

Original Research Article

Challenges and Expectations of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Study on Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts of Cumilla and Brahmanbaria Districts

ABSTRACT

Cucculelli and Goffi [1] stated that one of the industries with the highest growth rates worldwide is tourism, which provides the majority of developing nations with their primary source of foreign money. Bangladesh's tourism industry has immense potential to make it to the top of the tourist priority list. Ahmed, et al., [2] pointed out that in the context of global tourism of developing countries, Bangladesh, which offers a variety of natural variations, such as mountainous areas, sea beaches, mangrove forests, and many historical sites, has a tremendous amount of potential. Tourism provides advantages, which contribute to poverty reduction, by providing employment opportunities for local people. Tourism can contribute value to the Bangladeshi economy if a competent marketing plan and strategy are developed and implemented. The main objectives of this research were to review existing and unexplored tourist attractions, analyse locations, identify major benefits and challenges, evaluate the overall tourism industry, explore relevant employment opportunities, assess economic growth, and identify required development. The study area was Burichang and Kasba sub-districts of Cumilla and Brahmanbaria Districts. The information for the study was gathered using both primary and secondary data; the primary data was gathered by using the personal interview with using close-ended questionnaires that were from sample 82 domestic tourists and 18 related to different commercial activities that are related to these tourist places. Stratified random sampling method was used to meet the objectives. Data was analyzed using frequency analysis, percentage and descriptive statistics, with the help of Microsoft Excel 2019. From the analysis, it was found that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with transportation, space, and simplicity of access, all of the locations are well located geographically, tourists can easily cover all of the places at a time and the travel costs are reasonable. However, they are dissatisfied with information gaps, the absence of security, promotional activities, hotels, motels, bungalows, restaurants, and the present industry is limited. Several guidelines have been stated in the recommendation section that the concerned authorities can follow in order to improve the status.

Keywords: Tourism; tourist; potential; Burichang; Kasba; Sub-district.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been one of the fastest-growing industries in the world since the 21st century, and it has been almost 60 years since it started still providing an economic impact on the world's GDP. The tourism sector generates revenue, economic growth, and foreign currency for our country. Bangladesh has plenty of tourist attractions for visitors to visit, attracting both local and foreign tourists and worth spending their money on. Bangladesh is to be the next destination in the Asian region because, Bangladesh has enormous tourist attractions like archaeological sites, resorts, beaches, historical mosques, picnic spots, forest, tribal people,

and wildlife of various species but, for many reasons like lack of accommodation facilities, proper transportation management, and assessment of tourism spots, Bangladesh's tourism is not doing well like other countries. Tourism can add value to the Bangladeshi economy if a proper assessment plan and strategy can be made and implemented for this purpose.

The aim of this study is to explore the challenges and expectations associated with the tourism industry in Bangladesh, analyze locations, evaluate the overall tourism industry, explore relevant employment opportunities, assess economic growth, and identify required development. The study area was Burichang and Kasba sub-districts of Cumilla and Brahmanbaria Districts. The information for the study was gathered using both primary and secondary data; the primary data was gathered by using a structured questionnaire through visiting places. It is to be hoped that this study will be a helpful document for the tourism industry.

Rahaman [3] stated that the inadequate infrastructure is one of the major issues that Bangladesh's tourist sector must deal with. Poor transit infrastructure, subpar lodging options, and undeveloped tourist sites hamper the smooth flow of tourists, which restricts the entire tourist experience. According to Khatun, et al., [4] Political unrest has also been a persistent issue that hinders the development of the sector. An unfavorable climate for the growth of tourism can be produced by frequent changes in government, uncertain policy, and societal instability. Hossain et al., [5] pointed out that Bangladeshi tourism sector faces major obstacles due to security worries. Due to incidents of terrorism and safety concerns in specific areas of the nation, potential tourists no longer feel inclined to travel due to these views. Ahmed [6] suggested that Bangladeshi tourist sector has the ability to help the nation greatly despite these difficulties. In the beginning, it can significantly boost economic growth by producing foreign exchange revenues, generating job possibilities, and encouraging investment in associated industries. Shiddiquee, et al., [7] pointed out that a flourishing tourism industry can also improve Bangladesh's standing abroad by luring more travelers, investors, and international collaborations.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To find out major challenges and expectations of tourism industry in Bangladesh.
- To provide a road map to analyse the location of tourist attractions.
- To analyse the tourism industry in these sub-districts.
- To prepare some priority proposals for the tourist sector's development.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Madrid Tourism [8] refers to the activities of people who travel to and stay in places outside of their usual environment for less than a year for leisure, business, or other purposes. Rashidul [9] mentioned that tourism may be regarded from a variety of perspectives, including economic, managerial, marketing, social, and environmental. According to Rahman et al. [10], Bangladesh has an attractive natural environment and many historical-cultural places, which can be potentially utilized for the development of tourism. The country is conferred with beautiful coasts and beaches, archaeological sites, historical and religious places, hills and islands, forests and jungles and attractive countryside with innumerable water bodies and green fields of agriculture. According to Muhammad and Rehana [11] researched the tourism sector can play a positive contribution towards enhancing Gross Domestic Product of a country. Ali [12] showed that through enlightening the efficiency and effectiveness of services of tourism region, arranging better facilities, cost-cutting method, technological improvements and infrastructural development, both domestic and foreign tourists can be stimulated to tour with different alternative reasons. Sarkar [13] According to

