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## **AN ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES OF HALAL TOURISM INDUSTRIAL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA: A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to find the opportunities of Halal tourism that can be utilized so as to promote the tourism industrial sector in Sri Lanka using the descriptive analysis. The data collected for the study were secondary from the various secondary sources such as printed materials, journal, and web based documents. All these data collected were qualitative to achieve the objective of this study. The concept of Halal represents Islamic law and order on the basis of the teachings of the Holy Quran and guidance of the apostle, Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and it effectively regulates every aspect of life of the Muslims in their day to day activities. In ranking Sri Lanka,

the large Muslim population of Sri Lanka meant Halal restaurants were established amply along with a large number of Muslim-owned wayside food outlets. The system of the Crescent-rating guaranteed that Serendib Leisure properties served Muslim guest, tourists and travelers with Halal-oriented goods and services anticipated by them even during the time period of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan. Along with a large presence of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka, many hotels located in Sri Lanka supply the Halal-friendly and Arabian foodstuffs and facilities. Kataragama was a prehistoric sacred town that was of the reputed significance endemic to the Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in Sri Lanka. Adam's Peak was another one of multi-religious sites in Sri Lanka with the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians of Sri Lanka all declaring that the sacred footprint on the peak of this solitude-stood mountain to be of Adam, Buddha, Siva, and St Thomas. The opportunities of Halal tourism sector found but still not recognized by the relevant authorities and policy makers in Sri Lanka were too unique to promote such sector considerably.

**Keywords:** *Halal Tourism, Crescent Rating, Opportunities, Muslims, Arab Countries*

## **1. Introduction**

Tourism is delineated as any person who is a resident within a his or her country, irrespective of nationality, starting the journey from his native place or domestic country to a destination place which is located within his country or other than his usual place where he resides for a period of time less than one day or one night, 24 hours or for an aim without engaging in an earning activity in the place of visits. The various intention of this type of traveling may be practiced for (1) leisure (recreation, holidays, health, studies, religion, sports); (2) business, family, mission, and meeting (World Tourism Organization – WTO, 1981)

The concept of Halal tourism in Islam means not only the application of the Shari'ah (Islamic practices) to the food pattern of the Muslim Community all over the world in their travel and tours, but it should be compatible to any products produced and supplied in the market all over the world ranging from the dealings of banks to accommodation, transportation, banking, vaccines, leisure time activities, privacy and cosmetics even along with the case of female

Muslim guests, tourists and travelers in all the destinations. In addition, it implies that supplying and offering of travel and tour destinations and packages that are absolutely planned and designed to distribute for the solid concentrations and considerations of Muslims and deal with the needs and requirements of the Muslims.

Presently, the Muslims are the investors of consumer in the six operations of Halal industrial sector, and require investing their financial capital in these industries to run their 'Halal' future. Accordingly the consumers of Muslims' gross expenditure worldwide on foodstuffs and the sectors of lifestyle such as personal care, clothing, recreation, travel and tourism is accounted to be \$1.62 trillion in 2012 by the 2103 *State of the Global Islamic Economy report* (SGIE) by Dinar Standard and Thomson Reuters. The SGIE projects that the already-significant expenditure is expected to reach \$2.47 trillion by 2018.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of tourism, the report estimates global Muslim spending on travel (outbound) to be \$137 billion in 2012 (excluding Hajj and Umrah), and is expected to grow to \$181 billion market by 2018 representing 12.5 % of global

expenditure. It should be noted that the collective global Muslim tourism market is bigger than the largest tourist-bound country: the United States. The tie into halal medical and wellness tourism presents opportunities for countries to attract medical tourists from the GCC.<sup>6</sup>

Those involved stress the fact that any strategy to develop or market Halal tourism products services must be guided by Islamic law (Shari'ah). This growing interest in Halal tourism could be partly due to the growth of Muslim population worldwide. The paper explores the concept of Halal tourism along with the components which constitute the industry. The paper also discusses the opportunities and challenges in developing and marketing Halal tourism. Marketers and policy makers who are concerned with halal issues will understand the Islamic requirements related to tourism. This will help them choose suitable halal alternatives. The knowledge of Halal tourism concept and components are pertinent to industry players alike in developing Halal tourism infrastructure and facilities, halal travel packages, and halal travel activities.

