



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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OPPORTUNITIES OF TOURISM SECTOR IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The paper mainly focuses on the prospects of tourism sector in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a country of enriched heritage and culture from thousands of years ago. The economy of Bangladesh has much potentiality to earn foreign currency creating more attraction and disseminating the information about the tourist places to other parts of the world. The study has been conducted based on secondary information that have been collected from various articles published in journals, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, and different websites. Authors' personal experiences and observations have also been taken into account to get the findings. The paper finds that the major tourist attractions, number of foreign tourists arrivals in Bangladesh in several years, the annual income and profit earning from tourism sector in the country have shown the opportunities and potentiality of tourism development in the country. However, the paper identifies various constraints to the development of tourism and prescribes some necessary recommendations for policy formulation and managerial implication of the development of the tourism sector in Bangladesh. Therefore, the value of the tourism sector development has a positive impact on the growth and economic development of Bangladesh in future.

KEYWORDS

Tourism, Tourist, Tourist attractions.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh, the country of natural beauty, has many attractive places for traveler. People like to travel for their different i.e. recreational, business, religious, cultural, sports and as well as to attend at conference and seminar. Traveler is the person who goes from one place to another for satisfying his own needs and wants (Zulfikar, 1998). The interest of traveling is varied at different age of people, health, energy and as well as background of the people. The younger people are more interested to travel than the older. Traveling helps to breakdown of the dull and monotonous feeling which is to be for a long time work and gives refreshment to join the work with encouragement. There is an enormous opportunity to flourish tourism sector in Bangladesh. There are some beautiful beaches, religious places, archeological sites, hills and islands, forests and jungles as well as many historical places in this country. At present, it is very important to preserve the places and develop necessary infrastructures for attraction of travelers from different regions within the country and also from foreign countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the problems and opportunities of the tourism development of Bangladesh.

Pannell Kerr Foster Associate (1998) has mentioned its comprehensive report on the Strategic Master Plan for Tourism in Bangladesh that for the development of infrastructure, national airlines, and overall tourism in the country, the government of Bangladesh has taken attempts to make substantial investments which require to be properly supported by effective management and marketing activities in order to meet the policy objectives and ensure a realistic return from these investments. The report has also pointed out that the comfort, services and management of tourism firms in Bangladesh are all below the level expected by the international tourists and the foreign community residing in Bangladesh. It has also identified the shortcomings as difficulty in obtaining the operating supplies of sufficiently high quality, poor communication system, lack of infrastructure, bad image and more importantly even, a lack of true professional management. It has further blamed the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) for not playing completely its role as a national tourism organization and facilitator of tourism development. The report finally emphasized on the balanced marketing activities along with the improvement of the infrastructure, quality of services, facilities, and efficient management in order to cater to the needs of the existing and potential tourists.

Ahmed (1986) has criticized in his study that despite all the efforts and measures of the government, the BPC and other private firms, the tourism industry in Bangladesh had not yet taken off, got a solid footing, and been able to give a true sense direction towards its development. He has pointed out the main reasons including the lack of co-ordination, imagination, effective policy planning and resources responsible for such backwardness and underdevelopment of this sector. He has also advocated the need for the expansion and development of infrastructure with a view to developing the tourism industry of the country.

In another study, Hasan (1992) has described the tourism industry of Bangladesh and analyzed its potential market and marketing strategies. He has blamed that Bangladesh, in comparison to other South Asian countries, has failed to develop its tourism as yet and attract a sizeable number of tourists to visit the country, though it is endowed with different tourism attractions. Hasan has suggested to create a separate organization for performing the marketing activities of the BPC owned tourist plants and installations. Hasan has further recommended for planning the necessary strategies aiming at the potential markets and avoiding aimless policies to develop mass tourism at the initial stage of this new industry in Bangladesh.

Hasan and Chowdhury (1995) have critically analyzed the state of hotel and restaurant services and their role in the development of tourism in Bangladesh. They have shown that the occupancy rates of the graded hotels at Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar are much lower due to high room-rates. The local non-graded hotels throughout the country are engaged in catering to the needs of the domestic night stoppers and most of these do lack in food and drinking facilities. The country also suffers from an acute shortage of standard restaurants to meet the needs of the tourists. They have suggested for erecting good quality

accommodations blending with good restaurants and commercially important cities to serve both the domestic and the intra-regional tourists. They have also suggested the deluxe and graded hotels to offer customized services blending with reception, living, foods, and recreation for the high spending tourist-segments.

Hossain (1999) has considered the tourism as a complete industry like other. The three aspects- 1) the implication of marketing in tourism industry, 2) the real scenario of tourism industry in Bangladesh and 3) the importance of tourism industry in the economy of Bangladesh have been mainly focused in his study. He has also identified the major problems of this sector that are the absence of enough and exclusive tourist products, the poor access to the destinations as well as the lack of enough and effective marketing promotion.