the study, tourism provides enormous social, economic, environmental, and cultural advantages. It also contributes to poverty reduction by providing employment opportunities for the local underprivileged. Mamun [14] stated that the most important part of tourism should be rural tourism because it has the best resources of nature and traditional archaeology. Alauddin and Uddin [15] pointed out that the tourism industry can add value to the country's economy if an effective strategic marketing plan can be developed and implemented to sell the products to its huge target market. Sraboni Bagchi [16] the tourism industry contributes a standard amount of money to the economy of Bangladesh. From 2015 to 2019, the industry contributed more than 2% to the GDP of Bangladesh. According to Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), 323295 foreign tourists arrived in Bangladesh in 2019, in 2018 arrived 267209, in 2017 arrived 237452, in 2016 arrived 182469, in 2015 arrived 126264, in 2014 arrived 133902, in 2013 arrived 104009, in 2012 arrived 159524, in 2011 arrived 156545, in 2010 arrived 139106. Hossain and wadood [17] found that the current size of the Bangladesh tourism economy is BDT 500 million. Besides, Bangladesh earned USD 1157 million from the tourism sector during 2009–2018. Each year, 10.55 million tourists (on average) visit Bangladesh in the same period. Moreover, it creates 2.23 million jobs each year. The travel and tourism sector contributes 4.4% of the GDP each year. This study claims that the potential of the tourism sector is not currently fully explored. If it flourishes smoothly, then it will reduce the revenue dependency on other sectors. Islam [18] The Cumilla region has different attractive places (cultural & religious heritage, transportation quality & cost efficiency) to visit as tourists are very keen to get a test of visiting, but there are information gaps and many attractive locations remain unexplored because of a lack of information on websites & social media. Hasan and Islam [19] discovered that Cumilla's promotional activities and tourism procedures are unsatisfactory to visitors, but there are lots of tourist attractions here. This is almost 10% of all tourist attractions listed in the Chittagong Division and suggests that the tourism of Cumilla has to increase facilities to give tourists proper guidelines about different places. Hussain [20] stated that the overall archaeological attractions of Mainamati are still uncovered and that the Mainamoti site is unique in its kind as it is the symbol of ancient Buddhist cultural and religious legacy. It has significance for tourists as it is the symbol of the ancient civilizations of the 7th century. More than nine sites are still unexcavated. To flourish as a tourist destination, proper site identification, excavation, and embellishment are required. Hossain [21] "Influential Factors of Tourists' Satisfaction in Bangladesh: Evidence from Selected Tourism Destinations at Cumilla Region" the study found some significant factors using the 7ps marketing mix, that is, product, promotion, people, and psychological evidence as to the vital factors that significantly affect tourists' satisfaction. Islam and Akter [22] stated that most of the respondents (in the Cumilla district) are satisfied with transportation quality. However, they are dissatisfied with non-compliance with hygiene rules, high cost of touring, poor security, and the management style of tourist place authority.

