

# Chapter 17

## Ecotourism in Bangladesh: Investment and Development Contexts



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**Abstract** The importance of ecotourism is a rapidly increasing in Bangladesh as the country has natural wonders, panoramic hills, valleys, forests, beaches, lakes, rivers, reserves of glorious creatures etc. These ideally have positioned Bangladesh to become able to compete in the global ecotourism market. Although ecotourism is still relatively new to Bangladesh, several initiatives are taken to expand and promote it in the country. Ecotourism in Bangladesh is gaining popularity as more travelers become aware of the stunning landscapes, mesmerizing wildlife and biodiversity of plants found in this beautiful country. What is more, by offering access offshore islands, rivers, wetlands, “Haors” (water reservoirs), mangrove forests, and diverse bio cultures, Bangladesh possesses potential for development as an ecotourism hub. The aim of this chapter is to define the opportunities for ecotourism services and products in Bangladesh, as well as the current constraints and potential solutions. This chapter will assist policymakers and marketers in putting policies and strategies in place to promote ecotourism products and encourage overall tourism growth in Bangladesh.

**Keywords** Tourism · Ecotourism · Marketing · Bangladesh

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## Introduction

Global tourism offers tremendous potential for export earnings. In 2016, the travel and tourism industry contributed directly to GDP growth of 3.1% and generated USD 7.6 trillion. The direct contribution grew to 3.2% in 2018 and is expected to increase to 3.6% by 2029. Moreover, the total contribution to GDP (including direct, indirect, and induced) was 10.4% in 2018 and is projected to grow to 11.5% by 2029 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). Tourism's contribution to employment generation is also noteworthy. In 2016, tourism generated approximately 300 million jobs worldwide (including direct, indirect, and induced contributions). The figure increased to approximately 328 million in 2018 and is projected to grow to around 420 million by 2029 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). Given the ease and accessibility of modern transport, today's tourists increasingly aspire to see and experience new, unique destinations (Yeoman et al., 2006).

In 2014 almost 125,000 tourists visited Bangladesh, and Bangladeshi citizens traveling out of the country showed a similar trend. Overall, travel and tourism investment increased by almost 13.9% in 2017. It contributes to GDP increased by almost 6.2% by direct contribution and 7.2% by total contribution to the GDP in 2017 (Tourismprof.club, 2018). Worldwide, tourist arrivals grew 7.1% in 2017 (approximately 1322 million travelers). The sector is expected to register a growth rate of about 4–5% in 2018 (World Tourism Organization, 2018).

The travel and tourism industry generates employment opportunities and has contributed approximately 10% of all job growth produced across the globe, which is similar to the formation of 109 million employments (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). However, this rise accounts for about 8% of overall universal greenhouse gas productions (Lenzen et al., 2018). Public voice to diminish pollution has increased and the industry has recognized the capability to influence social phenomena, such as minimizing the poverty and promoting cultural interactions, as a result 2017 was declared as the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by United nation” (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2017). It is the time that the tourism industry should take initiatives on sustainable development which will ensure the protection of the natural environment from the damaging impact of growing tourism.

## History of Ecotourism

According to Oxford Dictionary (2002), “Ecotour was first founded in 1973 and ecotourism in 1982”. The roots of the word “ecotourism” are not completely obvious. However, in his study, Hetzer (1965) recognized four pillars of responsible tourism; minimizing the impacts on the environment, respect to host cultures, to maximize the benefit for the local people, and enhancing the satisfaction for the visitors. Here the first pillar is the most critical part of ecotourism.

Other references are found in the early work by (Miller, 1989), originally published in 1978, and the work was on park planning in Latin America ensuring Eco development, and papers produced in Canada to set the roadside “eco tours” which developed during mid of 1979 to early 1980.

Ecotourism was formed “with the womb” of 1970s and 1980s environmental movement. Rapidly increasing environmental concern combined with a growing unhappiness with mass tourism resulted in increased demand for alternative, nature-based experiences. At the same time, developed countries also started to show their concern regarding this issue. By the middle of 1980s, a number of these countries identified ecotourism as a way of achieving both preservation and development objectives (Tourism Notes, 2020). However, the first formal definition was given by (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987) that defined ecotourism as traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals. Ecotourism also involves any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in the areas (Wang, 2010).

