

Prospects and Problems of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach as a Tourist Spot of Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study aims to Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, the tourist capital of Bangladesh. The objective of this paper is identifying and analyzing the potentials of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach as a tourist spot and weighing up the insights of tourists concerning this tourist spot. The study also attempted to highlight the existing services relating to accommodation facility, transport facility, refreshment and communal impression and to understand visitors' expectations on Cox's Bazar Sea beach as one of the most promising tourist spots of Bangladesh. By using Convenient Sampling Technique the data has been collected from randomly selected 500 respondents. In this case the collected data has been processed manually at first and then the statistical devices like average, percentage and ratios have been used. Bangladesh has huge potentials in case of tourism industry through Cox's Bazar Sea Beach. But this nation needs to discover the proper scope through which it might be flourished to the tourists.

Keywords: Cox's Bazar Sea Beach, World Largest Sea Beach, Destination Marketing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh Cox's Bazar Sea Beach is a place of wonderful scenario along with sunset view. Not only local people but also thousands of tourists from different places visit this sea beach each and every day of the year. But the maximum rush of the tourists remains at the season of winter.

Furthermore, the potential tourist areas in and around Cox's Bazar have gigantic range for advancement. A very favourable and healthy climate, the world largest beach, accommodation facilities and shopping centres for special types of items such as Burmis pickle, cloths, souvenir, dry fish and so on make it very attractive tourist spot to the tourists. In this case, to make it promising and convenient place another important factor is transport facility; the tourists may reach in Cox's Bazar by bus, plane and train (Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's bazar) as they wish. So far it is still suffering from proper and suitable development by the government as well as by the private sector. After considering all of these particulars it is disclosed that keenness both in the government and private sectors can expand the attractiveness and beauty of this place and create new prospects for tourism that can facilitate and increase the visitors' stimulation to come and enjoy at the sight for refreshment.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this paper is to explore the potentialities of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach as a tourist spot.

The specific objectives are:

- To understand visitors' expectations about Cox's Bazar Sea beach as one of the most promising tourist spots of Bangladesh;
- To scrutinize the striking services relating to the world largest sea beach, accommodation facility, transport facility, refreshment and communal impression;
- To explore the demographic characteristics of the tourists who have already visited Cox's Bazar Sea Beach.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of the tourist was proposed by the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) in 1963 and approved in 1968 by the World Tourist Organization. This is the most widely accepted definition. It refers that international tourists are "temporary visitors staying at least twenty-four hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified into two headings, which are given below⁸:

- (a) Leisure which includes recreation, holiday, health, study, religion and sport;
- (b) Business which includes family mission, meeting.

There are four core criteria of a tourist spot namely, *a form of tourism* (the most common reason for travel is visiting friends and relatives. A "tourist" will also travel outside of their normal residence and spend a specific amount of time at a destination); *basis in nature* (attractions are based primarily on a natural environment or ecosystem or some component of that environment. It also may have a cultural component associated with the natural environment); *learning* (visitors are motivated by the opportunity to gain knowledge or appreciation of a natural area or culture); & *sustainability* (sustainable is a critical factor in any tourist spot definition. It is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs)³.

Tourism is assumed for pleasure. According to the Swedish National Encyclopaedia the term tourism is defined as visitors' activities when they travel to places that exist outside their ordinary environment. The length of the stay shall be shorter than a year and the main purpose of the tour shall not involve work that is compensated by someone at the destination.

Mass tourism means providing leisure activities to large numbers of people at the same time. Coastal resorts and cruises are popular forms of mass tourism. Nature tourism can be defined as the travel to unspoiled places to experience and enjoy nature⁴. Today eco-tourism is considered to be a popular option to mass tourism for inadequate natural resources. According to The International Eco-tourism Society (TIES) "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" is known as ecotourism¹⁰.

Miles of Golden sands overlooked by tall cliffs and flooded with foaming waves, colorful conch shells, ponderous pagodas, delicious seafood all these make Cox's Bazar, the tourist capital of Bangladesh. The sea-side tourist township of Bangladesh boldness the world's longest (120km) unbroken beach sloping quietly down into the blue water of the Bay of Bengal- Cox's Bazar is one of the most gorgeous tourist spots of the country (BPC 2012)².

