

Elevating Bangladesh: Exploring Tourism Marketing Strategies for Growth

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh, with its pristine natural landscapes, rich historical heritage, and abundant archaeological treasures, presents an enticing prospect for tourism development. The tourism industry holds immense potential for driving economic growth, bolstering the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and generating foreign currency earnings. As countries worldwide vie for a share of the tourism market, effective marketing strategies become imperative for attracting visitors and maximizing revenues. This study investigates the current landscape of tourism marketing in Bangladesh, aiming to identify opportunities, challenges, and strategic interventions for sustainable growth. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and empirical data, this research sheds light on the pivotal role of promotional activities in enhancing the competitiveness of Bangladesh's tourism sector. Key findings highlight the need for targeted investments, innovative marketing approaches, and policy support to capitalize on the country's tourism potential.

Key words: Tourism Marketing, Economic Growth, Bangladesh, Strategic Interventions, Sustainable Development, Promotional Activities, Competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

One of the fastest-growing sectors in the modern world is thought to be tourism. Tourism has the capacity to significantly affect economic growth, which is why it can strengthen Bangladesh's economy. Bangladesh's infrastructure is growing, and the government's involvement in promoting tourist-related features is progressing favorably, despite the fact that the majority of its neighbors in South and Southeast Asia have already established prosperous tourism sectors. In an effort to draw both domestic and foreign tourists, business and public groups have stepped up together. Travel and tourism in Bangladesh has a promising future. If resources are utilized effectively through target-oriented market positioning, tourism in Bangladesh will guarantee to generate more money than it does at the moment. A report by BPC has once again shown the enormous potential of the nation's tourism. The average yearly growth rate of tourist arrivals to Bangladesh, according to the BPC study, would be far higher than the WTO forecasts, based on previous arrival trends.

Effective advertising strategies are vital for the industry's growth in the face of fierce competition among the destination nations. Due to lack of funding and vision on the part of decision-makers, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation or Bangladesh's tourism was unable to achieve this criterion a few days ago (Afjal, 2001). Since there aren't enough attractions and amenities, this industry and its market haven't been able to develop as they should have. But the clock has not yet run out. If Bangladesh takes the initiative to develop some infrastructure and properly highlights itself as a tourist destination to potential tourists through effective promotional measures, the country could earn many times more than it currently does from attracting more tourists in a short amount of time. Thus, ensuring a favorable experience for locals, tourism-related businesses or organizations, and tourists themselves is the goal of tourism marketing. Bangladesh's tourist industry must therefore adopt an integrated approach to planning, development, and management if it is to grow considerably and sustainably, meet the needs of present visitors, and not jeopardize those of future generations.



This study aims to evaluate the importance, existing environment, and potential future in Bangladeshi tourism marketing. This study also included some recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dey et al. (2013) states that, tourism marketing is to be understood as the systematic and coordinated execution of business policy by tourist undertakings, whether private or state-owned at local, regional, national, or international level to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the needs of identifiable consumer groups, and in doing so to achieve an appropriate return. For the western part of Ireland, Deegan and Moloney (2007) noted a significant relationship between tourism and employment and economic growth. There is considerable reason to expect that, in the context of total macroeconomic activity, tourism can significantly contribute to economic development in the years to come if the right emphasis and strategy are adopted.

Researchers found that poor nations are excluded from the benefits of tourism and recommended effective planning that takes into account the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental issues (Butler, 1974; Edelmann, 1975; Sadler & Archer, 1975). As a result, professionals in the tourism industry and international organizations started utilizing tourism as a powerful instrument for reducing poverty. According to Jahangir (2013), community involvement in the tourism planning process is encouraged as a means of implementing sustainable tourism. In addition to the ladder of citizen engagement, power dynamics, mechanisms for collaboration, and social capital for motion, this research evaluated the guiding principles utilized to discuss community.

The attitudes of foreign tourists regarding service product arrangements, channels of distribution, prices of travel-related goods and services, and promotional setups were identified by Chowdhury & Chowdhury (2015). They also demonstrated marketing restrictions that have an impact on how international visitors behave. They advise the Bangladeshi tourism sector to set up its components of the marketing mix in a way that will win over the support of foreign visitors and secure the growth of the nation.

Despite all the efforts and steps from the government and various private entities, Shahabuddin (1986) claimed that Bangladesh's tourist industry has not yet "taken off" or gained a solid footing.

According to Kale & Weir (1986), travelers' decisions to visit a nation are influenced by country-specific appealing and repelling variables. Therefore, the amount of publicity strongly influences a country's efforts to promote tourism.

In Bangladesh, there are numerous tourism attractions. But occasionally, travelers are unable to get this information. In order to create a positive perception of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) needs alter its marketing approach (Hasan, 1992). To promote tourism in the nation, Biman has been unable to comprehend the needs, wants, and other considerations of the customers (Kamal and Chowdhury, 1993).

