

# Chittagong-A hub of eco-tourism

## Some possibilities and proposals

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### Abstract-

Bangladesh is a darling child of Mother Nature. Very few countries of the world have such natural beauties like Bangladesh. Chittagong, the port city of Bangladesh and is the hub of these natural attractions. It is a division where you can find sea, hill, river, dighi (a large and deep tank or pond) what not! Moreover, Chittagong has archaeological, natural, ecological, cultural and other tourism products to attract tourists [1]. Tourism has considered as the world's largest and rapid growing industry of modern business world. It can play a vital influence on economic development of the country. However, this industry, in our country, fails to reach its destination due to inadequate marketing practices. This paper is about the problem, strength, constraint and possibilities of the Chittagong city and its surrounding area to become an eco-tourist hub and also provides some ideas to develop the present state of the city to convert it into an eco-tourist hub of Bangladesh [2]. For this the potentiality of this city of being a tourist hub is at first analyzed following the standard given by UN and after that through SWOT analysis the present state of Chittagong is analyzed. Finally, some proposals comprising the tourism development of Chittagong with a proposed outline of an individual development plan is provided.

**Key words**— Tourist hub, Swot analysis, Possibilities, Development factors, development proposals, a development project estimation.

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the potential sectors but it is still unexplored by the decision maker or relevant agency of Chittagong. Her tourist attractions include archeological sites, historic mosques and monuments, resorts, beaches, picnic spots, forest and wildlife. There are hills, deep rivers and the longest beach in the world. In this area, the scope of nature based tourism, research based tourism, culture based tourism, and eco-tourism is quite evident [3]. Many developing countries have prepared plans particularly at the central level to guide tourism development, as they have recognized the tourism sector as an important source of foreign currency earning and employment [4]. It is high time we explore our natural treasures and utilize it.

### Background of the study

#### Chittagong

According to the Muslim historian it is found that in past Chittagong was full of angels and demonic soul. On that time a saint named 'Badar shah' had come to Chittagong. He used a 'chati' (a kind of torch which is made of mud and lit by fire) to eradicate this demonic souls from this region. From that event this area had been named as chatigram and then converted to chattagram. [5]

But according to the Buddhist historian, they described that in past there were a lot of 'Buddha chaitta' (Buddhist praying place or keyang). With chaitta, gram word then added with the word and then denoted by choittagram. Later this chaittagram has converted to Chittagong. Chittagong. It is the biggest seaport and second largest town in Bangladesh situated near the Bay of Bengal. It is 264 km Away east of Dhaka, famous for hill areas, natural beauty And for the seashore. Chittagong is also known of the town of Aulias (Muslim saints). Its green hills and forests, its Broad sandy beaches and its fine cool climate always attract the holiday-markers. Described by the Chinese traveler poet, Huen Tsang (7th century A.D) as "a sleeping beauty emerging from mists and water" and given the title of "Porto Grande" by the 16th century Portuguese seafarers. It combines the busy hum of an active seaport with the shooting quiet of a charming hill town [6]

Chittagong is the country's chief port and is the main site for the establishment of heavy, medium and light industries. Bangladesh's only steel mill and oil refinery are also located in Chittagong.

#### Chittagong as a tourist hub

In the reference of UN, for being a tourist spot, a city need to have the following tourist attraction products : [7]

1. **Eco tourism product:** As an eco-tourism product Chittagong have Chittagong hill tracks, Cox's bazar, kaptai, dulahzra safari park, foy's lake, Patenga beach, naval academy, River karnaphully, mahamaya, bashkhali, patiya hilly areas, C.R.B etc.

2. **Historical tourism product:** As a historical tourism product Chittagong have war cemetery, old railway station, Chittagong court building, Chandanpura nachghor etc.

3. **Religious tourism products:** As religious tourism products we have the shrine of baized Bostami, the shrine of maizvandari, Adinath mandir, Kapiladham mandir, Patharghata church, sorno mandir etc.

4. **Recreational tourism products:** For the recreational tourism products Chittagong have place like foy's lake, patenga, cox's bazaar, amusement parks like Zia complex, concord amusement park, karnaphully park, ramu, himchori etc.

5. **Adventure tourism products:** For adventure tourism like hiking, we can provide the Chittagong hill tracks, Kaptai, foy's lake resort etc. locations.