## Meaning of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a concept that combines two terms: “ecosystem” and “tourism”, and it emphasizes on environmentally friendly tourism. The term “ecotourism” comes from the term “nature-based tourism”. Ecotourism, according to the International Research Group (2020), is defined as travel for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions. It has supplanted so-called “sight- seeing” as a means of escaping the aggravating crowds, and it has become a significant craze among globetrotters. Visitors who are environmentally concerned have come to embrace environmentally sound tourism, which ensures the preservation of natural quality while avoiding negative environmental impacts. The name “eco” is derived from the Greek word “oikos”, which means “habitat” and is an acronym for “ecology”. The term “tourism” is derived from the Hebrew word “tora”, which means “to study, learn, or research”. Ecotourism, according to the International Ecotourism Society (2020), is responsible travel to natural regions that conserves the environment and supports the well-being of local people.

Kabir & Bhuiya (2004) mentioned that ecotourism is to preserve the sustainability of the natural as well as cultural environment. Ahmed & Mollah (2014) suggested that ecotourism includes not only exploring natural wonders but also recreational and archaeological tourism. Some common types of ecotourism are depicted in Table 17.1.

Ecotourism is the most inescapable tourism of all, and it plays a vital role in various countries differently. Surely, it motivates a large number of tourists. The areas that are considered by this tourism include national parks, jungles, and wildlife (Bowker et al., 1999). The tourism industry, especially ecotourism has played an

**Table 17.1** Types of ecotourism sites

Types	Sites
Marine	Bays, islands, marine-protected areas, beaches, coral reefs
Terrestrial	Forest areas, mountains, volcanoes, caves, trails
Freshwater	Waterfalls, rivers, lakes, hot and cold springs
Cultural	Reforestation sites, urban parks
Manmade	Festivals, churches, historic sites

Source: Ahmed and Mollah (2014)

important role to make a bridge between humans and community, economic activities, and development (Dehcheshme & Zangibadi, 2008).

The Quebec Declaration of Ecotourism, developed as part of the 2002 United Nations International Year of Tourism, defines ecotourism as tourism that “Contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage; includes local and indigenous communities in its planning, developing and operation, and contributes to its well-being; interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors; and lends itself better to independent travelers, as well as to organized tours of small group sizes” (Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism, 2002, p. 12).

According to Tsaour et al., (2006: p. 640), ecotourism is recognized as a form of sustainable tourism, which is expected to contribute to both conservation and development. Ecotourism is defined as nature-based tourism with three added goals: (1) to reduce negative environmental, economic and social impacts that are often associated with mass tourism; (2) to deliver a net positive contribution to environmental conservation; and (3) to develop the livelihoods of the local people (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). According to Narasaiah (2005: p. 81), ecotourism must be responsible, respect the local needs, and improve local welfare. However, to be completely sustainable, ecotourism should complete the ambitions and expectations of all interests of tourism enterprises, organizations, and tourists.

According to Honey (2002) and Cox et al. (2009), there are some elements of authentic ecotourism: first, travel to natural areas; second, minimized impacts; third, building environmental and cultural awareness for hosts and guests; fourth, providing direct financial benefits and empowerment for local communities; fifth, respect of local culture; sixth, sensitivity to the host country’s political environment and social climate; and finally, support of human rights and international labor agreements.

Ecotourism is defined in different ways as: Ecotourism is a type of tourism that is primarily inspired by a region’s natural history, particularly its indigenous cultures. In the spirit of appreciation, engagement, and sensitivity, the eco tourist explores relatively untouched places. (Ziffer, 1989). Nature-based tourism that emphasizes educational possibilities while also benefiting local and regional communities and exhibiting environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability

(Gardner & McArthur, 1995). Ecologically sustainable tourism in natural places that interprets the local environment and cultures, improves tourists' understanding of them, promotes conservation, and improves the local people's well-being (Richardson, 1993). Travel to distant or natural locations with the goal of improving awareness and appreciation of the natural environment and cultural heritage while avoiding damage to the ecosystem and the experience for others (Figgis, 1993). Ecotourism is a type of tourism that emphasizes visiting and observing natural regions while promoting environmental principles (Boyd & Butler 1996). Travel to experience the incredible diversity of natural life and human civilization around the world without harming either (Cater & Lowman, 1994). Ecotourism is a type of tourism and recreation that is both natural and environmentally friendly (Lindberg & McKercher, 1997).