4. RESEARCH GAP

Previous researchers have found that Bangladesh is full of tourist spots to attract visitors, both foreign and domestic, which can have a positive impact on the economy. Tourism provides enormous social, economic, environmental, and cultural advantages. Cultural, historical, forest, mountain, and rural tourism should be encouraged because it has the best resources for nature and traditional archaeology, which contribute to poverty reduction by providing employment opportunities for local people. The Cumilla region has different attractive places to visit, and this is almost ten percent of all the tourist attractions listed in the Chittagong division. In addition, the researcher said that the potential of the tourism sectors are not currently explored, there are information gaps and many attractive places remain unexplored because of a lack of proper guidelines about different places on websites and social media. However, the study aimed to explore the challenges and expectations

associated with the tourism industry in Bangladesh, analyze locations, evaluate the overall tourism industry, explore relevant employment opportunities, assess economic growth, and identify required development. The study area was the Burichang and Kasba sub-districts of Cumilla and Brahmanbaria.

5. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research has been conducted for this study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary information was gathered from a variety of sources, including newspapers, publications, and websites etc. Primary sources were gathered by using personal interview with using close-ended questionnaires. Descriptive statistics analysis were employed to achieve the objectives of the study.

5.1 Target population

The target population is mainly comprised of tourists who travel at tourist attractions as well as stakeholder who working and providing tourism services at tourist attractions.

5.2 Questionnaire types and design

All the questions were used close ended. There are three parts of the questionnaire among the first part A is the introduction which includes the general information about respondent and the topic of the study survey. Part B includes an assessment of tourists thinking about the tourist attractions. Part C includes stakeholders who working and providing tourism services at tourist attractions. Structural questions have been prepared and consists of 17 items for data collections.

5.3 Data collection method

The study was collected data from tourists who travel at tourist attractions as well as stakeholder who working and providing tourism services at tourist attractions in personal interview through survey method.

5.4 Sampling technique

Stratified random sampling has been chosen to meet the research objectives. Stratified random sampling is a sampling technique that divides a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata.

5.5 Sample size

To conduct this survey, a predesigned questionnaire had been provided to 110 respondents. Among them, 100 responded to the questionnaire and return while 10 copies are not returned. Among this sample, 82 were domestic tourists and 18 were related to different commercial activities that are related to these tourist places. Visitors are not travelling via Bangladesh to visit tourist attractions because of COVID-19, Bangladesh's government-imposed travel restrictions. This is one of the drawbacks to the growth of tourism and the local economy.

5.6 Data analysis technique

The questionnaires were be organized before entering the data into Microsoft excel for analysis. The data analysis involved frequencies, percentage. The data was then presented in the form of Tables and figures.

6. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE STUDY AREA.

- ❖ Burichang sub-district is situated beside the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in the Cumilla district. The river Gumti flows across this sub-district. The Burichang region was once under joined with Tripura State. Burichang Sub-district consists of eight Unions. This Sub-district has several archaeological spots including Mainamoti. Gomti is the main river for this Sub-district.
- ❖ Kasba is a sub-district of Brahmanbaria district. Kasba Sub-district officially is known as Kasba Sub-district. The present Kasba is a Sub-district under the Brahmanbaria District. The Kasba region was once under joined with Tripura State. Kasba Sub-district consists of ten Unions. This district has several archaeological spots including.

6.1 Tourist attractions in Burichang sub-district:

I. Padma Beel (Marsh) Dakhshin village

This place, situated in Dakhshin village in the Burichang sub-district of Cumilla district, has turned into one of the most fascinating tourist attractions. Currently, this place is the heart of a major tourist destination. The only place in Bangladesh where tri-colored lotuses can be found is where they bloom together in a beel (marsh). Local people say hundreds of local tourists visit this place every day to see lotus flowers and spend their weekends with their families, which generates extra income for local people. Not only are the lotuses flowers, but also various types of birds come to this beel to survive, such as hummingbirds, parrots, Dahuks, Balihas, Saros, among others. Every year, lotus flowers bloom from the Bengali months of Ashar to Kartik. If anyone wants to see the heavenly scenery of lotus flowers, they should visit during the Bengali months of Srabon to Bhadro. During this time, it is full of thousands of lotus flowers on the water, from early September to late August. Otherwise, you will not see any lotuses there because of the rest of the year, the water shrinks and dries. Farmers plant paddy when the water shrinks and dries.

There are several reasons why this Padma body (Beel) is unique:

- “This unique yellow lotus has never been seen before. This will increase our biodiversity.” said, Rakhhari Sarkar, chairman of the Botany department of Dhaka University, [Prothomalo]
- Three different kinds of lotuses can be seen blooming at the same time.
- Not only are there lotuses but also various birds come to survive their lives.
- This place is generating extra income for local people.

