

ABSTRACT

This presentation describes what is being done by the Sri Lanka Ministry of Tourism in the name of using the Ramayana legend as a device for luring Indian tourists to the island.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA)- the apex body for tourism that replaced the former Tourist Board – formulated the Ramayana initiative as a response to declining tourist arrivals resulting from the war and the surge in fuel costs. This initiative involved taking the Indian tourist along what was called the Ramayana trail to over 50 sites which according to the SLTDA was associated with the Ramayana epic.

In addition a committee was established called the Ramayana Trail Executive Committee whose function is to administer and update Ramayana research. The object of the research is to find evidence in the island that substantiates the Ramayana legend. The evidence the Committee's research has discovered so far is thus listed.

The activities of the Committee has also been elaborated on by its chairman in an address he delivered at the Indian Cultural Centre of the Indian High commission on "The Historical Evidence of Ramayana and Ravana in Sri Lanka" in which the substantive argument is the irrelevance of archaeology, history and epigraphy in evaluating the evidence he relies on.