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Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges

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Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges

PhD Dissertation

Md. Abdul Hamid



**Institute of Bangladesh Studies
University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh
15 November 2020**

Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges

*A dissertation submitted to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges” is submitted by Md. Abdul Hamid, PhD fellow of the session 2016-1017 at the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. The findings and views expressed in this dissertation are entirely his contribution. This dissertation is an original research work done under my supervision and guidance. To the best of our knowledge, this dissertation has not been submitted anywhere else for any purposes, such as for any degree or diploma.

We have gone through the draft dissertation thoroughly and found it satisfactory for submission. The dissertation is therefore recommended and forwarded to the University of Rajshahi through the Institute of Bangladesh Studies for necessary steps towards its acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Declaration

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged and referenced, this research study (Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges) is entirely his own work and has not been submitted for any degree or other qualification in any institution.

(Md. Abdul Hamid)

15 November 2020

Abstract

The tourism sector of Bangladesh is perceived as very potential from the very beginning. The policymakers, concerned authorities, and other active stakeholders frequently express such opinions on different occasions. But the achievements in the last four decades do not indicate the same. Undoubtedly many factors are responsible for such slow progress. In that case, 'Tourism marketing' has been identified (by some studies) as one of the significant players.

The researcher was fascinated to understand the marketing issues, strategies, and challenges of the tourism sector of Bangladesh. The objectives of the study were to portray the current scenario of the tourism marketing issues (elements) in Bangladesh; to gain more insights of tourist behavior in Bangladesh; to be acquainted with the competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination; and to figure out the challenges of marketing the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

It was an exploratory study in nature. Both the primary and secondary data have been used. For primary data, a survey has been conducted on 390 respondents based on a structured questionnaire. The respondents were tourists and visitors of four leading tourism spots of Bangladesh. Besides, to collect qualitative data 28 active stakeholders have been interviewed from the concerned industries. To analyze the quantitative data different statistical and mathematical tools have been used. For qualitative data, a content analysis method has been used. Related secondary materials have been incorporated where appropriate.

The necessity of tourism marketing is frequently pronounced by the responsible authorities but its scope and potential contributions have not been identified. As a result, need based, timely, and competitive products have not been developed and offered. Pricing methods of tourism products are not well integrated. The distribution channels are less effective. The promotional tools are not diverse and customized. Absence of realistic and organized plans to produce skilled manpower for the tourism related industries is noticed. The process of communication and providing services is not competitive as well. The significance of the physical layout and presentation has never been properly addressed.

To formulate effective strategies required analyses, field level studies, and database management could get priority. To do so a goal oriented and dynamic organization is highly required. A group of skilled manpower with professional expertise, passion, and devotion toward the sector is extremely needed. As the goals are not SMART, the weaknesses are not duly recognized yet. Absence of detail plans to uplift from the existing situation is also noticed.

For the dynamic nature of the sector, the behavior patterns of the tourists rapidly changes. As the competitors offer value added services, the tourists' expectations increase. The digital technologies are creating more scopes for them to compare and choose the best alternative options. For this reason, the boundary of competition is being wider. The marketers are struggling to keep the tourists satisfied through providing regular services.

In that situation, offering traditional and obsolete products in an unorganized manner can not help to win in the competition. The pace of the service providers should be more speedy and dynamic than the tourists. The tourism sector of Bangladesh can not follow this trend. The domestic tourists are being interested in the alternative offers and destinations. Their outgoing tendency has increased in the last few years. On the other hand, the international tourists are getting many alternative offers from neighboring countries.

For the distinctive nature, the domestic and international markets are equally important to the marketers. Besides, by offering the nation as a destination, each country is competing with each other. As a result, no one is beyond the race. In the global

competitiveness rankings the tourism sector of Bangladesh is moving slowly. The tourism sector is not growing as fast as the economy of Bangladesh. Weaknesses in tourism infrastructure, limited budget for its development, shortage of skilled manpower, safety and security concerns, technological readiness stage, ensuring credible online presence and many other factors are visible to the tourism community. Intensive transportation and communication systems, price competitiveness, and hospitable nature of mass people could be utilized to gain competitive advantage. But these positive factors can not play a significant role in its development.

The challenges of the sector are increasing rapidly. Demand for customized products, widening scope of competition, supply of skilled personnel, creating a network with the stakeholders, ensuring easy access to the services, addressing domestic and international pressures, increasing outbound trends and other related things are making the job much challenging than the earlier days.

To address the above mentioned issues—professional, passionate, and devoted (toward tourism sector) people should be assigned in the key positions of the tourism sector. New products should be explored, developed, and offered on a regular basis. Pricing methods and strategies should be integrated as well as competitive. Promotional activities should be more effective and widely circulated. Developing skilled manpower must get priority in the decision-making process. The process management should be easy, comfortable and tourist friendly. The layout and presentation of the destinations should be planned and organized. Enriched websites and appropriate contact persons should be focused on promotional tools. Besides, international tourism experts and experienced investors should be incorporated to move from the current situation.

The first target should be to attract the domestic tourists to visit the spots of Bangladesh. Reducing their outgoing trend can be a mentionable success. To attract the international tourists and to motivate the domestic people to visit the tourist spots of Bangladesh, at first detail research should be carried out. Based on their demographic profiles—segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies should be formulated. The attitude of the young tourists should be understood and respond accordingly. Overall cost leadership can be the winning strategy for the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

To stay in the competition, the nature of the competition should be realized properly. To do well in the international rankings, the poorly performed indicators should be taken into consideration. If those can be treated properly, it will be easy to address the competitiveness challenges. Short, mid, and long term plans have to formulate to win the race. The threshold levels can be determined based on the current performance of the neighboring countries like India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

To face the challenges of tourism marketing, an empowered as well as integrated body should be assigned. BTB could play this role but the structural change is required. More active stakeholders should be included there. Otherwise, it is tough to get better outcomes. Moreover, establishing DMOs for the major geographic tourism areas can bring better results. Giving budgetary and policy support, setting proper STP strategies, and designing effective promotional tools might help to overcome the challenges.

Finally, the potential scope of contribution of the tourism marketing has been undervalued here. If the issues are properly taken into consideration, workable strategies are formulated, and challenges are minimized — the tourism sector of Bangladesh can bring better outcomes within a certain period of time.

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Three years, especially in this stage, was a very significant phase of my life. During the research I have found immense cooperation from my respected supervisor, teachers, fellow mates, respondents, colleagues, students, and my family members. Thus, it is my pleasure to thank you all for the kind and sincere support throughout the journey.

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I would like to thank IBS for supporting me during the study. I am especially grateful for the fellowships granted by the IBS, University of Rajshahi and University Grants Commission, Bangladesh. I am indebted to all the participants who took the time out from their busy schedules to talk to me during the data collection and analyses.

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Finally, I thank the almighty Allah for all His blessings. I am always a happy man with what I have, Alhamdulillah. Through completion of this task, I have been more grateful to Him. May Allah bless us all.

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Dedication

Md. Wahed Ali

Nurjahan Begum

My loving parents

&

Zain Hamid

Who makes my living meaningful!

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Abbreviations

ATAB	Association of Travel Agencies of Bangladesh
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BFD	Bangladesh Forest Department
BPC	Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation
BROA	Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association
BTB	Bangladesh Tourism Board
BTF	Bangladesh Tourism Foundation
DMOs	Destination Management Organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
INHAB	International Hotel Association of Bangladesh
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICE	Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Event
MoCAT	Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
NASCIB	National Association of Small and Cottage Industries
NHTTI	National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute
NRBs	Non-Residence Bangladeshis
NTO	National Tourism Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RMG	Ready Made Garment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound
SMTes	Small and Micro Tourism Enterprises
SRS	Simple Random Sampling

STP	Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning
TDAB	Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh
TGAB	Tourist Guide Association of Bangladesh
TOAB	Tour Operators' Association of Bangladesh
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
TTCR	Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USA	United States of America
USD	Dollar of USA
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
VAT	Value Added Tax
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Chapter 01

INTRODUCTORY ASPECTS OF THE STUDY

Bengal is enriched with diverse resources from the ancient period. For this reason, the European traders and Arabs had keen interest in visiting this region. Even the Chinese people would like to visit the ancient Bengal. Their interests indicate that Bengal was a great attraction to the world community. From that point of view—Bangladesh could be more successful in tourism related business.

Moreover, Bangladesh realized the significance of the tourism sector just after achieving its independence. Within a few days of being an independent country, it established a statutory corporation as well as a Ministry. So, it was expected that Bangladesh would do better in this sector. But in the last four decades the achievements are not so mentionable.

Among the many factors ‘Tourism marketing’ has been identified as one of the key factors behind such backwardness. For this reason, the researcher was interested to be introduced with the issues, strategies and challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh. To gain more insights, the tourist behavior and competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination have also been taken into consideration.

From the outcomes of this study, the policymakers will gain more insight; investors, mass media, and (distribution) channel members will get useful information to design or redesign their offers and strategies. In this chapter, the background, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, justification, expected contributions of the study, and the thesis structure have been presented.

1.0 Introduction

There is a general perception that the tourism sector has huge potentiality to grow and contribute in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. By realizing its significance, the government has declared tourism as a thrust sector in the Industrial Policy—2010. Other responsible authorities also do the claim that they are trying their best to grasp maximum benefits from the sector. The achievements in the last four decades from the tourism related industries are not remarkable. On the contrary, a huge number of Bangladeshi tourists are traveling to the well-known tourist spots of neighboring countries rather than visiting the beautiful places of Bangladesh.

With the mentionable advancement of communication and transportation technologies the pace of the tourism industry is escalating worldwide rapidly. Many countries like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand and even our next-door nation India consider tourism as one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings. Compared to these nations, Bangladesh is in the very primitive stage of tourism development till now. It has a good number of tourism resources and much potential. For the lack of adequate initiatives and effective strategies of attracting domestic and international tourists, the desired results are not being achieved. The sum up of all tourism contributions results in healthy GDP and creation of huge employment.¹ For example—it is expected that by the year 2021, this sector will account for 1.9 million jobs directly in Bangladesh, an increase of 29.3 percent over the next ten years.

Till now the achievements of Bangladesh in this sector is less noteworthy. The actual causes of such backwardness and slow trends are not properly explored yet. Because tourism is comparatively a new field of study in Bangladesh. Few studies have been conducted on the relevant issues. Some factors have been identified; some researchers have indicated that ‘tourism marketing’ might be a significant role player. In every competitive environment, marketing helps to be successful, if this powerful weapon is efficiently used. But at first, an intensive study is required to outline the major issues of tourism marketing in Bangladesh. Through conducting this study the researcher wanted to contribute in this area.

With the rapid expansion of business activities the usage of marketing is increasing world-wide. As a service sector, tourism requires special care and intensive marketing programs. It is perceived that marketing makes a fundamental contribution to long-term

¹ Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*, (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2015), 27.

business success.² As Bangladesh is trying to get the attention of the domestic as well as international tourism community, designing and implementing effective marketing strategies can be helpful. Because, it is said that traveling to Bangladesh is a journey through ancient cultures, magnificent traditions, and modern civilization.³ If this strength can be marketed to the target market properly, achieving the desired success will not be tough or impossible.

One interesting thing is—it seems that all are interested to see the tourism sector successful but past activities prove that it is a neglected area of concentration. Less effective, traditional, and obsolete strategies are increasing the challenges to be successful in near future. Here the challenge is two folded: keeping domestic tourists inside as much as possible and attracting foreign tourists to visit the beautiful Bangladesh. In this situation, this study has tried to explore how marketing can play the deemed role to achieve the desired success.

Traveling is one of the ancient sources of entertainment. People would love to visit different places; to be introduced with the geographic, cultural, social and other issues of different regions of the world.⁴ The ancient ‘Bengal’ was a great attraction to the tourists. People would come from China, Africa, and Europe to visit this region. The trading prospects of many items of this geographic area encouraged the Europeans to explore this region. Till now Indian subcontinent is a great attraction to international travelers.

Tourism was one of the ancient activities of human beings. The adventure lovers would take steps to discover a new place or culture, or even new civilization. Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Amerigo Vespucci, Marco Polo, Ferdinand Magellan, James Cook and so many unknown travelers did this job at their own will. Sometimes they would take some people with them to make the journey possible or to make it enjoyable. In that time, their lives would generally be under threats like unfavorable climate, attack of the dacoits (pirates), and threat of the aggressive ethnic groups.⁵ Even the shortage of required foods and drinking water would cause their death. Gradually, the scope of traveling has been

² Rossano Eusebio, Joan Llonch Andreu, and M. Pilar Lopez Belbeze, “Measures of Marketing Performance: A Comparative Study from Spain,” *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 18, no. 2 (2006), 145-155.

³ Md. Wahidur Rahman, “Cultural Tourism and Bangladesh,” *Bangladesh Research Publications Journal* 7, no. 1 (2012), 6-15.

⁴ Scott A. Cohen, Girish Prayag, and Miguel Moital, "Consumer Behavior in Tourism: Concepts, Influences and Opportunities." *Current Issues in Tourism* 17, no. 10 (2014), 872-909.

⁵ Nigel Evans, David Campbell, and George Stonehouse, *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. (Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003).

increased and visiting an attractive place with family has become a popular trend worldwide.⁶ Now many families keep separate allocation for their annual trips to the desired places.

When several manufacturing industries struggle to survive, as an ‘invisible export’ sector tourism can play a significant role in the national economy. Moreover, the net income form this industry is much contributory than other sectors. Because to provide USD 100 services to a tourist, a little has to be imported. On the other hand, in many industries like RMG, maximum amount goes outside to import and process the physical goods. Worldwide tourism is treated as a ‘smoke free industry.’ It can be developed without using much fuel or other power sources.⁷ As the concern of environment pollution is increasing in an alarming rate all over the world, tourism can be a good source of alternative income for the under developed countries in tourism business.⁸

In the case of MDGs, Bangladesh has achieved a mentionable success. It is desired that in case of achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), it will maintain the flow or do much better than its earlier performances. In that case tourism can help the nation in a diverse ways.⁹ On the other hand, the pressure of eco-friendly ventures is increasing all over the world. To make the development more sustainable, the business ventures should be as natural as possible. Bangladesh enjoys many competitive advantages in this aspect as well. Besides, to create employment opportunities for the huge number of unemployed young men, expansion of tourism sector can really be helpful.¹⁰

⁶ Dale Fonnness and Brian Murray, "A Model of Tourist Information Search Behavior." *Journal of Travel Research* 37, no. 3 (1999), 220-230.

⁷ C. D. Roe Ashley and H. Goodwin, *Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor*. (London: ODI, 2001), 13.

⁸ BMZ, *The Contribution of Tourism to Sustainable Development and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. BMZ Position Paper 2, Berlin: Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012.

⁹ Jackie Clarke, Rebecca Hawkins, and Victoria Waligo, "Sustainability and Marketing for Responsible Tourism." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 41-53. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 42.

¹⁰ Ziaul Haque Babloo, *Globalization and Tourism Development of Bangladesh*. (Dhaka: Soummo Prokashani, 2007), 7.

In the developing countries like Bangladesh has to face a lot of challenges in the initial stage of tourism development.¹¹ But if once the foundation is established, the benefits come for a long time with less investment and little nurturing. For this reason, the policymakers and its active stakeholders should take the challenge of developing this sector. This study was intended to gain better insights, portray the scenario, identify the challenges, and present a set of guidelines for the practitioners. Through conducting the study at least the attempt of 'wake up call' has been taken. If many of us talk on the issues, certainly once the way will be found out and Bangladesh will be highly benefited from this potential sector.

¹¹ Eli Avraham and Eran Ketter, *Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3.

1.1 Background of the Study

As a learner of marketing I always would like to understand the learnt issues in the context of Bangladesh. How the theories of marketing can be established or matched in our known environment, it is always my concern. Few years back I became interested in the tourism sector of our country. In personal discussion, most of the people express the opinion that tourism can contribute a lot into our socio-economic development. But in reality, the progress of the sector is not satisfactory or even not mentionable at all. As a marketing apprentice, I notice the sheer lack of marketing applications in the tourism sector. Then I started reading and gathering information on the relevant issues. Fortunately, I became a part of some projects where tourism development was a significant concern.

In 2010, I got a great opportunity to gain theoretical as well as practical knowledge during the completion of my M.Sc. in European tourism management. I became more interested in working in the tourism marketing field of my motherland. I decided to pursue my PhD program on this topic. For this reason, I formally started my research under IBS, Rajshahi University three years back. Now simply the question arises—which factors made me interested to work on this field?

The first reason is many countries have been able to utilize their tourism resources to gain economic success. Through such gaining, the country image enhances and the international tourism community becomes interested toward the land. But it doesn't always require huge investment or mega factories to be successful.¹² Besides, the scope of net income in this sector is much greater than that most of the manufacturing industries. In personal level, by offering customized products, people can earn money and create employment opportunities. It also creates the scope of international networking which brings many indirect benefits for a nation.

Bangladesh is not much enriched with diverse tourism resources. But at least we own some distinguishing natural, historical, and cultural resources which can be developed to meet the demand of our domestic as well as international tourists. As uniqueness is the key to success in this sector, Bangladesh can be successful in this business. Because this land was unique as well as a center of attractions from the ancient

¹² S. M. Al-Husainy, "Some Thoughts on SMEs in Bangladesh." *An Occasional Paper*, September 2002.

period. The people from around the world visited this land and made it familiar to the international community. For this reason, I strongly believe that sincere and caring efforts to improve its existing resources can convert it into an attractive tourism destination. Here the question is—where to start for its improvement?

To find out the answer to this small question, huge research activities should be carried out. Unfortunately we do not realize the necessity of research. Even without having credible data and information, we dare to take major decisions. The tourism sector is not beyond this trend. Without having mentionable research outcomes, experiences, and even passions—the people are taking decisions here for tourism development. As a result, though money has been spent for many years, the desired success has not come. This reality encourages me to be introduced to the practical situation and contribute as little as possible. This thesis is the ultimate outcome of this venture. Last three years, I have studied relevant web documents, reports, articles, books, newspaper reports and columns. Relevant audio-video has also been reviewed to gain better insights.

Besides, my field level data and observation has presented a fraction of the entire scenario. This contribution is not mentionable at all. But I am trying to disseminate my gained knowledge through writing newspaper columns, journal articles, and book on tourism related issues. If these can keep contributing a little in the development of the tourism sector of Bangladesh, my efforts will be meaningful. In future, I would like to carry out more studies on this field. Because now I do believe that to change the fate of our next generations, tourism can do a lot. Just required steps should be taken to grasp the existing benefits. Now the question is which factors play a significant role in developing such belief?

Based on what, I do such claim is a significant question. Some facts can be shared in this regard. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 5.3 billion (BDT 421.4 billion), 2.2% of total GDP in 2016 and it forecast to rise by 6.2% in 2017, and to rise by 6.1% per annum, from 2017-2027, to USD 10.2 billion (BDT 806.6 billion), 2.1% of total GDP in 2027.¹³ The figure of international tourist arrival was 1,25,000 which generates USD 148.4 million. An average receipt per arrival was USD

¹³ WTTC, *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact — 2017 (Bangladesh)*. (London: World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017), 3.

1,187.2.14 The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was USD 10.6 billion (BDT 840.2 billion), 4.3% of GDP in 2016, and is forecast to rise by 7.2% in 2017, and to rise by 7.1% per annum to USD 22.6 billion (BDT 1,783.0 billion), 4.7% of GDP in 2027.¹⁵ But till now it is not a regional significant player like India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Maldives in terms of international tourism receipt.

Table I: Contribution of tourism sector in the economy of Bangladesh

BANGLADESH	2016 USDbn ¹	2016 % of total	2017 Growth ²	USDbn ¹	2027 % of total	Growth ³
Direct contribution to GDP	5.3	2.2	6.2	10.2	2.1	6.1
Total contribution to GDP	10.6	4.3	7.2	22.6	4.7	7.1
Direct contribution to employment ⁴	1,057	1.8	1.8	1,138	1.6	0.6
Total contribution to employment ⁴	2,187	3.8	2.7	2,695	3.8	1.8
Visitor exports	0.1	0.4	11.2	0.3	0.5	7.6
Domestic spending	8.6	3.5	6.1	16.2	3.4	6.0
Leisure spending	7.5	1.8	6.0	14.4	1.8	6.1
Business spending	1.2	0.3	6.9	2.2	0.3	5.4
Capital investment	0.9	1.2	13.9	2.6	1.8	9.3

¹2016 constant prices & exchange rates; ²2017 real growth adjusted for inflation (%); ³2017-2027 annualised real growth adjusted for inflation (%); ⁴000 jobs

Source: WTTC, *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact – 2017 (Bangladesh)* (London: World Travel & Tourism Council): 11.

Domestic travel spending generated 98.4% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2016 compared with 1.6% for visitor exports (e.g. foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts).¹⁶ Domestic travel spending is expected to grow by 6.1% in 2017 to BDT 716.7 billion, and rise by 6.0% per annum to BDT 1,283.4 billion in 2027. Whereas visitor exports are expected to grow by 11.2% in 2017 to BDT 12.3 billion, and rise by 7.6% per annum to BDT 25.6 billion in 2027. These statistics indicate that tourism has extreme potential in Bangladesh. But to get the actual benefits, proper marketing insights are required. An in-depth research on this issue may contribute for the future development of the sector in Bangladesh. It encourages me to carry out this study.

Bangladesh realized the significance of the tourism sector in the very beginning of its inception as an independent country. Establishing a Corporation within two years and a Ministry for tourism development within four years of independence indicate that

¹⁴ Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*. (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 94.

¹⁵ WTTC, *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact – 2017 (Bangladesh)*, 3.

¹⁶ Ibid, 6.

clearly. The statutory body, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), was assigned to develop and promote this industry with the collaboration of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT). But four decades have passed without mentionable achievements of these organizations are not so mentionable. Many nations started their tourism development journey at about the same time. Many of them already have reached far for their efficient management and effective marketing strategies. Now the question is—why Bangladesh is lagging far behind? Certainly, many reasons are liable for this but weaknesses in marketing activities are indicated by the concern stakeholders. Many of us think that the low price can be the winning factor for the tourism sector of Bangladesh. But the days have been changed. Now people do not search for low cost products only. Rather they consider other factors to choose a product. For this reason it is said that...

“A good image is a prerequisite for successful marketing. An attractive product at the right price will not guarantee a sale. Customers do not like to buy from companies with poor reputations.”¹⁷

For the mentionable advancement of technology, nowadays the product and service quality is about the same of the competitors. It has become really tough for the general consumers to distinguish the best one among the alternative products. In this situation, marketing is the tool which can help both the parties. Through strategic use of this powerful tool, most of the marketers are trying to make them as a distinctive one from the competitors. On the other hand, customers are getting useful information as well as support to make better decisions.¹⁸ Competitors of neighboring countries are already effectively using this powerful tool. To capture large market share of this industry, the supply side stakeholders of Bangladesh should not be reluctant on the issue.

The researchers and active stakeholders think that the current marketing practices are not ‘up to the mark’. Which factors hinder achieving the desired goals; what is the current trend of the tourist behavior; what is our competitive position in the international market etc. questions should be addressed as soon as possible. If marketing does function properly, how Bangladesh will be benefitted; should the tourism sector of Bangladesh be highly attentive toward marketing activities...these questions have influenced the researcher to carry out this study.

¹⁷ Moi Ali, *Marketing Effectively*. (London: A Dorling Kindersley Book, 2008), 11.

¹⁸ Kevin Lane Keller, *Strategic Brand Management*, 4th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2013), 42.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

During the rule of West Pakistan, there was a tourism department (later called tourism cell) which was responsible for developing, promoting, and regulating the tourism sector of Pakistan.¹⁹ Like other departments and corporations of the government, it would also work to save the utmost interest of the western part of the country. For this reason, till 1971, tourism was an ignored sector in eastern region (current Bangladesh). Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, the government of the newborn state realized the socio-economic importance of tourism.²⁰ They took some mentionable steps as well.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) was formed to explore, develop, and promote the tourism sector of Bangladesh. This organization has worked four decades as the National Tourism Organization (NTO) of Bangladesh. After that, to bring pace and diversity in promotion (actually–marketing) of this industry, Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) has been formed. In 2010, with the special mission of promoting the tourism sector of Bangladesh, this new NTO started working. Now BPC has been totally attentive to its commercial ventures. They are not responsible for taking care of the overall tourism sector of the country.

Tourism marketing activities of Bangladesh are poorly developed and less effective from the very beginning.²¹ Few noticeable steps have been taken in recent decades. Most of them were irregular and to some extent inconsistent. As a result, no organized scenario of Bangladesh (as an attractive tourism destination) has been presented to the domestic as well as international tourism community. There is a lack of management in this sector at national, regional, and local level.²² Even the active stakeholders are disappointed in many cases for the obsolete initiatives taken by the responsible authorities.

¹⁹ Mohammad Musa, "Marketing: A Tool to Develop Bangladesh's Tourism Sector," *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* 2, no. 1 (June 2013), 6-9.

²⁰ MoCAT (GoB), *Travel and Tourism Yearly Report* (Dhaka: Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, 2004), 3.

²¹ Md. Abdul Hamid, "Challenges of Branding a Tourism Destination: The Case of Bangladesh." In *Contemporary Issues in Business Research*, by Tanbir Ahmed Chowdhury, 41-60. (Dhaka: East West University, 2015).

²² Md. Lutfur Rahman et al., "An Overview of Present Status and Future Prospects of the Tourism Sector in Bangladesh." *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners* 3, no. December (2010), 65-75.

The absence of effective marketing programs is one of the major problems of the tourism industry in Bangladesh. There are various marketing constraints that also affect the attitude of the foreign tourists.²³ Relevant studies show that to face competition among the destination countries, effective promotional measures are essential for the development of the industry.²⁴ Lack of proper integration among the concerned bodies is noticed from the very beginning. No professional team or entity is assigned for achieving specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound goals of the industry.

On the other hand, outbound trends of Bangladeshi tourists have increased in a mentionable volume in recent days. In spite of the sheer weaknesses in the coordinated initiatives for the industry, a good number of private investments (especially in Sylhet, Chittagong, Cox'sbazar, and Gazipur) are noticed in the last few years. But in the absence of an integrated approach²⁵ by the concerned authorities and changing characteristics of the market—many of them (entrepreneurs) are already frustrated. Actually, the nature of relationships among the stakeholders is very complex in this sector. To keep it active, government bodies have to play a pro-active role; other partners might only seek their own benefits from the taken initiatives.

A good number of people from the government side are also assigned to the sector. The government maintains a Ministry as well as statutory organizations like BTB and BPC. A routine budget is also allocated each fiscal year. If a destination is presented negatively to its target market, it becomes really tough to convert that into a positive one. For these reasons, Bangladesh should take effective and timely steps to design realistic marketing programs and allocate required resources to gain desired success within a reasonable time. Problem of the tourism sector is not a new issue. It is existent from the very beginning of tourism development in Bangladesh.

Most probably, to meet the basic needs of a huge population, the governments were always busy to manage the food, cloth, shelter, education, and health related issues. Simply, tourism has been treated as a less prioritized sector. There is also a gap in its understanding—tourism might be 'luxurious' to the customers (tourists), not to the sellers

²³ Nazia Nabi and Shituma Zaman, "The Sources and Availability of Information for Tourists: A Study on Tourism Sector of Bangladesh," 154-166.

²⁴ Tarafder Md. Mehedi Al-Masud, "Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: What, Why and How," *Asian Business Review* 5, no. 1 (2015), 13-19.

²⁵ Note: Balanced contribution of the marketing mix elements.

(destinations). Required investment in the tourism industry gives more return than other traditional manufacturing industries. For example—the net return of the readymade garment sector is much lower than the tourism. Because earning USD 100 from both sectors has great differences regarding net income.

Diverse research outcomes, official reports, newspaper features, statements of the concerned authorities indicate that ‘tourism marketing’ is a significant factor for the tourism sector of Bangladesh.²⁶ The tasks of marketing are not being done properly – it is also frequently mentioned. Most of them admit the issue but no meaningful steps have been taken to overcome the challenges. This situation creates the scope of contribution through conducting a research. An intensive research can depict the real scenario which could be helpful for the policymakers to design future marketing strategies. Through conducting the study, the researcher has attempted to do so.

Developing a complete marketing design is essential for the tourism industry of Bangladesh. Because, only having the resources is not enough today. Rather converting those supplies into attractive tourism products is very important. Marketing can contribute in this case very effectively. To generate satisfied tourists, all out marketing efforts—from all active stakeholders—have to invest. If it simply runs like other government offices, desired results might not come out. Because, by nature, it demands special care to grow and sustain in the long run. From the outcomes of the study at least the active stakeholders will be aware of the most relevant issues.

In the case of business enterprises, organized teams are assigned to attain specific marketing goals. They work intensely throughout the year to be successful. For a tourism destination, it should also be like that. The successful nations in the tourism business have done it very carefully. But in Bangladesh perspective, generally government employees of different academic backgrounds are assigned to perform this dynamic job. Most of them do not have any kind of professional training, expertise in the sector, and even required passion for the industry. For these practical reasons, they just carry out routine jobs daily.

²⁶ Syed Rashidul Hasan, "Marketing Publicity and Sales Promotion for Tourism Development in Bangladesh." *Social Science Review* 19, no. 2 (2005), 15-16.

Most probably for this reason, no mentionable success has been achieved yet. Singapore, Malaysia, Nepal and some other countries started their journey of tourism development about in the same time of as Bangladesh. They have achieved remarkable success but Bangladesh is lagging behind till now. It is really a challenging task to bring interested groups under an umbrella. Moreover, lack of continuous, relevant, and integrated marketing initiatives is clearly perceived. For this reason, though the call of investment in the tourism sector under Public Private Partnership (PPP) is open from the government side, no mentionable response is noticed from the investors.

The economy of Bangladesh is being deprived for not ensuring the proper utilization of its tourism resources. It has a huge scope and ability to contribute for the national economy. Besides, tourism related business (tour operators, hotel-motel-resort, restaurant, transport) owners and staff could get better returns from their existing and potential investments. Moreover, the local community could increase benefits through establishing micro, small, and medium tourism related enterprises in the different tourism spots. Overall, the community people can grasp diverse benefits from such development. So, lack of effective marketing strategies is depriving all of its stakeholders directly or indirectly.

The tourists, researchers, and concerned business people admit the problems very often. But most probably the responsible bodies can not workout the actual problems. As per their statements, it seems tourism is keeping a significant role in the national income as well as employment creation. Most probably for this reason, due attention is not being given at the decision-making level. From the above discussion, it is clear that diverse problems relating to the tourism development, its management, and marketing practices are seriously prevalent in Bangladesh. All of them can not be addressed in a single research. The researcher was interested to concentrate basically on closely related issues of tourism marketing through conducting this study.

Now considering only a single nation does not work properly. Especially for the tourism sector, inter connectivity must be taken into care of. For this reason, the management guru Peter Drucker has identified some factors which help us to understand the reality. He opines that...

“The world economy is increasingly becoming global. Business—and increasingly many other institutions as well—can no longer define their scope in terms of national economies and national boundaries. They have to define their scope in terms of industries and services world wide.”²⁷

Focusing only on national issues can not give a solution of the problem. On the other hand, identifying the research problem is valuable, but it is also difficult to address them. Marketing problems can be divided into three categories: ambiguous problems, somewhat defined problems, and clearly defined problems.²⁸ From that point of view, the problem of this research is somewhat defined. The researcher was interested to make the issue more clear and addressable through conducting this study.

²⁷ Peter F Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*. (New York: Harper Business, 1999), 63

²⁸ Marko Sarstedt and Erik Mooi, *A Concise Guide to Market Research*. 2nd ed. (Berlin: Springer, 2014), 12-13.

1.3 Research Questions

By considering the above mentioned circumstances, some questions simply arise. Those are: What are the most influential marketing issues of the tourism sector; what marketing strategies are used by the practitioners; what is the competitive position of Bangladesh in the global, regional and domestic market; what are the major challenges to achieve the desired goals? Basically, these questions have insisted the researcher to conduct the study.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main purpose of the study was two folded: to sketch the current scenario of tourism marketing issues, relevant strategies, and challenges faced by the tourism sector of Bangladesh; and to explore how marketing can be used to gain desired success in future. The research objectives were as follows:

1.4.1 General objective

The overall objective of the study was to identify, evaluate and present an analysis of the factors that influence tourism marketing activities in Bangladesh. Simultaneously, the study attempted to propose strategic alternative approaches for tourism marketing to gain maximum benefits from the sector.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

Through breakdown of the research questions and general objective, the following research objectives were set:

- i. To portray the current scenario of tourism marketing issues in Bangladesh;
- ii. To review the characteristics of tourist behavior in Bangladesh;
- iii. To evaluate the competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination; and
- iv. To figure out the challenges of marketing tourism of Bangladesh.

1.5 Justification and Expected Contribution of the Study

All of us have the perception that ‘tourism of Bangladesh’ has potential. But why and how it is potential; to grasp benefits from this potentiality—what can be done, who is supposed to do those tasks? These issues should be addressed in a credible way. To know the answer to these pertinent questions, rigorous studies are required. This study attempted to address the closely related issues mentioned in the earlier section (research objectives).

Through conducting the study, an overall scenario of tourism marketing in Bangladesh has been portrayed. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats have been revealed in the studied area as specific as possible. With the enhancement of modern transportation systems and communication technology, the response patterns of the tourists are changing rapidly. This study has tried to find out those issues which might be helpful to the tourism related businessmen to understand the trend and expectations of the tourists.

From the research outcomes, the policymakers might gain better insights; the current and future investors, mass media, and (distribution) channel members would like to get useful information to (re)design their future strategies. Explored changing attitude and response patterns of the tourists, competitive scenario in the target market, and challenging factors would be helpful to other active stakeholders to make realistic decisions.

There are mentionable weaknesses in developing tourism products and its promotion to the target groups (with special attention to the potential market). Moreover, it is managed by some officials who have no professional training as well as experience as much as required. So, building strong relationships with the partners have also been affected negatively. The policy suggestions of this research might be helpful to develop short, mid, and long-term planning of this sector.

Finally, in the academic arena—relevant and organized thoughts will be produced. The major outcomes will be communicated as thesis, book, articles, and newspaper features which will help the academic scholars (researchers, learners).

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

In the first chapter the introductory issues of the research have been presented. Background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives (general and specific), justification of the study, expected contribution, and structure of the thesis have been presented.

In the second chapter, a thorough and extensive review of the relevant literature has been carried out. Tourism in ancient Bengal, recent trends of tourism development, the dilemma of Bangladesh for tourism development, sellers versus buyers perspective, the role of marketing in service oriented business, tourism perspective of Bangladesh, tourism resources or potential sites, the role of Bangladesh tourism board, tourist behavior and satisfaction, the archaeological tourism context of Bangladesh, the nature of the tourism challenges, target market, promotion of the destination, tourism related Laws, competitive position of Bangladesh as a tourism destination, used strategies for tourism development, challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh, achieving SDGs in Bangladesh through tourism development and other relevant issues have been presented. The research gap has also been presented with logical arguments in this chapter.

In chapter three, the conceptual framework and research methodology have been presented. The major sections of this chapter are: explanation of the key terms (tourism and tourist, classification of the tourist, marketing, tourism marketing, strategy, consumer behavior, service and service marketing, motivations behind travel and tourism), conceptual framework, research methodology, marketing research, sampling frame, sources of data, data preparation and analysis, reliability and validity, scope and limitations have been presented.

In chapter four, tourism marketing issues (elements of tourism marketing mix) of Bangladesh have been presented. Here, the elements in Bangladesh perspective have been discussed in detail with its distinguishing features.

Chapter five has presented the tourist behavior in Bangladesh. For many practical reasons, the tourist behavior reality in Bangladesh is different that has been discussed in detail. Decision processes, influencing factors, and characteristics of tourist behavior in Bangladesh have been presented with practical examples.

In chapter six, the competitiveness of the tourism sector has been portrayed. The position of Bangladesh in the different competitive rankings and indexes has been presented. The competitive strengths, weaknesses, and advantages have been described in this chapter.

In chapter seven, the challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh have been discussed in detail. The current scenario of the challenges, responsible bodies for addressing these challenges and other related factors has been discussed.

In chapter eight, the policy suggestions and conclusions have been presented. To get better outcomes in tourism marketing efforts what the policy makers can do and how to do those have been presented in this chapter. Based on the major findings of the research these suggestions have been made.

Finally, the detailed references, appendices, and other supporting documents have been inserted in the last part of the thesis.

Chapter 02

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is designed to review the relevant literature on the studied issues. International and domestic books, articles, and reports have been reviewed to get better insights. Though the size of the country is small, Bangladesh is enriched with diverse tourism resources. Lack of actual perception about its potential contribution causes diverse backwardness. The tourism sector of Bangladesh has not gained mentionable success in the new trend of tourism business. But from the ancient period, Bangladesh was the center of attractions for the travelers and traders.

Many countries are using tourism as a significant source for socio-economic development. For many challenges, Bangladesh is not being able to grasp the benefits from the sector. The dilemma is also noticed in case of discussion and taken steps. The responsible bodies for performing different tasks are not always clear. No one takes the responsibility for its poor performances. By nature the travel and tourism business demands extra care. But for the lack of authentic guardians, the potentials are being abused or unused. To achieve the sustainable development goals, the tourism sector can help the nation in a significant volume. But till now no mentionable steps have been taken to grasp mentionable benefits from the sector.

Tourism marketing can play a significant role in achieving the desired goals. But before that the challenges should be identified, issues should be taken care of, and strategies should be formulated. Based on the review, the issues have been presented in this chapter. The research gap has also been shown at the end of the discussion.

2.0 Introduction

People of Bangladesh are hospitable in nature from the very beginning. But the business of hospitality and tourism has not started long time ago. Even its formal studies have started in Bangladesh in last decade. Very few people have obtained formal education on tourism related issues. The volume of research on this field is not so large yet. Most of the contributors of tourism literature here are from diverse academic background. All of them have explained tourism sector from their own point of view. As a result, a mentionable difference among the publications is noticed. A good number of journal articles in Bangladeshi journals on the travel, hospitality, and tourism industries are found on Bangladesh perspective. But most of them are general description oriented and intended to provide useful information (like guide) to its readers.

Specific and to the point research articles on hospitality and tourism sector of Bangladesh are rare. Few publications on tourism of Bangladesh in the recognized international tourism journals are found. Reports of some international organizations give an overall idea about the tourism sector of Bangladesh.¹ Tourism marketing is comparatively a remote area for in-depth study in Bangladesh. The researcher has tried to collect, organize, and present the available literature relevant to this topic here in brief. The following sections are developed based on the published materials, opinion of the in-depth interviewers, and observation of the researcher.

2.1 Tourism in Ancient Bengal

Bangladesh has been emerged as an independent state in 1971. But the history of Bengal is much older than many other localities of the world. It was enriched in diverse natural resources, weather was favorable to live, and people were cordial in nature from the very beginning of the history.² For this reason, different rulers and Emperors were keenly interested to own Bengal as their province.

Even they attempted to conquer this land from very far places. Its fine rice, distinctive clothes, distinguished spices and many other goods made this region as the key attraction of the international travelers. They were interested to be introduced with the life, culture, and resources of this region. After returning from this land, their successors

¹ Note: The name of United Nations World Tourism Organization, World Economic Forum, and World Travel & Tourism Council are especially mentionable.

² Md. Anisur Rahman, *Development of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: Issues and Strategies*. PhD Thesis, (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 2015).

have been more interested to be here by listening to them about the enriched resources and lifestyles of this region. So the early history of Bengal was mostly related to the trade and commerce. Even after entering into this land as businessmen, some groups (e.g. fence, British) became ruler of Bengal afterwards.

Long days ago Hiuen Tsang said, “A sleeping beauty emerging from mists and water.” After many years, till now the land is not much explored beyond the large cities. The remote areas of the country like hill track districts of Bangladesh holds astonishing beauty for the visitors.³ Some descriptions of the visit of Fa-Hien (399–414)⁴, Hiuen Tsang (630–644)⁵, and Ibn Battuta (1334–1342) are found in the different books. But in between of their travel and the history of modern era are not properly found. What does it indicate? The world travelers did not come in Bengal? Either they have ignored this area or their visits are not properly recorded. Both are harmful for the tourism sector of any nation. For example—the tourism authority of Montenegro always try to focus that the international celebrities like Madonna comes for concert there regularly.

Through mentioning this information, actually they would like to establish that as a destination how credible they are. They are capable enough to ensure security as well as wants of world top celebrities. Such type of promotions insists many general tourists to visit the spot. If Bangladesh could keep and promote such information to the target communities, it would be easy for convincing them. But no organized plan is taken to explore those and use it to achieve financial as well as other benefits.

The mostly uttered statement is: Bangladesh is very potential for tourism development. According to the experts, for many practical reasons, it has not explored yet in the level of expectation. The responsible authorities also would like to pronounce like others that the land is ‘potential’ but results are not satisfactory, no one is taking this reality into consideration.

³ Nushrat Nahida Afroze and Md. Hasanuzzaman, "Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Bangladesh Banderban District case." *Global Journal of Management and Business Research* 12, no. 23 (2012), 22-30.

⁴ Jogindranath Samaddar, *Choinik-Paribrazok Fa-Hian*. 2nd ed. (Dhaka: Dibyaparakash, 2016), 15.

⁵ Premomoy Dasgupta, *Hiuen Tsanger Dekha Varot*. (Dhaka: Dibyaparakash, 2016), 6.

2.2 Trends of Tourism Development

Trend is a significant factor in the tourism sector. In recent days, educated and wealthy people of Bangladesh are very positive toward traveling. They are much enthusiastic to go for a visit, in any form and anywhere, out of their usual environment. Even many of them keep separate time and budget for annual travel and tourism in the desired places of home and abroad. Earlier people would wait for occasions to go outside but now create occasions for this purpose. India, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand is trying to get maximum benefit from this trend. Most probably the policymakers of Bangladesh are not aware enough to capture maximum benefits from this tendency. Otherwise, the initiatives to bring the international tourists and to keep more domestic tourists inside the tourist spots would be noticeable.

In the modern era, especially in the tourism sector, the supply side can highly influence the demand of a product.⁶ Once upon a time, the ‘natural resources’ would be kept at the top of product development and its promotion. But now many products are developed in such an attractive way that the potential buyers become interested for ‘test buying’ from that point of view, man-made tourism attractions are getting mentionable success.⁷ As the nature of visiting long distances is being reduced—parks, picnic spots, conference centers, exhibition points, festivals, tournaments—are drawing the attention of mass people. If they get the chance of amusement near at hand, especially the city people would like to grasp the opportunity. As a riverine country, water based product development opportunities are simply ignored which can draw attention of huge number of city dwellers.⁸

Roughly 15 countries produce 80 percent of the outbound tourists. So, targeting those countries, with special focus on eco-tourism, can bring better results.⁹ Actually tourism of Bangladesh is in a stagnant situation for a long time. But to move forward with the competition the strategy of ‘keep on rolling’ is very important. Last many years, no mentionable steps have been taken for its advancement, though the policymakers always

⁶ Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.

⁷ Caroline Ashley and Dilys Roe, "Making Tourism Work for the Poor: Strategies and Challenges in Southern Africa." *Development Southern Africa* 19, no. 1 (2002), 61-82.

⁸ Syed Nesar Ahmad Romy, "Promoting Riverbank Tourism in Bangladesh." *The New Nation*. (Dhaka: New Nation), 9.

⁹ Mubina Khondkar and Adiba Anis, "Bangladesh as an Ecotourism Destination." *D. U. Journal of Marketing* 17, no. June 2014 (2016), 77-90.

utter the potentialities of this sector in their statements. On the other hand, more than 100 million eco-tourists are traveling around the year all over the world. They would like to experience nature, culture, heritage of the visited place.¹⁰ It is assumed that the number increases 10 percent each year. To catch up this opportunity, Bangladesh needs to develop the products according to the expectation of the world eco-tourists. Otherwise, other countries will take the opportunity.

Earlier, in many countries, the contribution of the travel and tourism sector was not so visible. For this reason, it was not the part of main planning. But gradually the policymakers have noticed that it can contribute a lot by investing a few. Even just some additional attention can contribute to net income in a mentionable volume. So, they have given attention and are now enjoying its benefits. For example—when many people think of Dubai, they think of an economy driven by oil. Yet today 30 percent of Dubai's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from travel and tourism.¹¹

Though there are thousands of alternative spots, competition is increasing in some places. Most probably the image, cost, convenience of traveling and promotional efforts of the DMOs influence it.¹² In this situation, if the concerned authorities of Bangladesh do not take up to date strategies, being defeated in the competition is a must. Because the competitors are always framing creative strategies to compete with their existing and potential competitors. Bangladesh might consider itself that we are not trying to defeat anybody; just we want to draw the attention of the world community to visit our beautiful country. But the competitors are always counting us and they are trying to be the winner. As a result, as Bangladesh is a player in the tourism industry, especially in the South Asia, it must consider the others' initiatives and play its own role accordingly.

Many factors keep significant roles to enhance the pace of traveling. As the income of Bangladeshi people is increasing, the trend of visiting in different places is also increasing. A mentionable portion of them prefer to visit the neighboring countries as the

¹⁰ Frederico Neto, "A New Approach to Sustainable Tourism Development: Moving beyond Environmental Protection." *Natural Resource Forum* 27 (2003), 212-222.

¹¹ Philip Kotler, John T. Bowen, and James C. Makens, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th ed. (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2014), 6.

¹² Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 73.

cost patterns do not differ much.¹³ Now the main challenge is to reduce the number of outgoing tourists. Because it is easier to keep them inside than attracting the foreign tourists. Some careful steps can be helpful to achieve this goal. Making the transportation systems more convenient, adding artificial amusement items, offering local foods and music can encourage them to spend more time within their homeland. If they have negative attitudes, many steps will not bring better results.

2.3 Travel & Tourism Economy of Bangladesh

The travel and tourism economy of Bangladesh is not so vast like the other neighboring countries. An overall scenario of economy, employment, and other contributions are presented below:

Table 2.1: Key indicators of the economy of Bangladesh

Years	2005	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013
GDP (US\$ billions)	60.8	64.9	73.7	94.6	113.9	---
GDP (PPP, US\$) per capita (estimates)	2011	2130	1311	1487.3	1909.5	3167
Real GDP Growth (percent)	6.2	6.4	6.3	5.6	6.5	6.1

Note: The years vary because of the dissimilarity of published economic data. Latest available data have been used to prepare the index. Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

The table shows that there are ups and downs in the economy of Bangladesh. The size of the GDP is gradually expanding; the purchasing power of the people is far better now than other underdeveloped and even developing countries. The real GDP growth rate is really mentionable as it is always above 6% for the last 10 years. The economy of Bangladesh is getting solid foundation gradually which is the pre-condition for the expansion of travel & tourism economy of any country.

Table 2.2: Travel & tourism economy of Bangladesh (estimates)

Years	2006	2007	2008	2010	2012
GDP (US million)	2350	2601	2964	3786	5775
Percentage of total GDP	3.7%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	4.7%
Employment(1000 jobs)	2181	2024	2065	2373	2992
Percentage of total employment	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	4.1%

Note: From the 2015 edition, data related to the tourism economy are not provided in the report. Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

¹³ Raffaella Nicoletta and Rocco Servidio, "Tourists' Opinions and Their Selection of Tourism Destination Images: An Affected and Motivational Evaluation." *Tourism management Perspectives* 4 (2012), 19-27.

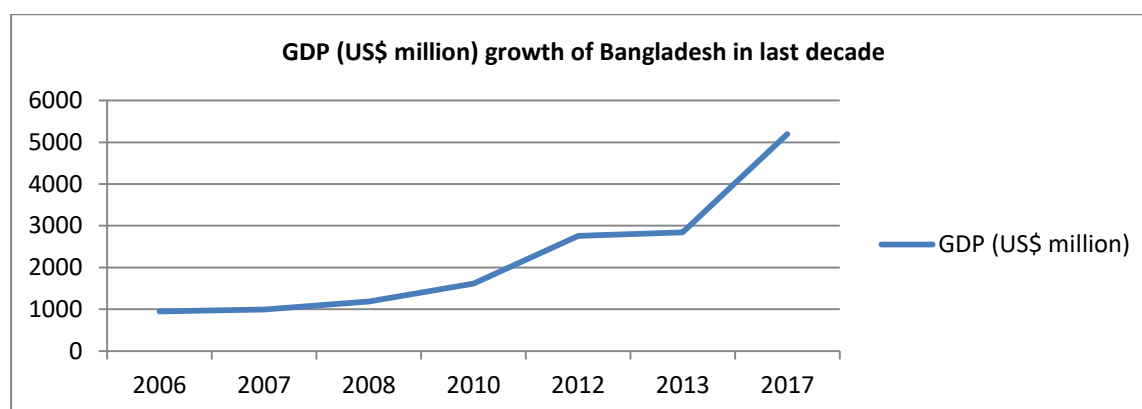
The table shows that the size of the travel & tourism economy of Bangladesh is expanding gradually. Contribution of travel & tourism in GDP and employment both are following the same trend. Within six years (2006-2012) the GDP has been more than double. The rate of contribution has also increased from 3.7% (2006) to 4.7% in 2012. The rate of employment has also increased from 3.0% to 4.1% in this tenure. In the last two editions of the reports this information was not provided. Rather, they were giving emphasis on presenting the tourism economy.

Table 2.3: Travel & tourism industry (estimates)

Years	2006	2007	2008	2010	2012	2013	2017
GDP (US\$ million)	945	998	1185	1613	2756.2	2845.8	5193
Percent of total GDP	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	2.3%	2.1%	2.4%
Employment (1000 jobs)	851	752	801	984	1377	1328.5	1138.7
Percent of total employment	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.9%	1.8%	2.0%

Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

Figure 2.1: GDP growth trend of Bangladesh



Size of the travel & tourism industry of Bangladesh is expanding regularly. In the last 10 years, it is six times more. In 2006, the travel & tourism GDP was US\$ 945 million whereas in 2017 it was US\$ 5193 million. On the other hand, employment in the sector has not increased in the same level. In both cases, the rate of contribution has grown up. For GDP, it has been 2.4% which started at 1.5%. Earlier travel & tourism employment was 1.2% (8,51,000 jobs) which was not 2.0% (1,13,87,000 jobs). Employment opportunities have not been created as per the growth of the industry.

Figure 2.2: Employment trend of tourism sector in Bangladesh



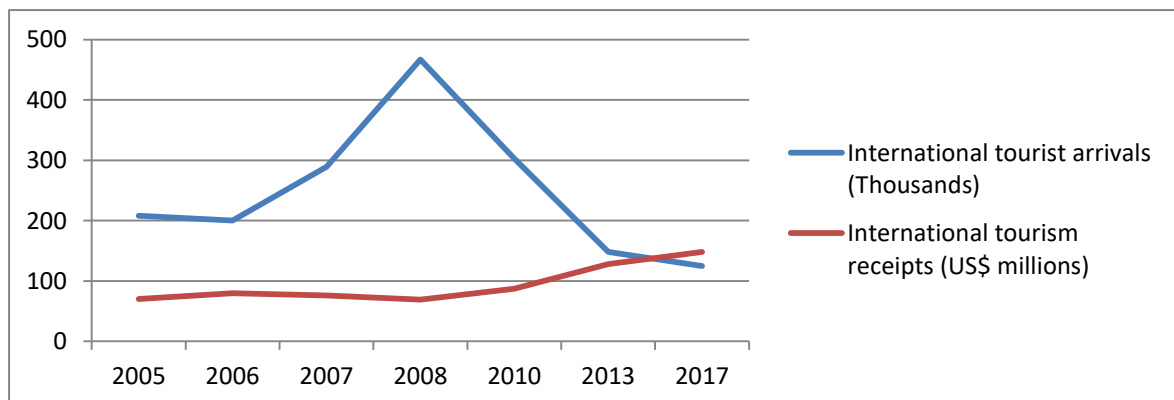
Table 2.4: International tourist arrivals and tourism receipts

Years	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2013	2017
International tourist arrivals (Thousands)	208	200	289	467	303	148	125
International tourism receipts (US\$ millions)	70	80	76	69	87.1	128	148.4
Average receipts per arrival (US\$)	---	---	---	---	---	864.9	1187.2

Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

High fluctuation is noticed in the number of international tourist arrivals in the different editions of the TTCI. It was 208 thousands in 2005. With some ups and downs in the year 2008, it goes to the peak (467 thousands). After that it started declining the number of arrivals. In this phase, Bangladesh was host of World Cup Cricket (2011). It has celebrated the tourism year (2016). But the number of arrivals decreased (only 125 thousands in 2017)!¹⁴

Figure 2.3: International tourist arrival and receipt from tourism



¹⁴ Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report*. (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 94-95.

The receipts have the similar fluctuation in the earlier editions of the report. After 2010 the trend is upward. In 2008, it was in the lowest position with US\$ 69 million. In the latest report, it was US\$ 148.4 million. Last two editions of the TTCI have added additional useful information (average receipts). In 2015, the volume was US\$ 864.9 and in the latest edition (2017) it was US\$ 1182.2 which indicates that the per tourist expenditure is increasing in a mentionable volume.¹⁵ It is also much better than some other South Asian countries.

¹⁵ WEF, *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015: Growth through Shocks*. (Geneva : The World Economic Forum, 2015), 88-89.

2.4 Tourism Development Dilemma in Bangladesh

All people are thinking that tourism is a very potential sector; responsible bodies do claim that they are trying their best to develop the tourism related industries but most of the stakeholders are not satisfied with the pace of the progress. Of course, many factors play a role behind such a dilemma. From the secondary sources the researcher has tried to identify those. In this section, those have been presented in brief:

2.4.1 Huge employment opportunities but few skilled personnel: It is said that every 12 tourists create a new job. The industry accounts for 11 percent of global employment.¹⁶ As unemployment is a huge problem in the economy of Bangladesh, through taking proper steps in tourism development a good number of employment opportunities can be created.¹⁷ To do so, theoretical as well as practical knowledge and training programs are required for the potential employees.

But till now, very few organizations of Bangladesh are doing this task on a limited scale. On the other hand, the unemployed people are also less interested to be skilled on the relevant field.¹⁸ On one side, lack of employment opportunities; on the other side, few people are interested in building career in this sector. Pragmatic research is required to identify the real causes and realistic steps should be taken to address the issue.

2.4.2 High demand but no nightlife: There is a general perception that without having nightlife facilities, bars and others, it is tough to grow the tourism sector of a country. From this view point, the project of 'special tourist area' (known as exclusive tourist zone) was initiated; though the progress is not mentionable yet.¹⁹ On the other hand, a strong opinion exists that we can not offer nightlife like Thailand for the international tourists. So, which side should we accept and move forward, it is a great dilemma. In this case, diverse forms of tourism are being developed all over the world.

The most important thing is to create huge scopes so that the tourists do not feel bored or get enough alternative scopes of amusement. This should always not necessarily

¹⁶ World Travel & Tourism Council, *Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact—2018 (Bangladesh)*. (London: World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018).

¹⁷ Biswas Shaheen Ahmmad, *Economic and Employment Opportunities of Tourism in Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation*. MPhil Thesis, (Rajshahi: Institute of Bangladesh Studies (RU), 2008), page 8.

¹⁸ Md. Mizanur Rahman and Md. Abdul Hamid, "Job Satisfaction and Voluntary Employee Turnover in the Tourism Industry of Bangladesh." In *Contemporary Issues in Business Research*, by Tanbir Ahmed Chowdhury, 68-84. (Dhaka: East West University, 2016), page 68-84.

¹⁹ Note: Tourism Reserved Area and Special Tourist Area Act, 2010.

be relating to the sex products or like this. Even as a significant Muslim country, Bangladesh has a strong network with other Muslim countries. As a member of OIC countries, Bangladesh has a special advantage also. In this case, offering 'halal tourism' can be a good option. Besides, Bangladesh is much more ready to offer 'eco-tourism' or 'authentic tourism' products to the world community. These can be good alternative options to address the nightlife amusements.

2.4.3 Small in size but distinctive tourist attractions: In tourism, many things can be used in favor of its development. Bangladesh is a small country in geographic context. But the example of Bahrain teaches us that such characteristics can be used as a positive side for promotion. Their slogan is—"Bahrain: Small is beautiful."²⁰ On the other hand, Algeria used their backwardness as a marketing tool during Arab spring. When most of the countries of that region were vulnerable in political unrest situation, Algerian authority declared: Due to the lack of tourist facilities and also due to low-quality service at hotels in Algeria, this country remains a niche market, but has the advantage of being untouched and original for visitors.²¹

Though we have no iconic attractions like Tajmahal, Himalaya, or Twin tower; Bangladesh has the opportunity to distinguish itself to the target market. Because many modern tourists do not always expect only the 'state of the art' services in tourism sectors. Rather many of them search for real or authentic experiences for what Bangladesh can be perfect at least in some aspects like rural tourism. Lifestyles of different ethnic groups can also be a core product to attract the international tourists from industrialist nations.²²

2.4.4 Assumed as prospective but less investment is made: Many sectors have done really well in Bangladesh in the last few decades for the active participation of the private sector. Telecommunication, Education, health, FMCGs are the best examples of such success. But in the case of tourism, till now the private investors are not taking it seriously. Some expensive resorts and hotels have been established in the different areas of the country but tourism is not getting pace from those initiatives. Most probably, all are waiting for the government initiatives to improve basic infrastructure at first. But till now,

²⁰ Eli Avraham and Eran Ketter, *Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 98.

²¹ Eli Avraham, "Spinning Liabilities into Assets in Place Marketing: Towards a New Typology." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 10, no. 3 (2014), 174-185.

²² Faridul Islam and Jack Carlsen, "Tourism in Rural Bangladesh: Unlocking Opportunities for Poverty Alleviation." *Tourism Recreation Research* 37, no. 1 (2012), 37-45.

it is less of a priority to the concerned authorities. Because in the underdeveloped and developing countries, they have to deal with so many human issues like food, education, health and many other things to meet the basic needs of the huge population.

To enhance international tourism market share—investment in tourism infrastructure development is highly required. The countries which (e.g. India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives) are interested to gain benefits from the sector; they are doing huge investments in this purpose.²³ They are also sincerely trying to draw the attention of the international investors. Because it helps to promote their destinations to the international community. The private sector (as well as international) investors are till now not showing interest toward the tourism industry. Where they have taken the steps, that sector has grown in a mentionable size. Government should work out the reasons and create favorable environment for the investors' contribution.

2.4.5 Low cost but high price: The price of some tourism services are perceived as very high in Bangladesh. For example, the room rent of most of the resorts is higher than the perception of the domestic tourists. Many hotels charge really high price for this purpose. Most probably they compare with the international price level. But in Bangladesh, the tax is not so high, laborers are paid a lower amount as salary, and other maintenance costs are not so high. But they are charging too much, to some extent to the tourists. Besides, the price of the food items is high in many resorts and hotels. It increases total traveling costs. As a result, the domestic tourists think that they can easily travel India, Nepal, even Malaysia (just adding the airfares) with such a budget!