Tourism hospitality is served by the local people in this area, which has an impact on their lives, such as:

- Boat services.
- Selling/promoting local foods.
- Building bungalows/hotels.
- Building restaurant.
- Selling street foods.

This place is under threat due to a lack of maintenance attention. The government should take a few initiatives to save this unique tourist spot.

II. Mainamati war cemetery

This historical site commemorates the tragedy and sacrifice of human life during World War II (1903-1945). This place is 7 kilometres away from Cumilla district, besides the Cumilla to Sylhet highway. During the Second World War, 737 soldiers were buried in this place, including the warriors of Pakistan, India, Japan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries. According to Amin, [23] there are signs directing you to the place from the main road, which is its destination. This place is established in 1947 and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). A tourist spot has developed around this cemetery. Some tourism facilities have sprouted up around this tourist attraction, bringing in additional revenue for the local people. Every day, hundreds of visitors visit this location, and most of the visitors are from nearby districts and different divisions. Visitors come to exemplify why the world requires peace and to learn about those who sacrificed their lives during World War II.

III. Palace of Queen Mainamati.

It is a historical place that represents the middle age of Bengali culture and the ancient living style. Mainamati is one of the oldest civilizations in the Cumilla district, and the Palace of Queen Mainamati is the remains of the oldest city. It is the ruins of an ancient city called Jayakarmantabasak. The location is situated with Chandra Queen, mother of the last called Chandra king, Govindachandra, and is locally considered to have been the last seat of the dynasty; there are two parts which have not been covered yet (Bangladesh parjatan corporation, 2022). This place is situated a kilometre away from the Mainamati War Cemetery, with good access from Cumilla Cantonment to the destination if you are coming from the capital, and the transportation cost is not very expensive, but there are security problems and no tourist hospitality. Most of the visitors come from nearby districts. This place needs attention to be promoted as a tourist attraction.

IV. Mainamati kali mondir (Temple).

It is a holy place for the Sanatana religion. The temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. It is situated near the palace of Queen Mainamati. This temple bears witness to the ancient history of the Sanatana religion. Fourie et al, [24] stated that in world history, one of the oldest types of tourism is religious tourism, where believers visit based on their belief in fulfilment. Tourists visit temples for religious reasons: to fulfill religious beliefs, celebrate religious events, find spiritual salvation, and communicate with other believers.

V. Gumti bank.

The Gumti is a hilly river. Previously, it was known as the "sorrow of Cumilla town". The Gumti River originates from Dumur in the north-eastern hilly region of Tripura state in India. The approximate distance from the beginning to the end is 150 km, including 135 km in Bangladesh. It enters Bangladesh at Katak Bazar, which is situated in Cumilla district. It crosses through the north side of Cumilla district and the east side of Mainamati, keeping Burichang sub-district to the north, Debidwar and Companiganj Bazar, then finally falls into the Meghna River, Ahmed et al., [25]. Rivers are always an important thing for human beings. People used to stay beside the river since it supplied them with drinking water as well as land for agriculture and transportation. People nowadays aim to avoid floods. People visit Gumti Bank because this is the only place where they can see the heaven scenario: the blue sky, water flowing, and a bank full of green. People also visit to spend their vacations with their families, on study tours, or picnic for self-refreshment. Gumti Bank is one of the best tourist destinations because Bangladesh is the most populated country in the world and there is a lack of quiet places where people can spend their time with nature and fresh air, especially for those who live in the city.

VI. Gungur River.

The Gungur and Bijna Rivers have carried the Titas River's historical flows throughout its existence. The Gungur River originates from a stream of kakribeel which originates from the Raghunandan hills in the Indian state of Tripura and then enters Bangladesh. It is called the Gungur River or the Pagli River. It crosses through the Bakhsimul village, which is situated in the eastern part of the Burichang sub-district, Cumilla. People visit Gungur Bank because it is the only place where they can see a heaven scenario; the blue sky, flowing water, and a bank full of green. They also visit to spend vacation time with family, go on a study tour, or go on a picnic for self-refreshment. Gungur Bank is one of the best tourist destinations in Burichang because Bangladesh is the most populated country in the world and there is a lack of quiet places where people can spend their time with nature and fresh air, especially those who live in the city.

