

Chapter 7

Tourism in Bangladesh: A Future Outlook



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Introduction

Over the last few decades, tourism development has been steadily increasing over the world. This has encouraged a greater understanding of the necessity of ensuring that this expansion is ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable. In comparison to other economic sectors, tourism may be a powerful economic engine that, if well managed, can contribute to higher welfare at reduced environmental and social costs (Dinica, 2009). Tourism has the potential to accelerate development, particularly in emerging and impoverished countries (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011; Newsome & Hassell, 2014; UNWTO, 2008). Beyond the economic regeneration, it can aid reconciliation among the people of its destination (Causevic & Lynch, 2013).

Over the decades, tourism is diversifying to become one of the fastest-growing economic sectors on the planet. It is regarded as one of the world's most important industries. In 2019, the travel and tourism industry contributed 5.5% of total growth, trailing only information and communication (4.8%) and financial services (3.7%). It contributed USD8.9 trillion to global GDP, accounting for 10.4% of global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and one out of every ten employment (total 330 million jobs). Tourism ranks third in the global export sector, but it is the top export category for many developing countries: on average, tourism accounts for 40% of

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service exports in these emerging nations (the global average is 30%) (World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2020).

Tourism has been a crucial driver for International commerce and socio-economic development in many developing countries. Moreover, tourism has a noteworthy function to install peacebuilding and create better relations between the communities within a country and between its neighboring countries despite political instability (Causevic & Lynch, 2013). UNWTO takes various initiatives to make people more aware of tourism and its contributions. One of such initiatives is to celebrate World Tourism Day, which is September 27. The theme of 2019 was: 'Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all' and for 2020, it is 'Tourism: Building Peace! Fostering Knowledge!'. Tourism contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably Goals 8, 12, and 14, both directly and indirectly. When tourism is underdeveloped, however, it may lead to the depletion of the resource base it relies on, with severe repercussions for destinations, neighboring areas, and even entire countries (Dinica, 2009).

Bangladesh was born as an independent nation-state of South Asia in 1971. The Bay of Bengal situates the country, a rich alluvial plain on the confluence of three major rivers: the Ganges, Meghna, and Brahmaputra. The geographical location of the country is between 20°34' to 26°38' north latitude and 88°01' to 92°41' east longitude consisting of a total 14.75 m ha (6.4% water body) land area (Banglapedia, 2006). Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated nations (density: 1260/km² with a population of 170 million people) (Statista, 2019). Approximately one-third of Bangladeshis reside in cities, including Dhaka, the country's capital. This country belongs to the lower-middle-income group. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries (density position: 10th: 1260/km² having a total population of 170 million) in the world (Statista, 2019). Around one-third of Bangladeshis live in urban areas, including Dhaka, which is the capital of Bangladesh. This is a member of lower-middle-income countries (World Bank, 2019).

According to a report (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2018), poverty of Bangladesh is estimated as 21.8% (40% was in 2005 and 31.5% in 2010) based on the upper poverty line while the poverty rate as per lower poverty line is estimated as 11.3% (25.1% was in 2005 and 17.6% in 2010). By 2021, Bangladesh wants to be a middle-income country (BBS, 2018).

According to the Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) 15(c), the citizens have the right for having reasonable recreation, rest, and leisure as necessities. This right is directly related to the travel and tourism sector as it provides reasonable rest, recreation, and leisure. Tourism is becoming an important sector in Bangladesh. Despite many potentials of tourism development in Bangladesh this sector is still in the infant stage of development due to a lack of proper planning and implementation. According to Industrial Policy (2005), tourism is considered a thrust and potential Bangladesh sector. Currently, the Bangladesh Tourism Board is working on a 'Tourism Master Plan' for the next 20 years, with the goal of making travel and leisure the third major economic engine in Bangladesh after textiles and remittances. Moreover, there are many initiatives have been taken to develop this sector

to contribute more to the national GDP. Some of the initiatives have been discussed in the following parts of this chapter.

Bangladesh was named the best value destination for the year 2011 by Lonely Planet (2011). Many unique archaeological sites, cultural heritage, and nature-based tourist goods and services may be found throughout the nation. The world's largest single tract of mangrove forest with Bengal tiger and spotted deer in Cox's Bazar, the world's longest (120 km) unbroken sea beach in Cox's Bazar, the world's oldest archaeological site in the Southern Himalayas – Paharpur in Naogaon, and the world's largest terracotta temple – Kantaji Temple in Dinajpur are just a few of them. Mahasthangarh, in the Bogra district, is home to the country's largest and most ancient archaeological site. In addition, virtually every district has several beautiful monuments and mausoleums commemorating the language movement and Bangladesh's liberation war. On tiny hillocks in the north-eastern section of the Sylhet division, there is a green sanctuary of tea plants. During the winter season, a large number of migratory birds migrate, notably in Bangladesh's rural regions. During the summer, the North Bengal is renowned as a fruit zone, with litchi, mangoes, and jackfruits being particularly popular. As a result, tourism attractions may be found nearly everywhere in the country.

Bangladesh as a tourist destination; tourism education, research, and training in Bangladesh; tourism status in Bangladesh; tourism prospects in Bangladesh; challenges of tourism development in Bangladesh; way forward for tourism development in Bangladesh; and conclusion are the sections of this book's chapter.

Bangladesh as a Tourist Destination

With the global tourist industry expanding, several developing nations, such as Bangladesh, are attempting to open their tourism markets in order to enhance their socioeconomic and environmental advantages. However, the extent to which governments and the tourism sector balance the need for more visitors with the local demand for more socially and culturally acceptable tourism growth will determine its actual broad advantages (Mastny, 2001).

Tourism Attractions

Bangladesh is rich in art and cultural heritage, with many famous literature, music, and poetry playing crucial roles in Bangladesh's societies. Moreover, this is some green country rich in diversified resources that attract domestic and international tourists. These tourism attractions may be classified into the following three categories.

Natural Attractions

Bangladesh is full of natural attractions situated in both urban and rural areas. Natural attractions are basically nature-based resources, either geographical or biological features, that have some power levels to attract tourists. These features are becoming very popular for nature lovers and contribute significantly to the tourism market. Such attractions may vary like various water bodies, starting from ponds to Bay of Bengal, wetlands, colorful vast agricultural fields, diversified forests including protected areas, mountains, and natural beauty of expanded panoramic landscapes.