2.4.6 Mega events with fewer benefits: So called international tourism fairs are arranged frequently in Bangladesh. The responsible persons seem happy that they are doing a great job to develop the tourism sector of Bangladesh! But does it really have any positive impact on the tourism sector of Bangladesh? Most probably not, rather it is harmful for this sector. Because in such events, many international tour operators and the agencies of different nations get opportunities for the potential tourists of Bangladesh.

Even they offer discounts for special occasions. It only keeps a role in the outbound tourism of Bangladesh. As most of the visitors are Bangladeshi, foreign agencies get the chance of promoting their tourism to this market. What is the

²³ Clark Hu, "Diverse Developments in Travel and Tourism Marketing: A Thematic Approach." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 8, no. 7 (1996), 33-43.

achievement of Bangladesh for such events—it is not clear. If the Bangladeshi operators could take part in more international tourism fairs in other countries, it would be beneficial for Bangladesh.

2.4.7 Most required but absence of strong marketing department: Till now, tourism marketing is comparatively an untouched area in Bangladesh by the concerned policymakers. Most of them would like to talk about the ‘overall issues’ of tourism development. Setting priority goals for the individual destination, according to its necessity, are not focused yet. Among the three generic strategies, focus is the most important as well as effective for the weak competitors.²⁴

Considering the necessity of individual segments is till now far away. Even the concerned authorities have no clear idea that for whom they are offering the product or who the potential market is, what they expect during the tour and so many basic things. As a result, they take steps that they think are appropriate. But the world is very small now. The tourists have thousands of options to choose. In that case, if we do not respect their taste and preference, why will they choose Bangladesh as their next destination?

To be successful in business in this era of stiff competition, an organization must have an effective marketing department. In spite of having many other business qualities and resources, the business might fail if the marketing does not work properly. Because today marketing isn't simply a business function; it's a philosophy, a way of thinking, and a way of structuring your business and your mind.²⁵

²⁴ Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Les Hewitt, *The Power of Focus*. (London: Vermilion, 2013), 87.

²⁵ Philip Kotler, John T. Bowen, and James C. Makens, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th Edition. (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2014), 6.

2.5 Tourism as a Business Sector in Bangladesh

Like many other service sectors tourism could be an attractive business sector, it is not completely perceived by the business community. In the industrialist nations, it has expanded like fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) products. But most probably for two reasons it has not been done. Those are: average income of mass people is lower which is not favorable for tourism expansion.

On the other hand, the tendency of traveling is not much developed in our country. Till now people do not feel to go anywhere except having any task or assigned duty. Both the situation is changing gradually. For this reason, in the major cities some tourism business organizations are seen which are doing well in the tourism business. Relevant issues are discussed in the following sections:

2.5.1 Travel and tourism business: Travel industry is an inseparable part of the tourism sector. For this reason, in many countries both the industries are considered as the integral part. When they take any decision regarding tourism, they re-design or try to comply with the existing transportation services. For the complexity of traveling inside the country, many people of Bangladesh feel comfortable to travel Singapore rather than visiting Cox's Bazar!

All over the world, alternative (air, road, water) modes of transportation are highly integrated.²⁶ So that the traveling experience of the tourists becomes less hectic and comfortable. Gradually the situation is being better in our country but the rate of road accidents is till now a matter of concern to the travelers.²⁷ Bangladesh has good density of road communications. Now the thing should be done—integrate the routes by keeping the tourist in consideration.

2.5.2 Sellers' versus buyers' perspective: Value is the core thing of any business operation today. The customers have huge alternative sources of information. For a slight dissatisfaction, they can move to the next options.²⁸ So once the customer is satisfied, no

²⁶ Robert Caruana, "Discourse and Power in Tourism Communications." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 81-93. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 83.

²⁷ Feroz Ahmed, Md. Shah Azam, and Tarun Kanti Bose, "Factors Affecting the Selection of Tour Destination in Bangladesh: An Empirical Analysis." *International Journal of Business and Management* 5, no. 3 (2010), 52-61.

²⁸ Akin Aksu, Ebru Tarcan Icigen, and Ruya Ehtiyar, "A Comparison of Tourist Expectations and Satisfaction: A case Study from Antalya Region of Turkey." *TURIZAM* 14, no. 2 (2010), 66-77.

way to be happy that she or he will buy the same product next time. Especially the nature of tourism products is such that they do not visit the same place again and again. In that case, having alternative offers is very important. Continuous improvement and making the tourists happy in all transactions is highly required.²⁹ Otherwise, they will not become loyal (find alternative spots of different countries) and the nightmare of the marketing people will increase.

Tourists are the 'life' of any tourism destination. Having a huge amount of investments to build star hotels, resorts, and restaurants are not enough at all. Convincing the potential tourists that there is unique something here which can make them satisfied is the core task.³⁰ If once they visit the place, such wonderful experiences should be given that they will become loyal to the spot. Besides, they will work as the non-paid agent of the spot. Their viral or word of mouth marketing will convince potential tourists than million taka advertisements in the different promotional media.

2.5.3 Marketing tasks in service oriented business organizations: There is a misconception that 'marketing' is the task of the marketing department only in the organization. It means the other people can be reluctant on the issue. Actually the all sections and departments must understand what his/her role can support the marketing promises.³¹ Even the firms of backward and forward linkages have to understand it with equal importance. Because the customers evaluate the entire services 'as a whole.' They do not like to think about who is supposed to do which part of the entire tasks or who is actually liable for the wrongdoings. If they have negative experiences, just they will skip it during next consideration. For this reason 'holistic marketing' approach is highly applicable to be successful in the business for a long time.

Customer insights are a very important factor in tourism and hospitality business. For its intangible nature the tourists can not test before finalizing the purchase decision. Much awaited and expensive tour might be less interesting or painful if it seems that the decision was wrong. For this reason, the tourists try their best to gain insights about the tentative product and its associated services. In that case, helping them to visualize the

²⁹ Natalie J. Allen and John P. Meyer, "The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization." *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 63, no. 1 (1990), 1-18.

³⁰ Scott A. Cohen, Girish Prayag, and Miguel Moital, "Consumer Behavior in Tourism: Concepts, Influences and Opportunities." *Current Issues in Tourism* 17, no. 10 (2014), 872-909.

³¹ Note: The concept of 'Holistic marketing approach' is much applicable here.

potential tour is a great challenge to the marketers.³²By providing audio-visual evident, adequate and credible information, useful maps, review of the earlier visitors can help the prospect to realize the tentative product and finally take the decision. To do so, well designed marketing program and dedicated manpower is required who can really make the tourists feel that what they are going to enjoy and experience through the upcoming tour.

2.5.4 Scope of creating synergy: In some countries, the taxi drivers are given training so that they can serve as a tour guide when and where required. Even specialized taxis offer 'twin in one' services in many destinations. It means if someone hires a taxi, they need not spend additional money for the tour guide. It actually makes the journey more comfortable for unknown people. It also helps to create long term relationships with tourist. Generally if once a tourist takes services of such a driver cum guide, they communicate next time to the guide directly to find out any other support of him or his friends, colleagues, relatives and so on. In the case of Bangladesh, till now such a type of manpower has not developed. Even the quality of the tour guides are not up to the standard who can offer comfortable services to the international tourists with special interests like history, religion, archeology etc.

To gain long term success in tourism business, creating a favorable perception in the mind of the target groups, regarding the destination, is very important.³³There are so many alternative offers, most of which have better quality as well. Then the question simply arises—who will win? Of course, the organization which can utilize the tools of marketing more efficiently. For this reason, besides developing the tourism products a destination must have to apply its marketing weapons efficiently. If that can not be done, huge investments might not bring the desired outcome.

³² Antonia Correia, Metin Kozak, and Manuel Tao, "Dynamics of Tourists' Decision-Making: From Theory to Practice." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 299-312. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

³³ Tanja Dmitrovic et al., "Conceptualizing Tourist Satisfaction at the Destination Level." *International Journal of culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 3, no. 2 (2009), 116-126.

2.6 Tourism Perspective of Bangladesh

The overall scenario of the tourism sector is not clear to its stakeholders. Because no initiatives have been taken to identify its existing and potential resources, to determine the number of required manpower of related areas, no marketing plan is developed with the opinion of the experts of this field; even the overall management system is not independent as well as integrated. For this reason, no credible source is there, to get required information on the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

Some interested people do some research activities at their own will and plan. Some small projects are also operated; those are not mentionable in the overall scenario. For this reason, all the men talk about the tourism sector is like seeing the elephant by the blind men. They share their opinion or recommendations as they can see or realize the part. For this reason, some scattered scenarios of the tourism and hospitality sector are presented in the different articles and reports but no specific and integrated outcomes are produced in tourism as well as its marketing. Some closely related issues are discussed in the following sections.

2.6.1 Producing manpower for the tourism sector: Lack of knowledgeable people in Bangladesh on this field is also another side of weakness. Earlier tourism was not an established field of study in higher educational institutions. In the last decade few universities have started their under graduation and masters program of tourism studies. Before that the people of other fields would give their opinion where required. Even among the government high officials, there are no or very few people who have formally studied on this issue. Even the expert people are not properly included in the decision making process.

In Bangladesh, most of the investors of this sector emphasize on infrastructural development.³⁴ But many of them forget to invest in manpower development. As a result, they do not get desired success and once declare that investing in this sector is not profitable. Actually, tourism is a mostly service oriented industry. To do well here, at first manpower development is mandatory. Many limitations of the destination can be

³⁴ Jannatul Ferdaush and Hasan Md. Faisal, "Tourism Potentiality & Development of Bangladesh: Applicability of Pragmatic Governmental Management Policy." *Journal of Management and Science* 4, no. 1 (2014), 71-78.

minimized through satisfactory behavior and cordial services.³⁵ In successful tourism destinations, the ordinary service providers of restaurants, hotels, and transportation become a great source of entertainment to the tourists. They are always happy to make the guests satisfied with their place.

2.6.2 Visiting family, friends and relatives: VFR is another significant segment of tourists in Bangladesh. Because the working scope is increasing around the country and so the people are being scattered in different regions of Bangladesh. Many of them are also going outside the country for different purposes. As a member of high context culture, men visit their family, friends, and other relatives after regular intervals. It is increasing the total volume of the domestic travelers each year. If the traveling facilities are high and there are attractive places to see, people become encouraged to visit VFR regularly. For example—if someone gets such scope to visit Sylhet, they do not want to miss it. Nice communication systems, good accommodation facilities, and its natural beauties attract the people of other regions to do so. There is no statistics on how many people do visit on this purpose all over the country.

2.6.3 Creating image for long term success: The view that image is a critical factor in choosing destinations is widely supported.³⁶ Generally ‘image’ is built in an automatic process but most of the competitors invest huge budget and resources to uphold their existing image. In a planned way, they take part in different exhibitions and shows, organize mega events, perform well in the competitions etc. Bangladesh should address the issue properly. Because, if it is kept in a reluctant manner, gradually it will be damaged. The target groups are overwhelmed with the huge sources of information. So, to get even a tiny pace in their mind, continuous and positive reminders should be sent.

2.6.4 Organizing international events: Bangladesh is very good at organizing national and international events. Most of the cases, it gains high praise from the delegates. Even as a co-organizer Bangladesh did a superb job in the case of World Cup Cricket—2011. But it can not attract additional tourists to visit Bangladesh on these occasions. Even the players, team managers and their families just come here to perform their assigned job. If proper steps could be taken, they would pass some time to visit attractive places in

³⁵ Norma D'Annunzio-Green, Gillian A. Maxwell, and Sandra Watson, *Human Resource Management: International Perspectives in Hospitality and Tourism*. (New York: Continuum, 2003), 27.

³⁶ Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 73.

Bangladesh. When they will visit a place—certainly in this era of technology—they will share it on social media. It can be really helpful to introduce the potential tourist spots of Bangladesh. But not so organized efforts are noticed. For this reason, maximum they visit some luxurious shopping malls and go back without seeing the beauty of Bangladesh.

2.6.5 Religious tourism: Each year Bangladesh efficiently organizes ‘Bishwa Ijtema’. It is called the second highest gathering of the world Muslims (after the holy Hajj). Participants come from up to 70 countries in an event. They come for a very short visit to take part in the Ijtema. But if they could be properly communicated, they could visit at least the beautiful mosques of different regions. UNESCO has declared—as part of world heritage sites—Bagerhat as the mosque city.

Even in the Dhaka City there are so many Muslim heritage and historical places. Lack of presenting them to visit the places, is the main reason for their not visiting the places. If they would stay a few additional days, they would spend a huge amount of money. Besides, it would create image of Bangladesh to the world Muslim community. Tourist spots of Bangladesh are relating to its history and heritage. Many of those were abandoned for a long time. Some of those are not even in a recoverable situation. Others need enough care to preserve for the next generations. Such care is not taken by the concerned authorities. So, the valuable resources are being destroyed under the sun and rain.

2.6.6 Seasonality is not so high here like the countries where the climate is extremely cold or hot. Since the climate is moderate, people can travel here most of the time throughout the year. Even six seasons have added extra flavor here. Each season has its own and distinguishing characteristics. There are many religious and historical attractions where people can visit any time of the year. But at the end of winter, visiting tourist places has become a tradition in Bangladesh. The educational institutions especially arrange diverse programs like study tour, excursion, picnic in this time. So it is a noticeable season which starts in October and generally ends in March.

2.6.7 Tourists are not prioritized in the spots: Some tourist spots are totally occupied by the local traders or their representatives. For example—In Jaflong, the influence of the stone businessmen is increasing rapidly. Volagonj has the same situation. Bisnakandi is not so affected yet but might be affected any time. In the established tourist spots the tourists are in a most vulnerable situation. The tourists come from the different parts of

the country to see the beauties of these regions but they feel helpless in between the stone collection, processing, and carrying vehicles.³⁷ Even they always have to be much concerned about the stone carrying heavy trucks. Huge dust and sound pollution, to some extent, make them puzzled.

The rate of accidents in the stone query is also increasing at an alarming rate. When a tourist sees a dead body or blood in the visiting place, simply their 'mode' of enjoyment goes out. Very often the stone collecting laborers die from such accidents. The reports are regularly published in the local and national newspapers. (Four Killed in Jaflong, Prothom-alo, 02/01/2018). On the other hand, in developing countries like Bangladesh, tourism is not a priority sector. The policymakers always become concerned to meet the basic needs of its huge population. So, for allocating required budget, detail planning, and to make other decisions tourism generally gets less attention.

2.6.8 Unknown scenario of the competition: The real scenario of competition is not clear to the tourism authority of Bangladesh. Based on the perception, countries like India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand, and Malaysia are considered as the competitors. But there is no solid ground for thinking so. Because these countries have dissimilar products and target groups. Only for proximity, they can not be treated as the competitors. To design competitive plan of actions, detailed studies are required to identify the competitors and their used strategies.

2.6.9 Forecasting the demand: Lack of proper forecasting and demand assessment is a major barrier to the development of the tourism sector of Bangladesh. The developed countries in tourism forecast and measure the demand of their tourism products monthly, quarterly, and annually.³⁸ They do compare the present performance with the same time of the previous years. But in the case of Bangladesh, till now, no proper statistics are found regarding the 'actual' domestic and international tourists.

To improve the situation, this problem must be addressed properly. Moreover, in the case of Bangladesh, the relationships between tourist arrivals and factors that influence the arrivals are not identified yet. Generally the income, price of substitutes,

³⁷ Md. Abdul Hamid and Mst. Bilkis Akter, "Awaiting Jaflong: A Genuine Cave for Nature Hunters." *The Business and Economic Review* 1, no. 2 (2008), 151-160.

³⁸ S. Horner and J. Swarbrooke, *Marketing Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure in Europe*. (International Thomson Business Press, 1996), 9.

real and nominal exchange rates, airfares, marketing expenditure and special events are considered the most important determinants.³⁹

2.6.10 Promoting to the specific segments: Successful countries in tourism business do promotion to the specific target markets. At first, they do research to identify the potential market. Then they move for extensive promotion. It increases the effectiveness of promotional budgets. In the case of Bangladesh, most of the allocation goes for routine expenditures like salary, office rent, maintenance etc. So no mentionable amount is kept for the promotional purpose. For this reason, no depth study is operated to understand—who are the market, what are their wants or how can we provide the best services to them.

2.6.11 Political stability and country image: International tourism is important to developing countries as far as foreign exchange earnings and employments are concerned.⁴⁰ But to gain benefits from the sector the political stability and avoiding chaotic situations are must.⁴¹ After Arab Spring (2010) many African and Middle East nations have suffered a lot for this crisis. Even Egypt which was a great attraction to the world tourism community they have suffered a lot.

The tourists do not like the turmoil and unstable situation of their visited places. Even many industrialist nations now circulate warnings to visit some particular countries; it has a huge negative impact. Stability and peaceful conditions are highly required to be considered as a potential destination to the international tourists as well as investors.⁴² Bangladesh has faced severe political crises earlier. It has played a role to build a negative image to the potential markets. Now an organized drive should be given to inform and pursue them that Bangladesh is in a far better condition than the earlier times.

2.6.12 Networking with the stakeholders: Partnership with different stakeholders is highly required in tourism marketing. Travel agents or tour operators can play an important role to make a spot more acceptable. The assigned bodies try to promote or

³⁹ Nada Kulendran and Jordan Shan, "Forecasting China's Monthly Inbound Travel Demand." In *Tourism Forecasting and Marketing*, by Kevin K. F. Wong, & Haiyan Song, 5-19. (New York: Hawoerth Hopitality Press, 2002), 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 9.

⁴¹ Androniki Kavoura, "A Conceptual Communication Model for Nation Branding in the Greek Framework. Implications for Strategic Advertising Policy." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 2014, 32-39.

⁴² Md. Abdul Hai and Abdul Razak Chik, "Political Stability: Country Image for Tourism Industry in Bangladesh." *International Conference on Social Science, Economics and Art 2011*. Bangi-Putrajaya, Malaysia: International Scientific Conference, 2011. 58-65.

uphold the status of tourism in Bangladesh. But it is impossible for any single body to enhance the acceptance of this multi-sectoral industry. All active stakeholders have to move forward altogether to uphold the existing situation of tourism development.

2.6.13 Pro-tech attitude: The tourists and the related business people are trying to adapt with the very fast growing latest technologies. At least to get the primary idea most of the travelers now take help of the modern technologies like Internet and cell phone. To support such advancement, a well developed website, Facebook page, and YouTube channels should be operated from the tourism authorities of Bangladesh.

Many people would like to get answer to their specific questions through asking for a reliable source. At least having a hot line number to support the tourists is very normal in this era of communication technology. It would be really good, if a modern call center we could establish to answer all the pertinent questions of the potential tourists. But no such arrangement is planned for upcoming tourists.

2.6.14 Ensuring safety and comfortable journey: The concept of tourist police was introduced in 2009 for ensuring safety and security of the tourists. It is a very good initiative though their number and scale of services is limited. The tourist spots are used by the criminals to serve their purposes. As the rate of mobility of the unknown people is high, unwanted incidents may happen at any time. To give the needed support to the affected person, this policing system should be improved. Modern rescue equipment, ambulance, and medical support services should be made available so that they can take the primary measures when any one falls in an unpleasant situation.

Generally the transportation systems are highly integrated in the developed nations. They maintain it so efficiently that the tourists feel less pain during the journey. In case of Bangladesh, the rail-road-water and airways are not developed by considering the needs of the tourists. Those are developed for the general purposes and tourists have to use those frequently. For this reason, sometimes the tourists have to face very complex situations to come and fro in a remote tourist spot. As those are not developed in a tourism friendly way.

2.6.15 Making the tour memorable: Tourists feel better to collect souvenir items from the visited place. The developed nations in tourism offer a wide range of products to draw the attention of the tourists. In case of Bangladesh, the local people make some handicraft items. If the concerned authorities would do research in this field and could take initiative

to collect unique products from different areas of Bangladesh to sell in the tourist spots, the pace of souvenir item business would have expedited.

Positive experiences during the tour might encourage the tourists revisit the spot. Being unique is not mandatory for being successful in tourism business as well. The main products of Malaysia and Indonesia are: beaches, mountains, cultural diversity, performing arts and handicrafts.⁴³ Natural and cultural resources are the main tourism products of Bangladesh. Competitors are trying to diversify their product offerings. But Bangladesh is following the traditional path which was applicable in the last century. Without a dynamic move it is really tough to draw attention of world tourism community.

⁴³ Amy Y. F. Tan, Cynthia McCohan, and Judy Miller, "Modeling Tourist Flows to Indonesia and Malaysia." In *Tourism Forecasting and Marketing*, by Kevin K. F. Wong, & Haiyan Song. (New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press, 2002), 64.

2.7 Tourism Resources of Bangladesh

Though Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971, the origin of human dwelling in this geographic area is too old. Even before many geographic areas, Bangladesh was existent as the land of mass people. No formal state was formed but they were divided into many regimes. In the ancient period, this region was known as Vanga, Samatata, Harikela, Varendra, Pudra, Vikrampur, Chandradwip and in many forgotten names. People would live collectively to support each other.

For practical reasons, they also would form communities and their rulers. The king or in any form the rulers would built different large palaces, temples, mosques, and other institutions. Many of their historic buildings are standing all over Bangladesh. The tourists have much interest regarding these architectural monuments, sculptures, and so many things. These are the unique resources of the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Besides the natural resources, these keep significant contributions to this industry.

In broader aspects, the tourism resources of Bangladesh can be classified into three categories. Those are: natural, cultural, and historical. Among them many subsections can be developed for the convenience of market segmentation or promotion. Some of those have been discussed in the following subsections.

The oldest university (Somepur Vihara, 8th century) was established in this area. The great architectural resources of Mainamati (7th century), Wari-Bateshwar (5th century), and overall Pundra Nagar were the higher educational centers of that time. So the people would come from many other countries to take lessons from the priests. Lack of exploration abilities of these resources has kept us back for a long time. But now we realize that we have these resources. To get maximum benefits from these unique resources, the updated and effective strategies should be used. Lack of skilled manpower for its conservation and development is also a great challenge. Shortage of required funding creates another problem.

This land has been developed by many regimes. Among them The Buddhists have a great role. Only in present Bangladesh, there are more than 30 viharas which are really a set of good collection to attract the foreign tourists. Especially the people of this religion will visit this place with the sense of pilgrimage. These should be properly developed and managed so that they do not become upset during the visit. There are many unique

resources of the period of ‘Tamrolipi’ in the Chattogram District and its adjacent areas can attract the international tourists.

The first and enriched museum (established in 1910) of this subcontinent. There are few museums like this even in the entire Asia continent. Its number of collections and the characteristics are really capable to draw the attention of the visitors of home and abroad. But this is less known to the people of Bangladesh. As it is situated (Rajshahi) out of the Capital city, this museum is not getting the due attention of the tourists of Bangladesh. So, effective promotional strategies must be used to make it more accessible to the tourists of home and abroad. The visitors’ comment on its comment book gives evidence of how people perceive these unique resources.

Table 2.5: Major tourist attractions of Bangladesh

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Tourism attractions</i>
Bagerhat	Shatgambuj Masjid, Kodla Moth, Sundarbans, Khan Jahan Ameer Majar
Bandarban	Boga Lake, Chimbuk Pahar, Neelgiri, Ruma Bazar, Shoilopropat Porjotonkendro, Keukradong
Barguna	Bibicini Shahi Masjid, Amtoli, Char
Barishal	SorboanondoVaban, Charon Kabi Mukund das er basotvita, Brojmohon College, Padri-shibpur Dharmo polli
Bogura	Nabab Bari, Mohasthangar, Sherpur er Nidorshonadi, Behular Bashor
Brahmonbaria	Kalvoirob Mandir, Smritimoy Kosoba, khorompur Majar
Chadpur	Palgiri, Shaharpara Dighi, Char Rajesshor, Shohor Chandpur
Chapainabganj	Firozpur Gouro, Sona masjid, Mango garden, Subolar buro Tetulgach
Chattogram	War Cemetery, Foyz Lake, Patenga Sea Beach, Bayzid Bostamir Majar, Chandranath
Chuadanga	Mishonpara, Sorot Chandra er Kashipur, Hajar Duari Jamindar Bari, Keru and Company
Cox’s Bazar	Sea Beach, Himchari, Safari Park, Game Reserve Forest, Moheshkhali Island, Saint Marin’s Island
Cumilla	Soterrotno Mandir, Moynamoti-Lalmai, Ranikuthi, Alisshor Bihar
Dhaka	Ahsan Manzil, Lalbagh Kella, Museums, Zoo, Sangsad Vaban, Hoseni Dalan, Mosques (Baitul Mukarram, Sat masjid, Star Mosqu etc), Dhakeswari Temple, Armenian Church, Parks, and Gardens.
Dinajpur	Rajbari, Ramsagar, Sopnopuri, Hilli Port, Parbotipur Railway Station
Faridpur	Pollikabi Jasimuddiner Bari, Mathurapur Deul, Baishroshi Jamindar Bari, Sitanath Ashrom
Feni	Shamsher Gazir Kella, Char, Joynarayanpur Tupi Shilpo Elaka, Bijoy Singho Dighi
Gaibandha	Biratnagar, Dreamland, Ramchandra Hatchari Gram, Bardhankuthi Jamindar Bari

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Tourism attractions</i>
Gazipur	Bhawal Rajbari, Rajendrapur Jatio Uddan, Puspodam, Nandan Park
Gopalganj	Bangabandhur Somadhi Complex, Orakandhi Sridham, Chandrabormon Court
Hobiganj	Komola Ranir Dighi, Shonkorpasa Masjid, Shahjibazar Fruits Valley, Gram Baniachong
Jamalpur	Sarishabari Mimi Chiriakhana, Sohor Jamalpur, Paharika obosor Binodon kendro
Jessore	Vorot rajar deul, Damdama pirsthan, Huda Khaner Songrohoshala, Michel Modhusadan Datto er bari.
Jhalokathi	Daud shah er majar, Palbari, Gazi Kalurdargah
Jhenaidhah	Goyesh Kazir Mandir, Shohor Muhammadabad, Naldanga Jamindar Bari, Shoilokupa Shahi Masjid
Joypurhat	Barshibaloy, Pathorghata, Pachbibi Shohor, kalai Lokosongskriti Parishad
Khagrachari	Sajek Valley, Ramgar, Manikchari, Alutila
Khulna	Sundarbans, Ghat Mandir, Mohesshor Pasha Zorbangla mandir, Khulna Shipyard, Agra-razkpur
Kishorganj	Solakia Eidgah, Haor, Pagla Masjid, Chndraboti & Dijbongshi Das er Mandir
Kurigram	Chilmari, Char, Nagesshor, Jhauban
Kustia	Rabindra Kuthibari, Harding Bridge, Lalon Shah Majar, Mohishkunthi Nilkuthi
Lakshmipur	Khoa Sagor, Kamankhola-Dalal Bazar, Boromia Pir Saheber Masjid, Lengta Shah Mazar
Lalmonirhat	Sabuj Nir Jadughar, Tistaspar, Ondho hafezer Majar, Vabani Pathok Prasad, Biman Ghati
Madaripur	Parbat Bagan, Danlop Saheber Nilkuthi, Banor er rajjo, Paglar Akhra
Magura	Sitaram Rajar Bari, Nader Chader Ghat, Gorai Setu, Gorib Shah Majar
Manikganj	Balihati Choudhury Bari, Sri Sri Joshomadhob Mandir, Pakhir Rajjo Bahadurpur
Meherpur	Mujibnagar, Amjhupi Neelkuthi
Moulvibazar	Khoja Masjid, Lawachara National Park, Madhabkundo Waterfalls and Eco Park, Hakaluki Haor, Bangladesh Tea Research Institute
Munsiganj	Indrakpur Durgo, Baba Adam-er masjid, Panditer Vita, Ballal Sener Bari
Mymansingh	Mymansingh Rajbari, Mymansingh Jadughar, Jaynul Abedin Songrohoshala, Krishi Bishyabiddalay Campus, Trishal
Naogaon	Dubolhati Jamindar bari, Kusumba Masjid, Paharpur Bihar, Kali Sagor Dighi
Narail	Narail Jamindar Bari, Birshrestho Nur- Mohammad er Gram, Arunia, Niribili Vojonshala
Narayanganj	Lokonath Ashrom, Panam Nagar, Murapara Jamindar Bari, Folk Art & Crafts Museum, Langalbando

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Tourism attractions</i>
Narsingdi	Tomb of Kabul Shah, Tomb of Shah Osman, The Graveyard of Shaheed Asad, Gorgeswar Sadhu Ashrama, Kanailal Temple, Wari Batteswar Village, Kumardi Masjid, Purulia Masjid
Natore	Uttara Ganabhaban, Dighapatia Rajbari, Chalan Beel, Chougram, Halti Bil, Gosai Akhra, Dayamrampur Rajbari,
Netrokona	Birisiri, Coatbari, Duani Jamindar Bari, Haorbaor
Nilphamari	Nilsagar, Ramkola, Kazirhat, Nilkuthi Bhaban
Noakhali	Ramthakur er Ashrom, Mohatma Gandhi Smritikendro, Char, Nijhumdip
Pabna	Jor Bangla Mandir, Edward College, Mental Hospital, Anukul Chndraer Ashrom, Masum Khan kabulir Masjid, Jogonnath Mandir
Panchgar	Rocks Museum, Vitorgar, Tetulia-Banglabandha, Dham Mandir
Patuakhali	Kuakata, Char, Rakhain Palli, Kha Bari
Pirojpur	Rayerkathi jamindar bari, Momin masjid, Reserve Pukur
Rajbari	Gourango and kalachand Chaytonno Biggromandir, Laksmikhol Rajbari, Rani Boher Jamindar Bari
Rajshahi	Padma Nadeer Bandh, Boro Kuthi, Varendra Research Museum, Shrine of Hazrat Shah Makhdum, Sarda Police Academy, Puthia Rajbari
Rangamati	Changma Rajbari, Rajbon Bihar, Shuvolong Jharna, Kaptai Lake, Hanging Bridge
Rangpur	Keramotia Masjid, Dokhiganj Shoshan, Tajhat Jamindar bari, Vinnojogot, Carmichael College
Satkhira	Sundarbans , Mayerbari Panchmandir, Sultanpur Shahi masjid, Jhurijhara
Sherpur	Mandir Bari, Ecopark, Darbar Sharif, Modhutila Pusporath
Shariatpur	Vojesshorermito Bandar, Chakrabarty Smriti Moth,
Sirajganj	Hatikumrul Naboratno Mandir, Rabindra Kachari Bari, Mokhdum Shahdoular Majar
Sunamganj	Hasan Rajar Somadhi, Tanguar Haor, English Tila, Dilashar Masjid
Sylhet	Shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R), Keane Bridge, Chandni Ghat, Monipur Rajbari, Haripur Gas Field, Tamabil-Jaflong, Bichanakandi, Ratargul, Shadapathor
Tangail	Santosh Choyana Rajbari, Atia Masjid, Madhupur Gar, Jamuna Bridge
Thakurgaon	Gorkui-nekmordo, Gourolal Mandir, Tongknath Jamidar Bari
Vola	Char, Brishrestho Mostofa Kamal er Poitik Vita, Biddasundorir Dighi

Bangalees (The people of Bengal) are known as the food lover. There are many attractive food items in the different parts of the country. Diverse tasty items of Hilsa fish can be a great matter of attractions to the international tourists. All over the world, culinary tourism has taken a great place. Now many people visit various destinations just to take

taste of the local food items. In this perspective Bangladesh is undoubtedly much endowed with the food items.

Just converting those into the shape of the international tourists' ability to consume (e.g. reducing less hot and spices, minimizing bones of the fish) can bring mentionable outcomes in this section as well. Pitha and other local food items can be attractive elements of drawing the attention of the tourists. The cooking tradition of different ethnic groups can be a source of great attraction to the international tourists.

Figure 2.4: Map of tourist attractions in Bangladesh



Source: https://www.google.com/search?q=tourist+map+archaeological+sites+and+monuments+of+bangladesh&sxsrf=ALeKk02HSO-bIrkZxvHKjZaHNrQNVFvJfA:1605244004050&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjfo713_7sAhWhjuYKHfEtD6MQ_AUoAXoECAgQAw&biw=1536&bih=722#imgrc=g1a_IL1fuFA4zM

A good number of archeological evidence has been found in many areas of Bangladesh. Some of those are from prehistoric to early historic period. As those are rare in nature, it has high value from the tourism resource perspective. Paharpur Buddhist Monastery (Somapura Mahavihara), Mainamati-Lalmai of Cumilla, Mahasthangarh of Bogura, Sitakot Vihara in Dinajpur, Asamrajar Garh (Wari Bateswar), and Hrishchandra Rajar Prasad Dhibi (Savar, Dhaka) are some mentionable resources of early historic period.⁴⁴ Those have been discovered in different times. Even some of those are in the process of exploring. It indicates the historical enrichment of this region. These are able not only to draw the domestic tourists; a large international community has interest on these resources.

The sites of the medieval period are found almost in good condition. Gaur Jannatabad, Khalifatabad and Sonargaon are its best examples. So many mosques of this period are found all over the country. Adina Masjid, Jorbangla Masjid, Galakata Masjid are especially mentionable to them. Kantaji temple of Dinajpur is the great evidence of late medieval sites. The rulers of this period built so many catchy buildings that till now they can attract a huge number of tourists each year. A good number of modern buildings, sculptures, monuments and other things have been established in recent years. Those are basically history and national pride related. Another characteristic of such constructions is city oriented. Previous establishments were scattered all over the country. But the modern sites are closely related to cities or other renowned places.

Some other considerations

The right product for the right tourist is a must: The developing countries like Bangladesh always emphasize on mass tourism. Getting tourists in any form becomes the desire in the primitive stage. But all over the world, the advanced nations on tourism focus on developing right product for the right group of tourists.⁴⁵ Because the advanced level tourists do plan to visit diverse tourism spots in each tour. In that case Bangladesh at first needs to identify its scope of new tourism product development. If that can be done properly, the scope of the market will be clearly identified. It will give a clear view to target specific tourist groups.

Otherwise, a major portion of the tourism promotional budget will be wasted. For example, if the Buddhist route can be efficiently developed, or eco-tourism can be properly developed, Bangladesh can get a good number of tourists each year from the

⁴⁴ Md. Mosharraf Hossain, *Bangladesh Archaeological and Tourism*. (Dhaka: Dibyaprokash, 2017), 18.

⁴⁵ Peter Mudie and Angela Pirrie, *Services Marketing Management*. 3rd Ed. (Burlington: Elsevier, 2006), 40.

developed nations. Till now being highly fascinated toward beach tourism is not a wise move. Because most of the countries of the world offer such similar or better beach products.

Ensuring comfort of the tourists in all aspects: As the competitors are offering better products at reasonable prices, the bargaining power of the tourists is increasing rapidly. They are even getting much more information regarding tourism services than earlier periods. For this reason, making or keeping them satisfied is really a great challenge. Now even the tourists need not to compare the available offers! Many websites are doing this task on behalf of them. But the countries like Bangladesh are very slow in developing new products as well as communicating to the target groups. It creates problems to be in the race. Because the competitors are always trying their best to keep their target groups up to date regarding their latest offers or newly designed products.

For example, one of the key challenges is to ensure ‘ease of the services’. It must be in all aspects of providing services. Searching information, evaluating alternatives, ordering the chosen products, reaching to the destination, flexibility of the tour plan, payment system, returning to the home...all must be comfortable to the tourists. In that case, coordination among the service providing authorities are highly required. In that case, any single authority or business organization can not do it. Then the integrating authority should be as smart as the competitive organizations of home and abroad. This lack is felt in most of the cases of tourism in Bangladesh. Till now, very few professional travel agents or tour operators have been established who are trying to offer unique experiences of the exclusive or very selective market. But in general, the standard of the offered services is not up to the mark.

On the other hand, charging high prices for products and services has been a fashion recently. For example, very close two destinations of two countries in the Tamabil border have charged very distant prices for their hotel services. The Indian village Mawlinong charges only \$40 per night. On the other hand, a hotel in Jaaflong charges \$150 for the same time! In this way, the newly established resorts charge very high prices for their services which might encourage a good number of tourists to visit the tourism destinations of the neighboring countries. Even traveling to Nepal is cheaper than visiting the resorts of Sylhet. A controlling authority must be there to set reasonable prices for the offered services. Otherwise, not only the individual tourists will be in loss,

they will keep contributing to be discouraged by the domestic tourist spots. It has a very negative impact on the tourism sector of Bangladesh in the long run.

Creating attractions for the kids is highly important: Earlier the satisfaction of the kids would not be highly considered to design tourism products and services. Gradually the scenario is being changed. The tour centric families are being considerable enough about the satisfaction of their kids as well. If the kids are satisfied, the parents may consider the destination for repeat traveling in the place. For this reason, the resorts are trying to add fun elements for the kids. This trend must be encouraged.

In the developed nations, visiting the place like *Disney World* or *LEGOLAND* becomes a dream of the kids. To fulfill the kids' desire the parents visit the city where such a park is situated. In Bangladesh, parks like *Nandan*, *Jamuna Future Park* or *Fantasy Kingdom* have been established to attract daylong visitors. But outside the capital city, in any remote area of Bangladesh, if such a park would be established, the parents would consider that for touring for a few days. Some regional parks have been established. But no one has been developed which has nationwide attractions and the kids dream to be there at least once.

Though small in size, the kids have a powerful influence of visiting a particular tourist spot. For this reason, offering products and services for them should be taken into consideration. Otherwise, they will insist their parents travel to the international tourist spots of other countries. It will contribute to the outflow of our hardly earned foreign currencies. On the other hand, in childhood if they do not visit the tourist spots of our country, they will actually lack knowledge as well as patriotism for their motherland.

When they make decisions independently, they will prefer foreign tourist spots which are very bad for a developing country like Bangladesh. So, the policymakers should give priority or emphasis on children friendly tourism products. Even the investors can be made compelled to keep a special zone for the kids. Some specialized tourism ventures for kids can be highly encouraged through offering different incentives.

The nature of the challenges is quite different: In the developing countries, in many cases, the nature of the challenges for the domestic and international target groups is about the same. Even their nature of tourists' expectations, climate, lifestyle, expenditure pattern as well as traveling tendency is about the same. So, it becomes comparatively

easier to develop products for the entire market under the same planning of the both markets.

The scenario is not the same for the South Asian countries. Especially, Bangladesh as a Muslim majority country there are some beliefs, practices and values which contradict with the tourists of the industrialist nations. For this reason, first Bangladesh has to decide its priority for tourism development. If the domestic tourists are its main concern, Bangladesh must develop it as per the need of the domestic people.

In that case, for the international tourists, some exclusive tourist zones can be developed where all facilities for them will be available in their standard. The skilled manpower should be developed to serve the international community. Without such development, the mass tourist spots can not serve them properly. Because the public facilities (transportation, sanitary facilities, common ground etc) are not usable to the international tourists. The service providers can not communicate in the major languages. Even their security might be under threat. For this reason, promotional campaigns are not being possible as well. Because specific products can be offered to a particular market segment. If Bangladesh has no segmentation and positioning strategies, getting desired success in the long run will be impossible.

The geographic location is a great advantage for Bangladesh to draw the attention of the international community. In case of Slovenia, they draw the attention of the tourists who go for visiting their most attractive neighboring countries like Germany, Austria, and Croatia. Just they expect a one or two day's interval on the way to their tour. And this strategy has worked best. They get a huge number of tourists who generally do not plan for traveling to Slovenia. But during the tour, they take it as an advantage of seeing a new country. Bangladesh can play the same strategy.

Huge numbers of tourists are traveling India and Nepal each year. If we can reach a small segment of them, it will be a huge number. If we can offer them standard service in comparatively lower costs, they will promote the tourist spots of Bangladesh. Creating a fresh market for small countries like Bangladesh is generally tough always. So the beginning must be through taking competitive advantage. Otherwise, countries like Myanmar will be benefitted, we will not be. Proper planning and its execution in this aspect can bring a huge positive impact in the tourism development of Bangladesh.

Conservation of the own heritage and culture: The big criticism of tourism development in any region is it destroys the local heritage and culture. Rapidly tourism developed areas suffer a lot in this case. For example, Greece tourism has suffered as

their young generation has lost interest in making them skilled. Because if they pass some time with the tourists, they earn a handsome amount. So, they are reluctant to be skilled, education and even their long term traditions. In Spain, the local community has protested the government's tourism development plans. Their argument was it hampers their regular social life.

The tourists come for a few days but they have to stay there with family members. They can not bear the negative consequences of such 'so called development'. In Dubrovnik, Croatia the local inhabitants were angry at the tourists. Because the businessmen were using different tactics to uproot the local inhabitants to acquire the lands to build hotels and tourism related amusement parks. They were angry with the ongoing trends of tourism development. They were considering that they are being uprooted from their inherited lands and becoming refugees in the new areas which are intolerable to them.

USP must be selected and promoted: In case of tourism products and services, there are some special characteristics. One of them is to draw the tourists to a unique product. Based on that the surrounding or related areas products will be developed and the length of staying of the tourists will be longer. For example, The Eiffel Tower (France), The Tajmahal (India), The Great Wall (China), The Twin Tower (Malaysia), The Everest (Nepal) etc. basically attract the tourists toward the concerned destination.

But when they go to that country, of course, they do not leave it just after watching the unique selling proposition (USP) or iconic item of the country. In most of the cases, the tourists go to enjoy a particular attraction in the visited country. But when they have to stay for a few days, they would like to roam around. Those comparatively unknown places also get a good number of tourists and gradually become famous.

Till now Bangladesh has not been able to select and promote such iconic attractions to the international tourists. For the domestic tourists, more or less, Cox's Bazar is acting like this. Most people dream of visiting the place at least once in their life. But unfortunately, we could not make it saleable to the international tourism community. If some foreigners ask, why should I visit your country? There is no straight forward answer for this question. There are many domestic and international tourists who have an interest in special issues of tourism.

For example—the people of developed nations have interest in life and activities of the ethnic groups. Especially many groups are in a vulnerable condition. So they would like to be acquainted and even work with them to improve their conditions. In that case, there are good numbers of ethnic groups that can be promoted to the international market.

Table 2.6: Some ethnic groups of Bangladesh

<i>Ethnic groups</i>	<i>Locations</i>	<i>Ethnic groups</i>	<i>Locations</i>
Chakma	Rangamati	Khasia	Sylhet, Habigonj
Marma	Bandarban, Khagrachari	Garo	Mymansingh, Tangail
Murang	Bandarban, Rangamati	Hajong	Netrakona, Mymansingh, Jamalgonj
Tanchangya	Cox'sbazar, Chattogram	Kuch	Rangpur, Dinajpur
Khyang	Rangamati, Bandarban	Santal	Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Pabna, Bogura, Rangpur
Khumi	Cox'sbazar	Rajbabgshi	Naogaon, Dinajpur, Joypurhat, Gaibandha
Rakhain	Cox'sbazar, Chattogram	Palia	Rajshahi, Dinajpur
Bawm	Bandarban	Munda	Naogaon
Manipuri	Sylhet	Buna	Jamalpur

Source: Md. Mosharraf Hossain, *Bangladesh Archaeological and Tourism*. (Dhaka: Dibyapokash, 2017), 229. Note: Compiled and modified by the researcher.

There are a good number of museums in Bangladesh that have special interest to the diverse tourist groups. Especially many guardians are now taking their children to the museums to introduce the root and lost heritage of our own culture. List of mentionable museums are given in the next page:

Table 2.7: Renowned museums of Bangladesh

<i>Name of the museums</i>	<i>Location</i>
Bangladesh National Museum	Shahbagh, Dhaka
Varendra Museum	Rajshahi
Muktijuddha Jadughar	Segunbagicha, Dhaka
Jatirpita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Smriti Jadughar	Dhanmondi, Dhaka
Vikrampur Foundation Museum	Munshigong
Folk Art Museum	Narayanganj
Bengali Samagra Jadughar	Dhaka
Maulabaksh Jadughar	Dhaka
Waribateswar jadughar	Narshingdi
Dinajpur Jadughar	Dinajpur
Nilphamari Jadughar	Nilphamari
Rock Museum	Panchagar
Faridpur Jadughar	Faridpur
Marine Museum	Chattagram
Lalbagh Fort Museum	Dhaka
Chittagong Ethnological Museum	Chattagram
Mainamati Archaeological Museum	Comilla
Bagerhat Museum	Bagerhat
Khulna Divisional Museum	Khulna
Paharpur Archaeological museum	Naogaon
Mahasthan Archaeological Museum	Bogra
Rangpur Museum	Rangpur

Source: Md. Mosharraf Hossain, *Bangladesh Archaeological and Tourism*. (Dhaka: Dibyaprokash, 2017), 217. Note: Compiled and modified by the researcher.

To enhance the basic knowledge of history and heritage of the nation, the museums play a very significant role outside the classroom. To present the conserved and preserved resources to the next generations, professional curators and guides should be appointed. Their efforts can make the young minds interested about the history and heritage of our country. If the museums are properly developed and promoted, the international tourists will also be interested to visit those.

2.8 Tourism Management in Bangladesh

The tourism policy was drafted three decades ago. In that time, the overall condition of Bangladesh was not so good like today. The socio-economic condition and the tourism perspective of the country have been changed in a mentionable volume. But till now it is running under the backdated policies. So, it needs a rigorous review, with the consultation of the concerned experts, to make it updated and workable. By following the policies of the successful countries in tourism, it can be updated which will be helpful for the regulators as well. Different stakeholders (e.g. investors, international tour operators, embassies of different countries) review the policy before taking any decision. So to do well in the long run, the tourism policy must be updated according to the necessity of this time. Potential changes in upcoming days

2.8.1 Tourism related laws:

- The National Tourism Policy was declared in 1992 which was finally accepted by the Parliament in 2009.
- Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012 has been passed to protect tourism resources of Bangladesh. Besides, it will work to ensure safety of the tourists and service providers; and will uphold security issues of the valuable tourism resources.
- Bangladesh Tourism Protected Area and Exclusive Tourist Zone Act, 2010 has been passed to protect the existing tourism resources and to attract international tourists as well as investors. The development works of Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, and Sundarbans are going on under this Act.
- To expedite the promotional activities worldwide Bangladesh Tourism Board Act, 2010 has been passed.
- Tourist Arrivals and Entry Regulations have been accepted under which the visa processing of the tourists have been made easier than earlier times.

Till now, there is no policy regarding the tour operators' business and the rent-a-care business management. Even the tour guides' professional training or registration system is not applied. As the foreigners would travel with the tour guides, the tour operators do manage some guides locally who serve the tourists when required. As a result, it has not been established as a separate profession. If they are given required training and operated under any Act, the tourists will feel more comfort to work with them.

- Bangladesh Hotel and Restaurant Ordinance and Bangladesh Travel Agencies Ordinance.
- Bangladesh Travel Agencies Ordinance 1976 will also be made up to date in the proposed Act.

2.8.2 The role of Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB)

With a high ambition the organization was established in 2010 (started working in 2011). Initially the responsible authority started to talk about the issues, some steps were also noticeable. In the BTB Act, total 16 points have been mentioned as its key responsibilities. All are relating to the promotional (in greater sense marketing) tasks. But within a few days, it becomes like many other government offices. Some routine tasks are accomplished. Mentionable tasks after its establishment are:

- Developing video titled – School of Joy.
- Active promotion in World Cup Cricket – 2011.
- Digital marketing campaign.
- Bangladesh Folk Festival – 2011.
- Participation in foreign tourism exhibitions.
- Co-sponsor of BPL – 2011.
- World Tourism Day observation – 2011.
- Organizing Asian Tourism Fair – 2011.
- 11th SAARC Trade Fair & Tourism Mart – 2012.
- Visit Bangladesh campaign – 2016.

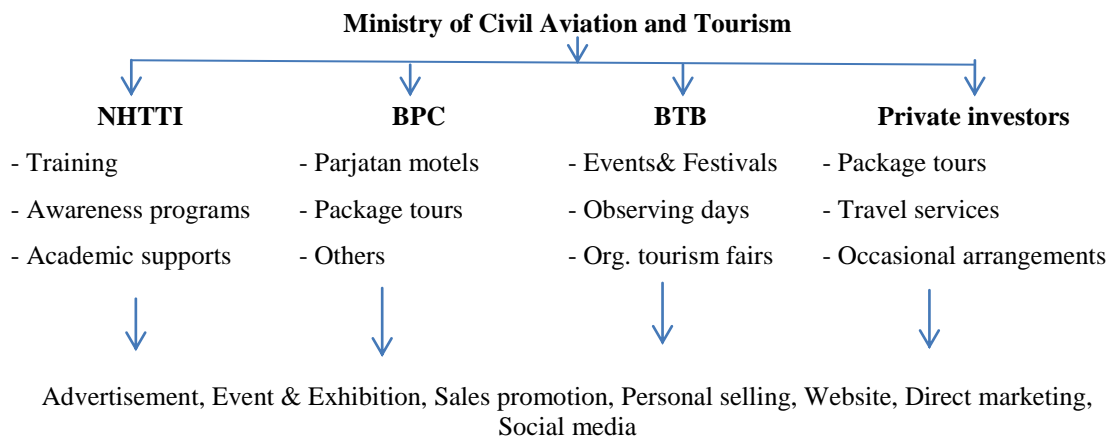
Till now, the tourism policy of Bangladesh is written in Bangla. If the foreign investors, travel agents, and researchers would like to know about the attitudes, promises, and plans of the government of Bangladesh toward the tourism issues, will they get required information from this document? Most probably not because it is prepared in a very traditional format where many significant issues are absent. The modern stakeholders would like to know much more issues to step forward. Unfortunately no updated information is found in BTB website (which is the first source of information to an international partner).

The government should seriously consider the issue of outbound tourism. Introduce such regulations that to go for a pleasure trip outside of the country, they must visit at least five internal or domestic visits. Otherwise, the trend of outgoing will increase gradually which will impact our economy negatively. There are some nations who travel outside most (e.g. Germany, Austria) but they also get a similar number of tourists from other countries. So do not face negative consequences of such a trend. But in developing countries like Bangladesh, the outgoing trend is a one way route. So for saving the national interest introducing such rules can be considered. Even imposing high tax on pleasure trips to the outside might be considered to rein this trend.

2.8.3 Responsible bodies for tourism marketing in Bangladesh

Selling a product to a customer once in lifetime should not be the target of a marketer. In that case, the programs must be developed in such a way that the tourists become satisfied and feel better to visit the destination again. It is said that the marketers should work for creating loyalty.⁴⁶ Now the question is: who is supposed to do that for the tourism sector of Bangladesh? In most of the developing countries, the government has to do everything for the development of the tourism sector. All departments work together to achieve the goals. For marketing, the government normally does funding; private sector sponsors to the events.

Figure I: Tourism marketing organizations of Bangladesh



Three bodies are somewhat related to the tourism marketing activities in Bangladesh. Those are: Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT), Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC). NHTTI provides support to produce skilled manpower to the industry. As a national tourism organization now BTB should play the key role. But for their lack of manpower, budget, or even field level experience— they are not in a comfortable position.

On the other hand, BPC has vast experience working on it but now they have been totally involved in business operations. Moreover, as two separate entities are working under a single Ministry, most of them are interested to work on civil aviation; the employees of the tourism section are less interested to plan and execute for long term success.

⁴⁶ Scott McCabe, *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 2.

2.9 Convincing the Target Market

As the marketing plan for the tourism sector of Bangladesh is not so organized and the effectiveness is not measured properly, the markets are not well organized yet. From the own feelings and interests the tourists visit different types of places and try to enjoy as much as possible. Generally they are not motivated or given a special type of information by any agency. For this reason, in many cases they have lack of information about the visited places. The markets are not segmented as well. Distinguishing product development for the separate segments is not also practiced here. As a result, mass tourism is practiced for all the spots of Bangladesh.

For segmenting the market some issues should be taken into consideration. For example—Bangladesh owns adequate number of Hindu, Buddhists, and Muslim heritages. If those are properly explored, conserved, and presented to the target audience, these can be really distinguishing attractions to the target groups. As more than one billion followers of Hindu religion live in our neighboring countries India and Nepal, it can be used effectively. Many ancient temples, Palace of Hindu kings and landlords, birthplace of their spiritual leaders (e.g. Chaitanya Dev), and so many things can attract a huge number of Indian and Nepalese tourists to visit these places. On the other hands, the Buddhist resources are enormous in this land. Proper development of those resources can make Bangladesh an attractive destination to the people of Myanmar, Thailand, China, Tibet, Vietnam, Japan and other Buddhist based countries.

Bangladesh is the country of Muslim majority. So the Muslim world simply has a positive attitude toward this country. The mosque city Bagerhat, the old Dhaka architectural resources, different mosques around the country, old madrasas (Darasbari, Chapainawabgonj) and so many sculptures can draw attention of huge number of Muslim tourists to visit this place. Recently, a call has been given to the member states of the OIC countries to visit Bangladesh. The Biswa-Ijtima could be used in this case as a great opportunity to motivate them to visit Bangladesh. In these connections, if they would take decision to visit some Muslim history and heritage products of Bangladesh, it could be a huge market. But for recent conflict among the groups of its management body has created uncertainty in this case. Anyway, it is till now a huge area to attract international tourists.

2.10 Unique, Updated, and Credible Online Presence

In this era of stiff competition, active and valued online presence is a must. The countries which have done well in tourism development have created and continuously updated the online resources to draw the attention of the international target groups.⁴⁷ Even for the domestic tourists they are providing a lot of services. Many of them have kept options for the translation of their information. In other cases, they have kept separate offers for the different nationals. In case of Bangladesh, till now such development is in a primitive stage.⁴⁸

Only the tourism related information can be reached in Bangla or English languages.⁴⁹ Even those are not well organized, well designed, and regularly updated. Competitors are working hard to offer the desired information of their sites at ease to the target groups (tourists, investors, embassies, media etc).⁵⁰ But there is no assigned group in case of promoting tourism of Bangladesh in an integrated manner. For this reason, even the domestic tourists do prefer to visit the foreign tourist spots.

Tourism business related private organizations are developing their websites in a very much professional manner. But they do cover only a smaller part (e.g. transportation, accommodation or amusement) of the entire arrangements. The responsible authority for these activities should integrate all the possible issues as soon as possible. Unfortunately this task is not being done properly. Even it is not clear who is responsible to carry out which tasks to promote the tourism sector to the domestic as well as international tourism community.

⁴⁷ David Meerman Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Blogs, News Releases, Online Video, & Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly*. (New Jersey: Wiley, 2010), 77-79.

⁴⁸ Raquib Siddiqi, "Tourism in Bangladesh—A Thrust Sector with no Thrust." *The New Nation*, February 4, 2006.

⁴⁹ <http://www.parjatan.gov.bd/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.tourism.gov.my/>; <http://www.vietnam-guide.com/>; <https://www.tourismthailand.org/>

2.11 Third Party Supports to Convince the Potential Market

Actually the nature of purchasing a tourism product is so critical that the tourists can not take the decision alone. In that case, the tour operators play a very significant role.⁵¹ During discussion about the possible alternatives, if the tour operators offer a spot in a credible manner, in most of the cases, the tourists rely on their opinion. For this reason, most of the successful countries emphasize on convincing the tour operators, travel agents, and media of the targeted countries. Because simply the ultimate tourists will not believe an unknown source to take such an important decision. So convincing the target groups is highly required before reaching the target tourists.

Political situations, environmental factors, international political environment, the economic and social situation of a country are significant and determine the design policies which are implemented for the promotion of a region, a state, a city.⁵² Creating 'unique selling proposition' is highly required to be recognized, identified, and accepted to the target groups. For example—The Statue of Liberty, Niagara Falls, Eiffel Tower, Tajmahal, Twin Tower etc. are enough to draw millions of tourists in the respective countries. In case of Bangladesh, after the establishing the BTB, it tried to elect an iconic monument which will represent Bangladesh to the world. For the disappointing response, they have rejected the initiative! It means Bangladesh has not built yet such an iconic place which properly can represent Bangladesh to the world tourists.

Culture can influence how the target groups perceive and eventually process their information.⁵³ By realizing its significance the European Council on Travel & Trade has set the theme of World Tourism Day–2018: Protecting Culture and Heritage. Without proper conservation of these resources, getting success in the tourism business in the long run is quite impossible. The industrialist nations have realized it and they try to preserve and conserve such resources carefully. But the underdeveloped and less developed countries are still reluctant on this issue.

Overall perception of the tourists may depend on external factors that are difficult for destination management or local tourism business to influence.⁵⁴ For the widened sources of information, now the perceptions of the potential tourists are formed in different ways. In that case, generating satisfied tourists is one of the most effective tools.

⁵¹ Andrew J. Spencer and Dimitrios Buhalis, "Contextualizing the Past, Conceptualizing the Future: Tourism Distribution and the Impact of ICTs." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 345-358. New York: Routledge, 2014.

⁵² Androniki Kavoura, "A Conceptual Communication Model for Nation Branding in the Greek Framework. Implications for Strategic Advertising Policy." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 2014, 32-39.

⁵³ Hayden Noel, *Consumer Behaviour*. (Lausanne: Ava Publishing SA, 2009), 16.

⁵⁴ Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 73.

Besides, diverse forms of communication must be used to keep the prospects informed, updated, and convinced about the taken decisions. For this reason, the public relations department of tourism organizations is being stronger in the developed countries than earlier days. Even mass awareness is required to do any major establishment of tourism development.

Planning, development, promotion, and catalyst organizations (PDPCO) have a significant role to make a destination successful in the long run.⁵⁵ For this reason, tourism development should be kept at the hand of a minimum number of authorities. Otherwise, integration among the concerned parties is a great challenge. The industrialist nations assign an organization for tourism development with the required budget, autonomy, and authority. But in case of the underdeveloped and developing countries, lack of integration, is a great problem. Different bodies organize programs in their own way which indicates the lack of integration among the bodies.

Tourism sector is affected for many reasons, those might be big or small factors. It depends on the context of the situation. Extreme effect of Tsunami in East Asian countries, the impact of SARS virus on Canada and some other countries, militant attack on Hotel Taj in India and a very recent event in the church of Sri Lanka affects the tourism flow hugely. The good side is that the tourism sector can recover the situation very soon. For example—after the terrorist attacks on European, Australian, Indonesian, Egyptian, and India, the tourists have come out on the street and they have shown courage to keep the movement like before.