VII. Kalikapur hill Scenario.

This place is situated in the far eastern part of the Burichang sub-district, beside the Cumilla-B. baria Bypass road. The place is about five km long and one kilometre wide, extending from Chaygram to Kalikapur. The place is surrounded by small hills, and Tripura province, India, is located in the east and northeast part of this place. Most of the visitors to this place are from nearby districts. They visit there when they have free time to get a taste of nature because it is full of birds, plants, and wild animals. There are various birds that attract tourists, such as magpies, parrots, sparrows, Mynas, kingfishers, hummingbirds, goldfinch, swallows, cuckoos, woodpeckers, tailorbirds, doves, etc. Another diversity of this place is the different types of plants, such as the Jack fruit tree, Mango tree, Blackberry tree, Amla tree, Banana tree, Pomegranate tree, Sweet Orange, Star fruit tree, Carambola tree, and Pineapple tree. Also, there are some wild animals that have been surviving their lives without any monitoring. Among them are monkeys, deer, foxes, porcupines, rabbits, snakes, bats, etc. Visitors are encouraged to buy locally produced foods and products in order to earn extra money. All fruits become mature and available, especially in May and June. It would be a better and more appropriate place to visit for those who live in crowded cities, where they cannot see the natural beauty of nature with its variety of birds and animals and cannot taste fruits without chemicals.

6.2 Tourist Attractions in Kasba Sub-district

I. Kullapathar shaheed cemetery

Kasba is a frontier sub-district in Bangladesh. This location is near the Indian border in the Bayek Union of the Kasba sub-district of the Brahmanbaria district. Kullapathar Ganakabar is said by the local people because there are 50 martyrs buried on the top of a small hill during the war between East Pakistan and West Pakistan in 1971, which was under sector 2 during the war of liberation (www.brahmanbaria.gov.bd, 2022). A tourist spot has developed around this cemetery, and recently, a modern bungalow and a mosque complex have been constructed at the initiative of the government administration. Some tourism facilities have sprouted up around this tourist attraction, bringing in additional revenue for the locals. Most of the visitors are from nearby districts and different divisions. Visitors come to have a taste of the beauty of nature and to learn about those who sacrificed their lives during the liberation war for their country. The surroundings are covered by small hills and hilly roads; visitors rest at the guesthouse, and there are some pictures of the liberation war that represent the history of our independence in the front yard of the guesthouse, as well as a signboard for the proposed Sheikh Park beside the guesthouse.

II. Laxmipur shaheed cemetery

It is located in the village of Laxmipur in the Gopinathpur union, just 3 kilometres north of the Kasba sub-district headquarters. It is a frontier village where 12 martyrs were buried on the top of a small hill during the war between East Pakistan and West Pakistan in 1971, which was under sector 2 during the war of liberation (www.brahmanbaria.gov.bd, 2022). A tourist spot has developed around this cemetery. Most of the visitors are from nearby districts because this place is not well known. It should be promoted. Visitors come to learn about those patriots who sacrificed their lives during the liberation war for their country. The surroundings are covered with small hills and hilly roads.

III. Kasba border haat

Border Haat is one of the best places for those who want to visit the border without a visa or passport. On June 11th, 2015, Border Haat was opened at the Tarapur-Kamalasagar border near Pillar No. 2039 of the Kasba border of Brahmanbaria. The Border haat is jointly organised once a week on Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm by the governments of Bangladesh and India in Kasba [www.vromonguide.com]. This is not only a place to visit for tourists and a business for local people, but also a reunion place for those who live on both sides of the international border. Visitors can easily enter the Indian Territory without a passport and visa and buy Indian goods. After buying, visitors can visit the Akhaura integrated check post in the afternoon, where two countries' border guards can be seen seated together in a mesmerizing parade along the border. The people of Kasba have looked to it as an additional source of income since the haat opened. It became a primary source of income for families in the area. Everyone depends on the haat, from day labourers to fishermen, almost all of them, according to various locals.