Some of the examples of natural attractions of Bangladesh are the Sundarbans mangrove forest, Tanguar haor (these two are UNESCO World Heritage Sites), Cox's Bazar sea beach and other beaches, Lawachara National Parks (total no. 19), Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (total no. 20), Swatch of no-ground marine protected area, National Botanical Garden (total no. 2), Eco-parks (total no. 10), Safari parks (total no. 2), Ratargul swamp forest, many rivers like the Padma, Jamuna, Brahmaputra, Meghna, Teesta, and so on.

Cultural Attractions

Bangladesh is very rich in its cultural heritage, which is basically focused on languages, religions, arts and architecture, literature, various forms of cultural performances, colonial reigns, foods and drinks, dresses, sports and recreation, natural resources, rural and urban dichotomy and ethnicity. Bangladeshi history and culture are intertwined with that of India, Pakistan, and other countries who reigned the country at several stages. Bangladesh has a history of around 190 years (1757–1947) of British colonizers' colonial period. Moreover, Portuguese, Dutch, Afghan, and French businessmen came to the country for the pursuit of trade and commerce until 1756. Moreover, the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist dynasties reigned the country for several hundreds of years. As a result, Bangladesh's culture has been influenced by these religions, foreign rulers, businessmen, and tourists.

Cultural resources of diversified mainstream and tribal populations of Bangladesh are treated as potential cultural resources for attracting international and domestic tourists. These attractions are man-made (i.e., built environment which is physical and intellectual creations attract tourists to experience). It also includes heritage attractions like the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, various historical infrastructures like religious buildings, monuments, residences of famous persons, bridges, modern buildings, amusement or theme parks, zoos, and so on. Tourists can come to know the place or country by visiting these historical sites as well as provides opportunities for the enjoyment of achievement history of the previous generations and ancestors.

Some of the examples of cultural attractions of Bangladesh are Khan Jahan Ali Sixty-domed Mosque (the only UNESCO Cultural World Heritage Site) and other contemporary structures in Bagerhat; Shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal in Sylhet; Paharpur

in Naogaon; Kantaji Temple in Dinajpur; Mahasthangarh in Bogra; Lalbagh Fort, Liberation War Museum, Pink Palace of Ahsan Manzil, Bangladesh National Museum in Dhaka; Sonargaon in Narayanganj; Rabindranath Kuthibari in Kushtia; Puthia Rajbari in Rajshahi; Golden temple in Bandarban; among many others.

Event Attractions

Event-based tourism is a well-known term that attracts tourists from both home and abroad towards various planned and organized events. This is one of the ways to make campaigns and marketing for certain destinations. These events may be focused on various cultural and religious celebrations or festivals, arts and entertainments, sports competitions, business and trade, scientific and educational, political, recreational, MICE (meeting, incentives, conferences, exhibitions), and any special event. These events may be organized by a state or several states, corporate sectors, private sectors, businessmen, corporations, or any other form.

Some of the examples of such event attractions of Bangladesh: the main festivals in Bangladesh are mainly religious. The Muslims celebrate their two most important festivals (i.e., Eid-ul-Fitr), which comes at the end of one-month fasting (Ramadan), and Eid-ul-Adha is also known as the festival of sacrifice during the Hajj celebration. On these occasions, families, and friends used to exchange their visits and spend time all together. Besides these, the Hindus celebrate various pujas all around the year.

Durga Puja from the 2nd to the 7th day of Kartik month of the Bengali calendar is known as the biggest festival. Moreover, Krishna Janmashtami, Dolyatra, Rathayatra, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja, Laxmi Puja are notable. There is yearly Rashmela at Dublar Char of the Sundarbans, which is also a religious festival of the Hindus. However, tourists of other religions also like to visit the Sundarbans at that time.

Moreover, there are some national celebration of various national days as independence day, victory day, intellectual day, martyr day, the birth anniversary of the founder of the nation, Pohela Baishakh or Bengali New Year, Gregorian New Year, and so on) and international (mother language day, Valentine's day, mother day, father day, environment day, women day, children day, forest day, wildlife day, tourism day, biodiversity day, and so on) events, religious, cultural (shows and competitions), academic (Olympiad and other competitions), sports (competitions/tournaments), and so on are considered as various types of tourism attractions of Bangladesh.

Different Types of Tourism

There are diverse types of tourism currently popular in Bangladesh. These types are given below:

Nature-Based Tourism/Ecotourism/Community-Based Tourism

As already mentioned above, Bangladesh is rich in biodiversity, natural environment, different types of ecosystems, wildlife, and natural scenic beauty. Therefore, nature-based tourism is a popular form of tourism practiced in Bangladesh. However, the majority of the domestic visitors or tourists usually do not follow the principles of nature-based tourism. They like to enjoy nature just for their recreation, putting aside the love and care for nature. These guests generally like to make picnics at destinations where they show their casual attitude towards nature and its components. Though many people also call such tourism 'ecotourism' particularly for the Sundarbans and other forest-based protected areas, an ideal destination is rarely found in Bangladesh where ecotourism is practiced in the true sense (i.e., following its principles).

Similarly, the term community-based tourism is also used for some of the destinations. However, like ecotourism, it is also rarely practiced in Bangladesh though some discrete initiatives from some private tour operators and NGOs to practice community-based tourism, particularly at some villages adjacent to the Sundarbans mangrove forest, are rare. Lawachara National Park, and some areas of Chattogram Hill Tracts. Green tourism, adventure tourism (mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, bushwalking, etc.), rural tourism, agriculture tourism, and so on are practiced more or less in the same fashion. International tourists also like to visit these nature-based sites, which are much more environmentally conscious than domestic tourists. It might be noted here. There are immense opportunities for practicing ecotourism, nature-based tourism, and community-based tourism/ecotourism in Bangladesh. It requires some practical planning to implement.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is also popular in Bangladesh. There are many cultural tourism destinations in Bangladesh that are popular for their architecture and arts, cultural and historical heritage, culinary heritage, religion, lifestyles literature, music, value systems, beliefs, norms, and traditions. People like to visit cultural destinations during the public holidays on the occasion of various religious festivals. International tourists also like to visit these cultural sites. Shrine-based tourism is popular in Bangladesh, where people of different religions, beliefs, and classes gather. Various types of activities take place at these sites.