In another study, Hossain (2001) has emphasized on the adopting marketing strategies of the BPC in order to meet the needs of the tourists, fulfill objectives of the BPC, and contribute to the national economy of Bangladesh. He has recommended that in formulating and adopting marketing strategies, BPC should examine carefully those factors which affect prospective tourists' choices in connection with selecting destination and adopting tourism products (attractions, facilities and accessibility).

Therefore, the existing evidences and literatures reviewed above for the purpose of this study clearly indicate that the tourism sector in Bangladesh has not yet stood at a solid footing. Many reasons are there for the backwardness and underdevelopment of this sector. Though the government, the BPC and other private sector firms have already taken several steps for the overall development of this sector, a lot of efforts and measures are still required for this purpose.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to identify the opportunities of tourism industry of Bangladesh. In connection with this main purpose, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To analyze the major tourist attractions in Bangladesh.
- ii. To identify how much foreign tourists arrivals in Bangladesh.
- iii. To find out the annual profit earning from tourism sector in Bangladesh.
- iv. To forecast and highlight the opportunities and potentiality of tourism development in the country.
- v. To identify the major constraints to the development of tourism and to prescribe necessary recommendations for reformation and improvement of the tourism sector in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on secondary data. The data and information have been collected and analyzed mainly from different published articles and reports, research monograph, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, and different websites. Moreover, researchers' observations at different places over the years within and outside Bangladesh have also been pointed out as an input for this study.

MEANING OF TOURISM AND TOURIST

Tourism is a leisure activity which involves a discretionary use of time and money and recreation is often the main purpose for participation in tourism. In short, tourism means the business of providing information, transportation, accommodation and other services to travelers (Ghosh, 2001). Therefore, tourism is emerged from the movement of people to and their stay in various destinations. Mainly, there are two basic elements in tourism such as the journey to the destination and the stay. Tourism may be broadly divided into two types- domestic tourism and international tourism. In domestic tourism, people move within their own country where as in international tourism, the barriers exit (Zulfikar, 1998).

In tourism, tourist acts as the key player in this system. The term tourist is defined as who goes on holiday to visit places away from his home. There are two kinds of tourist i.e. foreign tourist and domestic tourist (Zulfikar, 1998). Foreign tourist is a person who visits a place and stays at least 24 hours on a foreign passport for the purpose of leisure, business and meeting etc. On the other hand, people who travel within the country to a place other than his place of residence and stays at hotel or rented place and uses the sightseeing facilities for a duration of not less than 24 hours or one night and not more than 6 months (Zulfikar, 1998).

SHORT GLIMPSE OF BANGLADESH AS TOURIST COUNTRY

Bangladesh is a large delta laden with bounties of nature. The borderland along the north-east, east and the south-east is evergreen forested hills with wondrous wildlife. All her six seasons vibrate with fairs and festivals, mirth and merriment. Though Bangladesh is one of the world's smallest countries, she has the world's longest sandy sea-beach along the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar and the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest, the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger, sentinel of the south. Bangladesh is heir to a rich cultural heritage. The archaeological treasures of Mahasthangarh, dating back to the 3rd century B.C., Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur of the 8th century, a World Heritage site and the Salbana Vihara at Mainamati of the same period and the sixty-domed grand mosque at Bagerhat of the 15th century, also a World Heritage site, the Hindu temples of Chandranath at Sitakund, the Adinath at Moheshkhali and the Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka bear testimony to its devotional past. (<http://travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/11725.html>).

MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BANGLADESH

Most of the tourist spots in Bangladesh are situated in Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet Division. In Dhaka Division, the major tourist spots are located at Dhaka City and Sonargoan. In Chittagong Division, the site seeing facilities are situated at Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban districts. In Sylhet Division, the major tourist locations are Jafong, Madhabkunda, tea gardens, and the Shirnes of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Hazrat Shah Poran. Beside these three divisions, some renowned places are Kantajee's Temple, Swapnapuri, Ramsagor and Rajbari at Dinajpur, Paharpur Buddhist Vihara at Noagaon, Mainamati at Comilla, Mahasthangarh at Bogra, sixty-dome (Shatgombuj) Mosque at Bagerhat districts and Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the World Heritage site (www.mocat.gov.bd). Most of the tourist attractions which are located in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet Divisions are in the Table-1.