Overpopulation, natural catastrophes, unemployment, and economic underdevelopment are the main issues affecting tourism in Bangladesh (Hall, 2000). Through this study, we would like to investigate several facets of Bangladeshi tourism marketing.

The methodical and coordinated implementation of business strategy by tourism endeavors, whether privately held or owned by the government, at the local, regional, national, or international level in order to maximize the satisfaction of specific consumer groups' needs and, in the process, generate a suitable return, is widely known as tourism marketing (Bhatia, 2001). Professionals in the travel and tourism sector as well as international organizations began to use tourism as a potent tool for ending poverty. Bangladesh tourism sector needs to be rearranged its components of the marketing mix in a way that will win over the support of foreign visitors and secure the growth. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) needs to alter its marketing strategy for the country in order to foster a favorable image of Bangladesh. The most significant issues impacting tourism in Bangladesh include natural disasters, overcrowding, joblessness, and economic underdevelopment. Publicity coverage has a big impact on a nation's attempts to boost tourism.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

One of the most stunning and interesting places on earth is Bangladesh. It has the capacity to develop its tourism industry. Due to its distinctive qualities, even it can quickly draw a sizable number of both domestic and foreign tourists and generate a sizable quantity of foreign exchange through tourism promotion. The tourism business is growing at a different rapid rate, and marketing has been recognized as the most important management activity. Due to the ephemeral and intangible nature of the tourism industry, it is particularly crucial. Despite its immense tourism potential, Bangladesh faces significant challenges in effectively marketing its attractions and maximizing tourist arrivals. The existing literature underscores the critical importance of robust marketing strategies in driving tourism growth and economic development. However, there remains a gap in understanding the specific needs, opportunities, and constraints within the context of Bangladesh's tourism sector. This study aims to describe Bangladesh's tourism products, why they are necessary, and how they can be produced. This study seeks to address this gap by

providing a comprehensive analysis of the country's tourism marketing landscape, elucidating the significance of strategic interventions for sustainable growth. By highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities facing Bangladesh, this research aims to inform policymakers, industry stakeholders, and marketers about the imperative of adopting tailored marketing approaches to realize the country's tourism potential.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopts a comprehensive review approach, relying solely on secondary sources of data. A systematic search of scholarly literature, industry reports, government publications, and reputable online sources was conducted to gather relevant information on tourism marketing in Bangladesh. The review process involved analyzing and synthesizing existing research findings, industry trends, and policy documents to elucidate the current state of tourism marketing in the country. By leveraging existing knowledge and insights from diverse sources, this study provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in Bangladesh's tourism marketing landscape. The reliance on secondary data ensures the rigor and reliability of the study's findings, offering valuable insights for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers alike.

TOURISM MARKETING: A ROADMAP FOR BANGLADESH

According to marketing professionals, tourist marketing entails systematic and coordinated efforts to maximize traveler happiness. The marketing of tourism is also intended to be a tool to make a potential overhaul of the management concept and reorientation of business policy. Providing tourists with the greatest services is the goal of tourism marketing, which is a comprehensive effort. It is a strategy for commercial promotion that provides firms with the data they need for farming or revising marketing strategies (Mahadasa et al., 2020). Therefore, marketing for the tourism industry focuses on sales or promotion based on market research for products. Compared to other marketing strategies, tourism marketing has unique qualities. Tourists have fewer interactions with local goods and services because they are transient visitors. However, since tourists concentrate on having a good time, marketers should think about using emotional appeals in their campaigns, like giving youngsters a special experience (Mahadasa & Surarapu, 2016). Businesses that depend on tourism depend on other organizations. Several steps are involved in tourism marketing. Consumer understanding is a goal of market research, while the needs of the consumer are the focus of product development. Analysis and selection of target markets, also known as segmentation, include researching potential clientele and choosing only those groups whose requirements and preferences may be most effectively satisfied by a certain producer's offering. Utilizing

promotion, advertising, pricing, and distribution, marketing strategies try to reach their target markets (Mahadasa et al., 2020). Three channels of marketing communication exist: internal, external, and word-of-mouth. To advertise the tourism product to the traveler, external marketing makes promises and boasts about its advantages through formal communication channels. When a tourism service provider contacts a traveler and provides the benefits they have promised, internal marketing communication takes place. When customers or staff members casually share their impressions of the tourism service with others, word-of-mouth communication takes place. The intended people use the excursion for a variety of reasons. The causes of tourism were divided by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation into tourism, business, office, study, religion, service, and other purposes. Other forms of tourism, such as halal tourism, medical tourism, and tourism to slums, are also shown through literature studies.

Site Tourism: One of the main motivations for travel is the enjoyment of scenic beauty, among other factors. This nation is a tourist haven for both domestic and international travelers thanks to its enormous natural attractions.