The 9/11 attack in the the USA, economic recession in Europe and America (2008) or the Arab Spring in Egypt (2011) can be the best examples of such coming back. For this reason, man-made crises can not stop the tourists but sometimes the natural calamities like Tsunami or Nepal earthquake cause disaster which take time to recover. Tourism had a great impact of Tsunami (2004) on the six Asian countries. Terror attacks on Bali, Indonesia are another example of such negative impact. Bangladesh has also experienced (Holy Artisan attack) such types of unwanted incidents.

All of a sudden, in the above mentioned events the situations became worse than imagined. It was thought the pace of travel and tourism will not be normal soon. But within a few years, they have been able to regain their position as attractive destinations. The tourists have visited the places even more and for a long time than the earlier times. The earthquake in Indonesia, floods in India, cyclones of the USA or even tsunami in South East Asian countries stopped the pace of tourism for a while. But the tourists have conquered the fear very soon and came back in their normal mood.

⁵⁵ Charles R. Goeldner & J. R. Brent Ritchie, *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies* (New York: Wiley, 2006): 19.

2.12 The Role of (Mass and customized) Media

The mass media (especially the visual media) can play a significant role to promote the tourism sector of a country. In this case, Bangladeshi television channels and movies are not broadcasted in the international arena. For this reason, the beautiful spots and existing facilities can not be presented through this powerful medium. Many countries enjoy this benefit by using their international television channels. Even the print media of Bangladesh (except the newly started online portals) has limited access. Only Bengali known people might be reached through this medium as well. The websites of the concerned organizations are not enriched enough to give full confidence of a potential tourist to visit a particular place.⁵⁶ Organized efforts are much required to get benefits from this powerful tool.

In the geographically large countries like India, USA, Canada—inter-state competitions are very popular and can attract a huge number of participants, guardians, spectators etc. With the central coordination, all of them have planning and promotional mechanisms, which ultimately help to develop the tourism sector of that country. Even in the child age, many European and American youngsters visit a wide range of places for this purpose. In the case of Bangladesh, most of the events are centered in Dhaka. But Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, and Rajshahi own huge and international level stadiums and sports complexes. Even for inter-regional games, the Chittagong hill tracts districts can be a good option. If those could be done, the unnecessary burden of the Capital City could be reduced and the participants would get the opportunity to visit some beautiful places of Bangladesh.

In many cases, for practical reasons, the NRBs do not feel comfortable to use the Bangladeshi passport. Even sometimes it gives a wrong perception about the total volume of international tourists because they are counted as international tourists. For different painful experiences, they do not feel proud to promote the beautiful places of Bangladesh to their known society. If they would do it, Bangladesh could get a huge word of mouth or viral marketing benefits. They should consider working with them so that they feel enthusiastic to do so.

⁵⁶ <http://www.tourismboard.gov.bd/>

2.13 Development of Small and Micro Tourism Enterprises

With the development of any tourist spot generally a good number of small tourism enterprises (SMTEs) grow in the surrounding area. These enterprises play a significant role to augment the satisfaction level of the tourists. Number of small enterprises is also increasing gradually in the tourist spots of Bangladesh. There is no universally accepted definition of small and micro enterprises as it not only depends on investment volume and number of workers but also on involved technologies and technical complexities of production; degrees of skills demanded from workers and managers; end use of products and so on...which criteria certainly varies country to country.

UK's largest ever small business research project used the criteria: fewer than 100 employees and user of formal venture capital.⁵⁷ Fiji's definition of small enterprises is spelt out in the Small and Micro Enterprise Development Act—2002 as follows: Small-enterprise is defined as *any enterprise which has a turnover or total assets between \$30,000 and \$100,000 and employs between 6 and 20 persons*. In the case of Bangladesh, according to the Industrial Policy—2010, the government has classified all industrial organizations into five categories⁵⁸: Large, Medium, Small, Cottage, and Micro; further definitions of each classification for manufacturing and non-manufacturing (service) sector is given.

In the manufacturing sector, small industry is defined as *“Small industry will include enterprises with either the value (replacement cost) of fixed assets excluding land and building in the range of Tk 0.5 million to Tk 5 million or enterprises having between 10 and 25 workers”*. On the other hand, for non manufacturing activities (e.g. trading or services) small enterprise is defined as *“An enterprise should be treated as small if it has less than 25 workers, in full-time equivalents.”*⁵⁹ For the micro enterprises the definition is as the following—*“Micro industry will include industrial enterprises with either the*

⁵⁷ D. J. Storey, *Understanding the Small Business Sector*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 3.

⁵⁸ Industrial Policy of Ministry of Industries (Government of Bangladesh), 7-8.

⁵⁹ Auybur Rahman Bhuyan, "Bangladesh Industrial Policy 2010: A Critical Appraisal." *Thoughts on Economics* 20, no. 03 (2011), 7-14.

value (replacement cost) of fixed assets excluding land and building up to Tk 0.5 million or enterprise having 10 or fewer workers.”⁶⁰

Most of the above mentioned definitions are given for the manufacturing industries of different countries. In the case of tourism (as a service sector) the specific definition is formally given by the Ministry of Industries of Bangladesh. The restaurants, shops of handicrafts and souvenir items, local fruits or food sellers, beverage and drinks sellers, hand-made clothes or mat sellers etc. have been considered as the small and micro tourism enterprises. More than two-thirds of them had less than half a million taka as initial capital and about one-third had between half and two million taka. Regarding the number of employees, most of them have less than five employees; some of them are between five and 10. There are five to hundred such small business enterprises in each tourist spot of Bangladesh.

Small and micro tourism firms are different from other forms of traditional enterprises. The key issue in determining whether small tourism firms represent an appropriate analytical category is whether they are distinguished sufficiently from other enterprises.⁶¹ Rogerson studied the constraints and opportunities faced by tourism based small enterprises in South Africa.⁶² He argued that it was only through small enterprises that rural people can participate in tourism. In these enterprises, the opportunities of small initiatives or laborers are maximized. He also argued that the government had the responsibility to involve local communities in tourism through the development of economic linkages such as supply of agricultural products. The bulk of small tourism firms do not aspire to grow and are often motivated by non-financial factors.

The impacts of tourism on economy and society are classified as direct, indirect and induced.⁶³ Its impact on small business development draws much attention in the literature too. With tourism development, the local people have golden opportunities to offer services or sell products to domestic and foreign tourists. For example—In Kenya,

⁶⁰ Ministry of Industries, *Draft Industrial Policy 2010*. (Dhaka: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2010), 8.

⁶¹ Rhodri Thomas, "Small Firms in the Tourism Industry: Some Conceptual Issues." *International Journal of Tourism Research* 2, 2000, 345-353.

⁶² C. M. Rogerson, "Transforming the South Africa Tourism Industry: The emerging black-owned bed and breakfast economy." *GeoJournal*, 2004, 273-281.

⁶³ Rajib Kanti Das and Jaba Chakraborty, "An Evaluative Study on Tourism in Bangladesh." *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting* 3, no 1, 2012, 84-95.

tourism is the second largest contributor to the country's foreign exchange earnings after agriculture. It is one of the six key pillars for growth under Kenya's vision 2030. Hence, this sector may be a primary means of realizing the goal of economic development of undeveloped regions by linking tourism operations to local suppliers. For many coastal communities in Kenya, tourism is an important means of generating income and provides an opportunity for strengthening local businesses. The use of available resources by hotels can be a good way for enhancing the growth of micro and small scale enterprises.⁶⁴

The World Bank estimates that over 90 percent of businesses in South Asian region are small and medium scale enterprises. Ali & Chowdhury suggest that entrepreneurship development is required in the tourism sector and regional cooperation can bring benefits for Bangladesh.⁶⁵ Most of the developing countries now generate economic benefits through the development of tourism industry. The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) together employ a total of 31 million people, equivalent to about 40 percent of the population of Bangladesh, aged 15 years and above. More than three quarters of the household income in both urban and rural areas are provided by the MSMEs.⁶⁶

In the past, the governments were reluctant to invest for tourism development, but in this modern age the situation has been somehow changed. Now the government concentrates on not only tourism but also hospitality management.⁶⁷ The structure of the tourism sector in Bangladesh is predominantly managed by the public sector. The public sector has played a significant role in the development and promotion of tourism sector. Directing tourism growth towards local needs, interest and limits can greatly enhance tourism's value to the community and help to create a sustainable tourism industry.

There is a controversy that in the name of development of tourism, much money goes outside for importing required stuff to offer services to the tourists. In this case, Williams has developed a model of tourism entrepreneurship and linkages in developing

⁶⁴ M. Mshenga and G Owuor, "Opportunities for Micro and Small Scale Businesses in the Tourism Sector: The Case of The Kenya Coast." *KCA Journal of Business Management* 2, no. 2 (2009), 9-16.

⁶⁵ M. M. Ali and S. Chowdhury, "Different Aspect of Tourism Marketing Strategies with Special Reference to Bangladesh." *Business Review* (Khulna University), 2008, 13-21.

⁶⁶ A. Rahman, "Atiur Sees Factoring as Ideal Financial Solution for SMEs." *The Financial Express*, July 26, 2009, 9.

⁶⁷ M. A. H. Sarker, "Tourism and Marketing Strategies for Bangladesh." *Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce* IV, no. 1(1) (2013), 49-58.

countries.⁶⁸ The scopes of flourishing of small enterprises are huge and if it is utilized properly, the face of the economy might be changed within a certain period of time.

Different types of undue political pressures are increasing on the small and micro enterprise owners. Besides, paying rent to the legal authority they have to pay cash and kind to the activists of different political or regional groups. Sometimes, if they fail to meet their unwanted demand, the shops are vandalized and even compelled to leave the business or particular spot. Intensity of competition is increasing, especially in the last few years, very rapidly in the spots.

New businessmen are settling down and numbers of substitute products are increasing widely. Infrastructure is another significant problem in the tourist spots of Sylhet. Up to district headquarters, the road and transportation systems are satisfactory but reaching to the spots are sometimes very challenging. In some spots (for example-Ratargul swamp forest), there is no basic support to get shelter from heavy rain or sunlight and to be fresh during stay.

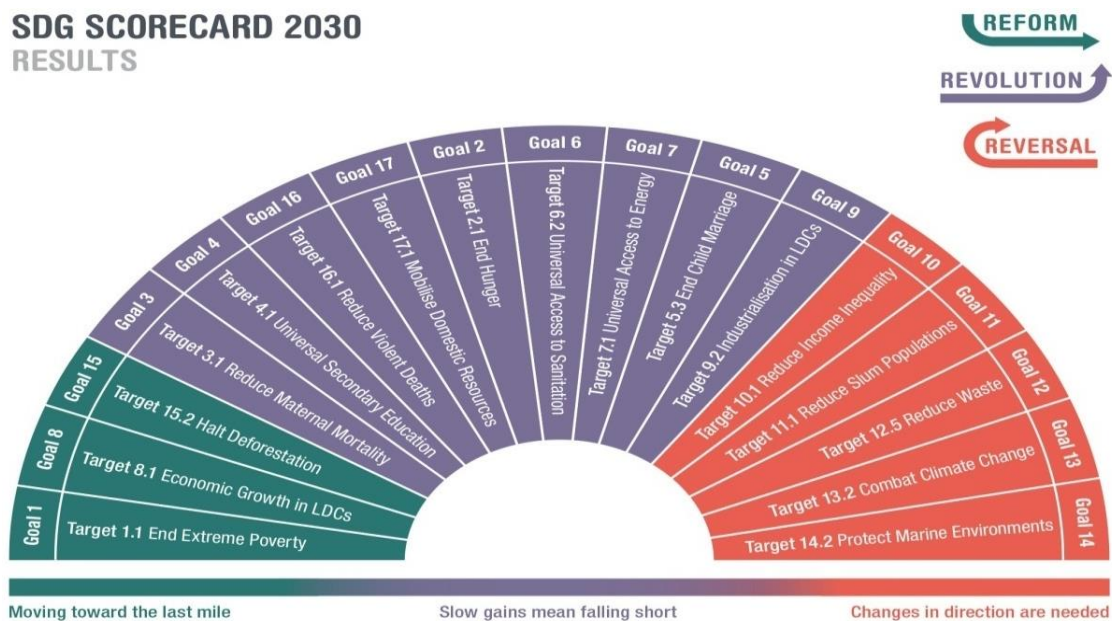
The businessmen do not get enough financial support from the local bank or other financial institutions like other businessmen of the urban area. The main reason is, they do business for a particular season and might not be able to pay the loan from business gains of that season. So, they have to manage funds from other money lenders who charge a very high rate of interest and allow short time to repay. Seasonality is another severe problem of this kind of business. Except for some spots like the Shrines of Hazrat Shajalal (R), most of the tourist spots face this challenge. Even the spots like Ratargul swamp forest get a good number of tourists only two or three months (May-July) of the year. For this, they can not depend on this single source of earning.

⁶⁸ R. I. Church et al., "The National Survey of Small Tourism and Hospitality Firms." 1998.

2.14 SDGs for Bangladesh and Tourism Development

Though the term 'sustainable development' is frequently uttered, there is a lot of ambiguity among its practitioners and stakeholders. The scholars and institutions have defined the terminology in different ways. Among them the definition of Brundtland Commission is much acceptable. It says sustainable development is the “ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Here the environmental issues have given much priority. It means the development should not be by compromising the environmental degradation or threat. If it is done, our next generations will be really vulnerable and their survival will be tough. To make comparatively a better future the United Nations have declared the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By 2030 these goals are targeted to achieve. If those are properly taken care of, the tourism sector will be highly benefited.



Source: <https://www.odi.org/publications/9895-projecting-progress-reaching-sdgs-2030>

Various countries have proven that tourism development does not contradict with the SDGs. By controlling the mass tourism tendency, the tourism sector can assist to achieve the 17 goals. The awareness of the concerned can play a significant role in this regard. From the very beginning tourism was treated as a significant sector in Bangladesh. But the achievements of the last four decades have not kept such impact on the economy and

employment. The performances of BPC, MoCAT, NHTTI, and BTB have not been evaluated time to time. So, many practical and timely steps are not taken as well.

Some countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, and Nepal started their journey (as an independent country) at the same time. Most of them have used tourism as a significant tool of their economic development. In spite of having mentionable advantages (e.g. strategic location and natural environment), Bangladesh has not achieved much from this promising sector. To keep many people traveling inside the nation and attract foreign tourists, practical and timely development plans should be taken.

Regarding the return on investment, tourism can contribute a lot doing less harm to the natural environment. Though it might be a luxury product to the buyer, the sellers can offer it in very natural settings. Bangladesh should take this advantage to comply with the sustainable development goals. To do so, a diverse backward linkage can be developed which will keep significant contribution in the usage of raw materials and employment of the country men. As a smoke free industry tourism can be the real role player for achieving the SDGs.

In the earlier goals (MDGs), Bangladesh did really well. Based on the previous performances, it is expected that Bangladesh will do better in the SDGs as well. The 2030 SDG Agenda has five areas of critical importance which can be referred to as the five Ps. Those are--people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The 2030 global transformation agenda has 17 goals and 169 specific targets. SDGs are expected to provide a more comprehensive framework in addressing the concerns of the Bottom 40 percent of the socio-economic divide. It can keep roles to minimize socio-economic discrimination which is a matter of great concern for humanity.

Goal 8 is targeting to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 12 hopes to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; and Goal 14 emphasizes on Conservation and sustainable uses of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The indirect impacts of tourism development can keep significant contributions (Goal 6, 9, 11, 15, 16, and 17) to enhance our standard of living which is the ultimate target of the SDGs.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Note: Published by the author in the daily Observer (5 January 2018) in the Op-Ed section. Page 6 (Link: <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=114954>).

The trend of mass communication should be reduced through segmenting the markets. It will reduce pressure on some popular tourist spots. Problems like deforestation, soil erosion or reducing wet lands will be reduced which will make the land more livable for our next generations. In Bangladesh, the ability of tourism has not been much utilized. To achieve the SDGs, tourism can be used as an effective tool to sustainable development.

2.15 Negative impact of tourism development

Most of the literature talks about the positive sides of tourism development. Many issues are brought into discussions which show that tourism development has played a significant role to develop a community. But now the opposite sentiment is also growing. It is not always a blessing for the local community. Rather in many cases, it is playing the role of curse for them. For this reason, the protest against such development has been seen even in Spain which basically depends on the generated income from tourism. So now the academicians have started to talk and think on the issue worldwide.

Undoubtedly, there are huge positive impacts of tourism development on a society. Through tourism development the local community gets benefits in different ways. The road and transportation systems develop, communication facilities become better, diverse business opportunities are created, direct and indirect financial benefits come to them. Especially the scope of creating employment is shown one of the most significant benefits of such development.

As a result their quality of life increases and they get name and fame to the rest of the areas. These achievements make them happy for a short time. But in the long run the situation does not be the same. Even if the tourist spot becomes much popular, the local community loses control of their own fate very soon. For this reason, they become victims of so called development and many people leave the area to live in peace.

All over the world, the raw and virgin natural places have a great attraction to the tourists. Before the expeditions, simply the place is calm and quiet – good for the plants, animals and overall biodiversity. But when the tourists start heading to that place, a huge rush creates noise. It has short and long term impacts on its inhabitants. Normal breeding process hampers, they feel disturbed. For this reason, in the tourism places, many species are now extinct.

More than that is in passing days in the danger zone. The main reason is the tourists go there for a very short time. They simply would like to visit the place and make fun as much as possible. But they do not bother what will happen after some days or even decades. If the authorities are not careful enough, they become vulnerable rapidly and even not exist after a certain period. For example—the number of Royal Bengal Tiger in Sunderbans is reducing at an alarming rate.

In the developing nations, the nature of such impact is much different. The lifestyles of the tourists have much negative impact on the local inhabitants. Their own cultures become under threat, especially the young generation who would like to follow the visitors' trend. Even having alcohol and being involved in prostitutions in Greece created panic in many Islands. The senior citizens became panicked by the attitude of their kids toward the hip-hop and trendy lifestyle of the tourists.

The new generation became less interested in studying and working hard. Passing time with the tourists would give them pleasure as well as pocket money. So they would be very interested to go out with foreigners. For this reason, in the pressure of different communities now the government has passed some rules and regulations regarding the community involvement in tourism activities.

There was a huge protest in Spain against so-called tourism development. The social leaders could realize that the new trend of tourism development will cause a great harm to their history and heritage. Even the unwanted issues like 'gay tourism' were getting shelter by the businessmen. So the local inhabitants became rude against such development. They want development but not through the destruction of their own culture.

In this way, there are many examples which have proven that many negative impacts and sufferings are common to the tourism destinations. In Duvronic of Croatia, the local inhabitants started to leave their birthplace only to escape their children from the consumption oriented culture of the tourists. They did not want their small kids to see the drunken tourists on the street and their uncontrolled behavior. Even when going to school in the morning, they see the cans and garbage that were produced by the tourists last night.

For this reason, the development should be well planned and carefully managed. Otherwise, in the long run it will have negative impacts on the society which can not be managed anyways. As a comparatively conservative society, Bangladesh would also like to develop tourism in such a way that will have positive impacts on the society as well as economy.

2.16 Tourism Marketing Research in Bangladesh

Research is always a less prioritized issue in most of the underdeveloped and developing countries. Generally the decisions come from the experience and perception of the key persons of the organization. Even no proper assessment is done after implementing the programs. But research is very important for making realistic decisions. For example—to the entrepreneurs and tourism promoters it is essential to know exactly what kind of information should be included in tourist brochures and guides. At the same time, it is important to analyze the effects of information on tourist behavior and image.⁷⁰

The researcher has consulted a good number of books, theses, reports, and journal articles. Among the 13 relevant theses, the focuses were basically on: Economic contribution and employment, Socio-economic impact, Customer perception toward the industry, Impact of social media on consumer behavior, Promotional measures in developing tourism industry, Promotional activities in the industry, Development strategies of tourism, Authenticity in tourism products, Destination competitiveness, Tourism policy and service quality management, and finally, issues and strategies of tourism development. Very close topic to this study was the examination of promotional activities undertaken by the different tourism stakeholders and evaluate the role of their activities for the development of this industry.⁷¹ Promotion is an important element of the marketing mix. So, the scope of this study is wider than the studies have already been done by Md. Anisur Rahman and Md. Jakir Hossain.⁷²

In case of reviewing articles, total 27 papers have been found which are closely related to this study. Those have measured customer satisfaction level, strategies, value dimensions, tourist behavior, visitor attitude, cognitive image, competitiveness, and destination image. Those are small scale studies and so generally they have covered limited areas of tourism marketing. This study has attempted to integrate the most relevant factors of tourism marketing in Bangladesh perspective. Other 232 articles have

⁷⁰ Nazia Nabi and Shituma Zaman, "The Sources and Availability of Information for Tourists: A Study on Tourism Sector of Bangladesh," *World Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (March 2014), 154-166.

⁷¹ Md. Anisur Rahman, "Development of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: Issues and Strategies" (PhD Thesis, University of Dhaka, 2015), 7.

⁷² Md. Jakir Hossain, *Promotional Measures in Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh*. PhD Thesis, (Dhaka : University of Dhaka, 2015).

been reviewed to gain insights of the tourism marketing of home and abroad. Those were very helpful to design and enrich the study.

Research gap: Some articles and theses have been produced on the tourism issues of Bangladesh and tourism marketing. But no paper has addressed the issues, strategies, and challenges together in the perspective of Bangladesh. For this reason, the researcher would like to contribute in this area (*Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges*) so that some meaningful contributions can be made for the development of tourism sector of Bangladesh.

Chapter 03

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three is mainly divided into two sections: The conceptual framework and research methodology. In the 'conceptual framework' portion the researcher has tried to explain how the process of 'tourism marketing' does function in this sector. Closely connected issues (which have influence or impact) have been presented in a diagram. Before that, the key concepts or terms relating to the study have been explained from different points of view. In addition to the opinion of the renowned scholars, the observation or understanding of the researcher has also been reflected.

In the 'Methodology' section the issues related to conducting the research have been presented. The philosophies which have influence on the researcher, used methods with arguments and considerable alternative approaches are stated in this section. It also presents the key methodological components which helps to achieve the stated research objectives. Logical arguments have also been shown in favor of the used methods. The basic research types and how those can be used in this study have been discussed for deeper understanding.

The data collection procedure, the study population, sampling frame, survey and interview procedures, analytical tools and techniques, reliability and validity measures adopted in this research have been explained. Step by step functions have been narrated so that the readers of the thesis can get better insights. Limitations of the study are also made clear to avoid ambiguity.

3.0 Introduction

As a notion of social science research, each term and concept might have different explanations. The marketing practitioners use many terms to function properly in their workplace. To conduct this study, the researcher has used such many terms, concepts, and notions. To avoid ambiguity among its readers as well as having deeper understanding, the researcher has studied in detail on those issues.

These might have different meanings but what is meant by the given term in this study, have been explained in detail. Basically explanation of the key terms, how the study has been conducted, which methods have been used, why those methods seem appropriate for this study, the scope and limitations and other relevant issues have been clearly stated so that others become convinced about the used terminologies as well as methodological approaches. The following sections have presented those issues in brief.

3.1 The Conceptual Framework

The ‘conceptual framework’ section is divided into two major sections. Firstly, the key terms have been explained with the established or recognized definitions. To some extent, there is diversity among the contents of the definitions. In those cases, after reviewing the definitions, the opinion of the researcher has been added so that the reader can understand what exactly is meant by the term in this thesis. In the second portion, through a diagram, the interaction process among the key elements of ‘tourism marketing’ in Bangladesh has been shown.

Additional notes, regarding the interrelations have also been added to connect the discussed issues. The core concepts have been explained in the thesis and how those are inter-related to each other has been presented in a logical manner. It has guided the researcher throughout the process to conduct the study. It is expected that these explanations will help to understand as well as answer all the conceptual framework related issues of the study.

3.1.1 Explanation of the key terms

As an element of social science research, a terminology might have different meaning or understanding in different places. Besides, the reputed authors and established researchers emphasize on different aspects of a process or function. So having a different opinion about the same notion is not impossible at all. To explain in what sense – the term has been used in this thesis, have been explained in this section. The used terms of this thesis bear a specific meaning. To comprehend the discussed issues from the researcher's point of view, the following terms have been defined as well as explained. In case of having multiple established meanings, the term used in this thesis has been presented to ensure clarity and to minimize ambiguity among its readers.

3.1.1.1 Tourism and tourist

As a multi-sectoral discipline of study, the experts of different fields have defined 'tourism' from their own point of view. As a result, a wide range of elements is included in the diverse definitions of this term. Among those, the mostly cited and commonly used definition is given by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). According to this organization,

“Tourism comprises the activities of person's traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”¹

Earlier, the traveling for absolute leisure purposes would be treated as tourism. Only pleasure trips in particular places would generally be counted as tourism activity. But gradually the scope of tourism activities is being much wider. Even some usual travels are being treated as part of tourism. For example—medical tourism, sports tourism, dark tourism, visiting family and friends are important types of modern tourism.

Though tourism evolved in the ancient period, in recent days it has drawn much attention as a field of study. Especially in developing countries like Bangladesh, the policymakers, investors, tourists, and academia are interested in talking and working on the issue. In spite of having its diversified and wider value-added forms in modern days, the historical roots of tourism can be traced back almost of the origins of civilization.²As

¹ Note: UN World Tourism Organization has reviewed this definition in 1992 which is subsequently ratified by the UN Statistical Commission in 1994.

² Stephen Page, *Tourism Management: Managing for Change*. Oxford: Elsevier, 2007, 29.

a multi-sectoral discipline of study, the experts of different fields have contributions to define and redefine the term ‘tourism’ from their own perspective. As a result, a wide range of elements is included in the available definitions of tourism. Some of those have been mentioned here to understand actually what tourism is.

Table 3.1: Definitions of Tourism

Dictionary meaning	Tourism is the business of providing services such as transport, places to stay or entertainment for people who are on holiday. ³
G. P. Raju	Tourism arises from the movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations. ⁴
Stephen Page	Tourism is the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. ⁵
Goeldner& Ritchie	Tourism is a composite of activities, services, and industries that deliver a travel experience: transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities, and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are traveling away from home. ⁶
Horner and Swarbrooke	A short-term movement of people to places some distance from their normal place of residence to indulge in pleasurable activities. It may also involve travel for business purposes. ⁷
Tourism society	Tourism is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and their activities during the stay at these destinations. ⁸

³ Cambridge University Press, *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 3rd edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1540.

⁴ G. P. Raju, *Tourism Marketing and Management*. (Delhi: Manglam Publications, 2009), 2.

⁵ Stephen Page, *Tourism Management: Managing for Change*. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007), 10.

⁶ Charles R. Goeldner and J. R. Brent Ritchie, *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. 10th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 5.

⁷ S. Horner and J. Swarbrooke, *Marketing Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure in Europe*. International Thomson Business Press, 1996.

⁸ Les Lumsdon, *Marketing for Tourism: Case Study Assignments*. (London: MacMillan Education, 1992), xi.

All the above mentioned definitions of tourism have emphasized on moving from the home or their usual work environment. The 'study' should not be much longer than a year. During the tenure they will receive required services of the host community. In earlier days, the purpose of the visit would also be taken into consideration to treat it as tourism or not. But now to define the term, the purposes are not being considered so seriously. Taking part in business, treatment, pilgrims, training programs etc. are also being considered as tourism. Because now people have less leisure period, more tasks. So they are trying to integrate the work and leisure together. For this reason, the scope of tourism has increased more than ever.

In the modern world, the term 'travel' and 'tourism' are used interchangeably among the tourism practitioners. But most of the experts think that travel is a part of the tourism process. It has a much wider meaning and functional area. Travel industry is an integral part of the entire tourism sector. It supplements or adds value in significant volume to the tourism process. It is noted that 'tourism' refers to all activities of visitors, including both 'tourists (overnight visitors)' and 'same day visitors.' Hospitality is another closely associated term to the tourism sector. Nowadays people not only travel to see the places, rather they would like to enjoy hospitable entertainment and wellness services of the host community. This trend is being expanded rapidly all over the world.

To explain the scope of tourism some authors have emphasized on 'journey' and 'stay including activities' in the destination. The tendency of visiting any place for a very short time is also increasing. Visiting with family and friends are also increasing in a mentionable volume. For the improvement of transportation and communication systems, the pace of roaming around has been increased than the earlier days. According to other researchers—time, money, inclination and means are the basis form which the tourism industry of today has developed.⁹ Nowadays people of most societies are earning a good amount of money. Their consumption patterns are being changed. They are capable enough to fulfill their wishes of traveling to the attractive tourism destinations worldwide. It has enhanced the volume of tourism all over the world.

The people who are involved in traveling activities, they are treated as tourists. To some extent, to be considered as a tourist, there are some conditions like staying overnight in the visited place. Otherwise, they are called as the same day visitor. In this

⁹ Sharron Dickman, *Tourism: An Introductory Text*. 2nd edition. (New South Wales: EdwardcArnold Australia, 1994), 13.

study, the commonly accepted rule has been followed. To select the respondents for questionnaire survey, generally they have been interviewed who passed at least a night in the visited place during the tour. The number of same day visitors is huge in Bangladesh. There are no specific statistics on this issue, but roughly about half of the tourists might be the same day visitor. Picnic of educational institutions in the winter season are the best example of it. Other organizations also organize such events which can be completed in the same day without staying at night.

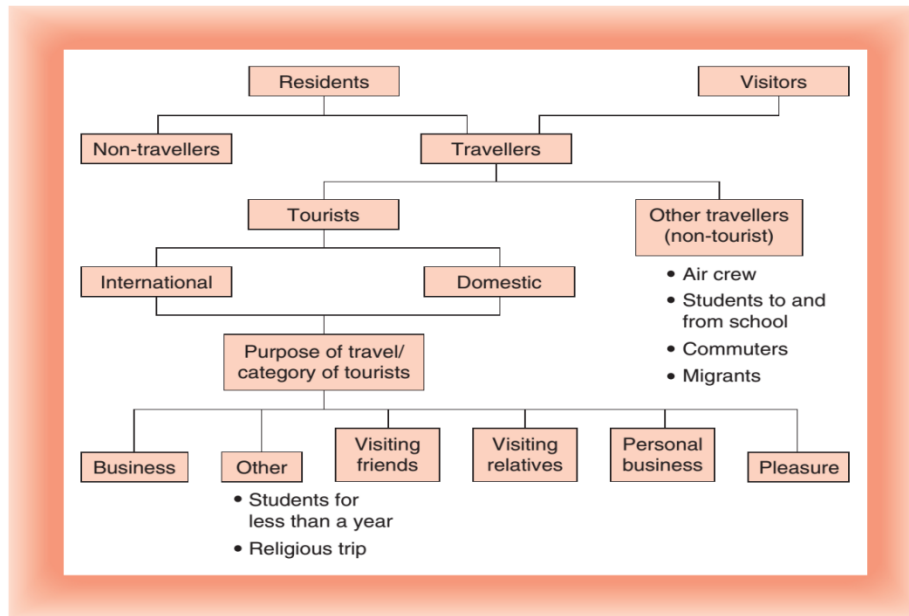
Generally they go to the nearby tourist spots alone or with the family and friends. They (the same day visitors) also have a significant contribution in the tourism sector of Bangladesh. The nearest business enterprises get benefits from their visits which encourage them to enrich their offerings for the tourists of those spots. To grow a place as a tourist spot, the same day visitors have to show the path as innovators. When they prove that the place is really beautiful and worth visiting, then the distant tourists wish to go there and discover more attractions gradually. There are many spots in Bangladesh where there are no accommodation facilities but a huge number of visitors go there in the tourism season of that region. For example—Bichanakandi, Ratargul, Paharpurvihara are widely visited places where maximum numbers are the same day visitors.

The same day visitors (also called excursionists) have a significant role in the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Because a good number of people visit a place for a few hours or a day. They can not be ignored as they hire transportations, take meals in the nearest restaurants, buy handicrafts and souvenir items and so many other things. So, they have a significant contribution in the tourism industry. For this reason, to do any plan for a particular spot, same day visitors' needs also should be addressed.

Classification of the Tourists

Tourists are the center of all tourism related thinking. To plan on any tourism related issues, at first they have to consider the perspective of the potential tourists. Being introduced with their classification will be helpful to understand the relevant things. Tourists can be classified in different ways; the following categories are accepted by most of the tourism researchers:

Figure 3.1: Classification of the tourists



Source: Stephen Page, *Tourism Management: Managing for Change*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007), 11.

This figure shows that among the total travelers—a significant portion is not tourists. For their daily purpose, they have to visit the place or travel through particular transportation services. Crew of different transportation vehicles, students who stay and study in a particular place, regular passengers of tourists carrying transportation vehicles, migrants and many others can not be counted as tourists of that geographic area. The purpose of their traveling is totally different from the conventional tourists. All of those issues have to take into consideration to design marketing plans as well as strategies.

3.1.1.2 Marketing

The idea of marketing was introduced as ‘the commodity school of thought’ in the Adam Smith’s epic book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). It was also explained that ‘Consumption is the sole end and purpose of production...’ In recent days Marketing is a distinguishing field of study. But even in fifty years back, it was treated as a part of Management. Before that it would be considered as a major section of Economics. For this reason, to explain the marketing issues, the influences of Management and Economics are noticeable. Huge research on marketing is being all over the world and so the efficiency and effectiveness of the marketing practitioners are being increased in a mentionable volume.

In the initial stage, marketing would be treated as the activities of shifting goods from the manufacturer to the ultimate consumers. Generally the tasks of a marketer would be started after the physical production of the goods. Even, to the most practitioners, Marketing would be treated as the functions of promotional activities. But with the change of time, the scope and its contribution has been much wider. Now it is being considered as a never ending (cyclic) process in the dynamic organizations. After ultimate consumption, collecting the feedback of the consumers is one of the most important tasks of the marketers. Based on those opinions of the consumers, they redesign or modify the offers for the target market.

For this reason, in the current perspective, “Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.”¹⁰ Though the desired outcome of the process is ‘sale’, the span of modern marketing is much broader which was beyond imagination even just in two or three decades ago. In last decade, the focus was to maximizing profits through using marketing activities. By realizing its significance, nowadays even the non-profit organizations and social activists are keenly interested to use the marketing tools to gain the desired success. Even in personal level, through using different web based tools, they are trying to be successful. Marketing helps a lot in this regard.

In the primitive stage of development, only the large and profitable business organizations would use ‘marketing’ to achieve the organizational goals. Earlier, most of the organizations would think that they have no or limited ability to spend huge amounts of money this purpose. Even a few decades ago, they were reluctant to invest time and money to be successful in the market. On the other hand, many entrepreneurs would be caught in the ‘mouse-trap fallacy.’ They would sincerely believe that ‘if their product

¹⁰ Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing*, 15th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2014), 27.

quality is high, people will find out them' even if they stay in the jungle.¹¹ The followers of this notion are not few and they are scattered all over the world. Many Bangladeshi marketers strongly do follow this concept and generally they do follow in the long run.

Based on this concept, they would concentrate only on 'the quality of product'—instead of emphasizing on marketing activities. But with the expansion of 'free market' culture in the western world, the usage of marketing has increased in a significant volume. Only having quality products is not enough today, efficient marketing activities are highly needed to be successful and to make the organization sustainable. Many giant organizations have failed in recent days as they failed to identify the target market and to reach them as per the necessity. The experienced and skilled marketers can understand the market situation and take steps as per the situation demands. In this way, an organization can expand their market size gradually and enter into more marketplaces.

The pace of globalization has expedited the volume as well as the scope of marketing activities. The revolution in transportation and communication sectors has added pace with this trend. The stiff competition has made the marketers compelled to keep significant allocation for marketing their products as well as organization. Nowadays most of the organizations, even many individuals, are being compassionate enough about marketing activities—both in the designing offers as well as managing the demand.¹² The evidence of marketing activity surrounds us like the air we breathe; it is not restricted to products with prices.¹³ Indirect efforts are not less counted today besides the direct marketing efforts to reach to the stakeholders. This tendency is increasing the cost of products which is not good for the competition in the modern world.

There is limited knowledge or 'misconception' among the general people, even among the practitioners, about the term—Marketing. Most of them consider 'selling' or even 'advertising' synonymous to the term marketing. But those are very fractional perception of marketing like the 'watching elephant by the blind men'. Marketing has a wider impact on the modern life of all people and business organizations. Marketing can be understood from different points of views. Some of the recognized definitions are cited here to conceive the key essence.

¹¹ <https://www.business.com/articles/5-reasons-why-product-quality-matters/>

¹² Victor T C Middleton et al., *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 11.

¹³ *Ibid*, 22-23.

Table 3.2: Definitions of Marketing

Dictionary meaning	Marketing is a job that involves encouraging people to buy a product or service. ¹⁴
Chartered Institute of Marketing	Marketing is the management function which organizes and directs all those business activities involved in assessing customer needs and converting customer purchasing power into effective demand for a specific product or service, and in moving that product or service to the final consumer or user so as to achieve the profit target or other objective set by the company or other organization. ¹⁵
Kotler & Keller	Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. ¹⁶
Peter Drucker	The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim is to know and understand customers so well that the product or service fits them and sells itself. ¹⁷
Kotler & Keller	Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and society, resulting in strong customer relationships that capture value from the customers in return. ¹⁸
AMA Definition	Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large. ¹⁹
Carl Dysinger	Marketing is finding out what the consumer want sand selling it to him at a profit. ²⁰
Scott Bedbury	Marketing is the process by which resources are brought to bear against opportunities and threats. ²¹
Roger & Steve	The activity for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that benefit customers, the organization, its stakeholders, and society at large. ²²

¹⁴ Cambridge University Press, *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionanry*. 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 877.

¹⁵ J Christopher Holloway, *Marketing for Tourism*. 4th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2004), 7.

¹⁶ Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, *A Framework for Marketing Management*. 6th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2016), 26.

¹⁷ Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. (New York: Harper & Raw, 1973), 64-65.

¹⁸ Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, *Marketing Management*. 15th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2016), 10.

¹⁹ Victor T C Middleton et al., *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, 21.

²⁰ G. P. Raju, *Tourism Marketing and Management*, 119.

²¹ Scott Bedbury, *A New Brand World*. (New York: Penguin, 2002), 153.

The above mentioned definitions have one common thing. That is to identify the need of the target market and to fill that offering product and services at profit. Besides, creating long term relationships also get priority. Attempt to create a win-win situation is noticed in the activities of the modern marketers. Because encouraging repeat purchase is less costly than finding out a new customer. For this reason, the marketers now emphasize on creating, communicating and delivering required value to the target customers. If a marketer can identify a single problem which is critical to the target market and offer its solution, she/he will be successful in the long run.

In any organization, conflicts among the various departments are not unusual. Most of the employees think that their department plays the most significant role to run or to do well in the organization. Without their valuable contribution, it will not be able to carry out its function properly in the long run. As a result, the trend of not giving sufficient allocation of resources or trying to deem others' performance is seen very often. In the long run, it harms the functioning process of the entire organization. The reason is: marketing can not function effectively unless it has the support and cooperation of all departments of the organization.²³ Other departments of many organizations do not cooperate properly as the success of the marketers is visible than many other departments. For this reason, the marketers have always to face the challenges of inside as well as outside of the organization.²⁴

Marketing originated in the first half of the last century in the USA. After approximately 50 years of its evolution, the UK and other European industrialist nations adopted it.²⁵ Initially, the process was highly used in case of manufacturing industries. But gradually the service organizations have realized its significance and actually they have been able to bring out its best. Now marketing is analyzed from different points of views and scientific methods are applied to make it more effective. As a result, it is a widely studied subject in the universities—all over the world. Many expert marketers have combined the 'science' and 'art' altogether to gain maximum outcomes from the process. Tourism as a service industry started to apply the marketing concept in the late 1960s and 1970s.²⁶

²² Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*. 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016), 4.

²³ J Christopher Holloway, *Marketing for Tourism*. 4th ed. Essex: (Pearson Education, 2004), 7.

²⁴ John J. Burnett, *Core Concepts of Marketing*. (Zurich: Jacobs Foundation, 2008), 108.

²⁵ Wulff Plinke, The Core Concept of Marketing Management. In M. Kleinaltenkamp, W. Plinke, I. Wilkinson, & I. Geiger, *Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Marketing: Mastering Business Markets*. (2015: 77-127). Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-12463-6_2.

²⁶ J Christopher Holloway, *Marketing for Tourism*, 8.

3.1.1.3 Tourism marketing

In the previous section, the terms have been explained separately. When both the terms (tourism and marketing) come together, the meaning does not change widely. But in the sense of synergy, the combined term 'tourism marketing' undoubtedly makes a special meaning. All the tasks of marketing tourism products are considered as tourism marketing. As a service product 'marketing of tourism' products is comparatively a tough issue to the marketers.

On the other hand, for the distinctive nature, tourism can not be marketed as like other physical goods and services. Because in those cases, generally a particular agency or body is responsible for performing marketing tasks of the given firm. But in the case of tourism, especially in the developing countries like Bangladesh, it is not clear who is supposed to perform the tasks of marketing of tourism products. In that case, tourism marketing becomes sometimes a 'vague term.' Gradually it is forming a shape as per the practices of the developed or industrialized nations.

In case of developed nations, it becomes comparatively easier because they form powerful DMOs (Destination Management Organizations) who are clearly assigned to design the product offers, to promote, to distribute and to measure the effectiveness of the taken initiatives by the active stakeholders. Though there is ambiguity regarding the terms tourism and tourism marketing, there are diverse definitions of this term. For this study, the following definitions have been considered as suitable:

The functions operated by the destination management authority to make its tourism products and services acceptable to the target groups can be treated as tourism marketing.

Earlier the companies would try to offer products for all potential customers. But after adopting the marketing concept, they have learnt that people actually do not buy the products. Rather they pay for the benefits offered through the product. So, the attitude has been changed toward product offering. The main focus of a product is—what is being offered through this product? Now the fourth generation of marketing is going on. Initially it was product-driven (1.0), then it shifted to customer-centric (2.0) marketing. After that its focus was human-centric (3.0) marketing. The marketing 4.0 is a marketing approach that combines online and offline interaction between companies and customers.²⁷

²⁷ Philip Kotler, Hermawan Kartajaya, and Iwan Setiawan, *Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital*. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 46.

3.1.1.4 Strategy

Strategy is a commonly used term in all academic and nonacademic arenas. As the intensity of competition is increasing, the application of strategies is also expanding all over the world. Each discipline understands ‘strategy’ from its own point of view. In case of marketing, as an inevitable consequence of the expansion of global marketing activity the usages of strategies are increasing.²⁸ Segmentation, targeting, positioning, differentiation, focus are the commonly used marketing strategies.

Besides, there are many strategies of each discipline like pricing, sales promotion, branding etcetera. Through rapid expansion of technologies, the effectiveness of earlier strategies is being reduced. So, continuously introducing new strategies have been required to stay in the competition. Otherwise, after a few days, it becomes tough to survive in this dynamic sector.

*Strategy is where you will focus your efforts to achieve your goals, and how you will succeed.*²⁹

To reach in the expected position within the given period of time, the strategy can really be helpful for the marketing practitioners. Among the competitors who can use this efficiently generally they become successful. Overall marketing strategies are now segmented in many small fractions to ensure micro focus and to avoid unwanted pitfalls. To execute a company’s competitive strategy, all these functions play a role, and each must develop its own strategy. Here, strategy refers to what each process or function will try to do particularly well.³⁰

²⁸ Warren J. Keegan, *Global Marketing Management*. 7th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 308 .

²⁹ <https://www.braintraffic.com/articles/what-is-strategy-and-why-should-you-care>

³⁰ Sunil Chopra & Peter Mendi, *Supply Chain Management: Strategy, Planning, and Operation*. (Noida: Pearson Education, 2016), 32.

Table 3.3: Definitions of Strategy

Christopher Holloway	Strategy is a company's game plan for achieving its goals. ³¹
Les Lumsdon	The term 'strategy', derived from military terminology, relates to the way in which an organization seeks to meet its objectives and usually refers to the main lines of direction, statements which explain how things are made to happen over a given timescale. ³²
Kotler, Bowen, and Make	Marketing strategy, the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create the customer value and achieve profitable relationships. ³³
Roger & Steve	An organization's long-term course of action designed to deliver a unique customer experience while achieving its goals. ³⁴
Nigel, David & George	A strategy is usually taken to mean the process that is performed in order to close the gap between where an organization is now and where it aims to be in the future. ³⁵

All of the definitions emphasized on achieving organizational goals. Strategy helps to do this task successfully. Actually the vision of an organization guides the marketers to design the strategic game plan. If it works, they become successful. In the case of tourism business, strategic actions are highly needed. Because it is a service oriented business which demands special care and attention of the tourists.

For a firm to succeed, all functional strategies must support one another and the competitive strategy.³⁶ If that can not be ensured, simply the outcomes will be different. To formulate an effective marketing strategy 'customer analysis' is a must. In the case of tourism marketing, the approach is not different at all. Through proper tourist analysis, an effective strategy can be formulated. The culture of doing such research in Bangladesh is

³¹ Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, *Marketing Management*, 74.

³² Les Lumsdon, *Marketing for Tourism: Case Study Assignments*. (London: MacMillan Education, 1992): 1.

³³ Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2014), 108.

³⁴ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*. 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016), 25.

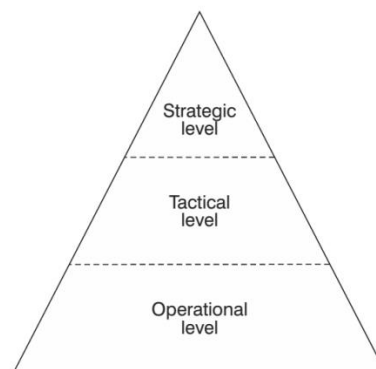
³⁵ Nigel Evans, David Campbell, and George Stonehouse, *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. (Burlington MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003), 397.

³⁶ Sunil Chopra & Peter Mendi. *Supply Chain Management: Strategy, Planning, and Operation*, 32.

somehow absent. For this reason, in many cases, the tourism initiatives fail that make others frustrated regarding the investments in this sector.

Overall advantage or disadvantage results from all a company's activities, not only in a few.³⁷ For this reason, choosing strategy and action according to that is very essential. Otherwise, when the negative results will appear, nothing will be left to escape. All of the activities of an effective organization must be based on planned and strategic moves. Without this, it is really tough to be successful in this era of stiff competition. Though strategy is very useful for the organizations, it can be applicable to business within the defined boundaries. If the boundaries are changed the outcomes of the strategic actions might be changed. Such changes generally affect a delimited area of demand and competition.³⁸ Marketing strategy is the means by which a marketing goal is to be achieved, usually characterized by a specified target market and a marketing program to reach it.³⁹

Figure 3.2: Levels of strategic decision making (where strategy works)



Source: Nigel Evans, David Campbell, and George Stonehouse, *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. (Burlington MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003), 13.

In the case of tourism marketing in Bangladesh, weaknesses in all levels are noticed. Basically, the upper tier (strategic level) has to take it seriously. Then the rest of the levels will be compelled to comply with the upper level strategic issues. According to nature, without their initiatives, it is tough to work.

³⁷ Harvard Business School, *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Strategy*. (Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2011).

³⁸ Peter Doyle and Philip Stern, *Marketing Management and Strategy*. 3rd ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2006), 20.

³⁹ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*. 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016), 40.

3.1.1.5 Consumer behavior

With the changing socio-economic condition, free flow of information, changing taste and preferences of the consumers and so many factors have made the behavior pattern of the modern consumers. For this reason, consumer behavior is a matter of great concern for marketers all over the world. Without understanding their behavior patterns, it is about impossible to design the product, ensure physical distribution, setting price, and combining promotional mix. In case of tourism research, consumer behavior is treated as tourist behavior. But there is no basic difference between these two notions. For understanding the term consumer behavior, the following definitions have been taken:

Table 3.4: Definitions of consumer behavior

Leon G. Schiffman	Consumer behaviour is the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. ⁴⁰
David L Loudon, and Albert J. Della Bitta	Consumer behaviour is the decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services. ⁴¹
Hoyer & MacInnis	Consumer behavior is the study of the processes involved when consumers acquire, consume and dispose of goods, services, activities, ideas in order to satisfy their needs and desires. ⁴²
Roger & Steve	The actions a person takes in purchasing and using products and services, including the mental and social processes that come before and after these actions. ⁴³

The above mentioned definitions have one common point. That is behavior or response patterns of the consumers before, during, and after the consumption of the product. When they are involved in this process, they always scan and release their emotions. It ultimately guides their future behavior toward the product or brand. For tourism products, this behavior pattern becomes more important to the marketer because the consumption process is lengthy and directly interactive with the service providers. The consumer behavior determines the success or failure of the business.

⁴⁰ Leon G. Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behaviour*. 10th ed. (Noida: Dorling Kindersley, 2010), 5.

⁴¹ David L Loudon and Albert J. Della Bitta, *Consumer Behavior*. 4th ed. (New Delhi: Tata_McGraw-Hill, 2002), 5.

⁴² Wayne D. Hoyer, and Deborah J. MacInnis, *Consumer Behavior*. 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 3.

⁴³ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*, 88.

To a marketer, the behavior of the consumers is very important. Based on the ability of understanding the consumers, generally the success or failure of a marketer is determined. Nowadays the customers have huge bargaining power as well as the option of switching to the other suppliers or sources. So, making them satisfied through providing services is a great challenge. Moreover, a study shows that on average, a customer who is dissatisfied shares their negative feelings with approximately ten other individuals.⁴⁴ On the other hand, if they are satisfied with the product and service quality, they consider it as normal and generally do not share with others. For this reason, in this era of netizens, the scope of negative virality is much greater than the positive one,

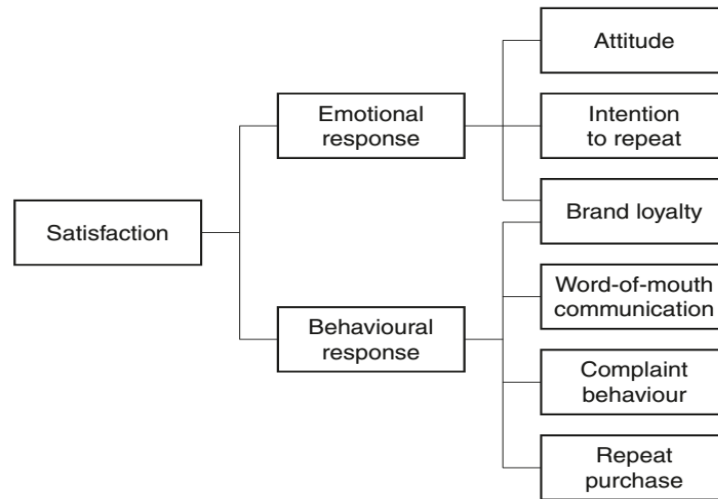
The complexity increases when the consumer does not buy the product directly. It means 'consumer' and 'customer' are different individuals. The knowledge level, perception, attitude toward the product might be totally different between the two persons. In that case, as a marketer – whom should we target? It's a worldwide uttered tough and complex question. For example: for a baby product like *chips* or *juice* who should be the target of promotional activities? Though the kids are ultimate consumers, the parents are the authority to buy the product or not. In most of the cases, the kids perceive such products as very good, tasty and enjoyable. On the other hand, maximum guardians feel that those are harmful to the health of their children. But million packs of chips and juices are being sold each year!

The reason is: though the customers perceive it as injurious, the consumers feel it is very useful. And the consumers are more 'powerful' in case of today's decision-making pattern. Besides, consumers and customers are influenced by so many groups who do not pay for the product, but their decisions are taken as the key factor of purchasing the product or not. So, only considering the consumers as the key player is not justified enough in modern days. Rather the groups like *opinion leaders* have a great impact on ultimate purchase decisions. In the case of tourism products, it is about the same as physical goods or other services. Because many tourists now critically review others' opinion and experience regarding the destination or the specific resort. So, the classic models of consumer behavior work here the same.

⁴⁴ Hayden Noel, *Basic Marketing: Consumer Behaviour*, 23.

In the upcoming days, tourism business will undergo major changes as a result of new trends observed in the new emerging consumers.⁴⁵ Why is it important to produce a satisfied consumer? The reason is that it gives immense pleasure and converts them (existing customers) into voluntary advocates of the organization. It is unveiled in this way:

Figure 3.3: Behavioral and emotional responses to satisfaction



Source: Peter Mudie and Angela Pirrie, *Services Marketing Management*. 3rd ed. (Burlington: Elsevier, 2006), 240.

For this reason, marketers are working hard to produce satisfied consumers by investing their all efforts. The first target is to gain their positive emotional response. If it is possible, though they do not repeat, they will recommend others to receive the service of that organization which has a huge contribution in business success. The opposite side is also obvious in this regard. Their negative experiences will be spoken louder than the positive ones. So, producing satisfied tourists is highly required to get rid of negative publicity.

⁴⁵ Carlos Costa and Dimitrios Buhalis, "Introduction." In *Tourism Management Dynamics: Trends, Management and Tools*, by Dimitrios Buhalis, (Burlington: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006), 1-5.

3.1.1.6 Services and its marketing

The significance of the service sector is increasing rapidly all over the world. Even in some economies like the USA the contribution of this sector is more than three fourth (75 percent)!⁴⁶ In the economy of Bangladesh, this trend is also growing. More than 50 percent of the GDP is contributed by this (e.g. airlines, rail-roads, educational institutions, hospitals, bank and insurance companies) growing sector.⁴⁷ Though hospitality and tourism have a small contribution in the economy of Bangladesh, it is growing gradually.

In modern days, it is tough for most of the products, to clearly distinguish between goods and services. By nature, maximum offers include both the physical goods and services in substantial volume. For example– to be successful in Fast-food outlets, advertising agencies, airlines, automobiles, restaurants and so many similar business organizations, combination of tangible and intangible spectrums are very important. Excellence in either side is not enough to be successful in the long run in most of the businesses.

Table 3.5: Definitions of services

Valarie A. Zeithaml et al.	All economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction, is generally consumed at the time it is produced, and provides added value in forms (such as convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort, or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser. ⁴⁸
Roger & Steve	Intangible activities or benefits that an organization provides to satisfy consumers' needs in exchange for money or something else of value. ⁴⁹

These definitions indicate the treat as well as opportunity of the tourism marketers. If the special features of service products can be addressed properly, it brings a huge opportunity for them. Otherwise, it can be the reason for failure. So, tourism marketers are always service providers who have to deal with the highly expected demands of intangible products. As a leading service industry, many organizations enjoy competitive advantage through offering special benefits.

⁴⁶ Robert D Reid and David C. Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*. 4th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 45.

⁴⁷ Economic Survey Reports, GOB, Dhaka (<https://mof.gov.bd/site/page/44e399b3-d378-41aa-86ff-8c4277eb0990/Bangladesh-Economic-Review-Archive>)

⁴⁸ Robert D Reid and David C. Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*, 45.

⁴⁹ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*, 214.

Tourism sector is much different than other traditional service sectors. In case of accommodation, education, health, or transportation services the customers are compelled to receive the provided services. In most of the cases, there might not be better alternative options without taking the provided services. But in case of tourism, it is not a mandatory product. Besides, most of the consumed services are 'psychological'. They spend huge amounts, accept physical pains of traveling to the spot and other costs only to gain mental peace.

In that situation, it is really tough to make and keep them satisfied throughout the tour by providing services as per their expectation. Before taking the final decision, they do not see or taste any physical substance. Only some visualized elements like video and pictures drive them to reach the destination. If they find any gap between expectation and the actual services, they become dissatisfied with the service providers. And if one becomes unhappy, it is a really tough job to make them satisfied through providing the pre-set services.

In case of service marketing, place or distribution is the most important consideration.⁵⁰ As one of the most important characteristics of service products is inseparability. For this reason, through proper distribution, it can be reached to the wider marketplace. In the case of hospitality and tourism business, it is highly applicable. The marketers who attempt to make satisfied only a small niche, they can ignore this philosophy. But in most cases, through proper distribution they would like to offer services to the customers of new geographic locations. The international hotel chains, travel agents, and parks do it very much.

Marketing of service products is much more challenging than other traditional goods. Because its distinguishing characteristics (e.g. intangibility, heterogeneity or variability, simultaneous production and consumption, perishability, search experience, and credence qualities) always make it tougher to show, present, and explain to the potential customers. And for this reason, the gap might be created from customers' side or providers' side. The customer gap is the difference between customer expectations and perceptions. On the other hand, the providers' gap might be: The listening gap, the service design and standards gap, the service performance gap, the communication gap.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*, 263.

⁵¹ Valarie A. Zeithaml, Mary Jo Bitner, Dwayne D. Gremler, and Ajay Pandit, *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm*. 6th ed. (New Delhi: McGraw Hill Education, 2013), 38-39.

3.1.1.7 The motivations behind travel and tourism

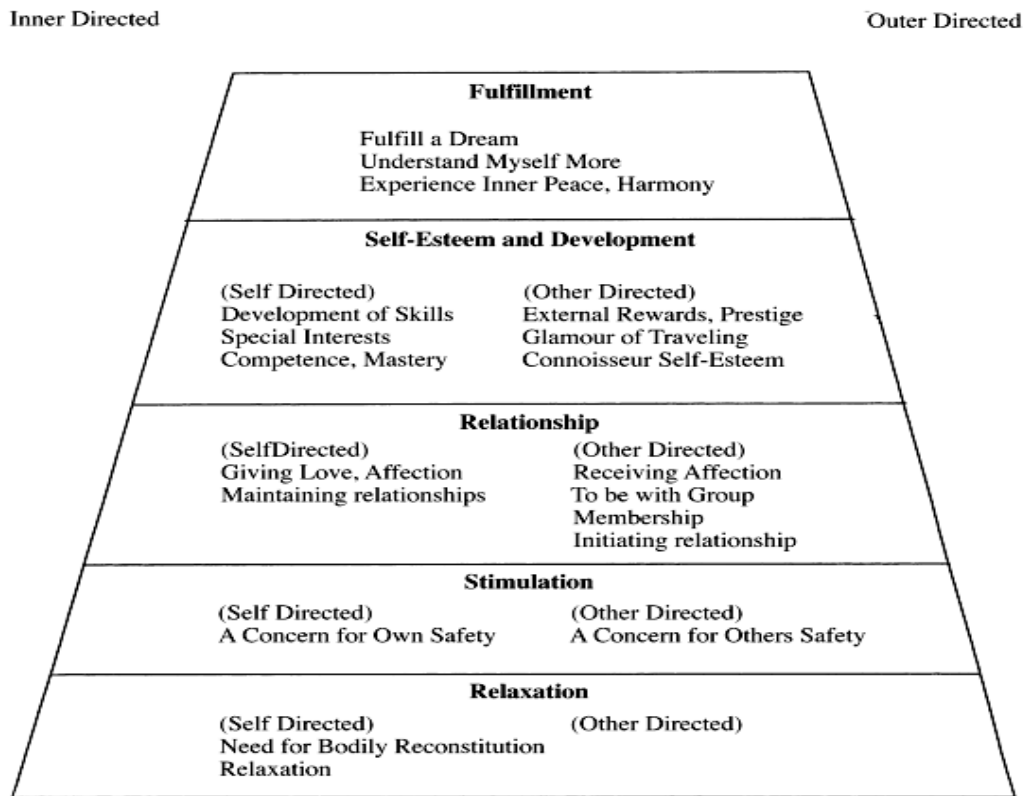
The history of traveling is as old as human civilization. People travel around the world for different causes and motivations. Even in many cases, the reasons are not clear to the traveler himself. In that situation simply the question might arise—why people travel? To find out the answer to this core question, we have to be introduced with the motivations that drive a person or a group of people to travel to various destinations. It is simply assumed that as the characteristics of human beings are quite dissimilar; their motivations are also different from one to another. Researchers are trying to find out the reasons. Some research findings can also help to draw conclusions from the available answers.