## Importance of Ecotourism

The role of ecotourism is immense in our social life. Tourists like this tourism very much especially who like nature. It attracts them to enjoy the scenery. People's increasing interest in the environment and trips focused on fresh air, combined with their growing frustration with mass tourism, has illustrated the need for ecotourism in the tourism industry. Furthermore, the evolution of the word "ecotourism" was aided by an increasing portion of the population's awareness and compliance with the ideals of environmental protection and sustainability. Ecology and cultural values must be ensured in ecotourism. The target of ecotourism is to minimize the environmental impact on any specific tourism area with the combination of cooperation and management, in addition to this traveler may increase the positive impact on the environment and their surroundings while traveling. Ecotourism is described as liable travel to ecological areas that protects the environment while also improving the well-being of locals (Blangy & Wood, 1993) Environmental and growth conflicts, as well as global climate change, necessitate the development of eco-tourism. It is a crucial understanding for tourism-oriented or third-world countries because it effectively contributes to the conservation of natural and cultural resources by including local and indigenous communities in planning and development. It makes an impact to their happiness; it educates visitors about the natural and cultural heritage; and it is well-suited to both individual and small group travel. Ecotourism provides a safe, pollution-free destination, decreases tourism's negative effects, contributes to conservation efforts, collaborates with locals to manage natural areas, and protects local economies and uniqueness. Figure 17.1 showing the importance of ecotourism.

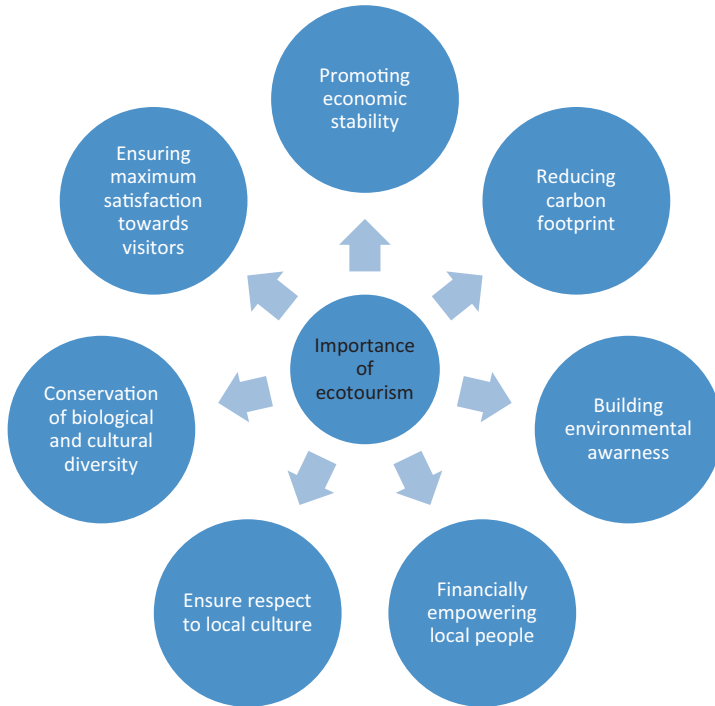


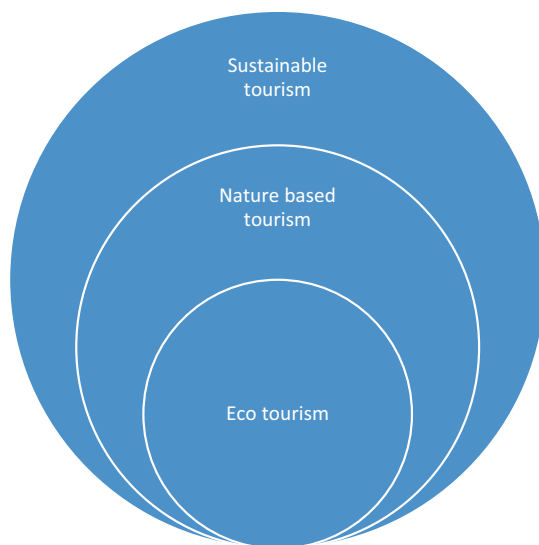
Fig. 17.1 Importance of ecotourism. (Source: Fennell, 2004)