Chittagong lacks only two sides. One we do not have any *archeological* sites like mahasthangor but still it is predicted that a very old settlement was established in the karnaphully basin area near present KEPZ which needs to be found out and we don't have any *standard museum*.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Chittagong has possesses almost all the resources that are necessary to turn it into a tourist hub.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

**Swot** analysis means strength, weakness, opportunities and Threat analysis [8]. Mainly this type of analysis is used for Commercial analysis but in this paper this method is used to analyze the Potentiality and state the present condition of Chittagong's Tourism aspect.

### Strength

- Its unique natural resources. Chittagong is the very few of the cities who possess hill, beach, rivers and lots of greenery within.
- Her largest sea beach in Cox's bazaar.
- Her renowned historical and religious places. The shrine of baized basmati or the temple of Kapiladham, sorno mandir is very popular internationally.
- Her natural beauty and greenery.
- It is a city famous for its hospitality.
- Accommodation facilities like: peninsula, Agrabad, lord's inn, avenue, or the resorts of foy's lake.

The main factor is that tourism mostly a service industry, is more labor oriented than other sectors of production. Automated and computerized processes may replace human beings in other industries to a great extent, but in the tourism sector the key factor is service, particularly personal service. Therefore, it is clear that the tourism industry Offers more **employment opportunities** than other industry with the growth of population in the country, the problem of unemployment has become acute day by day. Thus, in view of this fact that Bangladesh has a labor-intensive economy and the creation of more employment opportunities are essential. The tourism industry can create employment opportunities and a productive labor force to a greater degree than other sectors.[9]

### Weakness

- Tourism sites are not properly explored, extracted or managed.
- Lack of safety, security and hygiene.
- Absence of sales plan and public relation activities.
- Lack of private initiatives in tourism development.
- The number of supply chain member in the tourism industry is not sufficient.
- Small number of tour operators, inefficient national airlines, and insignificant role of travel agencies.
- Shortage of professional guides.
- Price of some tourism components like the star and standards hotel rooms, food items, package tours and transportation is insufficient.
- River cruise programs are much costlier and insufficient.
- Misconceptions about Bangladesh as a tourist's destinations. Foreigners now know Bangladesh as well as its city is as a country of poverty, baggers, flood, political unrest and corruption.
- Lack of awareness among the mass people regarding the benefits of tourism both locally and internationally.

- Political Instability.

#### Opportunities-

- Redevelopment of the existing sites like Askar dighi, Chandanpura nach ghor, Batali hill, CRB area.
- A new tourist spot can be created in the basin area of the SANDIP channel which will provide all the services of a FIVE star hotel and the area can be modeled in the mirror of Las Vegas or Reno city of USA.
- Development projects for Parki beach, Sandwip channel, Kutubdia, moheshkhalia etc.
- Some gathering spaces can be created in the areas like CRB, parade corner, GEC which has vast potentiality for this.
- Roadside development projects can be introduced in the tiger pass area.
- Dulahazra, kaptai, bashkhalia can be converted for attractive eco-tourism activities like trekking, hiking, mountaineering, hunting .
- Safari park development potentiality.

#### Threat-

- Political instability.
- Lack of public private financial supports.
- The potential spots are being severely affected for the housing and other urbanization purposes.
- Lacking of promotional and marketing activities of tourism by both public and private sector.
- Absence of proper tourism policy.
- Lack of investment.

So from this part it is clearly stated that Chittagong has some serious issues that need to be resolved for the development of a tourist hub in this area.

#### Proposals

For developing Chittagong into a tourist hub **5 factors** can be considered and believe if we can improve the conditions of these 5 factors satisfactorily we can hope of Chittagong as a first destination of the tourists. The factors are:

- ❖ Attractions.
- ❖ Infrastructures.
- ❖ Facilities and services.
- ❖ Hospitality.
- ❖ Cost.[11].
  
- ❖ **Attractions**

#### Panorama:

- Panorama means the overall development Of the sites. It includes it's natural and infrastructural development with its vista.
- Sitting arrangements or walkways can be made in such a position from where the whole area or the structure can be seen.
- More than that gardening and others ornamental tree plantation landscaping can be installed for the betterment of the site[12].
- Cable cars can be introduced in the some parts of the kaptai and foy's lake.

#### Natural resources:

- Natural resources are the key feature for the development of eco-tourism. In respect of That the existing natural beauty of the City should be preserved.
- More than that Gardening and ornamental Tree plantation program should be increased on the sides of the roads[13].