Business Tourism: Bangladesh receives the second-highest number of international visitors for business. Based on our abundance of natural resources, strategic location, distinct competitive advantage, and comparative advantages, industries in Bangladesh have enormous growth potential to serve the sizeable domestic market as well as to take advantage of the privileged market access being enjoyed by Bangladesh from developed countries through export (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2015).

Office Tourism: There are a huge number of foreign, multinational, and global businesses operating in Bangladesh. These include A. K. Khan & Co. Ltd, Avery Dennison Bangladesh Ltd., Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, Bureau Veritas Consumer Products Services (Bangladesh) Ltd., Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited, and Aamra, a group of 14 businesses that have been active in textile and apparel sector, information and communication technology, and lifestyle service industries in Bangladesh for the past 22 years.

Education Tourism: According to Williams P. (2010), educational tourism refers to travel that people who are taking an overnight trip or going on an excursion engage in when education and learning are either the primary or secondary purpose of their journey. Universities organize numerous international seminars, conferences, and symposiums that draw academics and students from around the world who are interested in learning.

Religious Tourism: The third-largest country in the world with a Muslim majority is Bangladesh. She organizes a large number of religious events, including Bishwa Ijtema and other religious meetings. She draws Muslims from all over the world. A small number of followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity also travel to Bangladesh for religious reasons.

Medical Tourism: A good source of medical tourism can be medical science. Recently, few hospitals with international standards have opened in Bangladesh. These may open up new possibilities for medical travel. Despite the fact that medical tourism is not widely known in Bangladesh, it could soon present a sizable opportunity. The other component of medical tourism is internet medical, which is a sizable online database that offers the details required to entice visitors to the nation physically.

Other Tourism: Bicycle tours, boat sharing, dark tourism, rural tourism, river cruises, nautical tourism, Jihadi tourism, Halal tourism, sports tourism, slum tourism, virtual tours, walking tours, wildlife tourism, and water tourism are some more forms of tourism. People frequently travel for short stays to meet relatives, participate in sports, learn about other cultures, and other reasons.

TOURISM PRODUCTS OF BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has a lot of tourism attractions, thus it has the potential to be a top host destination (Rahman et al., 2020). The following broad categories of items can be used to discuss the entire scenario of tourism-related goods and attractions:

Eco-Tourism products

Bangladesh is a country rich in unspoiled natural areas and wonders, as well as the habitat to much extraordinary and gorgeous wildlife. Bangladesh is the ideal location for ecotourism, with its hills, valleys, forests, beaches, lakes, and rivers. The Sundarbans, the biggest mangrove forest in the world, might be a goldmine for ecotourism in Bangladesh. In order to preserve and maintain the biodiversity of the unique ecotourism, UNESCO has already designated Sundarbans as a world heritage site. With a 120 km long, flat, and drivable beach, Cox's Bazar is the tourist hub of Bangladesh. Inani Beach, Maheshkhali Island (renowned for its Buddhist and Hindu temples and a dried fish industry), Teknaf (Bangladesh's southernmost point), Ramu, Sonadia, Himchhari, St. Martin Island (the sole Coral Island), etc. are some of Cox's Bazar's other unique attractions.

A variety of tribes with unique customs, rituals, and traditions live in the three hilly districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban. The items in the hill tracts are extremely desirable, including those from Chimbuk,

Ruma, the Rain-Khyoung valleys, Keocradang, and Tazinsdang.

Another eco-attraction in Bangladesh is Sylhet, which has the most tea granaries of the entire country.

Another popular tourist destination of Bangladesh is Kuakata Beach, where visitors may witness both sunrise and sunset.

Consequently, Bangladesh possesses a diverse and abundant flora and fauna, which is a biological phenomenon that is solely unique to Bangladesh.

Archeological Tourism products

Bangladesh is a country that is significantly rich in archeological resources, particularly from the medieval era under both Muslim and pre-Muslim control, albeit the majority of these resources are still undiscovered and unknown. According to Bangladesh's earlier history, Buddhism benefited from royal sponsorship from a number of powerful ruling dynasties, including the Chandra and Deva Kings, two of the greatest Pala emperors. Numerous well-run, self-contained monasteries grew up all over the country under their royal patronage. The most important and largest known monastery south of the Himalayas has been excavated in Paharpur, one of the major archeological sites. Mahasthangor is the name of the fortified city that is surrounded by a number of isolated mounds, some of which have local names such as Govinda Bhita Temple, Khodai Pathar Mound, Mankalir Kunda, Parasuramer Bedi, Jiyat Kunda, etc. The Mainamati-Lalmaj range, which extends through the center of the Comilla area, is a remote low, dimpled range of hills scattered with more than 50 ancient Buddhist towns from the 8th to the 12th century AD.

The Shait-Gumbad Mosque is the most majestic and substantial multidomed mosque in Bangladesh.