Business Tourism

Business tourism is also another popular type of tourism practiced in Bangladesh. Many visitors and tourists like to visit the adjacent tourism destinations while they visit any place due to their various businesses related to attending meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions (MICE industry), training, education, health/treatment, administration, manufacturing, trade, and services, and so on. Moreover, people like to move away from their home and usual working place due to making their businesses bigger and purchasing their goods or services. After doing their main businesses, they like to visit the neighboring tourist destinations for their recreations. Urban/city tourism may be merged with this type of tourism.

Water Tourism

Bangladeshi people like water-based tourism activities particularly focusing on the sea beaches. These activities include walking, running, playing, swimming, sun-bathing, enjoying the beach environment, relaxing at sun loungers with beach umbrellas, shopping and eating, taking photos, horse riding, surfing, and riding on beach riders, and so on. Moreover, there are some river-based or inland water tourism activities (fishing, cruising, boating, and sports). Still, these have not yet been that much popular despite their great potentials. Besides these, there are some amusement parks in some big cities where there are some water-based amusement activities are provided.

Coastal and maritime tourism focusing blue economy are becoming more popular in Bangladesh. Bangladesh government and some private tour operators are trying to take the various initiative to develop this tourism sub-sector. Recently, such opportunities have been increased due to resolving the maritime dispute with Myanmar and India. As a result, Bangladesh has been assured her rights over 118,813 km² or territorial sea, 200 nautical miles of exclusive economic zone, and all ocean shelf resources up till 354 nautical miles from the Chattogram coast. The Sundarbans mangrove forest, Ratargul swamp forest, various lakes, waterfall-based water tourism is also popular in Bangladesh.

Education Tourism

A significant number of domestic tourists travel to various tourist destinations as part of their academic activities or for their recreational purposes from their academic institutions. Such study tours, excursions, picnics, outings, industrial tours, internships, data collection for research, experience sharing activities facilitate learning, skills development, self-development, intellectual growth (i.e., capacity

building of the students and their mentors). Such types of tourism activities range from primary school to university students. Some international students, academicians, and researchers also visit Bangladesh for the same purpose.

Sports Tourism

Bangladesh is popular for various sports, particularly famous for cricket, football, hockey, and kabaddi. There are different sports (local, regional, national, and international) competitions in different cities of Bangladesh that invite a good number of tourists from all over the country. Many international players, officials, tourists visit Bangladesh to take part and attend these sports events.

Potential Types of Tourism to Attract More Tourists

The above-mentioned tourism types have greater opportunities to flourish in Bangladesh, contributing to socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and institutional benefits. Moreover, ecotourism, community-based (eco)tourism, pro-poor tourism, cultural tourism, coastal and maritime tourism or blue tourism, rural tourism, well-being and medical tourism, culinary tourism, adventure tourism, fruits-based tourism, religious tourism, ethnic tourism have good potentialities to develop in Bangladesh if proper planning and its implementation can take place in a proper way.

Tourism Education, Research, and Training in Bangladesh

The tourism sector is gradually getting bigger in Bangladesh. Capacity building through education and training is believed to generate productive manpower, essential for Bangladesh's sustainable development. The management of tourism products and services largely depends upon professional manpower. Consequently, the opportunity for training, education, and research on tourism, hospitality, travel, and recreation are also gradually improving. Bangladesh became an independent state in 1971, and tourism education started its journey in 1974 by the establishment of the historic National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute (NHTTI) under the National Tourism Organization (i.e., Bangladesh Parjatan (Tourism) Corporation (BPC)) under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. NHTTI is the only government training institute of Bangladesh to provide various capacity building opportunities for both male and female candidates who are playing significant roles in developing the country's tourism sector.

Higher education and research facilities are also increasing in Bangladesh. Currently, there are 21 universities to offer several academic programs (both undergraduate as Bachelor of Business Administration or Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts and postgraduate as MBA/MSS/MA/MSc and PhD) in tourism, hospitality, and hotel management to generate competent and skilled manpower for tourism development in Bangladesh. In addition, though there are some of the universities where there is no distinguished undergraduate and postgraduate program on tourism and hospitality, however, various tourism and hospitality-related courses (like Tourism Management, Travel, Wildlife Management, Hospitality and Hotel Management as both compulsory and optional courses) are offered to the students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (like under the department of marketing, management, finance, forestry, environmental science, natural resource management, and so on). Interested students are also allowed to conduct their research projects at these levels. Well trained and educated faculty members and researchers are working in these institutions to forward these academic institutions and produce a competent workforce in the tourism sector.

In addition to the higher studies, currently 12 colleges are currently offering 4 years professional program (i.e., BBA (Honor's) in Tourism and Hospitality Management (THM) under National University, Bangladesh). Moreover, there are 32 training institutes, 1 polytechnic institute, and some institutes under the Technical and Vocational Education Board to generate confident and skilled (theoretical and practical skills) manpower in the field of tourism and hospitality so that they can effectively manage and adapt to a continuously changing business environment.

Besides these academic educational opportunities, various governmental, non-governmental and private organizations in Bangladesh organize various independent training sessions on various issues of tourism. Some of these associations are Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), Bangladesh Outbound Tour Operators Forum (BOTOFO), Bangladesh Inbound Tour Operator Association (BD Inbound), Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), National Hotel Association of Bangladesh (NHAB), Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh (TDAB), Tourism Resort Industries Association of Bangladesh (TRIAB), Hotels International Limited (HIL), Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd., Bangladesh Services Limited (BSL), Tourist Police, Bangladesh, Pacific Asia Tourism Association (PATA) (Bangladesh Chapter), PATA Dhaka University Student Chapter, various hotels, and so on.

Tourism Status (Contributions) in Bangladesh

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UNEP & WTO, 2005, p. 12) and “addressing the needs of stakeholders” (Waligo et al., 2013, p. 342). There are socio-cultural, economic,

environmental, and institutional benefits of tourism. However, tourism may have negative impacts from all these perspectives. Sustainable tourism can outweigh the negative impacts of tourism on the host community and the environment by its positive impacts. Therefore, sustainable management of tourism is an important factor to consider.