"Yes, it is getting popular and according to analysts the Islamic tourism market is projected to become worth \$181 billion by 2018," Sunil Prabhakar, chief executive officer, Travel Point Oman, said. "Acknowledging the potential of the Muslim population, and an increasing demand for 'Halal' alternatives in various retail sectors, many countries, including non-Muslim ones, are

already jumping on the opportunity and opening up their markets for Muslim tourists,” Prabhakar explained. Halal tourism is not only about Halal food, as is the larger belief of some people, but is also about the overall experience, which is compliant with the Islamic Shari’ah culture.

"It is not just being applied to food, but includes anything, which is Shari’ah compliant. It is a form of tourism for Muslims, who prefer to utilize services, facilities and activities compliant with Islamic principles,” Prabhakar added. Travel Point has established a "Certificate of Accreditation” with the help of Crescent Rating, the world’s leading authority on Halal travel. This certificate is recognized as an Accredited Travel Company in Oman by Crescent Rating.

According to Prabhakar, the sector is tailored around the travel needs of Muslim tourists, who seek a family friendly environment and destination. The fundamentals include a Halal hotel, Halal food premises, Islamic finance, Islamic travel packages, Medicare tourism, and a Halal spa. Out of these, Halal food normally is the biggest criteria, "Halal food provided during the tour must come from Crescent-rated restaurants with a rating of ‘AA’ or above, and the same applies to the list of restaurants provided in the package. Prayer facilities are also expected in all rated packages and include a stop in the itinerary for combined Zuhr and Asr prayers,” he added.

Travel Point has been operating in the Halal travel market since March 2015, and has witnessed an increase in demand for Halal Tourism Services from Oman year after year. "We can confirm that the demand is increasing year after year and we have not witnessed any downturn in this leisure segment due to the economic downturn.” Some of the most popular destinations for Halal tourists are Spain, Vienna, Munich, Bangkok, London, Delhi, Gold Coast, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Brunei.

Travel Point offers more than 250 Halal holiday packages, such as Madrid and the Gems of Islamic Spain, the Bosnian Nature Tour, Adventurous Indonesia Tour and several others. They also have a database of Halal Hotels. A sharia-compliant hotel means no alcohol, Halal food, no pork, no discos, and facilities for prayers and healthy family-oriented entertainment. This trend is catching up fast, not only in the Persian Gulf region, but even European markets are exploring the possibility of opening such hotels in a bid to grab a share in the Arab tourist market.

Muslim Mehmood, general manager at Al Hashar Travels said Halal tourism is the need of the hour and has increased in the last few years. "It is the need of the times since the international holiday concept is increasing in Arabs, and many countries are focusing on this as it is the demand for valued customers, who have a strong spending power." (Times of Oman, <http://www.igqa.ir/en/news/3460382/halal-tourism-becoming-popular>)

## **2. Literature Review**

Sureerat Chookaew, et al. (2015) aimed to develop the potential of Halal tourism on the Andaman Gulf in Thailand for a group of the tourists from Muslim countries using applied research approach (questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion). The objectives of their research were to propose the method of making the marketing plans of the Halal tourism for all tourists from Muslim countries; to offer either the entrepreneurs or tourism businessmen many choices in Halal tourism management for tourists from Muslim countries; to study about the way to develop the potential of Halal tourism management in order to support the tourists from Muslim countries; to be a model of setting administration standard, and Halal tourism management for tourists from Muslim countries; and to offer tourists from Muslim countries alternative choices of consuming Halal products and services. They found the five main points from their study such as: (1) the methodology of making a marketing plan of the Halal Tourism are, (2) the choices of enterprises in business management in order to support all travelers from Muslim countries found that the form of Halal tourism management is classified into many elements such as (3) Halal Restaurant Business, (4) Halal Hotel Business, and (5) Halal Spa. The concluded that Halal tourism would directly fulfill the Muslim needs thus, it would become one of the niche product for the tourism industry in Thailand.