Maslow explained the stages of the hierarchy of needs as: Physiological needs (air, food, drink, shelter, sex, sleep), Safety needs (protection, security, law, stability), Belongingness and love needs (family, affection, relationships), Esteem needs (achievement, status, responsibility, reputation), and Self actualization (personal growth and fulfillment) needs. Besides, Abraham Maslow has mentioned additional two issues: *Aesthetic need* and the *need to know and understand* (these two elements are less known as those factors are not mentioned in the discussed hierarchy model). Tourism researchers think that the drive of traveling generally starts in the third level of this model. But the lastly mentioned two issues are more important from the tourism point of view. Some researchers have found that people travel to learn about something new, and to be exposed to objects of beauty.⁵²

C. Ryan has explained the motivations of traveling from another point of view. In his model, he has basically emphasized the social needs of human beings. Many inner and outer directed factors drive them to visit from one place to another. Implied and expressed so many factors have a significant role behind traveling to any place. The tourism marketers try to understand those motivational factors and design their products accordingly. When the secret motivations and product offerings come to the similar point, the decision becomes quick and fruitful for both the parties.

⁵² Cathy H. C. Hsu and Songshan (Sam) Huang, "Travel Motivation: a Critical Review of the Concept's Development." In *Tourism Management: Analysis, Behaviour and Strategy*, by A. Woodside and D. Martin, (Oxfordshire: CAB International, 2008), 14-27.

Figure 3.4: The Ladder Model of Tourism



Source: C. Ryan, "The Travel Career Ladder: An Appraisal." *Annals of Tourism Research* 25, no. 4 (1998), 936-957.

Based on this model, people travel to get physical relaxation directly. In modern days, they are being exhausted for physical and mental workload. After a few days, they become so bored that they need some relaxation time and activities that will recharge them to do more tasks in the upcoming weeks. There are many options for doing so but most of them like to travel and stay in a new place where they are totally out of the daily familiar environment.

In many cases, they become compelled to do or take part in such activities. Their office colleagues, friends or family members arrange such tours and they become part of it. But enjoying some relaxed moments drive them to be part of the venture. The trend of unipolar families has made the task comparatively easy. Now they can move forward within a short notice even for a very short period of time. Even a good number of highly earning people are now 'single'. They can start a journey without having so called preparation. It expedites the speed of traveling all over the world.

To step forward for any tour, the safety and security of him or her comes first. Without getting confirmation of this level, they do not move forward. Even the 'adventure

seekers' consider it first. Because after returning from the tour, they would like to share the experience with others happily. If anything creates the chance of not coming back safely, few of them go for the venture. So, in the second phase, safety of the travelers becomes the most significant consideration.

To ensure it, many of them are interested to pay extra for the trip or even feel comfortable to pay an insurance premium. In countries like Bangladesh, people are more skeptical about going outdoors. The alarming high rate of road accidents and other social unrests make them anxious before starting any journey to a new place. Though the trend of traveling mass people in the new tourist attractions is increasing, the anxiety and tensions are not being reduced as well.

During the tour, building relationships is a great motivation. Most of the people feel comfort to be acquainted with new people in the new places of this earth. Basically when people travel to distinctive places, they feel open minded and positive to the people and surrounding environment. Creating long term relations with at least some service providers and other travelers also become natural to the tourists. It gives them the feelings of being enriched and connected to the fellow travelers. Initiatives might come from either side. Most of the cases, the service providers create the scope and others respond. It helps to generate new trips and other visits to the tour loving people whose greatest motivations are to gain self esteem and personal development.

People are traveling now around the world to be enriched and to be skilled. It gives both sides of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Such activities make them happy to get the chance to learn new things and be more competent than before. On the other hand, it enhances their social recognition, gains awards or rewards for the achievement, and the attitude of the surrounding people change to him/her. As a result, overall good feeling comes after completion of the mission. In this case, inner feelings and self satisfaction motivates them much to do new tasks in future. Most probably for this reason, the frequent travelers are always passionate to visit new places and meet new people where possible.

In the last stage, the travelers gain the feelings of 'fulfillment'. Actually, it is a more spiritual stage of satisfaction. In the primitive stages, people search for the ultimate satisfaction. After having so many visits in the different places, once they find out their own identity or place. It gives them the feeling that 'yes' - I was searching for this thing

for a long time! After that when they feel bored or irritated from the surroundings, simply they go to the place. Talk only with him or her and become part of nature and the most powerful spirit. It gives them relief from all burdens. The pleasures of 'knowing thyself' become much greater than other visible and tangible substances.

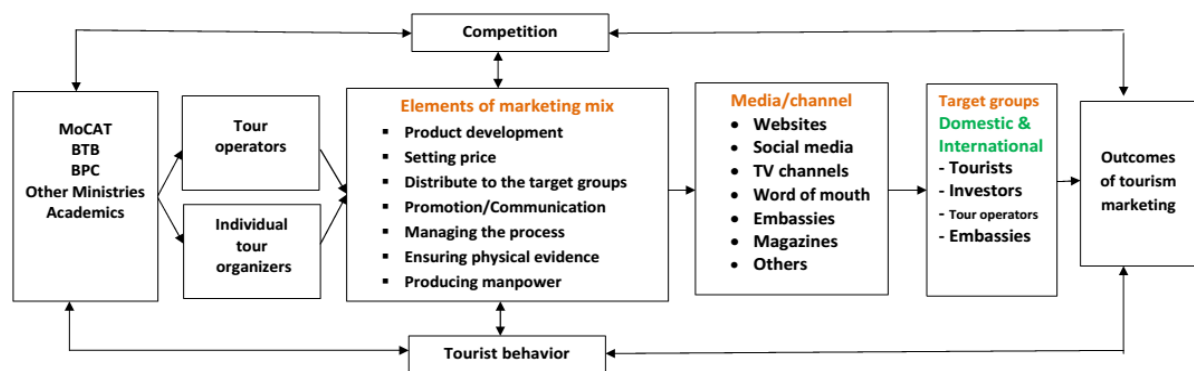
Travel makes people open minded toward the diverse cultures, their social systems, educating procedures and so many things. Actually, through traveling, people learn how to respect 'individual difference'. It makes them happy and satisfied to be part of the greater system and being able to be introduced with so many differences.⁵³ To some extent, people do not find peace anywhere. In that case, traveling to a new and unknown place makes them happy and content to be their own self. Sometimes, no explanation is enough to do so, even those are not essential at all. Sometimes people visit as only they like it. Finding out any point of doing so is not needed.

⁵³ Scott McCabe, *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

3.1.2 Conceptual framework

The study has tried to explore the closely related issues of the tourism marketing process. An attempt has been taken to present the key elements of the process working in the tourism sector of Bangladesh. The interconnections among the elements have also been shown here. These major issues have been presented as the findings of the study. Separate chapters or sections have been designed to present these issues with the relevant examples and information.

Figure 3.5: Conceptual framework of the study



Source: Developed by the researcher.

Initially, the regulators and idea generating groups by considering the practical circumstances take the decisions (including policymaking, allocation of budget, new initiatives). Those are passed to the concerned business organizations and individual tour organizers who regularly do organize tours for the clients or themselves. Based on the competition and tourist characteristics the marketing mix elements are integrated and products are offered. If the organization is government owned or managed, their offerings are little bit different than the other business ventures. Those are economic but the quality of the services are also traditional and not up to the mark always.

Through the media or channels those offers reach the target groups. Then, by considering the costs and benefits generally they do respond either negatively or positively. In case of individual and group tours the considerations are not the same. For groups, some special necessities are taken into considerations. Now most of the group tours are arranged by the tour operators. The response patterns of the target tourists determine the success or failure of the marketing efforts. Then, by taking tourist behavior and competitive environment into consideration, the regulators and idea generating

groups review the existing offers and generate new thoughts. The quality of the decisions improves gradually and the outcomes of tourism marketing attempt to reach in the desired place.

Though the major parts of this framework have been discussed separately in this Thesis, their interrelations have been tried to connect and reach into a conclusion. The reason is the tasks of tourism marketing are closely interconnected. They can not be considered separately. This conceptual framework has guided the researcher to carry out the study and bring all outcomes into a channel to reach a conclusion.

3.2 Research Methodology

The word ‘method’ means ‘a way’. It is a process or technique in which various stages or steps of collecting data are explained and the analytical techniques are defined. The term methodology in its original and proper usage refers to the systematic study of principles guiding scientific and philosophical investigation. It denotes the logical process used in discovering or in demonstrating the truth.⁵⁴ So, methodology is the way of inquiry in a systematic manner to address a problem.

More precisely it can be said that the method explains how to complete the process. On the other hand, the methodology explains why the chosen method is the best in the given situation. If the researcher is convinced that this is the best possible approach to reach the destination, it is thought that the methodology is appropriate for the study. But for the changing situations or the circumstances, the methodology might be needed to modify.

3.2.1 Research

Literally, research (re-search) means “to search again.”⁵⁵ But the more important question is what to search, why to search? If there is at least one valid reason for doing so, the research is worthwhile indeed. The industrialist nations have realized its significance and consequently they spend huge amounts of money for research. But the underdeveloped and developing world has accepted that they have no or limited abilities for funding the research. Bangladesh is not beyond this trend as well.

In the long run it has been their ‘attitude’ toward the research. As a result, when their economic conditions improve, generally they do not pay attention to the research which can really contribute to their development or change in life. So, there is a major gap between the attitude towards research in the developed and underdeveloped nations.

Research has a great influence on human beings. It is continuously changing our lives though sharing different research findings. But the less developed nations do not get real benefits from the budget they keep each year in this purpose. To make the research more acceptable, the tendency of handling the approach of the research must be changed.

⁵⁴ M. Soundararajan, "Pedagogy of Economics." Vers. MS Word. *Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University*. 2016. <http://kasturicollege.org/downloads/Economics.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2018), 52.

⁵⁵ William G. Zikmund, *Exploring Marketing Research*. 8th ed. (Singapore: Thomson Learning, 2003), 4.

3.2.1.1 Marketing research

Marketing research is the systematic and objective process of generating information—gathering, recording, and analyzing data—to aid in making marketing decision.⁵⁶ On the other hand, The American Marketing Association formally defines marketing research as: “Marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information—information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.”⁵⁷

On the other hand, it has been defined by Roger, Steve, and Hartley more specifically as: Marketing research is the process of defining a marketing problem and opportunity, systematically collecting and analyzing information, and recommending actions.⁵⁸

To explain the necessity of such research Booth, Colomb, and Williams have mentioned that ‘we all gather information to answer a question that solves a problem.’⁵⁹ They have also mentioned the role of the research (with some inabilities) on human beings. According to them, ‘the world changes everyday because of research, not always for the better.’⁶⁰ Actually, it is not the duty of research to change anything. Rather it can present the actual scenario for them who can change the world through their own deeds. For example—Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has decided to contribute to the education system of the USA through training and development programs.

They have been inspired to do so that after getting some research outcomes that the teachers of their country need more training and development programs to improve the existing methods of teaching. So a research outcome has changed their attitude and they are spending a huge amount of money each year through their Foundation. For this reason, it is claimed that ‘learning to do research changes the way we think, but only by

⁵⁶ William G. Zikmund, *Exploring Marketing Research*. 8th ed. (Singapore: Thomson Learning, 2003), 21.

⁵⁷ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*. 7th Ed. (Noida: Pearson India Education Services, 2016), 6.

⁵⁸ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*, 162.

⁵⁹ Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*. 2nd ed. (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 11.

giving us more ways of thinking.’⁶¹ This study is descriptive in nature which indicates a type of conclusive research that has—as its major objective the description of something—usually market characteristics or functions.⁶²

3.2.1.1.1 Qualitative and quantitative research

There is a general perception, especially in the less developed countries, that the quantitative approach is better than the qualitative research. Even without having a significant portion of quantitative elements in any research findings, many researchers show less interest in the outcomes. But for tourism research (as a field of social science), the quantitative approach can not always help to reach a better conclusion. It is claimed that ‘Quantitative research methods are used by researchers to understand the effects of changes in different elements of the marketing mix. This allows marketers to predict consumer behavior.’⁶³ Generally it includes experiments, surveys and observation. The results are descriptive, but can be used to predict how groups of consumers might behave.⁶⁴

Quantitative research methods are used by the researcher to understand the effects of changes in different elements of the marketing mix.⁶⁵ This study has used numbers to reach conclusion on the studied issues. But the understanding of the researcher is that for social science research like tourism has less impact on portraying the actual scenario. The tourists go to a particular destination for a short time. Just they would like to see the place from the view of natural beauty, fun, enjoyment and so many things. But the actual stories are not always the same as the tourists see the spot. Many ill and even inconvenient issues are related to the tourism sector and its development which generally can not be expressed merely in numbers. So, to have an overall idea, quantitative research is helpful but it hides so many untold stories. Most probably for this reason, John Scully has claimed that ‘No great marketing decisions have been ever made on quantitative data.’⁶⁶

This study is exploratory in nature that is one type of research design, which has as its primary objective the provision of insights into and comprehension of the problem

⁶¹ Ibid, 14.

⁶² Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 74.

⁶³ Hayden Noel, *Consumer Behaviour*. Lausanne: Ava Publishing SA (2009), 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 23.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 24.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 24.

situation confronting the researcher.⁶⁷ The objective of exploratory research is to explore a problem or situation. It can help organizations to formulate their problems exactly. Exploratory research can also help to establish research priorities.⁶⁸ During the research process, many facts have been revealed to the researcher that are really unique and have developed core understanding that have a great role to get insights on the studied issues. All of them will not be possible to write in words but have helped to shape the thinking as well as attitude toward the sector.

3.2.1.1.2 In-depth interview: In-depth interviews are often used to formulate problems precisely. It is unique in that they allow for probing on a one-to-one basis, fostering interaction between the interviewer and the respondent.⁶⁹ In this study, it was a great opportunity to be introduced with a diverse and wider view of the experts, practitioners, active stakeholders of the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

3.2.2 Sources of data

Both the primary and secondary data have been used in this study. To present the detail scenario the study population, sources of data, data collection procedure, and tools-techniques of data analysis are described below:

3.2.2.1 Study population: Population can be defined as any complete group of entities such as people, organizations, institutions, or the like that share some common set of characteristics in agreement with the purpose of the study under investigation and about which researchers want to be able to draw conclusions and plan to generalize.⁷⁰ The study aimed to investigate the related issues of marketing where two different groups are included as the study population.

One is active stakeholders of the tourism sector including regulators/management, tour operators, tour guides, transport agency (basically who serve the tourists), hotel owners, restaurant owners, academic scholars/researchers. On the other hand, the tourists who consume the offered products and services are another set of population. More

⁶⁷ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 70.

⁶⁸ Marko Sarstedt and Erik Mooi, *A Concise Guide to Market Research*. 2nd Ed. (Berlin: Springer, 2014), 15-16.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 15.

⁷⁰ William G. Zikmund et al., *Business Research Methods*, 8th ed. (Toronto: South-Western, Cengage Learning, 2010), 78.

specifically in this study, a tourist is defined as a traveler who is at least 18 years old or above and took at least a single leisure trip for at least one night away from home regardless of nationality.

3.2.2.2 Sampling frame

Sampling is the process of selecting observations using a small number of units of a larger population to draw conclusions about the whole population.⁷¹ A sampling frame, also called the working population, is the actual list of elements (sampling units) from which a sample may be drawn.⁷² The samples are taken from two groups. Firstly, total 28 respondents from the active stakeholders were chosen for an in-depth interview.

They have been selected based on purposive sampling due to their characteristics and scope of contribution. Secondly, a simple random sampling was employed to select the 384 respondents from the tourists of the study area. Based on a structured questionnaire, they have been surveyed. For questionnaire surveys, assistance from others (mentioned in the acknowledgement) has been taken where necessary.

3.2.2.2.1 Secondary sources of data

Data lie at the heart of conducting a marketing research. Data is the collection of facts that can be used as a basis for analysis, reasoning, or discussions.⁷³ The research has used both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative part has helped to understand the feelings, attitudes and functional sides of the tourism suppliers. On the other hand, the quantitative part has helped to understand the customers' point of view. Outcome of both groups has helped to draw conclusions on the tourism marketing practices and its related issues in Bangladesh. Primary and secondary both sources have been used to collect data which are described below:

⁷¹ Ibid, 86.

⁷² Fang Meng, "An Examination of Destination Competitiveness from the Tourists' Perspective: The Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Perceived Destination Competitiveness," (PhD Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2006), 61.

⁷³ Marko Sarstedt and Erik Mooi, *A Concise Guide to Market Research*, 25.

All possible sources of secondary data have been reviewed. A good number of related websites have been reviewed for updated information. Books, Theses, Academic journals, Magazines, Seminar proceedings, Websites of the concerned institutions, Newspaper reports and features have been consulted. Publications of closely related organizations like Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Bangladesh Tourism Board, United Nations World Tourism Organization, World Economic Forum, World Travel & Tourism Council, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh Bank, National Board of Revenue have been used in this purpose, Brochure-leaflet-advertisement of concerned organizations have also been used as the secondary sources of this study.

3.2.2.2 Primary sources of data: Primary data have been collected from the selected tourist spots by using the *observation, in-depth interview, and questionnaire survey*. Details are explained below:

3.2.2.3 Selection of spots: Among the leading tourist spots of Bangladesh, four have been selected purposively. Most of the domestic and foreign tourists desire to visit the Chattogram region. Though there are many tourist attractions in that region, Cox's Bazar has been taken as the top visited spot. Secondly, the tourists would like to visit Sylhet region. Tourists prefer to visit at least Jaflong when they go to Sylhet. So, it has been taken as another spot. Sundarbans has been chosen from Khulna region by considering its significance as one of the UNESCO world heritage sites; as well as the largest mangrove forest. Finally, Dhaka is the most ancient and historical Capital City. Sonargaon has been selected by considering its historical as well as archaeological significance from Dhaka region.

3.2.2.4 Observation: Observation method has been used as a data collection technique. It is the recording of behavioral patterns of people, objects, and events in a systematic manner to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest.⁷⁴ The researcher has employed observation to gain more insights in the data collection spots. It has helped the researcher to understand the real situations of the tourism marketing practices and overall atmosphere of the studied area.

⁷⁴ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 204.

3.2.2.5 In-depth interview: Active stakeholders deal with the most pertinent issues of the industry for a long time. So, they have practical experiences and vast knowledge on the relevant factors. Their opinion has helped a lot to be acquainted with the real life situation of the sector. For this reason, the selected representatives of regulator or management (Executives of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Members of Bangladesh Tourism Board, and Representative of archeology department), Tourism researchers/Academic scholars, Tour operators, and Service providers in the hotel, motel, resort, and restaurant have been interviewed to gain insights of the industry.

Table 3.6: Respondents of in-depth interview

Region	Tourist Spots	Regulator/ Management	Tour Operator	Tour Guide	Transport Agency	Hotel/ Resort	Restaurant /Food shop	Academic/ Researcher	Total
Dhaka	Sonargaon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	07
Chittagong	Cox's Bazar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	07
Khulna	Sunderbans	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	07
Sylhet	Jaflong	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	07
								Total =	28

They have been selected based on judgment sampling procedure. Separate open ended questionnaire has been employed to interview the respondents. The interviews were not always restricted to the pre-set questions. Relevant information has been accommodated where applicable. Foreign tourists are always considered as a significant concern for the tourism industry of any country, especially in the developing countries like Bangladesh.

But for many practical reasons, now the number of international tourists is very few, even negligible. So, they have not been kept as a special segment of respondents. During the data collection, some foreigners were met; they have been talked in an in-depth interview format. Special notes have been given about their views in the data analysis part of the thesis. Most of them were very busy during the talk. As a result, the researcher just gossiped on the issue based on his requirements. During the interview the notes have been taken for organizing and analyzing data later on.

3.2.2.6 Questionnaire survey: To collect data from the tourists a questionnaire survey has been conducted. Based on the random sampling procedure the data have been collected. For obtaining a representative sample size, the following random sampling formula has been adopted for unknown population.⁷⁵

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{e^2}$$

Where,

- n = sample size
- Z = the value on the Z table at 95% confidence level =1.96
- e = Sampling error at 5%
- p = maximum variability of the population at 50%. i.e. (0.5)
- q = 1-P = 0.5

Assuming, P= 0.5 (maximum variability) and 95% confidence level the resulting sample size is estimated as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data from the tourists. The number of respondents in each tourist spot is shown in the following table:

Table 3.7: Respondents of questionnaire survey

<i>Region</i>	<i>Tourist Spots</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Reserve</i>
Dhaka	Sonargaon	96	04
Chittagong	Cox's Bazar	96	04
Khulna	Sunderbans	96	04
Sylhet	Jaflong	96	04
	Total =	384	16

Total (384+16) = 400 respondents were interviewed. Among them 10 questionnaires were unusable for final analysis. Because those were incomplete, marked several answers for the same questions, or answered one option for all questions. So, those are not taken into consideration for final analysis. As a result, total respondent number is 390 for this study. The demographic profiles of the respondents are described below:

⁷⁵ C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: New Age International, 2015), 179.

Table 3.8: Demographic profile of the respondents

Gender	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid percent</i>	<i>Cumulative percent</i>
Male	236	60.5	60.5	60.5
Female	154	39.5	39.5	100.0
Age category (years)				
Up to 30	228	58.5	58.5	58.5
31-40	75	19.2	19.2	77.7
41-50	58	14.9	14.9	92.6
Above 50	29	7.4	7.4	100.0
Education				
Up to Secondary	27	6.9	6.9	6.9
Higher Secondary	54	13.8	13.8	20.8
Degree/Honours	231	59.2	59.2	80.0
Masters or above	78	20.0	20.0	100.0
Occupation of the respondents				
Govt. job	29	7.4	7.4	7.4
Private sector	103	26.4	26.4	33.8
Self-employed	81	20.8	20.8	54.6
Others	177	45.4	45.4	100.0
Main purpose of the visit				
Family tour	226	57.9	57.9	57.9
Official visit	21	5.4	5.4	63.3
Study tour	88	22.6	22.6	85.9
Others	55	14.1	14.1	100.0
Length of this tour				
1-2 day(s)	170	43.6	43.6	43.6
3-4 days	154	39.5	39.5	83.1
5-6 days	60	15.4	15.4	98.5
More than 6 days	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Number of participant(s) in this tour				
Alone	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
2-3 persons	84	21.5	21.5	23.8
4-5 persons	142	36.4	36.4	60.3
More than 5	155	39.7	39.7	100.0
Used accommodation/housing facilities				
None	74	19.0	19.0	19.0
Hotel/Resort	230	59.0	59.0	77.9
Friend & Family place	76	19.5	19.5	97.4
Others	10	2.6	2.6	100.0
Average monthly income of the respondent				
Below 25,000	186	47.7	47.7	47.7
26,000-50,000	110	28.2	28.2	75.9
51,000-75,000	52	13.3	13.3	89.2
More than 75,000	42	10.8	10.8	100.0
Does the respondent keep separate budget for annual tours?				
Yes	136	34.9	34.9	34.9
No	186	47.7	47.7	82.6
Never thought	68	17.4	17.4	100.0
Overall frequency of tour (each year)				
Irregular	186	47.7	47.7	47.7
1-2 times	156	40.0	40.0	87.7
3-4 times	39	10.0	10.0	97.7
4 times +	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
International tour experience of the respondent				
Yes	123	31.5	31.5	31.5
No	267	68.5	68.5	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Gender and age category: Among the total respondents 60.5% was male (236) and 39.5% female (154). Among them 58.5% was up to 30 years old. Among others 19.2% was between 31 and 40 years. And 41-50 years were 14.9%. Only 7.4% was above 50 years old.

Education and occupation: In case of educational status, only 6.9% respondents were up to SSC and 13.8% were HSC pass whereas 59.2% were graduate and 20.0% of them were Masters degree holders or above. Among them only 7.4% were engaged in Govt. job. On the contrary 26.4% were in the private sector. Among the total respondents 20.8% were self-employed and rest of them 45.4% (the major portion) was in other sectors.

Purpose and length of tour: Majority of the respondents (57.9%) visit the tourist spot as a part of family tour while only 5.4% visit as part of official tour. On the other hand, 22.6% respondents answered that they come for a study tour and 14.1% visited the spot for other purposes. Among the respondents' 43.6% tourists' length was 1-2 day(s), 39.5% stayed 3-4 days in the venue, and 15.4% of them stayed 5-6 days. Only 1.5% visited the spot for more than 6 days.

Team size and accommodation: Only 2.3% tourists visited the place alone. Among others 21.5% visited in a team of 2-3 persons and 36.4% of 4-5 persons. On the other hand, 39.7% of the respondents visited the tourist spot with more than 5 persons. Most of the respondents (58.7%) used hotel/resorts for their accommodation. Another 19.0% did not use any accommodation. On the other hand, 19.2% of the total respondents used their friends' or family place during the visit. Only 2.6% used other places to this purpose.

Income level and separate budget: Most of the respondents (47.7%) replied that their average monthly income was less than 25,000 Taka. Then 28.2% had between 26,000 and 50,000 Taka and 13.3% respondents' income level was 51,000-75,000 Taka. Another 10.8% said that their average monthly income was more than 75,000 Taka. In case of keeping separate budget, 47.4% replied negatively. Another 17.4% have never thought about the issue. But 34.9% of the respondents said that they keep separate budgets for annual tours.

Frequency of and international tour experience: About half of them (47.7%) have no frequency of traveling. The nature of the tour is very irregular. If get a chance, they travel more than one time in a particular year but in many years they can not manage time and scope of traveling. But 40.0% of the respondents said that they visit 1-2 times each year whereas 10.0% of them visit 3-4 times. And only 2.3% visit more than 4 times each year. Among the respondents 68.5% had no international traveling experience. Rest of them (31.5%) replied positively in this question.

3.2.2.7 Review of documents: Beyond the above mentioned sources, relevant documents of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MoCAT), Bangladesh tourism Board (BTB), Bangladesh parjatan Corporation (BPC), Association of Travel Agencies of Bangladesh (ATAB), Tour Operators' Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute (NHTTI) and other organizations will be reviewed to gain more insightful information.

3.2.3 Data preparation and analysis

After data collection, it has been scrutinized thoroughly and edited manually to remove inconsistencies (if there is any). Then, the data have been processed by coding, classifying and tabulating. Qualitative data (from in-depth interviews) have been analyzed through an inductive reasoning process (content analysis: The objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of a communication⁷⁶) for drawing appropriate inferences. For analyzing data, collected through questionnaire surveys, IBM SPSS (version 22) and MS Excel software have been used as per the necessity of the study.

To analyze the data, necessary statistical tools (frequency, cumulative percent, percentile, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis) have been used. The findings have been presented both in tabular and graphical forms of presentation. Errors and other pitfalls have been addressed in compliance with the standard rules in that regard.

3.2.3.1 Reliability and validity

In any research process, it is an expected condition to apply the best measures. Such measures are those that measure what they are supposed to measure and do so consistently.⁷⁷ In this case, validity and reliability are the most used instrument to cross-check the issues. For social science studies, though the issues can not be ensured properly, the attempt have been taken to make it in an acceptable form.

3.2.3.1.1 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which what we measure is free from random error and, therefore, relates to a situation where the E_R is zero.⁷⁸ It can also be said that the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are made on the characteristic.⁷⁹ It means if the research is reproduced, the result will be the same. For applied sciences, this is absolutely possible in most of the attempts. If a formula is tested anywhere at any time with fulfilling certain conditions, the result generally will be the same.

⁷⁶ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 207.

⁷⁷ Marko Sarstedt and Erik Mooi, *A Concise Guide to Market Research*, 34.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 35.

⁷⁹ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 290.

In the case of social science research, it is impossible to reproduce a study and get the same result. Especially in tourism research, the scope of fluctuation is very high. Because the level of understanding of the respondents differ highly. For the changing situation, their responses might be totally different. For example—before and after the mega event or accident the attitude toward a destination becomes totally different. The Arab Spring situation in Egypt (2011) or the massive Earthquake in Nepal (2015) is the best examples of such a situation. Though this argument does not give the researcher total ‘disclaimer’ advantage for bypassing from ensuring reliability. Because, reliability is also a necessary condition for validity.⁸⁰

In the question of ‘ensuring consistency’ the tourism researchers have less score as with the change of time, situation, and respondents the outcomes differ in a mentionable volume. In this situation, this study is not out of question as well. To minimize the level of inconsistencies and other loopholes, the researcher has reviewed a good number of related articles, theses, and book chapters. The methodological issues have been modified again and again to be on track and it is expected that the utmost efforts have been invested to make the study more reliable.

All possible measures have been taken to ensure that if the study is conducted again in other situations, the trend of the outcomes will be the same. So it can be claimed that the reliability issue has been taken into great consideration when conducting the study. To ensure reliability of this study a pre-test on 20 respondents were done. Based on their opinion, the questionnaire for data collection has been modified. This step has helped the researcher to realize that others’ opinions regarding the study do not differ a lot.

3.2.3.1.2 Validity: Validity is the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect true differences among objects on the characteristic being measured, rather than systematic or random errors.⁸¹ This instrument is used to minimize the methodological errors applied to the study. It means, in case of above (reliability) condition, the study might be replicated in the varied situation. But here the question is: will it bring the outcomes for which the study was conducted?

⁸⁰ Marko Sarstedt and Erik Mooi, *A Concise Guide to Market Research*, 36.

⁸¹ Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhusan Dash, *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*, 291.

If the answer is 'no' after having all the correctness, actually the research will have less contribution to the knowledge sector as well as in the applied field. For this reason, ensuring validity is a pre-condition to conclude any study. In case of social science (more specifically tourism research), the validity can be ensured more effectively than the reliability issue. For academic study, it is comparatively tough to maintain the set criteria for validity as it has less implication in the real world.

In the case of this study, as there was limited scope of comparison with other applied research, the researcher has taken few similar studies as examples to understand their methodological approaches in detail. The tools and techniques have been taken which are applicable to this study. The seminar given on the proposal in front of a large audience, created an opportunity to get feedback from the experts and fellow researchers. Based on the rigorous study, supervisor's consultation, and opinion of the participants in the seminar has created the environment to make the research methodology more valid and acceptable to the academic arena. Some slight modifications have been made as per the advice of the supervisor in the middle of the data collection when felt it necessary.

3.3 Scope and Limitations

Social science research is more complicated than most other fields as it deals with the societal issues of human beings. A minor change might have a huge impact on psychology and on its action. Moreover, the tourism sector is a vast area of study. Many large industries like accommodation, transportation, restaurants, entertainment are closely related to this field of study. For this reason, it is really tough to reach a conclusion for what reason, what happens in the tourism sector. Besides, within a limited time and resources, this study has been conducted. So, from the very beginning the scope of the study was carefully chosen so that the tasks can be completed within the given period of time.

As a multidimensional sector tourism has wider branches to study. In this research, only marketing related issues have been taken into consideration. Of course, many other factors have immense impact on the success or failure of the sector. But by realizing the limitations, the researcher decided to concentrate on the marketing issues. It is not possible to cover the closely related issues like its overall management, financing for its development, human resources management, policies and regulations, destination branding and so many things under this single study.

On the other hand, overall Bangladesh has been considered as a single destination in this study. Its marketing issues, strategies and challenges have been taken into consideration for the research. But there are so many individual spots which need special attention for designing effective marketing strategies. Covering all types of tourist attractions under an umbrella might have loopholes. For example—Puthia Shiva Temple, Sompur Vihara, Mohastangarah, Saint Martin’s Island, and Madhobkunda waterfalls have their own marketing functions and strategies. Those spots have to face different sets of challenges as well. In this study, those issues have not been addressed separately. Detailed marketing guidelines for the DMOs should also be proposed. But to do so, many studies like this should be conducted.

To be acquainted with the contents of ‘tourism marketing’ courses at world renowned universities, the researcher has reviewed a good number of course outlines. The following major issues have been covered in those curriculums: Tourist market characteristics; Communication and promotion; Usage of information technology; Product and price; Collaborative approaches; and Destination branding. The researcher has tried to cover (at least touch) these areas through conducting this study.

Actually the researcher was intended to concentrate on the three basic questions. Those are: For effective marketing of the tourism sector of Bangladesh—what is the current scenario; what are the major challenges to achieve the desired success; and how to minimize those by using marketing strategies. The entire thesis is devoted to present the findings, understanding, and perception during a three year long journey. Many issues have been declined carefully by understanding the limitations of the researcher as well as the proposed study.

Chapter 04

TOURISM MARKETING ISSUES AND STRATEGIES IN BANGLADESH

In case of general marketing the most used terminology 4Ps (Product, Place, Price, and Promotion) are known as the marketing mix elements. For the marketing of physical goods, this is somehow universally accepted as well as an effective notion. But some authors have shown that for marketing service products, these four elements are not good enough. For this reason, they have suggested additional 3Ps (People, Process management, and Physical evidence) as the complementary elements of the mix. As tourism products are mostly service oriented, experts consider that the 7Ps are much suitable to explain tourism marketing issues.

To portray, understand, and formulate strategy for any industry—the marketing mix scenario must be understood clearly. From that point of view, the term 'issues' has been included in the Thesis title before the terms—strategies and challenges. Based on the collected data and the observation of the researcher, the overall scenario of the tourism marketing issues in Bangladesh has been portrayed in this chapter. Most of the tourism marketing strategies are also interconnected to the elements of marketing mix. Relevant issues have been discussed in this chapter.

4.0 Introduction

Today, most of the companies use marketing as a powerful weapon to achieve their organizational goals. Even the not for profit organizations have given much attention to the marketing functions. By nature, tourism has some characteristics which demand special care to market its products. Current marketing scenario of tourism sector in Bangladesh can be explained in the following way:

4.1 Tourism Marketing Issues in Bangladesh

Today marketing is mostly used as well as an effective tool for being successful in business operations all over the world. Earlier the business focus was to enhance the sales volume anyhow. Earlier marketing was generally used to sell the physical goods. But gradually the sharpness of this tool is enhanced through continuous research and development programs. For this reason, with the intensity of its usage, the scope and strategies of marketing activities are increasing rapidly. Even the not for profit organizations have been attentive to use this tool where possible. In the tourism sector, marketing is treated as a winning factor from the very beginning.

“Without marketing, no business can survive—people who don’t know you exist can’t purchase what you have to offer, and people who aren’t interested in what you have to offer won’t become paying customers.”¹

Tourism sector demands integrated efforts to be successful in the long run. As many industries have to work together to offer a successful product, the use of marketing is generally higher than the other sectors. In the case of Bangladesh, the tourism sector has not matured yet. The practitioners of this field are learning through doing diverse activities. Like the industrialist nations, the underdeveloped countries can not give much attention to enhance the quality of services. This is not true only for the hospitality and tourism sector rather most of the industries run in this way. So, making mistakes or having complaints is a very common phenomenon. Especially the mismatch of price and quality of tourism products is a highly discussed issue to its active stakeholders, especially to the customers (tourists).

The research and development activities are not also much developed or integrated here. So, the issues should be discussed in the different areas of study as well

¹ Josh Kaufman, *The Personal MBA*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 86

as practical fields. This chapter has tried to bring out all of those issues together especially which are closely related to the marketing activities in the tourism sector.

The 'marketing mix' is a very significant concept to the marketing practitioners. Initially, it would be used to formulate marketing strategy and plan, but gradually it pervades all aspects of marketing management.² Popularly 4Ps (Product, Place, Price, and Promotion) are known worldwide as marketing mix.³ But researchers have argued that for the service sector that mix is not adequate at all. They have proposed additional 3Ps (People, Process management, and Physical evidence) for marketing service items. On the other hand, few researchers think that the traditional four Ps approach does not work in the hospitality industry.

Rather, a modified marketing mix is proposed by them which consist of five components: Product-service mix, Presentation mix, Communication mix, Pricing mix, and Distribution mix.⁴ For destination marketing management another study has proposed 15Cs framework that includes: Complexity, Control, Change, Crisis, Complacency, Customers, Culture, Competition, Commodification, Creativity, Communication, Channels, Cyberspace, Consolidation, and Collaboration.⁵ But the concept of 7Ps is widely accepted by the practitioners which are also considered as the basic pillars of marketing in this research.

Generally the people of other disciplines consider marketing as very similar to promotion or even advertising! The government officials who are posted in MoCAT from other Ministries; most of them do not have required knowledge in marketing. So, they consider the maximum two elements: product and promotion. Naturally those initiatives are not competent enough to win in the tough competition. As it has been mentioned earlier, 7Ps formulate the ultimate marketing mix. To formulate realistic strategies, clear understanding of the mix is highly required. The marketing mix of tourism sector of Bangladesh has been presented below from that point of view:

² Robert D Reid and David C. Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 20.

³ Kotler and Armstrong, *Principles of Marketing*, 76.

⁴ Leo Renaghan, "A New Marketing Mix for the Hospitality Industry," *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, April (1981), 31-35; Reid, and Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*, 19-20.

⁵ Alan Fyall, Brian Garrod, and Cevat Tosun, "Destination Marketing: A Framework for Future Research," in *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, eds. Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 75-86.

4.1.1 Product

Though small in size, nature has gifted Bangladesh a good number of natural resources. Besides, our earlier generations have established enormous historical and cultural resources. For this reason, the experts perceive that Bangladesh has huge potential for tourism development.⁶ But for many practical reasons she has not been able to ensure its maximum (or even desired) utilization yet. Most of the cases, the inherited resources are simply kept abandoned with less (or even without) care.

If its potentiality would be realized properly, the tourism sector could be a significant role player in the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh.⁷ Only having the raw materials (or its supply) is not enough to grasp business benefits in this era of strict competition. Rather adding required value is much needed to make a product more attractive to the target consumers.⁸ In Bangladesh, the tourism related supplies (in most cases) are not efficiently converted into tourism products. As a result, the possibility of getting benefits from the sector is being untouched or wasted. Recently some initiatives have been taken by the responsible offices but those seem inadequate by the concerned stakeholders.

Beside the basic attractions, lacks of fun or amusement activities are strongly felt in most of the tourist spots of Bangladesh. When visiting a new place, the tourists try to enjoy as much as possible. On the other hand, the natural and cultural attractions can be visited only at day time (favorable conditions are also needed). But after reaching the spot, if they want to pass some quality time through fun and entertaining activities, generally no organized arrangements are kept for them. Here, most of the tourism product developments have been based on natural, cultural and historical resources.

In many other countries, they have emphasized on creating (man-made) tourism attractions. The main reason is natural or cultural products can not be developed over

⁶ Feroz Ahmed, Md. Shah Azam, and Tarun Kanti Bose, "Factors Affecting the Selection of Tour Destination in Bangladesh: An Empirical Analysis." *International Journal of Business and Management* 5, no. 3 (2010), 52-61.

⁷ Bashir Ahmed Bhuiyan and Jahangir Alam, "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business* (Kangwon National University) 5, no. 2 (December 2014), 1-12.

⁸ Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2014), 6.

night.⁹ But the amusement park, theme park, science city, museum, zoo, or Cineplex can be established where and when felt necessary. These products can attract different segments of the tourists. So the number of such items (especially near the existing spots) must be increased.

Tourism products are classified in different ways. The industrialist nations in the tourism business have taken the tourism business to a sophisticated level. But the countries like Bangladesh are classifying tourism products in gross categories. From that point of view, Bangladesh is enriched with natural, historical and cultural resources.¹⁰ Overall, there are good numbers of supplies but those are not properly developed as tourism products yet.¹¹ Besides, as a riverine country, it has a wider scope of developing water-based tourism products. Most of the existing products are not suitable for the international tourists. For many days, the necessity of ‘exclusive tourist zone’ is felt but the progress is not mentionable yet. As the mass tourism tendency is high, the international tourists do not feel comfort to visit most of the tourist spots.¹² So offering additional attractions for them is highly needed. To enhance the overall brand image as a tourism destination, diverse product development always plays a very significant role.

Table 4.1: Key tourist attraction of this spot

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Natural	296	75.9	75.9	75.9
Cultural	31	7.9	7.9	83.8
Historical	63	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

When the respondents were asked about the key tourist attraction of their visiting spot, 75.9% among the total respondents mentioned that the spots’ key attraction was natural, though 7.9% of them think of it as a cultural attraction. On the other hand, 16.2% of the

⁹ Duncan Light and Richard Prentice, "Market-based Product Development in Heritage Tourism." *Tourism Management* 15, no. 1 (1994), 27-36.

¹⁰ Mohammad Musa, "Marketing: A Tool to Develop Bangladesh's Tourism Sector." *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* 2, no. 1 (June 2013), 6-9.

¹¹ Mohammad Mehedy Hassan and Md. Shahnewaz, "Measuring Tourist Service Satisfaction at Destination: A Case Study of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh." *American Journal of Tourism Management* 3, no. 1 (2014), 32-43.

¹² Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, Md. Kamrul Hasan, and Sheikh A. K. Mohsinul Hossain, "Image of Cox's Bazar Beach as a Tourist Destination: An Investigation." *International Review of Business Research Papers* 9, no. 5 (2013), 122-138.

respondents mentioned that the spots' key tourist attraction was historical. Till now the tourists like the natural spots more. Beside nature they would like to visit other attractions.

Bangladesh is one of the countries with a unique scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage offering to the visitors from home and abroad.¹³ It has many tourist attractions including archaeological sites and monuments, hill tracts, world's longest unbroken sandy sea beach, the largest terracotta temple, historical and modern cities. It is also enriched with forests like the largest mangrove forest Sunderbans, lakes, wild lives, handicrafts, sanctuaries, religious festivals, colorful tribal cultures, enriched history and heritage products. As a riverine country enormous opportunities exist for sports tourism like angling, water skiing, river cruising, rowing and surfing.¹⁴ But the lack of vision regarding product development and its promotion is noticed from the very beginning.

Actually, lack of brand vision is somehow liable for this which crafts the management's view of the brand's long-term potential. Brand positioning puts some specificity into a brand vision.¹⁵ Tourism of Bangladesh does not know – where it is now, where it would like to be after a certain period, and how to reach there. For this reason, Bangladesh has not only failed to develop attractive products but also sheer weaknesses are noticed in preserving and conserving the natural and inherited resources. For example – a study shows that in recent years the Sundarbans have suffered severe degradation from oil spills, climate change, large-scale clearance and timber harvesting, over-fishing by commercial fisheries, invasive species, and subsistence hunting, and poaching of wildlife including tiger.¹⁶

Worldwide the pressure of sustainable tourism development is increasing. As Bangladesh is in the preliminary stage of tourism development, the practitioners are not much concerned on the issue. The government agencies do the claim that they are in favor

¹³ Md. Enayet Hossain and Md. Abdul Alim, "Choice Behaviour of Visitors towards the Beach Tourism in Bangladesh," *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies* 37, no. 2014 (2016), 135-152.

¹⁴ Bashir Ahmed Bhuiyan and Jahangir Alam, "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business* 5, no. 2 (December 2014), 1-12.

¹⁵ Keller. *Strategic Brand Management*, 392.

¹⁶ Shahida Khanom and Ralf Buckley, "Tiger Tourism in the Bangladesh Sunderbans," *Annals of Tourism Research* 55 (2015), 178-180.

of eco-tourism.¹⁷ Even to attain the sustainable development goals (SDGs), Bangladesh has to formulate plan and policies in compliance with the three goals (Goal 8, Goal 12, and Goal 14) relating to tourism development. Recently some resorts are being established to ensure eco-friendliness; their success might encourage others to keep nature as it is or in a better position for the next generations. There are three world heritage sites. Two of them are cultural: *historic mosque city of Bagerhat* and *Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara* at Paharpur; and other is the natural resource: *Sundarbans*.¹⁸

The product is the core offering to the customer, the main benefit received by the customer.¹⁹

*“The most effective way to get people to want something is to encourage them to visualize what their life would be like once they’ve accepted your offer. You can use this natural tendency to your advantage by helping your prospects imagine the positive experiences they’ll have.”*²⁰

Tourism is defined as a short-term movement of people to places some distance from their normal place of residence to indulge in pleasurable activities. It may also involve travel for business purposes.²¹

Tourism products are classified in different ways. The advanced nations in tourism product development have taken it to a very sophisticated level. But the countries which are in the primitive stage like Bangladesh are classifying their products in gross categories. From that point of view, Bangladesh is enriched with natural, historical and cultural products. Besides, as a riverine country, it has a huge scope of developing water-based tourism products. The trend of creating man-made tourist attractions is also increasing. Overall, there is a huge supply of tourism resources but those are not properly developed as tourism products yet.

The branding issue should be taken into significant consideration. It is an integral part of a modern tourism product. Consistency among the promotions and actual services

¹⁷ BFD, *Integrated Resources Management Plans for the Sundarbans (2010-2020)* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Forest Department, 2010), 14.

¹⁸ UNESCO, *World Heritage Convention*. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/BD/> (Accessed July 10, 2019).

¹⁹ Les Lumsdon, *Marketing for Tourism: Case Study Assignments*. (London: MacMillan Education, 1992), xiv.

²⁰ Josh Kaufman, *The Personal MBA*, 99-100.

²¹ S. Horner and J. Swarbrooke, *Marketing Tourism, Hospitality, and Leisure in Europe*. (International Thomson Business Press, 1996).

should be ensured. Otherwise the tourists will be dissatisfied and they will search for alternative. Once if they do so, it will be really challenging to draw their attention to this destination. Like the other companies the tourism marketers should also be caring about the Brand Equity: The value inherent in a well-known brand name.²²

A long list of products is offered by the destinations of Europe and USA. In Bangladesh, till now it is nature based. On the other hand, some initiatives are taken to give pleasure inside the room. Those are very exclusive as well as expensive. General people have less interest in such tourism products.

Table 4.2: Cleanliness of the spot

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below average	46	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Average	236	60.5	60.5	72.3
	Satisfactory	103	26.4	26.4	98.7
	Wonderful	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that, most of the respondents (60.5%) think that the tourist spots' cleanliness was average, 26.4% said that the cleanliness was satisfactory, 1.3% of them mentioned it as wonderful. Only 11.8% of the total respondents expressed that the cleanliness of the spot was below average. Some selective (especially privately developed and managed) spots of all regions, the level of cleanliness is better. But the common places like roadsides and city areas where they stay for a long time during the tour are comparatively dirty. In this case, an expert opines to improve the cleanliness and sanitation systems local people (individual or organization) can be assigned who will get revenue from the authority as well as the visitors. It will make them more caring about the tourism ventures of their locality.

An attractive and memorable nightlife should be offered. Even in many spots the tourists have nothing to do in the evening. In that case, they should have huge alternative scopes of passing time with enjoyment. There is a misconception about the term 'nightlife' among the mass people. It is not necessarily to be like the nightlife of

²² Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*. 10th ed. [Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India), 2010 (Reprint 2016)], 223

Thailand. Alternative huge options are available to make the tourists satisfied to pass their leisure time.

Creating the scope of passing quality leisure time is a must in modern day tourism. After reaching the destination, if the tourists do not find enough attractions, never ever they will visit the place again. So to create loyal tourists and ensure their repeat visit, enormous attractions should be there so that they feel to visit again and again to explore those places.

“For the best ideas on how to improve your products, consult the experts; your customers. Seek their opinions and suggestions using questionnaires, comment cards, focus groups, or customer panels, so that you can introduce real enhancements based on customers demand.”²³

All over the world, local made handicraft items have a great attraction to the tourists. Proper initiatives can make it a source of name and fame. For example–Sylhet has a great reputation in cane products as well as Monipuri sarees. The families visiting to Sylhet, feel comfort to collect some of those. Even they enjoy a very nice evening to search these products in the concerned areas. In this way, if close to all tourist spots such products are available, people will love to try and buy those products. Those will also work as souvenir items and when they will talk on those, word of mouth promotion will be automatic.

Taking taste of the local food items is very popular all over the world. In the case of Bangladesh only some places such scopes have been created. Saint Martin Island and Cox’s Bazar offer special taste of the sea fish items. But all parts of the country of course there are some distinctive food items to enjoy. If the local authorities and businessmen would offer such products, a good number of tourists would plan to have a taste of those items in their leisure time.

To the outsiders always have interest to be introduced with the ethnic music, dance or other traditional performance. In case of Sundarbans, local cultural groups offer such programs to the international tourists and they earn good amounts of money. It can be done for other tourist spots of Bangladesh.

The zoo has a special attraction to the kids. As the working parents get less time to take their children to the zoo or such type of place, they will take the chance to visit the

²³ Moi Ali, *Marketing Effectively*. (London: A Dorling Kindersley Book, 2008), 24

zoo for their kids' interest. Others have great interest in Museum. It might be general as well as specialized. There are special forms of zoo in different parts of the country. If those can be properly connected to the local tourist spots, people will love to visit the place. For example—in Cox's Bazar fish or sea related museum can be much relevant and attractive to the visitors.

If there is special attraction (iconic something) which represents the area, people would love to visit that place with other tourist attractions.

“To gain competitive advantage, uncover not just differences but also attributes that customers value. Make sure the differences are meaningful to customers, so that your product is preferable to the others available.”²⁴

All over the world casino or gambling houses have a great attraction to a particular group of tourists. Many of them visit a destination only for these attractions. For example—Macao is famous for casino business. World gamblers gather there to enjoy the world class gambling experience. Huge number of gamblers visits the hotels of Montenegro just to take part in gambling and they do not visit outside spots. It indicates that there is a large scale market for this product. If Bangladesh does not create such scope, the Bangladeshi players will go outside and they will take money outside. On the other hand, such arrangements can bring money from outside gamblers.

Having recognized bars for hard drinks and support services draw a good number of tourists from the domestic as well as international arena. Its restriction encourages illegal business and it simply reduces the revenue of the state. As it is an internationally recognized product, it should be available in proper channels. In some Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, it can be easy to buy for the international tourists. For the local citizens, as per the law it can be sold. It will help to offer required services to the international tourists.

For fair entertainment different sport items can be offered. During the visit, people love fun and entertaining activities. Even the rough and tough people feel free to take part in the entertaining physical activities when they are in tour mood. To make it work out, arrangements near the tourist spots can be kept so that they can be part of it. It will give them memorable experiences which will encourage them to recommend others to visit the place.

²⁴ Moi Ali, *Marketing Effectively*, 26.

People would love to enjoy riding services at the beach or other tourist spots. Uncommon and adventurous riding opportunities encourage them to try. It also creates the scope of being viral or getting publicity. Different indoor games also help the tourists to pass quality time in the spot. Especially if the weather is negative, they can enjoy the indoor game facilities. Arranging some exciting competitions or tournaments (like beach volleyball) can be a good source of passing time in the tourist spots. Even kite flying festivals or other religious events can be celebrated by the local inhabitants and the guests. Arranging some mega concerts bring people from different corners of the country. Special segments have much interest in such events. Creating the scope of visiting religious places has great importance to the tourists. With tourist attractions, if they can visit one or more religious attractions, it gives them much pleasure.

Nowadays many people are interested in natural treatment. They are searching for special forms of medicine or treatment like Ayurveda. People from developed nations visit India to find such types of specialists. As Bangladesh produces a huge amount of herbal plants, it can draw a special segment from the international tourism community. Besides, offering unique massage and spa services have a mentionable market, it is also expanding gradually. So, offering unique experiences to the tourists have a mentionable market segment.

All participants must not necessarily like or enjoy the same thing, alternative scopes of enjoyment must have for non-lovers of the key attraction(s) of the spot. In that case, the other members will not play a negative role during the decision period of the tour.

Table 4.3: Matching with the expectations

	Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than exp.	67	17.2	17.2	17.2
	Similar	228	58.5	58.5	75.6
	More than exp.	92	23.6	23.6	99.2
	Others	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that, only 17.2% of the respondents said that the matched visiting places less than their expectations. Maximum respondents (58.5%) said that the spot matched with their expectations. On the other hand, 23.6% respondents said the place was more attractive than their expectations. It indicates that the level of dissatisfaction with key attraction is not so high. As the tourists are habituated to face daily life challenges,

they do not expect more in the visiting places. For this reason, they become satisfied if they get a favorable environment during the tour. In this regard, one tour operator said, they do not specifically know actually what they want. When they see any inconsistency, they become louder and forget after sometimes. So, the service providers do not become sincere about the complaints of the tourists. Because they think that, this person will not come again.

Here formation of expectation can be taken into consideration. No planned and organized efforts are invested by any authority or group of business organizations. As a result, just visiting a new place is considered as a privilege. Even without having the minimum support like sanitation, they show their positive attitude toward the visiting place. So, the lower level bar of expectation might influence them to be satisfied.

4.1.2 Pricing: Overall price level of Bangladeshi tourism products, even a few years back, was much competitive in the international standard. During travel to Bangladesh, the foreigners would feel that the products and services are much cheaper here. Now the situation has changed. The domestic tourists, in many cases, consider it as unnecessarily expensive.²⁵ For example, the hotels and resorts of tourism areas do charge high room rent and costly catering services. As per the costs of support services (e.g. salaries of the employees, house rent, price of used commodities), the charges must not be so high. For this reason, many domestic tourists become demotivated to visit the local spots.²⁶

Rather, they do feel that by adding a little extra money, they can easily fly to Nepal, India, Sri Lanka or even Malaysia. Charging high prices in local spots is encouraging domestic tourists to fly abroad. The pricing issues are not integrated properly by any authority which has negative impacts on tourist psychology.²⁷ Without minimizing the gap, it will be tough to rein the outgoing trend of the Bangladeshi tourists. For this reason, the service providers should consider the 'pricing' issue, as one of the key challenges, in a more realistic way.

In the international standard, prices of Bangladeshi tourism products are much competitive. When the foreigners travel to Bangladesh, without some cases, they feel that the products and services are much cheaper in this country. But for domestic tourists, in many cases, it seems expensive (high price charged). For example, the newly established hotel and resorts of tourist areas keep high room rent and catering services. As per the price of other products (salaries of the service providers, house rent, price of used commodities etc.), the charges should not be so high. On the other hand, to the international tourists, the price is not the only factor to choose a destination.²⁸ For this reason, the concerned stakeholders should consider the 'pricing' issue in a more realistic way.

²⁵ Md. Wahidur Rahman, "Cultural Tourism and Bangladesh." *Bangladesh Research Publications Journal* 7, no. 1 (2012), 6-15.

²⁶ Md. Abdul Hai and Abdul Razak Chik, "Political Stability: Country Image for Tourism Industry in Bangladesh." International Conference on Social Science, Economics and Art 2011. (Bangi-Putrajaya, Malaysia: International Scientific Conference, 2011), 58-65.

²⁷ Mohammad Mehedy Hassan and Md. Shahnewaz, "Measuring Tourist Service Satisfaction at Destination: A Case Study of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh." *American Journal of Tourism Management* 3, no. 1 (2014), 32-43.

²⁸ M. A. Hossain, "Foreign Tourists Attitudes towards Marketing Mix Elements of the Tourism Industry in Bangladesh." *Dhaka University Journal of Business Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002), 85-95.

Generally the pricing decisions are taken by the concerned authorities. In case of government offerings, the price is not profit oriented. Even places like zoos, museums, and heritage sites are free or offered at a subsidized price. Hotel, motel, resort, restaurant, transport services etc. determine the rate of fair or rent in the meeting of their association or by the owner(s). To some extent, the government just receives VAT and other taxes from the charged price on the provided services. According to the WEF report, price competitiveness is a stronger side of the tourism industry of Bangladesh.²⁹

²⁹ Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report*.(Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 95.

4.1.3 Place or Distribution: In case of infrastructure development, mostly are done to serve the mass people. Generally the infrastructures are not developed to support tourism ventures.³⁰ For example—All over the country, the road communication and transportation systems are not tourism friendly at all. On the other hand, many tourist attractions are not developed and communicated yet to the potential tourists and tour operators. As a result, they are not aware enough to visit or promote those virgin places.³¹ No specialized and passionate middleman, at home and abroad, has also been developed to take the tourism products of Bangladesh to its potential market.

Moreover, tourism is not considered yet as the mainstream business in Bangladesh. The networks among the domestic and international tour operators, to promote the spots of Bangladesh, have not been developed yet. The interactions between government and private sector are not well established as well. For these reasons, the distribution of tourism products is not well organized. The tourists find the scope of traveling to the spots at their own will, no authority continuously motivates them to visit the place. If it would be more planned and carefully managed, the pace of the tourism development could be more dynamic.

Tourism is not considered as the mainstream business in Bangladesh. Moreover, the network among the domestic and international tour operators is not so well developed. The interaction between government and private sector is not well established as well. As a result, till now the distribution of tourism products is not well organized at home and abroad. Most of the cases, the tourists find the scope of traveling to the desired spots on their own. If it would be more planned and carefully managed, the pace of the tourism business could be more enriched.

*“Operating in today’s omni business environment requires a supply chain fit for purpose. The optimal structure is fully integrated with the front end of the business and possesses the flexibility and agility to react to constant change in customer needs.”*³²

The responsibility of BPC was to develop tourism infrastructure, discover and promote relevant products, and create a positive image of the country to the international

³⁰ Isan Zahra, "Destination Image and Tourism: A Case Study of Bangladesh." *European Journal of Business and Management* 4, no. 6 (2012), 18-27.

³¹ Md. Abdul Hamid and Mst. Bilkis Akter, "Awaiting Jaflong: A Genuine Cave for Nature Hunters." *The Business and Economic Review* 1, no. 2 (2008), 151-160.

³² Ming Zeng, *Smart Business: What Alibaba's Success Reveals about the Future of Strategy*. (Boston: HBR Press, 2018), 97

community.³³ But most of the time they were busy with commercial activities like motel business, package tour operation etc. It organizes different readymade and tailor-made package and sightseeing tours like educational tours for school students, wildlife tours to Sundarbans, beach tours to Cox's Bazar, archaeological tours to Mahasthangarh, Paharpur Buddhist Monastery and Rajshahi Varendra Research Museum, river cruise to Chandpur and Jamdani village, Rupshi etc. So, BPC is one of the significant players who distribute the tourism products to its target groups. Besides, Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) is the largest association of travel agent community in Bangladesh which undertakes different activities to uphold the travel and tourism by using their network of about 3000 travel agents located in major cities of the country.³⁴

ATAB plays the important role in building relationships between government and member organizations by policy determination, upholding the interest of the member organizations and escalating infrastructure for the travel and tourism industry's development.³⁵ Other major tourism related organizations are: Tour Operators' Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), Bangladesh Tourism Foundation (BTF), International Hotel Association of Bangladesh (INHAB), Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Associations (BROA), Tourist Guide Association of Bangladesh (TGAB), Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh (TDAB) and National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) for facilitating small and cottage industries in the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

Table 4.4: This tour is organized by...

