

Challenges and Opportunities of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

MBA Project Paper

Submitted By

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Challenges and Opportunities of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

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**Master of Business Administration
(Tourism Management)**

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Table of Contents

Topics	Page No.
Declaration	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Tables and Figures	iv-v
Chapter – I:	
1.1 Introduction	1-5
1.2 Statement of the problem	5-7
1.3 Significance of the study	7-8
1.4 Objectives of the study	8
1.5 Research Questions	8-9
1.6 Capabilities in conducting the project paper	9
Chapter – II:	
2. Literature Review	10-24
Chapter – III:	
3. Research Methodology	25
3.1 Nature of the Study	25
3.2 Scope of the Study	26-27
3.3 Theoretical Propositions or Research Questions of the Study	27-28
3.4 Population	28-29
3.5 Sample Size	29-30
3.6 Sample Selection Procedure	30-31
3.7 Questionnaire Preparation	31-35
3.8 Pilot Survey for Questionnaire Pre-test	35-36
3.9 Field Survey and Investigation for Primary Data Collection	36-37
3.10 Sources of Secondary Data	37-38
3.11 Verification of Filled in Questionnaires and Tabulation of Data	38-39
3.12 Data Analysis and Interpretation	39
3.13 Organizational Framework of the Research Report	39
3.14 Limitations of the Study	40-42
Chapter – IV:	
4. Major findings	43

4.1 Tourism history of Bangladesh	43-44
4.2 Tourism Development in Bangladesh	44-46
4.3 The seven main tourist divisions	46-99
4.4 Status for tourist attractions	99-100
4.5 Target groups	100-105
4.5.1 Inbound tourists	100-102
4.5.2 The local middle and high class	102-103
4.5.3 The expatriate community	103-105
4.6 Future tourist demand	105-106
4.7 Transportation	106-107
4.8 Accommodation, restaurants and night life	108-109
4.9 Tour operators	109-110
4.10 The future Bangladeshi tourist supply	110
4.11 The potentialities of the tourism industry	111-114
4.12 Competing destinations or businesses	114-115
4.13 Defining the economic contribution of travel & tourism	115-124
4.13.1 Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP	116-117
4.13.2 Visitor Exports	118
4.13.3 Investment	119
4.14 Different components of travel & tourism	120
4.15 Country Rankings, 2011	121-124
4.16 International Tourist Arrivals to Asia Pacific Markets	125
4.17 International Tourism Receipts in Asia Pacific Markets	126-129
4.18 Seasonality	129-133
4.19 Economic Impacts of Tourism	134-144
4.20 Negative impacts of tourism upon economic development	144-145
4.21 Social and Cultural Impacts of Tourism in Bangladesh	145-151
4.22 SWOT Analysis	151-166
Chapter – V: Summary, Conclusion & Implications	167-185
5.1 Summary	167-172
5.2 Conclusion	173-183
5.3 Implications	183-185
Bibliography	186-191

DECLARATION

I hereby do solemnly declare that the work presented in this project paper has been carried out by me and has not been previously submitted to any university for an academic qualification or degree.

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I further undertake to indemnify the university against any loss or damage arising from breach of the foregoing obligations.



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Abstract

This project paper analyzed the challenges and opportunities to the Bangladeshi tourist sector focusing on its general status and development potential.

Due to historical isolation Bangladeshi culture and history is distinct. The six national divisions offer both individually and combining a variety of natural and cultural destinations suitable for tourist attractions. The Bangladeshi authorities are concerned with safeguarding its heritage, including an extraordinary intangible heritage and the traditional Bengali handicraft.

Target groups in the Bangladesh tourism industry are: inbound tourists; the local high and middle class and expats. Bangladesh is one of the countries in the South Asian region that has the least arrivals and revenue earned from the tourism industry. This might change in the future as the travel and tourism activity is forecast to increase worldwide, regionally and nationally.