Piangpis Sriprasert, et al. (2014) studied to examine the Asian Muslim tourist's behavior and needs at Andaman Gulf of Thailand using a convenience sampling technique, face-to-face interviews by using structured questionnaire from 280 Asian Muslim tourist of Andaman Gulf, Thailand. They found from their study that seeing and experiencing a foreign destination was the main reason for visiting Andaman Gulf of Thailand, Internet was the major source of tourism information, the most popular theme of trip is Sun and Sea; Majority of tourist hired a car and traveled with family. And also they demanded for high needs towards the placement of Qibla

stickers/ direction towards Makkah city in hotel room, availability of Halal sign at Halal restaurant, and availability of Mosque. Finally it was recommended from the results of this study to provide useful information for policy makers and business managers in formulating the strategy and program to enhance Halal tourism potential in Andaman Gulf of Thailand.

Mohd Rizal Razalli et al. (2012) aimed to discuss the opportunities, issue and challenges in the process of developing the model of Islamic hotels in Malaysia using descriptive analysis with the aid of the past and current literature. They found the growing number of Muslim population and Muslim travelers would continue to boom this market segment and these opportunities came with challenges. These challenges were related to the measurement of Islamic hotel, and the acceptance and the implementation of the concept among hoteliers and consumers. Finally they recommended that In Malaysia, this concept is not totally new but the degree of compliance to the Islamic hotel need to further upgraded.

Nargeskhatoon Bozorgaghdeh and Resia Beegam. S (2015) aimed to understand the concept halal tourism, to understand the major challenges faced by Indian halal tourism industry, to study the opportunity of halal tourism in Kerala and to provide a deep understanding into halal tourism and its potential in Kerala using descriptive method mainly based on secondary data. They concluded and suggested that The Kerala government had to seriously facilitate the industry by encouraging the participants in the industry in using halal logo. The department of tourism should take new steps to grab gulf countries tourists which bring foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunity. According to interim report Kerala; north Kerala, despite its tourism assets, contributed only around 22 percent of total tourism traffic to Kerala, this was due to the absence of a strategic thrust to both marketing and infrastructure development; Kerala was a large repository of herbal drugs and had become a big centre of herbal therapy and beautification. Treatment through the herbs was very popular from the ancient time in Kerala subcontinent and now approaching to new boundaries. Due to its non-alcoholic and vegetarian nature, Ayurvedic was favourite medicine for Indian traditional and Halal conscious consumers. Now along the side of Allopathic, Ayurvedic and Homeopathy, Unani also had gained acceptance across the country especially in Kerala, with ample number of hospitals, dispensaries, practitioners and pharmacies in public and private sector. In line with the policy of government of Kerala to decrease usage alcoholism, halal tourism was a market of tourism without alcoholism.

Mevlüt AKYOL and Özgür KILINÇ (2014) aimed to examine and define the concept of “halal tourism” with its elements such as “halal hotels, halal transportation (halal airlines), halal food, halal tour packages and halal finance” using descriptive analysis. They analyzed visually and textually the various examples of hotels’, which offer services in the “Halal tourism” sector, web sites and their differentiating aspects in the tourism marketing. They concluded that even though Halal tourism was growing in Turkey the number of hotels which had Halal certificate was limited. Therefore, the Halal marketing actors should consider the expectations of Halal hotels both for Muslim and non-Muslim travelers. Muslims seek a holiday which is coherent with Islam and also non-Muslims’ expectations of safety and hygiene should be taken into account by the Halal marketing actors. For instance, providing Halal food and non-alcohol principles, separate facilities for women and prayer rooms were the main and common features of an Islamic or a Halal hotel. Moreover, they found that the internet and social media provided a significant communication platform for Halal hotels because Halal orientated industry suppliers and intermediaries generally targeted the Muslim population.

