

Tourism Potentiality & Development of Bangladesh: Applicability of Pragmatic Governmental Management Policy

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the fastest arising and undivided largest industries in the world. The contribution of tourism industry in the global as well as individual perspective is really astonishing. Many countries in the world depend upon tourism as a main source of foreign exchange earnings. The increasing trend of tourist arrivals and earnings is extending. In 2005, the world tourist arrivals rose to 808 million (Gunn, 1994). This continued growth in tourism business throughout the world is encouraging and nations are becoming more concerned to attract more tourists to their own destinations and trying to promote this sector as a major source for the economic development of the nation. In addition to this perspective this paper intends to assess and evaluate the existing potentiality and development of tourism industry of Birisiri (Netrokona District) of Bangladesh and also the applicability of pragmatic governmental management policy from various changing urgency.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the post-Second World War era, tourism demand has rapidly increased and tourism has become a worldwide phenomenon. Not surprisingly, this post-war boom has drawn the attention of many developing countries, and tourism as one of the growing industries of the world economy has enticed many entrepreneurs and governments of various countries to invest in the tourism industry without proper planning and preparation (Tosun and Timothy, 2001). Tourism is not associated with aristocracy. Today even ordinary persons can afford. With the passage of time, the tourism has become almost a part of our normal life. In the background of its growing popularity, tourism has become a mass phenomenon. It has grown to such dimensions that we consider it an important industry. In 2004, about 271,270 foreign tourists visited Bangladesh during the year and the country earned about Tk1. 3967.56 million (US\$ 66.82 million) from this sector in the same year (BPC, 2007). To get hold of that great opportunity in the tourism business opening up before us in the near future, Bangladesh's tourism sector must start taking

all the preparations from this moment. At the same it must not also ignore the increasing prospect of the domestic market of this sector (Siddiq, 2007).

Tourism Vision 2020-determined that Bangladesh would cash in on the following critical factors: A positive image will exist and prevail; political stability is firmly established; Bangladesh will become a single destination like Maldives, Malaysia and Singapore; approximately 1.30 million tourists will visit Bangladesh each year following the year 2020 and the growth rate will continue to rise; target to contribute to the GDP of Bangladesh, at least 4-5 per cent from the tourism industry(Siddiq, 2007). The products will be diversified and improved and marketing system will develop and Liberal and easy travel system will be introduced by Bangladesh and other countries (Siddiq, 2007).

In the case of the tourism industry in Bangladesh, these decisions include the identification of the problems faced by the industry and taking necessary corrective measures to direct the industry towards its growth and development. As Bangladesh tourism lags behind in its growth and development and in attracting a significant number of tourists to visit its destinations, the situation therefore calls for the identification of the causes and formulation of policy and strategy measures. Bangladesh should also emphasize on vigorous marketing of tourism products in the following manner: develop tourism market: Short-term market development, long term market development; target some countries as potential markets; Intra regional Countries, China, Japan, UK, Germany; organize single and multi-destination tours; target potential groups .Birishiri is an attractive rawly developed tourist spot in Bangladesh. If Government of Bangladesh develops this spot with efficient sustainable planning and pragmatic management policy then government earns huge revenue which will contribute to develop economy.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is basically a review of secondary research conducted in this area. Data were collected from various published and unpublished documents in the form of books, journals, government circulars, newspapers, research reports and internet browsing. Along with secondary data a stratified questionnaire survey were conducted which sample size was very nominal about 45. This research incorporates complementarity techniques. Complementarity techniques can be called when different aspects based on data of different types but each is complementary to each other.

3. STUDY AREA PROFILE

Location Shusong Durgapur of Birishiri is located at Netrokona district about 200 km north from Dhaka. It's not only blessed by charismatic natural beauty, is also reach in ethnic culture as there are many ethnic groups like –Hajong, Garo, Achik and Mandietc lives here. Many people around the world come here to learn the ethnic culture and livings. The main attraction of Birishiri is the ceramic hill of Durgapur and the picturesque landscape along the Shomeshwaririver. Except the rainy season it's hard to find any water in the river and that's why the river changes its landscape color with the seasons. There is also an ethnic museum at Birishiri.

Main Attractions: SHOMASHWARI RIVER, KONGSHOW RIVER, BANGLADESH, INDIA BORDER, GARO VILLAGE, CERMIC LAKE, HAZONG MATA MEMORIAL SHUSANG MAHARAJA, CULTURAL ACADAMY, RANIKONG CHURCH.

