journalists, says Leif Ohlson.

**8. What's the strength of Sri Lanka according to you?**

Sri Lanka is an all-year-round destination. It's affordable and the infrastructure is slowly improved. The country has a long history of being a tourist country, says Leif Ohlson.

**9. -- opportunities?**

We find out more specialized segments of Sri Lanka; wildlife, food, architecture, health trips and different combining trips. I think Sri Lanka has everything, sun and bath is also available but you should not only travel to Sri Lanka for that, the country have more to explore, says Leif Ohlson.

**10. -- threats?**

Political instability, it becomes too expensive, the service level is not increased at the pace it should be. That are some few threats but especially the service is really bad, says Leif Ohlson. You do not see enough in the long term, they are short-sighted in Sri Lanka and do only see money. Greed has affected the locals, people rip and pull the tourist to make them buy at the market and that covers up the genuine with Sri Lankan people and places.

**11. -“- weaknesses?**

The weakness is their low service level and the infrastructure, though it's getting better. Their language skills are quite bad; the English around young people is not really good. If you go out to a village and need some help, ask an older person for help because their English is good.

Another weakness is that there will be too many Russians and Chinese tourists, they are usually not returning back to the destination as Swedes do, says Leif Ohlson.

**12. How do you think Sri Lankan tourism will look in about 3 years? And how will the sales on travels to Sri Lanka increased or decreased?**

It will be raised from a Swedish perspective, assuming that there will not be any political instability and scandals for example rapes as India has been affected with nor that it will be too expensive, says Leif Ohlson.

**13. How do you think the war have affected the tourism in Sri Lanka? Do you think Swedes should have a particular concern not to go there?**

Not anymore. There was tourism in Sri Lanka during the civil war but from Swedish perspective not so organized because they couldn't let people in to a country were a war is ongoing.

**14. How do you think the security is build up in Sri Lanka? Should tourist be worried when they travel there?**

I think it's really good but I know people are worried about the traffic. Things can happen everywhere, but generally it is safe in Sri Lanka, however the traffic is a problem, says Leif Ohlson.



**Picture 1**



**Picture 2**



**Picture 3**



**Picture 4**



**Picture 5**

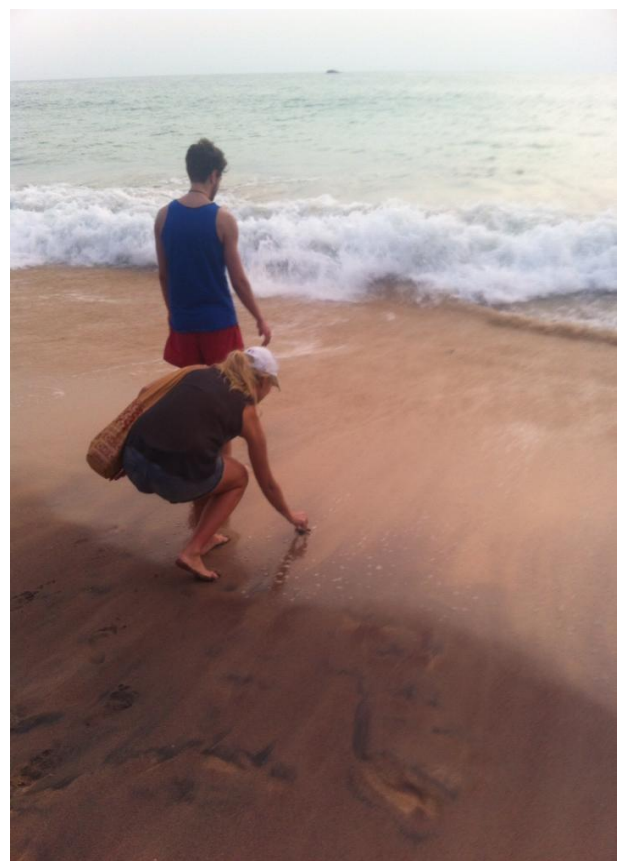


**Picture 6**

**Picture 7**

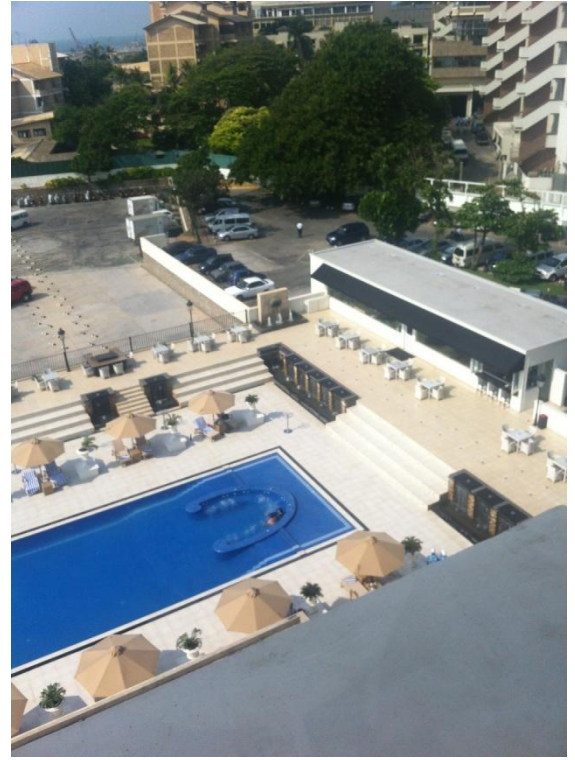


**Picture 8**






Picture 9



Picture 10

Picture 11

  
[www.aitkenspencetravels.com](http://www.aitkenspencetravels.com)

**Sri Lanka c/o Stockholm**  
**20<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

Join *Aitken Spence Travel* for a cup of Ceylon tea and learn more about of the paradise island.

In this seminar for travel agents we will inform about the latest developments in Sri Lanka and how the island has become an all year around destination also for the Swedish market.

**Program:**


- Aitken Spence Travel what we do and offer
- Coming FAM-trips
- Latest tourism news from Sri Lanka
- The East coast – Sri Lanka the all year round destination
- Colombo the trendy city
- Sri Lanka from a Swedish perspective
- How to get there - airline info
- *Star for Life* in Sri Lanka a CSR-example

**Briefings by:**

- Kapila Abeywardane, *Aitken Spence Travel*
- Leif I Ohlson, *Best of Sri Lanka in Sweden/Srilankaguiden*
- Christina Riddebäck, *Star for Life*

Tea and cake from Sri Lanka will be served

**When:** 20 May at 1600-1800 hours  
**Where:** World Trade Center, Klarabergsviadukten 70, Stockholm, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, entrance D



**RSVP:** Before 16<sup>th</sup> May to [nordic@aitkenspence.lk](mailto:nordic@aitkenspence.lk)  
**Can not come?** Book your own meeting with the Aitken Spence-representative who is visiting Stockholm 19-21 May.

