



Community Based Development through Tourism in Bangladesh: Possibilities and Limitations

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Introduction

Initiatives have been taken by the government to development of Community tourism in Bangladesh:

- Establish Bangladesh Tourism Board as an apex national tourism regulatory body in 2010.
- A new Act has been enacted to stimulate community tourism and preserve heritage site of Bangladesh
- The tourist attractive sites of the country are declared as tourism protected area.

Benefits



- Income generating activities through selling home/handmade products and rent of housing.
- Exchange of knowledge, culture and tradition
- Employment of surplus labor in tourism sector from agriculture
- Empowerment of women through employment
- Increase of awareness regarding health, sanitation, education and other social indicators
- Development of local infrastructure
- Reduce mother and child mortality rate due to education and access of primary health facilities
- Increase life expectancy and standard of living of the community.





Benefits

Continued...

- reducing rural urban migration, rejuvenating rural communities and countering structural inequalities of income distribution
- Increasing tourist satisfaction
- helping tourism professionals to design better tourism plan
- contributing to a fairer distribution of costs and benefits among community members
- assisting in satisfying locally identified needs
- Strengthening the democratization process in tourist destinations.

Stakeholders



- **Central Government:** to provide the regulatory and legal framework and create favorable business environment to flourish tourism
- **Local Government:** most important to implement and support government policy and maintain local law and order situation
- **NGO's:** play vital role to organize and engage the local community to explore their potentials according to their inherent capability with available resources and provide product development, research and marketing facilities of their products
- **Private tour operators:** most vital stakeholders to develop the tourism as a whole, explore of possibilities of community tourism, involve the local people, make bridge between local community and tourist and provide very useful suggestion for Government to formulate tourism related Acts and regulations.
- **Local communities:** act as a key component of community tourism, who are the host of the tourist and nucleus of community tourism.
- **Law enforcing agency:** an important part of community tourism specially in developing country to ensure safety and security of tourist



Assets

- Diversified cultural heritage
- Beautiful natural sites
- Very rich domestic crafts industry
- Diversified religious and ethnic group and their culture
- Simplicity and warm hospitality of local people
- Very vibrant and distinct 6 seasons
- Necessary regulatory framework to develop tourism
- Declared tourism as a thrust sector of economy by the Government
- Involvement of private entrepreneurs to develop tourism infrastructure
- Rapid and steady GDP growth rate (6%+) since two decades

Planning & Strategy



- A new Act has been enacted in 2010 to address the necessity of development of tourism sector and economic development as well
- Declare tourism and hospitality industry as priority industry in industrial policy of Bangladesh
- Bangladesh Tourism Board(BTB) has been formed in 2010 under this Act
- BTB is mainly responsible to promote and development of tourism as well as CBT
- Tourist attractive sites of country are declared as tourism protected area by the Government
- Government has declared 2016 as 'Tourism Year' to attract 10 million foreign tourist and further development of tourism sector
- Recently some initiatives have been taken by the private tour operators
- Government is also trying to expand regional tourism specially SAARC countries
- To attract Buddhist people from SAARC & ASEAN countries, religious tourism as a component of CBT has been given emphasis at Chittagong and Sylhet Hill tract region



Case Study

- 'Ajiyer' have introduced community tourism in a form of 'home stay program' at two villages of Tangail district about 7-8 years back. They supported the house owners of these villages to build some infrastructures like toilets and other necessary things for the tourist. They have also arranged awareness and sensitization training and provided guideline to the village people to deal with the tourists. Now they are successfully running the home stay program as well as day visit program in Tangail. Usually they have foreign tourists from Japan, England, Italy, USA and Brazil. The tourist enjoys the village life, local foods, traditional festivals and cultural program. They are very fond of the local handicrafts, gold and silver jewels, cane made household products and organic grains and vegetables. They are also very interested to learn the new agricultural system adopted in the fields of the locality.



Issues

- Physical infrastructure
- Negative image among foreigners about Bangladesh
- Lack of necessary proper and sufficient publicity
- Lack of skilled manpower
- Lack of safety and security
- Poor internet coverage
- Lack of automation of hotel booking and other facilities
- Language barrier
- Religious believes and norms

Recommendations



- Formulation of a policy is a must for the introduction of Community Based tourism to avoid unplanned development of tourism
- Communication, internet, electricity, sanitation, telephone and other infrastructural facilities should be enhanced in the rural/ community area.
- Workshop, trainings and seminars should be arranged for the policy makers, tour operators, hospitality sectors and the hoteliers
- Natural environment, social and cultural heritage should be protected in the locality.
- Security measures should be strengthened to ensure safe and risk-free movements of the tourists.
- Necessary promotional actions and public relation activities should be strengthened to remove the perceived negative image of and misconceptions about Bangladesh before arrival of the tourists in Bangladesh



Thank You

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