Tourism of Bangladesh is mainly focused on domestic tourism through various initiatives have been taken to attract more international tourists. The government, various associations, involved in travel and tourism, researchers, and academicians are trying to propagate Bangladesh's tourism sector. There is insufficient reliable and systematic data on the contributions of the national economy's tourism sector and the updated records on the number of foreign and domestic visitors and tourists, and the direct and indirect receipts from these visitors and tourists. Moreover, there is insufficient reliable and systematic data on destination-wise tourist and visitor numbers and their receipts. This implies that there is no formal system in place in Bangladesh to record visitor statistics and track revenue from the tourism industry. The Bangladesh Police Special Branch keeps track of the partial details of international visitors to the country. These, however, are not for tourists. The Bangladesh Bank also maintains track of revenue from international tourists.

The contribution of the tourism sector to the GDP of Bangladesh is not as expected. The direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP of Bangladesh was US\$ 6 billion (2.2% of total GDP with the growth of 13.5% while 4.42% average growth since 1999), which created 1180.5 thousand persons employment (growth 7.7% and 1.9% of total GDP) in 2018 (Knoema, 2020). According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2020), the total contribution of travel and tourism sector to GDP of Bangladesh was US\$ 9113.2 million in 2019 which was 3% the total economy (6.8% T&T GDP growth against 8.1% real economy GDP growth). Considering these contributions, domestic tourists' expenditure was 96% and international tourists' expenditure was only 4%.

According to a study, the travel and tourism sector generates the highest number of employment (944 jobs per 100 tourists) in Bangladesh than in any other country in the world (Knoema, 2020). According to some other studies, almost 1.2 million people (1.8% of the total employment) directly depend on this sector for their livelihoods in 2017 while, another 1.2 million people are indirectly associated with the sector (Hasan, 2018; Sajid & Islam, 27 September 2019). As stated by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2020), the travel and tourism sector generated jobs of 2.9% of total employment in 2019.

Tourism may be divided into three categories: Domestic tourism, Inbound tourism, and Outbound tourism. The present status, as well as the contributions of tourism, have been discussed below.

Domestic Tourism

The tourism sector of Bangladesh is mainly driven by domestic tourists (tourists traveling within Bangladesh), which accounts for 98% of total tourists in Bangladesh. Domestic tourism is a strong and powerful tool that can educate our people irrespective of their status, education, profession, and age regarding these health and essential environmental issues. Due to international travel restrictions, both inbound and outbound tourism will be very confined after the COVID-19 pandemic has over resulted in more emphasis on domestic tourism. People will be very selective and judicious to travel worldwide even after the withdrawal of international travel restrictions.

Domestic tourism is growing rapidly in Bangladesh due to having more dispensable income and time. The socio-economic status of the people is gradually improving. Hence they like to spend more money on their recreational and travel activities. The per capita income of Bangladeshi people has been estimated as US\$ 2079 in the outgoing fiscal year of 2019–2020. It is estimated that around 9 million local tours are organized annually all over the country. Annually 13.7 million domestic tourists visit various spots of Bangladesh (Hasan, 2018). These tourists like to visit various tourist destinations during their holidays, leave, and festivals. Such visits help them to know their own country.

Domestic travel and tourism expenditure for Bangladesh was 787.8 billion LCU (taka) (with a growth of 18.23%) in 2018 (Knoema, 2020). According to different tour operators, about 70% of tourists visit Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Hill Tracts, followed by the Sundarbans mangrove forest and the Sylhet region. Around 500 tour operators provide various services to these local tourists, including accommodation and transportation booking, guiding, and so on. Approximately 25,000 employment were directly created by these tour operators across the country (Rahman & Chakma, 2018).

Nature-based tourism generates a considerable amount of financial support for conserving and managing ecosystems and natural resources, building the destination more authentic and attractive to the tourists. Moreover, such tourism improves solid waste management, reduces pollution (sound, water, air), and improves environmental awareness among local people and tourists. Conversely, tourism has negative impacts by promoting mass tourism, particularly to fragile ecosystems, by polluting the ecosystem (Elands et al., 2015).

In addition to the economic contributions, tourism (of all three types) has many socio-cultural contributions to our society. Tourism can bring about a real sense of pride and identity to the local communities. At the same time, it allows them to look at their history and community identity. This helps the residents to preserve and maintain their norms, tradition, and culture. The research found that tourism contributed positively to create more educational opportunities for the locals; increase the quality of life by better food, cloth, etc.; reduce criminal activities, and facilitate the tourists to learn about local cultures (i.e., exchange culture). Moreover, tourism may contaminate the local heritage and culture that may also tempt the local

community people's crime situation and behavior (Elands et al., 2015; Parveen, 2013; Raihan, 2014).

Tourism also has many institutional contributions. Studies find that tourism can enhance the access of local people to decision-making processes, facilitate the implementation of the various development activities, facilitate cooperation to local businesses, help to get better support (training, finances, technical issues, etc.), facilitate good communication with the project development officials, and increase tourism facilities (Elands et al., 2015; Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008). These benefits also promote a good governance system at the tourism destination, which ultimately improves the overall management and conservation system of the tourism destination (Baggio et al., 2010; Islam et al., 2018a, b).

Forest Focused Nature-Based Tourism in Bangladesh

Forests of Bangladesh play a pivotal role in socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and political domain. Recently forest-based nature tourism (particularly regulated ecotourism and community-based ecotourism) has been recognized as an important tool to protect and control these forest areas and the resources. Nowadays, nature tourism is getting popularity also in Bangladesh among the hosts and guests; as a result, the forest dependent local community people are being involved with nature tourism particularly to find out their alternative source of income which directly and indirectly facilitates to conserve the forest resources. These people are now being motivated and aware of nature and forest conservation through such alternative type of tourism. The co-management approach has opened the door for these local people in such tourism related enterprises.

Many of the nature-based tourism attractions are situated within high conservation value areas and/or protected areas (Newsome & Hassell, 2014). Protected areas have significant importance by providing various direct and indirect ecological, socio-economic, and cultural benefits. Importantly, these areas also support the livelihoods of those communities that live in and around these areas (Islam, 2012; Kuenzi & McNeely, 2008).