## Ecotourism and Sustainable Development

In the developed countries, tourism is considered as a faster growing economic industry. This change can be due to shifting habits in affluent communities, as people pursue more recreation and are more concerned about environmental quality (Veenhoven, 1999). Travelers from developed countries are now also exploring the hidden natural beauty of the developing countries. Exotic travel is motivated by a desire to relax, as well as a desire to experience pristine and serenity natural beauty while learning about diverse cultures. The rapid growth of tourism in developed countries has increased hopes that tourism will help countries develop economically (Tapper, 2001). Mass tourism and alternative tourism are the two broad types of tourism that have been defined (Wood, 2002). Over time, alternative tourism has been categorized into three categories: nature, rural community-based tourism, and cultural events-oriented tourism. As a result, the idea of “ecotourism” arose from natural tourism (Lumsdon & Swift, 1998; Wood, 2002).

Hall (2004) stated that Ecotourism is sometimes considered as a low-cost way into niche tourism industries, based on a seemingly endless supply of natural materials and a desire to promote sustainability and environmental awareness. Hall (2004) also specified that the term’s precise definition and meanings are not well

**Fig. 17.2** Mechanism of ecotourism ensuring sustainable tourism. (Source: Fennell & Dowling, 2003)



defined. There are at least three different types of ecotourism: Firstly, the chance to engage with nature and people from different cultures; secondly, rather than big (international) tourism firms, the selection of tourism styles that maximize revenue for disadvantaged people; and thirdly, reducing travel's overall ecological influence (Fennell & Dowling, 2003). The relation of ecotourism with sustainable tourism has shown in Fig. 17.2.

Various definitions of ecotourism place different weights on each of these elements, but academics are increasingly emphasizing the combination of these three. According to Björk (2000), ecotourism is a distinct form of tourism that recognizes the close relationship between decent ecosystem and good economy, as opposed to adventure, nature and farm tourism. Wood (2002) and Buckley (1995) explain that travel to natural regions in a responsible manner can protect the environment and ensure the well-being of locals (Fig. 17.3).

## Principles of Ecotourism Products

### *Nature Area Focuses*

Focus on providing tourists with the ability to explore nature up close and personal.

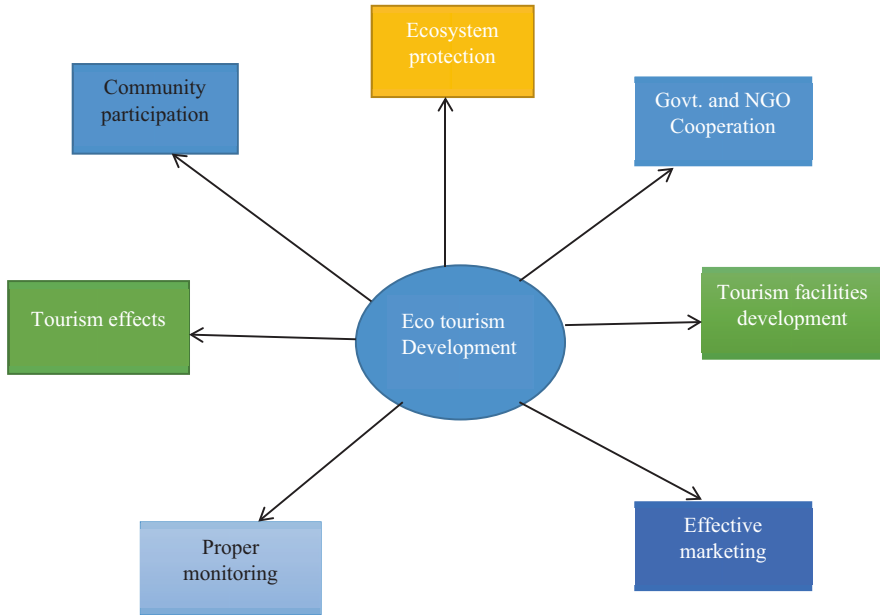


Fig. 17.3 Ecotourism development aspects. (Source: Reza, 2016)

***Interpretation***

Provide opportunities for people to interact with nature in ways that foster a deeper understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of it.