### **3. Significance of the Study**

The largest tourist markets are likely occupied by the demand of the population of Muslims in the world, but the perceived value of supplying Halal tourism for this tourism market in Sri Lanka has not been definite. Besides the domestic Muslim population in Sri Lanka, she attracted the foreign tourists from Muslim countries all over the world. The potentialities of Halal tourism in Sri Lanka to attract overseas tourism market from Muslim population should be instrumentally studied within this contemporary tourism arena.

### **4. Gap of the Study**

It is understood from the literature reviews analyzed in this study that the studies have been carried out in some of the selected countries but in Sri Lanka, this sort of any attempt of studies has not been performed by the researchers even in Sri Lanka or overseas. Thereby this study is instrumental and evident to especially fulfill this gap of the research.

## **5. Objectives of the Study**

To find the opportunity of Halal tourism, that can be utilized so as to promote the tourism industrial sector in Sri Lanka.

## **6. Methodology of the Study**

The methodology that is used in this study is descriptive mainly based on secondary data sources, that are collected from the different journals and articles, tourism official web sites, books on tourism industry, papers presented on tourism, and other important media and channels of information.

## **7. Questions of the Study**

What are the opportunities of Halal tourism that can be utilized and used so as to promote the tourism industrial sector in Sri Lanka?

## **8. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **8.1 Concept of Halal Tourism Industry**

Halal tourism industry is a new concept studied presently as instrumental in the growth of the countries through the tourism industry not only in Sri Lanka and but all over the world. The concept of Halal represents Islamic law and order on the basis of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and guidance of the apostle, Prophet Muhammed (PBUM) and it effectively regulates every aspect of life of the Muslims in their day to day activities. The term, "Halal", is the Arabic word which means literally "licit" or "lawful" and also it is functioning as a constitutive element of Islamic law (Mukherjee, 2014).

Hence, Halal is an Arabic language word meaning 'Permission' derived directly from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the apostle of the Almighty Allah, Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). Halal tourism is one of the recognized tourism industries in the world from both the perspectives of Islam and researchers. Goods and services (products) of Halal tourism



must be supplied as per the guidance of Islam with the support of both the revelation of the Holy Qur'an and teachings of the apostle of the Almighty.

In the view of Halal tourism, the emergence of the concept of Halal tourism, meaning permissible in Arabic, must be applied to any of tourism activities, further it consists of any Sharia (the basis of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the guidance of prophet Muhammed - PBUM) compliant products ranging from bank dealings to cosmetics, vaccines and tourism. In tourism activities, Halal tourism means offering tour packages and destinations that are particularly designed to cater for the considerations of Islamic teachings from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith of prophet Muhammed (PBUM). So, the Halal tourism is suggested to be inclusive of the following: (1) Halal food that is slaughtered in accordance with the teachings of Islamic Shari'ah Law and free from any substance forbidden by the teachings. Eg. No alcohol and pork, (2) Shari'ah – compliant and oriented banking (3) Halal or Islamic beach holiday (4) Separate Masjid for prayers (5) Modest dressing (6) International hotel accommodation to the Muslim tourists' taste and spiritual needs (Nisthar and Nufile, 2016).

There is no specific definition of Halal tourism as it is a vast concept newly constructed and designed only upon the Islamic customs and norms. This concept is mainly perceived as tourism products providing the services of hospitality that are compliant with the Islamic Law. For example, Halal hotels and restaurants with the absence of availability of alcoholic beverages, availability of Halal certificates for food, presence of wellness facilities for women, exclusive rooms for prayer and recitations and, in general, a Muslim-friendly environment.

The apostle of Almighty Allah said, "The first thing of the human body to purify is the abdomen, so he who can eat nothing but good food (Halal and earned lawfully) should do so, and he who does as much as he can that nothing intervene between him and Paradise by not shedding even a handful of blood, (i.e. murdering) should do so." (Sahih Bukhari, 266)

The above sayings of the prophet Muhammed (PBUM) clearly delineates the significance of the Halal in the every aspects of the human life.

