



Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey 2016

24 - 30 December

Acknowledgment

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Introduction

This report details the findings of Maldivians Traveling Abroad (MTA) Survey 2016 conducted by the Statistics Division of the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA).

The main objective of the survey is to estimate the travel expenditure, which is one of the components of the current account of the Balance of Payments statistics. The MTA survey is an important tool used to identify and analyse the travel patterns of Maldivians; by purpose of travel, frequently visited destinations and expenditure patterns.



Methodology

The survey was conducted over the span of 7 days at the arrival hall of Ibrahim Nasir International Airport² from 24th to 30th December 2016. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with passengers while they waited for their baggage. A total of 29 staff from different departments of the MMA took part as enumerators in conducting the survey. The staff worked in 2 shifts, whereby the first shift of enumerators worked from 0730hrs until 1700hrs while the second shift lasted from 1900hrs to 0000 hrs.

All major flights carrying Maldivians during the survey period were covered in the survey. Although the survey questionnaire was designed in English, for ease of communication, interviews were conducted in Dhivehi.



²The airport has since been renamed as Velaana International Airport on Jan 2017.

Data Processing

Data collected from the survey was entered manually into a spreadsheet, while three stages of data validation was undertaken by different staff of the Statistics Division. Following this, the data was processed using the statistical software 'R' to further analyze the information and generate a more systematic dataset.

The MMA started using 'R' for MTA data processing from 2015 onwards; hence the results may not be comparable with survey results prior to 2015.



Key Findings

According to Maldives Immigration, 7,185 Maldivian passengers arrived during the survey period. A total of 4,488 passengers were interviewed for this survey, reflecting a participation rate of 62%.