***Environmental Sustainability Practice***

Represent environmentally friendly tourism best practices.

***Contribution to Conservation***

Make a direct contribution to the preservation of natural areas.

***Benefiting Local Communities***

Contribute to the local community on a regular basis.



### ***Cultural Respect***

Be aware of, interpret, and include the local culture or cultures.

### ***Customer Satisfaction***

Meets or exceeds customer needs on a regular basis.

### ***Responsible Marketing***

Be truthful and precise in your marketing and promotion so that reasonable standards are established (Eco India, 2020).

## **Ecotourism in Bangladesh**

The idea ecotourism is still new and unexplored in the tourism industry of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is an ecologically rich country with ample opportunity to explore ecotourism as an economic growth engine. However, Bangladesh holds a great possibility for ecotourism growth. The country wholly herself is an ecotourism attraction. There are ample ecotourism destinations across this country. The haors, offshore islands, wetlands, river, mangrove forests, hills, and cultural heritage can be the attractive ecotourism products of Bangladesh. The attractive ecotourism destinations are shown below:

### ***The Sundarbans***

The Sundarbans is one of the important and largest areas for ecotourism, covering 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest mangrove forest in the world, composed of different islands. Almost 66% of the mangrove forest is in Bangladesh, and the rest 34% of the area is in under India. The mangrove forest's unique environment supports a distinctive anthology of flora and fauna that has made the area a paradise for ecotourism. The Royal Bengal Tigers is the unique attraction of this place. Moreover, spotted deer, crocodiles, wild boar, jungles fowl, lizards, different kinds of monkeys, countless types of lovely birds and ducks have increased the beauty of this forest. Honey and leaf collection, fishing support the employment of local people. Wildlife photography, boating through the forest area, nature study, enjoying the

activities of wood-cutters, fishermen, honey-collectors and the mysterious environment of the Sundarbans always invites the tourist, nature lover, researcher and scientists. UNESCO announced the Bangladeshi portion of forest area as a globe heritage site in 1997. Hiron point, Karamjol, Nilkomol, Katka, Dublar Char, Smoronkhola, Kodomtola, Akram Point, Haldibunia, Dobeki, Tiger Point (Kochikhali), Harbaria and Notabeki are the important tourist attraction point in Sundarbans. Ministry of Environment and Forests and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) are jointly working to develop the Sundarbans as an ecotourism destination.

### *Cox's Bazar*

Cox's Bazar, the world lengthiest sea beach, is the most popular and most visited destination in Bangladesh. It is the tourist capital of the country. There is no fear of shark attack, as a result, this beach is good for swimming and sun-bathing. The scenario of the sunset behind the waves of the sea is very charming. Cox's Bazar is the home of many Buddhist pagodas, Rakhaine culture, an ancient monastery, shrimp cultivation, salt production, tribal handicrafts and delicious seafood. The Inani beach, Himchari waterfalls, Maheskhali, Sonadia, Ramu, make this place most attractive for ecotourism. The road in between sea beach and hill on the way to Teknaf through marine drive known to be the home of deer, wild elephants, jungle fowls, and beautiful birds. The river Naf, divided sub-urban town Teknaf and Myanmar, which is situated on the southern tip of Bangladesh. The historical "Mathin Kup" (water reservoir) in Teknaf is an important attraction for tourist. The island in the Bay of Bengal, Maheskhali is in the northwestern site of Cox's Bazar. The century-old Temple Adinath is at the top of the hill on the island. Travel by crossing big wave in the sea, salt production, Rakhaine villages, fishermen villages are some notable attraction of Maheskhali. Sonadia is another beautiful and calm island near Cox's Bazar and very close to Maheskhali famous for dry fish processing. Ramu is the home of the largest rubber gardens of Bangladesh. Buddhist pagodas, Buddhist village, forest area, lake in forest areas increase the scope for ecotourism.