The Kantanagar Temple, which was constructed in 1752 by Maharaja Pran Nath of Dinajpur, is the most beautiful of the country's late-medieval temples.

Historical Tourism Products

There are numerous historical sites in Bangladesh that depict the Hindu, Muslim, British, and independence eras. Major historical landmarks include:

In Bangladesh's historic district of Dhaka is a fort called Lalbagh Fort. The Mughal era's reddish and pinkish architecture is referred to as Lalbagh. Aurangabad Fort was the name of the initial fort. Prince Muhammad Azam Shah, the future Mughal emperor and son of the emperor Aurangzeb, began work on the building.

Sonargaon (Sonargaon is one of Bengal's first capitals. Up until the 13th century, it served as the Deva Dynasty's capital. Sonargaon served as the Sultanate of Bengal's

secondary capital from that point until the arrival of the Mughals.

World War II Cemetery: Over 700 troops from the Commonwealth and Japan who perished in the Second World War are buried at this well-maintained Chittagong cemetery.

The Mainamati War Cemetery, also known as the Comilla War Cemetery, is a cemetery and memorial commemorating Second World War dead from the surrounding districts in Comilla, Bangladesh. There are 736 Commonwealth burials in the cemetery. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission established and maintains it as a memorial to those who gave their lives in battle.

Gandhi Ashram (This ashram was built in honor of Mahatma Gandhi's historic visit to Noakhali and is dedicated to his philosophy).

The stunning memorial honoring the first provisional revolutionary government of Bangladesh, which was established here on April 14, 1971, during the liberation war, is known as Mujibnagar.

National Memorial (Architect Moinul Hossain created the national memorial. It was made in honor of the millions of unidentified martyrs who died in the liberation fight in 1971).

Bangabandhu Military Museum had started from September 2017. 'Tophakhana JaduGhor' was first inaugurated on 15 November 2018 followed by the 'Bangabandhu Military Museum' that started its journey from 06 January 2022 after its inauguration by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Central Shahid Minar was constructed on February 21, 1952, to honor the martyrs of the historic language fight and serve as a symbol of Bengali nationalism.

Martyred Intellectual Memorial (the memorial was erected to remember the intellectuals who died in 1971, barely two days before Victory Day, at the hands of Pakistan's occupation forces).

National Poet's Grave (Kazi Nazrul Islam, a revolutionary poet, passed away on August 29, 1976, and was buried here. In close proximity to the Dhaka University Central Mosque is the cemetery).

High Court Building, Old the High Court Building is an excellent example of the fusion of European and Mughal architecture; it was initially constructed as the residence of the British Governor.

Religious Tourism Products

The early 14th century is thought to have seen the introduction of Islam to the area, according to the Shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal (The renowned Muslim Saint, Hazrat Shah Jalal (R.A.)). In the center of Sylhet town, near

Dargah Mahalla, is where his shrine is located.

Mosque (Dhaka is home to many hundreds of old mosques. The Huseni Dalan Mosque, Chawkbazar Mosque, Star Mosque (18th century), Baitul Mukarram - National Mosque, and Seven Domed Mosque (17th century) are among the most notable.

A big number of tourists and pilgrims flock to Bayazid Bostami Majar in Chittagong. A sizable pond with hundreds of enormous turtles and fish floating in the water may be found at the base of the structure.

The Sat Gambuj Mosque, often known as the "Seven Domed Mosque," is located in the Mohammadpur neighborhood, just outside of Dhaka. It is a beautiful illustration of the 17th-century introduction of the regional Mughal architectural style to Bangladesh.

The Shait Gambuj Mosque, also known as the Saith Gunbad Masjid or the Sixty Dome Mosque, is a mosque in Bagerhat, Bangladesh. It is a section of Bagerhat's Mosque City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is the largest mosque during the sultanate era (1352-1576) in Bangladesh. Khan Jahan Ali, the governor of the Sundarbans, erected it during the Bengal Sultanate. One of the most spectacular Muslim monuments in all of South Asia, according to some.

The most elaborate of Bangladesh's late-medieval Hindu temples is the Kantaji Temple. Every square inch of the temple is exquisitely decorated with clay plaques that depict a staggering variety of modern social and cultural activities, as well as flora and animals, geometric motifs, mythological scenarios, and more.

Cultural Tourism Products

Sonargaon, one of Bengal's first capitals, dates to the 13th century. Here, a museum of folk art and craft has been constructed. In Goaldi village, there are some ancient structures that are still standing, including Sultan Abdul Alla's mausoleum and a stunning mosque. Natore-Dighapati Rajbari (The palace is surrounded by a massive moat and boasts roomy, open gardens. The palace boasts a well-appointed guesthouse, a commanding doorway, and a lovely garden with white marble statues. Shilaidaha Kuthibari (The majestic mansion carries remembrance of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore who made frequent visit to this place and used to reside here, in connection with management of his Zamindari and enhanced Bengali language via his poems during that period). Puthia Rajbari, an example of Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture, is a palace in Puthia Upazilla, Rajshahi, Bangladesh. It was constructed in 1895 for Rani Hemanta Kumari Debi. The palace is located one kilometer south of Rajshahi Natore highway and 30 kilometers to the east of the town.