Coverage of MTA survey 2016



Number of Maldivian arrivals

7,185



Number of people interviewed

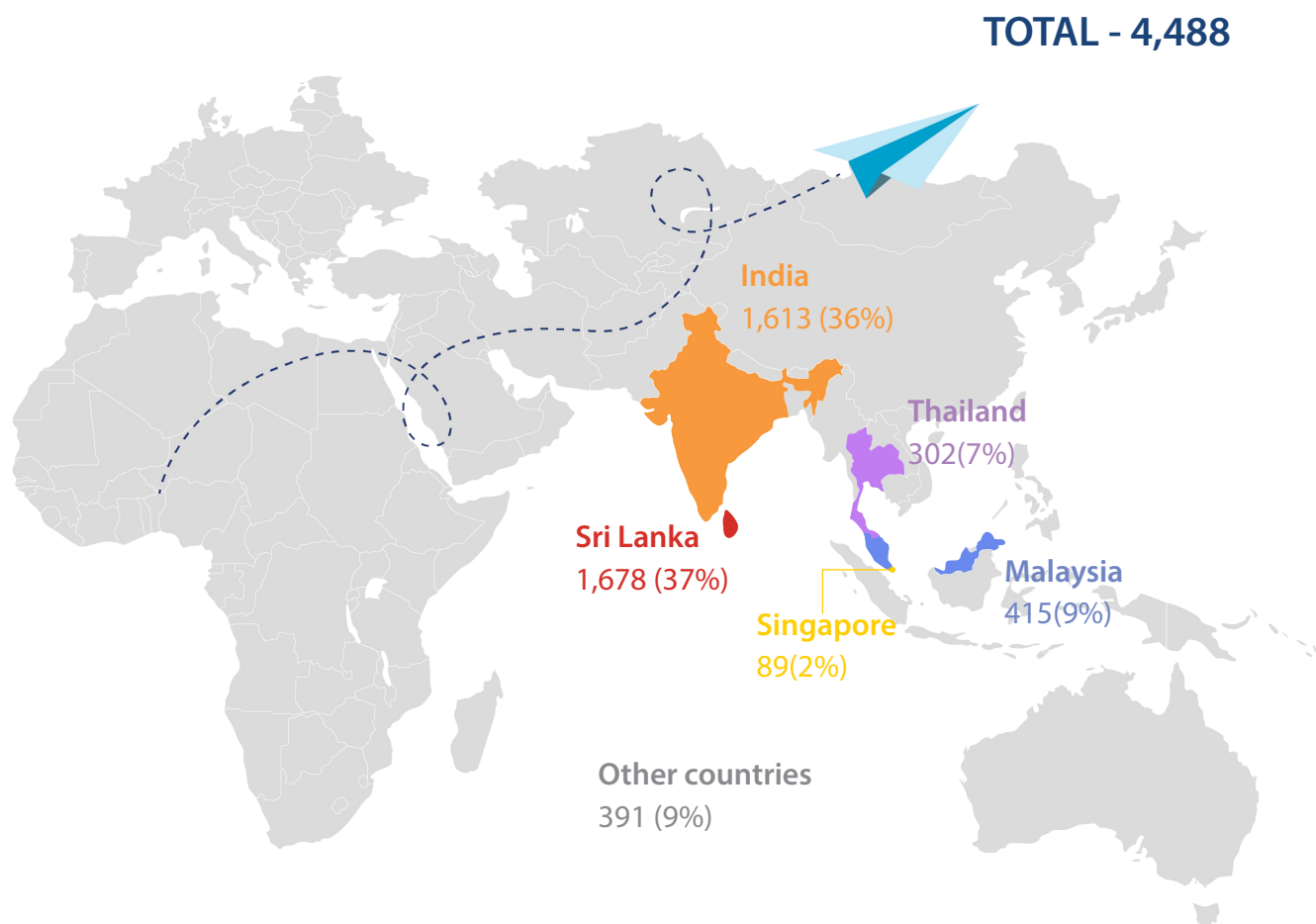
4,488



Coverage

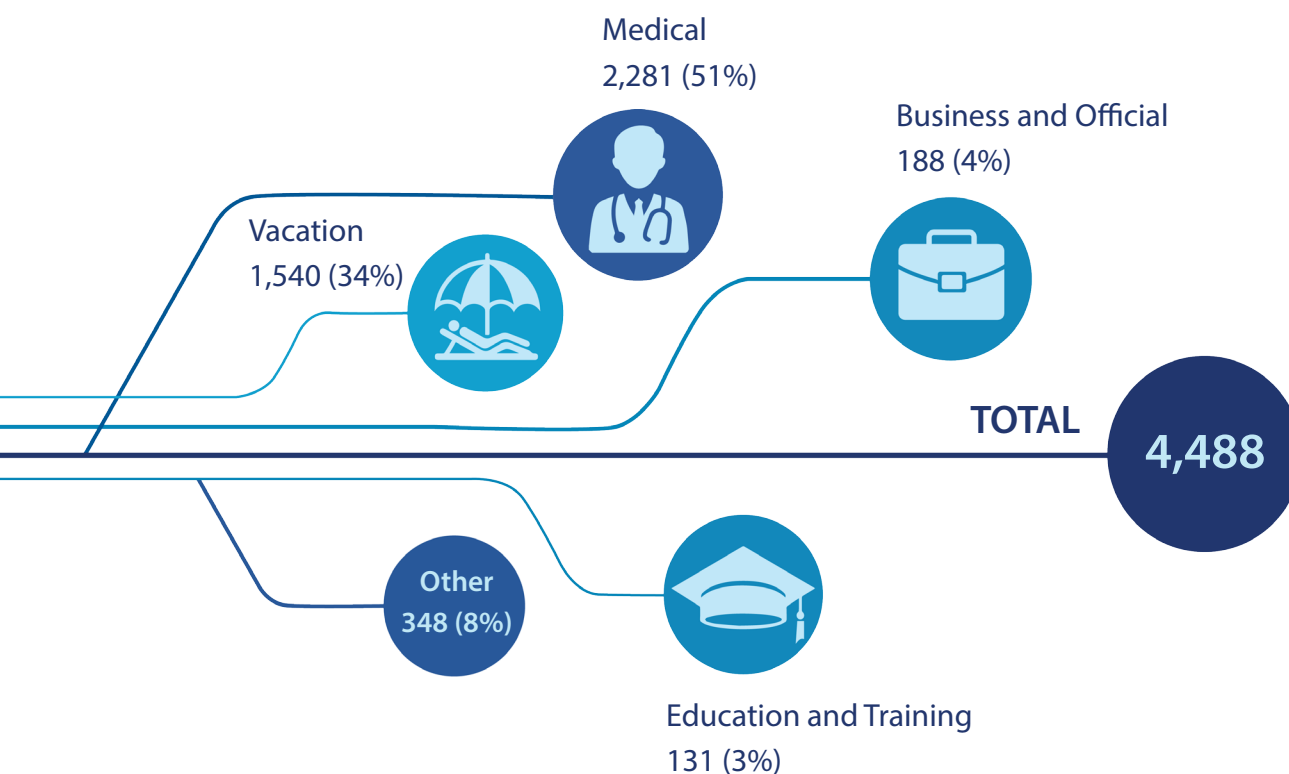
62%

Number of people by destination



As per the 2016 survey results, the most popular destinations among Maldivian travellers were Sri Lanka and India with 37% and 36% of survey respondents returning from these two destinations. This was followed by Malaysia (9%), Thailand (7%) and Singapore (2%). Travellers to countries other than these five specified countries and those who travelled to more than one destination combined accounted for 9% of the total respondents.

Number of Maldivians by Purpose of Travel



Out of the total Maldivian passengers covered in the survey, 51% of the respondents stated that their main purpose of travel was to obtain medical services. Meanwhile 34% of the passengers travelled for vacation and 3% of the travellers cited education and training as their purpose of travel. Passengers traveling for business and official purposes combined accounted for 4% of the total respondents; while the remaining passengers were classified in the residual category 'other', as their purpose of travel did not correspond with any of the broad categories identified in the survey.



Average expenditure on airfare

India	US\$278
Sri Lanka	US\$230
Malaysia	US\$350
Thailand	US\$477
Singapore	US\$503

As per the survey results, the average return airfare for India and Sri Lanka was US\$278 and US \$230, respectively. On average a Maldivian who travelled to Malaysia spent US\$350 for airfare. The average return airfare for Thailand and Singapore was US\$477 and US\$503 respectively.