The "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park" is an attraction of ecotourism, which is the first safari park in Bangladesh. This safari park is situated about 50 km from Cox's Bazar town a sound environment for animal reservation. The green forest is rich with Boilam, Garjan, Chapalish, and Telsur trees. The safari park is full of different wild animals, including elephants, tigers, lions, crocodiles, bears, and different types of monkeys and birds, which has created ample scope for ecotourism. The Saint Martin Island is the only coral island of Bangladesh, which is also known as Narikel Jinjira. This is a small island surrounded by the beach on the northeast side of the Bay of Bengal. Clear green seawater, stunning landscapes, coral colony, sea crabs, coconut groves, the roar of the wave, fresh and unique sea-side are notable attractions of visitors. There is another beautiful attraction very

closed to St. Martin's named as CheraDwip. The uniqueness of Saint Martin and CheraDwip Island, warmth welcome of the local community, natural resources can be the heaven for ecotourism.

### ***Kuakata Sea Beach***

Kuakata is also known as "Sagar Kannya" (daughter of the sea), is the second-largest panoramic sea beach in Bangladesh. It is a sandy sea beach of 3 km<sup>2</sup> wide and 18 km<sup>2</sup> long. This site's unique beauty and main attraction are that it is the only sea beach in Bangladesh where one can enjoy both sunset and sunrise from the same area of Bay of Bengal. Century aged Buddhist community, the lifestyle of tribal Rakhanyas are another tourist attraction of this place.

### ***Chattogram Division***

Chattogram is the wealthiest division in terms of ecotourism attraction in Bangladesh. The business capital Chattogram city is the second-largest city in Bangladesh. It has the most important and busy seaport. It is famous for its harbor and port, Foy's Lake, Parki beach in Annuara, Patenga beach, Neval Beach, Karnaphuli River, Vatiary Lake, Chattogram Zoo, Batali Hill, the shrine of Bayazid Bostam, Butterfly Park Bangladesh, the beautiful Chandanpura Mosque, Chattogram Commonwealth War Cemetery, Adher Manik Shanti Niketan Buddhist Monastery, Kaibalyadham Ram Thakur Ashram, Chatteshwari Kali Temple, Ethnological Museum, Zia Memorial Museum, etc. The first eco-park of Bangladesh is situated in Sitakunda, which is only 36 km away from Chattogram. Chandranath Hills in Sitakunda is renowned for its botanical garden. The eco-park has been developed to accommodate biodiversity conservation, new plantations, natural rejuvenation, and to encourage nature-based tourism. Hindu pilgrims, a holy place for the Hindu community, is also located here.

There are some wonderful hilly districts under Chattogram divisions, including Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari, which are home to many tribes with unique traditions and cultures. Rangamati is situated on the south-eastern side of Bangladesh, and its township is on the western bank of Kaptai Lake, 77 km away from Chattogram city. Rangamati is famous for the colorful tribal population, hills, beautiful landscape, Shuvolong Waterfalls, flora, and fauna, hanging bridge, ivory jewelry, homespun textile products, scenic beauty, tribal museum, and Kaptai Lake. Kaptai Lake is the largest man-made lake in the sub-continent with full of natural beauty. Kaptai National Park falls between the Kaptai hill and Karnaphuly. This park is full of different types of old trees planted in 1873, and this place is home to various wildlife like elephant, monkey, jungle cat deer, etc. The lake has been formed due to the establishment of Kaptai Dam on Karnaphuli River's flow under

the “Karnaphuli Hydro-electric project”. A hanging bridge over this lake has created a tremendous attraction for ecotourism.