The famed poet Micheal Madhusudan Dutta was born in Sagordari, which is generally regarded as the birthplace of

Bangla literature's first modern poet. Trishal is where many of our nation's poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's boyhood recollections can be discovered. Shahjadpur Kuthibari (Another historical location where poet Rabindranath Tagore frequently traveled). Ahsan Manzil Museum (In Dhaka, the pink majestic Ahsan Manzil has lately undergone renovations and been transformed into a museum. It is the pinnacle of the rich cultural history of the country. The Nawab of Dhaka resides there and is a silent observer of many occurrences. Ahsan Manzil, a landmark of incredible historical beauty, is currently being repaired.

Recreational Tourism Products

Bangladesh is home to the greatest uninterrupted stretch of ocean coastline in the world, thousands of rivers and rivulets, and several lakes and canals that provide tourists a variety of recreational opportunities like fishing, boating, swimming, and squash. Additionally, we have a variety of rich classical dances, arts, and music that might draw both domestic and international visitors.

Adventure Tourism Products

Adventure travelers might experience something special and difficult in Sundarban and Chittagong's Hill District. They can have exciting experience by observing Royal Bengal Tigers, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer, Crocodiles, other reptiles, and Bangladesh's tallest peaks in the north.

DIGITALIZATION'S IMPACT ON TOURISM MARKETING IN BANGLADESH

In the contemporary landscape of global tourism, the advent of digitalization has revolutionized the way destinations promote themselves and engage with potential travelers (Mahadasa & Surarapu, 2016; Dekkati et al., 2016). Bangladesh, with its burgeoning tourism industry, stands poised to leverage digital technologies to enhance its marketing efforts and attract a diverse array of visitors. This chapter delves into the transformative impact of digitalization on tourism marketing in Bangladesh, exploring key trends, opportunities, and challenges in harnessing digital platforms to promote the country's rich cultural heritage and natural attractions.

Digitalization Trends in Bangladesh's Tourism Sector

In recent years, Bangladesh has witnessed a rapid proliferation of digital technologies, fueled by increasing internet penetration and smartphone adoption rates. This digital revolution has profoundly influenced the tourism sector, empowering travelers with access to information, booking platforms, and immersive experiences (Vadiyala, 2021). From social media platforms to mobile applications, digital channels have emerged as powerful tools for destination marketing,

allowing Bangladesh to showcase its unique offerings to a global audience.

Opportunities for Digital Engagement

Digitalization presents a myriad of opportunities for Bangladesh to elevate its tourism marketing efforts and differentiate itself in the competitive global landscape. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer cost-effective avenues for destination promotion, enabling real-time engagement with prospective travelers and influencers (Desamsetti, 2016a; Rahman & Dekkati, 2022). By leveraging captivating visual content, user-generated experiences, and targeted advertising campaigns, Bangladesh can effectively showcase its cultural diversity, natural beauty, and historical landmarks to a global audience.

Furthermore, the rise of online travel agencies (OTAs) and booking platforms has streamlined the travel planning process, offering convenience and flexibility to travelers while providing tourism stakeholders with valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences (Desamsetti, 2016b). By partnering with leading OTAs and embracing digital booking technologies, Bangladesh can enhance its visibility and accessibility in the global travel marketplace, driving visitor numbers and tourism revenues.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite the opportunities afforded by digitalization, Bangladesh faces several challenges in harnessing the full potential of digital technologies for tourism marketing. Limited digital infrastructure, low digital literacy rates, and linguistic barriers pose obstacles to effective communication and engagement with international travelers (Vadiyala, 2020). Additionally, concerns regarding data privacy, cybersecurity, and online fraud necessitate robust regulatory frameworks and industry standards to safeguard the integrity and trustworthiness of digital platforms (Ballamudi & Desamsetti, 2017; Desamsetti, 2021).

Moreover, the rapid pace of technological innovation requires tourism stakeholders to adapt and evolve their marketing strategies continually (Thaduri et al., 2016). Keeping abreast of emerging digital trends (Fadziso et al., 2019), investing in digital skills training, and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors are essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of Bangladesh's tourism industry in the digital age.

Digitalization presents unprecedented opportunities for Bangladesh to elevate its tourism marketing efforts and position itself as a premier destination on the global stage. By embracing digital technologies, fostering innovation,

and addressing key challenges, Bangladesh can leverage its cultural heritage, natural assets, and warm hospitality to attract a diverse array of travelers and drive sustainable tourism growth. As the country navigates the complexities of the digital landscape, strategic investments, collaboration, and adaptability will be crucial for realizing the full potential of digitalization in shaping the future of tourism marketing in Bangladesh.