Inbound tourism

Bangladesh has not yet been a popular inbound tourist destination despite its immense opportunities. There are some challenges to develop and flourish inbound tourism in Bangladesh. Some of these challenges have been discussed in the latter part of this chapter. According to the World Economic Forum's 'Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019', Bangladesh had the world's greatest percentage improvement in its overall Travel and Tourism (T&T) competitiveness over the last

two years, helping it move up five spots to rank globally 120th out of 140 countries, indicating the country's high potential for upward mobility. The country increased its safety and security ranking (from 123rd to 105th), ICT readiness (from 116th to 111th), T&T priority (from 127th to 121st), pricing competitiveness (from 89th to 85th), and ground and port infrastructure (from 74th to 60th) ratings by double digits. Environmental sustainability increased as well (128th to 116th), although much of the improvement was in metrics assessing marine sustainability. However, owing to increasing visa restrictions (46th to 53rd), international openness has decreased (104th to 114th), while tourism services infrastructure (133rd) remains the country's largest disadvantage relative to the worldwide average. Bangladesh may further reduce red tape in order to improve its T&T competitiveness. Extending total protected areas (102nd) might aid in the preservation of vulnerable wildlife (112th), prevent growing deforestation (43rd to 60th), and improve Bangladesh's exploitation of natural resources for tourism. Nature tourism in the nation is also endangered by lax environmental rules and enforcement (105th), and the country's overall attractiveness is hampered by significant air pollution (140th) and a lack of wastewater treatment (Calderwood & Soshkin, 2019).

Tourism is known as one of the important drivers of the economic growth of a country. It can earn foreign currency by selling hospitality, tourism products, and services and support the Balance of Payment (BOP) of a country. Though approximately 0.84 million foreigners are visiting Bangladesh annually, this number may be annually 0.5–0.6 million (Hasan, 2018; Sajid & Islam, 27 September, 2019). However, according to Knoema (2020), the number of foreign tourists arrival was 1.03 million while inbound tourism receipts for 2018 was US\$ 357 million (0.81% of the county's total export), which was 2.59% more from 2017.

According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2020), international tourist receipts were US\$ 333.5 million (0.7% of county's total export) in 2019. Among these receipts' leisure spending was 88% and business spending was 12%. Here, international tourism receipts are the expenditures made by international tourists, including expenditure to national airlines/carriers for international transports. Inbound arrival countries are India (47%), China (16%), Pakistan (6%), USA (5%), South Korea (4%), and the rest of the world (22%).

Tourism can create many employment opportunities through backward and forward linkages. It can offer direct jobs to the local community people such as tour guides, accommodation housekeeping, handicraft manufacturing, selling foods and drinks, and so on. Other industries, such as agriculture, food production, and retail, create indirect employment.

Outbound Tourism

Like domestic tourism, outbound tourism is growing rapidly in Bangladesh due to having more dispensable income and time. Moreover, due to cheap airfare and promotion of outbound tourism packages, Bangladeshi tourists like to visit various

neighboring and other countries, including Middle East, Europe, North and South America, and Australia. The records indicate that Bangladeshi tourists visit India's different parts, following Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. Most of the tourists visit India via several land ports. A considerable number of Bangladeshis visit India for treatment and other purposes like tourism, religion, education, meeting with family and friends, and attending various MICE events. According to Knoema (2020), tourism expenditure in other countries for Bangladesh was US\$ 1208 million in 2018. The number of departures for outbound tourists was 1.46 million in 2013 (recent data is not available). Outbound departure countries are India (59%), Saudi Arabia (10%), Malaysia (4%), Thailand (4%), Singapore (3%), the rest of the world (20%) (World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2020).

Prospects of Tourism in Bangladesh

Prospects of Inbound Tourism, Outbound Tourism, and Domestic Tourism

Despite massive potentials, Bangladesh is yet to ensure the aspects required to attract international tourists. There is the world's largest sea beach Cox's Bazar. The Sundarbans, the world's largest single tract of mangrove forests, as well as numerous other natural, religious, cultural, and historical monuments and attractions with significant potential, are distinct selling factors for Bangladesh's tourist industry. To reach the tourism standards, it needs proper planning with effective and efficient implementation of those plans.

There are ample scopes to improve tourism growth and tourists' tourism experiences at popular tourist destinations like Cox's Bazar, the Sundarbans, some destinations in Sylhet, and Chattogram Hill Tracts. Many unexplored destinations are not considered as popular in comparison to the above two sites. These destinations are the potential to develop further by improving tourism facilities. Considering the Sundarbans and other unspoiled natural attractions, Bangladesh has gold mines, but these are to be adequately exploited to get the benefits.

Previously (even one decade ago), there was a dearth of tourism-related workforce and research in Bangladesh. Currently, the situation is gradually changing (as discussed earlier) as the tourism department has been founded in many universities (total 21) of Bangladesh where students and faculties are engaged in tourism research. Besides these, tourism-related various courses are also taught in many other universities of Bangladesh, where some of the students and faculties are engaged in tourism research. Moreover, various research projects are funded by different home and abroad funding agencies. These research projects generate new knowledge and information to take various policy and other decisions to facilitate the richer's tourism sector. In addition to the universities, 12 colleges are offering undergraduate degrees in tourism and hospitality management to produce

competent manpower for the tourism sector. Moreover, 32 training institutes, 1 polytechnic institute, and some vocational institutes are preparing the skilled workforce for Bangladesh's tourism sector who can be easily employed to enrich the tourism sector.

Due to the advancement of the ICT sector, more dispensable money and time, digitization, women empowerment, equity in gender, better transportation system, flourishing more tour operators and other concerned travel and tour agencies, privatization, marketing, and so on which are making tourism sector of Bangladesh prosperous. The number of tour operators, tourism-focused other organizations like travel agencies, event management, accommodation providers, and tour guides, is increasing in Bangladesh (though their activities have been affected significantly due to COVID-19 pandemic). There are many associations of these organizations (as mentioned earlier) who are found active now. All of these factors adding value the prospects of the tourism sector in Bangladesh.

Referring to the various types of tourism attraction, there are immense opportunities of tourism development in many potential destinations of Bangladesh. As mentioned, Bangladesh has enormous cultural attractions that might be attractive to potential visitors. Some of these are Tribal lifestyles of Chattogram Hill Tracts and other areas of the country; many historical, archaeological sites and ancient mosques, temples, churches, pagodas; historical and religious sites; different Rajbari; ethnological museums; different monuments; other different historical places and ancient buildings; shrimp ponds, crop fields; orchards particularly of Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Naogaon; canoeing; different religious traditions and festivals; producer groups of crafts; coastal and marine zones; music and cultural evenings and shows; etc. Furthermore, the peoples of Bangladesh are simple and very friendly that attract both international and domestic tourists.