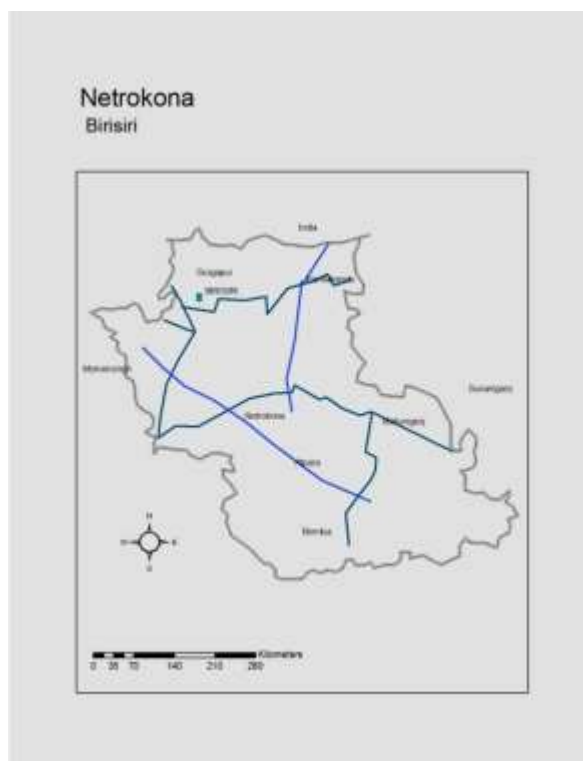


Fig 1: Base map of Birisiri

Source: Netrokona District, modified by author

4. TOURISM MARKET AND POTENTIALITY ANALYSIS OF STUDY AREA

4.1 Tourism Market (Birisiri)

The Ministry of Tourism has invited foreign investors to take advantage of Bangladesh's rich tourism resources (BPC, 2007). This approach could lead to exploitation of the natural resources without appropriate environmental controls. There is great potential to work with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, leveraging a coordinated approach to development that incorporates investment, planning, and environmental conservation. The local business community regards corruption as the second most important impediment to growth, after poor electricity supply. However, the country currently faces serious infrastructure bottlenecks in the delivery of power and telecommunications (Islam, 2009), which will lessen interest in foreign investment in tourism.

4.2 Market Information: Visitor Data

Current market information available to the author dates to the year 2010 with a total of 50,000 visitors. Peak period, recorded as December-April was 89.74% of total visitor numbers for the year. This is primarily a weekend tourism market, with travelers coming by overnight bus from Dhaka on Thursday night and returning to Dhaka on Saturday night. Table shows the visitors number during different months in 2009 in the Birisiri.

Table: Trends of visitors in the year 2009

Months	Visitors Numbers
January	2000
February	3800
March	2500
April	960
May	550
June	1100
July	1200
August	250
September	300
October	250
November	150
December	6400
Total	19460

Source: IUCN, (2008)

In 2010 total visitors were 50000 and per month average were 9100 visitors, per week average 6,000 visitors and per day average 300 visitors (Source: IUCN, 2009) which might be a strong ground for tourism potentiality at Birisiri.

4.3 Market Segments

The potentially interested market segments in community-based nature tourism on the Birisiri can be broken down as follows:

- Domestic weekend travelers
- Expatriate travelers (foreign couples and small families living in Bangladesh)
- Youth travelers in large groups
- Only a few Foreign traveler group

4.4 Purpose of Visiting Birisiri

Tourist has been asked why they visit Birisiri. They have been asked 10 basic reason for travelling to Birisiri, those are business trip, pleasure trip, health recovery, honey moon, meeting with friends and relatives, study tour, research adventure, spiritual Religious, others. It is found that 69% of tourists are travel to Birisiri for pleasure trip. There also tourists for adventure, adventure, health recover purpose.

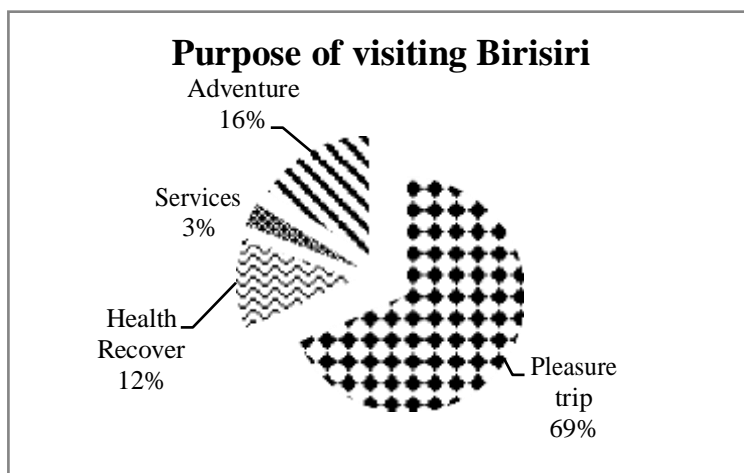


Fig 2: Purpose of visiting Birisiri

Source: Author's Survey, 2012

4.5 Types of facility Tourists Want

There have great opportunity to provide different kind of tourist facilities. It is found that most of the tourists want motor surfing (58.5%). They also need speed boating, cultural festival, enjoying forest.