Multicultural Sri Lanka has been ranked as the world's fourth best non-Islamic destination for Halal-friendly travel. Sri Lanka's ranking is as per a compilation by Halal website Crescent rating which has listed top 10 destinations among Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) as well as non-OIC states. Bosnia and Herzegovina top the latter category followed by Singapore, South Africa and Sri Lanka. In listing Sri Lanka, the website said Sri Lanka's large Muslim population means Halal restaurants are aplenty in addition to number of Muslim-owned roadside food outlets. Among OIC countries Malaysia ranked top followed by Egypt and Turkey (sailanmuslim.com).

## **8.2 Halal Travel & Tourism in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka which is a multicultural and non-Islamic country has been graded as the fourth best destination for Halal-friendly travel in world. This grading of Sri Lanka is according to a compilation by the Halal website Crescent-rating that has graded the top 10 tourists' destinations among Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) as well as non-Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina are at the top in the latter category after Singapore, South Africa and Sri Lanka respectively. In ranking Sri Lanka, the website suggested that the large Muslim population of Sri Lanka means Halal restaurants are established amply along with a large number of Muslim-owned wayside food outlets. At the same time, Malaysia ranked as top country followed by Egypt and Turkey respectively among OIC countries (sailanmuslim.com).

Ranking of Sri Lanka is according to a compilation designed by Halal Website Crescent Rating which has registered 10 top of destinations amongst Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Non-OIC countries. Herzegovina and Bosnia are ranked at the top being pursued by Singapore, South Africa and Sri Lanka. Though losing the 2018 Commonwealth Games bid to God Coast of Australia, Sri Lanka in the Halal-friendly travel destinations has an edge over the city of Queensland, a state comprising the north-eastern part of Australia that is ranked at fifth place. In ranking Sri Lanka, the website says that the large number of Muslim population of Sri Lanka implies that Halal hotels and restaurants are abundant in addition to the considerable number of Muslim-owned wayside foodstuff outlets throughout the country. Malaysia is listed at the top being followed by Egypt and Turkey among OIC countries. (<http://www.ft.lk/article/67989/Halal-friendly-tourism:-Sri-Lanka-rated-fourth-best-among-non-Islamic-states>)

Sri Lanka which is an island situated in the Indian Ocean is one of the greatest holiday destination of attraction, with the friendly people, lush green tea plantations, eternal beach sites, fantastic food, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites and etc. It is a magnificent spot to take pleasure in a funny-filled holiday. Muslim visitors are certainly able to come across Muslim-friendly facilities in Sri Lanka. Halal restaurants and hotels, the areas of prayer, and Masjids are distributed across the country of Sri Lanka; on the other hand since it is a Buddhist country, no all cities of the Island are having the Muslim-friendly facilities. The visitors of Muslims interested with finding Muslim-friendly hotels in Sri Lanka are not to worry because the country has a number of Crescent-ranked hotels and restaurants in the famous holiday destinations and attractions.

Another one of the destinations, famous and popular among the Muslim guests and tourists is the Hill country, Kandy which is situated in the heart of the country. Muslim tourists, visitors and guests are rejoiced to know that four hotels are there in Kandy with Crescent-rated. Randholee Luxury Resort, Cinnamon Citadel Kandy, Earl's Regency Hotel, and Hotel Hilltop are located in Kandy with a Crescent-rating ranked with three.

Another hill country in Sri Lanka, named Nuwera Eliya is a one of the well-known destinations in which there are two hotels with the a Crescent-rating of three such as Jumeirah Grand Apartments and Heritance Tea Factory. The Sands by Aitkin Spence Hotels and Avani Kalutara Resorti lactated in Kalutara, Cinnamon Lodge in Habarana, Chaaya Village Habarana, Bentota Beach Hotel in Bentota and Avani Bentota Resort and Spa and Bentota Beach Hotel in Bentota are all hotels with a Crescent-rating of three. The Muslim guests and tourists who have been visiting Sri Lanka are able to find Crescent-rated hotels such as Chaaya Tranz in Hikkaduwa, Heritance Kandalama in Ahungalla, Chaaya Tranz in Hikkaduwa, Chaya Blu in Trincomalee, and Chaya Blu in Dambulla. However, these hotels are not making sure that the foodstuffs supplied by their restaurants are subject to Halal certification. Anyhow, the options of pre-requests can be made in these restaurants so as to supply Halal certified meals. At the same time, the Muslim guests, tourists and visitors should be to be strictly aware that the restaurants at more of these hotels dish up alcoholic drinks and also some of these hotels may even house an inn

located within their premises. (<https://www.halaltrip.com/other/blog/crescentrated-hotels-in-sri-lanka/>)