TABLE-1: TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BANGLADESH AT A GLANCE

Attractions in Dhaka	Attractions in Chittagong	Attractions in Sylhet
Sonargaon (Cultural Capital of Bangladesh)	Port City of Chittagong	Shahi Edgah of Sylhet
Bangladesh Institute of Arts and Crafts	Patenga and Fouzdarhat Beaches	Gour Gobinda Fort
Ahsan Manzil Museum	Foy's Lake	Temple of Sree Chaitanya Dev
National Art Gallery of Bangladesh	The Shrine of Hazrat Shah Amanat	Tea Gardens of Srimongal
The Dhaka Zoo	Tomb of Hazrat Sultan Bayazid Bostami	The Border Post of Tamabil-Jaflong
Central Shahid Minar (The Symbol of Bengal)	Sitakunda (The Chandranath Temple and The Buddhist Temple has a footprint of Lord Buddha)	Jaintiapur Town (The Capital of an Ancient Kingdom)
Choto Katra	Chandraghona (The Biggest Paper Mills in Asia)	Madhabkunda
Boro Katra	Mercantile Marine Academy at Jaldia	Haripur Gas Field
Mausoleum of National Leaders	Court Building Museum	The Shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal
National Museum	The Longest Sea-Beach at Cox's Bazar	The Shrine of Hazrat Shah Poran
Science Museum	Himchari, Mohekahli, Inani Beach at Cox's Bazar	Lawachara, Madhabpur Lake, Bangladesh Tea Board at Srimongal
Mukti Juddha (Freedom Fight) Museum	Saint Martin Islands at Cox's Bazar	Tangor haor at Sunamgonj
Bangabandhu Memorial Museum	Kaptai Lake, Buddhist Temple at Rangamati	Hakaluki haor at Moulovibazar
The Suhrawardy Uddyan (Park)	Chimbuk at Bandarban	---
Bahadur Shah Park	Sailopropat, Meghla and Nilghiri at Bandarban	---
The Lalbagh Fort	Boga Lake, Ruma, Bijoy, Shorno Mondir, Kaokaradong at Bandarban	---
National Memorial of Dhaka	Khagrachari	---

SOURCE: TRAVELSPEDIA (<http://www.travelspedia.com>)**TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN DHAKA**

Dhaka is the capital Bangladesh. It is also known as the "city of mosques and muslin", has attracted travelers from far and near for centuries. The oldest section of the city runs along the north bank of the waterfront and was developed when Dhaka was a significant Moghul (Muslim rulers of Asia) trading centre. The Old City of Dhaka is the area between the two main water transport terminals, Sadarghat and Badam Toli where the panorama of river life on the Buriganga is particularly fascinating. The Ahsan Manzil, Dhaka is always crowded with people and watercraft of every type. Along the waterfront is the old baroque-style palace, Ahsan Manzil has been painted bright pink. The premier attraction of Dhaka is the Lalbagh Fort, an unfinished fort dating from 1678 situated in the Old City. The area also contains a couple of attractive mosques, including the Hussain Dalan. The National Museum is north of the Old City in the old European zone known as Modern City. It has fascinating displays of Bangladesh's Hindu, Buddhist and Moghul past and an extensive collection of fine folk art and handicrafts (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>). Other attractions in and around Dhaka include the Institute of Arts and Crafts with its representative collection of folk art and paintings, handicraft shops. Aparajeya Bangla monument at Dhaka University, picnic spots at Chandra and Salna, industrial estates of Tongi, Narayanganj, Demara, Tejgaon, cruising by country boat in the nearby river or a visit to a village to see jute cultivation, weaving and pottery making. Last but not the least, travel by a horse driven cart or rickshaw along busy Dhaka streets is a rewarding experience (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=1).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN CHITTAGONG

A picturesque region of large forested hills and lakes, Chittagong is a wonderful holidaying spot. The city itself is the second largest in Bangladesh and has a busy international seaport and airport. Its lush green hills and forests, broad sandy beaches and fine cool climate attract holiday seekers. Chittagong is a major hub of industries, trade and commerce. The country's only oil refinery is situated here. Chittagong is connected with Dhaka by rail, road, air and water. The world class Shah Amanat International Airport with all modern facilities is a recent addition to the city. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation offers tourist class accommodation at Motel Shaikat with restaurant service in Chittagong City (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=1). The Shahi Jama-e-Mosque and the Qadam Mubarak Mosque are two of the most impressive buildings in the city. It has also worth visiting the Ethnological Museum in the Modern City which has interesting displays on Bangladesh's tribal people. There are good views and cooling breezes from Fairy Hill in the British City in the north-western sector of the city (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN COX'S BAZAR

Cox's Bazar is a district in the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh and it is located 150 km south of Chittagong. It is called the "tourist capital" with its golden beaches lapped by the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal. It has the longest unbroken and natural sea beach (120 km) of the world and is the only beach resort of Bangladesh. The beach is shark free and wonderful for swimming. It has also a Buddhist flavor to it with colorful pagodas and temples (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

PICTURE-1: COX'S BAZAR SEA BEACH



Cox's Bazar Sea beach

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.
(http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-13_1179050528_cox_bazar_sea_beach.jpg)

Aggmeda Khyang is a large Buddhist monastery, and a place revered by around 400,000 Buddhist people of Cox's Bazar Hill Tracts. Cox's Bazar is also one of the fishing ports of Bangladesh. Other tourist spots of Cox's Bazar are Ramu, Ramkot, Shahpori Island, Saint Martin, Sonadia, Chera Dip, Himchari which is situated about 8 km south of Cox's Bazar and is a picnic spot famous for its waterfalls, Inani Beach which is famous for the rock and coral boulders Cox's Bazaar Circuit House which is located 2 km from the Laboni Point which is also famous for its location (<http://www.bdtraveling.com/tour/?cat=9>).