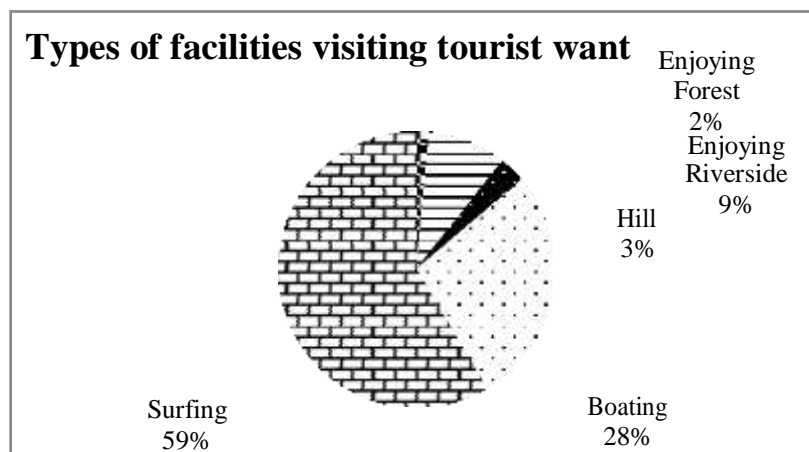


Fig 3: Types of Facilities visiting tourist want

Source: Author's Survey, 2012

5. GENERAL CONSIDERATION FOR APPLICABILITY OF PRAGMATIC GOVERNMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

The most important challenge for destination marketing therefore is to bring all individual partners together to cooperate rather than compete and to pool resources towards developing an integrated marketing mix and delivery system (Buhalis & Cooper, 1998; Buhalis, 2000). There are so many problems regarding tourism in Birisiri. The customers of tourism market are price sensitive and want security in tourist place. To expand the market, it is necessary to set competitive price.

- Develop the management education on tourism marketing and prepare marketing or sales people to sell the product properly to the right place in local and global perspectives as well. In order to strengthen the marketing department, a person should be appointed to look after the policy matters and new brand exclusively while the responsibility of that division should be in the hand of the marketing director.
- The Government should make the Management Plan for each area and it should be prepared by professional landscape architects and urban planners, in consultation with the local community tourist market experts as well as others directly concerned.
- Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) should create pressure on Govt. to implement her policy more strictly regarding the quality of service. As a result, private service provider will be able to face competition on an even ground.
- To pay special attention (in terms of promotion and product diversification strategies in particular) to tourist arrivals from Europe, South Asia, USA, Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, East Asia and the Pacific Rim, Australia and New Zealand and others. BTO opened new regional offices in these countries to support and enhance the value of Bangladesh as a tourism destination (MoCAT, 2006).
- To target new and potential markets by identifying and monitoring changing designs and needs for various market types such as China, Japan, East European and South America, and South Asian countries (MoCAT, 2006; Hossain, 2006)
- Tourist facilities and design should act as standard setters“ in environmentally sensitive design and operations. Good design and operations can help visitors understand the key concept of ecotourism, can highlight the importance of sustainable tourism and also highlight the management“s commitment to environmental protection.
- Development of “Software” means development of activities which help visitors come out as informed citizens who understand the concerns of nature and in turn helps in dispersing the conservation message. Development of” Software” also involves naturalistic expectations of the visitors. To deliver information to the foreign tourist through online or website and Information Technology is necessary to research about new tourist spot.
- Responsible authorities should exclude developments in geologically unstable zones and define development and buffer zones after proper environmental impact assessments.

6. CONCLUSION

The significance of tourism is viewed from many angles like economic, social, cultural, political, etc. Tourism is now the fastest growing and single largest industry in the world. In 2004 about 271,270 foreign tourists visited Bangladesh during the year and the country earned about Tk 3967.56 million (US\$ 66.82 million) from this sector in the same year (Business Report, 2013). At present, in our gross domestic product, the role of tourism is below one per cent. If it could be brought to five per cent then it would generate about five lakh direct and indirect employment,

which would move the economic index in the upper direction in all areas. There is no alternative to carrying out promotional advertisements in international media to attract more foreign travelers. Every destination country is trying to attract more tourists by drawing the attention and growing the interest among the potential tourists through adopting effective marketing strategies. Promotion is an important element of marketing mix and plays a pivotal role in developing marketing strategies. Because of tourism is a field where the customers/tourists want to know in advance about the attractions and facilities of the destination. Marketers need to provide such necessary information to the prospective tourists through different promotional measures and thus, try to motivate and attract them to the sponsor's destination.

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