The tourism industry is quite a young line of business in Bangladesh. It is predominantly developed by local market forces to the national tourist market and a foreign urban business market. Organizations represent the government and private tourist sector, but co-operation, strategies and policies to develop a prosperous and sustainable tourist industry are rear. Both local and international tourist players are competing for the existing market, but no Bangladeshi tour operator works abroad, and no foreign tour operator work in Bangladesh.

To successfully develop the Bangladeshi tourism industry a local based strategy is crucial. This strategy should aim both at sustainable development (including economical, cultural and environmental considerations) and increasing tourist income. It is obvious to focus on existing local markets as well as to aim for the traditionally profitable inbound tourist market.

List of Tables and Figures

No.	Title	Page No.
1.	Table 1: Bangladesh - Tourism Receipts 1996-2008	44
2.	Figure 1: Bangladesh - Purpose of Visit 2004	45
3.	Table 2: Tourist arrivals to SAARC countries	114
4.	Table 3: Tourism revenue of SAARC countries	114
5.	Figure 2: Defining the economic contribution of travel & tourism	116
6.	Figure 3: Bangladesh: Direct contribution of travel & tourism to GDP	117
7	Figure 4: Bangladesh: Total contribution of travel & tourism to GDP	117
8.	Figure 5: Bangladesh: Visitors exports & international tourist arrivals	118
9.	Figure 6: Bangladesh: Capital investment in travel & tourism	119
10.	Figure 7: Different components of travel & tourism	120
11.	Table 4: WTTC League Table Extract: Absolute Contribution	121
12.	Table 5: WTTC League Table Extract: Relative Contribution	122
13.	Table 6: WTTC League Table Extract: 10-year Real Growth per annum	123
14.	Table 7: Estimates & Forecasts	124
16.	Table 8: Total Arrivals to Asia Pacific 2004-2008 in Summary	125
17.	Table 9: International Tourism Receipts Forecasts for Asia Pacific 2006-2008 (US\$ mil)	126
18.	Table 10: Bangladesh - Forecast Arrivals 2004-2008	127
19.	Figure 8: Bangladesh - Arrivals 2004-2008	128
21.	Table 11: Bangladesh - Growth Rate 1996-2008	128
22.	Table 12: Bangladesh - Main Source Market Share 1996-2008 (%)	129
23.	Figure 9: Bangladesh - Seasonality of Arrivals 2003-2004	129
24.	Table 13: Bangladesh - Tourist Arrivals, Receipts, Departures and Expenditures	130
25.	Table 14: Bangladesh - Tourism Receipts Forecasts for Main Source Markets	131

26.	Figure 10: Bangladesh - Top Five Tourism Receipts Forecasts 2006-2008 (US\$)	132
27.	Table 15: Asia Pacific Departures Forecasts to Bangladesh 2004-2008	133
28.	Table 16: Visitors Arrival by Purpose of Visit 2009	135
29.	Table 17: Outbound Travels by Purpose of Visit 2009	135
30.	Table 18: The economic contribution of travel & tourism	138
31.	Table 19: The economic contribution of travel & tourism	139
32.	Table 20: Foreign Visitors Arrival by Months 2000-2009	140
33.	Figure 11: The local development process based on tourism	155
34.	Table 21: Shows major incentives for Foreign Investors in Bangladesh	156

Chapter-I

Introduction

1.1. Preamble

Bangladesh is now confronting multifarious crises in its history. The country is in dire situation as far as its politics, society, economy, education, industry, literature, population, employment, and law and order are concerned. However, there must be a way out and only by conquering the economic crisis; we can surmount this crucial period. This can be said without the least doubt that all the sectors like manpower, textile and fisheries has failed one after another to ensure earning foreign currencies after golden-thread except readymade garments. Yet, it is also very difficult to say what will happen to the readymade garments industry in future. Already the readymade garments industry is in a very precarious condition after US ban on the quota system and labor unrest. Export of manpower is almost closed. Moreover, the economy is still alive from earnings of readymade garments, manpower and thanks to the donations and debts from the developed countries. Therefore, without any further delay and negligence, we must ensure establishing a tourism service industry based on natural surroundings and manpower, thereby earning valuable foreign currencies for the country. We are endowed with the largest sea beach in the world "Cox's Bazar" within a land radius of only 1,43,000 sq. km. In addition, we have the second most rare sea beach in the world "Kuakata" where one can observe both the sunrise and sunset at the same place. We are proud owner of the United Nations declared World Heritage, the largest mangrove forest "Sundarban" in the world. Besides these, we also have different areas along with Coral Island Saint Martins, Hill-tracts in Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachari, which can be made very attractive for the tourists inside and outside the country.