### **8.3 Halal Hotels and Restaurants**

Crescent-rating is a system of the rating which approves any type of establishments or business institutions to be ranked and rated on the basis of the facilities and the services they are supplying to serve to the needs of Halal-concerned travelers, guests and tourists. Hotels - Serendib Leisure currently provide with the consideration of Halal-oriented facilities and services such as supplying a prayer's time table of five times prayers along with prayer mat on the request of the guests, travelers, and tourists; availability of a list of Masjids and Halal-oriented restaurants in the proximity of restaurants and accessibility at the front reception desk, and list of the restaurants which are catering Halal foodstuffs; the mobile staff who are well-versed in the needs and requirements of Muslim travelers, guests and tourists and making sure of the use of exclusive utensils for non-Halal foodstuffs. The system of the Crescent-rating guarantees that Serendib Leisure properties will serve Muslim guest, tourists and travelers with Halal-oriented goods and services anticipated by them even during the time period of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan.

Serendib Leisure's properties - Club Hotel Dolphin, AVANI Kalutara Resort and AVANI Bentota Resort & Spa – are categorized into the Halal-oriented Three Crescent-rating in recent times for the appropriateness of Halal concept by the company based on the country Singapore. Accordingly 'The System of Crescent-rating' is known as the 'global leader' in assisting Halal-oriented travel estimates. As a result, outbound travel and tourists from the Middle East country has improved at an average of 8 percent during the time period of the last 10 years. It is estimated better over the average of the world. The above three Serendib Leisure properties such as AVANI Kalutara, Club Hotel Dolphin, and AVANI Bentota are currently well dignified so as to attract Muslim guests, tourists and travelers who are exclusively looking for Halal-friendly services while they are on travelling for leisure and business.

Mr. Ranil de Silva, Managing Director – Serendib Leisure Hotels commented: “We are delighted to receive the Halal-friendly crescent rating certification for three of our properties. The company, 'Crescent-rating', has ranked Sri Lanka as the world's fourth-best non-Islamic destination for Halal-friendly travel and we believe that Serendib Leisure is spearheading this niche segment in Sri Lanka. Inbound tourists into Sri Lanka have been increasing steadily and we believe that the

Halal tourism market seeking Halal-friendly services will form a substantial portion of the ambitious target of 2.5 million inbound tourists envisaged by 2015. Muslim travelers represent 12% of global travel expenditure and are expected to grow to 14% by 2020. By catering to Muslim travelers, the Serendib Leisure hotel group is at the forefront of Sri Lankan luxury hotels fulfilling the specialized needs of this niche segment.”

[www.arabiantravelmarket.com/\\_novadocuments/27313?v=635010957595900000](http://www.arabiantravelmarket.com/_novadocuments/27313?v=635010957595900000)

There are raft of options in Sri Lanka to find Halal food to cater for a visitor here. On account of the active and large Muslim community in Sri Lanka, Halal Food is widely available throughout the country of Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, only some of them have received Halal certificates from the Halal Accreditation Council (Guarantee) Limited, or HAC, which is the only entity certifying and conducting professional and internationally accepted compliance audits for Halal standards in Sri Lanka.( <http://www.hac.lk/>) Presently, the outlets certified as Halal serve mainly fast food. There are also a number of restaurants which make sure that they supply Halal food. But they have not certified their outlets to serve Halal foodstuffs in Sri Lanka. Most of them are Muslim owned outlets. Therefore, it is advisable to check the food before we decide such a restaurant or outlets to be dined. In addition to the fine-dining restaurants and fast food outlets, there are rather number of wayside food outlets that are owned by Muslim and dish up "Halal Food". These outlets generally have marked a name identified as Muslim and have signature to ensure it.