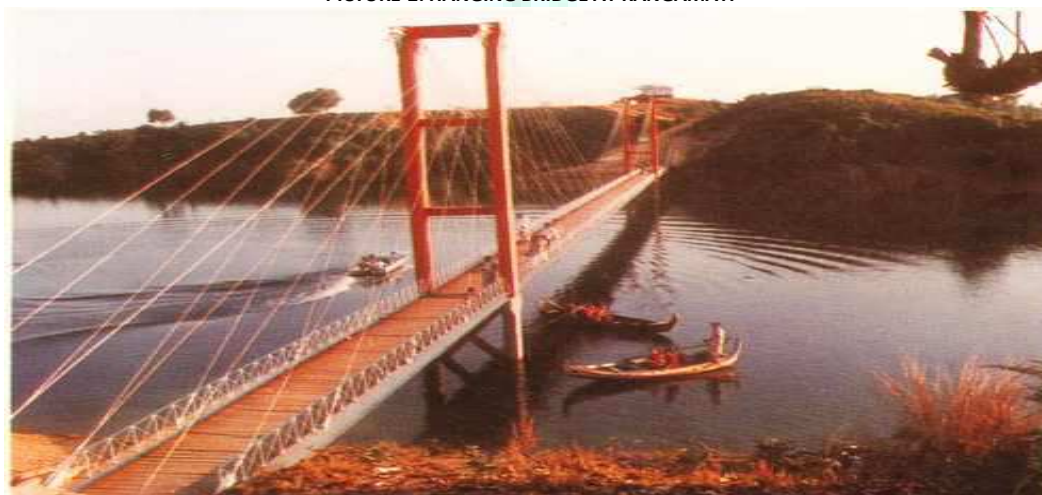
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN KAPTAI

Kaptai is a 64 km long pleasant and picturesque drive from Chittagong. The place is known for its beautiful man-made Kaptai Lake formed by damming the Karnaphuli River. Just 3 kms away is the Chit Morong Buddhist temple with beautiful Buddhist statues (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN RANGAMATI

Rangamati is located 77 kms from Chittagong. Because of its scenic landscapes and varied flora and fauna, it is a frequented tourist spot. Other tourist attractions include activities like speedboat cruising, water-skiing, hiking bathing and fishing.

PICTURE-2: HANGING BRIDGE AT RANGAMATI



Hanging Bridge at Rangamati

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-13_1179049564_hanging_bridge.jpg

Rangamati is a favored holiday resort for its breath-taking beauty, its colorful tribal life, its hanging bridge, home-spun textile products and ivory jewellerys. The tribal museum in Rangamati is well worth a visit. (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=1).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN SYLHET

Sylhet is nestled in the picturesque Surma valley amidst scenic tea plantations and tropical forests. It is a well-frequented tourist destination because of its terraced tea gardens, orange groves, pineapple plantations that form part of its beautiful landscape. The vast wetlands around here provide sanctuary for a large number of migratory birds from the Himalayas. Srimangal in Sylhet is the "tea capital of Bangladesh" and has the world's three largest tea gardens. A visit to these plantations is a memorable experience. Sylhet is also known as the land of the famous Muslim Saint Hazrat Shah Jalal. Sylhet is linked to Dhaka by air, road and rail (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BARISAL

Barisal is a district in southern Bangladesh. It is also the headquarters of Barisal Division. Formerly it was a district called Bakerganj. The town lies in the Ganges (Padma) River delta on an offshoot of the Arial Khan River (Kirtankhola). Barisal town was under the control of the Roy Choudhury family, which now has moved to Calcutta, India. It is incorporated as a municipality in 1876 and upgraded to City Corporation in 2002. It is linked by steamer with Dhaka (117 km north) and with Chittagong to the southeast. Road communication improved in last decade with building of few bridges. Barisal is served by the Barisal Airport which is located just outside of the city. It has frequent flight services to Dhaka via Biman Bangladesh Airlines and GMG Airlines. The luxurious launch journey connects between the south and Dhaka city. It is one of the most enjoyable night journeys ever anyone could get in one's life. The launches are really royal, majestic and with pomp and pleasure. It has a general public university named Barisal University which is situated at Karnokathi near Barisal City. Tourist spots of Barisal are mainly Durga Sagar which is a large pond, ancient ruins of the palace of a local Lord (called Jamidar in Bangla), the Bell's Park which is a place inside Barisal City and right on the banks of Kirtankhola River, Kirtankhola Bridge, Dapdapia Bridge, Chakhar which is also famous for the birth place and house of Sher-E-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Hoque, a famous leader of the then sub-continent and undivided Bengal during British and Pakistan period and the birth place and house of famous poet Jibanananda Das (<http://www.bdtraveling.com/tour/?p=233>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN PATUAKHALI