IV. Gowsaisthal Padma beel (Marsh) Kasba

It is located in Gowsaisthal village (a border village with Tripura state in India, on the eastern part of the village) in the Gopinathpur Union of Kasba sub-district in Brahmanbaria district, and has become one of the most intriguing tourist attractions. It is a major tourist destination because it is located in the best place in Bangladesh where the marsh is surrounded by hills. Local people say hundreds of tourists visit this place every day to see lotus flowers and spend their weekends with families, which generates additional income for local people. People also come from India during Durga Puja to collect lotus flowers. Not only are the lotuses flowers, but also various types of birds come to this beel to survive, such as hummingbirds, parrots, Dahuk, Balihas, Saros, among others. Every year, lotus flowers bloom from the Bengali months of Ashar to Kartik. If anyone wants to see the heavenly scenery of lotus flowers, they should visit during the Bengali months of Srabon to Bhadro. During this time, it is full of thousands of lotus flowers on the water, from early September to late August. Otherwise, you will not see any lotuses there because the rest of the year, the water shrinks and dries. Farmers plant paddy when the water shrinks and dries.

Tourism hospitality is served by the local people in this area, which has an impact on their lives, such as:

- Boat services
- Selling/promoting local foods
- Building bungalows/hotels
- Building restaurant
- Selling street foods

This place is under threat due to a lack of maintenance attention. The government should take a few initiatives to save this unique tourist spot.

V. Kalyan sagar dighi

Kalyan Sagar Dighi is located in the heart of the Kasba sub-district. The total area is about 22 acres (www.brahmanbaria.police.gov.bd, 2022). The original name of Kasba was Kailagarh. Kasba had been ruled by the state of Tripura before Muslims ruled. Kailagarh was named at the time. Local people say during the reign of Maharaja Yashodhara Manikya, a commander was appointed and later established a cantonment there. After that, he was appointed Maharaja of Tripura. He dug that lake to the west of the cantonment. People call it "sagar" because of its size. In time, it became known as Kalyan Sagar Dighi. People come here to spend their holidays. Many tourist places have been developed around the city, but Kalyan Sagar Dighi still remains one of the best entertainment places for nature lovers to spend their leisure time. The purest air and breath can be felt at the bank of the Dighi.

VI. Titas River

The Titas is an interlinked river between Bangladesh and India. The Titas River originates in Tripura, India. The average length is about 98 kilometres and it flows into Bangladesh through the Akhaura sub-district of Brahmanbaria district, and after crossing the border of Shahbazpur town, it goes further south through the Kasba sub-district of Brahmanbaria district and joins the Meghna River (www.brahmanbaria.gov.bd, 2022). Rivers are always an important thing for human beings. People used to live along the river because it provided them with water to drink, as well as land for plantation and transportation. Nowadays, people try to prevent flooding. People visit Titas Bank because this is the only place where they can see the heaven scenario; the blue sky, water flowing, a bank full of green. People also visit to spend their vacations with their families, on study tours, or picnic for self-refreshment. Titas Bank is one of the best tourist destinations in Kasba sub-district because Bangladesh is the most populated country in the world and there is a lack of quiet places where people can spend their time with nature and fresh air, especially for those who live in the city.

VII. Salda River

The Salda is a transboundary river between Bangladesh and India. The Salda River originates in Tripura, India. It enters Bangladesh from India through the Putia border in Bayek union of Kasba sub-district of Brahmanbaria district, where it joins the Buriganga River. People visit Salda Bank because this is the only place where people can see the heaven scenario; the blue sky, water flowing, a bank full of green. People also visit to spend their vacation time with families, on study tours, or picnic for self-refreshment. Salda Bank is one of the best tourist destinations because Bangladesh is the most populated country in the world and there is a lack of quiet places where people can spend their time with nature and fresh air, especially for those who live in the city.

VIII. Salda gas field

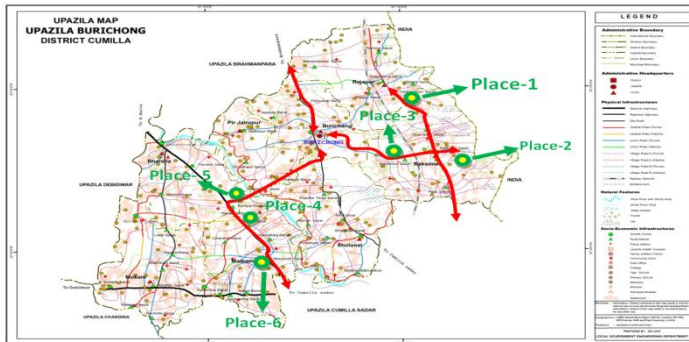
Salda gas field is the 19th gas field in Bangladesh, located in Kasbaupazila of Brahmanbaria. 10 km from Kasba sub-district. It is located in Bayek Union in the south. It is named Salda Gas Field because it is located on the banks of the river Salda. This gas field has become a popular tourist destination. Because this location is well known in the nearby area, the majority of tourists are from nearby districts. The area is surrounded by small hills and country roads.