- If possible, some more artificial eco tourist spots like dulahazra safari park can be created. Kaptai and sitakundu can be good locations for establishing such spots.

#### History:

- Historical sites should be preserved with its historical background and beauty.
- In this respect a board can be set up at the starting of the site where all necessary information, date of establishment, reason of establishment, total maps all the information's will be gathered.
- View cards and leaflet viewing the importance and beauty of the sites can be provided also [14].
- Billboard containing the top most features of Chittagong can be set up on the city gate, airport and railway station area.

#### Climate:

- The landscaping and plantation pattern should be planned according to the change of seasons and environment.[15]

#### Accessibility:

- Chittagong has a pretty good connection with the Dhaka city and others. A 6 lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway is proposed and the project is under construction which will improve its transportation facilities.[16]
- Moreover Chittagong has an international airport named "shah amanat" Airport which is also a key factor.
- She has a port which is known as the gate of the south. So Chittagong possesses a perfect location in respect of accessibility.
- But renovation, development and future planned extension is really necessary.
- For internal transportation rapid transport bus system with dedicated road for public transport can be introduced.

#### ❖ Infrastructure development:

##### Temporary accommodation in tourist spot:

- Though Chittagong has a few 3 star hotels but the number is not sufficient enough. In this respect, some temporary accommodation facilities like tourist cabin or safe self-contained temporary accommodation services like on the rooftops can be provided.
- In this respects the fast food chain shops can take this short term accommodation business.
- The people of the respective areas can take the chance like **Bed and breakfast accommodation system**. It will increase their income and also solve the temporary tourist accommodation pressure [17].
- If the spots themselves can create accommodation facilities in their style it will be economically effective for them and attractive for the visitor's also. For example the thatched house of the Boga Lake in Bandarban or the resorts of nilgiri.

#### Communication networks:

- Sufficient tourist rent a car service need to be created. It will be a development of the economy also.
- Suppose the hotels can select and provide some money to some rickshaw pullers who will decorate their vehicle gorgeously and will be used only for the tourist purpose. It will develop the condition of those pullers and also will bring a new dimension in this industry. But literacy of the rickshaw pullers will be an important factor.
- A city is best seen when someone take walk within the city. For that reason the footpaths of the city need to be developed and also make attractive by involving various activities like street hawkers or roadside food shop by a planned way. For that reason we can create pocket in the road side wall by taking some space from the owner of the respective buildings in rents [18].

#### Power/alternative power sources:

- Though central power development is the concern of the government, the sites can create alternative small power generating system like mega generator or small generator, solar plant, if resource available biogas plants etc. can be created.
- It can minimize the existing need, and then overall power development is necessary for the overall development of the city's tourist attraction.

#### **Sewerage/drainage system of the whole city:**

- Chittagong is a city which becomes Venice city on the rainy season.
- Almost the entire city goes under water because of the bad sewerage or drainage system. But we have khals like: chaktai, hizra or Dom khal.
- But present conditions of these khals are very poor. Most of the khals are blocked by garbage's and become fully nonfunctional.
- But if we can improve it's it can improve not only the sewerage or drainage problem but also it will be a good transport route in the internal transportation.
- The banks and the khals can be turned into a tourist spot also.

#### **Streets/highways:**

- Safe, spacious highways and streets are a precondition for tourism development industry. We can use the dividers for ornamental tree plantation.
- Street lights can make a difference also [18].
- Decorative walkways on the footpath can be introduced.
- Road side hawkers are a common feature of our city. It can be turned into an attractive phase if we can provide a planned space for them in the side of the walkways. For that reason, some development of the footpath is necessary.
- Traffic development is also necessary in this respect.

#### **Advanced security systems:**

- Security of the tourist locations should be ensured.
- For that reason special private tourist guide and Guard firm can be created which will provide job opportunities for many people.

#### **Entertainment facilities:**

- Entertainment facilities highlighting our culture heritage and also intermingling with the taste of the foreigners should be providing.
- Bars, sports center, Cineplex, Swimming pools, refreshment zone like: spa, etc. facilities should be improved and new ideas should be developed for the advancement of tourism industry of the city.[19].
- Special features of Chittagong like the mejbani or festivals like Jabbar's boli khela, Boat race in the karnaphully or ghuri festival etc. occasions can be set up on the tourist season so that they can see our culture and occasions.