Bangladesh can earn a lot of foreign currency based on the tourism products it has. Because tourism products are such products which cannot be competed. It is being observed that many countries in the world are earning a big amount of foreign currency based on one or two tourism products. For example, our neighboring country Nepal, who having the highest

mountain peak Everest in the world has already taken a position in the World Tourism Market and earns huge foreign currency. Considering this, Bangladesh has a number of tourism products like Cox's Bazar, the longest sea-beach in the world; Kuakata sea-beach from where one can get the rare chance of viewing the sun-rise and sun-set from the same point; Sundarban, the largest mangrove forest in the world; the wild-life sanctuary of several Eco-parks; the rare and special Royal Bengal tiger; and so many historical and archeological sites. Moreover, during winter numerous guest birds come from Siberia and such other cold weather to stay in our marshy areas temporarily. These guest birds work as bonus for our tourism industry. To attract foreign tourists having these much tourist products would obviously be an extraordinary matter.

In terms of position and size, our tourism industry is in a better position. Summer i.e. June to August is the Tourism season in Europe and America. Providentially, at that time of year, we have the rainy season here, which is not friendly for tourists' visit. On the other hand, our tourism season is in winter i.e. October to March during when there is extreme cold in Europe and America and the tourist spots are not favorable for visiting. As the tourism seasons are of different phases, we do not have any competition with Europe and America in this industry.

We are also in a favorable position from a lengthy tourism season here. The tourism season in Europe and America is three months (June-August) and our tourism season is six months (October-March) when we have congenial weather for tourists. Such a lengthy tourism season is possibly non-existent except in our region. We can also promote rainy season as tourist season because of the beauty of the rain and water which is exciting for Europeans and Americans.

Our tourism industry is having an extra advantage in terms of its location i.e. all the tourist locations are situated within a distance of 500 km from the capital Dhaka. Foreign tourists will be especially attracted to the facilities to visit so many variegated tourists' spots from so close to the centre. On the other hand, tourists can reach any tourist spot by road within a period of dawn to dusk. In addition, it is very easy to travel and visit all the important tourist locations in Bangladesh through the two sea beaches. We have the largest (120 km) sea beach

in the world in Cox's Bazar and beach in Kuakata. Tourists who come to visit Cox's Bazar can easily a trip to the nearby Saint Martin's Island along with other islands and hilly regions like Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Again, it is very easy to visit the Sundarbans from Kuakata by seaway.

Bangladesh can be the best tourism spot in the world owing to its possession of Kuakata sea beach and many other rare sights. The foremost is the exclusive sight of sunrise and sunset in a single sea beach, which is indeed very rare in the world. Secondly, there is the largest Buddhist statue (37 feet high) in Asia in the Buddhist temple situated in misripara in Kuakata. This temple is located at misripara that starts from Kuakata to Gangamati sea beach. There are no steps or policy by either any government or non-government organizations to preserve or renovate this 120 years old Buddhist statue. If preserved after proper renovation, this temple and Buddhist statue can be exhibited with entrance fee. Adjacent to Kuakata sea beach there is also a Buddhist temple where we can find a Buddhist statue made of gold, silver and brass metal and Rakhaine market where tourist find handloom and handicraft items made by Kua and Rakhaine people. Thirdly, we may also observe Rakhaine handloom industry, view struggling life of the fishermen. Studying the big sharks in Sutkipara can be welcomed by the tourists as a rare bonus to the whole entertainment. A German tourist once after watching seven live big sharks exclaimed with sheer joy that his visit to Kuakata was a grand success. Fourthly, tourists can still enjoy a trip to "fatrarban", a sister of Sunderban by modern tourist boat. Private entrepreneur Shahjalal has made the arrangement for tourists. Mr. Jalal has taken special permission from the respective authority of government for tourists' toilet facilities and seating arrangements in the above mentioned Upaban. Fifthly, tourists can observe in one visit both Kuakata as well as the vast sea beach of Gangamati. The Jhauban of Kuakata touches the heart of the tourists. Owner of Sunrise Hotel Mr. Shahjalal has arranged for two toilets at his own expense for the tourists. Kuakata also has historical importance for the garrison of British soldiers during the Second World War.