Patuakhali is a district in South-western Bangladesh. It is a part of the Barisal Division. This district is called "Sagor Konna", which means daughter of sea. It is watered by the Bay of Bengal. The three sides of Patuakhali city is surrounded by rivers. Among them two major rivers are Laukathi and Lohalia, which are directly connected with the Bay of Bengal. The city also has an inland airport used to transporting and traveling of the citizens across the country. Coach, bus and launch are available for transportation from Dhaka to Patuakhali.

PICTURE-3: KUAKATAKA SEA BEACH



SOURCE: BDTRAVELING.COM

<http://www.bdtraveling.com/tour/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/patuakhali.jpg>

Tourist spots of Patuakhali are mainly Kuakata, popular sea beach in this district offering decent views of the Bay of Bengal and from where sun-rise and sun-set can be seen, Patuakhali University of Science and Technology and Kalapara (<http://www.bdtraveling.com/tour/?p=221>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN MAINAMATI, COMILLA

Mainamati Ruins are a range of low hills, situated 70 kms south-east of Dhaka and famous as an extensive centre of Buddhist culture from the 7th to 12th centuries, the buildings excavated here were made wholly of baked bricks. There are more than 50 scattered Buddhist sites. Among these, the three most important sites are Salban Vihara, Charpatra Mura and Kotila Mura. Salban Vihara was a well-planned, 170sq m (182sq ft) monastery facing a temple in the centre of the courtyard. Nearby is a museum housing which includes terracotta plaques, bronze statues, a bronze casket, coins, jewellerys and stupas embossed with Buddhist inscriptions. The most important discoveries at Charpatra Mura were the four royal copper-plate decrees, three belonging to Chandra rulers, the other to Sri Viradhara Deva, a later Hindu king. It is noted that some of the major ruins are within a military cantonment authority and cannot be visited without permission from military officers. Kotila Mura comprises three large stupas representing Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the 'Three Jewels of Buddhism' (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN SUNDARBANS

Sundarbans is the biggest mangrove in the world. It is situated around 320 kms from Dhaka and spread over an area of 6000 sq km along the coastal belt of Khulna district. The Sundarbans is home to the "Royal Bengal Tiger", which is now a protected species.

PICTURE-4: THE ROYAL BENGAL TIGER, SUNDARBANS



Majestic Royal Bengal Tiger, Sundarbans

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-21_1179743518_royal_bengal_tiger.jpg

PICTURE-5: GRAZING DEER AT SUNDARBANS



Grazing Deer at Sundarbans

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVT. OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-21_1179743518_deer_sundarban.jpg

A network of rivers and creeks crisscrosses its dense rain forest. The forest is accessible by river from Khulna and Mongla. There are rest houses and organized tours for nature lovers. Anyone might suddenly come across tigers taking an occasional dip in the waters, or crocodiles basking in the sun along with other animals like cheetahs, spotted deer, monkeys, pythons, wild bears and hyenas (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BAGERHAT

Mosque City of Bagerhat is one of the three World Heritage Sites in Bangladesh. This historic city is situated within Bagerhat District in south-west Bangladesh. Originally this ancient city was known as Khalifatabad. The city is renowned for its large concentration of mosques and Islamic monuments. More than 50 monuments have been catalogued as part of the citation by UNESCO World Heritage. These include the Sixty-Dome Mosque, mausoleum of Khan Jahan, the mosques of Singar, Bibi Begni, Reza Khoda, Zindavir etc. Among these, the Sixty-Dome Mosque is one of the oldest mosques in Bangladesh. It attracts a large number of tourists and visitors every year. It has more than sixty pillars with its eighty one gambuj or domes. Seventy seven domes are over the roof and four smaller ones over the four corner towers. It was established by Khan Jahan Ali, a Muslim saint and the local ruler of Bagerhat, during the 15th century. The mosque is decorated mostly with terracotta and bricks. (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=2).