According to Quddus, M. A. (1998) the colourful city at the head of a 120 km long beach with lines of fancy shops on either sides of Cox's Bazar main road, quiet and calm Khyangs and Pagodas, Rakhyne quarters, fish harbour of Kostura Ghat, the tourist attractions of the rising sun behind the hills and setting of it into the Bay of Bengal- the entire gives the atmosphere of a fairy land- a tourist heaven⁷.

About Cox's Bazaar according to ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)⁴:

1	Location	South-east region of Bangladesh
2	Distance from the capital, Dhaka:	414 kilometres.
3	Nearest town and distance	Chittagong, 152 kilometres
4	Total area of the district	2,244.30 square kilometres.
5	Height above sea level and an average of 3 metres (Seasonal water level variation)	0.95 metres (high tide), 1.17 metres (low tide).
6	Accessibility	Accessible by air and road
7	Available land area	185 Acres

Tourism is multidisciplinary subject (BPC 2012). Various nation-building agencies dispense their resources and unite hands in making it a triumph. Millions of people are travelling every year from one country to another country, region or area of the world to know the indefinite and to see the unseen (Quddus 1998)⁷.

The number of people who travelled abroad in 2011 increased by 4.4% to a total of 980 million from 2010 and the tourist arrivals increased by 6.7 per cent in 2010 over the previous year, recovering from a decline of about 4.0 per cent in 2009 (Madrid AFP)¹. According to the UNWTO, 846 million international visitor arrivals generated US\$735 billion (US\$2 billion/day) in tourism revenue in 2006. Tourism represents 35 percent the world's export of services and over 70 percent in the Least Development Countries. The UNWTO predicts that international tourism demand will double by 2020 to an astronomical 1.6 billion visitors generating nearly US\$2 trillion in economic activity⁶.

However, in the new era the peaks, the depths of the oceans of the end of the earth are predicted to be the possible destinations for the holiday-makers. In association of these predictions of unexplored natural beauties, Bangladesh has great potentials to be the most attractive tourist destination (Siddiqui 1999)⁹.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), characteristics of the nature based tourist spot can be summarized as follows: i) all nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the surveillance and enjoyment of nature as well as the usual cultures existing in natural areas, ii) it contains instructive and understanding features, iii) it is usually, but not completely prepared for tiny groups by specialized and small, locally owned businesses, iv) it minimizes unenthusiastic impacts upon the natural and socio cultural environment, v) it supports the safety of natural areas, vi) generating economic reimbursement for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with preservation purposes, vii) increasing consciousness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists, viii) providing alternative employment and income opportunities for confined communities (Shamsuddoha and Nasir, 2009)⁵.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1. Types of Research Design: In this study, at first an exploratory research has been conducted to gain a primary understanding about the prospects and problems of Cox's Bazar Sea Beach as a tourist destination of Bangladesh. Then the descriptive research has been conducted.

4.2. Information Needs: Most of the data have been collected from primary sources by the means of survey and the survey conducted through personal interview. On the other hand, data from different journals, magazines, articles relevant to this study is the secondary source from which data directly used in this research.

4.3. Scaling Technique: For scaling purpose, the 5 point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree has been used. The respondents have marked the point that best indicate how they would describe the object being rated.

4.4. Questionnaire development: To collect required primary data from the respondents through the direct interview method a set of structured questionnaire set that containing open-ended and close ended questions. For getting the advantages of data processing the close-ended questions are coded and the open-ended questions will be post coded that means at first collected the data from the respondents and then coded these in different classes.

4.5. Sample size: Here at first, 500 respondents are selected randomly on the basis of convenience and then collected the information from them through personal depth interview method. So, the total sample size is 500.

4.6. Data Processing and Analyzing Technique: At first the theoretical outline of the study has been constructed based on literature review. Then the collected data has been processed manually at first and after that the statistical devices like average, percentage and ratios have been used.

5. STUDY RESULT: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study results have been analyzed under the following captions:

a. Personal Profile of the Respondents

The total number of respondents is 500 individuals; the survey found that among the 500 respondents almost 69% were male tourists and 31% were female.

According to the age of the male respondents, 12.6% are below 20 years, 28.8% are in between 20 to 30 years, 18% in between 30 to 40 years, 12% are in between 40 to 50 years and 3% are above 50 years of age. On the other hand, 4.6% are below 20 years, 10% are in between 20 to 30 years, 6% in between 30 to 40 years, 4% are years in between 40 to 50 years and 1% are above 50 years of age according to the age of the female respondents (Table- 1).