According to the World Tourism Indicator 2005, if we can attract the number of tourists as many as Nepal, our yearly income from tourism sector will be 89 million US dollar (approximately BD 6, 23, 000, 0000) higher than present. World Tourism Indicator 2005

indicates that the number of tourists in Nepal in 2005 was 3, 75,000 whereas 2, 08,000 in Bangladesh. For this, Nepal earned 176 million US dollar while Bangladesh earned only 78 million US dollar. Conversely, the number of Nepali tourists to foreign countries was 3, 73,000 and they spent 221 million US dollar. At the same time, Bangladeshi tourists were 1,767,000 in number and they spent 371 US dollar. From this, we can make out that 13, 94,000 Bangladeshi tourists visited foreign countries more than Nepali tourists. If we have adequate tourism facilities in our country, this huge number of tourists would not have visited foreign countries. Subsequently, we can save a big amount of foreign currency from the afore-said 150 million US dollar, which could be spent within the country. Similarly, if the number of foreign tourists in Bangladesh would be like Saudi-Arab, India and Sri-Lanka, the foreign currency income from this sector would be 6033, 4050 and 621 million US dollars higher. Obviously, this amount can change the economic cycle of our country. That is why, in order to reach to this desired goal, we will not need that much time if proper measures will be taken.

Therefore, having all these facilities in our country, it is very easy and potential for us to earn foreign currency. It is to also to mention that though the developed countries could be competent in terms of technology or economy, but they cannot come to the competition by producing another Kuakata or Sundarban.

Local laws reflect the fact that Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country. Furthermore centuries of isolation, even when foreign powers ruled, have produced people, customers and values that are typical Bengali in nature. Bangladeshis are generally hospitable and exceedingly helpful. Anything unusual is a crowd magnet, be it a road accident, a street demonstration or a foreigner. Travelers should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of their actions to ensure that they do not offend other cultures or religious beliefs. Likewise foreigners are advised to travel responsibly, being sensitive to their impact on the local environment and society.

Safety and security issues for travelers according to several embassies are; Terrorism threats and attacks cannot be ruled out; Demonstrations are often held at short notice and have the potential to become violent; and the current political state of emergency.

Documented crime against expatriates and tourists include armed robbery; pick pocketing, abduction for ransom and officials' abuse of authority. Travel between towns after dark, by train, bus or ferry, is generally risky because of banditry. Further more road network condition and safety is poor; and ferries are often dangerously overcrowded.

Travelers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Chittagong Division) are required to register with local authorities, stay in the main towns and travel on the main roads. The safety situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is pointed out by embassies as constantly changing due to violent disputes between rival tribal groups, settlers and the military.

Historically, crime rates in Bangladesh have traditionally been low compared to other areas of the world. The crime situation in Dhaka and Chittagong is however worsening and there are increasing reports of crimes involving weapons. Foreigners have not been especially targeted. One recent security advice for foreigners in Dhaka estimates that "Dhaka is a safe place, when you know how to play by its rules".

As to the safety situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts a peace accord was signed in 1997, after two decades of local resistance and military repression. All problems are not solved but both local and foreigners are now traveling to several destinations in the area.

General travelling advice for Bangladesh is therefore to be well informed of world events and local developments as well as avoid potential dangerous situations like traveling alone (especially as single females), at night and by public transportation.