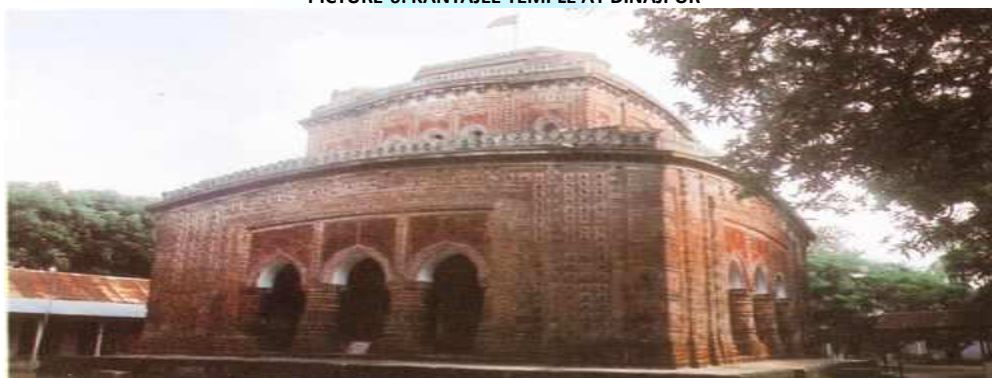
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN RAJSHAHI

Rajshahi has seen the most glorious days of Bengal's Pala dynasty. It is famous for its silk, mangrove and liches. The silk products are cheaper here. The Varendra Research museum houses rich archaeological finds (<http://www.travelspedia.com/South-Asia/Bangladesh/Major-Tourist-Attractions-In-Bangladesh.html>).

KANTAJEE TEMPLE IN DINAJPUR

Kanatajee Temple near Dinajpur town was built in 1752 by Maharaja Pran Nath of Dinajpur. The temple, a 50'square three-storied edifice, rests on a slightly curved raised plinth of sandstone blocks, believed to have been quarried from the ruins of the ancient city of Bangarh near Gangarampur in West Bengal from where the now stolen Radha-Krishna idols are said to have been brought. It was originally a Navaratna temple, crowned with four richly ornamental corner towers on two storeys and a central one over the third storey. Unfortunately these ornate towers collapsed during an earthquake at the end of the 19th century.

PICTURE-6: KANTAJEE TEMPLE AT DINAJPUR



Kantajee temple, Dinajpur

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

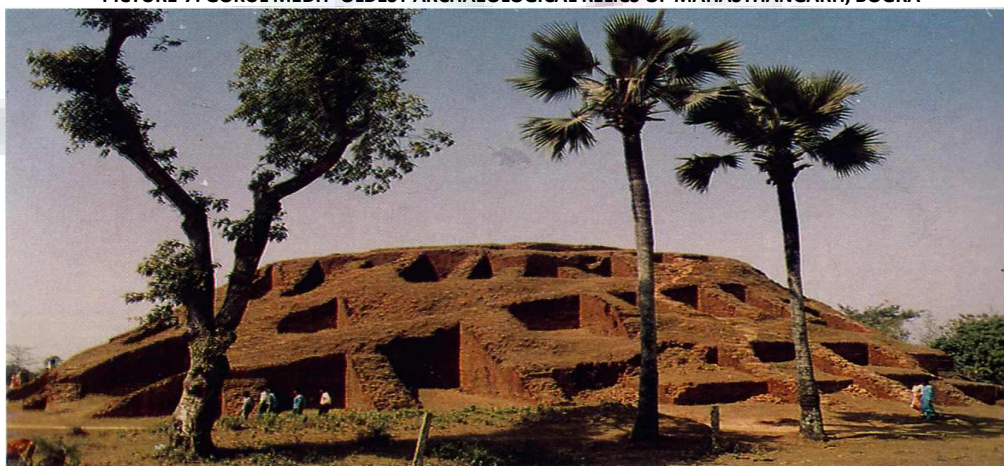
http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-17_1179376912_kantajee_temple.jpg

Every inch of the temple's surface is beautifully embellished with exquisite terracotta plaques, representing T10ra, fauna, geometric motifs, mythological scenes and an astonishing array of contemporary social scenes and favorite pastimes. The Maharaja's palace with relics of the past centuries and local museum are worth a visit. (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=1).

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN MAHASTHANGARH, BOGRA

'Mahasthan' means a great place. Mahasthangarh is the oldest archaeological site of Bangladesh built in the 3rd century B.C. and situated on the western bank of the river Karatoa, at a distance of 18 km. north of Bogra town. These ruins are of great importance to the Hindus because they ceremonially bathe on the riverbanks every year in mid April and once in 12 years. There is also a museum with a variety of antiques from this time period. It has also been declared as a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

PICTURE-7: GOKUL MEDH- OLDEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL RELICS OF MAHASTHANGARH, BOGRA



Gokul Medh- oldest archaeological relics of Mahasthangarh, Bogra

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

http://www.mocat.gov.bd/attractive_location/2007-05-17_1179380844_gokul-medh.jpg

A visit to the site museum at Mahasthangarh will open up a wide variety of antiquities, ranging from terracotta objects to gold ornaments and coins dug up from the site. Also noteworthy are the shrine of Hazrat Shah Sultan Bulki Mahisawar and Gokul Medh in the neighborhood of Mahasthangarh. While visiting Mahasthangarh, the visitors may enjoy the tourism hospitality at their Bogra Motel. (http://www.mocat.gov.bd/att_location.php?type_id=2).