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Tour operator	27	6.9	6.9	6.9
Self	240	61.5	61.5	68.5
Institution	108	27.7	27.7	96.2
Others	15	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Maximum respondent's (61.5%) told that their tour was organized by themselves, 6.9% of it was organized by tour operators, 27.7% of the respondents mentioned that it was organized by their institution and very few of them said that their tour was organized by others. It indicates that the culture of taking helps from the tour operators and travel

³³ Mohammed Javed Hossain, Farzana Sharmin Chowdhury, and Rashed Ahmed, "Status of Tourism Research in Bangladesh: A Review of Literature," *Bangladesh Research Foundation Journal* 1, no. 1 (February 2012), 197-206.

³⁴ ATAB, <http://www.atab.org.bd/member/member-directory.html> (Accessed September 23, 2017)

³⁵ Bhuiyan and Alam, "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh," 1-12.

agents have not been developed yet. Only a few tourists would like to travel through their arrangements. Institutional organization is comparatively higher as educational and working organizations arrange such tours. In this regard, one travel agent said that the culture of organizing tour is increasing. In the last five years this trend is growing. If it continues, a good number of travelers will choose traveling through tour operators within a few years.

4.1.4 Promotion: The overall arrangement for regular promotion is not adequate, organized, or even continuously taken care of. These tasks are not clearly assigned to any devoted team or authority. Lack of international connectivity is highly felt by the experts and experienced tourists.³⁶ In this era of digital connectivity, regional, international, and global network building is highly required. To do so the public and private sector should work together.³⁷ But this integration is not noticed yet. In fact, who is responsible for promoting the tourism sector—this is a great dilemma—in Bangladesh.

Private investors do it on a very limited scale which has no mentionable impact on the overall scenario. On the other hand, government bodies do it in a very occasional and inconsistent manner. When the competitors are always trying to reach the potential market by using different promotional tools, the irregular drives of Bangladeshi tourism can achieve little or none. A clear and vision oriented promotional campaign can boost tourism of a particular destination.³⁸ For example—different provinces of India hire international consultants and use celebrities to endorse their tourism products. It gives a consistent reminder to the target groups which bring positive outcomes in the long run.³⁹ The overall scenario of promotional activities is like the following:

Bangladesh has not been able to develop integrated marketing communication strategies yet for the tourism sector. By producing some occasional videos or through attending some international tourism fairs, it should not expect to get a huge number of international tourists. The competitors work hard throughout the year in a credible and consistent manner to draw the attention of the potential tourists. On the other hand, to develop effective communication mix, even the basic steps have not been taken yet. For example—there is no organized and eye-catching website for the potential tourists as well as other stakeholders of the industry.

Successful countries in the tourism business like Malaysia, Cambodia, and Thailand have developed their websites in multiple (can be translated up to 12) languages.

³⁶ Note: An extensive traveler shared this opinion in personal discussion with the researcher at Sylhet.

³⁷ Wahida Shahan Tinne, "Nation Branding: Beautiful Bangladesh." *Asian Business Review* 2, no. 1 (2013), 31-36.

³⁸ Simon Hudson and Karen Thal, "The Impact of Social Media on the Consumer Decision Process: Implications for Tourism Marketing." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* (Taylor & Francis Group, LLC) 30 (2013), 156-160.

³⁹ Scott A. Cohen, Girish Prayag, and Miguel Moital, "Consumer Behaviour in Tourism: Concepts, Influences and Opportunities." *Current Issues in Tourism* (Routledge) 17, no. 10 (2014), 872-909.

BPC and BTB have done it only in English; even the tourism policy is uploaded in Bangla!⁴⁰ If the international tourism community would like to know about the relevant policies of Bangladesh, is it possible to get the information directly? But the neighboring countries, who mostly visit Bangladesh, are not English speaking nations. So, should not the authority develop the website with the options of translating it into Bangla, English, Hindi, Chinese, and Japanese language?

*“Social media provides the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differ from so-called “mainstream media” in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media can take the form of text, audio, video, images, and communities.”*⁴¹

For promoting tourism, commercial sources can be used just to inform the target groups. But the ultimate decisions are taken when reliable or credible sources recommend them to visit the place. No meaningful and continuous efforts from the responsible authorities are seen in this regard. Some initiatives are taken occasionally like World cup cricket, Visit Bangladesh campaign, or International folk festival. Besides, there are some routine promotions of the NTO.

The websites of the BTB (<http://www.tourismboard.gov.bd>) or BPC (<http://www.parjatan.gov.bd>) are not up to the standard of the NTOs of competing countries. They are not enriched with useful information for the stakeholders; even those are not updated for a long time! Newspapers, satellite channels, and social media have a significant role in this aspect. Domestic tourists actually get information from these sources. As part of promotional programs, NTO regularly participates in major tourism exhibitions in the different countries of the world. On the other hand, it organizes some international tourism fairs in Bangladesh which simply creates the opportunities to the competitors to sell their spots to the Bangladeshi tourists! The overall promotional efforts are not satisfactory at all.

*“While most advertising for countries should be designed to plant a long-term image in the reader’s mind, there are occasions when it can be used and hoc, to solve temporary problems.”*⁴²

Who is responsible to promote the tourism products of Bangladesh—this is a great dilemma—in Bangladesh. Private investors can do very limited scale promotions which

⁴⁰ BTB, <http://tourismboard.gov.bd/plan-and-policies/tourism-policy/> (Accessed September 29, 2017).

⁴¹ David Meerman Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Blogs, News Releases, Online Video, & Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly*. (New Jersey: Wiley, 2010), 38.

⁴² David Ogilvy, *Ogilvy on Advertising*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 128

have no massive impact. On the other hand, government bodies do it in a very occasional and inconsistent manner. When the competitors are always trying to reach to the potential tourists by using different forms of promotions, the irregular drives of Bangladeshi tourism can achieve a little or none. A clear and vision oriented promotional campaign can boost tourism of a particular destination. For example—the provinces of India hire international consultants and use famous celebrities for years to talk for their tourism products. It gives a consistent reminder to the target groups which bring positive outcomes in the long run.

“People dream about visiting foreign countries. The job of your advertising is to convert their dreams into action. This can best be done by combining mouth-watering photographs with specific how-to-do-it information.”⁴³

The trend of traveling of domestic tourists is less than the average of our neighboring countries. Recently the trend is being changed. A good number of people are traveling the home and international tourist spots. It is an opportunity to develop the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Now the favorable environment should be created so that people feel comfort to visit the domestic tourist spots with their family and friends.

Table 4.5: Main Source of information

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Word of mouth	211	54.1	54.1	54.1
Internet	159	40.8	40.8	94.9
Brochure	9	2.3	2.3	97.2
Others	11	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that 54.1% of the respondents were informed through their personal source. Their main source of information was word of mouth, 40.8% of them mentioned that they got information from the Internet, 2.3% of them mentioned brochures of the different organizations that helped them to be informed about the visited place. Rest of the respondents expressed that they got relevant information from other sources. One resort owner said that our culture is to be introduced with others' experience before visiting any place. So, the tourists generally talk and collect required information from their familiar persons who have visited the place earlier.

⁴³ David Ogilvy, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, 133

Table 4.6: Considering others’ review to choose the destination

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Always	110	28.2	28.2	28.2
Sometimes	270	69.2	69.2	97.4
Never	10	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Total 69.2% respondents informed that, sometimes they consider others’ review to choose a destination, 28.2% of them always consider others’ review though only 2.6% never consider others’ review to choose a destination. This information indicates that most of the tourists give much value to others' comment or reaction toward a tourist spot. In this regard a communication expert said that most of the available information is not integrated and credible. So, to get the primary idea the potential tourists visit different sites but lastly they rely on their known people's opinion.

The overall arrangement for the promotion of the tourism sector of Bangladesh is not adequate, organized, or even continuously taken care of. These tasks are not assigned to the devoted team or authority. Lack of international connectivity is highly felt by the experts. In this era of connectivity, regional, international and global network building is highly needed. To do so the public and private sector should work together.⁴⁴ But this integration has never been possible in Bangladesh. Who is responsible to promote the tourism products of Bangladesh—this is a great dilemma—in Bangladesh. Private investors can do very limited scale promotions which have no massive impact.

On the other hand, government bodies do it in a very occasional and inconsistent manner. When the competitors are always trying to reach to the potential tourists by using different forms of promotions, the irregular drives of Bangladeshi tourism can achieve a little or none.⁴⁵ A clear and vision oriented promotional campaign can boost tourism of a particular destination. For example—the provinces of India hire international consultants and use famous celebrities for years to talk for their tourism products. It gives a consistent

⁴⁴ Wahida Shahan Tinne. "Nation Branding: Beautiful Bangladesh." *Asian Business Review* 2, no. 1 (2013): 31-36.

⁴⁵ Simon Hudson, and Karen Thal. "The Impact of Social Media on the Consumer Decision Process: Implications for Tourism Marketing." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* (Taylor & Francis Group, LLC) 30 (2013): 156-160.

reminder to the target groups which bring positive outcomes in the long run.⁴⁶ The overall scenario is like as the following:

4.1.4.1 Advertising: To inform, to pursue, and to remind regular advertising should be in electronic and print media. Some occasional television commercials (TVCs) are seen. The sponsors are not generally managed to continue promotional activities. Supports of the concerned government bodies are not also mentionable in this regard. An integrated as well as continuous approach is needed to get desired results within a given time.⁴⁷ Voluntarily some media does it as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. But to win in the competitive environment, the authority should be attentive toward regular advertisements.

Tourism of Bangladesh is always absent in the international media. Efforts of the concerned bodies are not also mentionable. Some occasional television commercials are noticed. For example—During the World Cup Cricket 2011 an advertisement (School of joy) was released. But it is not clear for whom, why the advertisements are suddenly telecasted. Before promoting the spots, the service providers must be ready or well equipped to provide quality services to the customers. An integrated as well as continuous approach is needed to get desired results from advertisements within a given time.⁴⁸ Voluntarily some media do it as part of their CSR activity. But to win in the competitive environment, the clearly identified and accountable authority should be attentive toward regular as well as credible advertisements. To motivate the domestic tourists, no regular advertisements are noticed.

4.1.4.2 Publicity: Print and electronic media do it regularly at their own interest and plan. In the case of print media, as the readers have much interest in traveling, most of them have weekly page for sharing tourism relevant news, feature, opinion, and articles.⁴⁹ Some voluntary groups do it through social media (basically in Facebook and YouTube). Few web portals are also seen that promote tourism issues voluntarily. But those are not properly taken care of or supported (or even integrated) by anybody. So in many cases, after some days they become reluctant to maintain the group or page.

⁴⁶ Scott A. Cohen, Girish Prayag, and Miguel Moital. "Consumer Behaviour in Tourism: Concepts, Influences and Opportunities." *Current Issues in Tourism* (Routledge) 17, no. 10 (2014): 872-909.

⁴⁷ Androniki Kavoura. "A Conceptual Communication Model for Nation Branding in the Greek Framework. Implications for Strategic Advertising Policy." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 2014: 32-39.

⁴⁸ Androniki Kavoura, "A Conceptual Communication Model for Nation Branding in the Greek Framework. Implications for Strategic Advertising Policy." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 2014, 32-39.

⁴⁹ Syed Rashidul Hasan, "Marketing Publicity and Sales Promotion for Tourism Development in Bangladesh." *Social Science Review*, 2005: Vol. 19, No. 2.

Some public relation instruments are also used to cover the celebration of different occasions and special days of the concerned bodies like UNWTO, UNESCO, and MoCAT. On the other hand, sharing practical experiences of the tourists is a normal tendency. Even many of them feel it as a social obligation during the tour.⁵⁰ This powerful tool should be attempted to direct properly by the destination managers. Study shows that the consumers are more enthusiastic to share negative experiences than the positive one.⁵¹ So if not taken proper steps to flow it positively, simply negative ones will be more viral.

Print and electronic media do it regularly at their own will. Most of the cases, they do it at their own interest and of course as per their will. As the readers have interest on travelling, they have separate page in each week for sharing news, feature, opinion, and article on tourism issues.⁵² Some voluntary groups do it in social media (basically in Facebook and YouTube). But those are not properly taken care of by anybody. So in many cases, they become reluctant after maintaining a group or page for some days.

4.1.4.3 Sales promotion: Public and private organizations do it separately according to their own plan. No integrated or coordinated initiatives are noticed. For example–Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation does it occasionally for their motels and package tours. Other hotels and restaurants do it as per their own budget and schedule. They don't receive any directive or support from the concerned bodies. On the other hand, few international tourism fairs are organized by the responsible authorities that have a negative impact on domestic tourism. Because those events help the international tour operators to collect Bangladeshi tourists to visit their destinations.

Public and private organizations do it separately according to their own plan. No integrated or coordinated steps are noticed in this case. For example–Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation does it occasionally for their motels or package tours. Other hotels and restaurants do it as per their own schedule. On the other hand, few international tourism fairs are organized by the responsible bodies which have a negative impact on domestic tourism. Because those events help the international tour operators to collect Bangladeshi tourists to visit their destinations.

⁵⁰ Clare Foster, "Customer Satisfaction in Tourism: The Search for the Holy Grail." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 165-178. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 136.

⁵¹ Victor T C Middleton et al., *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*. 4th ed. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 148.

⁵² Syed Rashidul Hasan, "Marketing Publicity and Sales Promotion for Tourism Development in Bangladesh."

4.1.4.4 Direct marketing: Some industries use direct marketing effectively to gain desired success in their business operations.⁵³ This is a very effective tool for the tourism industry as well. Especially the distinguished hotel, motel, resort, and restaurant do it regularly. But those efforts are not highly connected (or linked) to the tourism development initiatives of Bangladesh. From the NTO, like many other nations, no such initiatives are noticed. Moreover, digital marketing is also used by the competitors of international tourism market.⁵⁴ But from Bangladesh's perspective, till now it is not properly used in the tourism sector.

Some industries use this tool very efficiently to gain desired success in their business operations. For the hospitality and tourism sector, this is a very useful tool. Especially the hotel, motel, resort, and restaurant do it regularly. But those efforts are not highly connected (or linked) to the tourism initiatives. Digital marketing is highly used by the competitors of the international tourism market. But in Bangladesh perspective, till now this is not properly used in the tourism sector. Simply policymakers keep faith on the 'slogan' of being digital Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, digital technologies have been reached and touched the individuals. But in the case of tourism business, it is too far to get benefits from this modern approach.

⁵³ Zheng Xiang, Bing Pan, and Daniel R. Fesenmaier, "Foundations of Search Engine Marketing for Tourist Destinations." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 505-519. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁵⁴ Alan Fyall, Brian Garrod, and Cevat Tosun, "Destination Marketing: A Framework for Future Research." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, 75-86. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

4.1.5 Process management: During the tour generally the tourists do not bother who is supposed to perform the task. They simply expect the services will make the tour memorable. So, the relevant tasks must be developed in an integrated manner. To ensure customer satisfaction, the process must be easy, convenient, and credible.⁵⁵ In the case of private sector, some institutions are trying to maintain it but the public sector organizations are far away.

Besides, till now the development of this sector is 'domestic' customer oriented. By considering the expectations of the international tourists, no mentionable development steps have been taken.⁵⁶ In many cases, tourism services (e.g. booking, ticketing, and payment) are processed manually. To make it digitized some steps have been taken but those are comparatively 'complex' in nature.

Table 4.7: Feeling safe and secured during the tour

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not at all	16	4.1	4.1	4.1
To some extent	140	35.9	35.9	40.0
Satisfactory	228	58.5	58.5	98.5
Very much	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

When it was about the tourist spots' safety and security issue, the most of the respondents (58.5%) were satisfied with the existing environment. 35.9% of the respondents said that they are satisfied with the issue to some extent. On the contrary, only 4.1% of the total respondents were not satisfied at all, though 1.5 % of them were very much satisfied with the same issue. Rather they have emphasized on the road safety issue. Besides, during the tour they might have to face different unwanted situations.

In this case, a transport service provider said that the number of occurrences in the tourist spots have been reduced in the last few years. The local business associations and benefited groups ensure the safety and security of the locality for their own interest. Though there is a general perception that the safety concern is a big issue in the case of tourism of Bangladesh, most of the respondents do not think the same. It means, with the general safety and security concerns, they don't find mentionable differences during the tour.

⁵⁵ Teoman Duman and Metin Kozak, "Service Failure, Tourist Complaints, and Service Recovery." In *Handbook of Tourist Behaviour: Theory & Practice*, by Metin Kozak, & Alain Decrop, 145-158. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁵⁶ M. M. Hasan & M. Shahnewaz, (2014). Measuring Tourist Service Satisfaction at Destination: A case Study of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh. *American Journal of Tourism Management*, 3 no. 1,(2014), 32-43.

4.1.6 Physical evidence: Most of the natural resources are kept as it is found. No mentionable steps have been taken to develop those like the competitors of our neighboring countries. To offer any product to its target market, it must be developed according to the expectations of the tourists. Most of the cases, this task has not been done effectively. Besides, lack of cleanliness is apparent in the tourist spots. In most of the public places, the lack of cleanliness creates disturbance for the visitors. Even the tourist attractions like Kuakata sea beach, Volagonj stone quarry, Natore Rajbari are not properly taken care of. The local administration shows the causes of limited budget and shortage of manpower to decline their responsibilities.

In the industrialist nations, all of the tourist spots are developed in such a way that the tourists can enjoy the beauties at their best. For this reason, many support services are developed and emergency services are kept ready. In the case of Bangladesh, even the natural resources are not safe from different groups. In the case of Jaflong, the places are totally occupied by the sand and stone businessmen. In case of Cox's Bazar, the buildings have been constructed inside the beach. For this reason, now it has been tough to find out the natures after going to see the natural spots.

This trend makes the tourists dissatisfied toward the spot and many of them dislike revisiting the place. Even they do negative publicity to their family and friends. In the long run the place lost its attractions to the potential tourists. One tour guide told the researcher that many of them become frustrated after the first sight of the spot. Because they have learnt many things or spicy stories about the beauty of the spots but after arrival (most of the time) they find nothing mentionable. It happens especially for the spots which are seasonal. In the offseason the tourists become really upset.

A tourism researcher feels that to minimize this practice, the government should declare the places as protected areas and take proper steps to conserve the resources. The destinations should be developed and presented in a planned way. The assistance of the experts should be taken in this regard. Otherwise, after visiting once, the tourists will be less interested to go there again and again. It is very harmful for a country like Bangladesh which is trying to develop its tourism sector.

4.1.7 People: Most of the job of tourism sector is not considered here as prestigious. For this reason, the skilled people of this sector prefer to work abroad; less skilled manpower stays here for long time. Even the number of such manpower is inadequate to meet the future demand. The existing workforces are not well trained for providing the specialized services as well. Human resources of this sector are not properly organized under any particular authority. No plan is taken to produce certain number of skilled people for this industry within a given period of time.⁵⁷

No renowned training center or institution has been established to produce skilled manpower for this sector. There are some courses or academic programs but most of them are certificate oriented. They can do little help the hospitality and tourism sector of Bangladesh. NHTTI is trying to keep contribution through providing training who are interested to build career in this profession. Some regional centers also offer some training programs. Few private ‘professional skills development’ centers or institutes have been established. They provide training on the trades which have dreamed in the industrialist nations. Some universities are offering degrees to produce managerial level man power.

Table 4.8: Overall management of the spot

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below standard	17	4.4	4.4	4.4
Average	256	65.6	65.6	70.0
Satisfactory	98	25.1	25.1	95.1
Excellent	19	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

When the respondents were asked about the overall management of the tourist spot the maximum part (65.6%) expressed that the overall management of spot was average. Another 25.1% mentioned it as satisfactory; only 4.9% of them said that the overall management was excellent. On the contrary, 4.4% of the respondents think that the tourist spots’ overall management was below standard. It indicates that the existing management patterns have no strong feelings on the visitors’ mind. They do not feel extremely well or bad during the tour. As most of the domestic tourists have the experience in the same situations, they don't find major deviations in the tourist spot management. One restaurant owner said that during taking meals the tourists talk about the mismanagement of the spot. Even the guests are eager to pay additional money to get a better atmosphere.

⁵⁷ Md. Abdul Hamid, *Biswo-Prekkhapote Bangladesher Porjoton (Tourism of Bangladesh in World Perspective)*. (Dhaka: Dibyaparakash, 2019), 113.

Table 4.9: Tourism products

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Sd. Error
Attractions are adequate in number to pass quality time	390	3.5385	.04556	.89976	-1.169	.124	1.061	.247
Diversity of the tourist attractions are praiseworthy	390	3.4769	.04785	.94487	-.880	.124	.192	.247
Recreational facilities of this spot are satisfactory	390	3.2333	.04489	.88658	-.408	.124	-.367	.247
Scope of night-life amusement is excellent	390	2.8179	.06087	1.20205	.078	.124	-.971	.247
Local food items are distinguishing	390	2.9590	.05053	.99787	-.152	.124	-.679	.247
Available handicraft items are attractive	390	3.5513	.04495	.88761	-.234	.124	-.073	.247
Valid N (listwise)	390							

When the respondents were asked about the tourism marketing issues, the availability handicraft items scored 3.551 in 5.0 point scales. On the other hand, Scope of night-life amusement is excellent scored the worst (2.817) on the same scale. Besides, attractions are adequate in number to pass quality time (3.5385), diversity of the tourist attractions are praiseworthy (3.4769), and recreational facilities of this spot are satisfactory (3.2333) have scored better. In the successful destinations of the industrialist nations, local food items (gastronomy) have a great influence to make the tourists satisfied. Besides, the night life issue is totally ignored in Bangladesh. But during the tour the tourists would like to ensure all out enjoyment in the visited place. In Bangladesh, till now this side is ignored. Without shopping in the handicraft shops, they have nothing to do after evening. Passing idle time in bad weather also makes them bored.

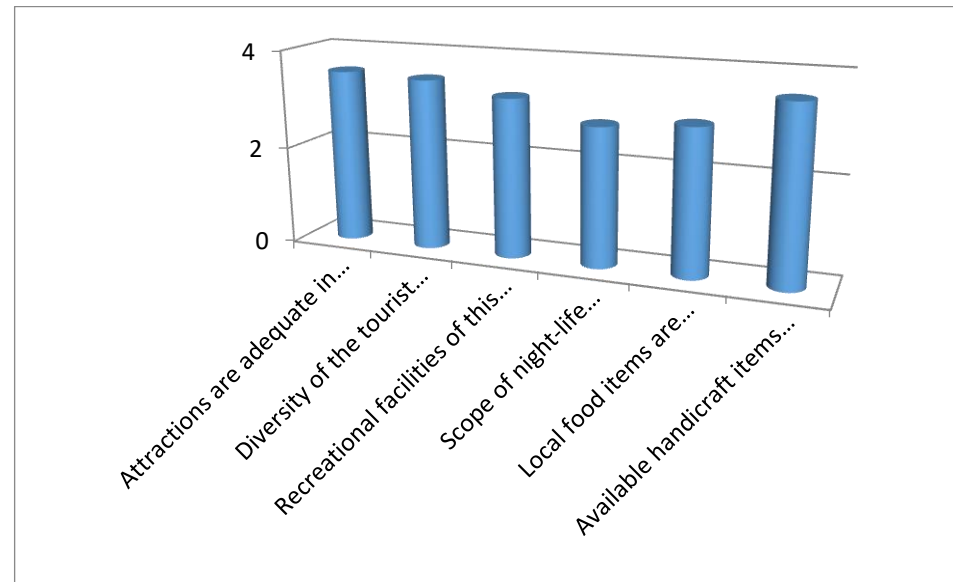
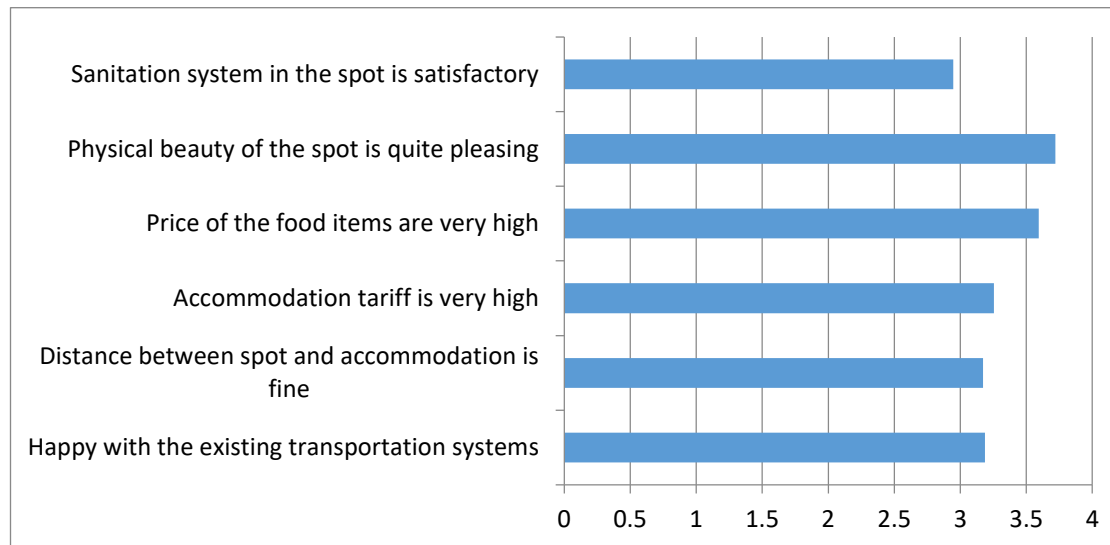


Table 4.10: Place, price and presentation

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Happy with the existing transportation systems	390	3.1872	.05691	1.12387	-.341	.124	-.743	.247
Distance between spot and accommodation is fine	390	3.1718	.05132	1.01339	-.424	.124	-.495	.247
Accommodation tariff is very high	390	3.2538	.04691	.92643	-.467	.124	-.209	.247
Price of the food items are very high	390	3.5949	.04803	.94853	-.438	.124	-.532	.247
Physical beauty of the spot is quite pleasing	390	3.7205	.04269	.84314	-.960	.124	.996	.247
Sanitation system in the spot is satisfactory	390	2.9462	.05323	1.05122	-.066	.124	-.618	.247
Valid N (listwise)	390							



The table and graph show that, physical beauty of the spot is quite pleasing (3.720 out of 5.00). Price of the food items are very high (3.5949), accommodation tariff is also considered as very high (3.25), distance between spot and accommodation is considered as fine, Happy with the existing transportation systems scored comparatively well. But the sanitation system in the spot is not very satisfactory (2.9462). To some spots these facilities are not up to the standards which make the tourists uncomfortable to some extent.

Table 4.11: Promotion and processing

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Healthcare services are available (if required)	389	2.8612	.04995	.98507	.070	.124	-.603	.247
Collecting useful information for the tour was easy	389	3.3393	.04713	.92948	-.453	.124	-.253	.247
Promotional activities have motivated me/us to visit here	390	3.0000	.05385	1.06353	-.348	.124	-1.024	.247
Booking/collecting ticket was convenient	390	3.2282	.04377	.86445	-.531	.124	-.255	.247
Access to ATM booths are convenient	390	2.7564	.05589	1.10370	-.106	.124	-.980	.247
Access to Internet is satisfactory	390	2.8949	.05664	1.11854	.042	.124	-.861	.247
Valid N (listwise)	389							

The above table shows that, collecting useful information for the tour was comparatively easy (3.339). Moreover, booking/collecting tickets was convenient (3.2282) and promotional activities have motivated me/us to visit here do comparatively good score (3.0000). On the contrary, access to ATM booths are convenient has scored very low (2.7564) in 5.0 point scale. Regarding the health care services, their opinion was not also satisfactory (2.8612). Access to Internet was also negatively marked (2.8949) due to the poor network and accessibility in the different spots of Bangladesh.

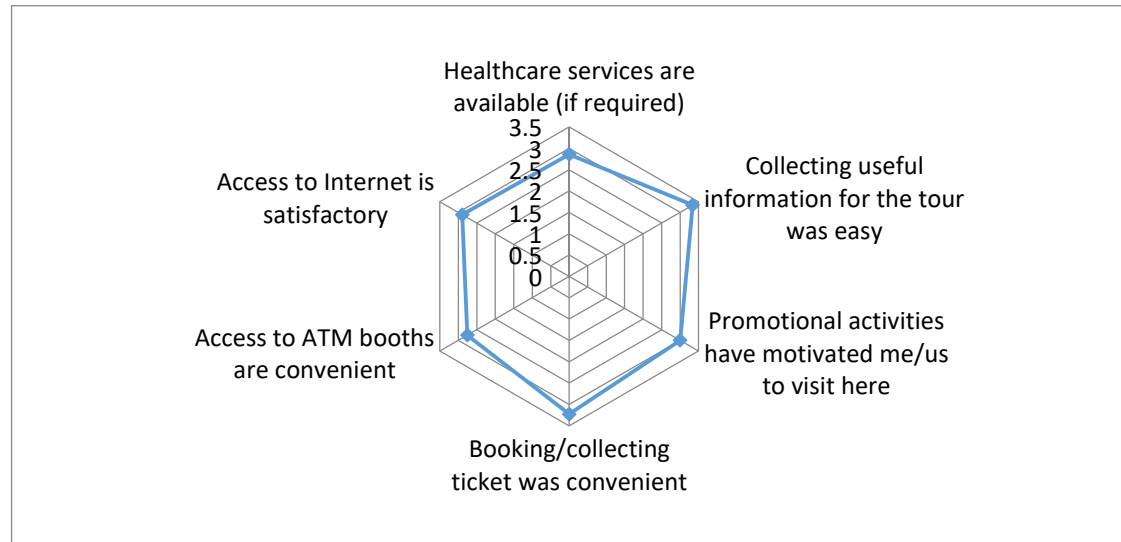
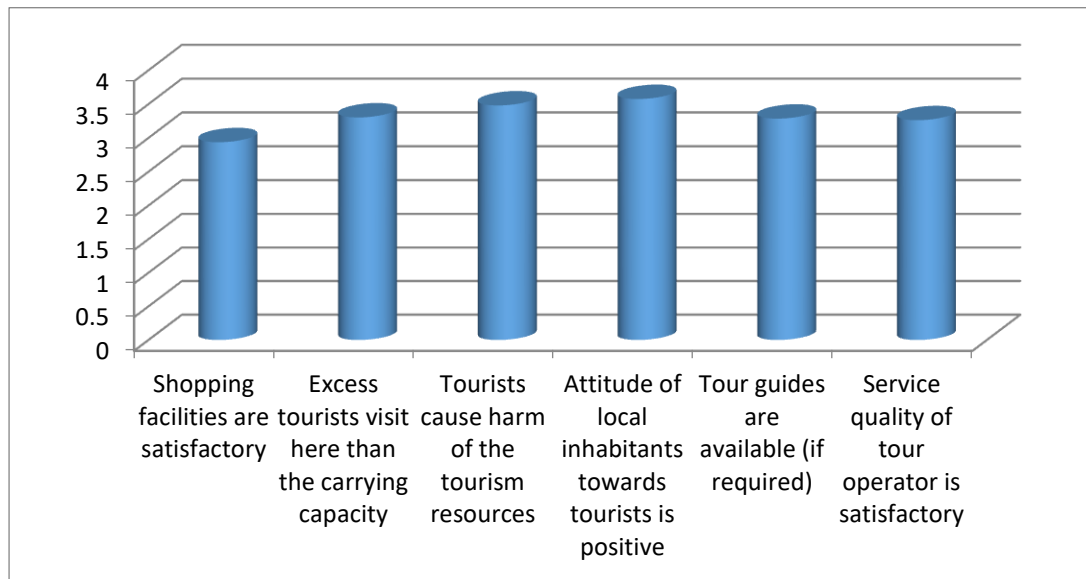


Table 4.12 : People and support services

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Shopping facilities are satisfactory	390	2.9359	.05610	1.10781	-.089	.124	-.882	.247
Excess tourists visit here than the carrying capacity	390	3.3026	.05111	1.00934	-.227	.124	-.617	.247
Tourists cause harm of the tourism resources	390	3.4795	.04306	.85043	-.213	.124	-.630	.247
Attitude of local inhabitants towards tourists is positive	390	3.5744	.03837	.75773	-.717	.124	.690	.247
Tour guides are available (if required)	390	3.2846	.05053	.99795	-.610	.124	-.172	.247
Service quality of tour operator is satisfactory	390	3.2615	.04631	.91450	-.318	.124	-.100	.247
Valid N (listwise)	390							



Attitude of local inhabitants towards tourists is found positive (3.574) than other given statements. The question of ‘tourists causing harm to the tourism resources’ has been scored (3.4795) which indicates a negative role is being noticed by the other tourists. Excess tourists visit here than the carrying capacity has also scored well (3.3026). It means that excess people are traveling here which should be controlled in a planned way. Tour guides are available (if required), and service quality of tour operators is satisfactory. But the respondents do not think that shopping facilities are satisfactory (2.935) near to the tourist spots or the places where they pass night/stay. All over the world, it is a very significant element of tourism.

Table 4.13: Tourism marketing strategies I

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Initiatives of local administrant is noticed	390	3.0718	.04520	.89269	-.316	.124	-.592	.247
Public-private collaboration is understood	390	3.0923	.04332	.85546	-.475	.124	-.313	.247
Recent development initiatives are visible	390	3.1051	.04540	.89657	-.359	.124	-.735	.247
Integration among the authorities are realized	390	3.1718	.09112	1.79938	12.895	.124	222.092	.247
Community involvement is noticeable	390	3.0821	.04457	.88019	-.252	.124	-.720	.247
Possible all forms of promotion are used	390	2.8897	.04493	.88730	.107	.124	-.895	.247
Website is enriched with useful information	390	2.8795	.05466	1.07953	-.190	.124	-1.080	.247
Valid N (listwise)	390							

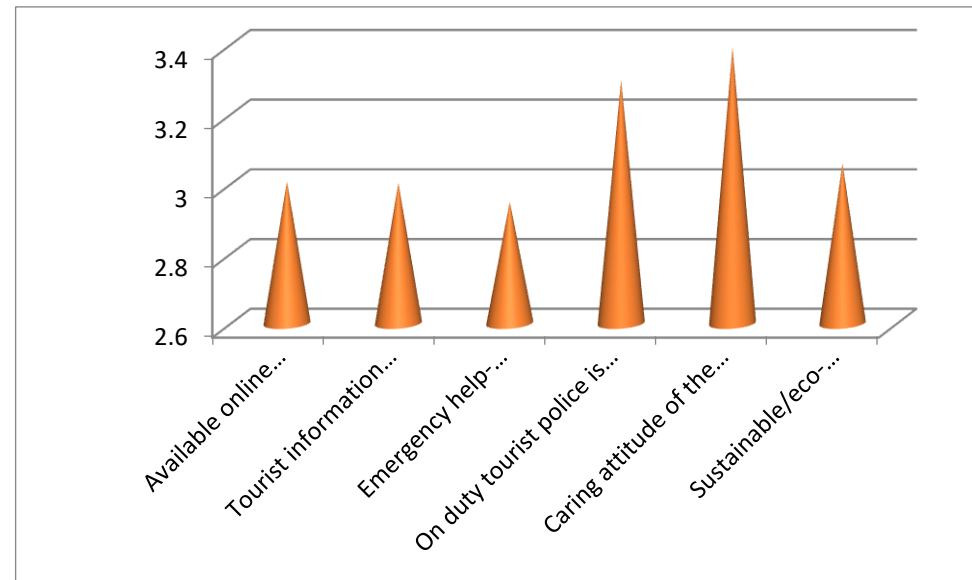


In case of tourism marketing strategies, ‘integration among the authorities are realized’ have scored the best (3.1718 out of 5.00). Besides Recent development initiatives are visible (3.1051), public-private collaboration is understood (3.0923), Community involvement is noticeable (3.0821), and Initiatives of local administrators are noticed (3.0718) have also done good score. On the other hand, ‘website is enriched with useful information’ has scored the lowest (2.8795) in 5.0 point scale.

Table 4.14: Tourism marketing strategies II

Particulars	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Available online information are reliable	390	3.0077	.05115	1.01020	-.211	.124	-.728	.247
Tourist information services are available here	390	3.0026	.05167	1.02036	-.458	.124	-.916	.247
Emergency help-line/services are working here	390	2.9487	.07073	1.39681	8.801	.124	132.040	.247
On duty tourist police is seen during the tour	390	3.2974	.04368	.86268	-.542	.124	-.292	.247
Caring attitude of the service providers are felt	390	3.3923	.11334	2.23835	15.380	.124	279.844	.247
Sustainable/eco-tourism ventures are noticed	390	3.0590	.04619	.91213	-.301	.124	-.432	.247
Valid N (listwise)	390							

The above table shows that ‘caring attitude of the service providers is felt’ scored the highest (3.392 out of 5.00). Other related issues including on duty tourist police is seen during the tour (3.2974), sustainable/eco-tourism ventures are noticed (3.0590), Available online information are reliable (3.0077), and tourist information services are available here (3.0026) scored about the same (above 3.00). But the emergency help-line/services working here scored very low (2.948) in the 5.0 point scale. Even in many remote spots there is no scope of rescuing in case of emergency.



4.2 Tourism Marketing Strategies in Bangladesh

Tourism is quite different in nature than other industries. It combines many industries together to offer a complete package. For this reason, the guardianship is not as clear as other traditional industries. Apparently it seems weak but if that can be properly managed, this feature can create mentionable synergy as well. The market is not properly defined yet. The market has been developed mostly based on the domestic tourists. But they are not in the center of the taken initiatives. Their demands, preferences, and expectations are generally not taken into consideration to formulate any strategy. As a result, the outcomes are not matching properly.

Even the industry structure is not properly defined. Who are the principal players and which organizations will assist them is not clearly traced out. As a result, apparently they all are working hard but the outcomes are not satisfactory. The activities of the policymakers are not confident about the potential contribution of the sector. Most probably they do not believe that the sector can do a lot. If it is the reality, how can the sector move forward? Strategy is the tool. It helps to achieve organizational goals. In the long run, to achieve the mission and vision of the organization, the strategies are used. With the increasing intensity of competitions, the usages of strategies are increasing all over the world. The business organizations use this weapon very effectively from the ancient period. The successful countries in the tourism business are also using new and creative strategies to gain desired success.

Strategy can be viewed as building defenses against the competitive forces or as finding positions in the industry where the forces are weakest.⁵⁸ There are three potentially successful generic strategic approaches (overall cost leadership, differentiation, focus) to outperforming other firms in an industry.⁵⁹ In the case of Bangladesh, at least one generic strategy can be used successfully. From the very beginning it is said that Bangladesh has a competitive advantage as a low cost destination. But for the changing world perspective, many poor and underdeveloped nations are offering their tourism products at lower cost. As a result, it is a matter of re-thinking, till now is it an advantage? There is no research on this issue.

By nature, selling the service products is more challenging than the physical goods. The distinct characteristics like intangibility, inseparability, perishability, heterogeneity, and

⁵⁸ Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*. (New York: The Free Press, 1980): 30.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

ownership has made the task more challenging than the marketing of goods. It has also created opportunities for the tourism marketers. They can create a dream to the potential tourists about the upcoming visited place. Such visualization helps them to take the buying decision easily.

As the potential customers can not compare the offers from one marketer to another, it creates the opportunity to sell more number of tours to them, Because tourism is such an appealing product that a customer can buy the same product again and again. So, the challenging side as well as opportunity both exists in the service products marketing. The bargaining power of the buyers is increasing. They have much access to the required information. They can move more easily (even to the international destinations) than earlier days. The unity or integration among the service providers is not increasing in that level.

The regulators should take a clear position. In the very beginning, operating a tourism business was somehow logical. But now in the private sector the industry has grown in the mentionable volume. In this situation, the government organizations should work to facilitate the tourism sector rather than involving in the business directly. The change is happening in the market. The rate of mobility and traveling tendency has mentionable increased. The competitors are taking the advantage. But for the unorganized efforts the tourism sector of Bangladesh can not grasp the benefits.

The goals of the sector are not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound). So, there is no continuous assessment and realistic recommendations for future moves. The active stakeholders should understand, feel, and comply with the taken strategies. In that case, reflecting their opinion to the taken strategies is highly required. But most of them are not aware (as well as convinced) on the issue. They should be taken into confidence to get meaningful outcomes in future. In the intangible industries like tourism it is tough to identify clearly the competitors and their taken strategies. The level of competitions is really tough to explore and counter them.

In earlier days, just offering a product to the target market was enough. For many reasons like limited supply, less scope to compare, lack of information, physical barriers, those would be sold at optimum level. For limited choice, the buyers would also be satisfied with the available products. But the current situation is totally different than that of those periods. Now the potential customers have huge alternative options to choose, to bargain for getting fair deals, to review others' opinion, and moreover, huge supply of information to them. As a result, winning in the competitive market is becoming tougher than any previous time.

In this case, the unique strategies can help the marketers of tourism products. To gain benefits from this tool, the marketers should be more planned and goal oriented. Time to time evaluation of their taken strategies is highly needed. Otherwise, the competitors might go ahead and that becomes really tough to exist in the race. The ultimate aim of any tourism venture is positioning to maximize the value of the capabilities that distinguish them from the competitors.⁶⁰ Without continuous efforts, it is impossible to create and maintain differentiation in the tourism sector. Because all other players are working hard to offer a better product. In that situation, without having a professional and devoted team to monitor and design plans, it is about impossible to be competitive.

Quality and quantity of the strategies taken by the authorities and other concerns are not much mentionable. Though a separate Ministry is formed, a statutory corporation is working from the very beginning; the outcomes are not so mentionable. Besides, a tourism board has been formed to expedite the slow pace, a decade ago; the results are not visible yet. Government bodies have to coordinate or integrate the tourism strategies in different levels, In the case of Bangladesh; this side has not done much yet. The recent authorities are trying to do so. But generally it takes much time to get results from this multi-sectoral industry. Without taking timely strategies, it will be about impossible to stay in the competition.

Lack of vision might be the prime reason. The concerned authorities did not give proper drive to achieve any particular thing within a given period of time. As a result, most of the steps were routine work. They have just taken some steps on a trial and error basis. Based on the past experiences, nothing has been learnt. As a result, if one step goes ahead, after someday, it backs it or more. The private sector tourism business practices are not also much organized and competitive like our neighboring countries. They are not properly integrated by anybody or person. As a result, in spite of having a large domestic market, the sector is not thriving. From the very beginning it is trying to survive not to thrive!

New products are not coming from a long time, no organized promotional efforts are invested, and the prices are not much competitive comparing our neighboring service providers, people for providing services are not being well trained for the closely related industries. So many factors are keeping the tourism sector of Bangladesh much behind than the competitors.

Being focused on some niches is highly required. Offering mass tourism has not functioned for a long time. Bangladesh should have a complete list of its core tourism

⁶⁰ Ibid, 47.

products. Then selecting some niche areas where it can do clearly better than the competitors. Set specific targets are highly needed. No one is sure to achieve what the concerned bodies are working for long time. As a result, after having people, products, and even a huge market, nothing is being achieved.

Be attentive to the domestic market. There is a misconception that drawing attention to the international market ensures the success of the tourism sector of a country. It is not true, always. Bangladesh is a huge populous country. More than 10 crore people move around the domestic market each year. If they can be properly taken care of, the related industries can do really well. Based on the occasional foreign tourists, the offers can not be developed. Those will not be profitable as well. So, having attention to the already created market can bring much desired results within a given period of time.

Regional competition should be enhanced. If the entire country is divided into eight tourism regions and they work hard to get a maximum number of tourists, it might bring wonderful results. Each region will be attentive toward the product development, its promotion and other steps...all of them will be developed. Otherwise, the central plans and its execution will not give much better results; it is being proven for last decades.

Being planned and taking realistic steps can really boost this potential sector. It can bring maximum results by investing less. Having multi-storied buildings with modern equipment is not always necessary to be successful in this sector. Rather having authentic, cordial, and distinctive products and services can bring really better outcomes. Bangladesh has the resources, just proper planning and its execution is highly needed. If those can be done, the tourism sector of Bangladesh will do better within the desired period of time.

Chapter 05

TOURIST BEHAVIOR IN BANGLADESH

To be successful in any modern business venture, understanding its consumers is a must. As consumer, for the adventure seeking nature, the tourists are more dynamic and less loyal towards any brand as well as destination. For this reason, producing satisfied tourists and maintaining it is a great challenge for the hospitality and tourism marketers. Whatsoever they understand or not the tourists generally do follow some chronological steps to take the ultimate purchase decisions. But as human psychology is much more critical, the actual reasons of taking a particular decision (within the black box) can not be totally explained. Besides, many internal and external factors always do influence of their choices. And so the tourism marketers always have to update their offers and arrangements than many other industries.

There is a debate in academia that the consumer (tourist) behavior is either rational or random. After a series of studies, it is concluded that from the outside the observers may consider their actions or decisions as random (irrational). But to the tourists it is unquestionably rational, whatever the decisions are. Otherwise, he or she would not pay the set price for the chosen products. They must have logical arguments behind buying or not buying a particular product. In the same way, their positive or negative voluntary opinions about a product or service (word-of-mouth or word-of-web) have a long term impact on the specific brand.

This chapter is basically produced based on the existing concepts, published articles and reports on the tourism sector of Bangladesh, opinion of the in-depth interviewees, and observation of the researcher. Based on the internationally accepted theories and models the situation or scenario of Bangladesh has been presented to explain the characteristics of the tourist behavior in Bangladesh. Based on the changed time, place, person, and situation these issues might be different but the attempt has been taken to portray the current practices in the studied area.

5.0 Introduction

Till now the hospitality and tourism sector of Bangladesh is in the primitive stage. Its citizens are exploring the domestic and international tourist spots randomly. The culture of passing planned holidays and leisure periods like the industrialist nations have not been developed yet. The business of hospitality and tourism may be described as a collection of service activities.¹ It is said that services are composed in deeds, efforts, and performances.² The concerned service providers of Bangladesh are also learning through doing tourism related business operations. A major portion of them actually play the role of a travel agent especially the Hajj Agent. As a result, both of them (tourists and service providers) are learning through 'trial and error' mechanisms.

Though it is treated as an emerging sector, mega investments or moves are not noticed here. The international tourists generally (most of them) come for other professional tasks in this country. Few of them visit Bangladesh just to explore the tourism products of the nation. Maximum number of tourists comes from India and the United Kingdoms. The non-resident Bangladeshis, who hold foreign passports, have a significant contribution in this number. For this reason, the characteristics of the international tourists are not much diverse than the behavior of the domestic tourists. Moreover, to understand and explain their characteristics are categories the following subsections can be taken into consideration.

5.1 Tourist behavior

Consumer behavior is the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products, services and ideas.³ This lesson can be applied in case of tourist behavior. Because more or less the tourists do the same thing while making decisions about a new product. In general, the tourist (buyer) behavior model consists of three stages: pre-purchase, consumption, and post consumption.⁴ Successful marketing managers focus on understanding their consumers'

¹ Les Lumsdon, *Marketing for Tourism: Case Study Assignments*. (London: MacMillan Education, 1992), ix.

² K. Douglas Hoffman, and J. E. G Bateson, *Essentials of Service Marketing*. (Orlando, FL: The Dryden Press, 1997), 31.

³ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*. 10th ed. [Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India), 2010 (Reprint 2016)], 5.

⁴ Eli Avraham and Eran Ketter, *Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 16.

wants and needs as clearly as possible. The study of consumer behavior is based on two fundamental ideas: that consumer behavior is rational and predictable and that, as marketers, we can influence this behavior.⁵

Why should marketers be interested in consumer behavior? Because understanding how consumers behave leads to greater profitability.⁶ Before developing any product the marketer should carry out required research to understand the needs and wants of the potential customers (market). But in the case of Bangladesh, till now no authentic study (from the responsible authority side) has been carried out for this purpose. If the decision makers understand everything and develop products as their wish, the tourists are not compelled to follow their route. To step forward, a rigorous study is required to understand—who are the market, what do they want, and how can we proceed to meet up their needs?

5.1.1 Tourist behavior reality in Bangladesh

Based on the other practical circumstances the expectations of the consumer vary time to time and place to place. In case of tourism the practice is not much different. As an underdeveloped nation, we did not get required services always where required. As a result, though now our economic growth and quality of life is enhancing, the expectations are not much higher. Rather on the way many unwanted situations have to face, by accepting this reality, they start the journey. These issues are presented in the following sections.

5.1.1.1 Less expectations: The tourists of Bangladesh have real life diverse negative experiences. For this reason, they do not dare to expect more comfortable services to the spot and other situations. The domestic tourists understand that there are many limitations in the visited place. So, most of them are mentally ready to accept the reality. Besides, most of the tourists are young and adventurous in nature.⁷ They can cope up with any situation during the tour. The luxurious (high income) tourists generally go to some specific resorts or hotels. They come back without much visiting the spots and nearest sightseeing places. So, tourists have minimum complaints against the service providers. Besides, a major portion of the tourists manage the tour on their own. The culture of

⁵ Reid and Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*, 89.

⁶ Hayden Noel, *Consumer Behaviour*. (Lausanne: Ava Publishing SA, 2009), 24.

⁷ Md. Mortuza Ahmmed, "An Analysis on Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh." *Journal of Culture and Tourism Research* (The Korean Academic Society of Culture and Tourism) 15, no. 2 (2013), 35-39.

traveling through tour operators have started recently. No rigorous study is found on tourist behavior in Bangladesh perspective.

Tourism marketing is an integrated effort to satisfy tourists by making available to them the best possible services.⁸ The essence of successful marketing is the image that a product has in the mind of the consumer—it is positioning.⁹ To create unique position in the mind of the consumers, understanding their motivation, attitude, perception, learning process is very important. For example—In remote areas the accommodation facilities are not satisfactory. A study on Sundarbans showed that only 40 percent of respondents were satisfied with tourist accommodation, whereas 90-95 percent was satisfied with food and water supplied.¹⁰ Such type of information helps to understand their opinion and take further steps.

5.1.1.2 Conflict of interests: The demands of tourism may come into conflict with the needs and wishes of local residents.¹¹ Because sometimes the local inhabitants feel uncomfortable with the flow of a huge number of unwanted people. Moreover, to some extent, they do not respect the local traditions and become threat to original socio-economic practices. Even their mode of pleasure as well as many expenditure patterns becomes a threat for the local livelihood. In Greece, it is seen that the new generation are less interested in doing hard work for their success in life. Rather they also like to pass time through enjoyment like the visitors. Such an attitude creates conflict with their parents and finally the senior citizens criticize ‘tourism’ for the the threats to their history, heritage, and culture.

Generally we consider that the people, who are not complaining for the delivered goods or services, are satisfied one. It is really a misconception. Because most of the customers do not like to talk about the unsatisfactory products. Few of the talk and that is devastating. A study finds that on average, a customer who is dissatisfied shares their negative feelings with approximately ten other individuals.¹² The same study explores

⁸ Mahmudul Hasan and Md. Imrul Jobaid, "Heritage Tourism Marketing: Status, Prospects and Barriers," *ISOR Journal of Business and Management* 16, no. 5 (2014), 40-48.

⁹ Leon G. Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*, 10th ed. (2010; repr. Noida: Dorling Kindersley India, 2016), 175.

¹⁰ Khanom and Buckley, "Tiger Tourism in the Bangladesh Sundarbans," 178-180.

¹¹ Charles R. Goeldner and J. R. Brent Ritchie, *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. (Need place and publisher, 2006).

¹² Hayden Noel, *Consumer Behaviour*. (Lausanne: Ava Publishing SA, 2009): 23.

that maximum ten percent consumers open their mouth in this regard. On average, a consumer who is dissatisfied shares their negative feelings with approximately ten other individuals.¹³ As the potential tourists must rely on the review of the tourists, rather than the promotional offers given by the companies, the number of dissatisfied tourists must be minimized by taking practical steps.

5.1.1.3 Symbol of social status: Some consumers try to indicate which social class they belong to by consuming certain products and services.¹⁴ This tendency motivates them to travel in home and abroad. When they share their travel experiences with their fellow mates, they get special respect for such activities. Especially in the growing economy like Bangladesh, such practices are frequently noticed. Crompton identified 'prestige' as a primary motivating factor.¹⁵ Though the study was conducted in the developed country perspective, it does not differ much in the developing countries like Bangladesh.

In tourism, one of the most frequently used content theories (given by John L. Crompton, 1979) is 'push-and-pull' motivations. Push factors refer to the internal forces that push individuals to travel. Pull factors are external forces of the destination which are concurrently attractive in the choice of a particular destination.¹⁶ Prestige is an ancient motivation for the social being. When a person becomes rich or feels that s/he belongs to the upper class of the society, they become interested to do such activities which are done by the people of that particular class.

Only for this reason, many people travel to the exotic places. Because such a visit gives that implied recognition about their social status. In that case, some special destinations give them extra positive feelings. They feel proud to visit those places. Visiting such places gives them the perception that society will count them differently. For example – Many Bangladeshi people visit Singapore and Thailand from that point of view. Other groups go to Saudi Arabia perform 'Umrah' or Hajj. A study shows that a

¹³ Ibid, 23.

¹⁴ Hayden Noel, *Consumer Behaviour*, 17.

¹⁵ Antonia Correia and Miguel Moital, "Antecedents and Consequences of Prestige Motivation in Tourism: An Expectancy—Value Motivation." In *Handbook of Tourist Behaviour*, by Metin Kozak, & Alain Decrop, 16-32. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 19.

¹⁶ Ibid, 17.

brand's prestige is determined by five type of perceived value: conspicuous, unique, social, emotional, and quality.¹⁷

5.1.1.4 Image plays the critical role: The public image and the media image of a country are crucial for many decisions and behaviors made by tourists. Trying to make a place 'attractive' is an old practiced strategy. When the European would try to attract new investors and skilled employees to their new colonies, they would publish news, features, and documentaries about the geographic area in the mass media. Even the American government did the same thing to encourage its citizens to shift in the less populated West region in the 19th centuries.¹⁸ With economic development, the countries try to enhance its image to the world community.

In this case, some studies show that the country image and the destination image might be different. In case of Turkey, such gap is found in several studies.¹⁹ Successful marketing managers focus on understanding their consumers' wants and needs as clearly as possible.²⁰ The study of consumer behavior is based on two fundamental ideas: that consumer behavior is rational and predictable and that, as marketers, we can influence this behavior.²¹ The domestic tourists understand that there are many limitations in the visited place. So, most of them are mentally ready to accept the reality.

¹⁷ Ibid, 20.

¹⁸ Eli Avraham and Eran Ketter, *Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 39.

¹⁹ Sara Campo Martinez and M. D. Alvarez, "Country versus Destination Image in a Developing Country." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 27, no. 7 (2010), 748-764.

²⁰ Philip Kotler, *Ten Deadly Marketing Sins: Signs and Solutions*. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 27.

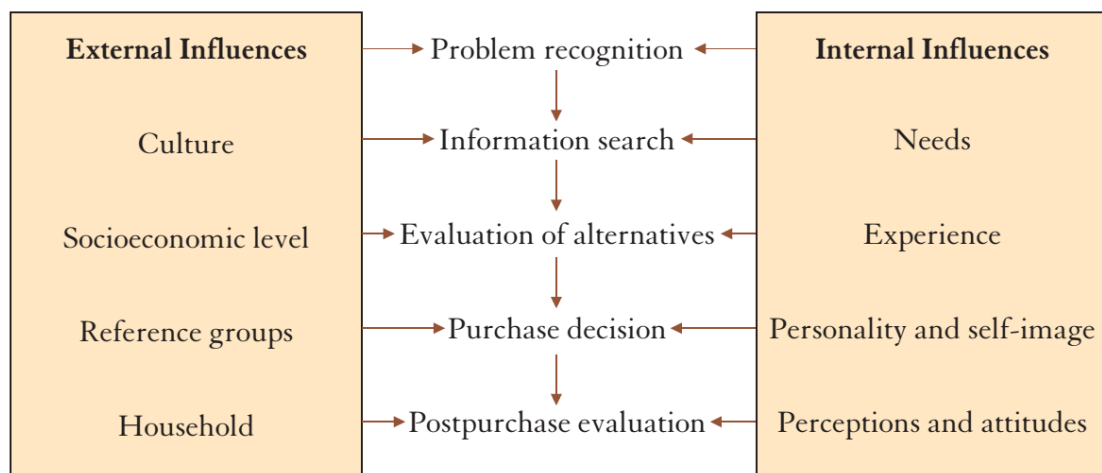
²¹ Reid and Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*, 89.

5.2 Decision Process of the Tourists

Tourists’ buying behavior is never simple. Consumers vary tremendously in age, income, education level, and tastes and they buy an incredible variety of goods and services.²² To understand the decision process of the hospitality and tourism market, a huge number of studies have been conducted all over the world. In diverse cultures, the behavior patterns differ in a mentionable volume. But some common factors as well as steps are found in most of the studies. In that case, the following model is widely accepted by the academic scholars. The decision making process of the Bangladeshi tourists do not differ a lot from the internationally accepted notions. So, the consumer (tourist) decision process of Bangladesh can be explained in the following way based on the discussed model.

Adoption Process: The stages through which an individual consumer passes in arriving at a decision to try (or not to try), to continue using (or discontinue using) a new product. The five stages of the traditional adoption process are awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and option.²³

Figure 5.1: A consumer decision-making model with the influential factors



Source: Robert D Reid and David C. Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*. 4th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 99.

²² Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2014), 166.

²³ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*. 10th ed. [Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India), 2010 (Reprint 2016)], 396.

5.2.1 Need or problem recognition: Few families of Bangladesh have annual tour plans and keep separate budgets like the citizens of the industrialist nations. Rather the institutional and/or social initiatives encourage them to go for any recreational tour with colleagues, family and friends. For this reason, the irregular traveling is a mentionable feature of the domestic tourists.²⁴ Even after many years, they go for a tour on any suitable occasion. Most of the cases, the family members have no mentionable pressure of doing it regularly. On the other hand, nowadays official initiatives inspire group visits when necessary.