1.2 Statement of the problem:

Today tourism has been considered as a great phenomenon involving movement of million of people all over the world. The number of international tourists and their expenditure has

grown strongly. This sector is contributing for the growth, development, employment generation and correcting negative balance of payment of a country. But the share of Bangladesh in the world tourism is poor. The contribution of this sector to GDP of Bangladesh is insignificant. Bangladesh is enriched with enormous tourists' assets, sports, and tourists' facilities which have not yet been explored. The tourism arrangements prevailing in Bangladesh is inadequate to meet changing and growing demand of this sector.

Tourism development is the process of an increased phenomenon in the context of the current and future strategies for the progress of tourism business in the destination. It is always a changing philosophy and is varied from the destination to destination. In fact, it is based on with its related development strategies to serve continuously. The strategies of tourism development are very complex in nature. That's why; for the development of tourism business needs to identify its potentialities effectively. In fact, tourism is one of the most important and number one labor intensive industries in the business world today. It is always contributing to grow a large number of economics growths, socio-cultural and environmental progress in the destination.

Bangladesh as a development tourism destination, the development of tourism business and its resource like tourism products and service are very important. But, the current tourism resources are still like at a beginning stage in spite of its tremendous archeology and historical richness. But, for the planning and development of tourism business, it is only contributing by the small scale of government implementation and program although 'Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation' has contribute in some sectors by its master plan of 1986-1988. But, due to the lack of financial support from the government, it was not gained the total manipulation of development in the context of whole master plan. However, in recent year for the increased of beneficial input in for national economy, the government of Bangladesh has been kept attention to improve its tourism business sectors more than before. Because, the inflation in tourism business is increasing day by day and contributing to increase more tourist arrivals, tourists expenditure, economic progress and employment opportunity tremendously in the destination.

Bangladesh as a developing tourism destination, the expansion of its tourism business has become to the foreign exchange earnings and on the gross domestic product both directly and through the operation of the expenditure multiplier. Therefore, an increase in tourists' arrivals and the foreign exchange earnings has been grown than before. Indeed, Bangladesh as a poor and unemployment destination can grow its economy by the proper well establishment of development plan for its tourism business. Because, tourism is a component of growth, particularly by its net contribution to the foreign currency and that's why, it should be included in the national development plans, since its factor in national development, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh.

Because, the potential benefits which can mainly help to generate than any other strategic tourism development plans. Strategies for long term plan, strategic plan, and plan short and middle range plan have been succeeded for the development of tourism country. By this way, it is seldom possible to maximize the creation of employment opportunities, dispersion of development to non-industrial regions and the social benefits arising both from local and international new understanding.

1.3 Significance of the study:

It has long being recognized that tourism has an impact on economic activity and is commonly used as a tool to stimulate and promote economic development and has emerged in many destinations as a catalyst for socio-economic change. Several studies also highlight the importance of this sector in terms of employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, exchanging cultural views, peace keeping and as a whole for the economic development country. The available literature highlights that tourism plays a multidimensional role to an economy.

Bangladesh is trying to promote tourism in policy agenda just after its independence based on natural, cultural, ecological and historical attractions with the hope that it will enhance the live quality of the people through bringing positive change to its economic development. But Bangladesh failed to attract the sufficient number of tourists at her destinations due to lack of adequate infrastructure, sufficient facilities at the destination, accessibility to the destinations,

accessibility to the destination as well as formulating and implementing a proper promotional program due to policy guidelines an stability of policy formulation, marketing orientation and resource constraints. From this view point, it can be stated the importance of this present study is of an immense interesting for a proper underrating of the position of our tourism industry and to help the concerns authorities to determine the proper initiatives needed for the better performance of this sector.

1.4 Objectives of the study:

The basic purpose of the study is to highlight the challenges and opportunities for developing the emerging sector like Tourism Industry in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- (a) To present an overview on the development of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh since liberation.
- (b) To focus the major challenges and opportunities for this vital sector in the context of Government policy, environmental competitions, globalization natural calamities and some other controllable and uncontrollable variables.
- (c) To trace the strength and weakness i.e. internal scenario of the emerging sector in consistence with the challenges.
- (d) To measure the opinions and views of the policy makers in the context of developing strategic issues for the expansion of this prospective sector.
- (e) To provide suggestions for developing appropriate strategies for the advancement of our Tourism Sector based on the experience of SARRC Countries.