Bandarban is considered as one of the attractive tourism destinations in Bangladesh. It is 92 km away from Chattogram city, which offers the beauty of valleys and hills. Nilgiri is a famous tourist attraction in Bandarban. It is the home of Mogh tribe and Morangs. Bohmong, the chief of Mogh tribe, lives in this place. The Moghs are very simple as well as hospitable people. Morangs are famous for their dance and music. The “Buddha Dhatu Jadi Temple” is located here. The topmost three highest mountains of Bangladesh – Keokradong, Mowdok Mual and Tahjindong- are located here. The Raikhiang Lake, known as the highest lake in Bangladesh, Boga Lake, Chimbuk peak and Sangu River, is the highly attractive taste of the country’s ecotourism.

Khagrachari is another place of ecotourism, which is also known as Mong Circle or Phalang Htaung and 112 km away from Chattogram city. Most of its land is hilly areas having three rivers, namely Kasalong, Chengi and Maini. It has the Richhang Falls, Alutila Cave and Hanging Bridge, and is mostly famous for Sajek, known as Hill Queen. Sajek is a new attraction for ecotourism which is name after a river that separated Bangladesh and India in this place. Different tribal communities like Chakma, Tripura, Marma, Lushai and Pankua live here.

## *Sylhet*

Sylhet Division has much to present as an ecotourism attraction, which is covered with tropical rainforest, attached tea estates, orange groves, and pineapple plantations. This place is important to the Muslims community as the shrines of “Hazrat Shahjalal (RA)” and “Hazrat Shahporan (RA)” are located there. The climate of Sylhet is the best in the country due to cool air and temperature in the winter and modestly warm in the summer session. There are many recreational resorts and parts with vast green areas boasted as ecotourism sites. There are virgin forests, more than 130 tea estates, national eco-parks, mountain ranges, undiscovered caves, and Khasia and Manipuri tribes, who are well-known for their distinct cultural heritage and folk dances.

Madhabkunda Eco-part has much to offer ecotourism. It’s in the Sylhet division’s Maulvibazar district. The Madhabkunda waterfall, which is about 200 feet tall and has significant ecological and economic significance, is Bangladesh’s largest waterfall. Lawachara is one of Bangladesh’s most beautiful tropical forests and natural reserves. This place is located in Maulvibazar district. Bangladesh government declared this place as Lawachara National Park in 1997. The national park is known for its various tree species and wild animals. Bangladesh’s largest wetland resource is Hakalukihaor. It is the home of numerous fishes, birds, animals and different flora and fauna. Ratargul Swamp is the only swamp forest of Bangladesh locally known as Amazon of Bangladesh. The green forest is linked with the canal ChengirKhal and sited by the river Goain. The forest goes around 10 feet deep and

rainy season it goes under 20-30 feet water. This place is home of fish, monkey, snakes, birds, insects and lizards. Bisnakandi is a modern ecotourism destination in Bangladesh.

### *Dhaka*

The capital city Dhaka, which is located on the bank of the Buriganga River. Dhaka city is full of heritage, culture and historical place. This place is famous for muslin, Jamdani crafts, silk and pearls. Ahsan Manzil, Lalbager Kella, the Mughal Constructions, the Star Mosque, the Armenian Church, the National Memorial at Savar, Curzon Hall, the Central Shadeed Minar, the National Museum, the National Botanical Garden, the Baldah Gardens, the National Zoo, Sonargaon, Bengal's oldest capital, and other ecotourism destinations can be considered. Many resorts such as Jamuna Resort, Elenga Resort, Padma Resort etc., are built either in the botanical gardens or in the riversides of the Dhaka division.

### *Rajshahi*

Rajshahi is famous for its archaeological heritage and historical places. Paharpur Buddhist Bihar is one of the important tourist attractions. This is a Buddhist monastery located at Paharpur in Naogaon, which was declared as a "UNESCO World Heritage Site" in 1985. Mahasthangarh at Bogra is another Buddhist monastery established in third century BC, which is nevertheless one of Bangladesh's greatest discoveries. The Ramsagor Lake and the Kantaji Temple are two attractive destinations in Dinajpur.