Nowadays, numerous Bangladeshi people like to travel and visit different tourist spots within Bangladesh and abroad. This trend has been increased drastically if we assess the visitors' status at some popular tourist spots such as Cox's Bazar, Sundarbans, different spots in Chittagong Hill Tracts, etc. and some popular spots in India, Nepal, Thailand, etc. These domestic and outbound and inbound tourism are not just to enjoy and recreation but also have immense contributions to Bangladesh's local and national development. However, systematic and scientific management of tourism destinations and visitors are found lax. The practice of sustainable tourism is also erratic in Bangladesh. However, considering the destinations' perspectives, there are many scopes to practice such systematic, scientific, and sustainable management of tourism destinations and visitors. In this regard, it requires integrated planning and implementation.

Participatory management of natural resources like co-management of forest-based and water-based protected areas aiming at biodiversity conservation has created opportunities of alternative income generation activities. Nature-based tourism is one such alternative income generation activity that creates new jobs for the local community people. Therefore, such paradigm shifts in protected area management are considered favorable to develop nature-based tourism or ecotourism. Ecotourism and community-based (eco)tourism have good prospects in many forests, water, and

water-based tourism destinations. Moreover, various legal bindings, non-legal bindings, voluntary agreements, MoU, and so on (as discussed in the following sub-section) are supporting tourism development in Bangladesh. Additionally, 'Tourism Master Plan' is preparing now for the next 20 years aiming to turn the travel and leisure sector into the third-largest economic sector of Bangladesh after the garments and remittance sector (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BBS), 19 Jan 2020). These facts and circumstances stated above have the potential to make Bangladesh a prominent tourism destination throughout the world.

Legal and Institutional Support for Tourism Development

The issues of tourism have been addressed in the highest legal document of Bangladesh (i.e., Bangladesh's constitution). In this regard, several policies, acts/orders/rules, vision/plans, guidelines have been prepared for developing and promoting the tourism sector in Bangladesh. Several governments, autonomous, private, and non-governmental organizations have been formed to look after the sector. Moreover, the tourism sector of Bangladesh is also linked with various regional and international organizations to develop the tourism sector. This sub-section deals with these legal institutions, affiliated national and international tourism organizations. Besides these, there are some voluntary agreements, bilateral agreements, MoU between the Bangladesh government and other countries and organizations to develop and promote tourism in Bangladesh (Table 7.1).

Besides these above-mentioned legal bindings formulated and approved by Bangladesh's highest authority, there are many other documents like guidelines, instructions, and notices that have been formulated to develop, promote, plan, and manage the tourism sector of Bangladesh. Moreover, the Bangladesh government is committed to some international organizations (like UNWTO, PATA, SAARC, BIMSTEC, etc.) to develop and promote the tourism sector. Additionally, there are several bilateral and regional agreements (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation or SAARC) among the concerned ministries of governments to strengthen Bangladesh's tourism sector. There are also some formal and informal agreements/Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between private tour operators of Bangladesh and various institutions (e.g., academic, research, cultural, volunteering groups) for developing the inbound tourism sector in Bangladesh.

Tourism has played an important part in SAARC since its inception. During the Second Summit in Bangalore in 1986, the Leaders emphasized the importance of taking tangible efforts to enhance tourism in the SAARC area. SAARC Summits have often emphasized the importance of tourism (SAARC, 2018). A SAARC Action Plan on Tourism Promotion was agreed by the second conference of Tourism Ministers in Bangladesh in 2006 and has been implemented since then. The Action Plan involves a combined proactive marketing or promotional effort in international markets for the SAARC landmass as a composite destination. The Action Plan also highlights the importance of the SAARC region's business sector in promoting and

Table 7.1 Tourism-related various supporting institutions of Bangladesh (source: synthesized by the authors)

Sl. #	Title	Brief description
Constitution		
1.	Bangladesh's Constitution, 1972	The overarching goal related to natural resource conservation and environmental improvement. According to 15(c), the right to have reasonable rest, recreation, and leisure has been established as the provision of basic necessities of the citizens. According to 18A, the state must work to conserve and develop the environment, as well as to preserve and safeguard wetlands, natural resources, forests, biodiversity, and wildlife for current and future inhabitants.
Policies		
2.	National Tourism Policy, 2010	30 objectives and goals with brief action plans. Recognized tourism as an industry. Addresses various types of recommended tourism for Bangladesh. Defined objectives of tourism development in Bangladesh.
3.	National Forest Policy, 1994	Ecotourism related to forests and wildlife has been recognized as forest-related activities considering the nature's carrying capacity. The concept of sustainability was addressed for the first time. Recognizes and protects the customary rights of people living in and around specified forest regions, as well as their forest-related cultural values and religious beliefs. Forest settlement process for the tribal people living in and around the forest lands have been established. Socio-economic development of the people living in and around the forests is addressed.
4.	National Forest Policy (draft), 2016	Promoting low-impact, forest-friendly, regulated, and sustainable ecotourism as a primary conservation activity in all forest regions. Creating a conducive environment for ecotourism. Provision of incentives to private entrepreneurs involved in ecotourism. Provision of benefit sharing with local communities.
5.	National Environment Policy, 1992	Environmental development and conservation for balancing the overall natural environment. The contribution of forest resources for balancing the natural environment and socio-economic development of the people has been recognized. Promotion of environmental education and awareness.
6.	National Land Use Policy, 2001	National Forest Policy, 1994 and National Environment Policy, 1992 have been addressed to improve the forest and environmental condition.
7.	National Industrial Policy, 1999 and 2005	Tourism has been recognized as an industry. Tourism has gained widespread recognition as a 'thrust sector'.