1.5 Research Questions:

Based on the extensive review of relevant research studies and Theoretical stock of knowledge the following research questions are developed for an empirical survey:

- (a) How far the challenges of Tourism Sector are Controllable?
- (b) How far the strategic Management of this Sector is effective?

- (c) Is there any scope for developing such an emerging sector?
- (d) What might be the Socio- economic impact i.e. opportunity and strength of the sector.
- (e) How far the weakness of the sector is controllable?

1.6 Capabilities in conducting the project paper

While completing my MBA degree in tourism of this University I had to go through many of the courses like Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Hospitality Management, Cultural and Heritage Tourism and Event Management, these impressed me a lot for developing the conceptual and theoretical framework of the subject, details of research studies available in world context, research gap, intensity of the tourism problem in Bangladesh but excellent potentiality of the sector in terms of Poverty reduction, foreign exchange earnings, employment generation and some other Socio-economic benefits.

Virtually availability of data, national emphasis on the imagine sector and my sources aspiration for these type of study have developed my capabilities in conducting this project paper. It is also mention that my two publications in related field have made me more confident in developing feasible project paper.

Chapter-II

Review of Literature

Chowdhury (2002) had a study on "Tourism industry in Bangladesh: an empirical study on its present patterns and strategies for development". Before discussing the present and future condition of tourism industry in Bangladesh, the researcher has felt that a clear picture about Bangladesh as a tourist destination should be presented. A brief introduction of various touring spots and attractive feature of Bangladesh are described. It is argued by the researcher that Bangladesh is not entirely made up of dirty slums and starving children, as the world been taught to perceive it through misleading news reports. It has many unique features to offer a tourist. The Sundarbans forest is the largest mangrove forest in the world, the natural habitat of The Royal Bengal Tiger, lush green landscape interspersed by network of vast rivers, the longest natural beach in the world, the history and culture of the land, possibly the most complex ethnic mixture in history, hospitable people-all these and many more will contribute richly to one's experience as a seasoned tourist.

The present study reveals that the total tourist arrivals in Bangladesh increased consistently during 1992 and 1997. It has fallen in 1998, and again kept increasing and continued till the year 2000. The study identifies that the major purpose of visiting Bangladesh by foreign tourists was 'business' till 1995 (if we do not consider the purpose 'others' as it is not known what 'others' mean). A dramatic change has taken place from 1996 onward and continued till to date. It is seen that, from 1996 onward the main purpose of visiting Bangladesh by foreign tourists was 'tourism'.

Security now a day is one of the important determinants of selecting a travel destination. Security for tourists is not cheap, but, to be competitive in real terms, host countries must today allocate significant amounts of resources towards it. In an age when tourists include in the price of the trip an implicit estimate of the probability of harm, Bangladesh must include

in its economic policy matrix a set of measures to be competitive from the standpoint of visitors' safety.

In today's world of market economy, a wise step could be to allow foreign investment in developing tourism infrastructure. Bangladesh can encourage foreign direct investment taking lesson from Malaysia for developing its tourist infrastructure. Bangladesh is moving towards more liberal and open financial system, and it would not be difficult at all to obtain favorable response from foreign portfolio investors with an assurance to release 51% shares in the country's equity market.

As Bangladesh lags far behind than its neighboring countries we should take all out effort to improve our share in world tourism trade. Japan, once was a country like Bangladesh. So, we can learn a lot from Japanese experience. Exchange of views and experts between two countries can give us an extra advantage. Moreover, encouraging foreign direct investment as well as joint tourism promotion between SAARC countries can boost our tourism sector significantly.