## **Issues of Ecotourism in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is not well-known in the global ecotourism market. Though Bangladesh has a very good potentiality in ecotourism, it has numerous issues. Afroz and Mahmud (2017), and Khondkar and Anis (2014) have identified the following issues in the ecotourism industry of Bangladesh:

- Frequency of natural catastrophe is one of the important obstacles in ecotourism of Bangladesh.
- A huge number of people are living in a small area. So, population pressure creates a barrier to ecotourism
- Poor physical infrastructural backing makes the destinations difficult for the tourists

- Lack of consciousness, enthusiasm and deficiency of proper market information among the common people do not support the expansion of this industry
- The absence of appropriate guidelines for the tourists
- The absence of calm and isolated areas for tourists
- Poor brand image of tourism destinations of Bangladesh
- The absence of long-term vision both in the private and government sectors
- The absence of sanitation problems in many tourism destination areas
- Poor promotional initiatives as an ecotourism destination in Bangladesh made it as a laggard industry
- Shortage of enough trained and skilled people in this industry
- Lack of adequate professional agencies to coordinate ecotourism operations
- Unplanned construction and development, especially in tourist resorts
- Scarcity of financial allocation in this industry also expanding the problem
- Proper safety and security for the domestic and foreign traveler is the prime concern for the ecotourism growth
- Insufficient accommodation capacity during pic season makes tourism destination more difficult for the traveler
- Political unrest hampers the easy movement of visitors
- Corruption in all stage damaging the potentiality of this industry
- Uncontrolled and mismanagement in transportations sector
- Unplanned urbanization and inadequate institutional capacity
- Absence of stable tourism policies and strategies
- Lack of research institute associated with ecotourism
- The conflict between and among tribal groups especially the Chittagong hill tract area creates a problem for visitors.

## Recommendations

Bangladesh is full of natural beauty, and ecotourism can be the dominating force to develop economic growth of the country. If ecotourism can turn as an active professional one, this industry can be the engine of Bangladesh's economic development. A proper corrective measure can help in this regard. Following suggestions can be taken to improve the situation of the ecotourism industry of Bangladesh.

- A long-term vision should be formulated for the growth of this sector. For this, a proper collaboration between the government and other stakeholders is required to promote Bangladesh as an ecotourism destination
- Currently, the entertainment facility is very low in the destination area. In most cases, visitors have no option to enjoy their time after the sunset. A broad tourism plan and policy need to be taken to satisfy the visitors
- Various motivational and awareness creation programs need to be taken to increase the flow of domestic and international tourists

- Public-Private Partnership initiative can help to flourish this industry in Bangladesh
- Different learning and training programs can be arranged for the people who are involved in tourism activities
- Tourist spots should be more secure and safer for domestic and foreign visitors. The appropriate measure for law enforcement authority needs to be taken
- Promotional activities can be broadcasted on global media and social platforms to attract international visitors
- Green and clean environment programs should be taken to make the place more attractive
- Priority should be given to infrastructure development related to ecotourism destinations
- Good connectivity through controlled and proper management in the transportations sector should be incorporated
- Urbanization should be made with proper planning and control
- A sufficient number of suitable restrooms for overnight visitors should be accommodated with proper care. Refreshment zones also need to be developed
- Stable political environment is also required for the growth of this industry
- Economic benefits and training of local people need to be ensured
- Waste management capacity needs to be developed
- Unauthorized resorts, parking, shopping area should be strictly prohibited.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Bangladesh is trying to utilize her full natural beauty to attract many local and foreign tourists. The country should have long-term planning and policy for developing ecotourism. Bangladesh has an enriched culture, strategic geographic location, and magnificent creatures, so it is high time for this country to make it an ideal place for ecotourism development. Moreover, it has the longest sandy beach in the world and the largest mangrove forest in the world which indicates the huge potentiality of the prospects of ecotourism in Bangladesh. For developing this sector, the government should come forward with the private investment sector and prepare a master plan to develop it. The government should also focus to provide a positive look at developing the skills of its human resources required for developing the tourism industry in the country. Furthermore, they can recruit expert professional and technical human resource who can provide better guidelines to contribute positively to satisfy the diversified needs of different tourists. Finally, it is a sector from where the government can earn huge foreign currency from the ecotourism industry.

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