Analysis by Purpose of Travel

This section looks into the pattern of Maldivian travellers and details on duration of trip and expenses for different purposes. As per the data compilation principles of the Balance of Payments statistics, all the expenditure except airfare, are considered as travel expenses and is analysed by purpose of travel. For instance, the average expenses of a medical traveller is not the amount spent on the purchase of medical services, but rather the expenses of the traveller for the medical trip, inclusive of accommodation, food, transport and other personal expenses.



Medical travel

Table 1: Expenditure and duration of medical travel

Country	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)
India	1,312 (58%)	14	\$641
Sri Lanka	774 (34%)	11	\$634
Malaysia	22 (1%)	17	\$589
Thailand	121 (5%)	9	\$1,416
Singapore	12 (1%)	12	\$1,186
Others	40 (2%)	23	\$2,357
TOTAL³	2,281	13	\$656

Looking into details of medical travel – the most popular reason for Maldivians to travel abroad – the top choice of destination was India with 58% of the travellers returning from the sub-continent. The average duration for a medical traveller to India was 14 days, while the expenditure per trip was US\$641 per person. Meanwhile, 34% of the people who travelled to obtain medical services stated Sri Lanka as their destination of choice. On average a Maldivian travelling to Sri Lanka for medical purposes stayed for 11 days and spent US\$634 per trip. Likewise, a Maldivian traveller to Thailand for the same purpose stayed 9 days and spent US\$1,416 per trip on average.

³Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.



Vacation

Table 2: Expenditure and duration of travel for vacation

Country	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)
India	241(16%)	13	\$585
Sri Lanka	665 (43%)	10	\$475
Malaysia	318(21%)	12	\$806
Thailand	141 (9%)	9	\$888
Singapore	51 (3%)	7	\$931
Others	124 (8%)	13	\$1,138
TOTAL⁴	1,540	11	\$667

The most popular destination among Maldivians for vacation was recorded to be Sri Lanka with 43% of the Maldivian holiday makers citing the country as their choice of destination. On average, a Maldivian travelling to Sri Lanka for vacation stayed for 10 days and spent US\$475 per trip. Following this, Malaysia and India each accounted for 21% and 16% of Maldivian vacationers respectively. Further, Maldivian holiday makers in Malaysia spent around 12 days and spent on average US\$806 for the trip while Maldivians who travelled to India for vacation stayed for 13 days on average and spent \$585 per trip.

Of the Maldivians who travelled for vacation, 9% cited Thailand as their destination of choice. On average, a Maldivian traveling to Thailand for vacation stayed for 9 days and spent US\$888. Likewise, a Maldivian travelling to Singapore for the same purpose stayed 7 days and spent \$931 per trip on average. In addition to this, travellers to countries other than specified as well as travellers to more than one country accounted for 8% of the Maldivian vacationers covered in this survey.

⁴Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.

Analysis by Destination of Travel

This section provides details on the destination of travel in terms of average duration and expenditure per day and per trip by Maldivians. The data represents travel pattern of a typical Maldivian traveller to these destinations, with some detail on the purpose of visit.



Sri Lanka

Table 3: Travel to Sri Lanka - by purpose and expenditure

Purpose	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)	
			Per day	Per trip
TOTAL⁵	1,678	11	\$54	\$594
o/w Medical	774 (46%)	11	\$56	\$634
Vacation	665 (40%)	10	\$47	\$475
Business	68 (4%)	3	261	\$927

Out of the total survey respondents, 37% of the travelers cited Sri Lanka as their destination and stayed for an average duration of 11 days. On average, a person travelling to Sri Lanka spent \$594 per trip. Looking at the purpose of those who travelled to Sri Lanka 46% stated their purpose of travel as to obtain healthcare services and spent US\$634 for an average of 11 days while 40% stated their main purpose of visit as vacation and spent US\$475 for an average duration of 10 days. Meanwhile Maldivians who travelled to Sri Lanka for business and official purpose accounted for 4%.

⁵Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.



India

Table 4: Travel to India - by purpose and expenditure

Purpose	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)	
			Per day	Per trip
TOTAL⁶	1,613	14	\$45	\$652
o/w Medical	1,312 (81%)	14	\$44	\$641
Vacation	241 (15%)	13	\$46	\$585
Business	8 (0.5%)	5	\$452	\$2,170

As per the survey results, 36% of the respondents visited India and stayed for an average duration of 14 days. The average expenditure per trip for a Maldivian traveling to India was estimated to be US\$652. Out of the Maldivians who travelled to India, 81% cited their purpose of travel as medical while 15% stated that they visited India for holiday. Less than one percent of those who travelled to India cited business as their main purpose of travel.



Malaysia

Table 5: Travel to Malaysia - by purpose and expenditure

Purpose	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)	
			Per day	Per trip
TOTAL⁷	415	20	\$42	\$980
o/w Medical	22 (5%)	17	\$55	\$589
Vacation	318 (77%)	12	\$65	\$806
Business	4 (1%)	6	\$44	\$667

Out of the Maldivians respondents, 9% cited Malaysia as their destination. The average duration for a Maldivian traveller to Malaysia is 20 days and is estimated to spend US\$980 per trip on average. Of those who travelled to Malaysia, 77% stated that they travelled for holiday purposes whereas 5% of Maldivians travellers to Malaysia visited to obtain healthcare services. Meanwhile travellers for business related purposes accounted for 1%.