TOURIST ARRIVALS IN BANGLADESH

Besides domestic tourist, all most every year, a large number of foreign tourist comes in Bangladesh. In 1997, the total number of foreign tourist was 1,82,420 which is increased in the upcoming year. The number of tourist in 2003 was 2,44,509 which is 2.92% higher than the previous year. In 2004 and 2005, about 12.75% tourist comes in Bangladesh for site seeing facilities. The number of tourist in 2006 was 2,00,311. But, the number of tourist arrivals in Bangladesh is decreased in 2006 which is 9.41% of the total number of tourist. The numbers of tourist arrivals in Bangladesh from 1997 to 2006 are shown in the Table-1. It is seen that the number of tourist coming in Bangladesh varies in different years. It is increased up to the year of 2004. But, after that time, the percentage of tourist arrivals in the country is decreased. Foreign visitors' arrival by months with the fluctuation among different years is shown in the Table-2.

TABLE-2: FOREIGN VISITORS ARRIVAL BY MONTHS

Month	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
January	17,600	14,485	17,663	23,160	25,548	23,711	22,193	23,670	20,213	16,382
February	16,490	19,800	14,022	18,730	20,724	16,152	19,041	25,012	15,848	13,473
March	17,485	17,394	15,323	15,982	20,062	17,898	16,506	24,262	19,853	13,659
April	14,453	18,143	13,730	14,976	19,216	15,372	15,299	23,173	16,234	12,261
May	14,788	13,169	13,432	15,647	15,926	15,771	17,996	14,959	18,535	20,971
June	13,311	12,076	12,484	14,212	16,606	15,754	21,867	23,020	17,496	17,002
July	12,830	12,475	13,688	14,809	15,517	14,345	22,957	26,991	19,773	25,604
August	13,484	11,348	13,016	13,399	16,739	14,315	19,041	21,938	15,292	14,244
September	12,468	9,986	11,529	12,874	11,015	13,022	17,968	19,860	13,166	16,823
October	15,688	15,127	17,126	15,855	13,053	18,601	23,498	21,785	15,568	17,237
November	16,971	13,909	15,388	19,489	15,265	17,136	21,028	27,208	18,399	14,734
December	16,852	14,049	15,380	20,078	17,528	25,169	27,115	19,392	17,285	17,921
Total	1,82,420	1,71,961	1,72,781	1,99,211	2,07,199	2,07,246	2,44,509	2,71,270	2,07,662	2,00,311
%Change	9.97	-5.73	0.48	15.30	4.01	0.02	17.98	10.94	-23.45	-3.54

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

http://www.mocat.gov.bd/tourism_statistics.php

ANNUAL PROFIT EARNING FROM TOURISM SECTOR

Tourism is one of the most profitable sectors in Bangladesh. In fiscal year 2000-2001, total income earning from tourism sector is BDT 338.83 million. In the same time, total expenditure for this sector is BDT 318.71 million. Total profit earning from this sector is BDT 20.12 million. The annual profit earning from this sector is given in the Table-3.

TABLE-3: ANNUAL PROFIT EARNING FROM TOURISM SECTOR (IN MILLION BDT)

Year	Total Income	Total Expenditure	Profit/Loss
1990-91	507.97	485.29	22.68
1991-92	425.43	397.05	28.38
1992-93	467.38	428.94	38.44
1993-94	438.52	400.50	38.02
1994-95	485.94	437.82	48.12
1995-96	245.55	221.88	23.67
1996-97	376.88	353.85	23.03
1997-98	454.19	430.43	23.76
1998-99	377.65	359.26	18.39
1999-2000	382.90	352.90	30.00
2000-2001	338.83	318.71	20.12
Total	4501.24	4196.63	314.61

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM, GOVT. OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH. http://www.mocat.gov.bd/tourism_statistics.php

CONSTRAINTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR IN BANGLADESH

Tourism sector of Bangladesh is facing many obstacles in its sustainable development. Infrastructure facilities are not adequate for this sector of the country. Accommodation facilities are not at satisfactory level at different tourist spots in Bangladesh. Some are highly expensive which are not affordable to both domestic and international tourist and some are in poor condition. Transportation linkage i.e. road, rail air and water is not good. The success of tourism sector mostly depends on marketing promotion tools like advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. But the government of Bangladesh has not enough skilled and knowledgeable human resources and technical expertise to formulate policy guidelines for such promotion tools and overall marketing. Some innovative ideas are necessary to highlight the tourist spots to people within and outside the country. Website of the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation is not well developed with adequate information such as photographs of renowned places, accommodation facilities, modes of transportation, distance from the capital city etc. Political will is the prerequisite for any kinds of development. For development of tourism sector, there is lack of political will and commitment. There is also lack of effective coordination among various organizations which are directly or indirectly involved in tourism sector. Government policy is not adequate for flourishing this sector successfully. Unplanned commercial development beside the tourist spots affects the physical environment of the spots. It destroys the natural scenic beauty of the sites. As for example, at Cox's Bazar sea beach and Saint Martin Islands, there are developed many unplanned commercial establishments such as hotel, motel and shopping center which disturb the tourist as well as the environment. Corruption is also another problem among officials of various organizations involved to operate tourism sector behind proper tourism development in Bangladesh.