TOURISM MARKETING'S VALUE FROM A BANGLADESHI PERSPECTIVE

In the dynamic landscape of global tourism, Bangladesh's emergence as a promising destination hinges significantly on the effectiveness of its marketing strategies. This chapter explores the evolving role of tourism marketing from a Bangladeshi perspective, shedding light on key considerations, trends, and strategies aimed at elevating the country's profile in regional and international markets.

Positioning Bangladesh on the Global Stage: Marketing plays a pivotal role in positioning Bangladesh as a sought-after destination in both regional and international markets. Through targeted promotional campaigns and strategic partnerships, the country endeavors to showcase its rich cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and diverse tourism offerings to potential travelers worldwide. By leveraging digital platforms, traditional media channels, and experiential marketing initiatives, Bangladesh seeks to captivate the imagination of travelers and inspire them to explore its unique attractions.

Influencing Destination Images: The perception of Bangladesh as a tourism destination is shaped significantly by the visual content disseminated through various channels, including television, satellite broadcasts, and online platforms. Captivating imagery, accompanied by compelling narratives and endorsements from influencers, celebrities, and opinion leaders, plays a crucial role in shaping travelers' perceptions and influencing their destination choices (Desamsetti, 2020). Effective marketing endeavors to craft a compelling narrative that resonates with target audiences, highlighting the country's cultural richness, scenic beauty, and hospitality.

Adapting to Shifting Market Dynamics: As tourism trends evolve and new market segments emerge, effective marketing strategies must adapt to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics (Desamsetti, 2022). Bangladesh's tourism industry recognizes the importance of catering to diverse market segments, including China, Japan, East European and South American countries, and Southeast Asian nations. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of each market

segment, marketing efforts can be tailored to resonate with target audiences, thereby maximizing the country's appeal as a travel destination.

Strengthening Bangladesh's Global Reputation: Efforts to enhance Bangladesh's reputation as a global travel destination necessitate the implementation of efficient marketing strategies supported by enticing offers and compelling travel products. Collaborative initiatives involving government agencies, tourism stakeholders, and private sector partners are instrumental in crafting and executing marketing campaigns that highlight the country's unique selling points and competitive advantages. By fostering a positive perception of Bangladesh as a tourism destination, marketing endeavors contribute to sustainable tourism growth and economic development.

Tourism marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping Bangladesh's image as a desirable travel destination on the global stage. By embracing innovative marketing strategies, leveraging digital technologies, and adapting to changing market dynamics, Bangladesh can enhance its competitiveness and appeal to a diverse array of travelers. As the country continues to position itself as a leading tourism destination, strategic investments in marketing and promotional efforts will be essential for realizing its full potential and fostering sustainable tourism growth.

MARKETING OF TOURISM PRODUCTS IN BANGLADESH: THE WAY OUT

The ideal strategy for promoting tourist attractions in the beginning is advertising. Depending on their requirements and goals, businesses can select from a wide variety of advertising techniques. Print, broadcast, and online media make up these channels. Today's society makes extensive use of these marketing methods. These are a few other successful strategies for marketing internationally. There is no geographic restriction on these marketing strategies. These are occasionally the most affordable methods of selling products and services. Again, clients may very efficiently access all information through those links, including price, facilities, opening hours, information about contracts, recent corporate actions, and its history. Customers might mail the service provider if they wanted any information (Siddique et al., 2013). Since everything depends on branding, branding should be utilized in destination marketing or tourism. An attraction will become well-known all over the world overnight if people can establish a strong brand for it. Any product or location needs branding to survive (Tinne, 2015).

Our daily lives now include using the Internet. The majority of people's daily time is spent online, communicating with friends and acquaintances, and maintaining connections with them through various

social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and so on (Baddam, 2020). Once more, there are more people using the internet every day. Social media can therefore be useful for marketing travel and tourism. We can already observe that the majority of tourism-related businesses have YouTube channels where they post their films or online advertisements. They also have several Facebook pages where they interact with customers and share the most recent details about their offerings. The idea of social media marketing is optimizing the website so that written content attracts links that serve as trust endorsements with the aim of listening to what the community frequently does and responses (Andrews, 2007). It aids in increasing client awareness of the brand and increasing the visibility of the goods or services for the intended market. Social media is also described as a technique that enables people to advertise their websites, goods, or services through online social networks as well as to connect with and engage a far bigger population than would have been possible through conventional advertising channels (Hyman, 1979). Another crucial step is to advertise on travel portals. There are countless travel-related blogs, online magazines, and informational websites. Use straightforward banner ads to draw in viewers. Select travel-related websites that your target audience is likely to visit, and spend money on advertisements that show up "above the fold," at the top of the page where they can be seen without scrolling. Create straightforward, engaging, and simple-to-read commercials. A travel column in a print newspaper or guest postings on travel blogs are both required. In order to draw customers who are interested in particular regions or trip kinds, it is important to choose topics that are pertinent to the tourism services being offered. Customer demands and preferences must be understood. It is advantageous to work with market and economic changes to improve your marketing message.