⁶ Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.

⁷ Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.



Thailand

Table 6: Travel to Thailand -by purpose and expenditure

Purpose	Number of people (%)	Average duration of stay (days)	Average expenditure (US dollars)	
			Per day	Per trip
TOTAL⁸	302	8	\$137	\$1,079
o/w Medical	121 (40%)	9	\$157	\$1,416
Vacation	141 (47%)	9	\$99	\$888
Business	36 (12%)	6	\$205	\$1,279

Out of the total survey respondents, 7% travelled to Thailand and stayed for an average duration of 8 days. The average expenditure for a Maldivian traveller to Thailand was estimated to be US\$1,079 per trip. Out of the Maldivian travellers to Thailand, 47% stated that they travelled for vacation, while 40% visited the country for medical purposes. Moreover, 12% of Maldivians who travelled to Thailand stated their purpose of travel was business.

⁸ Total duration of stay and expenditure is the weighted average.

Limitations

There are several limitations to be considered while interpreting the results of the MTA survey 2016. Firstly, the survey is conducted during the peak-season⁹ for Maldivian travelers; hence the survey results may not reflect the travel patterns of Maldivians throughout the year. It is also important to note that the expenditure on airfare collected from this survey represents average airfare to different destinations during the survey period. Airfares may be very volatile during the year depending on input costs and other factors. Additionally, since the survey is conducted during the school holiday season in the Maldives, it is possible that some of the fares quoted represent promotional prices for this period.

The coverage of students studying abroad remain significantly low, as travel patterns for students depends on their respective academic calendars which may not coincide with the survey period.



⁹Peak-season for Maldivian travellers is referred to the year-end school holiday period.



Maldivians Travelling Abroad Survey 2016

Form No.	<<Form No>>	Enum. name	Date:	- - / 12 / 2016
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SECTION 1

1.1 Purpose of visit		1.2 Country and city travelled		1.3 Expense arrangement	
a. Medical	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a. India	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	city	
b. Holiday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	b. Sri Lanka	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	city	
c. Education / Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	c. Malaysia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	city	
d. Business purpose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	d. Singapore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	city	
e. Government purpose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	e. Thailand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	city	
f. Other, specify:		f. Other, specify:			
abc		country / city		comment	

SECTION 2

2.1 Date of departure	D D	M M	Y Y Y Y	2.8 Type of accommodation	
2.2 Number of people spent for	1	2		a. Family / Relative / Friend	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Airfare:	\$ \$	a	1234	b. Paying guest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Number of:	<	2		c. Serviced apartment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Return ticket	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2.6 Class	abc	d. Hotel / Guesthouse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.7 Airline travelled	abc			e. Health facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				abc	

SECTION 3

3.1 Total expenditure (excluding cost of airfare)

a. Total expenditure	\$ \$	b. Did you spent by card?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(if No, skip to question 3.1.d)
c. Does the total include expenses by card?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If NO, please specify total card expenses by card		
d. Does the total include expenses covered by Aasandha?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If YES, specify expenses by Aasandha		
e. Does the total include expenses on goods in transit?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If YES, specify total expenses on goods in transit		

3.2 Expenditure details

a. Medical	\$ \$	1234	e. Personal items	\$ \$	1234
b. Accommodation	\$ \$	1234	f. Education	\$ \$	1234
c. Food	\$ \$	1234	g. Other expenses	\$ \$	1234
d. Transport	\$ \$	1234			

SECTION 4 (Students only, excluding trainings)

4.1 Course duration (in years)	Total	12	Completed	12	Remaining	12
4.2 Course fee	\$ \$	Per semester	1234	Per year	1234	Total
4.3 Name of the course	abc					
4.4 College / University	abc					



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