Hossain (2006) in his Doctoral Thesis on "Development of tourism industry in Bangladesh: an empirical study on its problems and prospects" propounds that Bangladesh tourism industry and its market have failed to grow properly not merely because it lacks enough attractions. Its tourism appears to have suffered mostly due to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient facilities at the destinations, and inaccessibility to the destinations by road, rail and air transport (Hossain, 1999)." Bangladesh also suffers from an image problem. Many foreigners still know Bangladesh as a country of poverty, beggars, floods and political unrest. Besides, the main providers of tourism services in Bangladesh are least involved in the promotion and marketing of the tourism industry in Bangladesh. They at best arrange air tickets for the outgoing passengers and do not usually render any other tourism-related services. Even the national carrier of Bangladesh, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, does not have modern aircraft and suffers from poor flight-planning, irregularities in flight schedule, delay in take off, lack of professional executives, etc.

The study has found that the infrastructure necessary to develop the tourism industry is yet absent in Bangladesh. Lack of smooth transport and easy communication networks, absence of adequate accommodations, irregular power supply, etc. are few examples that affect the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh. Therefore, on the basis of the above findings of this study, the first proposition could be considered true. There are only 32 tour operators, 2 airlines, and 235 travel agencies mostly located in Dhaka City and working in Bangladesh. These numbers are not adequate to attract a significant number of tourists and meet the demands of tourists visiting the country. These firms are the channel members of the tourism industry. The role played by the domestic and foreign channel members is not sufficient to meet the present needs of the industry as well as the market. The study found that the "cooperation of the channel members in the source countries" score only 2.83 indicating quite dissatisfactory impression of the respondent tourist on their performance. Some of the tour operating firms working in this field are not experienced with tourism activities and even fully equipped with necessary accommodation facilities, transport vehicles, and efficient guides. The travel agencies are not playing any their customers. Thus the second propositions could be considered partially true. The performance of the tourism industry in Bangladesh seems to be poor. The number of tourist arrivals is about 2 lacs only which is relatively much lower than the neighbouring countries. Foreign currency earnings and employment generation of this sector also show a gloomy picture. The position of Bangladesh tourism industry in the world of tourism is at the lowest end. At present, Bangladesh finds a place at the bottom of the list of tourist importing countries.

Realizing the prospect of tourism, the GOB has already taken some steps for the development of this sector. It has declared tourism as an industry prepared national Tourism Policy, offered some insentive for the investors to encourage their involvement in this sector, and constructed new hotels-motels in the destination areas. Yet the potentials of tourism in Bangladesh have remained unexplored. Every successive government promised a lot for the development of this sector. But they did not seem to pay the needed attention to implement their commitment. Hence, a lot of efforts are still required to give the industry a solid footing and a real sense of direction. In the case of the last proposition, Bangladesh is yet hopeful to attract a large section of tourists and develop this sector in the near feature. Though the

country may not have the world-renowned attractions, it does have something special to offer the tourists. As tourists are now changing their outlook, avoiding popular tourism circuits and heading towards natural and cultural attractions, Bangladesh has bright prospect to attract those nature-lover tourists. With an unexplored natural beauty and cultural objects, the country can expect to become an important destination by adopting effective strategies and by promoting its unexplored and unbeaten and cultural attractions.

Lincoln (2008) made creative paper on "Tourism industry in Bangladesh: a tremendous potential for foreign currency". The paper analyzed maximum available tourism products and services in Bangladesh and discussed how they can be utilized and used appropriately to establish an international standard thriving and foreign currency earning tourism industry. Bangladesh is endowed with the largest sea beach "Cox's Bazar" in the world within a land radius of only 1,43,000 sq. km. and we have the second most rare sea beach in the world "Kuakata" where one can observe both the sunrise and sunset at the same place. Bangladesh is proud owner of the United Nations declared World Heritage, the largest mangrove forest "Sundarban" in the world. Instead of having these and other tourism products in Bangladesh, we cannot utilize these natural resources to boost our economy by earning foreign currency. This paper focused on the reasons behind our inability to earn foreign currency from tourism sector and ended with recommendation of strategies for the tourism sector of Bangladesh.