Bangladesh will gain from this strategy if it places some tourist amenities of a high international grade among the alluring spots. The creation of special tourist areas, the building of 5-star hotels, the installation of golf courses, the development of water sports, etc., are a few examples. Another strategy to capture the tourism market is the installation of traditional Bangladeshi clothing shopping complexes in popular tourist locations. It is generally known that Bangladesh's traditional malls are luring customers from neighboring and European nations with their low prices as well as their delicately woven and knitted clothing. Business tourism implementation will have a significant impact on the tourism industry in Bangladesh. Services and facilities for the millions of delegates or visitors who yearly attend conventions, meetings, exhibits, congresses, business events, incentive travel, and corporate hospitality are provided by business tourism. People who travel for work-related reasons are the subject of this concern. In some significant divisional and district towns in Bangladesh, like Chittagong, Cox's

Bazar, Rajshahi, and Khulna, there is a great deal of opportunity to boost business tourism. Additionally, we may support the growth of numerous sectors with backward links in the nation by promoting business travel. Additionally, this will generate a large number of temporary jobs such as hawkers, food stands, betel stores, and tea vendors.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN TOURISM MARKETING

Despite its immense tourism potential, Bangladesh grapples with a myriad of challenges that hinder the effective implementation of marketing strategies aimed at promoting its attractions on the global stage (Rahman & Ahsan, 2013). This chapter delves into the key challenges facing Bangladesh's tourism marketing efforts and proposes strategic interventions to address these obstacles, paving the way for sustainable tourism growth and development.

Lack of Government Financial Support: A critical impediment to effective tourism marketing in Bangladesh is the absence of sufficient financial assistance from the government. Limited funding allocation for tourism promotion constrains the country's ability to conduct impactful marketing campaigns, develop tourism infrastructure, and compete with other destinations in the global marketplace. Addressing this challenge requires enhanced collaboration between government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and international partners to mobilize resources and prioritize tourism development as a strategic national priority.

Inadequate Education and Literacy Rates: The country's inadequate education system and high rates of illiteracy pose significant barriers to tourism marketing efforts. A lack of skilled workforce and a limited pool of educated professionals hinder the implementation of innovative marketing strategies and the dissemination of tourism-related information (Awan, 2015). Investing in education and vocational training programs tailored to the needs of the tourism industry is essential for building a competent workforce capable of driving tourism promotion and delivering high-quality visitor experiences.

Limited Tourism Training Facilities: Insufficient tourism-related training facilities further exacerbate the skills gap within the industry, hindering the development of a proficient workforce capable of meeting the demands of the tourism sector. Enhancing the capacity of existing training institutions, establishing specialized tourism academies, and fostering public-private partnerships in skills development initiatives are imperative for addressing this challenge and nurturing a skilled

workforce equipped with the knowledge and competencies required for effective tourism marketing.

Inadequate Infrastructure: The inadequacy of infrastructure facilities, including transportation networks, accommodation options, and tourist amenities, poses a significant challenge to tourism marketing in Bangladesh. Poor road connectivity, limited accessibility to remote destinations, and substandard tourism infrastructure detract from the overall visitor experience and diminish the country's attractiveness as a tourism destination. Investing in infrastructure development projects, upgrading transportation systems, and enhancing tourist facilities are essential for improving the tourism infrastructure and enhancing the country's competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Lack of Market Data and Interaction: The absence of comprehensive market data and limited interaction with target markets hamper Bangladesh's ability to formulate informed marketing strategies and effectively target potential travelers. A dearth of market research initiatives, consumer insights, and tourism statistics impedes the identification of market trends, preferences, and demand patterns, limiting the efficacy of marketing campaigns. Establishing robust market research mechanisms, enhancing data collection and analysis capabilities, and fostering collaboration with tourism stakeholders and industry experts are critical for overcoming this challenge and enhancing Bangladesh's market intelligence and responsiveness.

Inappropriate Tourism Policies: The presence of inappropriate or outdated tourism policies further complicates the landscape of tourism marketing in Bangladesh, inhibiting the industry's growth potential and impeding investment in tourism infrastructure and development initiatives. Streamlining regulatory frameworks, aligning policies with global best practices, and fostering a conducive business environment are essential for creating an enabling policy environment that promotes tourism growth, attracts investment, and facilitates sustainable development.