According to the educational qualifications of the respondents, 7% male and 3% female have below Secondary education, 12.2% male and 4.2% female have Secondary education, 15% male and 5% female have Higher Secondary education, 22.6% male and 20% female have completed their Graduation degree and , 8.6% male and 2.4% female have completed their Post-graduation degree (Table- 1).

The study shows the occupation of the respondents at a glance. According to the occupation of the respondents 20% male and 10% female were Service Holder, 12% male and 2% female were Businessmen, 14% male and 8% female were Professionals, 14% male and 10% female were Students and 8.2% male and 1.8% female were in other category (Others indicate the respondents that are unemployed, retired and disable etc.) (Table-1).

The study also shows the monthly income level of the respondents which are given below:

- The most of the respondents' income level is 35000-45000 taka per month (253 respondents' out of 500 or 50.6%);
- 102 respondents' or 20.4% respondents' monthly income are 25000-35000 taka;
- 100 respondents' or 20% respondents' monthly income are 45000-55000 taka;
- 7 respondents' or 35% respondents' monthly income are 55000+ taka.
- 10 respondents' or 2% respondents' monthly income are 15000-25000 taka. (Table- 1)

Therefore, from the above discussion it can be concluded that the tourists of the Cox's Bazar Sea beach are of different ages, different occupations, and different income levels and have different educational background (Table-1).

b. Cox's Bazar Sea Beach- As a Tourist Spot

The study has been showed that 50% respondents have visited the Cox's Bazar Sea Beach for more than three times and 45% respondents come yearly or frequently. 82% respondents think that Cox's Bazar is the best tourist spots among the all tourist spots of Bangladesh. All of the respondents came to Cox's Bazar Sea Beach for recreation. The survey has showed that 32% respondents came to Cox's Bazar to go to Saint Martin Island. Firstly they came to Cox's Bazar and after taking 1 or 2 day(s) rest they would go for Saint Martin Island. There are two ways to visit to Cox's Bazar from outside – by bus and by air; 10% respondents came by air and 87% respondents came by bus to visit Cox's Bazar. 97% respondents think that the transportation costs are increasing rapidly to come to Cox's Bazar. 90% respondents think that the accommodation costs of Cox's Bazar are also increasing rapidly. All of the respondents think that October to February is the best time to visit Cox's Bazar in terms of weather condition (Table-2).

c. Facilities of Cox's Bazar As a Tourist Spot: Visitors' Perspective

As a tourist spot the Cox's Bazar Sea Beach is full of natural beauties and recreational facilities. The tourists which are already visited this tourist spot evaluate her as one of the best tourist spots of the Bangladesh. The respondents were asked on different perspectives and their opinions were measured using Five-point Likert Scale and the study shows that the tourists think that the

accommodation facility is convenient with a mean score of 4.78, all kinds of foods are available with a mean score of 4.62 but quality foods are available with a mean score of 3.78, enough number of shopping mall with a mean score of 3.12, satisfactory level of utility supply with a mean score of 2.79, satisfactory level of street light facility at night with a mean score of 1.18, acceptable level of security system at day and night with a mean score of 3.56, enough number of prayer room with a mean score of 3.06, enough number of change or wash room with a mean score of 3.70. The survey also shows that maximum number of tourists think that life saving facility of Coast guards in beach area is enough with a mean score of 4.89 (Table-3).

d. Problems of Cox's Bazar as a Tourist Spot: Visitors' Perspective

The study shows that the respondents were identified different types of problems about the Cox's Bazar when asked them about the problems they already faced. The problems are given below based on the percentage of the visitors' perspective (Table-4):

1. Tough to ensure accommodation facility during October to January though this is the best time to visit Cox's Bazar in terms of weather condition;
2. There is no rail route to go to Cox's Bazar;
3. Lack of transport facility during October to January because of huge crowd;
4. All kinds of costs like accommodation, foods and transport costs are increasing rapidly;
5. The drainage system is so unhealthy;
6. There is a lack of security system for the tourists;
7. Lack of recreational facility in beach;
8. There is a little facility of toilet and change room in the beach;
9. lack of utility service in Cox's Bazar;
10. Lack of proper Medicare service for the natives and tourists.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tourism sites should be developed in collaboration with other sectors such as transport and communications, hotels, motels and catering establishments, etc.;
- The private sector and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to develop and run tourism sites and other recreational facilities;
- Low-cost tourism facilities should be developed for domestic tourists;
- The Tourism Training Institutes should be expanded through the country;
- Regional development authorities, district authorities and local councils should be associated with tourism development and promotional activities. They will be encouraged to undertake projects locally for developing domestic tourism;
- Wildlife should be preserved through parks, sanctuaries and game resorts on a national priority basis, and wildlife safari tours should also be organized to promote tourism;
- More four- and five-star hotels should be set up in Cox's Bazar.