They are not cheap restaurants, but some of them most likely cater some of the best local food in Sri Lanka. As a majority of Buddhist in the country, there is also a wide choice of vegetarian foodstuffs outlets throughout the island. The domestic people in Sri Lanka primarily are having rice along with vegetable and meat or fish curries. The local foodstuffs are commonly highly spiced, but some of the outlets serving to the visitors or tourists to Sri Lanka are catering gentle items of Sri Lankan cookery. There are also a variety of refreshments known in the country as "Short Eats". In general, these short eats are served in coffee shops or bakeries. In case of Halal certification, most of these items do not ensure Halal certification. Although the Short Eats mixed with pork are not served, it is possible to check with the local Muslims about where to get the Halal foodstuffs. Likewise, the snacks catered in Sri Lanka are great to have as starters or with coffee or tea or milk tea. They are also a range of sweetmeats made up of rice flour, coconut milk, margarine and eggs. (<http://aalamtravels.com/informations/Halal-travel-&-tourism-in-Sri->

Lanka.php). For Muslim visitors or tourists, the city of Colombo caters a large number of Halal restaurants catering the local foodstuffs and also internationally recognized the foodstuffs. Some of the well-known and the best Halal restaurants in the city of Colombo refer to The Sandwich Factory, Elite Restaurant, Al-Maas Family Restaurant, Eastern Wok Halal Restaurant, etc.

Two hotels have achieved the record of a Crescent-rating of four in Sri Lanka, and it is the best rank achieved by a hotel Sri Lanka. The Galadari Hotel which is located in the pivotal position of business district of Colombo, is one of the both hotels with a rank of four. Even though this hotel famous in the country has not been guaranteed by a body of Halal certification, this hotel asserts to be obligatory in the city of Colombo so as to serve Halal foodstuffs. Guests and tourists must also be made aware of that some of the restaurants located within the vicinity of the hotel are serving the alcoholic drinks, which is optimistic to the concept of Halal in Islam. Other services relevant to Muslim or Halal-friendly are supplied by the hotel including prayer mat and a prayer time table which are provided on the request of guests and tourists. Ifthar (the time of breaking the fasting of Muslims: at the time of sunset) and Suhoor (the time of inception of the fasting of Muslims: before the calling of Fajr prayer) meals can also be ordered during the month of Ramadan on the choice of their menu, on request. Muslim guests and tourists arrived in the country can also find a considerable number of Halal restaurants located in the close proximity to the hotel if they like to dine out of the hotel. The second hotel that represents a rank of 4 is the Eden Resort and Spa.

This hotel located in Beruwala in the southern coastal belt of Sri Lanka and also to the south of city of Colombo, is a five Star luxury and beautiful hotel. Tourists and guests can have the greatest pleasure of a relaxing and the funny beach site holiday with tranquility from the hotel, named as the Eden Resort and Spa. This hotel also affirms that the foodstuff being supplied by this hotel is Halal food even if this hotel has not been recognized by certificate of Halal by a body which certifies the Halal practices in the country. The other Crescent-rated hotels being available across the country are ranked to a rating of three. Cinnamon Lakeside which is a Five Star hotel located in the city of Colombo is the only other Crescent-rating hotel in Colombo.

#### **8.4 Muslim Halal-Friendly Travel to Sri Lanka**

The variety of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnicities is distributed to make travel and tourism unproblematic and convenient for Muslim foreign and domestic travelers. Along with a large

presence of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka, many hotels located in Sri Lanka supply the Halal-friendly and Arabian foodstuffs and facilities. The restaurants and the travel and tourism industry is prepared to make some of the facilities available such as the tool which is used to find the direction of Qiblah for the prayers of the Muslims and the timing indicators for the timely prayers all over the world. To cut it short, a Muslim traveler can comfortably explore the ever-green pastures of tropical Sri Lanka with ease. Further, Sri Lanka is surrounded with the various holy Muslim Pilgrimage sites that are also being visited by the non-Muslim visitors as well.