As part of the official tours, they include some attractive tourist spots for recreation of the participants. In this connection, few groups enjoy the opportunity of being part of MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Event) tourism. The advertisement on mass media has less or no mentionable role to arouse the needs of the potential tourists. Some social media groups encourage being part of them in routine and new ventures. It works best for the youth who form groups like 'tourist club' under different banners. Basically these are the areas where the tourists feel the necessity of traveling. Occasions or opportunities are the key role player for recognizing the needs of the domestic tourists. Documentary of television & video channels and special pages of newspapers & magazines have an important role to introduce the new places to visit in Bangladesh.

5.2.2 Information search: Basically the known or familiar people (e.g. Family members, friends, colleagues) are the main source of information for the upcoming tours. They even do help manga accommodation, transportation and other support services for the expected tours. In other cases, the websites, social networking sites, YouTube channels, relevant magazines and telephone contacts help them to gather related information. Now some tourism fairs, e-mail form the concerned organizations, brochures and leaflets work for the initial awareness of the tourists.

Till now the tour operators have limited contribution in this case though its increasing gradually in the last few years. After taking services for the first time, generally they (tour operators) keep in touch and provide the information of their new

²⁴ Md. Masudur Rahman, *Exploring the Socio-economic Impacts of Tourism: An Study of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*. PhD Thesis, (Cardiff: University of Wales Institute, 2010).

offers and other sales promotion tools.²⁵ Mass media, especially the print media, have a significant role in this case. They provide relevant information with attractive descriptions of the tourist spots of the different corners of the country. This information gives some clues to the potential tourists who are interested to visit new places.

Searching information is also influenced by the attitude of the consumer. Attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object.²⁶ Till now the information searching process of the tourists of Bangladesh is not so organized. When they decide to visit any place, normally they talk to their family and friends who have experience in that area. To some extent, they have familiar tour operators or travel agents who give them the required information. The social media or relevant websites have minimum contribution to arouse their feelings to visit any particular place. Rather they depend on the information of the known people who can help them to design the tour plan and even give some contact information to avail the required services.

5.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives: The tourists of Bangladesh do evaluate the alternative options in their own way. To do so, they generally consider some factors with high priority. Of them, the security, cost of tour, convenience of the journey and the scope of meeting family and friends get priority. Earlier the social occasions would get high attention for the family get-together. But in the last few years, the tourist spots have been taken into consideration as one of the alternative options. Having known and familiar people close to the spot plays a significant role in selecting the destination. Though such decisions are totally psychological issues, based on their response pattern these factors have been traced out.

Moreover, price, location, and service quality are the significant consideration for hospitality and tourism products.²⁷ Enjoying beauty of new places has also a role, especially the young generation dislike to repeat the tour in the same location. On the other hand, for family tours, they do not mind revisiting if the qualities of services are satisfactory. In this phase, generally the tourists' purchase decisions are influenced by the

²⁵ Jannat Ara Parveen, "Current Status of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: An Empirical Evaluation." *Scientific Research Journal* 1, no. 1 (2013), 41-56.

²⁶ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*. 10th ed. [Noida: Dorling Kindersley (India), 2010 (Reprint 2016)], 234.

²⁷ Abraham Pizam and Roger Calantone, "Beyond Psychographics Values as Determinants of Tourist behavior." *Int. J. Hospitality Management* 6, no. 3 (1987), 177-181.

attitude of others regarding the product. Unexpected situational factors also influence the purchase decisions largely.

*“No matter which position in the network your firm occupies, you must remember that each positioning strategy relies on the other positions for success. The strategy for any one firm is defined in terms of the activity of other firms. None of the three positional strategies exists in a vacuum.”*²⁸

5.2.4 Purchase decision: After passing a long path of critical evaluation they choose the final destination. The maximum number of tourists would like to make sure that the place is worth visiting. The culture of traveling through the tour operators, especially for individual and family tours, has not been developed yet in Bangladesh. Most of the cases, the purchase decision is taken solely by the tourists themselves.²⁹ Here the role of middlemen is lower than in other developed countries. They just work as information providers and facilitators of the tour. Like other industrialized nations, all of the purchase decisions are not based on formal agreement or signing contracts here. Rather both parties have to depend on ‘mutual faith’ regarding any tour plan in Bangladesh.

For this reason, sometimes the gap between expectation and perceived value creates misunderstanding among the involved parties. Through negotiation those problems are resolved in most of the cases. Post paid system is much practiced in Bangladesh. So the challenges of keeping the tourists satisfied till the end of the tour are enduring. Through offering satisfactory services till to the last minute, hospitality and tourism businessmen have to operate their business.

*“Potential customers want to feel certain that the purchase they’re considering will benefit them, that others will think highly of their decision, and that they won’t be wasting their money.”*³⁰

5.2.5 Post-purchase evaluation: By nature the notion of ‘loyalty’ is less functional in the tourism business. The key reason is that the tourists would like to explore the new places continuously (adventure seeker). But if once a tourist is satisfied with existing facilities and the provided services, generally they work as voluntary advocates for the

²⁸ Ming Zeng, *Smart Business: What Alibaba's Success Reveals about the Future of Strategy*. (Boston: HBR Press, 2018), 127

²⁹ Md. Kashedul Wahab Tuhin and Md. Tofael Hossain Majumder, "An Appraisal of Tourism Industry Development in Bangladesh." *European Journal of Business and Management* 3, no. 3 (2012), 23-30.

³⁰ Josh Kaufman, *The Personal MBA*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 110.

organization. For this reason, working hard to produce satisfied tourists has a long term positive impact on the business organization.

The same tourist may not visit the place again and again but when they recommend others, it gives much return than the revisit of a particular tourist. As a country of high-context culture, the tourists are highly dependent on the shared experience of their known groups for taking ultimate decisions. For this reason, the post-purchase evaluation of the tourists has a great influence to be successful in the hospitality and tourism business.

“Selling is the process of persuading a person or a group to buy a product or service. The more beneficial to both, the more likely it is that the sale will be made and, more important, that each party will come away satisfied with the transaction.”³¹

Word of mouth is a powerful tool to express the reaction of the tourists. After returning from any place, generally they share the experiences through gossiping and chatting with the friends, colleagues, and relatives. Nowadays the social media has a significant role to share their feelings of the tourists.³² Most of the cases, people would like to share negative experiences through social media so that the potential tourists do not go through the similar experiences.

“Research indicates that roughly 90 percent of your unhappy customers simply stop doing business with us without saying at all about it to us. Unfortunately, they do tell friends, relatives, neighbors, and complete strangers. Question: Can we afford unhappy customers?”³³

³¹ Arch Lustberg, *How to Sell Yourself*. (New Jersey: The Career Press, 2002), 132.

³² Alzbeta Kiralova and Antonin Pavlicecka, "Development of Social Media Strategies in Tourism Destination." *International Conference on Strategic Innovative Marketing, IC-SIM 2014*. Madrid, 2015. 358-366.

³³ Zig Ziglar, *Selling 101: What Every Successful Sales Professional Needs to Know*. (Mumbai: Magna Publishing, 2003), 90.

5.3 Influencing Factors on Tourist Behavior in Bangladesh

All over the world, the tourist behavior is highly influenced by numerous external and internal factors. As a social being the tourists generally do consider a good number of issues before departing for a tour. If it is a group tour, the opinions of all the participants have to take into consideration. For this reason, like other FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) products, the purchase decision of a tourism product is not so linear. Many critical issues are raised by its participants and after addressing those satisfactorily, they have to move for the next. Bangladeshi tourists are quite different from the industrialist nations for many practical reasons. Those have been described with relevant information and examples in the following sub sections.

“There are six basic emotions in the human experience; Happiness, surprise, disgust, fear, anger, and sadness.”³⁴

5.3.1 External influencing factors

Generally the tourist behavior is highly influenced by many external factors. Though the tourists spend their own money, they are highly influenced by so many factors. The cultural, social, economic, technological, political, legal and other factors of tourists have direct or indirect influence on their decision and its implementation. During the tour, generally the people become more open minded, fun loving and enjoyment oriented but they never forget that they are part of a larger society. For this reason, their behavior usually reflects the expectation of the society and their greater culture as well.

5.3.1.1 Culture: The sum total of learned beliefs, values and customs that serve to regulate the consumer behavior of members of a particular society is known as culture.³⁵ For any type of behavior of a human being, undoubtedly the culture is a great influencing factor. Even many people can not cross its boundary, after entering into a new culture, throughout their life. For example—a European female tourist knows that in the beach they have to wear swim suite. So, just after going to the beach they do change within few minutes. But a lady born and grown up in a Muslim country can not behave similarly; even though the beach has no male tourist! In this way, thousands of cultural factors guide human being to do or not to do a particular behavior.

³⁴ Kevin Hogan and William Horton, *Selling Yourself to Others: The New Psychology of Sales*. (Mumbai: Magna Publishing, 2003), 176.

³⁵ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*, 342.

The core of such culture, regarding traveling, is the attitude toward tour in the holidays or leisure periods. The citizens of OECD countries feel tourism as a mandatory annual task. They keep separate budgets and time for traveling. They can not imagine a year without having a planned vacation. In the case of Bangladesh, there are many people who have not traveled once in the lifetime for leisure! The most interesting thing is that they have no grief for such retention from traveling.

*The studies suggest that one of the important factors impacting tourist satisfaction is ‘cultural approximation’—that is, the extent to which the cultures and, especially, the languages, of visiting tourists and host countries are similar. The basic assumption is that different nationalities have different satisfaction levels: the more similar the languages and cultures, the higher the satisfaction levels.*³⁶

Why do such differences happen in the thought process? Most probably, the ‘culture of traveling’ is a very significant factor in this regard. In this way, religion, beliefs, attitudes, institutions, working environment, and many other sub-cultural factors have great influence on the traveling trend of the members of a particular society. Now the trend is changing rapidly in Bangladesh. The people who have a lot of money feel proud to visit the foreign tourist spots. But the middle class working group is taking it positively. As a result, the tendency of traveling to the tourist spots is increasing all over the country. In the different vacations like Eid and mega holidays a good number of people are traveling to the tourist spots.

As the first generation has started to travel, the next generation will take it high. For that the sector should be prepared. Otherwise, they will seek alternative spots of the neighboring countries. If the concerned industries wait for creating the market, the tourists will be outward oriented. So, we have to develop attractive tourism products and then promote them. If it happens, the culture will change within a few years. Among the huge number of people if a minimum portion becomes travel centric, the market size will be huge. There are both positive and negative impacts of tourism development on the host community.³⁷ The policymakers and practitioners have to play a significant role to

³⁶ Muammer Tuna, “Cultural Approximation and Tourist Satisfaction.” In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, 207-220. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 207.

³⁷ Tanja Armenski Vanja Pavluković and Juan Miguel Alcántara-Pilar, "The Impact of Music Festivals on Local Communities and Their Quality of Life: Comparison of Serbia and Hungary." In *Best Practices in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management, Applying Quality of Life Research*, by Ana María

conserve and uphold their own culture. Besides, taking positive sides of others' culture enriches them gradually. So, tourism development creates this great opportunity. Culture is a continuous factor to change. If it is positive, it brings well being for the stakeholders.

5.3.1.2 Subcultures

Though all of them live in the same geographic region, under a broader Bangladeshi culture, they are divided into many subcultures which have a very strong influence on consumer decisions. Not only the major elements of cultures do the division of a particular culture, they can be divided based on different other factors like educational level, taste and preference, motivation of the consumption etc. For example–Eid and Puja have a great influence on the tourist behavior. On these vacations, people are planning to go on outings in home and abroad. In the Eid-ul-Fitr approximately 6,00,000 people have visited foreign tourist spots.

Inside the country, though there is no specific data, more than 10,00,000 people visit inside tourist spots on Eid vacation. Besides, more than 1,00,000 people go to Saudi Arabia to perform *Hajj* and *Umrah* each year. Millions of people from all over the country attend Biswa Ijtema. All of these gatherings have contributions in the tourism sector. Many devotees go to Goya, Kashi, Brindabon, and Mothura as the holistic place. Others go to Ajmeer Sharif to cherish their needs and wants. *Orosh* is also an important occasion for which millions of people travel from one place to another which has tourism value.

Bangladesh is one of the nations who have achieved rapid economic growth in last decade. Even the growing trend is continuing. For the demographic dividend, it is expected to be continued for the next few decades. In that case the behavior of the tourists will be changed rapidly in a mentionable volume. Generally the tourism has a very positive relation with economic development. When people earn more money, they would like to spend in luxurious sectors like traveling home and abroad. For this reason, it is said that the social classes have an important role in this respect.

The middle income group is huge in size in Bangladesh. If a significant portion of them become habituated to travel in the attractive places, it will create a boom situation

for the hospitality and tourism sector. Really to do well in the sector, the domestic tourists have to play the most significant role. When they will spend money in the spots, the standard of the services will be upgraded automatically. Now the trend of the tourists is positive, it should be encouraged from the different corners of the active stakeholders. Their contribution can keep a significant role to flourish the hospitality and tourism sector of Bangladesh. In recent days, word-of-mouth (or word-of-web) has great influence on buzz marketing.

5.3.1.3 Reference groups: It is such a group that has direct or indirect strong influence on one's attitude or behavior.³⁸ In case of tourism, reference groups are very powerful for several reasons. They can easily form the attitude—positive or negative—of a potential tourist toward a destination or specific brands. Their single comment might have a devastating impact on a potential tourist. Even it might be such a tiny factor that the service providers have not even noticed it ever. For example, a medical tourist was sharing his experience in front of some people. As a patient, he has to go to Kolkata for treatment after six months. He would stay in a particular hotel there. But once he notices that the toilet is facing Qibla (West). Suddenly, he decides not to stay there any more.

Before taking the next hotel room, he has been sure about its face! By listening to this, one of the regular customers of the previous hotel said with wonder—Are you sure? Then from next time, I will not stay in that hotel as well! He also goes there for treatment after a certain interval. In this way, they can influence the decision of the potential visitors as they are respected by the followers. For this reason, it is said that reference groups are the people to whom an individual looks as a basis for self-appraisal or as a source of personal standards.³⁹ Their recommendations can make even a complex issue much easier. As members of a high context culture, the Bangladeshi people can not ignore (or stop them) from seeking help from the people whom they consider as ideal or experienced for the decision.

They are actually powerful opinion leaders. They do not go to the consumers to offer advice rather the potential buyers go to them to know which are the best brand and other relevant information. Nowadays online social networks are a powerful element to

³⁸ Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 6th ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2014), 187.

³⁹ Roger A. Kerin and Steve W. Hartley, *Marketing: The Core*. 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016), 103.

influence the acceptance of a product. This community advocates voluntarily and without having visible benefits to the potential groups. For this reason, the level of acceptance is much higher than other promotional tools. For tourism products such recommendations or referring has a great value to the potential tourists. Because they do not like to face the hazards as others' have experienced recently.

5.3.1.4 Influence of the family members: Family members also have a strong influence on acceptance or rejection of a tourism brand. For example—the young generation might have interest in buying many products but without having consent of the senior family members, in most of the cases, they can not buy it. Especially if it is relating to the travel and tourism issues the guardians are always concerned regarding their safety and security issues. So, convincing other influential family members, with the target market, is also an important task of a modern marketer.

Age and the lifecycle stage itself influences people to buy or not to buy a product. With the changing life cycle position, the nature of the income and expenditure patterns change massively. It directs their preferences, choices, and decisions about buying any product. For this reason, the marketers change their promotional strategies for the different age groups though they belong to the same community or even family. The diffusion process (The process by which the acceptance of an innovation is spread by communication to members of social system over a period of time)⁴⁰ is not somehow unexpected in Bangladesh.

5.3.1.5 Roles and status of the tourist: These are the significant indicators that what type of product a tourist can buy or not. A person belongs to a particular society; he or she feels the necessity of some special type of product. Especially in the show-up products like travel and tourism has a great influence in the community he or she belongs to. If others regularly travel home and abroad, other coworkers become motivated to do the same. The intensity might differ but they do it and become habituated gradually.

In high context cultures like Bangladesh, it really works best. So, having some clients in an organization gradually enhances the scope of expanding the market. Occupation is also a very powerful element of the consumer decision process in this modern era. The job the nature of a person determines many things these days. They have to buy and use as the profession requires it. Many people have to travel a lot as part of

⁴⁰ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*, 396.

their job responsibilities. In that case, their buying decisions are highly influenced by the colleagues, peers and other mates.

5.3.1.6 Economic situation: This is somehow one of the key decision factors of a potential tourist. Having purchasing power influences demand of tourism products.⁴¹ As the income level is being high, the people are becoming more consumption oriented. As they can not spend much money only on physical consumptions (e.g. food, clothing, shelter), they would like to spend on leisure and entertainment activities. On the other hand, the lifestyle of many people encourages having travel decisions. They would like to be part of the particular type of travelers. Adventure seeking or traveling to the exotic places tourists generally come from this group. Finally, the personality and self concept has also a great influence on the expenditure patterns of a potential customer. To follow their own personality traits they do some behavior or not. Travel and tourism is an important part of this. Based on their own concept and personality, they decide to travel or not, having a particular brand or not.

5.3.1.7 Change in the household structure: The household structure is rapidly changing in developing countries like Bangladesh. The joint family culture was practiced here for centuries. In those times, the decision making process was highly centralized, even to some extent; head of the family was solely responsible for taking any decision regarding the family members.⁴² Sometimes for sensitive decisions like voting in the upcoming election, they would have to wait for the opinion of the social (or regional) leaders. Now the scenario is being changed very fast.

In the new power structure, the purchasing power has been widely decentralized.⁴³ Even the family members have less or no control over the kids' buying decision. They choose their products and the seniors have to give consent and pay for the products. In case of tourism, though the decision making process is not so much decentralized yet, many members contribute in finalizing the decisions. When all the members of the family or the participants of the group agree on a particular point, it becomes possible to take the

⁴¹ Sakib Bin Amin, "Tourism and Economic Development :An Analytical Framework." *Participatory Development: External and Internal Challenges*. Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, (Dhaka: Bangladesh Economic Association, 2007).

⁴² L. Mozumdar et al., "Changing Leadership and Rural Power Structure." *Journal of Bangladesh Agricultural University*. 6, no. 2 (2008), 429-436.

⁴³ Ronald C. Powers, "Identifying the Community Power Structure." 2010. <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/pub/comm/NCR19.pdf> (Accessed March 28, 2019).

further steps of the tour. For this reason, only convincing the single member is not enough today for gaining success in the hospitality and tourism business. Beside these major elements, some other external factors also influence the tourist decision in Bangladesh:

5.3.1.8 Availability of information has a contribution: Huge sources of alternative information are also encouraging the potential tourists to visit their chosen places.⁴⁴ Earlier the people would be scared enough to move forward for a tourist spot for not having authentic information. So many tension and uncertainties would create barrier to start the journey.⁴⁵ Now they get information from various popular sources. Even the scope of cross-checking the information is increasing their level of confidence in this respect. As most of the people are now using different forms of social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Whats App, Tweeter etc.), they are getting updated information, with practical reviews, about offered services of the tourist spots. It encourages them as well as makes the plan more practical to plan for visiting the destination.

Even by some clicks they can contact the service providers which assure them that they can enjoy a comfortable journey. Even this advantage has created opportunities to customize the offers. Now the service providers are more flexible than earlier. It has sped up the pace of traveling all over the world. Bangladesh is not far behind from availing these advantages. But the challenging side of the overflow of information is: perception regarding something might change quickly, even before having practical experience at least once.

New and enriched information may give new clues or directions to the tourists. As a result, what they thought the most attractive, another site might take that position. So, all competitive destinations have to struggle to win and keep a better position in the tourists' mind. It is reducing the trend of loyalty toward a particular tourist spot for the travelers who travel regularly and keep separate budgets for the tours.

5.3.1.9 Job nature and pleasure trips: The people are being involved in multi-tasking which makes them bored or tired after working very hard in a few days. They do feel the necessity of passing some time in a calm and peaceful environment, beyond the busy working as well as daily family life. So, at the weekend or in a particular season they are

⁴⁴ Gareth Shaw, Stewart Barr, and Julie Wooler, "The Application of Social Marketing to Tourism." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 54-65. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁴⁵ Redwan Salam, "Tourism & Socio-Economic Development: Focus on Bangladesh, A Destination Country." *International Journal of Business and Management (Toronto)* 1, no. 2 (2014), 88-98.

going to visit in a motel or resort. They would like to enjoy sometimes as their own. It helps them to be recharged or re energized for taking the next physical or mental pressure.

The pace of this trend is increasing with the speed of busyness of a huge number of people. Earlier only the annual academic tours (or excursions) would be arranged regularly. But now many professional groups are organizing such type of tours regularly. It helps them to be connected with coworkers of their own institutions. It also creates a more congenial atmosphere for the employees of different levels of the organization to pass quality time with others' family and friends.

5.3.1.10 Social recognition and dignity is a factor: Prestige motivation is closely associated with traveling the tourist spots of home and abroad. The people who regularly travels in the domestic as well as international spots, their fellow colleagues do them respect for several reasons.⁴⁶ Most probably the general people consider them as a smart, dynamic and wealthy person. For this reason, when someone becomes rich and passes time with another rich community, they would like to pass some leisure period in some attractive tourist spots. Even rich people like Richard Branson buy attractive islands to pass leisure time. In that case, they would like to travel to international tourist spots but sometimes visit the spots of Bangladesh as well. It automatically gives them the feeling that they are being considered as an elite person to their fellow mates. This trend also encourages the Bangladeshi tourists to visit here and there when they get the opportunities.

5.3.1.11 Change in the income distribution has a role: In recent days, a good number of young people are earning a good amount of money. It gives them the freedom of pursuing their hobbies which was quite impossible for them. Few decades ago, people would earn a good amount of money after being included in a 50s or 60s club. In that time, other necessities would get priority than traveling in the desired places. Only they would prefer to visit for religious purposes. The cycle has been changed in a mentionable

⁴⁶ Antonia Correia and Miguel Moital, "Antecedents and Consequences of Prestige Motivation in Tourism: An Expectancy—Value Motivation." In *Handbook of Tourist Behaviour*, by Metin Kozak, & Alain Decrop, 16-32. (New York: Routledge, 2009).

volume. Now young couples or even before marriage many people are getting handsome salaries with additional allowances.⁴⁷

So, they are being daring enough to spend a good amount of money for traveling and tourism purposes. And this habit generally continues after being married and getting children. As a result, a first generation of family traveling is being created that will have a long term impact on the concerned industries. If the domestic products are not much competitive, this generation will be interested in the international spots. So, to capture them, the industry men should behave more professionally like the competitors of our neighboring countries.

5.3.1.12 Change traditional seasonality: Extension of the tourism period is also a significant variable for the sector. Actually as part of the monsoon area, Bangladesh has no extreme hot or cold weather throughout the year. Earlier people would like to travel only in the winter. Individual, family, and groups tours generally would be arranged in that time. But for the extended traveling facilities, now the tourists can visit different attractions throughout the year.⁴⁸ Even different seasons have extended the scope of different types of tourism. For example–In rainy season, they get water-based tourism facilities in Sylhet, Barisal, and Cox's Bazar region. So, compared to many countries, seasonality is not a highly critical factor in Bangladesh. It has extended the pace of tourism development in the last few years.

5.3.2 Internal influencing factors

Like the external issues, there are so many internal factors which extremely influence the decisions of travel and tourism. In the countries of high-context culture like Bangladesh, the shape of thinking is highly influenced by so many factors. Besides, for many practical reasons, they are not much adventure seeking. Rather always the thinking of the safe and secured journey regulates their behavior. Generally the following issues are clearly noticed which influence them to take tourism related decisions. Some of those are explained below:

⁴⁷ Sagib Kumar Ghosh, Shanto Banik, and Sajib Barua, "Value Dimensions Analysis for Tourism Destination among Bangladesh Young Tourist: An Empirical Study." *Bangladesh Journal of Tourism* 1, no. 1 (2016), 41-55.

⁴⁸ M. M. Hasan and M. Shahnewaz, Measuring Tourist Service Satisfaction at Destination: A Case Study of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, Bangladesh. *American Journal of Tourism Management*, 3 no. 1 (2014), 32-43.

Figure 5.2: Factors influencing behavior

<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Psychological</i>	
Culture	Reference groups	Age and life-cycle stage	Motivation	Buyer
Subculture	Family	Occupation	Perception	
Social class	Roles and status	Economic circumstances	Learning	
		Lifestyle	Beliefs and attitudes	
		Personality and self concept		

Source: Philip Kotler et al., *Principles of Marketing*. 4th European ed. (Essex: Pearson Education, 2005), 256.

5.3.2.1 Personal needs and motives: With financial independence, the people of the society are becoming more isolated in modern Bangladesh. The bondage of the society and even families are being loose than the earlier days. It is making the people lonelier and unhappy in spite of having much wealth. To minimize this unhappiness, they are considering traveling home and abroad, as one of the best alternatives.⁴⁹ The tension of during, before, and after the tour keeps them busy with so many factors. In that case, they forget the implied pains that they bear always in the workplace as well as in the family. For this reason, they try to keep them busy in the leisure periods.

This situation, with the financial abilities, encourages them to take more tours than the earlier year. It is creating a large market for tourism products. As it is the transition period, it will increase for at least the next one or two generations. So, the future of tourism business is bright because so many personal needs and motivations are driving them to go and stay outside the usual environment. Besides, the traveling trend of the colleagues, neighbors and other family members also insist them to take tours.

“As a fundamental principle, every human action is aimed at an improvement of some kind. People buy products and services because they feel they will be better off as a result.”⁵⁰

5.3.2.2 Traveling experience and its rewards: Traveling experience is quite different in nature than other service products. The experience of traveling to a particular spot does not fulfill the need totally; rather it increases the appetite of discovering new places next

⁴⁹ Sameer Hosany and Girish Prayag, "Determinants and Outcomes of Tourists' Emotional Responses: Towards an Integrative Model for Destination Brands." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 447-460. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁵⁰ Brian Tracy, *The Psychology of Selling: How to Sell More , Easier, and Faster than You ever Thought Possible*. (Tennessee: Nelson Business, 2004), 53.

time.⁵¹ Even the experienced people encourage others (non travelers) explicitly to do so. For this reason, the number of tourists of a society expands gradually. The favorable environment helps to make it happen. Besides, creating some experienced travelers has a long term effect on the overall society.

As Bangladesh is doing well economically in the last few years, it is expected that more people will be interested to take the experience of traveling to new places and recommend others. On the other hand, this trend will enhance the scope of taking more suitable tours at lower cost. It also encourages others to do the same which gradually create the culture of traveling in a society. Bangladesh has entered into this trend already. Now the concerned stakeholders have to take an active role to keep it up.

5.3.2.3 Personality and self-image: All over the world, the most traveled people are respected and recognized as a learned person. They might not have financial enrichment but people listen to them, perceive them as wise men. It creates the sense of 'self actualization' to many people in the society. Their personality and self-image give them enduring satisfaction which leads to travel again and again.⁵² Even their followers dream to be like them. In this way, tourism becomes acceptable to a society, it becomes a philosophy. It enhances the abilities of the tourists to accept others' differences easily. They can cope up with the new environment very easily.

Actually to form a liberal and open minded society, tourism can play a great role. Even the religions have made it compulsory to visit some holy places on different occasions. In case of buying behavior, based on these factors the tourists decide to take or not to take a tour. Through taking a tour they complete a long critical process of information search, evaluation of alternatives and facing different risks of ultimately taking the product.

5.3.2.4 Perceptions and attitudes: With the change of time and situation, generally perception and attitude toward something changes gradually. In case of tourist behavior, it helps to decide about taking the service in future or not. Besides, regarding the traveled place, they form a newer attitude and perception which guide them to behave in future.

⁵¹ Chunxiao Li, "Tourist Destination Choice: A Review and Critical Evaluation of Preference Estimation Methods in Tourism Marketing Research." In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*, by Scott McCabe, 313-326. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁵² Youcheng Wang and Abraham Pizam, *Destination Marketing and Management: Theories and Applications*. (Oxfordshire: CAB International, 2011).

Generally the tourists form it through traveling experiences. So it is the ultimate duty of the service providers to offer them such quality services that they feel better and become a voluntary advocate for them to the potential tourists.⁵³ This step encourages or discourages a tourist to take his or her next journey. So it is an obligation of the service providers to give them positive experiences so that they do not become reluctant about their upcoming tours. Their positive perception will motivate them to take more tours within their abilities. Making traveling a habit is possible through providing quality and cordial services to the current tourists.

5.3.2.5 Psychological factors: At least four major psychological factors influence internally a tourist behavior. Those are as follows:

Motivation: For having a tour to a destination might have different motivations. To explore a new place, to remind old memories, to meet family and friends, to gain new insights, to be part of a prestigious team, to enjoy the benefits of having a free tour and so many factors might motivate a person to visit a place. Even the combination of above mentioned few factors might be involved for having a particular tour.⁵⁴ Nowadays passing some leisure time and getting relief from the busy work life is working as a great motivation to travel in a preferred place. In this case, sales promotion or advertisements sometimes motivate them to have a tourism product or not.

Perception: The perception of the tourists depends on many factors which are even not possible to know by the service providers. The expressed factors are scanned based on the experience, learning and other personal choices. But generally the tourists do their own assessment by considering implied and expressed many factors. For this reason, the perception varies a lot among the participants of a tour even if they work in the same organization with similar backgrounds. Understanding the perception variables of the potential tourists and offering them required services are the key to success in this sector.

Learning: People learn from diverse forms of experiences. Helping them to be introduced with the offered products, and even what the competitors are offering has an impact on purchase decisions. In this case, learning from indirect sources is more credible than the direct sources of promotion of the concerned organizations. So, creating such materials in a planned way might bring better results to be successful in the long run.

⁵³ Ana Maria Munar and Jens Kr. Steen Jacobsen, "Motivations for Sharing Tourism Experiences through Social Media." *Tourism Marketing* 43 (2014), 46-54.

⁵⁴ Yooshik Yoon and Muzaffer Uysal, "An Examination of the Effects of Motivation and Satisfaction on Destination Loyalty: A Structural Model." *Tourism Management* 26, no. 1 (2005), 45-56.

Beliefs and attitudes: As part of a larger society as well as culture, the beliefs and attitudes toward a particular organization or a brand develop. It directly influences the purchase decision of the tourists like the consumers of other sectors. These factors can not be changed easily as well. For this reason, working to gain trust and providing sincere services might generate positive attitudes and positive beliefs in the long run of a brand. There is no short cut way of achieving these factors in favor of the organization.

“Many people only buy a product when it is clear from two to four years of history that the product is popular and well accepted.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Brian Tracy, *The Psychology of Selling: How to Sell More , Easier, and Faster than You ever Thought Possible*, 102.

5.4 Characteristics of the Tourist Behavior in Bangladesh

All over the world the tourists have distinctive characteristics. Bangladeshi tourists are not beyond that. Based on the available information and opinion of the respondents, the following issues can be identified:

Table 5.1: Special characteristics of the tourism business and tourist behavior

<p><i>Lack of professionalism of the tourists</i></p> <p><i>Tendency of mass tourism</i></p> <p><i>Irregular and inconsistent tours</i></p> <p><i>Special characteristics have much influence</i></p> <p><i>Personnel development and quality services</i></p> <p><i>Attention towards the special needs of each tourist</i></p> <p><i>Flexibility of the tour plan</i></p> <p><i>Group tours make them more comfortable</i></p> <p><i>Influence of entertainment industry</i></p> <p><i>Self managed and non-guided tours</i></p> <p><i>Awareness on local and special food items</i></p> <p><i>Lack of action research</i></p>
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5.4.1 Lack of professionalism of the tourists: The domestic tourists are not 'professional' yet from the tourism point of view. Tourism is not treated here as an impotent part of life or culture yet like the industrialist nations. From childhood they learn that for a specific time of the year people have to visit for vacation as well as recreation. In our country, in that aspect, the tourists are in the first generation stage. A good number of educated and wealthy people are thinking that a regular tour is required to be more productive.

Especially businessmen and working people are being used to travel for recreation on a regular basis. Though this number is small, the good thing is that they are making it as part of life or culture. It will encourage their children (next generation) to do the same in future. As a result, gradually a good portion of the tourists will become professional and they will contribute to grow the industry.⁵⁶ The service providers are also not professional yet. But gradually some organizations in the different parts of Bangladesh are developing who are trying to offer standard services. For this reason, they are getting a good number of loyal customers as well as a good brand image.

⁵⁶ Y. Wang and S. Krakover, "Destination Marketing: Competition, Cooperation or Competition?" *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 20, no. 2 (2008), 126-141.

5.4.2 Tendency of mass tourism: The tourists of Bangladesh generally travel to a tourist spot when they get any scope or occasion of doing so. The tourists of industrialist nations do travel to different places from their childhood. So, gradually they tend to fulfill their interests toward a special type of tourism product.⁵⁷ For this reason, after completion of visiting a particular type of attraction of their homeland, they would like to visit similar international tourist spots. In the case of Bangladesh, this is the first generation that is getting the chance of visiting different places from early childhood. As a result, the seniors have very limited choices of special type of tourism products.⁵⁸

Rather they would like to visit a particular place (wherever it may be) by forming a group. For this reason, some places are highly crowded and others are not. Sometimes this trend accumulates the huge number of tourists that are more than the carrying capacity of the spots.⁵⁹ It has a diverse negative impact on the destination. For the absence of proper market segmentation and not developing products as per their need, such type of problems is created. In the elementary stage of tourism development, it happens in the many countries of the world. But gradually they have developed different types of products according to the large segmentation of the market.

5.4.3 Irregular and inconsistent tours: As it is a voluntary task for the citizens of Bangladesh, for many reasons they can not take at least a tour each year. For personal, financial, social, and weather related issues can hinder the regular tour of a family. The young individuals would like to travel, they have physical abilities but they are unable to bear the costs. As a result, very few of them can travel regularly at their intended places. Many external hazards also create problems. Even political situations have a great influence on their decisions. As many sectors are involved with tourism business, if one sector faces trouble, others automatically do not work. It also affects the demand of the tourism products.

⁵⁷ Natalie J. Allen and John P. Meyer. "The Measurement and Antecedents of Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization." *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 63, no. 1 (1990): 1-18

⁵⁸ Md. Abul Kalam Azad. "Mass Tourism in Bangladesh: A Study on Cox'sbazar." *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies* XXXI (2008), 217-228.

⁵⁹ Mohammad Amzad Hossain Sarker and Sumayya Begum, "Marketing Strategies for Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: Emphasize on Niche Market Strategy for Attracting Foreign Tourists." *Arts, Science & Commerce* IV, no. 1no. 1 (2013), 103-107.

5.4.4 Special characteristics have much influence: Selling a tourism product is much more challenging than physical goods. For some unique characteristics, this service oriented sector, has to offer additional facilities.⁶⁰ For this reason, after the sales, ‘satisfaction of the tourist’ is considered as very important factor to succeed in the tourism business. During sales of physical goods, they have to invest much labor to convince the potential customer; after handling the product, generally they have nothing to do. But as an integrated service product, after consuming the services, having satisfied toward the destination as well as the service provider is very important.

Because it influences the word of mouth or viral marketing highly; it determines the re-visit the destination with the same operator. Getting new customers through them also highly depends on their level of satisfaction.⁶¹ For this reason, the successful travel agents and tour operators keep relations with the clients after the visit as they did before visiting the place. It has a very positive impact on the tourists’ mind that encourages them to talk on their recent tour and the quality of the service providers.

5.4.5 Personnel development and quality services: Expert and professional service providers can add much value to any tour.⁶² Out of the regular and convenient environment, the tourists generally feel various types of problems and shortcomings. Even psychologically they feel insecure and challenged till to the end of the tour. The service providers have a lot to do in this regard to minimize the tension and make the tour more comfortable.

Because when the tour members feel bored or irritated, the taken initiative of the service providers are much significant. In many cases, in spite of having excellent infrastructural supports the tourists return from the destination with dissatisfaction only for the low quality of services.⁶³ The owner(s) of the motel or resort invests a lot to improve the scenic beauty of the spot but simply ignore the necessity of developing

⁶⁰ Christopher S. Dutt and Ivan Ninov, "Expatriates' Learning: The Role of VFR Tourism." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 31 (2017), 253-264.

⁶¹ Nigel Evans, David Campbell, and George Stonehouse, *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. (Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003), 26.

⁶² Jayanta Fakir and Rafiq Ahmed, "The Opportunities of Career Development in Tourism Industry in Bangladesh." *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2017), 30-47.

⁶³ Donald G. Gardner et al., "Employee Focus of Attention and Reaction to Organisational Change." *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 23, no. 3 (1987), 351-370.

human resources with the same importance. Without being attentive to this sensitive issue, they have to struggle to be successful at the desired level.

5.4.6 Attention towards the special needs of each tourist: By nature, as a social being the tourists have distinct needs and perceptions. Especially during the tour, they want maximum satisfaction from their feelings. Though they belong to the same group (e.g. student, teacher, government official, or executives of an organization), their taste, preference, and assessment patterns of the consumed services might be quite different. But the service providers can not change the tourism infrastructure, layout or many other settings as they will.

In that case, the well trained and expert service providers can fill up this gap efficiently; because in most of the cases, people become angry or delighted for the little causes or differences. If those are handled rightly, the amount of dissatisfaction reduces in a mentionable volume.⁶⁴ As the mind-set of the tourists can not be changed in this short period of time, the service providing personnel have to cope up with the situation. In the case of good human behavior, tourists can sacrifice many desired things.

5.4.7 Flexibility of the tour plan: Keeping suitable alternative offers is very important. In developing and underdeveloped countries, so many factors might make them compelled to change their schedule. Political or social unrest, rough weather, illness of few participants, non-cooperation of third parties, accidents and so many things can influence to change the itinerary. From the past experiences, the service providers should be ready to face such unavoidable or unwanted situations.

Actually, after starting the journey, the tourists want all out enjoyment. In case of any break down, if instant alternative options are offered, most of them accept it. But if they have to pass idle time on the way or in the lobby, their level of dissatisfaction grows rapidly. So, having alternative options to keep the pace of enjoyment and reduce the level of dissatisfaction is highly required.⁶⁵ Many service providers always emphasize on 'making profit' and they hesitate to provide alternative services in case of uncomfortable

⁶⁴ Spiros P. Gounaris, George G. Panigyrakis, and Kalliopi C. Chatzipanagiotou, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Marketing Information Systems: An Empirically Validated Instrument." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* (Emerald Group Publishing) 25, no. 6 (2007), 612-631.

⁶⁵ Ryan Hamilton and Alexander Chernev, "The Impact of Product Line Extensions and Consumer Goals on the Formation of Price Image." *Journal of Marketing Research* 47 (2010), 51-62.

situations. But in the long run, the unhappy tourists spread negative news about the service providers which ultimately cause more harm than saves a little amount of money.

5.4.8 Group tours make them more comfortable: Tourists of Bangladesh feel safe and comfortable to travel in groups. Though individualism is increasing rapidly in the Bangladeshi society, most of the people feel better when they travel in a group. Different studies show that many factors make them fearful or ‘uncomfortable’ to visit individually or just a few family members. For this reason, it is seen that most of the people do not like to miss the group travel opportunity in their family or workplace. It might be the influence of ‘high context culture’ which we belong to. The inherited characteristics of sharing enjoyment with others also might encourage them to travel in a team.⁶⁶ In recent days, the trend of being united on different occasions has increased. On the other hand, a good number of couples do tour in the different tourist spots. Their expectations are much different than the mass tourists of Bangladesh.

5.4.9 Influence of entertainment industry: Relevant research shows that the entertainment industry has a great influence on the tourist decisions. For this reason, the tourism marketers are trying to use these media to influence the behavior of the tourists. In this case, the most powerful tools are: Film, literature (especially novels and travelogue), tour guide book, photograph, painting, television, radio, newspaper, webpage, chatting options with friends etc.

Nowadays as most of the tourists carry iPhone, smart phone, iPad and so many instruments, they play the role of a journalist. Their likes and dislikes are shared continuously in their network. Their video, photographs, status, and comments have a huge impact on their community as they do it voluntarily. It seems more credible source of information as they do it without taking any benefit from any source. It is said that they are not only the passive consumers; rather they are creating products actively through status, photographs, and video uploading.

After reading the great novel ‘The Vinci Code’ the number of visitors in Louvre museum has increased in huge volume as it is written in the context of that museum.⁶⁷ Another study shows that the Japanese people would like to visit the United Kingdoms.

⁶⁶ M. Hossain, "Domestic Tourist Attitude Towards the Tourism Destination." *Journal of Business Research* 9 (2007), 69-87.

⁶⁷ Maria Månsson, “The Role of Media Products on Consumer Behavior in Tourism.”, 230

The great motivation behind this is that they want to visit the places which they have studied in the story books.⁶⁸ Not only that they have insisted to their family and friends that they need to visit this attractive place so that they can compare the fictions with reality. Visit Scotland has claimed that after releasing the movie ‘The Vinci Code’ they have earned additional £6 million! The notion of ‘mediatized tourism’ is working well all over the world.⁶⁹

Spain, Montenegro, Croatia, Singapore, Malaysia, India and many countries have used their tourist attractions in the film and have gained mentionable success. In Bangladesh, till now this is done in a limited scale at Cox’s Bazar sea beach. Other attractive spot based movies can draw attention and encourage the potential tourists. Even the Indian film makers can be invited to make films on some specific issues (or spots) which will help to get attention of a large number of audiences. The ‘Japanese Wife’ movie was very successful to attract Bengali audiences toward Japanese culture and concerned places in this regard.

5.4.10 Self-managed and non-guided tours: In the developed nations, the tourists are much dependent on the professional tour organizers and tour guides. Many of them, in some spots, even they can not think about non-guided tours. But in the case of Bangladesh, most of the tours are organized by the assigned individuals or the concerned institutions. As a result, except some spots like Cox’s Bazar and Saint Martin Island, the professional travel and tour operators do not get a mentionable number of clients. On the other hand, the tourists are not getting maximum outcomes from the tours. Now the culture of taking help of the tour operators has started in a limited scale but the issue of ‘tour guide’ has not been popular yet. The experts think that an expert tour guide can add value up to 60 percent to any tour whereas the demand and supply of both sides have reluctance in this regard.

5.4.11 Awareness on local and special food items: The tourists are being much careful about the health issues during the tour. Generally they would like to consume a huge amount of food and beverage items during the tour. They would like to follow the philosophy—Eat, drink, and marry! Nowadays the necessity of healthy and diet food items

⁶⁸ Ibid, 228.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 231.

are increasing rapidly. Especially the people who have the ability of taking luxurious tours, their doctors have a lot of suggestions on what can be eaten or not.

As a result, the nature of their cuisine demand is changing. On the other hand, when people visit a new place, they generally would like to taste the local food items. The special items of the visited place have a great attraction. They not only enjoy the item by themselves, they would like to carry for the family and friends during returning home. Only a few expensive restaurants and resorts take this issue into serious consideration. But most of the restaurants in the tourist spots are not very caring about this issue. This special type of needs will also impact on spot selection in Bangladesh as well.⁷⁰

5.4.12 Lack of action research: The travel and tourism sector of Bangladesh has not been developed yet as per the standard of our neighboring countries like India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and even Myanmar. For this reason, professional research is not patronized here as it should be. Some academic researches are done as per their own interest or necessity by the people of diverse disciplines. But research initiatives and funding from the concerned stakeholders (e.g. businessmen, government, and international donors) are not mentionable. As a result, the real scenario of the tourism sector and its changing trend is not being presented as it should be. The tourists' behavior is changing rapidly with the pace of socio-economic changes but the actual scenarios are not being portrayed through real life research activities. It is creating a gap between the presented and actual scenario of the sector to the policymakers.

⁷⁰ Robert D Reid and David C. Bojanic, *Hospitality Marketing Management*. 4th ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 84.

5.5 Organizational Buying Considerations

In recent days, the tendency of organizational buying in travel and tourism has been increased. Different forms of institutions are buying these products. Normally their buying behavior is different than the individual or family tourists.⁷¹ If once they are provided quality services, they become repeat purchasers. Besides, generally they purchase large volumes. So, their bargaining power is much higher than the individual tourists. The marketer has also to consider many factors to design their tour plans as well as cost structure.

5.5.1 Educational institutions: This is the oldest form of organization that arranges tours annually or occasionally. In the form of a picnic, study tour, excursion tours are arranged. Earlier the responsible person would manage everything for the tour. But now most of the institution likes to take help of the tour operators. For this reason, this market is being expanded gradually. Number of participants is higher and generally economic in nature. They do not expect luxury in transportation and accommodation facilities. In this case, personal selling works best as a promotional tool. Overall satisfaction matters but convincing the responsible person(s) is the most effective way to get further tours from the same institution. Besides, if once the participants are satisfied, the benefit of word of mouth is easily gained.⁷² As the participants are highly active in social media, their opinion has an important impact on the other potential participants.

5.5.2 MICE tourism: As incentive the large organizations would arrange their annual general meeting or training programs in an attractive spot of home or abroad. Now it has been a trend. Different meetings, incentive programs, conferences, and events are being arranged in the most desired places of the participants. The corporate organizations are its customers. To make the tour memorable, they do arrange everything. For this reason, even the small groups offer good business for the travel agents and tour operators. Within the country, such events are mostly arranged in Cox's Bazar and Sunderbans. Outside Dhaka, few of them are arranged in Sylhet. Now large organizations arrange it in international tourist spots. If these numbers could be increased, it would be an attractive market for its marketers.

⁷¹ M. J. Hossain, "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Case of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh." *International Journal of Research in Finance and Marketing* 2, no. 2 (2012), 1-25.

⁷² Md. Enayet Hossain and Md. Abdul Alim, "Choice Behaviour of Visitors towards the Beach Tourism in Bangladesh." *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies* 37, no. 2014 (2016), 135-152.

Tourist clubs: In the last few years many tourist clubs have been formed all over the country. Especially in the universities in higher educational institutions, it is very functional. They arrange short, medium and long tours around the year. As a result, seasonality has been minimized and as per the suitability, they do arrange tours in the nearest tourist spots. Their great contribution is to explore different unknown spots. In last few years, hundreds of them have brought into light

5.5.3 Colleagues and coworkers arrange the tours: Till now the non-professional people do organize most of the tours. Giving the tasks to the tour operators is expensive and less independent—based on this idea; some experienced colleagues and coworkers take the initiatives. There are many weak sides of such types of arrangements. But till now they would like to take major decisions by themselves. To some extent, the scenario is being changed.

To visit the less controlled places like Sundarbans and Saint Martin Island, they have to depend on the local tour operators. Otherwise, they might face trouble to complete the tour according to the plan. As the people are being extremely busy and the mentality of sacrificing is being reduced, the culture of taking services of tour operators will take over soon. In that case, the tasks of marketing and management will be comparatively easier. Because the professional and limited number of persons or institutions will take the responsibilities.

5.5.4 Voluntary groups are being organized: In most educational arenas and the developed areas of the country the people are being organized for this purpose. They are arranging tours to the renowned spots of home and abroad. Especially the young groups are arranging different trips to the resorts and natural attractions. This is the first generation in Bangladesh who is being habituated to extensive traveling. By nature, it will increase in future. It means the domestic market will be large in size. If the local tourism resources can not attract them, they will be interested in the foreign spots. So, its high time to be attentive towards the effective tourism marketing.

Chapter 06

TRAVEL AND TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS OF BANGLADESH

The chapter has been developed to find out answer of the questions: What is the competitive position of Bangladesh in global and regional perspective? And what are the competitive strengths and weaknesses of tourism sector of Bangladesh? Chapter objectives were: To sketch the current competitive scenario of Bangladesh as tourism destination; to identify the competitive strengths of the tourism sector of Bangladesh; and to investigate the major weaknesses that hinder Bangladesh to be converted into a highly competitive tourism destination.

UNWTO and WEF published Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index has been taken as the foundation. Its basic pillars and sub-indexes have been taken into consideration to draw conclusion. Its all editions have been used in this purpose. The competitive position of Bangladesh in global and regional perspective has been presented in an organized manner. The major weaknesses and the areas of strengths have also been shown in this chapter.

The concerned policy makers, travel agents, tour operators, tourism investors, researchers and other interested groups will get an integrated scenario with some insightful observations which might help them to formulate further strategies and tourism planning. This chapter has organized, compared, and presented available data which might be helpful to understand the nature of competitiveness of the travel & tourism sector of Bangladesh.

6.0 Introduction

Under the conditions of an increasing global competition, tourist destinations are always looking for ways to increase their competitiveness. On the tourism market, the competition is becoming tougher, not only between countries in a particular region but also inter-regional.¹ Bangladesh possesses enormous tourism resources from the ancient period. Each corner of this beautiful land is blessed with different resources which attracts a good number of tourists each year of home and abroad. With the expansion of the tourism market the intensity of competition among the major tourist regions of Bangladesh is also increasing. Though the lack of organized efforts is felt by the stakeholders, in the organizational and individual level the efforts are noticed.

Destination competitiveness is understood from different perspectives all over the world. Enright and Newton have focused on a wide range of business-related factors within the components of supporting factors and resources, destination management and qualifying and amplifying determinants; and a number of tourism specific factors (tourism attractors) within the component of core resources and attractors.² The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has accepted some specific indicators to understand the level of competitiveness (e.g. natural resources and biodiversity, cultural and creative resources, visitor satisfaction, labor productivity in tourism services) of its member countries. Following definition of tourism competitiveness has been accepted by the wide range of experts:

*Tourism competitiveness for a destination is about the ability of the place to optimize its attractiveness for residents and non-residents, to deliver quality, innovative, and attractive (e.g. providing good value for money) tourism services to consumers and to gain market shares on the domestic and global market places, while ensuring that the available resources supporting tourism are used efficiently and in a sustainable way.*³

Most of the cases, the level of organized efforts for developing and communicating the tourism products and services have gained significant position in case of determining the competitiveness of a tourism destination.

¹ Stefan Dragos Cirstea. "Travel & Tourism Competitiveness: A Study of World's Top Economic Competitive Countries." *Procedia Economics and Finance* 15 (2014): 1273-1280.

² Enright, Michael J., and James Newton. "Tourism Destination Competitiveness: A Quantitative Approach." *Tourism Management* 25 (2004): 777-788.

³ A. Dupeyras, and N. MacCallum. "Indicators for Measuring Competitiveness in Tourism: A Guidance Document." *OECD Papers*. Vol. 2013. Prod. (OECD Publishing, 2013).

With the mentionable advancement of transportation and communication technologies, the distance of geographic locations has been reduced. Now people can roam around the world for various purposes. This trend has accelerated the pace of travel and tourism practices. As a result, the intensity of competition among the tourism destinations has increased than previous days. The industrialist nations regularly keep, maintain, and analyze data for all sectors to formulate effective strategies.

As a dynamic field of study, they conduct tourism research time to time. It helps them to initiate different (short, mid, and long) term planning for its development. It also helps them to monitor regular outcomes and desired progress. The less developed and developing countries cannot do it like the industrialist nations. In that case, the travel and tourism competitiveness index (TTCI) is treated as a useful source of information. Based on the TTCI and relevant documents, this study has attempted to sketch an overall competitive scenario of the tourism sector—in regional, continental and global perspective—of Bangladesh.

Before formulating effective strategies, the competitive scenario of the industry must be sketched properly. If that can be done, further tasks become easier. It would be better if specific research could be carried out to explore the actual scenario, of the travel and tourism competitiveness of Bangladesh, to draw a complete picture. But till now, such initiatives have not been taken by the concerned authorities. In that case, the TTCI can be taken into consideration to get an overall idea about the potential industry.

As the representative authority, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is regularly publishing reports from 2007. Around 140 nations—based on the availability of data—are included in the indexes which actively take part in the travel and tourism business. These reports present the overall scenario of the tourism competitiveness of the included countries. Based on those data, the study has organized, compared, and presented available data which can be helpful to draw a rough picture of competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination.

6.1 Background of Competitiveness

Consumption of service products like tourism is gradually increasing all over the world. Many people keep separate budgets each year to travel to diverse destinations home and abroad. In spite of having many alternative spots, competition is increasing among some specific tourism destinations of each country. The image, costs, convenience of traveling and promotional efforts of the destination management organizations (DMOs) generally determine its level of intensity. In earlier days, only the international competitions would be taken into consideration. But gradually the domestic competitions are also being intensified. For this reason, most of the destinations are working hard to win in the stiff competition—inside and outside of the country—which has been an unavoidable factor to many of them.

6.1.1 Competitiveness in tourism industry

The notion ‘competitive destination’ contains two elements: destination and competitiveness.⁴ Comparative (availability of resources) and competitive (ability to utilize the resources effectively) both aspects are generally taken into consideration to determine competitiveness of any destination. Before formulating strategies for any destination, the policymakers would like to visualize the overall and specific competitive scenario. The industrialist nations generally do it for domestic and international market places separately.

Nowadays, competitiveness has become one of the common concepts to explain as well as practice sustainable tourism development all over the world (Kozak and Andreu 2006). With the intensity, the characteristics of competition are being diversified. It is said that the long term competitiveness of a tourism destination is determined in great extent by the balance between cooperation and competition of business in tourism industry.⁵ For this reason, to win in the competition, the travel and tourism business organizations have to work through mutual understanding.

Michael Porter has developed his ideas relating to competition and related them to countries in trying to explain why some nations are more competitive than others and

⁴ Metin Kozak, and Luisa Andreu. "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

⁵ Y. Wang, and S. Krakover. "Destination Marketing: Competition, Cooperation or Competition?" *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 20, no. 2 (2008): 126-141.

some regions within countries are also more competitive than others.⁶ The most comprehensive framework so far has been developed by Ritchie and Crouch.⁷ Their model distinguishes comparative and competitive advantages on five key layers. Those are: qualifying and amplifying determinants; destination policy, planning and development; destination management; core resources and attractors; and supporting factors and resources. They have developed a comprehensive list of indicators combining subjective consumer measures and objective industry measures for each of 32 destination competitiveness components.⁸ For this reason, many countries have measured their competitiveness by using this model.

On the other hand, Dwyer & Kim have introduced another model for measuring destination competitiveness.⁹ They have focused on endowed resources, supporting factors, destination management, situational conditions, demand factors, and market performance indicators. In another study, Enright & Newton tried to determine the weight of tourism attractors and business characteristics of any destination's competitiveness.¹⁰ According to their study in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand: 15 attractors and 37 business factors generally determine the level of competitiveness of a destination.

Different elements are taken into consideration to determine the level of competition. Some researchers use a set of six factors to determine the competitiveness of any tourism destination. Those are: natural and cultural resources, amount and quality of accommodation and restaurants, accessibility to transportation system, all the activities available at the destination, tourist safety, and behavior of the local residents.¹¹ In case of MICE tourism (conference site selection) Go and Goers have identified seven attributes

⁶ Nigel Evans, David Campbell, and George Stonehouse. *Strategic Management for Travel and Tourism*. (Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003): 184.

⁷ J. R. B. Ritchie, and G. Crouch. "Competitiveness in International Tourism: A Framework for Understanding and Analysis." *43rd Congress of Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifique de Tourisme*. San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, 1993. 17-23.

⁸ Josef A. Mazanec, Karl Wober, and Andreas H. Zins. "Tourism Destination Competitiveness: From Definition to Explanation?" *Journal of Travel Research* 46, no. August (2007): 86-95.

⁹ L. Dwyer, and C. Kim. "Destination Competitiveness. Determinants and Indicators." *Current Issues in Tourism* 6, no. 5 (2003): 369-414.

¹⁰ M. J. Enright, and J. Newton. "Tourism Destination Competitiveness: A Quantitative Approach." *Tourism Management* 25, no. 6 (2004): 777-788.

¹¹ M. F. Cracolici, and P. Nijkamp. "The Attractiveness and Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations: A Study of Southern Italian Regions." *Tourism Management* 30 (2008): 336-344.

which determine the level of competitiveness: facilities, accessibility, quality of service, overall affordability, location image, climate and environment, and attractiveness.¹²

Another study shows that a tourism destination, as a unique experiential product, is also judged by tourists on its price competitiveness. In this case, two major categories of prices are included: travel cost and ground cost.¹³ As the tourism authorities of Bangladesh do not carry out rigorous study on competitiveness, the reports of global organizations become helpful to gain an overall idea of the ongoing competitive scenario in the regional as well as global perspective.

6.1.2 Competitiveness among tourism destinations

As the trend of traveling has increased worldwide, the characteristics of competitive forces have also been changing continuously. Such changes in the competitive environment have forced tourism destinations to provide higher quality services and added value to the travelers.¹⁴ Now competitive destinations are trying their best to offer maximum value so that the tourists become delighted. Service providers intend to offer such services that the tourists become loyal to their spot and travel there repeatedly. Besides, their word of mouth (or viral marketing) can play a significant role in enhancing destination image.

One of the most significant advancements in destination marketing, in recent years, is the use of destination vision as a framework for the marketing process.¹⁵ Tourism oriented different nations are setting their visions for 2030 or 2050. They are also working hard to achieve that position. It makes the task more specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. In this case, well-planned marketing program is essential to attract tourists in heritage destinations.¹⁶

¹² Metin Kozak, and Luisa Andreu. "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

¹³ FangMeng. *An Examination of Destination Competitiveness from the Tourists' Perspective: The Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Perceived Destination Competitiveness*. PhD Thesis, (Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2006).

¹⁴ Ruben Molina Martinez, Melissa Ochoa Galvan, and Ana Maria Gil Lafuente. "Public Policies and Tourism Marketing. An Analysis of the Competitiveness on Tourism in Morelia, Mexico and Alcala de Henares, Spain." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Science* 148 (2014): 146-152.

¹⁵ Eli Avraham, and Eran Ketter. *Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁶ Mahmudul Hasan, and Md. Imrul Jobaid. "Heritage Tourism Marketing: Status, Prospects and Barriers." *ISOR Journal of Business and Management* 16, no. 5 (2014): 40-48.

According to the responsible authorities, Bangladesh is trying to develop tourism sector as one of the persuasive instruments to increase the competitiveness in the local and global market.¹⁷ But the irregular and non-integrated initiatives are clearly noticed. Competitors are always offering new, lucrative, and distinctive features. The tourists are also being interested to 'try' new things. Studies show that the current competitiveness in the marketplace makes it very difficult to create brand loyalty.¹⁸

Though many factors play significant role to determine the level of competitiveness, price always considered as the key determinant.¹⁹ But in another 'cause-effect' study, the mechanism of non-price competition has been revealed.²⁰ To ensure competitiveness of a destination, continuous monitoring is very important. Gooroochurn & Sugiyarto have condensed 23 monitoring criteria under 8 main indicators of competitiveness of any tourism destination.²¹

When several competitors aim at the largest segments, the inevitable result is heavy competition.²² For the inability to fight with large companies, the small competitors find 'niche market' to gain desired growth. Technological evolution, consumerism, and the internationalization of competition are merely some of the market conditions which impose the increased levels of rivalry in the industry. Dealing with such challenges requires that companies become more adaptive to their market environment.²³ To do so, the plans must be updated time to time by understanding the trends of the market. Without doing so, isolated development programs will not give expected results as the tourists compare the alternative options before selecting a spot for their next tour.