OPPORTUNITIES OF TOURISM SECTOR IN BANGLADESH

Tourism sector can help to flourish the economy of Bangladesh. By ensuring proper development of this sector, it is possible to earn a lot of foreign currency which will contribute to the growth of the national economy of the country.

The sector also provides ample employment opportunity for the people who are directly or indirectly involved in this sector, since it is a service providing sector. The unemployment problem of the country can be reduced partly to develop necessary infrastructures of this sector. It will help to increase household income

and as well as the revenue collection of the government will increase proportionally. As a result, it will also help to reduce the economic gap between the rich and the poor people of the country.

Tourism can also be strengthened by the political unity of the country. Domestic tourists as well as foreign tourists like to visit historical places, archeological sites, national monuments and ancient battlefields that help to strengthen the political unity of the country in the long run. Moreover, extensive domestic tourism will help to build regional cooperation among the people by giving the opportunities to contact, share and exchange their views and sub-cultures with each other. It will also help to enhance more cohesiveness and empathy that will reduce regional disparity in terms of psychological and economic point of view within different divisions and districts and increase the unity among them and encourage them more to work for the national interest.

The people who come from developed countries, their life style, income level, background etc. are totally different from developing countries like Bangladesh. The people of the country can easily compare their life style with the people of developed countries. AS a result, they can exchange these idea and views with each other.

It is also possible to introduce Bangladesh to other parts of the world by tourism sector. It may also helpful to create better image to foreign country through proper management of tourism activities. If the sector can be managed properly and attracted tourists from different region within and outside the country, it will create goodwill for the country.

Tourism can also play a vital role to social and cultural development through cultural exchange and contact between people of different race and nationalities. This sector has also educational significance. The people of the country can learn many things by sharing knowledge with tourists who come from different regions within the country and foreign countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TOURISM SECTOR OF BANGLADESH

Some recommendations for sustainable development of tourism sector based on the analysis of its problems and opportunities are given below:

- The government should play a key role to prepare a policy guideline for planning and development, advertising, regulation and marketing of tourism sector because it provides ample employment opportunities to the citizen and earns foreign currency for the country. This sector will also help government to solve unemployment problem and act as source of revenue collection.
- The government should monitor the activities of travel agencies which are involved in operation. Every travel agency should be enlisted with the Tour Operators of Bangladesh (TOAB). Proper initiatives should be taken so that none of the travel agencies can operate their functions without affiliation of TOAB.
- BPC as the National Tourism Organization (NTO) should be strengthened with providing adequate fund, skilled human resources and technical expertise to function the organization smoothly. National Tourism Policy 2009 should also be implemented as quickly as possible and necessary supports such as tax holiday, loan in concession rates, rebates on taxes and duties and allotment of land in special case etc. should be given to attract private sector.
- Strategic Master Plan for tourism which was prepared by UNDP/WTO and later updated by WTO should be implemented for sustainable tourism development. Tourism development has many positive and negative impacts on society, economy, culture and environment. So, sustainable development should be achieved by balancing the needs of tourists at present and in future.
- Necessary initiatives should be taken to increase cooperation between public and private sectors to provide services for the tourists. In the long run, it will be beneficial not only for people who travel, but also for people in the communities they visit, and for their respective natural, social and cultural environments.
- Bangladeshi tourism faces many problems including areas of marketing, management, infrastructure, policy, safety, regulation and image etc. the problems are not unique and are the reality of worldwide tourism destinations. Necessary solutions should be taken to consider every aspect carefully and valuable suggestions should be taken based on experience, opinion of experts and relevant knowledge of others.

CONCLUSION

In spite of facing various constraints, tourism is a profitable sector in Bangladesh. So in the long run, it is possible to develop sustainable tourism in the country through knowledge sharing and cooperation. New historical and archeological sites should be identified and preserved properly for attracting tourist sites both for domestic and foreign tourists. The tourist places should be kept free from all sorts of chaos and pollution. Eco-friendly tourism is now a days, a demand for sustainable growth of this sector and for the betterment of overall economy of the country. Finally, the success of this sector mostly depends on cooperation of various players involved in this sector as well as on their unique vision.

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