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Sl. #	Title	Brief description
8.	National Water Policy, 1999	Tourism development has been recognized and allowed in various water bodies for recreational purposes as well as developing various tourism facilities without damaging the environment.
9.	National Coastal Zone Policy, 2005	The use of the coastal zone has been recognized for the development of the tourism industry and its link to poverty alleviation. Some coastal zones/islands/forests have been defined as 'special zone for tourism' where private investment has been encouraged.
<i>Acts/orders/rules</i>		
10.	The Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation Order, 1972	National tourism organization. It is the pioneer in developing and promoting tourism as an industry and market in Bangladesh. Responsible for the creation and operation of various tourism facilities. Developing trained tourism workforce through capacity building programs.
11.	Bangladesh Parjatan Board Act, 2010	Bangladesh tourism board will be responsible for the overall development, creation, and promotion of the tourism industry and services in Bangladesh. Responsible for facilitating responsible tourism. Coordination among different national and international stakeholders in order to achieve the previous point.
12.	Bangladesh Tourist Reservation Area and Special Tourism Zone Act, 2010	Declaration to reserve special zones for overall development, improvement and management of tourism industry and services in Bangladesh. In this regard, control and restrict unplanned activities and infrastructural constructions at the potential tourism destinations.
13.	Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012	'Ecotourism or nature tourism' at the natural areas (including forest-based protected areas) have been recognized. Conservation of these natural areas (including biodiversity), preservation of cultural heritage, and enhancement of the socio-economic Well-being of local people have been stated.
14.	The Forest Act, 1927	Oldest act of Bangladesh to manage forest areas. Defined does and don'ts in the forest areas, overall management, and control of the forest areas. Duties of the forest officials have been defined.
15.	The Forest Act, 2019 (Draft)	Revised and updated version of 'The Forest Act, 1927'. Declaration of protected areas has been described. Duties of forest officials have been defined. Defined regulated activities inside the forest areas.

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Sl. #	Title	Brief description
16.	Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act, 1995	Established environmental criteria for water, air, soil, sound, and other components. Environmental regulations have been imposed on the creation of factories and other development activities. Defined the procedures for protection of the environment and ecosystem. Measures against environmental degradation or pollution. Declaration of ecologically critical area.
17.	Protected Area Management Rules, 2017	Addressed 'sustainable nature tourism' in the protected areas and their adjacent areas with the help of co-management organizations. Recognized revenue generation from ecotourism through the application of co-management approach to promote biodiversity conservation, improve the health of protected areas as well as socio-economic Well-being of local people living in and around the destination.
<i>Vision/plans</i>		
18.	Tourism Vision 2020	Spelled out the overall target and expectations for tourism development (in terms of inbound and domestic tourism) in Bangladesh by 2020. Towards achieving the vision 2020 for different tourism products and services various steps, plans and programs have been identified.
19.	Tourism Master Plan (1990–2005)	First master plan of tourism in Bangladesh. Overall development plan for tourism development in Bangladesh.
20.	Tourism Master Plan (2021–2041)	The government is planning for tourism development for the next 20 years. After textiles and remittances, the travel and leisure industry is expected to become Bangladesh's third major economic engine. Targeted as a distinct brand image for Bangladesh as a prominent tourism destination in the globe in order to accomplish Bangladesh's "Vision 2041" and become a developed nation. The plan would frame short-term (three-year), mid-term (five-year) and long-term (15-year) initiatives.
21.	Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100	Exploring blue economy through different forms of coastal tourism. Recommends forest-based, wetland-based, charland-based, riverine ecotourism. Tourism as a tool for alternative income generation (livelihoods), biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services. Multi-purpose land and water bodies use through tourism.

developing tourism both intra-regionally and globally. The Fifth Working Group on Tourism, which met in New Delhi on November 25–26, 2015, underlined the need of executing the SAARC Action Plan on Tourism Promotion in the Region.

Bangladesh is a member state of BIMSTEC, which is a platform for intra-regional cooperation. It covers 3.7% of the total global area and a market of around 1.7 billion people (i.e., 22.2% of global population). Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are the other six members. To promote regional tourism, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) hosted a seminar on “Tourism Connectivity in BIMSTEC Region” on September 28, 2019, in cooperation with the 8th Asian Tourism Fair (ATF) 2019. As the seminar's chair, Ambassador M Shahidul Islam, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, highlighted BIMSTEC's efforts to promote tourism in the Bay of Bengal region and emphasized the importance of closer collaboration between government agencies and private sector tour operators and hospitality industry entrepreneurs. Since BIMSTEC's establishment in 1997, tourism has been one of 14 sectors of collaboration (BIMSTEC, 2019). The BIMSTEC Region's Plan of Action for Tourism Development and Promotion included the establishment of a BIMSTEC Tourism Information Centre, a BIMSTEC Tourism Fund, the operation of tour packages, and other activities. Recognizing the region's historical, civilizational, and cultural ties, the participants reaffirmed their great desire in taking tangible efforts to boost intra-BIMSTEC tourism, including specialized tourist circuits and eco-tourism to strengthen public-private partnerships for tourism marketing in BIMSTEC and to conduct the BIMSTEC Annual Tourism Convention (BIMSTEC, 2018).

Tourism and Sustainable Development

The idea of sustainable development differs depending on a variety of circumstances. It is described in numerous ways depending on the people, organization, and goal. However, one widely recognized definition of sustainable development from *Our Common Future* (Brundtland's report) is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987, p. 54). Sustainable tourism development satisfies the needs of current visitors and host communities while safeguarding and enhancing future opportunities. It is regarded as a leading concept for managing all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs are met while cultural integrity, biological diversity, essential ecological processes, and life support systems are preserved (WTO, 1998). Tourism must be environmentally, culturally, socially, and economically sustainable, as well as locally participatory, educational, and conservation-oriented (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). It considers the long-term use of resources, including biological resources, as well as the reduction of environmental, cultural, ecological, and social impacts while maximizing benefits. Sustainable tourism aspires to

market sustainability in order to ensure the long-term survival of tourism businesses and to determine the best way to maintain firm profitability (Stabler, 1997).

Sustainable tourism, also known as “ecotourism”, “responsible tourism”, or “environment-friendly tourism”, has grown in popularity (Gündling, 2000). Indicators of sustainable tourism are similar to indicators of sustainability, which are concerned with integrating tourism into its environmental and socio-cultural context (Farsari & Prastacos, 2000). The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria has created sustainable tourism criteria, which are divided into four major categories, namely (i) Efficient sustainability planning; (ii) Maximizing social and economic advantages for the local community; (iii) Enhancing cultural heritage; and (iv) Reducing negative environmental consequences (Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), 2011).

The German Wuppertal Institute is developing a methodology for the Sustainable Europe project based on a model that defines sustainability in four dimensions: social, environmental, economic, and institutional. According to the authors, there are inter-linkages among those four dimensions of sustainability, which is also called ‘Prism of Sustainability’ (Valentine & Spangenberg, 1999). A similar model of tourism sustainability was proposed by Mowforth and Munt (2003). Sustainable tourism facilitates sustainable development through improving the status of socio-cultural, environmental, economic, and institutional dimensions of a tourism destination.

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria has developed sustainable tourism criteria that are divided into four categories. (i) Effective sustainability planning, (ii) Maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community, (iii) Enhancing cultural heritage, and (iv) Reducing negative impacts to the environment.