¹⁷ Bashir Ahmed Bhuiyan, and Jahangir Alam. "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business* (Kangwon National University) 5, no. 2 (December 2014): 1-12.

¹⁸ Robert D Reid, and David C. Bojanic. *Hospitality Marketing Management*. 4th edition. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).

¹⁹ Josef A. Mazanec, Karl Wober, and Andreas H. Zins. "Tourism Destination Competitiveness: From Definition to Explanation?" *Journal of Travel Research* 46, no. August (2007): 86-95.

²⁰ M. L. Mangion, R. Durbarry, and M. T. Sinclair. "Tourism Competitiveness: Price and Quality." *Tourism Economics* 11, no. 1 (2005): 45-68.

²¹ Nishall Gooroochurn, and Guntur Sugiyarto. "Competitiveness Indicators in the Travel and Tourism Industry." *Tourism Economics* 11, no. 1 (2005): 25-43.

²² Metin Kozak, and Luisa Andreu. "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

²³ Spiros P. Gounaris, George G. Panigyrakis, and Kalliopi C. Chatzipanagiotou. "Measuring the Effectiveness of Marketing Information Systems: An Empirically Validated Instrument." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.) 25, no. 6 (2007): 612-631.

The main responsible ministry and government agencies for implementing the policy are the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Bangladesh Tourism Board, respectively.²⁴ Different academic publications do the claim that they are not effective enough to play significant role to enhance the competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination. Even the tourism policy is drafted only in Bengali language. It creates barriers to the interested foreign investors, network partners (Embassies, travel agents, tour operators etc), and potential tourists. The lack of integrated approach in this regard is clearly noticed.

Based on the 14 pillars of tourism competitiveness the assigned institution collects data and integrate them in an organized manner. It also categorically mentions the changes in the current situation from the previous edition. So the gradual changes are clearly noticed in each version of the report. It also forecasts the potential changes (contribution) of the sector in the long-term like 2020, 2025 and 2030. UNWTO (Madrid, Spain) and WEF (Geneva, Switzerland) have published 7th edition of the report in 2017. Earlier editions were published in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015.

It collects data of approximate 140 countries and presents the findings under the pre-set pillars. Based on the availability of data, the total number of participating nations slightly varies in its different editions. To some extent, they use the data of Travel and Tourism Council (London) and some other organizations with due credit. As Bangladesh does not conduct such sort of research at its own management, TTCIs at least give overall assumptions on the changes regarding competitiveness of the tourism sector and its closely related issues. The main limitation of the study is: the data is taken from a single source. It would be better if the data of different sources could be used but the challenges of 'comparison' are very high in that perspective. So, this approach has been used.

²⁴ Azizul Hassan, and Peter Burns. "Tourism Policies of Bangladesh - A Contextual Analysis." *Tourism Planning & Development* 11, no. 4 (2014): 463-466.

6.2 Competitiveness Scenario of Top Tourism Nations

Tourism system is subject to many influences and pressures that arise outside the system itself. It consists of a vast array of phenomena which broadly impact all human activities and which are therefore not specific to the travel and tourism industry in their effects.²⁵

But in a single study, only a limited scope can be covered. Here, to attain the research objectives the following analyses and findings are presented:

6.2.1 Top ranked global and Asian competitive countries in travel & tourism business

Before talking about Bangladesh, It is better to have a look on the global and regional leading competitive countries; it will help to understand the overall scenario. As the industrialist countries emphasize on becoming more competitive, their positions also changes in the different editions of the index. The following table has presented the scenario:

Table 6.1: Top 10 countries in global travel & tourism competitive index

Rank	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
1	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland	Spain	Spain
2	Austria	Austria	Austria	Germany	Germany	France	France
3	Germany	Germany	Germany	France	Austria	Germany	Germany
4	Iceland	Australia	France	Austria	Spain	USA	Japan
5	USA	Spain	Canada	Sweden	UK	UK	UK
6	Hong Kong	USA	Spain	USA	USA	USA	USA
7	Canada	UK	Sweden	UK	France	Australia	Australia
8	Singapore	Sweden	USA	Spain	Canada	Italy	Italy
9	Luxemburg	Canada	Australia	Canada	Sweden	Japan	Canada
10	UK	France	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Canada	Switzerland

Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

In this table, it is shown that Germany is doing well from the very beginning. Though in the beginning Spain was not listed as the top ten countries, within eight years, it has gained the top position in 2015. And till now it holds the position with pride. Just the opposite condition is noticed for the Switzerland. It was top rated from the beginning. In

²⁵ Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

2015, suddenly it falls in 6th place and lastly downed to the 10th position! The progress of France is also noticeable. It was included in the top ten countries in 2008 edition.

By facing different ups and downs it owns the 2nd position in the 2015 edition. It has been maintained in the following edition. USA and UK have maintained their middle position without major fluctuation. Austria was doing very well in the beginning stage but now it has lost its leading position. Among the Asian nations, Japan has occupied the 4th position in the latest edition. Though Singapore was doing well in the initial years, now it is out of the top ten countries.

In case of Asian countries, only one or two nations can include themselves in the global top ten competitive ranking. Initially the index was comparatively stable but now the rate of fluctuation is high. It indicates that some Asian countries are also being attentive to enhance their competitiveness in tourism business. List of the major (earlier and current) players of this region is as follows:

Table 6.2: Top 10 Asian countries in global competitive index

Rank	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
1	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Japan	Japan
2	Singapore	Singapore	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Japan	Singapore	Hong Kong
3	UAE	Japan	Japan	Japan	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Singapore
4	Japan	Korea Rep.	Korea Rep.	UAE	Korea Rep.	China	China
5	Taiwan	Malaysia	Malaysia	Korea Rep.	UAE	Malaysia	Korea Rep.
6	Malaysia	Qatar	UAE	Malaysia	Taiwan	Korea Rep.	Malaysia
7	Qatar	UAE	Qatar	Taiwan	Malaysia	Taiwan	Thailand
8	Korea Rep.	Thailand	Thailand	China	Qatar	Thailand	India
9	Thailand	Bahrain	Bahrain	Bahrain	Thailand	Qatar	Indonesia
10	Jordan	Taiwan	Taiwan	Thailand	China	Indonesia	Qatar

Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

Though Japan was in the third or fourth position in the earlier editions of TTCI, in the last two reports it owns the top position among the Asian countries. Singapore and Hong Kong both nations have downgraded in the recently published indexes. Korea Republic is holding the mid level position every time. With noticeable ups and downs Malaysia is also holding the same level position. Thailand, more or less, stands in the bottom of the top ten lists. In the latest edition, India has placed 8th position among the Asian countries. Taiwan, Indonesia, and Bahrain do struggle to be in the top ten lists. Qatar was doing well in the initial stage but now they are out of the Asian top ten ranks.

As Bangladesh basically competes in the regional market, a comparative scenario has been presented below from the different editions of TTCI:

Table 6.3: Competitive position of Bangladesh among the South Asian countries

Country/Year	2007 (124)	2008 (130)	2009 (133)	2011 (139)	2013 (140)	2015 (141)	2017 (136)
India	65	65	62	68	65	52	40
Sri Lanka	79	73	78	81	78	63	64
Pakistan	103	111	113	112	112	125	124
Nepal	106	116	118	125	122	102	103
Bangladesh	120	127	129	129	123	127	125
Bhutan	---	---	---	---	---	87	78
Maldives	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Note: Maldives is not included in the TTC ranking. Bhutan has been included in last two editions. Source: All editions of World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, jointly published by United Nations World Tourism Organization (Madrid) and World Economic Forum (Geneva).

In South Asia, India and Sri Lanka hold the first and second position consecutively from the very beginning. But in the last two editions, they have achieved mentionable progress in the world ranking. In 2011, India was 68th in the global index whereas they have achieved 40th place in the 2017 report. On the other hand, Sri Lanka has placed 64th in the latest report from the 81st position in the year 2011. Pakistan is losing its competitiveness gradually in each edition. They started in 103rd position in 2007 but now their position is 124th in the world ranking.

Nepal has also done badly (especially after the massive earthquake) in the ranking. After mentionable ups and downs, it holds now 103rd position which is the 4th place among the South Asian countries. Bhutan was not included from the beginning of this report, they have been incorporated in the last two editions and just in the second edition it has stepped nine steps ahead within two years. Though Maldives have a reputation for the tourism business (39.6% direct contribution to the GDP in 2017) they are not included in the index yet. The concerned authority generally excludes the countries where the required data are not available for evaluation and comparison.

6.2.2 Competitiveness of Bangladesh in travel & tourism sector

To understand the competitive position of any country, some key information should be seen at a glance. The TTCI presents these data in the first two sections to give an overall idea about the discussed country. In case of Bangladesh, the key facts are organized in the following way:

Table 6.4: The basic pillars of the tourism competitiveness of Bangladesh

Index components	South Asian Best (out of 7.0)	BGD Score (out of 7.0)	BGD Position (out of 136)
Ground port and infrastructure	4.5 (India)	3.1	74
Cultural resources and business travel	5.3 (India)	1.6	74
Price competitiveness	6.0 (Bhutan)	4.7	89
Business environment	4.7 (Bhutan & Sri Lanka)	4.1	104
International openness	3.7 (India)	2.5	104
Health and hygiene	5.3 (Sri Lanka)	4.3	107
Natural resources	4.4 (India)	2.4	107
Air transport infrastructure	3.9 (India)	1.9	113
ICT readiness	3.9 (Bhutan)	3.1	116
Human resource and labour market	4.5 (Sri Lanka)	3.8	121
Safety and security	6.1 (Bhutan)	3.7	123
Prioritization of travel and tourism	5.2 (Sri Lanka)	3.2	127
Environmental sustainability	4.6 (Bhutan)	3.4	128
Tourist service infrastructure	3.2 (Sri Lanka)	1.9	133

Source: *The travel & tourism competitiveness report, 2017.*

In the competitiveness aspect the position of Bangladesh is 125th out of 136 nations.²⁶ It was 127 out of 141 countries in the previous (2015) edition.²⁷ Three areas have been marked as the strong side of Bangladeshi tourism as a destination.

On the other hand, 11 areas have been marked as the weaker area. Strengths are Ground and port infrastructure (74th), Cultural resources and business travel (74th), and price competitiveness (89th).²⁸ Major weaknesses are Tourist service infrastructure (133rd), Environmental sustainability (128th), Prioritization of travel and tourism (127th), and Safety and security (123rd). Other seven factors hold the middle position among the participating countries. Those are between 104th to 121st position of the ranking.

Among the South Asian countries, India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan all are showing strong competitive abilities in the given score. Though Nepal is considered as an attractive tourism destination, regarding competitiveness, it has not gained top position

²⁶ Roberto Crotti, and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*, (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 95.

²⁷ Roberto Crotti, and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015*, (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2015), 5.

²⁸ Roberto Crotti, and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*, 95.

even in a single case. As Maldives is not included in the index, their level of competitiveness is not determined.

Table 6.5: Trend of the basic pillars of tourism in Bangladesh in TTCR

<i>Index components/Year</i>	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
Safety and security	3.1	2.8	3.1	4.2	4.4	4.4	3.7
Health and hygiene	3.3	2.1	2.3	2.6	2.8	4.29	4.3
Human resource and labour market	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.8
ICT readiness/infrastructure	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.7	2.7	3.1
Prioritization of travel and tourism	2.4	2.8	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.2
Affinity for travel & tourism	---	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.0		2.5
Price competitiveness	5.3	5.4	5.4	4.8	5.2	4.4	4.7
Environmental sustainability	3.0	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.01	3.4
Air transport infrastructure	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.9
Ground port and infrastructure	2.8	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.1
Tourist service infrastructure	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.6	2.3	1.9
Natural resources	3.7	2.6	2.6	2.7	3.2	2.3	2.4
Cultural resources and business travel	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6
Policy rules and regulations	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.7	4.0	---	---

Note: The indicators have been modified in different editions. So, the key words have taken for comparison. All indicators were not available in all editions of the report. For this reason, some data are not found.

Safety and security has a positive trend in latest editions. The highest scores were in 2013 and 2015 (4.4 out of 7.0). After that the performance in this category is being declined (3.7 in 2017). Recently, health and hygiene has scored higher than the earlier editions (4.3 out of 7.0). The up gradation is obviously noticeable (4.29 from 2.8 just within two years). The performance of environmental sustainability is staying about in the same level of the all editions of the report. Slight fluctuations are noticed. In the year 2008 and 2011, it scored the highest (3.7 out of 7.0). But in the latest report the score was 3.4 which indicates that we are not respecting the sustainability issues properly. Prioritization of travel and tourism has little ups and downs in the different editions. The score was highest in the years 2009 (3.3 out of 7). In the recent years the level of prioritization of travel and tourism shows moderate.

Air transport infrastructure has scored quite low in all editions of the report. Even in recent years like 2015, 2017 this pillar has scored 1.9 out of 7. The declining trend indicates that required steps have not been taken to improve the level of competitiveness of this area. On the other hand, ground transport infrastructure is running with ups and

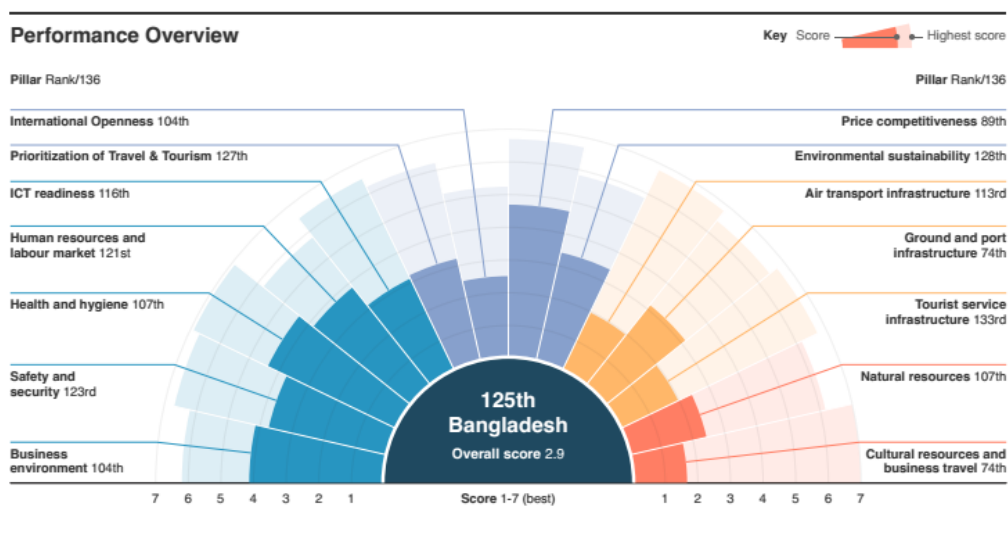
downs. The highest score in this area was in 2011 (3.9 out of 7.0). After that the score has declined gradually. Finally, it was 3.1 which denote the less competitiveness of the pillar.

Tourism infrastructure has always scored very low. In the 2015 edition, it scored the highest (2.3 out of 7.0)! In the recent edition, it has scored 1.9 which indicates the declining situation of this most important pillar. The score of ICT infrastructure is not also so impressive. In the 2017 edition it has risen to 3.1 which was only 1.5 (out of 7.0) in 2009. To get the attention of the international tourism community the standard of ICT readiness is mandatory. Price competitiveness in the travel & tourism industry was really good in the previous years with a score 5.4 (out of 7.0) in 2008 and 2009. But the performance of this area has become less competitive in recent years.

Competitive Scenario of Bangladesh in 2017 TTCI

Bangladesh has been trying to develop tourism sector as one of the persuasive instruments to increase the competitiveness in the local and global market.²⁹ In this case, well-planned marketing program is essential to attract tourists in heritage destinations.³⁰ Rapid technological evolution, consumerism and the internationalization of competition are merely some of the market conditions which impose the increased levels of rivalry in the industry. Dealing with such challenges requires that companies become more adaptive to their market environment.³¹ In the international level there is culture of measuring competitive position of Bangladesh as a destination. The following figure presents the latest competitive scenario of Bangladesh.

Figure 6.1: The strengths and weaknesses of tourism sector of Bangladesh



Source: Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*. (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 94.

In the competitiveness aspect the position of Bangladesh is 125th out of 136 nations.³² It was 127 out of 141 countries in the previous edition.³³ Three areas have been marked as the strong sides as a destination. On the other hand, 11 areas have been marked as the weaker area. Strengths are Ground and port infrastructure (74th), Cultural resources and business travel (74th), and price competitiveness (89th).³⁴ Major weaknesses are Tourist service infrastructure (133rd), Environmental sustainability (128th), Prioritization of travel & tourism (127th), and Safety & security (123rd).³⁵

²⁹ Bhuiyan, and Alam. "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh," 1-12.

³⁰ Hasan, and Jobaid. "Heritage Tourism Marketing: Status, Prospects and Barriers," 40-48.

³¹ Spiros P. Gounaris, George G. Panigyrakis, and Kalliopi C. Chatzipanagiotou. "Measuring the Effectiveness of Marketing Information Systems: An Empirically Validated Instrument," *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 25, no. 6 (2007): 612-631.

³² Ibid, 9.

³³ Roberto Crotti, and Tiffany Misrahi, eds. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015*, (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2015), 5.

³⁴ Crotti, and Misrahi. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017*, 95.

³⁵ Ibid.

Table 6.6: Basic pillars of South Asian countries

<i>Index components</i>	<i>BGD</i>	<i>IND</i>	<i>SLK</i>	<i>PAK</i>	<i>NEP</i>	<i>BHU</i>	<i>MLD</i>
Business environment	4.1	4.3	4.7	3.9	4.1	4.7	---
Safety and security	3.7	4.1	5.5	3.1	4.8	6.1	---
Health and hygiene	4.3	4.4	5.3	4.5	5.0	4.6	---
Human resource and labour market	3.8	4.4	4.5	3.1	4.2	4.3	---
ICT readiness/infrastructure	3.1	3.2	3.7	2.5	2.6	3.9	---
Prioritization of travel and tourism	3.2	3.9	5.2	3.4	4.8	5.0	---
International openness	2.5	3.7	3.1	2.2	2.8	2.9	---
Price competitiveness	4.7	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.6	6.0	---
Environmental sustainability	3.4	3.1	3.9	3.1	3.4	4.6	---
Air transport infrastructure	1.9	3.9	2.6	2.1	2.0	2.7	---
Ground port and infrastructure	4.1	4.5	3.9	3.0	1.9	2.5	---
Tourist service infrastructure	1.9	2.7	3.2	2.3	2.3	2.7	---
Natural resources	2.4	4.4	4.1	2.2	4.2	3.5	---
Cultural resources and business travel	1.6	5.3	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.3	---

Note: BGD=Bangladesh, IND=India, SLK=Sri Lanka, PAK=Pakistan, NEP=Nepal, BHU=Bhutan, and MLD=Maldives.

Based on the latest edition of TTCI the above mentioned table has been developed. Out of 14 pillars, Bangladesh has stayed in the bottom line of 5 pillars. Those are Health and hygiene, Prioritization of travel and tourism, Price competitiveness, Air transport infrastructure, and Tourist service infrastructure. Earlier Bangladesh had strong price competitiveness advantage. But in recent years, the cost of traveling in our country has increased in so much high level that is has declined to the last position among the South Asian countries! Pakistan has placed lowest position in 7 pillars. On the other hand, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and India own the top position in 5, 4, and 3 pillars respectively.

6.2.3 Competitive strengths of Bangladesh as a tourism destination

Based on the latest edition of the TTCI, the following sub-index components have been identified and presented:

Table 6.7: Competitive strengths of Bangladesh as a tourism destination

Serial	Sub-index components	Score/number/ point	Position (out of 136)
1.	HIV prevalence (% adult pop.)	0.1	1
2.	Fuel price levels (US \$ cents/liter)	90.0	30
3.	Purchasing power parity (PPP \$)	0.4	33
4.	Hiring and firing practices	4.3	35
5.	Effect of taxation on incentive to work	4.3	40
6.	Forest cover change (% change)	0.0	43
7.	Oral and intangible cultural heritage	3	43
8.	Visa requirements (0-100)	42.0	46
9.	Number of world heritage sites	1	46
10.	Total known species	784	47
11.	Sports stadiums	7	50
12.	Available seat kilometers (domestic airlines/millions)	7.4	53
13.	Total tax rate (% profits)	34.4	56
14.	Available seat kilometers (int. airlines/millions)	257.4	56
15.	Costal shelf fishing pressure (tonnes/km ²)	0.2	58
16.	Mobile network coverage (% pop.)	99.4	59
17.	Effect of taxation on incentive to invest	3.7	60
18.	Homicide rate (/1.00.000 pop.)	2.8	63
19.	Paved road density	--	67
20.	Quality of railroad infrastructure	2.7	68

Note: There is a practice to count first half (up to 136/2=68th) as strength side and the last half as the weaknesses side. Based on that criterion the pillars have been categorized. Among the 14 pillars, in case of tourism in Bangladesh, no one is in advantageous position. Even the most fundamental pillar Tourist service infrastructure is in the weakest position.

Bangladesh has achieved first place in one sub-category and that is the rate of HIV prevalence. Though it is not so mentionable factor in our country perspective, the tourists of industrialist nations give it much value. During their tour planning, they take it seriously and it works as a determining factor in many cases. Besides, the purchasing power parity (PPP \$) is a very significant consideration to the international tourism where Bangladesh holds a strong position. It is the third strong points for Bangladesh. Though

Bangladesh owns three UNESCO World heritage sites (Somapura Mahavihara, Sunderbans, and Mosque city Bagerhat), in the report only one has been shown. It has reduced some points undoubtedly.

6.2.4 Competitive weaknesses of Bangladesh as a tourism destination

Actually, tourism destination is a network of relations between different actors that, together, create the tourist product.³⁶ For many practical reasons, Bangladesh has not been able to build such strong network in home and abroad. If that could be done, many sides of tourism development would be stronger.

Table 6.8: Competitive weaknesses of Bangladesh as a tourism destination

Serial	Sub-index components	Score/number/ point	Position (out of 136)
1.	Hotel rooms (num/100 pop.)	0.0	135
2.	Particulate matter (2.5) concentration (pg/m ³)	31.4	134
3.	Airport density (airports/million pop.)	0.1	134
4.	Comprehensiveness of annual T&T data (0-120)	21	129
5.	Presence of major car rental companies	1	129
6.	Index of terrorism incidence	1.0	126
7.	Time required to deal with construction permits (days)	269	125
8.	Internet users (% pop.)	14.4	125
9.	Sustainability of travel and tourism industry development	3.1	124
10.	Effectiveness of marketing and branding to attract tourists	3.0	123
11.	Hospital beds (/10,000 pop.)	6.0	122
12.	Extent of staff training	3.3	122
13.	Aircraft departures (/1000 pop.)	0.2	121
14.	Extent of market dominance	3.0	120
15.	ICT use for biz-to-biz transaction	3.9	120
16.	Openness of bilateral air service agreements (0-38)	6.2	120
17.	Enforcement of environmental regulations	3.0	120
18.	Ticket taxes and airport charges (0-100)	46.6	118
19.	Timeliness of providing monthly/quarterly T&T data (0-21)	3.0	118
20.	Quality of tourism infrastructure	3.6	115

Note: There is a practice to count first half (up to 136/2=68th) as strength side and the last half as the weaknesses side. Based on that criterion the pillars have been categorized.

³⁶ R. Camprubi, Jaume Guia, and J. Comas, "Destination Networks and Induced Tourism Image." *Tourism Review* 63, no. 2 (2008), 47-58.

For the mentionable advancement in the transportation and the communication systems, the geographic distances have been largely minimized in this era of globalization. Though it is called international tourism, most of the visits are regional. Without having a specific job, very few people do visit a distant or remote destination. When any one travels for business, job, treatment, or visiting friends and relatives, they like to visit the nearest renowned places. Especially for the people of the developing countries, it is very much true. For this reason, Bangladeshi tourists like to visit India, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Most of our visitors are also India and China. From that point of view, the expectations of the tourists of our neighboring countries should get priority. For geographic convenience, they will try to start their journey from Bangladesh if we can create such an environment for them. At the initial stage, expecting the tourists from developed nations might not work much. Through providing services to the domestic and regional tourists, our manpower will be efficient to provide services to the international tourists and our infrastructures will be up to the mark.

In the primitive stage, visiting only the natural attractions would get priority to the tourists. But now they find alternative attractions to pass quality time in the visited place. In that case, entertainment is another category of destination core resources or attractors. The theatre, concerts, comedy festivals, operas, and circuses are examples of the contribution that the entertainment sector can make toward a destination's competitiveness.³⁷ On the other hand, a destination is more competitive when transportation systems are reliable, efficient, clean, safe, frequent, and able to take travelers to the locations and attractions of greatest interest.³⁸

According to the international perspectives it is said that the competitions have to be converted in the form of 'cooperation' to exist or win in the long run. Otherwise, the travel and tourism business will be at risk in the upcoming days.³⁹ So enhancing bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations with the partners (e.g. travel agents, embassies, and investors) is a must. Without taking this initiative, it is tough to get the attention of the international tourism community.

³⁷ Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid

Government policymakers should understand its potential and scope of contribution and bring it as an integral part of key policy considerations. In highly populated countries like Bangladesh, tourism could be a blessing for employment generation. But without enhancing competitiveness in major areas, it will not give desired feedback. So, affinity toward tourism and international openness both should be activated together. Without following the traditional approach of tourism marketing, the trend of developed nations can be followed. Today as competition and costs increase and as productivity and quality decrease, more marketing sophistication is needed.⁴⁰

Skills such as public management, customer relations, foreign languages and new technology should be priority areas to improve competitiveness (Holloway 2004). When a country is in competition, it has to win through offering better products at a reasonable price. In this case, a long term plan for human and tourism resources development should be taken. For practical reasons, the concerned authorities should consider the opinion: Increased competition or an ineffective positioning strategy can make repositioning necessary.⁴¹

Finally, to convert the tourism board and concerned ministry as more effective bodies, professional and experienced people in tourism should be incorporated. Like the private sector companies, experienced executives should be employed for enhancing the competitiveness in the travel & tourism sector. Otherwise, the desired results will not come in near future.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

6.3 Competitiveness among the Domestic Tourism Destinations

From the very beginning of history Bangladesh was familiar with its distinguishing resources and enrichment. Though no one has developed it in a planned way, for its distinct resources, different areas of Bangladesh have developed their own identity. For example- Dhaka is known as the city of mosques; Chattogram—the gateway to the bay of Bengal. On the other hand, Cox's Bazar is the tourist Capital. Rangamati is treated as the heart of the lake district and Kaptai—the lake town.

Sylhet is renowned as land of two leaves and a bud. Sundarbans—home of royal Bengal tiger and Bandarban is treated as the hilly resort. Kuakata is the place where the sun rises and set in the sea. On the other hand, Mainamati is the seat of lost dynasties. Mahasthangarh is the ancient seat of Buddhist rule whereas Rajshahi is the silk producing center of Bangladesh. Paharpur is known for the seat of Buddhist learning. Dinajpur is famous for the old ornamental temple town. Moreover, Bangladesh is proud of its vast rivers and their branches. Bangladesh has huge potential for water skiing, river cruising, rowing, and sea bathing as well as bringing one in close touch to the pristine nature. The weather of Bangladesh is very helpful to convert it into an attractive destination for the tourists from around the world.

Initial studies illustrate a huge number of elements for measuring competitiveness among the tourism destinations. Such as: creating attractive products, offering value for money, services at lowest price, most suited customer requirements, natural endowment, climate, geography and cultural heritage, branding process of tourism destination, strong ability of innovation, labor market efficiency, well structured educational and training environment, world heritage sites, transport and infrastructure facilities, safety and security etc. As most of the indexed nations are developed in the tourism industry, they can give attention to the very micro issues. In our country's perspective, the most essential needs are not fulfilled yet. For this reason, to measure competitiveness among the major tourism destinations of Bangladesh basically two broad areas (core resources and attractions, supporting factors and resources) can be taken into consideration.

6.3.1 Core resources and attractions: Natural, historical, and cultural attractions enjoy absolute advantages that one destination has over the other. It can't be changed or subordinated. The natural resources include physiographic, climate, flora and fauna etc. The culture and heritage, like the destinations' history, customs, architectural features,

and traditions enhance the attractiveness of a tourism destination. Historical places include the architectural or incidental importance of one place in history.

6.3.1.1 Natural attractions: Each corner of Bangladesh is enriched with diverse natural tourism supplies. Most of them have already been converted into tourism destinations, though there is a huge scope of improvement. On the basis of number of diverse natural beauties and unique natural tourism spots and number of tourists' turnover, four major destinations are presented below:

Table 6.9: Natural attractions of the major destinations of Bangladesh

Destinations*	Key tourist spots/attractions of the destination
Chattogram	Islands (Saint Mrtin's, Cheera, Sonadia, Moheshkhali, Nijhum), Beaches (Cox's Bazar, Himchori&Inani, Laboni, Parki), Hill Tracts (Chattogram, Rangamati, Bandarban), Foy's Lake, Teknaf, Sitakundu Eco Park
Dhaka	Bhawal National Park, Botanical Garden, Dhaka Zoological Garden, National Park, National Zoo, Ramna Green, Susan Durgapur
Khulna	Sundarbans (the largest mangrove forest of the world with <i>Royal Bengal Tiger</i> and spotted deer), Kuakata (known as the daughter of the Sea), Dublar char, Katka, Hiron point
Sylhet	Haors (Hakaluki, Tanguar), Waterfalls (Madhabkunda, Hum Hum), Jaflong and Tamabil, National Forest (Lawacherra, Satchari), Tea estates (Srimongol and Sylhet), Ratargul Swamp Forest, Sari river and Lalakhal, Panthumai, Tilagarh Eco park and Zoo

*Shorted alphabetically. Key attractions are mentioned under each destination but others have taken into consideration to rank them. Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Chattogram is the most beautiful destination regarding the natural beauty. Hilly land spaces, unique highways, plenty of tourist's spot, and distinctive resorts have made it the top natural attraction to the tourists of home and abroad. Cox's Bazar has the world's largest unbroken sandy sea beach with only coral beach (Inani) in Bangladesh. Mountain Landscape, Jeep ride facilities throughout the beach, Cruise ship experience, Saint Martin Island etc. attract the people of all ages. Hiking experience in Himchori hill tracks is also a unique opportunity for the visitors. All of these create huge number of tourists each year. Mind blowing natural sites of Rangamati, Khagrachari, Bandarban, Kaptai and Foy's Lake, Potenga sea beach creates the life time experience for the tourists.

Comparatively Sylhet won good number of tourist spots but considering overall natural aspects, it is positioned after Chattogram. Sylhet has some outstanding natural spots like Srimongol, Madhabkunda waterfalls, Lawacherra Rain Forest, Jaflong, and Ratargul swamp forest. Thousands of tourists visit each season in these spots. If some remote tourist spots (e.g. Panthumai and hum-hum waterfalls) could be brought under good

communication systems, a huge number of tourists would visit these places. Besides, some activities like stone business in Jaflong and Volagonj hamper natural attractions of the spots.

Sundarbans is one of the world heritage sites of Bangladesh. It is also the largest mangrove forest all over the world. Khulna region may not have plenty of different type of natural tourist spots but the forests and rivers have made it unique. Finally, Dhaka is at the bottom of the list in the natural aspect. Though Dhaka have some natural sites like National park in Gazipur, Hotapara (Gazipur), Khamarbari (Gazipur), Nuhas Polli (Gazipur), Birishiri (Netrokona), and very recently Hatirjheel and bank of Buriganga river. But the surrounding environment (basically for the unplanned industrial establishment) is losing its natural attractions.

6.3.1.2 Historical and cultural attractions: Historical places always attract a special segment of tourists all over the world. Historical monuments, buildings, archeological sites, ruins of any civilization attract the tourists like a magnet. Historical places symbolize our past, glory and indicate how we have reached in today's position. Bangladesh has a rich historical past in almost all the divisions as we were ruled and conquered by different people, nations, or kings of different cultures from different parts of the world. Each of them has contributed to construct our history. Now based on the presence of the historical spots and number of tourists' turnover the major tourist's destinations of Bangladesh can be arranged in the following way:

Table 6.10: Historic/cultural attractions of the major destinations of Bangladesh

Destinations*	Key tourist spots/attractions of the destination
Chattogram	Mainamati (Comilla), Ramu (Buddhist village), Shrine of Bayazid Bostami (R), War cemetery
Dhaka	AhsanManzil, Curzon Hall (DU), Dhakeswari Temple, Lalbag Fort, National Martyrs Memorial, Nawab Palace, Numerous attractive mosques, Sonargaon (Narayangong), Trisal, (Mymensingh: famous for rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam)
Khulna	Akhra of Lalon Fakir (Kushtia), Majar of Khan Jahan Ali (R), Sagordari (Jessore), Shilaidaha Kuthibari (Kushtia), Sixty dome mosque (Bagerhat)
Sylhet	Fort of Putijuri, Gour Govinda Fort, Historical watch, Jaintapur (The Capital of ancient Jaintiaswari Bari kingdom), Kean Bridge, Shahi Eidgah, Shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal and Shahporan (R), Temple of Sri Chaitannya Dev

*Shorted alphabetically. Key attractions are mentioned under each destination but others have taken into consideration to rank them. Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Regarding historical places, no other part of Bangladesh is as rich as Dhaka. It became the Capital of united Bengal thrice before the British rule. Large numbers of monuments, structures, forts have pushed Dhaka at the top of this list. Secondly, Sylhet holds diverse historical background including the conquer of Hazrat Shahjalal (R), Referendum in 1947, Battle fields during freedom fight, strong linkage with British businessmen. Moreover, harmonious relationships among the Muslims and followers of other religions have enriched its culture noticeably. \

Chattogram is also the place of history and culture. Tourists like to be introduced to the historic events and diverse culture and so they visit the area when they get the opportunity. Finally, the Khulna region is much more enriched with spiritual personalities and events. To feel the touch of Lalon, Tagore, Madhusudan, Khan Jahan Ali and their disciples, tourists try to visit the destinations of this region.

6.3.1.3 Other attractions: With the natural, historical, and cultural issues other important factors also attract a good number of tourists. Here a compilation has been made to present the other forms of attractions of the representative destinations:

Table 6.11: Other attractions of the major destinations of Bangladesh

Destinations*	Key tourist spots/attractions of the destination
Chattogram	Patenga Port Area, Marine Academy
Dhaka	Jamuna Bridge, National Museum, Parliament House, Vasani Novo Theater, Shishu park, Old quarter of Dhaka City
Khulna	Mongla sea port
Sylhet	Bangladesh Tea Research Institute, Horipur Oil and Gas Fields, Memorial of Birshreshtho HamidurRahman, Raja's Museum and Osmani museum, Shahzibazar Gass Field, Tekerghat lime crushing project, Tribal village (e.g. Monipuri village, Khasiapunji)

*Shorted alphabetically. Key attractions are mentioned under each destination but others have taken into consideration to rank them. Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Regarding the number of visited tourists each year, Dhaka is in the leading position in this segment. Sylhet also holds a good number of tourist attractions and people keep some time to visit these spots besides their regular itinerary. Chattogram city also owns some places which are the center of tourists' attraction. In this category, Mongla sea port is distinguishing in Khulna region.

6.3.2 Supporting factors and resources: Transportation, accommodation, recreational issues, food and drinks are considered under this sub-heading. Supporting factors are the advantages which can be added and alteration might influence tourists' satisfaction level. It includes travel agency, tour guide, resort facilities, food and drinks, service and cost in accommodation, transportation facilities with costs, shopping facilities etc.

As a multi-sectoral industry only tourism resources are not broad enough to influence the decision of potential tourists. The core attractions, the tourists seriously consider some other connected factors like transportation, accommodation, safety-security, recreational facilities, foodstuffs and drinks etc. The findings on these issues are discussed here.

6.3.2.1 Transportation system: The transportation system of the major destinations of Bangladesh can be presented in the following way:

Table 6.12: Transportation systems among the studied destinations

Region Medium	Sylhet	Chattogram	Khulna	Dhaka
By Air	Third busiest international airport. Main carriers: Bangladesh Biman, US Bangla, Novo Air, Regent Airways	Second busiest international airport. Main carriers: Bangladesh Biman, US Bangla, Novo Air, Regent Airways	Less used air ways with Jessore Airport	Main international airport. Main carriers: Bangladesh Biman, Singapore Airlines, Qatar Airways, PIA, Regent Airways, Air Arabia, Jet Airways, Turkish Airlines, Emirates etc
By Road	Connected with major cities. Most of the bus services are available	Connected with Dhaka Chattogram highway. Connect all major cities of Bangladesh	Bus services face problem for ferry ghats. By road very long distance	Connected with all district headquarters. By 10-12 hours journey can reach any destination
Railway	Directly connected with Dhaka and Chattogram	Directly connected with Dhaka and Sylhet	Connected with Dhaka, and Rajshahi	Connected with Chattogram, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Khulna, Mymensingetc
Waterway	A little water ways	Connected with Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet	Connected with Dhaka, Chattogram, Barisal etc	Connected with Chattogram, Barisal, Khulna, Cox's Bazar etc

Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Road transportation system of Bangladesh is much better than many other countries.⁴² Trend of air transport is also improving day by day. All major cities are connected by

⁴² Roberto Crotti, and Tiffany Misrahi. *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report*. (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017): 112.

more than one transport medium. Sylhet is in a better position regarding air, rail, and road transportation from anywhere in the country. By travelling maximum 10-12 hours a traveler can reach any destination from the capital city Dhaka. It is also improving gradually throughout the country.

6.3.2.2 Accommodation facilities: Accommodation is a major concern for the tourists. The overall scenario of the studied destination is presented below:

Table 6.13: Accommodation facilities in the major destinations

Region Forms	Sylhet	Chattogram	Khulna	Dhaka
Hotels	Roseview, Holy Gate, Valley Garden, Britania, Nirvana Inn and many 4 and 3 star standard hotels	Seagull, Sea palace, Agrabad, Eastern view, Golden Inn, Al-Faisal, Bandargaon and many 4 and 3 star hotels	Hotel International, Hotel Royal Castle, Hotel Tiger Garden and many 4 and 3 star hotels	Westin, Sonargaon, Ruposhi Bangla, Radisson Blue Water Garden, Le Meridian Dhaka, Hotel Sarina, Lake View and many 4 and 3 star hotels
Resorts	The Palace, Grand Sultan, Excelsior, Nazimgarh Resort, Suktara, Nishorgo Lichibari, Polo Orchid and so many resorts	Foy's Lake Resort, Butterfly Park and Resort, Chattogram Boat club and so many in remote areas	Sundarban Eco-Resort, Chitra Resort, Arunima Resort Golf Club, Mozaffar Garden and Resort	Jamuna Resort, Royal Resort, Arshinagar Holiday Resort and so many in Gazipur areas.

Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Accommodation facilities include hotels, motels, and resorts of the destination. Number of 3 to 5 star hotels and resorts are increasing gradually in all major destinations. The infrastructural growth in Sylhet is outstanding. But tourists have complaints for less accommodation facilities in or near tourist spots. Most of the hotels and resorts are rather near to the city than being in the natural settings that tourists come to visit.

Hotels and Resorts in Khulna are somewhat limited in number compared to other major destinations. But it offers resorts near the natural tourist attractions like Hiron Point and Kotka. In terms of accommodation, Chattogram has lots of hotels and resorts. The tourism related infrastructure in Chattogram region is still superior to other cities. Dhaka offers all sorts of accommodation to its guests but those are not available in natural settings at all.

6.3.2.3 Overall factors of tourism development: With the core issues there are some related factors by which the level of tourism friendliness is understood all over the world. All of those have been summarized in the following table:

Table 6.14: Overall factors of tourism development in the major destinations of Bangladesh

Visiting trend Components	Most visited	Visited	Less visited	Few visited
Natural Attractions	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna	Dhaka
Historic & Cultural Attractions	Dhaka	Khulna	Sylhet	Chattogram
Hotels & Motels	Dhaka	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna
Hotel Cost	Chattogram	Dhaka	Sylhet	Khulna
Tour Package	Chattogram	Dhaka	Sylhet	Khulna
Transportation System	Dhaka	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna
Transportation Cost	Dhaka	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulan
Tourism Infrastructure	Dhaka	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna
Resort Facility	Chattogram	Sylhet	Dhaka	Khulna
Food & Drinks	Dhaka	Sylhet	Khulna	Chattogram
Safety and security	Sylhet	Chattogram	Dhaka	Khulna
Recreational Facilities	Dhaka	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna

Source: collected by the researcher from relevant sources.

Based on the above data and information, it can be said that the domestic competitiveness is increasing gradually. But in the international competition, the position is not satisfactory at all. Moreover, the neighboring countries (India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka) are opening their door for the tourists of Bangladesh. As a result, a huge number of families and individuals are interested in visiting those places.

To improve the competitive strengths, different terms realistic plans should be taken and executed properly. To get international recognition, getting higher scores in the different indexes is important. Because, the international community gives it a value. The development initiatives of Bangladeshi tourism are not aligned with such requirements yet. For this reason, the concerned policymakers should be caring and sincere enough to enhance the position of 'competitive' aspects of the travel & tourism sector of Bangladesh.

Chapter 07

CHALLENGES OF TOURISM MARKETING IN BANGLADESH

Though the tourism sector of Bangladesh is perceived as very potential, the desired attainment has not been achieved in the last four decades. Among the key factors for such backwardness, poor marketing performance has been identified by many researchers.

Most of the tourist spots are running under threats for different economic and natural aggressions. To protect those natural and heritage resources the absence of laws and its enforcement are the major challenges. Diverse pollution, centralization of everything, outbound trend, less effective promotional activities, non-identified potential market and many other issues have been traced out as the challenges for the sector.

Other remarkable challenges are lack of required tourism infrastructures, skilled personnel, lack of realizing of its potential contribution, overall country in age, the scenario of competition is not properly portrayed, limited budget allocation, less community involvement etc. are identified as the challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh. Some other challenges directly linked to the tourism marketing mix have been listed.

7.0 Introduction

Though Bangladesh is perceived as a very potential country for tourism development, the outcomes of the last four decades are not so mentionable. Undoubtedly many factors play a critical role behind such backwardness. A good number of studies have been conducted to understand the nature of the problems and to gain desired success in future.¹²³⁴⁵ In that case, ‘tourism marketing’ has been identified as a significant role player by the concerned researchers and active stakeholders. To conduct this study, the researcher was interested to be introduced with the overall challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh. The concerned issues have been revealed and presented in the following sections.

The experts think that one of the most important and challenging issues affecting travel and tourism marketing is to understand where the tourists come from and what their travel patterns are.⁶ In the case of Bangladesh, no such research activities are operated to understand these issues. Based on some assumptions, the initiatives are taken which can not bring the desired success. Today the tourists consider at least four things: cost of traveling, value of the accommodation, quality of the restaurants, and evening activities or night life.⁷

If one of these is weak, the total outcomes of the marketing programs become less effective. Moreover, tourism exists only as information at the point of sale, and cannot be sampled before the purchasing decision is made.⁸ It is also said that tourism is a larger

¹ Md. Faridul Islam, “Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.” *Rajshahi University Studies* 12 (2004), 291-305.

² Al-Masud and Tarafder Md. Mehedi, “Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: What, Why and How.” *Asian Business Review* 5, no. 1 (2015), 13-19.

³ Muhammad Mahboob Ali and Chowdhury Sifat-e-Mohsin, “Different Aspects of Tourism Marketing Strategies with Special Reference to Bangladesh: An Analysis.” *Business Review* (Khulna University) 6, no.1 & 2 (2008), 1-18.

⁴ Md. Mortuza Ahmmed, “An Analysis on Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh.” *Journal of Culture and Tourism Research* (The Korean Academic Society of Culture and Tourism) 15, no. 2 (2013), 35-39.

⁵ Isan Zahra, “Destination Image and Tourism: A Case Study of Bangladesh.” *European Journal of Business and Management* 4, no. 6 (2012), 18-27.

⁶ Clark Hu, "Diverse Developments in Travel and Tourism Marketing: A Thematic Approach." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 8, no. 7 (1996), 33-43.

⁷ Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, 10.

⁸ World Tourism Organization Business Council, *Marketing Tourism Destinations Online: Strategies for the Information Age*. (Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 1999).

system rather than a simple economic exchange process between business and consumers.⁹

Tourism marketing can be understood as a systematic and coordinated effort exerted by NTOs (National Tourism Organizations) and other bodies to optimize the satisfaction of the tourists, by considering its sustainable growth.¹⁰ Today, the life of mass people is highly influenced as well as affected by the marketing activities. It is said that the evidence of marketing activity surrounds us like the air we breathe and take for granted.¹¹ For this reason, to operate any business successfully the usage of marketing has become unavoidable. The tourism sector of Bangladesh is not out of this trend as well. Generally five main sectors of travel and tourism (hospitality, attractions and events, transport, travel organizers and intermediaries, and destination organization) are taken into consideration in this regard.¹² To get anticipated results, the tourism marketers must address all of the areas appropriately so that no loopholes can make the entire efforts futile.

7.1 Challenges of Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh

Marketing of tourism is reasonably different from many other traditional goods and services. In developing countries like Bangladesh, integration among marketing initiatives is the most challenging factor. Absence of a strong body for integrating the elements of tourism marketing is clearly evident to the practitioners. As a result, no one takes the ultimate responsibility of failure. The budgets are inadequate; no assessment of the taken initiatives is done by any authority. So, the money is being spent but organized outcomes are not enjoyed by the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

7.1.1 Key challenging factors of tourism marketing

The experts think that one of the most important and challenging issues affecting travel and tourism marketing is to understand where the tourists come from and what their travel patterns are.¹³ Few research activities are operated in Bangladesh to understand these issues. Based on some assumptions, the initiatives are taken which can not bring the

⁹ Ute Jamroz, "Marketing of Tourism: A Paradigm Shift toward Sustainability." *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 1, no. 2 (2007), 117-130.

¹⁰ Scott McCabe, *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Marketing*. (New York: Routledge, 2014): 2.

¹¹ Victor T C Middleton et al., *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*. 4th ed. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009), 22.

¹² Ibid, 11.

¹³ Clark Hu, "Diverse Developments in Travel and Tourism Marketing: A Thematic Approach." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33-43.

desired success. Today the tourists consider at least four things: Cost of traveling, Value of the accommodation, Quality of the restaurants, and Evening activities or night life.¹⁴ If one of these is weak, the total outcomes of the marketing programs become less effective.

Moreover, tourism exists only as information at the point of sale, and cannot be sampled before the purchase decision is made.¹⁵ It is also said that tourism is a larger system rather than a simple economic exchange process between business and consumers.¹⁶ So, the special attention is needed to address these distinctive challenges. The respondents were asked to give their opinion on some challenging factors (found from the literature review) on a five point Likert scale. The outcomes are as follows:

Table 7.1: Key challenging factors for the of tourism marketing in Bangladesh

Description	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Key tourist attractions are running under threats	390	3.4795	1.01826
Various pollutions cause tourist dissatisfaction	390	3.5821	.93059
Weaknesses of Acts/rules are understood/felt	390	3.6641	.93627
Existing laws are not properly executed	390	3.7385	.78763
Current promotional tools are not effective	390	3.3744	.92847
Travelling in this spot is much expensive	390	3.0436	1.05170
Attraction of the spot is gradually decreasing	390	3.2385	1.05726
Competitive domestic spots are being more attractive	390	3.3974	.88895
Visiting foreign spots are being more attractive	390	3.6513	.94389
There is no scope of giving feedback/complaint	390	3.4487	1.00189
Alternative scopes of amusement are reducing the appeal of physical traveling	390	3.5769	.92827
Valid N (list wise)	390		

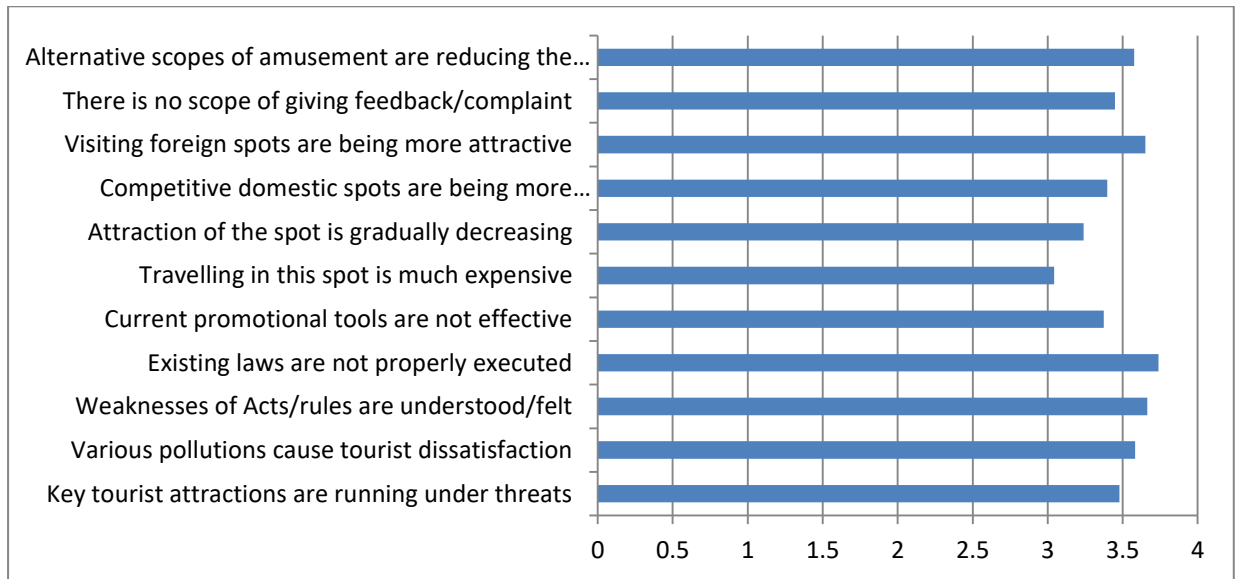
The rules and regulations allied issues have gained much attention to the respondents. They think that there are noticeable weaknesses in relevant rules and regulations (3.6641). Either those issues do not exist in any Law or have major loopholes in the existing rules and regulations. Moreover, the laws are not properly executed by the concerned bodies (3.7385). After that the trend of visiting foreign spots is increasing (3.6513) which have a negative impact on our tourism sector.

¹⁴ Kotler, Bowen, and Make, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, 10.

¹⁵ World Tourism Organization Business Council, *Marketing Tourism Destinations Online: Strategies for the Information Age*. (Madrid: World Tourism Organization, 1999).

¹⁶ Ute Jamrozy, "Marketing of Tourism: A Paradigm Shift toward Sustainability." *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 1, no. 2 (2007), 117-130.

Figure 7.1: Key challenging factors for the of tourism marketing in Bangladesh



Similarly, the pollution (land, air, water etc.) are causing dissatisfaction (3.5821) of the tourists. Alternative scopes of amusement (Internet, TV, Cineplex, Gaming zone etcetera) are creating apparent challenges (3.5769) for the tourism sector. Most of the respondents think that the key attractions are running under threats (3.4795). About half of them perceive that the promotional tools are not effective at all. On the other hand, the cost of traveling is not beyond their perceived level. Even the attractions towards the spots are satisfactory (3.2385) and their fascinations are not being faded away toward the spot.

One regulator representative said that the time consuming process of development is the key challenge of tourism development in our country. It takes much time and to complete the previous one, new problems arise. As a result, they always get complaints from the stakeholders. Integrating many parties to one point is the main challenge in this process. Another tourism researcher said, priority selection is the core challenge. If we really want to develop something sincerely, it is possible. For the different calculations, we can not move fast like our competitive nations. One hotel owner said, the lack of devotion of the responsible persons creates problems sometimes. If they could feel its importance, it would be able to reduce all barriers of tourism development.

7.2 Other Challenges of Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh

As a service lead product, tourism has some special characteristics which add some additional challenges for the marketers. To identify the gaps between expectations and actual services delivered, the SERVQUAL scale has been developed. Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility are used in this purpose.¹⁷ Are the special characteristics of services only a challenge for marketers? Not really, if those can be dominated efficiently, those characteristics can be a great favor for a marketer. There are differences between goods and services but those are not separately. Rather both are integrated in most cases. So, if properly those can be handled, specialty can bring huge benefits for the marketers.

The features are: intangibility, heterogeneous, simultaneous production and consumption, perishable.¹⁸ Some scholars also emphasize on its special nature of ownership. These features create some special challenges. For example— defining service quality, communicating it effectively, managing fluctuating demand, motivating service employees, setting prices, standardization and personalization, generating new ideas for the products, communicating and delivering consistent and quality services.¹⁹ Another great side of challenges is to minimize the gaps of service quality. Those might be customer gap, listening gap, performance gap, communication gap, and service design and standard gap.²⁰ From the published documents and opinion of the active stakeholders some other important challenges have been identified. Those are summarized below:

¹⁷ Leon G Schiffman, Leslie Lazar Kanuk, and S. Ramesh Kumar, *Consumer Behavior*. 10th ed. (Noida: Dorling Kindersley, 2010; Reprint 2016), 188.

¹⁸ Valarie A. Zeithaml et al., *Service Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm*. 6th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2014), 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 26.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 49.

7.2.1 Development, maintenance, and support services of tourist spots

Tourism infrastructure: Various development projects are taken regularly by the government. Infrastructure is one of the priority agenda of such development. But generally tourism does not get attention in such projects. As a result, in most cases, the transportation systems to and from the tourist spots are not well developed.²¹ Besides, lack of required development, ensuring its cleanliness, absence of proper maintenance are felt by the visitors. Managing pressure of mass tourists in the forest based or eco-tourism zones,²² stopping the beggars, and aggressiveness of the small traders become irritating. Sometimes they have nothing to do but leave the spot with dissatisfaction. In that case, negative word of mouth is generated. Potential tourists become negative or reluctant to visit that place. Nowadays the tourists have a positive attitude towards paying extra or following special rules regulations to respect the environmental issues.²³ But those are not being used to ensure sustainable development of the tourist spots in Bangladesh.

For economic development, the infrastructural facilities are increasing all over the country. People can move now at a much better pace than earlier times. But in case of any development, the tourists and its surrounding business activities are not given priority to plan and its execution. For this reason, the tourist spots are not well connected through rail, road, air and other ways. It affects the international as well as domestic tourists. Huge number of Bangladeshi rich families prefer to visit Singapore or Malaysia rather than travelling in a domestic attraction. The main excuse of them is that the road-communication system inside the country is not so comfortable that they can enjoy it with family members.

Less protected tourism resources: On the other hand, the tourist spots are being abused by the different interest groups. Authorities are failing to preserve and conserve those properly. For example- Chittagong, the most enriched tourism area of Bangladesh, faces great challenges because of high population growth, scattered industrial locations and poor infrastructure, which have reduced its charm as a desirable city to live in South

²¹ Md. Mortuza Ahmmed, "An Analysis on Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh." *Journal of Culture and Tourism Research* (The Korean Academic Society of Culture and Tourism) 15, no. 2 (2013), 35-39.

²² Mahbub Alam, Yasushi Furukawa, and Salma Akter, "Forest-Based Tourism in Bangladesh: Status, Problems, and Prospects." *Tourismos* 5, no. 1 (2010), 163-172.

²³ Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Nusrat Jahan, "Domestic Tourists' Mindset on Environmental Component of Responsible Tourism Management: A Case Study on Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh." *D. U. Journal of Marketing* 17, no. June 2014 (2016), 141-168.

Asia.²⁴ For Rohingya issue, in the humanitarian context, a good number of foreign tourists have cancelled their booking recently. Even the domestic tourists are less interested in visiting with family in the crisis area. It will have a very negative impact on the upcoming tourism season (November–April). If the problem continues, only God knows what will be the fate of tourism in Cox’s Bazar, Saint Martin’s Island and other three districts.

In the same way, the natural forest of Jaflong is disappearing rapidly due to dumping of stone illegally excavated from the Dawki and Sari rivers by a group of profit mongering traders. No wonder tourism in this scenic hill station, home to subtropical mountains, rainforests, tea gardens and the Khasia ethnic group is on the decline.²⁵ In case of Narayanganj, due to the improper management of the ancient establishments, most of the buildings have eroded their inherited historical beauty.²⁶ Involving the local community to the development process is another challenge. The three major forms of participation include coercive participation, induced participation, and spontaneous participation.²⁷ In the case of Bangladesh, the induced participation is noticed in most of the cases.

Limited allocation for promotion: The corporate bodies spend huge amounts of money to promote their own brands. In this case, the responsible organizations for tourism development suffer from limited budget and other policy supports.²⁸ Even most of the allocations are spent for the routine expenditures (e.g. office rent, salary of employees, maintenance). In spite of having huge unemployment problems, the shortage of skilled and trained manpower is strongly felt in this sector. Even huge investments in resorts and hotels are not getting desired success for this reason. There are few institutions here which provide training on hospitality and tourism relevant skill development. The owners of hotel, resort, restaurant, travel agency have expressed their deep concerns on this issue.

²⁴ Md Aslam Mia et al., “City Profile: Chittagong, Bangladesh,” *Cities* 48 (2015), 31-41.

²⁵ Amitava Kar, “Tourism Gone Wild,” *Daily Star*, February 13, 2017.

²⁶ Abu Hanifa Md. Noman et al. “City Profile: Narayanganj, Bangladesh.” *Cities* 59 (2016), 8-19.

²⁷ S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh et al., “Community Participation in World Heritage Site Conservation and Tourism Development.” *Tourism Management* 58, (2017), 142-153.

²⁸ Azizul Hassan and Peter Burns, "Tourism Policies of Bangladesh—A Contextual Analysis." *Tourism Planning & Development* 11, no. 4 (2014), 463-466.

Scope of comparison by the potential tourists: The scope of access to the information of the tourists is increasing rapidly. They can review and compare the alternative destinations by using smart phones. In this situation, to draw their attention, new products must be offered regularly. In the case of Bangladesh, the attractions are basically natural or historical. As India—enriched with wide natural diversity—is our neighbor; Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives are not so far, it is really tough to keep the domestic tourists inside or attracting international tourists based on these traditional products. The competitor tourism destinations work hard to improve their attractions. They are creating artificial attractions so that the tourists can pass time with pleasure in the visited place. Even most of the private investors of Bangladesh are reluctant on this issue.

Few investments: Development of the tourism sector of any country—especially the developing and underdeveloped countries—highly dependent on the foreign investments. As they have much experience in working with the international tourism community, they can develop the right products and promote to the international tourism market. When they do investment, at their own interest, they find out the appropriate market and take all measures to attract them. Though they do these tasks at their own interest, in the long run, it helps to make the international tourists interested toward the destination.