#### **❖ Facilities and services:**

##### **Sightseeing facilities:**

- For developing site seeing facilities cable car, small cart etc. services can be introduced. Watch towers can be set up for big areas.
- For structural sites access roads and lighting at night is an important factor for improving sightseeing facilities.
- Tourist guides and securities are also necessary for the overall development of sightseeing.

##### **Skilled tourist guides:**

- We can establish a tourism management and hospitality management training centers where they can provide training to young males and females and eradicate their curse of unemployment.[20]
- Government steps are necessary in this respect.

### **Available sight map:**

- Sight maps and overall city maps are necessary need for the tourists.
- A city map identifying important tourist locations can be set up on important corners of the city in the form of billboard.
- In the airports and other bus stands a corner can be created containing the overall information's like accommodation, transportation, shopping with costs for the tourists [21].

### **Amusement and adventurous facilities:**

- For adventurous activities like hiking, mount climbing we have areas like Kaptai, Cox's bazaar and the very best Chittagong hill tracks.
- We have areas like Boga Lake which can turn into both for hiking and also for site seeing.
- For amusement Chittagong has parks like foy's lake concord amusement parks, Zia complex or karnaphully parks.
- Though these parks are not in the level of world Disney but its level and conditions can be improved.
- Zia Shishu Park which is under the authority of CCC should be refurbished and powered and if it has become a burden to CCC it can be transfer to Private public partnership projects.

### **Shopping malls/centers:**

- Chittagong have shopping malls like ocean city,unesco,Afmi plaza,Apello,lucky plaza,Akhtaruzzaman center, Dubai market, new markets etc.
- For cheap clothes people can go to terry bazaar, reazuddin bazaar, tamakundi lane.
- For daily groceries they can go to the chain shops like Agora, meena bazaar, sopno, wall mart, khulshimart and many other small chain shops.
- At present these numbers are sufficient but for the future development new shopping malls and centers need to establish.
- Roadside hawkers can be turned into an exceptional tourist attraction if we can place them plan wise. Like by creating pocket on the roadside wall.[22]

### **Quality foods and beverage facilities:**

- City's traditional foods like "Shutki" or "Special mejbani" foods should be properly branded to the foreigners.
- Besides that number of fast food chain shops like KFC, PIZZA HUT or restaurants like Meridian, Silver spoon, Pavilion, lord's inn, Pit shop, Well Park and foods can create outlet adjacent to these attractive locations.
- Road side foods like Piyazu, Zhalmuri, pitha etc can be a special feature to the tourists if we can properly represent it to them.
- Number of bar in Chittagong is very mere. It needs to be increased.

### **❖ Hospitality:**

#### **Well educated guides:**

- Well educated guides are the prerequisite need for the tourist development of a country or a city.
- Maximum hospitality can be ensured by them.
- More over awareness program among the citizens of the city can also be organized. In nature ,
- The people of Chittagong are well known for their hospitality. Proper utilization of this reputation is necessary.

### **Behavioral settings:**

- Friendly behavior with the tourists is very much necessary to enhance the reputation of the hospitality of chittagonian people. In road, restaurant or any place they may face communication obstacle and cultural differences.
- People around him should help him to sort this out. This is obviously a positive branding of the city.[23]

#### **Avoiding the disturbances like beggars and others:**

- In the road protection from the beggars, street children, annoying hawkers is necessary. But the realization of these should be created on these people at first.
- By only law enforcing agency we can't solve this programme. For government awareness program is necessary.

#### **❖ Cost:**

##### **Accommodation prices:**

- Accommodation price should be reasonable and within the reach of the tourists.
- Special offers can be provided on special occasions.
- Though we don't have any 5 star hotels but by we have space and also private sector financial ability to establish one.
- Not only that, if we can offer reasonable offers than the tourists of our own country will be encouraged also.
- More public and private investment is necessary on this field. For this initiatives should be taken from now on.

##### **Food and beverage prices:**

- Now the law about drinks like alcohol is very strict. So that it is not available to the mass people. But if we want to attract more tourists we have to set up more bars and other recreational centers.

##### **Transportation prices:**

- Transportation price should be reasonable. Though the price for the foreigners is generally higher than general but we should not allow it to reach its highest state.
- If we take more money for transportation like city service (suppose it is 20 taka instead of 5-7taka) we need to ensure comfort and safety of his journey Then some special treatment need to be provided by the driver and helper.
- Special tourist bus and transportation system can be introduced which will include vehicles like big bus to small vehicles like rickshaw or van.