Considering the contributions of the tourism sector in world economy, sustainable tourism is capable to achieve directly and indirectly almost all (17 Goals) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the targeted timeframe (i.e., 2030). However, many of these SDGs (Goal 8, 12 and 14) are directly connected with tourism (i.e., tourism has the power to influence the achievement of these goals set for the whole world that will guide to a better future for all). The details of how tourism can influence achieving all these SDGs can be found in the Tourism for SDGs (T4SDG) platform formed by the UNWTO (see <http://tourism4sdgs.org/the-platform>).

Challenges of Tourism Development in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a lovely small country in South Asia bordering India, and tourism in Myanmar is still developing. Bangladesh’s geographical location, natural beauty, history, biodiversity, climate, culture and customs, and welcoming people are all factors that contribute to the country’s tourist growth. All of these variables are working in Bangladesh’s favor. Despite these advantages, Bangladeshi tourism is

only now beginning to realize its full potential. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC, founded in 1972) is a national tourism organization that has been working for developing the tourism sector for nearly 50 years. However, they have only achieved a fraction of the projected progress toward their goal (Sajid & Islam, 2019).

Insufficient private and government sector, faulty implementation of various tourism development policy/acts/plans/projects, poor governance system, lack of social and political commitment, lack of efficient tourism manpower, insufficient tourism research and the nexus between research and development plan, insufficient private and government sector interactions and involvement (i.e., collaboration, lack of internal coordination among the concerned ministries and departments, social and overall insecurity, non-availability of adequate infrastructure, lack of comfortable transportation facilities, accessibility for all to tourist destinations, inadequate accommodation choices, tourism marketing policy's non-existence both in government and private sectors), generally local people are less likely to have their own tourism experiences to operate their tourism business well, among others. Moreover, poor access to information and language barrier for the foreigners, incapability of concerning tourism authorities to spend money allocated for projects, poor utilization of public-private partnership (PPP) opportunities are also treated as barriers toward tourism development in Bangladesh.

Way Forward to Tourism Development in Bangladesh

The tourism sector is labor-intensive industry where the involvement of private sector is mandatory to flourish. The government should provide the supporting legal backups, infrastructures, security, simple visa requirements for the foreigners, tourism business-friendly environment like provision of loan with low interest, encouraging national and multi-national development partners to invest more in the tourism sector so on. A long-term tourism master plan focusing tourism policy by the involvement of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is warranted to promote tourism business in Bangladesh. Many researchers, academics, and policymakers opined that Bangladesh has tremendous potentialities for becoming one of the attractive tourist destinations in South Asia for domestic and international tourists. The economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and diverse institutional benefits can be harnessed of tourism through backward and forward linkages to enrich the country. Bangladesh may use tourism as a strong tool for poverty reduction, education and environmental awareness, participation, infrastructure development (i.e., sustainable development), and attaining the SDGs.

Some More Recommendation for Tourism Development in Bangladesh

More scientific research and studies on tourism, hospitality, travel, leisure, and recreation are needed. There should be sufficient budget allocation for such research and studies that will critically analyze the tourism sector and generate new knowledge and create new tourism products and services. Tourism education and training institutes should be reviewed frequently so that their academic and course curriculums are updated with the tourism sector's demand.

- The tourism and environmental awareness-related chapter might be included in different school and college curricula to make them aware of issues.
- Considering the vulnerability (e.g., any pandemic, natural calamities, terrorism) and seasonality of the tourism businesses, people of the sector, need to diversify their sources of livelihood.
- All concerned stakeholders (from local people to concerned ministry officials) should have the required knowledge and skills to operate and manage the tourism sector even in various crises like COVID-19, which will also add value to the tourism products and services. Extensive and exclusive capacity building initiatives should be taken for human resource development.
- Unexplored and potential tourism products and services should be invented to make the tourism sector more attractive and sustainable.
- Customer tailor-made marketing policies are helpful for domestic and international tourists to represent various tourism destinations of Bangladesh, focusing her various natural, cultural, and event-based attractions. Here, digital promotional campaigns with the help of various platforms may be used.
- More budget allocation for the tourism sector should be the demand of time.
- More community involvement is required in tourism development through their capacity building in tourism-based entrepreneurship, destination management, tourist entertainments and management, environmental awareness and education, biodiversity conservation, cultural preservation, and so on.
- The effects of COVID-19 on Bangladesh's tourist sector should be assessed scientifically, and based on that assessment, post-COVID recovery strategies and plans are warranted. Environment-friendly tourism development should be prioritized for all cases.
- Government-led various initiatives (like co-management approach for managing natural resources, ICT development, tree plantation movement, education for all, adult education, and so on) for engaging and mobilizing local community people need to be promoted.
- The concerned stakeholders starting from the family members/relatives/friends/colleagues to the destination managers (either private/corporate/public) should

be proactive in taking their proper actions so that we can change our unfriendly behavior to our environment and make our environment safe, sound and healthy not only for human being but also for all the creatures that will ultimately present a good ecosystem balance to attract more quality tourists and visitors.

Conclusion

Tourism is a stupendously noteworthy opportunity for any country for diversifying its economies and integrating historically and inclusive to sectoral strategies. Notwithstanding, the development of tourism is not a panacea, the poultice which will heal all the economic maladies. Tourism has become too competitive in the world market, the essence of which is captured in World Economic Forum's periodically published "Tourism Competitiveness Report", that is known as the de facto "index" to measure a host of identified factors contributing to the travel and tourism industry's development in individual countries, rather than measuring a country's attractions as a tourist destination. However, to make it attractive and competitive to the tourists, it requires "performance" and "impact" evaluation for each destination.

Since sustainable tourism is regarded as a negotiated position between "mass tourism" and "ecotourism reducing carbon footprint", the internal contradictions between these will remain in the discourse and continuous need to be addressed. As soon tourism is accepted as an instrument for achieving broader social goals apart from economic growth, internal contradictions will be less apparent. Even these positions in the context of Bangladesh and India may appear to be polar opposites, but in reality, they both form a part of the continuum, hence, these two positions movement and convergence always need to be facilitated through an effective institutional mechanism, adopting the best practices. Upon measuring local communities' attitude towards sustainable tourism, an appropriate institutional framework can be developed underpinning the historical characteristics of tourism's production and consumption.

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