Security and Safety Concerns: Inadequate security and safety measures pose significant challenges to tourism marketing efforts in Bangladesh, undermining visitor confidence and deterring potential travelers from visiting the country. Instances of crime, political instability, and natural disasters contribute to perceptions of insecurity and risk, adversely impacting the country's tourism image and competitiveness. Strengthening law enforcement capabilities, implementing stringent

safety protocols, and enhancing emergency preparedness and crisis management systems are imperative for mitigating security risks, ensuring visitor safety, and safeguarding Bangladesh's reputation as a secure and hospitable tourism destination.

In conclusion, addressing the myriad challenges facing tourism marketing in Bangladesh requires concerted efforts and strategic interventions across multiple fronts. By prioritizing investments in education and skills development, enhancing infrastructure facilities, improving market intelligence, reforming regulatory frameworks, and ensuring safety and security, Bangladesh can overcome the obstacles hindering its tourism potential and emerge as a vibrant and competitive tourism destination on the global stage. Through collaborative partnerships and sustained commitment to tourism development, Bangladesh can unlock new opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development, while showcasing its rich cultural heritage and natural treasures to the world.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As Bangladesh endeavors to realize its tourism potential and overcome existing limitations, strategic interventions and recommendations are essential for fostering sustainable tourism growth and development. This chapter presents a series of recommendations aimed at addressing key challenges and maximizing opportunities for enhancing tourism management and promotion in Bangladesh.

Strengthening Management Education in Tourism Marketing: The development of specialized management education programs in tourism marketing is paramount for equipping industry professionals with the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively promote Bangladesh's tourism offerings. Investing in training and capacity-building initiatives for sales and marketing personnel will enable them to tailor marketing strategies to the needs and preferences of both regional and global audiences, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of Bangladesh as a tourism destination.

Fostering Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors: Establishing a collaborative framework between the public and private sectors is essential for fostering synergy and cooperation in tourism management and promotion. Encouraging active participation of local communities in tourism development initiatives will ensure their ownership and engagement, thereby fostering sustainable tourism practices and equitable distribution of benefits.

Establishing Tourist Information Centers: The establishment of a national network of tourist

information centers will facilitate seamless access to essential travel information for visitors, including details on destinations, transportation options, accommodation facilities, and cultural attractions. These centers will serve as vital touchpoints for tourists, providing assistance and guidance throughout their travel journey and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

Promoting Tribal Tourism: Harnessing the cultural richness and diversity of Bangladesh's tribal communities presents a unique opportunity for promoting tribal tourism and attracting curious travelers interested in exploring indigenous cultures and ways of life. Establishing tribal retail centers in tourist destinations will provide visitors with opportunities to purchase authentic handicrafts and engage with local artisans, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of tribal communities.

Facilitating Halal Tourism: Recognizing the growing demand for halal tourism experiences among Muslim travelers, Bangladesh can capitalize on its status as a predominantly Muslim country by developing halal-friendly tourism offerings. Creating designated halal tourism zones, offering halal-certified accommodation and dining options, and providing tailored services that adhere to Sharia principles will enhance the country's appeal as a preferred destination for Muslim travelers.

Enhancing Training and Capacity Building: Continued investment in training and capacity-building initiatives is essential for keeping the tourism workforce abreast of emerging trends and best practices. Offering regular training programs and updated courses will equip industry professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver high-quality services and maximize productivity, thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of Bangladesh's tourism sector.

Ensuring Security and Political Stability: Prioritizing security measures and maintaining political stability are fundamental prerequisites for fostering a conducive environment for tourism growth. Strengthening security protocols, establishing dedicated law enforcement units for visitor safety, and adopting target-oriented planning strategies for infrastructure development will enhance the safety and security of tourists and instill confidence in Bangladesh as a safe and welcoming destination.

By implementing these recommendations and overcoming existing limitations, Bangladesh can unlock its tourism potential and emerge as a vibrant and competitive tourism destination on the global stage. Through strategic partnerships, collaborative initiatives, and sustained investments in tourism development,

Bangladesh can foster sustainable growth, create employment opportunities, and showcase its cultural heritage and natural beauty to the world. With a proactive approach and concerted efforts from all stakeholders, Bangladesh can chart a path towards a prosperous and inclusive tourism future.

CONCLUSION

The fastest-growing sector globally is tourism. Bangladesh offers greater possibilities for both domestic growth and luring tourists from abroad. As the global tourism industry continues to expand, Bangladesh stands poised to capitalize on its diverse cultural heritage and natural attractions. However, realizing this potential requires a concerted effort to develop and implement effective marketing strategies tailored to the country's unique context. By prioritizing investments in promotional activities, leveraging digital technologies, and fostering collaboration between public and private stakeholders, Bangladesh can enhance its competitiveness in the global tourism market and drive sustainable economic growth. Moving forward, policymakers and industry leaders must work together to craft policies and initiatives that support the development of a vibrant and resilient tourism sector in Bangladesh.

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