##### **Shopping prices:**

- Tourist shopping industry is now-a-days a bigger individual industry for the city or the country. In the view of this, some programs are necessary to be taken.
- Special tourist market or tourist corners among the market can be created.
- The elements which represents our culture and heritage and also new to them like (designed Katha, shitolpati, bamboo based different products) should be introduced to them.
- The price of these products should not cross their limit of purchase.
- If we can introduce these products to them, we actually introduce it to the world.
- It will help us for our future market around many countries.
- Within a moderate price level the products should be attractive.

For these reasons some initiatives can also be taken by the shops also. Like Sales interest per employee per product or on time delivery assurance. It will ensure improved service with high level services from the sales representatives and other individuals [23].

### A proposed project-

In this respect in this paper I want to propose a development project of a water body which is situated in the middle of Chittagong city.

#### Askar Dighi-

Askar dighi is a prominent water body of Chittagong city

Which in a bad shape due to pollution and also the

Surrounding of the dighi is attained by houses and slums. The ultimate beauty of the dighi has totally lost.ug in the period of 1669-71 during the

Period of askar khan [24].



It was dug to fill up the need of water of the local peoples in their daily necessities. For the improvement of the dighi an improvement and redevelopment project is very necessary. For this reason here I present some ideas and assumed earning and development cost with its source.

1. Create walkway and re attained the areas surroundings.
2. Landscaping which reflects our history, traditions and Provide fountains, sculptures etc.
3. Dighi side attractive stairs development.
4. For mini rail ride, a small scale rail road development.
5. A small scale wooden bridge development which connect the land with a restaurant which will be situated in the middle of the dighi.
6. Create space for laser show, seminars, symposium or other social programs gatherings.
7. Introduce small scale cable car ride.
8. Provide boat specially "sampan" a local pride of Chittagong.
9. Create a small scale garden which will contain various rare and beautiful plants.

Now let's see how much will it cost and how much we can earn from this project. At first the sources of earning and expenditures is given and then an assuming investment and earning estimation is given below-

Earning source	Expenditure source
Ticket	Infrastructural development
Boating	Maintenance and other technological development
Advertisement on selected restricted place	Different landscaping
Restaurant rent	Walkway, retaining wall, small scale suspended bridge.
Occasional rent	Entrance and boat costing.
Swimming training programs	Other

From a project cost of Karnataka of India the following estimation have been prepared[25].

Expenditure cost	Amount(in taka)
Infrastructure	1,30,000,00.
Landscaping	20,000,00



Other	32,000,00.
Total	1,82,000,00.

Now let's make estimation about the monthly income of the site in the respect of project taken in Nepal Kathmandu[26].

Earning source	Amount(in taka)
Ticket	30*1300=39,000.(Everyday earning 1300 taka estimated)
Boating	20*3000=60,000.(Per ticket tk.20 and monthly visitors 3000 estimated)
Advertisement	1600*50=80,000.(50 sq.ft estimated for this and per sq.ft charged tk 1600).
Restaurant rent	40,000.
Occasional rent	2,00,000.
Swimming training	8,000.
Net total	4,27,000.

## Chapter-6: Conclusion

At present world tourism industry appeared as a very competitive and promising sector. It is not only that tourism sector earns foreign currency but also that tourism creates image of the country and cultural diversification. The country, or the city having tourism potential, must be conscious in developing market offering and marketing mix .Natural, ecological, historical, cultural and other form of tourism based tourism industry of Chittagong has huge potentials to develop due to its Kind. Therefore, tourism industry of Chittagong must arrange its marketing mix elements such a way that give its better satisfaction to its customers. Tourism market should be segmented based on income level for not only foreigners but also domestic tourists. On the other hand, upper class people of the country who tours abroad can be inspired to tour within the income Group and lower income group of people of the country, tourism facility should be created within their purchasing Power capability also. Recently University of Dhaka and some other private universities have opened Department of Tourism and Hospitality[27]. This will definitely encourage creating skilled manpower in the tourism Sector and as a result new generation may use innovative ideas to capacity building and opportunities to attract tourists in the country. Government should extend these types of opportunities. Government of Bangladesh, different concerned ministries and the industry itself should take necessary measures. They should concentrated their efforts on the development of peripheral products, relocation of necessary facilities, improvement of domestic transport networks, development of professionally skilled human resources, arrangement of necessary securities measures, creation of good image of the country. If all these measures, marketing strategies along with policy measures are coordinated, tourism sector in Chittagong would yield a positive result.

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