7.2.2 Identifying market and ensuring its satisfaction

Bangladesh has limitations in developing marketing programs as well. Bangladesh needs to convert its tourism supplies into tourism products effectively. Having the largest sandy sea beach is not enough. According to the demand of the tourists, it should be developed and have to offer beach facilities. For example—is it possible to take ‘sunbath’ for a female international tourist at Cox’s Bazar sea beach? Answering this question is not tough; the reality is known to all. Developing the proposed exclusive tourist zone is highly required within the shortest possible time.

Research and information dissemination: No detailed survey has been conducted to trace out the tourism resources of Bangladesh. But to step forward, at first a destination should do it. As Bangladesh has not done it yet, it can be started now. Because, being late is better than never. With the expert people surveys should be carried out all over the country so that a tourism map can be developed to give the potential tourists required ideas at a glance. Hamilton Bukanon started his job but the tourism sector has not been able to take it forward as it demanded. So, till to date we have very little of tourism data

which should not be especially in this era of digital technology. The places should be presented in such a way that any stakeholder can get the overall and detailed (if interested) information about the spots and plans of the tourist spots. One tourism researcher said that overall the significance of research is not clearly sensed in our country. In the case of tourism, the scenario is not exceptional.

Reluctant toward domestic tourists: At first the needs of the domestic tourists must be met. Through providing services, gradually service providers will learn how to make the tourists satisfied. Gradually infrastructure, skilled manpower, and professionalism will be developed. After that, when international tourists visit the spots, they might have a positive experience. If it really increases, their word of mouth or viral marketing will help Bangladesh to get more foreign tourists. Even a popular airline of a country can change the face of tourism. Singapore, Turkey, and Thailand are the best examples of such achievement.

Backdated mass tourism: Today the competitors are offering much customized products according to the desire of the target market. Even which market we would like to grasp in future, the target is not clear. For this reason, the product development, its pricing, promotional initiatives are not being much effective. The examples of Foy's lake and Bichnakandi can be taken into consideration. Through required development of layout, presentation, and physical evidence, Foy's lake is generating handsome revenue each year. On the other hand, Bichnakandi is kept abandoned and the government is getting nothing from such a huge natural resource; the tourists are also being deprived from enjoying maximum benefits.

Failure to utilize its strengths: Bangladesh can not communicate price competitiveness information to its target groups effectively. Especially for the economic recession, the tourists of the developed nations are seeking low cost destinations. Besides, credible information source and contact positions have to develop so that anyone can request for useful information without hesitation. Online reservations and e-payment systems are not properly developed yet. To eliminate fears of negative publicity, Bangladesh has to present organized information to the stakeholders. An adequate budget for tourism development is highly required. Policymakers should not consider it as 'expenditure'; rather it might be a highly profitable investment.

7.2.3 Outbound trend of Bangladeshi tourists

Increasing outbound trend: Many travel agents offer packages to visit India, Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia which are much lucrative. It encourages the outgoing tendencies of Bangladeshi citizens. The newspaper reports say about six lakhs people have visited outside Bangladesh in the Eid vacation of June, 2019!²⁹ Most of them have gone abroad for tourism purposes. From a small country like Bangladesh, undoubtedly it is a huge number. It also indicates that the trend of traveling of Bangladeshi people is increasing. On the contrary, for the lack of proper planning and promotional activities, we cannot attract international tourists. No noteworthy initiatives are taken to encourage both groups to visit this beautiful land. If Bangladesh took part in the international tourism fairs, at least the potential market would be aware about the tourist attractions of Bangladesh.

Lack of integrated marketing plan: In spite of having potential, Bangladesh is unable to draw the attention of the international tourism community. Even a significant number of Bangladeshi people are traveling to different countries with their family members each year. Undoubtedly, many reasons are liable for such occurrences. Among them the nonexistence of integrated marketing plan for the tourism industry is reasonably noteworthy. The main challenge is to bring all active stakeholders together to cooperate to achieve the national tourism objectives.³⁰ For example—to get maximum output from the industry total 16 Ministries should work together which is almost impossible in the countries like Bangladesh.³¹ When a destination plans to draw the attention of the international tourists ‘offering an integrated marketing mix’ is highly required which is not easy in case of Bangladesh. A master plan of national transportation network is seemingly not in place supporting the national tourism policy and existing tourism attractions of the country.³²

²⁹ Bangladesh Post, "Trend to Spend Eid Abroad Up." *The Bangladesh Post*, June 1, 2019, 1.

³⁰ Musa, "Marketing: A Tool to Develop Bangladesh's Tourism Sector," 6-9.

³¹ Bhuiyan and Alam, "Systems Approach to Change Management for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh," 1-12.

³² Md. Lutfur Rahman et al., "An Overview of Present Status and Future Prospects of the Tourism Sector in Bangladesh," *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners* 3, no. December (2010), 65-75.

Integrated marketing plans must be developed for the industry. At first Bangladesh needs to analyze the market from different aspects. Till now it has no specific recording system of foreign tourists. If anyone enters Bangladesh through any port, they are considered as tourists! For this reason, lack of exact numbers and relevant information of the actual tourists are felt. Besides, as target customers are not well defined, the competitive scenario of the industry is not portrayed. Bangladesh needs to collect useful information about the competitors, their products, and use marketing strategies. In this stage, promoting tourism must not be targeted only at foreign tourists.

Aimless promotional efforts: Though policymakers frequently talk about the wider prospects of the tourism industry, it has no evident information about the current and potential tourists, characteristics of their demand, competitive position and so many things. Bangladesh is trying to convince whom (if really done) for traveling to its tourist spots – not clear to the active stakeholders. As a result, few foreign tourists consider Bangladesh as a potential destination. Efforts of tourism marketing, more specifically, tourism promotion in our country is generally inconsistent as well as irregular. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh Tourism Board, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation should work together in an integrated manner to overcome this problem. Moreover, tourism related central and regional bodies should have mutual understanding in setting goals and its execution.

7.2.4 Stakeholder involvement and their participation

Direct benefits of community: A place becomes popular when the local community feels high involvement toward the attractions. Through the development of a spot when the local people become economically, socially, and culturally benefitted—generally they do all out support. Otherwise, they become reluctant or even to some extent, create barriers to the development of the spot. On the other hand, the practice of taking all decisions centrally is a great problem in the developing countries. As all decisions are taken centrally, the reality is ignored in many cases. Besides, the regional administration and local community do not feel their high involvement with the upcoming project.

Failure to communicate its benefits to the active stakeholders: If the marketing activities are properly done, the maximum utilization of the resources will be ensured. It will bring a lot of direct and indirect benefits for its stakeholders. At first, the government will receive a handsome amount from its direct and indirect taxes. This income will be disseminated through different development tasks (general and tourism infrastructures). So, all sorts of people will benefit from this success. Secondly, the local inhabitants will benefit from the development. From the investment in transportation, accommodation, food and other stuffs, handicrafts, entertainment business, they will be able to generate income that will help to develop the surrounding area. Overall, the lifestyle and attitude toward the development of the local community will be changed in a mentionable volume. The local administration will also be interested to ensure law and order situation of the locality which will enhance the safety and security of that region.

Connecting the strategic partners: All of the concerned always say that Bangladesh is very potential for the tourism sector but the desired outcomes are not coming even after four decades of its independence. Strategically Bangladesh enjoys a very suitable location. It is situated in the middle of diverse tourism enriched countries. For example, it is surrounded by the tourism hub India which draws a huge number of domestic and international tourists each year. Nepal, though small in size, gets a good number of tourists, Bhutan is also doing well in tourism development in recent years. Other neighbor Myanmar is getting a special category of tourists who are interested in Buddha and its religious belief.

As Bangladesh owns a good number of such or related tourist attractions, they can also pass some time to visit Bangladesh. On the other hand, the recent international pressures on sustainable tourism development have created new challenges to its development as well as promotion. Measuring marketing effectiveness is a great challenge.³³ As Bangladesh does not maintain tourism interrelated database or TSA (tourism satellite account), the overall decisions can not bring the anticipated outcomes.

³³ Rossano Eusebio, Joan Llonch Andreu, and M. Pilar Lopez Belbeze, "Measures of Marketing Performance: A Comparative Study from Spain." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality management* 18, no. 2 (2006), 145-155.

Table 7.2: Marketing mix related challenges of tourism sector in Bangladesh

Product development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market is not properly identified • New products are not offered regularly • Lack of making comfortable environment for the tourists
Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly private tourism services • Less expensive alternative foreign spots
Place (distribution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers are spot oriented • Organizing so called international tourism fairs • Tour operators promote international tourist attractions • No steps taken to reach the mass domestic tourists
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of proper (adequate & integrated) information • Weaknesses in connecting the strategic partners • Domestic tourists are not considered in the promotions • Irregular, inconsistent, and incomplete promotional steps
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of efficient human resources • Weaknesses in maintaining the tourist spots • Lack of realization about its potential contribution
Process management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less community involvement • Centralization of tourism management
Physical evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism infrastructures are not developed • Layout and presentation are not up to the mark

Concluding remarks: Though many organizations work for the tourism development in Bangladesh, the necessity of proper marketing is not realized. Some occasional advertisements or video, billboards, banners, and ads in some selected magazines are not enough. Rather, at first it should be determined that for whom the products are developed. Who are the target groups, how to reach them, how the price should be set, which medium or channel should be used to reach them, who are responsible to provide which particular services, how value can be added to the existing products etc. should be well planned and integrated so that the entire industry seems a single unit to the potential tourists or the investors. Even the international travel agents and tour operators should be convinced that if they work for the tourism of Bangladesh, they will not face trouble in future. So, the all out marketing efforts should be invested in an integrated manner to get expected outcomes in the long run. But the necessity of such integration is not perceived yet by the decision makers.

Chapter 08

POLICY SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study this chapter has been developed. This study was conducted on a small portion of the entire tourism sector of Bangladesh. So the first recommendation is to carry out a mega and inclusive marketing research which will give an overall idea about the tourism resources, its market, existing and potential competition, wants of the tourists, strategies used by the competitors and other relevant issues. Then a complete marketing plan for different terms (short, medium, long) should be developed and under the guidance of an empowered body it should be executed. The restructuring of BTB as a NTO is highly required. Professional, experienced, and passionate people should be assigned to perform these tasks.

Based on our product natures, the market should be segmented properly. The target market should be selected first. Then all out efforts should be invested in reaching and convincing them. The domestic market size is huge and the foundation of its development is very strong. So, they must not be ignored to develop plans and its executions. Involving the active stakeholders is a must. Positioning strategies should be formulated so that Bangladesh can be identified to some segments as a most desired destination.

Bangladesh has different types of tourism resources which can easily draw the attention of a large market segment of the South Asian countries. So, the policymakers should take initiatives to capitalize these to ensure the proper utilization of its resources and gain economic benefits with the enhancement of its national image.

8.0 Introduction

During the study, the researcher has also observed a lot of issues which can be solved or improved by some short term initiatives. The respondents have given diverse opinions on the studied issue. Reviewing literature of different countries (already successful in tourism marketing) has also given some meaningful insights to the researcher. Based on those findings some policy suggestions are made in this chapter. There are many limitations and systematic complexities in our country but the issues should be taken into consideration to minimize those in near future. If those can be addressed properly it is expected that the tourism sector of Bangladesh will do better in near future.

8.1 Policy Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study and observations during the study period, the following suggestions have been produced. The researcher believes that if the issues are properly taken care of the tourism sector of Bangladesh will be developed within a given period of time.

8.1.1 Suggestions on tourism marketing issues

8.1.1.1 Realizing the actual potentiality of the tourism sector: As a service industry, the scope of tourism development is huge. The concerned authorities should sincerely realize its potential scope of contribution. If it can properly be done, at least 16 Ministries can work out how to get benefits from the tourism development. Especially the scope of creating employment opportunities plays a significant role which has multilevel impact on national development. In this case, not only relying on the government is an effective way of progress. Rather creating micro level tourism ventures can serve the purpose in a better way.

Most of the cases, the responsible person thinks that they understand the notion well and their thoughts are capable enough to support the sector. For this reason, imagination and perception based many steps have been taken for the development of the tourism sector. Now emphasizing on research is highly required. Through the outcomes of the research, if the decisions are taken, resources are allocated, manpower is employed; and then it can bring maximum output. As a developing country, there are resource constraints. So, to make efficient decisions emphasizing on research can help to do well within a short period of time.

8.1.1.2 Decentralization of the planning and execution process: The developed countries in tourism have decentralized their tourism sector as much as possible. As many of the tourist resources are located in remote areas and even the central policymakers have no practical knowledge, they should not plan for its development. Rather the local administration can do it more effectively. If the project proposals are invited each year from the local representatives and allocate budget based on their potential, it can really contribute for the balanced tourism development of Bangladesh. It will also enhance the competition among the prospective tourist spots of the country which will be able to play the desired role after the successful completion of the projects.

In the developed countries, destination management organizations (DMOs) play a very effective role in tourism development. Because they are totally responsible for planning, developing and managing the tourist spots and other support services. They have short, medium and long term plans to make the spots attractive to the target customer groups. In Bangladesh, the necessity of such a working body is not recognized yet. Most of the spots are managed by the local government administration as an additional duty besides their routine work. So, they cannot give special attention to the improvement of tourist spots and required facilities. To get actual benefits, a separate and empowered management body for each tourist spot can be formed including the private investors and community leaders. In that case, they will be able and enthusiastic enough to think and contribute for the development of their own spot. A fair competitive environment among the tourist spots will also be developed which will ultimately help in developing the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Initially eight DMOs for the Divisional Cities can be formed.

8.1.1.3 Developing tourism infrastructures: Improving the general infrastructure is obviously helpful for the improvement of any tourism destination. But in many cases, some extensions or linkage roads can help a lot. In many tourist spots, the main roads are nice but to reach the ultimate spots the tourists have to face a lot of challenges. To minimize that consideration of ‘tourism development’ is highly required. During the planning, if the spot could be taken into consideration, the journey would be more comfortable. Different government departments should be given special instruction to consider the potential tourist areas when planning for infrastructural development of that zone. It is much more helpful than allocating special or separate funds for the tourism infrastructures.

Most of the spots are till now the gift of nature and concerned authorities have added few or none value with them. For example, in the case of *Hamham waterfalls* there is high curiosity among the general tourists but most of them cannot go there for the inadequate infrastructural support. Even in some spots there is no basic support like supply of pure drinking water, hygienic sanitation system, quality restaurant, or parking facilities. To some extent, in the evening, no electricity supply is there which makes the tourists afraid to stay for a long time. For this reason, rigorous development of infrastructures is required to increase the satisfaction level of the tourists.

8.1.1.4 Assigning professional department/team for tourism marketing: To gain desired success, the large organizations employ professional experts. Especially ‘marketing’ is a very dynamic process. To do well in marketing, long term experience in the concerned field is highly required. The competitive nations seek and hire such types of experts to boost their destinations. In the case of Bangladesh, it is always kept to some people who are generally not the practitioners of tourism marketing. As a result, their thinking does not match the real situation or the wants of the potential tourists. Initially it seems an expensive venture but in most of the countries, it is proven that the outcomes are much bigger than the costs of employing professional marketing specialists for the development of the tourism sector.

8.1.1.5 Establishing a strong network with the international travel agents: Networking is highly useful to reach to the target groups. For example—if some travel agents of Europe work to promote the distinguishing tourist spots of Bangladesh, the potential tourists might consider it more positively. On the other hand, as they work in that environment, they know very well how to convince them. This is a less expensive strategy as well. To enhance the pace of this venture, building relationships with the Embassies of the targeted countries is the prerequisite.

8.1.1.6 Introducing reliable tourist taxi and bus services: In many countries, national tourism organizations have their own taxi services. The authority gives required training of driving as well as tour guide to offer services to the tourists. When any tourist contacts through websites or over phone, the organization assigns a driver who is in charge of the entire tour. From picking up the tourist in the port, he will organize (as well as responsible) everything. During the visit he will explain the things as a tour guide. In this way, he builds relationships with the tourists. In future, others come into his reference. It has really a positive and long term impact on tourism development.

Reaching to the spots and coming back timely is a great concern of the tourists in case of all spots of Sylhet. If they have to use public transports ultimately they get two or three hours to enjoy in the desired spots. Introducing tourist buses from the district headquarters can solve this particular problem easily. If certain schedules of departure and arrival of buses are known to all, they can arrange the tour plan in that aspect. It will give mental peace and encourage them to pass leisure time in the spots in a more relaxed mood.

8.1.1.7 Offering products for world Muslim community: The pace of travelling is increasing all over the world. The Muslim tourists are huge in number. They are also caring about the 'halal' issue. In that case, to draw attention of the tourists of the Muslim countries, special packages can be offered. As the lifestyle of Bangladeshi people is very much similar to halal activities, it can be done very easily. If it can be done, the tourists of Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Asian can be interested in the tourism products of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is fortunate enough to get the chance of organizing Biswas Ijtema each year. As it is the second highest Muslim gathering all over the world. Bangladesh should promote the event to the world Muslim community. To encourage huge participation from all over the world, the Ministry of Religious Affairs can take a year long program. No direct selling approach, just to encourage them to take part in the Ijtema. If it can be done, automatically the image of the country will be spread out quickly. When the numbers of participations will increase, they will come and visit different places of the country. The direct financial benefits might not be much higher but they will do word of mouth in their homeland. For example—Saudi Arabia gets huge business benefits for organizing the Hajj each year.

8.1.1.8 Offering unique and exclusive something: The young generation should try to do something unique. By nature people feel comfort to do the traditional job, family business or to walk through the proven track. Actually Bangladesh has a huge number of young people who are searching for work. In this case, if they generate creative ideas based on the tourism activities, they will get positive responses from the tourists. Now the people seek unique things. This step can create a huge scope of own development as well as the enrichment of the tourism sector. If they can generate better ideas, the investors will be interested to fund them. It will create a win-win situation for the both parties.

The individual entrepreneurs should take initiatives to develop and promote the tourism business of Bangladesh. It will give multilevel return in the long run. The government should also focus on the foreign investment issue. Now Bangladesh is doing well in many socio-economic parameters. So the trend of traveling will increase in future. Such initiatives will bring mentionable results.

8.1.2 Suggestions on tourism marketing strategy

It is said that “A marketing strategy provides organizations with a shared vision of the future.”¹ Now the question simply arises, does the tourism sector of Bangladesh really have any vision for which any department or team is working? If the answer is ‘yes’ the next question will be—is it bringing the desired outcomes? If not, is it not the right time to re-think and re-design the strategies? Because “... *failure of the strategy to produce the expected results is usually the first serious indication that the Theory of the Business needs to be thought through again.*”² So, for effective marketing of the tourism sector of Bangladesh, needs to think again. In that case, the following issues can be taken into consideration.

8.1.2.1 Developing a route for the tourists who have special interest in the Goutam Buddha and Buddhism.

The great saint Goutam Buddha was born in this Indian Subcontinent. So his activities were performed in Bengal as well. So many establishments relating to this religion give ample evidence of it. Those are so authentic and lively that the followers of this region can be like a pilgrimage to a holy place. The followers of this ideology are living around the world. Especially China, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar own a huge number of Buddhists. If Bangladesh can draw the attention of a small faction of this community, undoubtedly Bangladesh can be a top visited place of the Buddhist community.

Historically Bangladesh has a good relation with Japan and other neighboring countries. They can like Bangladesh as a part of their tour plan, if Bangladesh can offer such products and ensure comfortable tour experience to them. If that can be done, it will create a relationship with their next generations. Because the pilgrimage is such a

¹ Moi Ali, *Marketing Effectively*. (London: A Dorling Kindersley Book, 2008), 54.

² Peter F Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*. (New York: Harper Business, 1999), 43.

passionate issue that the next generations learn from their parents or senior citizens. If once the market is created, the tourism sector of Bangladesh will get long term benefits from this venture. So, Bangladesh should be attentive to develop a route for the Buddhist tourist heritage which can bring name and fame for Bangladesh as a nation, and an attractive tourist spot.

8.1.2.2 Building a strong network with the travel agents of India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, China, and Japan. If possible, Thailand can also be included in this network.

In this era of connectivity, it is impossible to grow in the tourism business without cooperation from other countries. As Bangladesh owns a good number of Buddhist heritage resources, building such a network will help to find the specific segment easily. Even to understand their nature of demand and other preferences, the strategic partners can help the tourism sector of Bangladesh. With the proposed connectivity, the partners will help to design product offers, to minimize the barriers of physical traveling from one nation to another. Even based on their proposal the inter-government cooperation might be enhanced. To work jointly, they might find new opportunities among the joint working nations. So Bangladesh should not try to sell its tourism products, especially in the initial stage, to the mass people. Targeting the tourists of these nations will give better outcomes in response to little efforts.

8.1.2.3 Taking initiatives to enhance relations and make more integrated among the South Asian countries to reduce barriers among the member nations. The scope of free flow of its citizens will enhance the trend of visiting Bangladesh.

In this era of global connectivity, there is no alternative to enhance communication among the members of regional groups and neighbor countries. It will not only increase exchange among the member nations, it will improve the present relation status and give multidimensional benefits. Free flow of goods and services will ensure better productivity of all member nations. Development of the tourism sector has multiple impacts on other developments. European Union is the best example of it. The SAARC nations are also in the position of enjoying such benefits. Besides, the relations with China might have a long term positive impact. If these two regional super power India and China can work together, all countries of this region will be benefitted.

8.1.2.4 Awareness program for the medical personnel of Bangladesh.

Though it seems irrelevant, to improve the tourism sector of Bangladesh the medical services must be developed from its current position. Because a huge number of people are traveling to India for medical purposes. As a byproduct they are visiting different tourist spots of India. It is reducing the scope of visiting the spots of Bangladesh. As the patients and their attendances are feeling that they have seen the better places, they need not to visit the beautiful places of Bangladesh. The low quality of the Bangladeshi treatment is enhancing the outbound trend of the Bangladeshi tourists. To rein this trend the quality of medical services must be developed.

It will keep the local citizens inside. The outbound trend of the tourists should be reining. Otherwise, others will offer attractive tour packages and they will take our citizens at their desired destinations. Singapore, Thailand, India and many countries are doing this job very effectively. If our medical professionals become more sincere and caring toward their clients, it will not only bring their professional success, it will contribute to the tourism as well as economic development of Bangladesh.

8.1.2.5 Establishing integrated and complete information centers online and offline for the interested people of visiting Bangladesh.

As a man of high context culture, we generally do not feel the necessity of having clear sign and symbols to visit any place. But the people of low context culture (most industrialist nations) feel comfort to be aware and step forward on their own. For this reason, to move forward, at first they find related information of the visited place. If they do not find complete information, generally they do not feel comfortable to visit that place.

Even the people of Bangladesh should be aware on these issues. Because the new generations are being much independent and they generally do not like to depend on others' opinions. Rather they would like to find the relevant information on their own. It will also enhance the level of confidence of the citizens of Bangladesh to visit independently in any place of the world. Domestic and international tourists will find the required information from a credible source. The information is not integrated and sources are not credible. So from the government managed portal if they get information, it will help them to understand and rely on the available data.

8.1.2.6 Taking hygienic sanitation programs in the tourist spots of Bangladesh.

The developed nations give high priority to hygienic sanitation facilities in any public place. In Bangladesh, the situation of most of the tourist spots is worse. Sometimes the situations become much uncomfortable to the visitors. To grow this sector, actions regarding this issue must be taken. Even the management might be by the local third party assistance. But the government has to do the initial tasks of this. Besides, to get approval of any tourism related initiatives, sanitation hygiene systems must be ensured.

This initiative will help Bangladesh in two ways. Primarily the discomfort of the visiting people will reduce. They will not hesitate to visit a place with such limitations. On the other hand, it will create employment for a huge number of people all over the country. If the management body (local government or destination managers) establishes toilets and gives lease to the local inhabitants, they will keep it neat and clean and will also provide lump sum money to the authority. The most benefit will come that the surrounding area will not be dirty and no tourist will face an embarrassing situation during their pleasure tour.

8.1.2.7 Developing integrated and separate tourist maps with international signs

Developing means much wider perspectives. The lifestyles of a significant portion of people will be changed in a mentionable volume. The people will be more scattered from its relatives and even families. So, bothering others just to get information will not be accepted in upcoming days. To make them comfortable, complete and distinguishing maps should be developed.

As the international tourists would like to visit and discover the places independently, this type of instrument will give them more confidence. Before starting the tour they will be able to visualize the entire issues which are highly needed for the international tourists. Otherwise, they become skeptic about the entire offer. New generations will be much independent and they will not feel comfort to ask anybody about the visited places. So, if they get useful and informative maps and can design their own tours, it will give them much pleasure. Otherwise, they will not get confidence to move forward. To make them habituated to visit attractive places on their own, such types of tools are highly needed.

8.1.2.8 Making movie on the attractive tourist destinations

Making movies on the tourist attractions have a very positive impact in the long run. Because, people remember those places for a long time. Many countries have applied this strategy very successfully. Earlier in the drama and movie the places would be used. But in recent days, it has been reduced. As a result, the young generations are not being introduced with these spots through entertainment. There are many examples of such success. The case of *The Vinci Code* is widely discussed—how a novel (and film later on) contributed to the tourism industry. Impact of popular media on tourism products is also well known.³ Media induced tourism is being expanded all over the world.⁴

To create awareness among the target groups, it has proven impact. The people of West Bengal and North Eastern states of India, understand Bengali language very well. They also have interest in the drama and movies of Bangladesh. Through enjoying the entertainment products, if they become interested to visit the attractive places of Bangladesh, it will give better results. Through this awareness the outgoing trend might be reduced as well.

8.1.2.9 Comply national economic development with tourism development

Recently the government has been attentive to allocating a good amount of money to improve the infrastructure. Though those will be used for general purposes, the key focus is to support the tourism sector. Eight lane road to Chattogram, four lane road to Sylhet, extension of railway up to Cox's bazar, Building eye-catching rail station at Cox's bazar, formation of exclusive tourist zone at Teknaf and such many other projects are recently passed.

Recently an order of integrating all sorts of transportation has also been given. If those can be done properly, the tourism sector will be highly benefited. But attention should be given to improve tourism infrastructure. Because gradually the specific needs of the tourists will enhance and they will expect more need based services from the concerned services providers.

³ Metin Kozak and Luisa Andreu, "Destination Marketing and Competitiveness: Introduction." In *Progress in Tourism Marketing*, by Metin Kozak, & Luisa Andreu, 71-74. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd. , 2006), 232

⁴ Ibid, 234.

8.1.2.10 New events create the door of new opportunities

In recent years, another trend is noticeable. Many organizations and events are being formed or organized under different banners. For example—Alumni association, Reunion, Get together, Campaign, Training session, Workshop etc. are being arranged by different formal or informal bodies. As per the nature and abilities, those are being organized in any tourist spot or nearest hotel, motel or resort. A major part of these events are being travel and tourism. Nowadays in the winter season, especially during holidays, maximum tourist spots, parks, zoos, museums, resorts are mostly occupied with the enormous number of guests. Getting space has become really a tough job.

This is a good trend for the tourism development of a nation. The daylong visitors now plan for going a three or five day tour next year. Not only that to make the journey comfortable and economic, they encourage others to visit the places. Overall it has a positive impact on the tourism industry. It is expected that their family members, especially the next generation, through this trend will be tourism friendly. Bangladesh will get a good number of domestic tourists each year. It will enhance the quality of services. If it is successfully done, the international tourists will also be satisfied with the offered services. Their word of mouth will give positive publicity in the long run as well.

8.1.2.11 International students can create a bridge with their nation

In recent days, many international students are coming here to study. It should be used to enhance the tourism sector of Bangladesh. If they have positive feelings and experiences in Bangladesh, they will promote the education system of this country to the potential students of their country. Besides, their family and friends will have a positive attitude toward this nation. They will visit when they get the opportunity. They will also share their experiences through photograph, video, status writing, blog post and word of mouth. So Bangladesh should be attentive to give them positive experiences during the stay of the international students. Besides, the government should set favorable rules and regulations on who will host such types of students and researchers.

8.1.2.12 Increasing amusement activities in the spots: To minimize the problem of short stay in the spots, artificial or additional fun/recreational/amusement instruments can be introduced. Generally in the renowned tourism spots many activities (e.g. sport or music events, kids' amusement instruments, suitable rides for the particular spot) are seen beside the natural tourism resources. Even safe swimming, hiking, rowing, riding and various activities make the tourists busy and normally they are delayed to go back than

the predefined schedules. So, these can be introduced by the local management body as well as private investors to make the spots more attractive.

8.1.2.13 Funding assistance to the tourism entrepreneurs: There are so many schemes of government (e.g. BASIC Bank Fund, the SME Foundation Fund) and non-government organizations (e.g. ADB Fund, selected 17 NGOs' Fund) to support SME sector. But till now the small and micro tourism business entrepreneurs do not find proper assistance from them. Most probably for the seasonality of business, funding bodies are less interested in such business ventures. In this case, the banks and other financial institutions should reconsider how they can assist these entrepreneurs or small business owners. Without getting such help, they are just floating and the 'sense of insecurity' of fund providers is increasing. For this, under any suitable policy, they should be assisted by the assigned and responsible organizations.

8.1.2.14 Increasing community involvement: When the local inhabitants feel that development of tourism can improve their socio-economic condition, they provide all out support to its development.⁵ For example, the local people of Saint Martin's Island have clearly understood that the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry will bring bread and butter for them. For this, in spite of so many limitations, tourists can really enjoy the tour in that Island. In this way, involvement of community members in different forms (e.g. owner of the small business ventures, supplier of local food or fruit items, manufacturers and sellers of handicraft items, getting income from local transports like boat, van etc) can encourage themselves to upgrade the tourism environment in the particular spots.

8.1.2.15 Some other issues:

Self marketing culture should be encouraged. In many countries like Philippine, Vietnam, and India individuals do promote their destinations very positively. In Bangladesh, it has been started in a limited scale. When many people will share their views and experiences with audio-visual media and photographs, the people of their network will be encouraged to visit that place in future. To encourage this culture, some steps can also be taken. For example—photo contest for the travellers of a particular spot or like this. The mass people should see and learn how beautiful the country is.

To do so depending only on some traditional media is not enough. Rather mass people should play the role of journalist in either form. If they say, the issues will come in

⁵ Murray C. Simpson, "Progress in tourism management: community benefit tourism initiatives - a conceptual oxymoron?" *Tourism Management* 29 (2008): 1-18.

front and the policymakers will be compelled to take initiatives to ensure the better condition in future. It should be like a business of all people to promote the places of Bangladesh. If it can be done, the outgoing trend will be somehow minimized and the limited budget group will be interested to visit near their workplace or accommodation. It is said that “*YouTube is already a central component of our activities, and we seek to utilize it even more.*”⁶ As most of the people can share their experiences through this channel, it can help a lot to enrich the digital content regarding the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

8.1.3. Suggestions on tourism marketing challenges

The first and foremost important task is to find out a specific organization that will be totally responsible for the marketing tasks of the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Then assigning the right people in the right place should get the priority to move forward from the stagnant situation. Besides, based on the findings of the study the following issues can be taken into consideration:

8.1.3.1 Addressing the genuine problems at first

Allocating a mega budget and constructing some attractive hotels are not the core contribution of tourism development in this stage of development. Many basic requirements are not being fulfilled in many spots. Thousands of people are rushing to the spots from all over the country but the sanitation facilities are not usable in the spot! We are trying to develop in many places but not the basic issues like healthy and comfortable sanitation facilities, taking rest, or having meals in a comfortable environment. Security concern, attack of the beggars, the audacity of the hawkers, rough behaves of the local community etc. affects the tourism development of any area. Tourism development authorities should be caring enough on these issues. Offering an overall satisfactory trip is the key challenge of tourism development. If that can be done, the trend of traveling will increase automatically.

8.1.3.2 Establishing institutions for producing skilled manpower

As the industry will go forward, more skilled people will be needed to offer standard services to the tourists. Even a good number of people are not traveling to international tourist spots. So their level of desired services is high. To meet that one, at first people should be skilled in particular tasks. Now some institutions are offering tourism and

⁶ David Meerman Scott, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Blogs, News Releases, Online Video, & Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly*. (New Jersey: Wiley, 2010), 27

hospitality related academic programs. But this field is much more practical, than the theoretical issues. So the industry attachment of the tourism and hospitality students should be enhanced. Otherwise, Bangladesh has to import skilled manpower from the neighboring countries. In that case, all our benefits of tourism development will be shared with others.

8.1.3.3 Utilizing the flow of domestic tourists

In the last few years, the trend of traveling has noticeably changed inside the country. It indicates that the size of the domestic tourism market has a mentionable change in this decade. With the development of economic conditions, the trend or attitude toward tourism has been changed. To make this trend sustainable, the tour facilities must be made comfortable and enjoyable. After spending the money, if they get satisfactory returns, the pace of traveling will increase in future. On the other hand, if they become dissatisfied, the trend of traveling to the other countries will increase. For the availability of the internet and other sources, now they can easily compare the costs and benefits of traveling at home and abroad. So making each journey comfortable is highly needed.

8.1.3.4 Deciding who is supposed to do what

Before moving forward for tourism marketing answer to some questions must be found: Who are our potential customers, what are their demands, which destinations are offering their desired services at a competitive price. Otherwise, trying to do marketing the sector will be like ‘a ship without radar.’ The government tourism agencies should be empowered with proper budget allocation and other support services. BTB should be converted into an active organization. For marketing tasks they must be the sole authority. All other bodies should assist them. Its structural change is also needed. Expert and passionate professionals should be included in this board.

8.1.3.5 Introducing Laws and ensuring its enforcement

To protect and develop the tourism sector, the natural, historical and cultural resources must be protected. To do so, new laws should be introduced and existing laws must be enforced by the responsible agencies. Otherwise, the tourists will not get priority in the spots. Different interest groups will take benefits by utilizing those resources but the tourism sector will be damaged in the long run.

8.1.3.6 Promotional activities

Regular and consistent promotional activities must be operated through diverse media. To enhance interactions with the active stakeholders, initiatives should be taken. Organizing different contests and offering attractive incentives might enhance the pace of such

activities. Otherwise, the negative word of mouth will take place which have long term negative consequences.

8.1.3.7 Inviting international tourism investors

International investors of this sector should be invited to invest in Bangladesh. If they come here, their international networks will help us to enter into the appropriate international market. Besides, taking part in the international tourism fairs in our target countries will give better results. Besides, NRBs should be connected in different ways so that they feel comfort to visit their homeland.

8.2 Conclusions

The key issues and challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh are not properly identified yet. To do so, at first the policymakers have to realize the scope of potential contribution of this sector. Besides, the nature of competition is always changing. To gain the real insights, rigorous studies should be conducted. Based on the findings—short, mid and long term detail plans must be made. To ensure integration of the efforts, BTB must be empowered through restructuring and support services. Decentralization of planning and its execution is highly needed to get better results. Fair competition among the different regions of Bangladesh can bring better outcomes. Otherwise, the challenges will enhance in upcoming days and the opportunities of being benefited from the sector will be remain unexploited.

Worldwide tourism is a growing sector and one of the significant contributors in foreign exchange earnings and employment generation. Compared to that, tourism has a very tiny contribution to the economy of Bangladesh. To gain maximum outcomes tourism should get special attention at the policy making level. Moreover, the private sector's participation in promoting and developing this sector will be an added wing in the overall efforts of achieving the target of this sector. The effectual implementation of above mentioned recommendations might convert this potential sector into a genuine contributor to the development of Bangladesh.

Tourism sector has not been taken care of by any marketing experts from its inception. The competitors are assigning the professional experts to promote their destinations as like the business organizations. They are setting the vision, mission, goals and strategies to be successful within a given period of time. In this case, formation of Bangladesh Tourism Board created hope among the stakeholders of this field. They expected that it would function properly to promote this neglected sector. But after about one decade of its formation, it is about in the same position. Rather among the three bodies (Ministry, Corporation, and Board), who is supposed to do what—is not clear at all. The vision statement for the tourism sector of Bangladesh should be clearly stated as soon as possible.

Like other sectors (e.g. education, health, banking), here the private sector can not take the lead. Because, by nature tourism is multi-sectoral and integration among many industries is required to be functional. Only government bodies can coordinate all these issues. Moreover, private investors can not develop infrastructure, ensure safety and

security, and even promote to the international market. So, the government has to realize the significance of marketing in this era of stiff competition. Otherwise, even after a few decades, the fate of the tourism sector will not be changed.

The tourism sector is a well discussed issue to most of the concerned people of Bangladesh. The trend of travel and tourism has increased but unfortunately the sector is not getting pace as it is expected. If the concerned policymakers take proper decisions and the assigned bodies become effective, Bangladesh will do better in near future. Marketing can play really a significant role in achieving that success.

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APPENDIX — I

Questionnaire

Place:.....

**Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges**

Researcher: Md. Abdul Hamid, Ph D Fellow, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi.

[All answers are confidential and you will not be able to be identified from the information you provided. Please put tick mark in the appropriate option in the section A and B]

Section A: Demographic Profile of the Respondent

1. Gender	(1) Male	(2) Female		
2. Age category (years)	(1) Up to 30	(2) 31 – 40	(3) 41 – 50	(4) Above 50
3. Education	(1) Up to SSC	(2) HSC	(3) Degree/Hons	(4) Masters or above
4. Occupation	(1) Govt. job	(2) Private sector	(3) Self-employed	(4) Others
5. Purpose of visit	(1) Family tour	(2) Official visit	(3) Study tour	(4) Others
6. Length of the tour	(1) 1-2 day(s)	(2) 3-4 days	(3) 5-6 days	(4) More than 6 days
7. Participant(s)	(1) Alone	(2) 2 – 3 persons	(3) 4 – 5 persons	(4) More than 5
8. Accommodation	(1) None	(2) Hotel/Resort	(3) Friend & Family place	(4) Others
9. Average monthly income	(1) Below 25,000	(2) 26,000–50,000	(3) 51,000–75,000	(4) More than 75,000
10. Keep separate budget for annual tours		(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) Never thought
11. Frequency of tour (each year)	(1) Irregular	(2) 1 – 2 times	(3) 3 – 4 times	(4) More than 4 times
12. International tour experience	(1) Yes	(2) No		

Section B: Tour Related Information

13. Key tourist attraction of this spot	(1) Natural	(2) Cultural	(3) Historical	(4) Others
14. Matching with the expectations	(1) Less than exp.	(2) Similar	(3) More than exp.	(4) Others
15. Feeling safe and secured	(1) Not at all	(2) To some extent	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Very much
16. Cleanliness of the spot	(1) Below average	(2) Average	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Wonderful
17. This tour is organized by...	(1) Tour operator	(2) Self	(3) Institution	(4) others
18. Main source of information	(1) Word of mouth	(2) Internet	(3) Brochure	(4) others
19. Do you consider others' review to choose a destination	(1) Always	(2) Sometimes	(3) Never	
20. Overall management of the spot	(1) Below standard	(2) Average	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Excellent

For each of the questions below, please circle/mark the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Section C: Tourism Marketing Issues

Sl.	Given statement on tourism marketing issues	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21.	Attractions are adequate in number to pass quality time	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Diversity of the tourist attractions are praiseworthy	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Recreational facilities of this spot are satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Scope of night-life amusement is excellent	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Local food items are distinguishing	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Available handicraft items are attractive	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Happy with the existing transportation systems	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Distance between spot and accommodation is fine	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Accommodation tariff is very high	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Price of the food items are very high	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Physical beauty of the spot is quite pleasing	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Sanitation system in the spot is satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Healthcare services are available (if required)	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Collecting useful information for the tour was easy	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Promotional activities have motivated me/us to visit here	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Booking/collecting ticket was convenient	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Access to ATM booths are convenient	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Access to Internet is satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Shopping facilities are satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Excess tourists visit here than the carrying capacity	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Tourists cause harm of the tourism resources	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Attitude of local inhabitants towards tourists is positive	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Tour guides are available (if required)	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Service quality of tour operator is satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: Tourism Marketing Strategies

Sl.	Given statement on tourism marketing strategies	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
45.	Initiatives of local administrant is noticed	1	2	3	4	5
46.	Public-private collaboration is understood	1	2	3	4	5
47.	Recent development initiatives are visible	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Integration among the authorities are realized	1	2	3	4	5
49.	Community involvement is noticeable	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Possible all forms of promotion are used	1	2	3	4	5
51.	Website is enriched with useful information	1	2	3	4	5
52.	Available online information are reliable	1	2	3	4	5
53.	Tourist information services are available here	1	2	3	4	5
54.	Emergency help-line/services are working here	1	2	3	4	5
55.	On duty tourist police is seen during the tour	1	2	3	4	5
56.	Caring attitude of the service providers are felt	1	2	3	4	5
57.	Sustainable/eco-tourism ventures are noticed	1	2	3	4	5

Section E: Tourism Marketing Challenges

Sl.	Given statement on tourism marketing challenges	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
58.	Key tourist attractions are running under threats	1	2	3	4	5
59.	Various pollutions cause tourist dissatisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
60.	Weaknesses of Acts/rules are understood/felt	1	2	3	4	5
61.	Existing laws are not properly executed	1	2	3	4	5
62.	Current promotional tools are not effective	1	2	3	4	5
63.	Traveling in this spot is much expensive	1	2	3	4	5
64.	Attraction of the spot is gradually decreasing	1	2	3	4	5
65.	Competitive domestic spots are being more attractive	1	2	3	4	5
66.	Visiting foreign spots are being more attractive	1	2	3	4	5
67.	There is no scope of giving feedback/complaint	1	2	3	4	5
68.	Alternative scopes of amusement are reducing the appeal of physical traveling	1	2	3	4	5

Section F: Overall Observation

Sl.	Given statement on overall comments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
69.	Travelling in this spot is the best use of money	1	2	3	4	5
70.	I would like to come here again and again	1	2	3	4	5
71.	I will recommend others to visit this spot	1	2	3	4	5
72.	Bangladesh is very potential for tourism development	1	2	3	4	5
73.	<i>If you would like to add any comment/information/opinion on the studied issue, please write in the next page.</i>					

Thanks for your kind support and sincere cooperation.

APPENDIX — II

Outline for In-depth Interview

on

Tourism Marketing in Bangladesh: Issues, Strategies and Challenges

Researcher: Md. Abdul Hamid, Ph D Fellow, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi.

- 1 Do you consider Bangladesh as a promising tourism destination? Why?

- 2 Are you satisfied with its current (overall) marketing practices? Why?

- 3 What are the key challenges of tourism marketing in Bangladesh?

- 4 What strategies can be taken to improve the effectiveness of marketing activities?

- 5 How will you explain the attitude of local community toward tourism?

- 6 Who is responsible for marketing of this destination?
- 7 How will you explain the environmental impacts of tourism activities?
- 8 Are you satisfied with the current management system of this spot? Why?
- 9 Please compare the costs and benefits of tourism development in this area.
- 10 What is your overall suggestion/recommendation to improve the current situation?

Thank you very much for your kind support and valuable opinion.

APPENDIX — III

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	236	60.5	60.5	60.5
	Female	154	39.5	39.5	100.0
Total		390	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Age category (years) of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to 30	228	58.5	58.5	58.5
	31-40	75	19.2	19.2	77.7
	41-50	58	14.9	14.9	92.6
	Above 50	29	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Education level of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to SSC	27	6.9	6.9	6.9
	HSC	54	13.8	13.8	20.8
	Degree/Hons	231	59.2	59.2	80.0
	Masters or above	78	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Occupation of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Govt. job	29	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Private sector	103	26.4	26.4	33.8
	Self-employed	81	20.8	20.8	54.6
	Others	177	45.4	45.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Purpose of visiting the tourist spot

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Family tour	226	57.9	57.9	57.9
Official visit	21	5.4	5.4	63.3
Study tour	88	22.6	22.6	85.9
Others	55	14.1	14.1	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Length of the tour

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-2 day(s)	170	43.6	43.6	43.6
3-4 days	154	39.5	39.5	83.1
5-6 days	60	15.4	15.4	98.5
More than 6 days	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Number of participant(s)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Alone	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
2-3 persons	84	21.5	21.5	23.8
4-5 persons	142	36.4	36.4	60.3
More than 5	155	39.7	39.7	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Process of accommodation

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid None	74	19.0	19.0	19.0
Hotel/Resort	230	59.0	59.0	77.9
Friend and Family place	76	19.5	19.5	97.4
Others	10	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Average monthly income of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 25,000	186	47.7	47.7	47.7
	26,000-50,000	110	28.2	28.2	75.9
	51,000-75,000	52	13.3	13.3	89.2
	More than 75,000	42	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 10: Keeping separate budget for annual tours

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	136	34.9	34.9	34.9
	No	186	47.7	47.7	82.6
	Never thought	68	17.4	17.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 11: Frequency of tour (each year)

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Irregular	186	47.7	47.7	47.7
	1-2 times	156	40.0	40.0	87.7
	3-4 times	39	10.0	10.0	97.7
	More than 4 times	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: International tour experience of the respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	123	31.5	31.5	31.5
	No	267	68.5	68.5	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 13: Key tourist attraction of this spot

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Natural	296	75.9	75.9	75.9
	Cultural	31	7.9	7.9	83.8
	Historical	63	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Matching with the expectations

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than exp.	67	17.2	17.2	17.2
	Similar	228	58.5	58.5	75.6
	More than exp.	92	23.6	23.6	99.2
	Others	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 15: Feeling safe and secured during the tour

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all	16	4.1	4.1	4.1
	To some extent	140	35.9	35.9	40.0
	Satisfactory	228	58.5	58.5	98.5
	Very much	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 16: Cleanliness of the spot

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below average	46	11.8	11.8	11.8
	Average	236	60.5	60.5	72.3
	Satisfactory	103	26.4	26.4	98.7
	Wonderful	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 17: This tour is organized by...

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Tour operator	27	6.9	6.9	6.9
Self	240	61.5	61.5	68.5
Institution	108	27.7	27.7	96.2
Others	15	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 18: Main source of information

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Word of mouth	211	54.1	54.1	54.1
Internet	159	40.8	40.8	94.9
Brochure	9	2.3	2.3	97.2
Others	11	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 19: Considering others' review to choose the destination

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Always	110	28.2	28.2	28.2
Sometimes	270	69.2	69.2	97.4
Never	10	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 20: Overall management of the spot

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below standard	17	4.4	4.4	4.4
Average	256	65.6	65.6	70.0
Satisfactory	98	25.1	25.1	95.1
Excellent	19	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 21: Attractions are adequate in number to pass quality time

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	17	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Disagree	36	9.2	9.2	13.6
	Neither agree or disagree	79	20.3	20.3	33.8
	Agree	236	60.5	60.5	94.4
	Strongly agree	22	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 22: Diversity of the tourist attractions are praiseworthy

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	54	13.8	13.8	17.7
	Neither agree or disagree	77	19.7	19.7	37.4
	Agree	218	55.9	55.9	93.3
	Strongly Agree	26	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 23: Recreational facilities of this spot are satisfactory

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	71	18.2	18.2	21.0
	Neither Agree or disagree	138	35.4	35.4	56.4
	Agree	156	40.0	40.0	96.4
	Strongly Agree	14	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 24: Scope of night-life amusement is excellent

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	63	16.2	16.2	16.2
	Disagree	102	26.2	26.2	42.3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	100	25.6	25.6	67.9
	Agree	93	23.8	23.8	91.8
	Strongly Agree	32	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 25: Local food items are distinguishing

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	29	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Disagree	101	25.9	25.9	33.3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	131	33.6	33.6	66.9
	Agree	115	29.5	29.5	96.4
	Strongly Agree	14	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 26: Available handicraft items are attractive

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	32	8.2	8.2	9.7
	Neither Agree or Disagree	148	37.9	37.9	47.7
	Agree	149	38.2	38.2	85.9
	Strongly Agree	55	14.1	14.1	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 27: Happy with the existing transportation systems

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	34	8.7	8.7	8.7
	Disagree	77	19.7	19.7	28.5
	Neither Agree or Disagree	98	25.1	25.1	53.6
	Agree	144	36.9	36.9	90.5
	Strongly Agree	37	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 28: Distance between Spot and Accommodation is Fine

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	26	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	73	18.7	18.7	25.4
	Neither Agree or Disagree	120	30.8	30.8	56.2
	Agree	150	38.5	38.5	94.6
	Strongly Agree	21	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 29: Accommodation tariff is very high

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	4.1	4.1	4.1
	Disagree	63	16.2	16.2	20.3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	136	34.9	34.9	55.1
	Agree	156	40.0	40.0	95.1
	Strongly Agree	19	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 30: Price of the food items are very high

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	.8	.8	.8
	Disagree	61	15.6	15.6	16.4
	Neither Agree or Disagree	85	21.8	21.8	38.2
	Agree	183	46.9	46.9	85.1
	Strongly Agree	58	14.9	14.9	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 31: Physical beauty of the spot is quite pleasing

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	35	9.0	9.0	10.5
	Neither Agree or Disagree	67	17.2	17.2	27.7
	Agree	236	60.5	60.5	88.2
	Strongly Agree	46	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 32: Sanitation system in the spot is satisfactory

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	36	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Disagree	95	24.4	24.4	33.6
	Neither Agree or Disagree	136	34.9	34.9	68.5
	Agree	100	25.6	25.6	94.1
	Strongly Agree	23	5.9	5.9	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 33: Healthcare services are available (if required)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	28	7.2	7.2	7.2
	Disagree	120	30.8	30.8	38.0
	Neither Agree or Disagree	134	34.4	34.4	72.5
	Agree	92	23.6	23.7	96.1
	Strongly Agree	16	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	389	99.7	100.0	
Total		390	100.0		

Table 34: Collecting process of useful information for the tour was easy

		Frequen cy	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Disagree	62	15.9	15.9	19.0
	Neither Agree or Disagree	123	31.5	31.6	50.6
	Agree	166	42.6	42.7	93.3
	Strongly Agree	27	7.0	7.	100.0
	Total	389	99.7	100.0	
Total		390	100.0		

Table 35: Promotional activities have motivated me/us to visit here

Particulars		Frequ ency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	36	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Disagree	103	26.4	26.4	35.6
	Neither Agree or Disagree	85	21.8	21.8	57.4
	Agree	157	40.3	40.3	97.7
	Strongly Agree	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 36: Booking/collecting ticket was convenient

Particulars		Frequ ency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Disagree	66	16.9	16.9	20.0
	Neither Agree or Disagree	142	36.4	36.4	56.4
	Agree	161	41.3	41.3	97.7
	Strongly Agree	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 37: Access to ATM booths are convenient

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	63	16.2	16.2	16.2
Disagree	96	24.6	24.6	40.8
Neither Agree or Disagree	115	29.5	29.5	70.3
Agree	105	26.9	26.9	97.2
Strongly Agree	11	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 38: Access to internet is satisfactory

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	42	10.8	10.8	10.8
Disagree	113	29.0	29.0	39.7
Neither Agree or Disagree	106	27.2	27.2	66.9
Agree	102	26.2	26.2	93.1
Strongly Agree	27	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 39: Shopping facilities are satisfactory

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	42	10.8	10.8	10.8
Disagree	103	26.4	26.4	37.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	106	27.2	27.2	64.4
Agree	116	29.7	29.7	94.1
Strongly Agree	23	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 40: Excess tourists visit here than the carrying capacity

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	78	20.0	20.0	23.3
Neither Agree or Disagree	117	30.0	30.0	53.3
Agree	142	36.4	36.4	89.7
Strongly Agree	40	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 41: Tourists cause harm of the tourism resources

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	57	14.6	14.6	14.6
Neither Agree or Disagree	124	31.8	31.8	46.4
Agree	174	44.6	44.6	91.0
Strongly Agree	35	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 42: Attitude of local inhabitants towards tourists is positive

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Disagree	29	7.4	7.4	8.5
Neither Disagree or Agree	119	30.5	30.5	39.0
Agree	215	55.1	55.1	94.1
Strongly Agree	23	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 43: Tour guides are available (if required)

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	25	6.4	6.4	6.4
	Disagree	55	14.1	14.1	20.5
	Neither Agree or Disagree	118	30.3	30.3	50.8
	Strongly Agree	168	43.1	43.1	93.8
	5.00	24	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 44: Service quality of tour operator is satisfactory

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Disagree	58	14.9	14.9	18.5
	Neither Agree or Disagree	155	39.7	39.7	58.2
	Agree	138	35.4	35.4	93.6
	Strongly Agree	25	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 45: Initiatives of local administrant is noticed

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	90	23.1	23.1	26.9
	Neither Agree or Disagree	144	36.9	36.9	63.8
	Agree	134	34.4	34.4	98.2
	Strongly Agree	7	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 46: Public-private collaboration is understood

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	16	4.1	4.1	4.1
Disagree	74	19.0	19.0	23.1
Neither Agree or Disagree	162	41.5	41.5	64.6
Agree	134	34.4	34.4	99.0
Strongly Agree	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 47: Recent development initiatives are visible

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	93	23.8	23.8	27.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	130	33.3	33.3	60.5
Agree	148	37.9	37.9	98.5
Strongly Agree	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 48: Integration among the authorities are realized

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	22	5.6	5.6	5.6
Disagree	66	16.9	16.9	22.6
Neither Agree or Disagree	160	41.0	41.0	63.6
Agree	136	34.9	34.9	98.5
Strongly Agree	6	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 49: Community involvement is noticeable

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
Disagree	96	24.6	24.6	27.4
Neither Agree or Disagree	140	35.9	35.9	63.3
Agree	136	34.9	34.9	98.2
Strongly Agree	7	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 50: Possible all forms of promotion are used

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
Disagree	138	35.4	35.4	38.2
Neither Agree or Disagree	130	33.3	33.3	71.5
Agree	105	26.9	26.9	98.5
Strongly Agree	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 51: Website is enriched with useful information

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	44	11.3	11.3	11.3
Disagree	112	28.7	28.7	40.0
Neither Agree or Disagree	90	23.1	23.1	63.1
Agree	135	34.6	34.6	97.7
Strongly Agree	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 52: Available online information are reliable

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	28	7.2	7.2	7.2
Disagree	98	25.1	25.1	32.3
Neither Agree or Disagree	122	31.3	31.3	63.6
Agree	127	32.6	32.6	96.2
Strongly Agree	15	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 53: Tourist information services are available here

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	35	9.0	9.0	9.0
Disagree	93	23.8	23.8	32.8
Neither Agree or Disagree	102	26.2	26.2	59.0
Agree	156	40.0	40.0	99.0
Strongly Agree	4	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 54: Emergency help-line/services are working here

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
Disagree	129	33.1	33.1	36.9
Neither Agree or Disagree	133	34.1	34.1	71.0
Agree	106	27.2	27.2	98.2
Strongly Agree	7	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 55: On duty tourist police is seen during the tour

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
Disagree	65	16.7	16.7	19.0
Neither Agree or Disagree	129	33.1	33.1	52.1
Agree	175	44.9	44.9	96.9
Strongly Agree	12	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 56: Caring attitude of the service providers is felt

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	58	14.9	14.9	17.7
	Neither Agree or Disagree	145	37.2	37.2	54.9
	Agree	159	40.8	40.8	95.7
	Strongly Agree	17	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 58: Key tourist attractions are running under threats

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	68	17.4	17.4	20.3
	Neither Agree or Disagree	86	22.1	22.1	42.3
	Agree	173	44.4	44.4	86.7
	Strongly Agree	52	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 59: Various pollutions cause tourist dissatisfaction

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	63	16.2	16.2	17.4
	Neither Agree or Disagree	65	16.7	16.7	34.1
	Agree	214	54.9	54.9	89.0
	Strongly Agree	43	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 60: Weaknesses of acts/rules are understood/felt

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	46	11.8	11.8	14.1
	Neither Agree or Disagree	66	16.9	16.9	31.0
	Agree	215	55.1	55.1	86.2
	Strongly Agree	54	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 61: Existing laws are not properly executed

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	.5	.5	.5
	Disagree	39	10.0	10.0	10.5
	Neither Agree or Disagree	56	14.4	14.4	24.9
	Agree	255	65.4	65.4	90.3
	Strongly Agree	38	9.7	9.7	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 62: Current promotional tools are not effective

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	83	21.3	21.3	22.8
	Neither Agree or Disagree	81	20.8	20.8	43.6
	Agree	199	51.0	51.0	94.6
	Strongly Agree	21	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 63: Travelling in This Spot is Much Expensive

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	26	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	105	26.9	26.9	33.6
	Neither Agree or Disagree	109	27.9	27.9	61.5
	Agree	126	32.3	32.3	93.8
	Strongly Agree	24	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 64: Attraction of the spot is gradually decreasing

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Disagree	94	24.1	24.1	28.7
	Neither Agree or Disagree	89	22.8	22.8	51.5
	Agree	155	39.7	39.7	91.3
	Strongly Agree	34	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 65: Competitive Domestic Spots are being more Attractive

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
Disagree	43	11.0	11.0	13.3
Neither Agree or Disagree	158	40.5	40.5	53.8
Agree	142	36.4	36.4	90.3
Strongly Agree	37	9.5	9.5	99.7
23.00	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 66: Visiting foreign spots are being more attractive

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
Disagree	39	10.0	10.0	13.1
Neither Agree or Disagree	76	19.5	19.5	32.6
Agree	209	53.6	53.6	86.2
Strongly Agree	54	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 67: There is no scope of giving feedback/complaint

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	19	4.9	4.9	4.9
Disagree	46	11.8	11.8	16.7
Neither Agree or Disagree	110	28.2	28.2	44.9
Agree	171	43.8	43.8	88.7
Strongly Agree	44	11.3	11.3	100.0
Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 68: Alternative Scopes of Amusement are Reducing the Appeal of Physical Traveling

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	50	12.8	12.8	14.6
	Neither Agree or Disagree	93	23.8	23.8	38.5
	Agree	191	49.0	49.0	87.4
	Strongly Agree	49	12.6	12.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 69: Traveling in this spot is the best use of money

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	25	6.4	6.4	7.4
	Neither Agree or Disagree	93	23.8	23.8	31.3
	Agree	191	49.0	49.0	80.3
	Strongly Agree	77	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 70: I would like to come here again and again

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	50	12.8	12.8	15.6
	Neither Agree or Disagree	67	17.2	17.2	32.8
	Agree	178	45.6	45.6	78.5
	Strongly Agree	84	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 71: I will recommend others to visit this spot

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	25	6.4	6.4	7.9
	Neither Agree or Disagree	62	15.9	15.9	23.8
	Agree	214	54.9	54.9	78.7
	Strongly Agree	83	21.3	21.3	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	

Table 72: Bangladesh is very potential for tourism development

Particulars		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	6.4
	Neither Agree or Disagree	36	9.2	9.2	15.6
	Agree	202	51.8	51.8	67.4
	Strongly Agree	127	32.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	390	100.0	100.0	