7. CONCLUSION

Tourism industry of Bangladesh has a number of positive impacts on the overall economy of this country. With tourism come hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies, tour companies, service stations, souvenir shops and much more; all of this already has created many different levels of employment for the native people of Cox's Bazar. The introduction and development of tourism allows the local people of the Cox's Bazar an opportunity for economic and educational growth

that would not otherwise be available. In addition, it may allow both the tourists and the local community a chance to experience other cultures, which broadens understanding. If properly used, the natural beauty of this tourist spot generated huge income that can be tremendously beneficial to the local communities and to the entire Bangladesh. The generated income of this sector can be used on a national and local level to ensure better education, improve infrastructure, to fund conservation efforts, and to promote more responsible tourism. But there are different types of problems in Cox's Bazar Sea Beach that may hinder the rising number of tourists as well as the growth of economic and social development. So, in this circumstance, we need favourable tourism policy for attracting and maintaining the interests of tourists to the tourists' spots of Bangladesh specially for the world largest sea beach Cox's Bazar Sea Beach.

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APPENDIX

Table- 01

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents				
Gender	Male		Female	
	69%		31%	
Age	Age Classes		Male	Female
	Below 20		63	23
	20 to 30		144	50
	30 to 40		90	30
	40 to 50		60	20
	50+		15	5
Education	Level of Education		Male	Female
	Below Secondary		35	15
	Secondary		61	21
	Higher Secondary		75	25
	Graduation		113	100
	Post Graduation		43	12
Occupation	Types of Profession		Male	Female
	Service		100	50
	Business		60	10
	Professionals		70	40
	Students		70	50
	Others		41	9
Income	Monthly Income Levels		No. of Respondents	
	15000 to 25000		10	
	25000 to 35000		102	
	35000 to 45000		253	
	45000 to 55000		100	
	55000+		35	

Table- 02

Sl. No.	General information about Cox's Bazar Sea Beach	Percentage
1	October to February is the best time to visit Cox's Bazar in terms of weather condition	100
2	The overall facility of this spot is increasing day by day	100
3	The accommodation costs of Cox's Bazar is increasing rapidly	90
4	The transportation cost is rising rapidly to come to Cox's Bazar.	97
5	Respondents came by plane at Cox's Bazar	10
6	Respondents came by bus to visit Cox's Bazar	87

7	Respondents came to Cox's Bazar to go to Saint Martin Island	32
8	Have visited the Cox's Bazar Sea Beach for more than three times	50
9	Respondents come yearly or frequently	45
10	The best tourist spots among the all tourist spots of Bangladesh	82

Table- 03 : Facilities of Cox's Bazar as a Tourist Spot: Visitors' Perspective

Sl. No.	Evaluation on Expectation	Mean Score
1	The accommodation facility of Cox's Bazar is convenient	4.78
2	All kinds of foods are available in Cox's Bazar	4.62
3	Quality foods are available	3.78
4	Enough number of shopping mall in Cox's Bazar	3.12
5	Satisfactory level of utility supply in Cox's Bazar	2.79
6	Satisfactory level of street light facility at night in Cox's Bazar	1.18
7	Acceptable level of security system at day and night in Cox's Bazar	3.56
8	Enough number of prayer room	4.06
9	Enough number of change or wash room	3.70
10	Life saving facility of Coast guards in beach area is enough	4.89

Table- 04 : Problems of Cox's Bazar as a Tourist Spot: Visitors' Perspective

Sl. No.	Evaluation on Expectation	Percentage
1	Tough to ensure accommodation facility during October to February though this is the best time to visit Cox's Bazar in terms of weather condition	100
2	There is no rail route to Cox's bazaar	100
3	Lack of convenient transport facility during October to February because of huge crowd	94
4	All kinds of costs like accommodation, foods and transport costs are increasing rapidly	98
5	Lack of proper Medicare service	88
6	Lack of recreational facility in beach	79
7	The drainage system is so unhealthy	75
8	There is a lack of security system	55
9	There is a little facility of toilet and change room;	54
10	Lack of utility service	50