#### ***8.4.1 Kataragama***

Kataragama is one of the cultural heritages in Sri Lanka. It is a prehistoric sacred town that is of the reputed significance endemic to the Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in Sri Lanka. It is situated towards the South Eastern coastal belt of Sri Lanka neighbouring to the Yala National Park or the Yala Forest Cover and it is stretched along the banks of the River Menik accompanying with the widespread religious complex which is comprised of the shrines and locations of worships for disciples and followers of all the three religious faiths. Originally a god of Buddhist or Buddhism, the primary religion, Deviyo Kataragama, is identical here with twelve-armed and god Skanda representing the Tamils or Hinduism which is war-like. It is thereby bringing the two main religions of the island together. Lance, or Vel of god, Skanda is believed to be held within Maha Devala which is the most significant shrine in the complex. The community of Buddhists and Hindus are on the routine worships at this shrine, with three timely daily observances or services or *pujas* (at 4.30am, 10.30am and 6.30pm), while the community of Muslims is present at a mosque located in the close proximity.

#### ***8.4.2 Adam's Peak or Samanala Kanda***

Adam's Peak is another one of multi-religious sites in Sri Lanka with the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians of Sri Lanka all declaring that the sacred footprint on the peak of this solitude-stood mountain to be of Adam, Buddha, Siva, and St Thomas. Even though none of these claims of all faiths have been ever considered seriously, a number of 100s and 1000s of devotees are attracted by this summit throughout the year. They visit to the summit not as just as to pay honour but to be surprised at the amazing panorama at the top of the mountain and to be rejoiced with a sun-rise of breath-taking at the fracture of dawn. With many of other sacred Masjids and Shrines stretched throughout Sri Lanka, the tourists and travelers of Muslim are able

to find themselves Masjids and Prayer rooms in close proximity at any time of their travels in the country. The organization, Target Travels Sri Lanka, has been organizing Halal-oriented tours for year to year for the Muslim travelers. If any one of us is interested in visiting Sri Lanka, he or she can get their advices and recommendations on the best choice of proper holiday package for all of our Muslims. All their travel and tour packages mentioned on their website can be specially ordered with the Halal-friendly guides, hotels and prayer timings. (<http://www.ranfertravels.com/sri-lanka-halal-friendly-holidays>)

## **9. Findings and Conclusion**

Halal tourism industry is a new concept studied presently as instrumental in the growth of the countries through the tourism industry not only in Sri Lanka and but all over the world. Sri Lanka which is a multicultural and non-Islamic country has been graded as the fourth best destination for Halal-friendly travel in world. Crescent-rating is a system of the rating which approves any type of establishments or business institutions to be ranked and rated on the basis of the facilities and the services they are supplying to serve to the needs of Halal-concerned travelers, guests and tourists. The variety of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnicities is distributed to make travel and tourism unproblematic and convenient for Muslim foreign and domestic travelers. Kataragama is one of the cultural heritages in Sri Lanka. It is a prehistoric sacred town that is of the reputed significance endemic to the Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in Sri Lanka. Adam's Peak is another one of multi-religious sites in Sri Lanka with the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians of Sri Lanka all declaring that the sacred footprint on the peak of this solitude-stood mountain to be of Adam, Buddha, Siva, and St Thomas.

## **10. Recommendation**

The opportunities of Halal tourism sector found but still not recognized by the relevant authorities and policy makers in Sri Lanka are too unique to promote such sector considerably. Especially SLTDA (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority), the business entrepreneurs of the tourism industrial sector, and policy makers in connection with the development of tourism sector in Sri Lanka can be guided to adopt the concept of Halal tourism similarly accompanied



with the development of conventional tourism sector in Sri Lanka. Department of Halal tourism in SLTDA can be inaugurated so as to target the huge amount of the tourists who can be attracted to Sri Lanka from the Arab countries all over the world. They can introduce and advertise Halal tourism packages in the Arab countries in the global context. Five star and three star hotels in Sri Lanka can be guided to add up with those packages in their menu to the tourists arriving in the country.

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