The researcher has the privilege of visiting many sea beaches and places of entertainment throughout the developed and developing countries. The enthralling journey to these fabulous places started from Goa in India to Jibran Bay beach in Bali, Indonesia, Albena sea beach in the Black sea, Pahlan sea beach in Singapore along with the Miami sea beach in Florida. Within a very short time, the Goa in India has become an attractive world famous tourist spot. Everyday 37 thousand tourists travel to Goa. The natural beauty of Goa is not better than Cox's Bazar or Kuakata in Bangladesh. It is developed only by attracting aspects of tourism industry. It does not have the facilities of a 37 feet tall Buddhist statue or the largest sand beach of the world or the rare opportunity to observe the sunrise and sunset in the same sea beach. Not only Goa even Miami, Albena, Bali, Pahlan do not have the unique sight and sound compared to our Cox-s-Bazar, Inani, Kuakata, Gangamati. Yet all these sea beaches

have become attractive to the tourists with installations of different entertainment facilities like artificial amenities, proper management, sophisticated hotels, proper security and improved communication system. Beaches are like commercial centres. There one can find hundreds of hotels, restaurants, huge shopping malls, gallery for local song and music, acting of local fairy-tales and jokes for the entertainment for the audience, arrangements for live songs in nearby beach restaurants, diving, parachuting, different types of boats, helicopter, water-ski, circus of dolphin and seal etc. Hundreds and thousands of staffs and employees are engaged in entertainment places like those. People have come from different parts of that particular country to work there.

Arrival of foreign tourists means earning of foreign currencies for the country. If afore said entertainment and facilities can be created in the tourists spots in our country, it will not only ensure foreign currency for the country but also will create employment opportunities for millions of unemployed youths. If employment opportunities are created in these tourist spots, it will reduce the pressure of overpopulation in big cities like Dhaka and others. That means eradication of terrorism, corruption, and political instability. Our identity will increase in the international arena. Bangladesh will become an ideal tourism location for the travel-hungry people of the world. The names of Bangladesh will repeatedly be uttered in the mouths of Europeans and the Americans. We will be a proud citizen of Bangladesh. No longer will people label us as bottomless basket or humans living in trees. Or be called as people from the land of storm, tidal waves and hunger. Appropriate development of tourism industry in the country can be the right measure to exempt us from all those blames and slanders. Combined efforts from both the government and private entrepreneurs can play ample role in this regard.

Joy (2008) prepared an article on "Tourism Development in Bangladesh –A SWOT Analysis". Tourism Development including its sustainability program in Bangladesh is ideally an integral program of the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) as one of its member countries. Sustainable Tourism Development programs, for any WTO member countries, can help fostering better understanding among peoples through building awareness of rich heritage of various civilization and appreciating inherent values of different cultures. Noticeably, Bangladesh has also introduced ecotourism to keep herself abreast with the

proclamation of 2002 as the International year of Ecotourism (UN Resolution no 58/200, The General Assembly, 15 December 1998). Not only that, Bangladesh has adopted and actively participated to uphold the global code of ethics for tourism. At this moment of time, Bangladesh, through its operational arm, the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) has started a campaign inviting world tourists to cast votes in favour of Cox's Bazar to be selected as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Although, in recent years, Bangladesh has been classified as a 'Least Developed Country' (LDC) replacing its position from the list of the developing countries (Joy, 2008). The fact is Bangladesh must play an appropriate role in developing sustainable tourism as a positive instrument towards alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life of its people.

In these days of worldwide economic crisis, constant threat of terrorism and political instability, once again, Bangladesh needs to utilize its available human and natural resources to gain best possible economic support, to protection environment & natural resources and to attain help for social development through promotion of international understanding, peace and prosperity.

The paper has not only identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, also made a good number recommendation to draw appropriate vision, missions and strategies for the Tourism Development in Bangladesh.

Tourism is a vital sector of the over-all socio-economic growth of the country, it should be give due importance and incorporated to the national development plan. This means that the sector must forecast its future project demands, financial commitments to the over-all development process through appropriate Tourism Development Plan and Policy.

Finally, for tourism development in Bangladesh, it is not good enough giving generous incentives and facilities to private and foreign investors in papers and policy documents. Political support and bureaucrat's honest and authoritative action is vital. GOB must treat