7. LOCATION ANALYSIS

7.1 Burichang sub-district:

Burichang sub-district can be accessed by road which is currently in a good condition and the Dhaka-Chittagong and Comilla-Sylhet highways are located along the Burichang. It is approximately 14.5 km. away from cumilla Airport (The Airport is not currently in operation.) and 115 km. away from Dhaka International Airport. It is convenient for people to travel within the sub-district by car. It's a little more challenging for individuals who take public transportation because it necessitates the use of another mode of transportation, such as motorcycles or tiny local vans, to go to the attractions or communities.

Map 1 illustrates the attractions in Burichang sub-district.



MAP-1: The green colour indicates the locations of attractions, and the red colour indicates the road.

Map courtesy: LEGD Bangladesh.

- There are six attractions shown on the map-1, such as:

Place-1: Padma Beel (Marsh) Dakshin village

Place-2: Kalikapur hill Scenario

Place-3: Gungur River

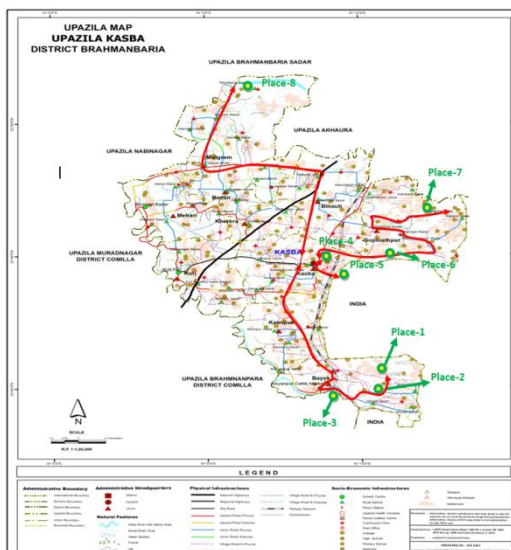
Place-4: Palace of Queen Mainamati, Mainamati kali mondir (Temple)

Place-5: Gumti bank

Place-6: Mainamati war cemetery

7.2 Kasa sub-district:

Kasba is an Upazila of Brahmanbaria District under Chittagong division, Chittagong Division in east-central Bangladesh. It is bounded by Akhaura and Brahmanbaria Sadar Upazilas on the north, Brahmanpara Upazila on the south, Akhaura and Tripura State of India on the east, and Nabinagar and Muradnagar Upazilas on the west. It is convenient for people to travel within the sub-district by car. It's a little more challenging for individuals who take



public transportation because it necessitates the use of another mode of transportation, such as motorcycles or tiny local vans, to go to the attractions or communities.

MAP-2: The green colour indicates the locations of attractions, and the red colour indicates the road.

Map courtesy: LEGD Bangladesh.

▪ **There are six attractions shown on the map-2, such as:**

Place-1: Kullapathar shaheed cemetery

Place-2: Salda Gas Field

Place-3: Salda River

Place-4: Kalyan Sagor Dighi

Place-5: Kasba Border Haat

Place-6: Laxmipur shaheed cemetery

Place-7: Gowsaisthal Padma beel (kasba)

Place-8: Titas River

8. SWOT Analysis of Tourism in Burichang and Kasba subdistricts, Cumilla, Brahmanbaria.

i. Strength.

- Natural, archaeological, historical, religious, traditional and culturally rich tourism destinations
- A wide range of tourism activities options
- Affordable access to the areas
- A quiet environment without any sound pollution
- The beautiful landscapes of the countryside
- Government assistance in creating a tourism-friendly environment

ii. Opportunity.

- Community-based tourism generates additional income opportunities for locals.
- Enhance employment opportunities.
- Add value to the tour operating business.
- Creating job opportunities.
- Increasing motivation for study travel and family trips.
- Investment opportunity.

iii. Weakness.

- Poor environmental infrastructure.
- There are fewer tourist activities.
- Poor transportation management.
- Lack of proper management of the nature.
- Lack of promotional activities.
- The lack of a standard level of hospitality for foreign tourists.

iv. Threats.

- Environmental pollution.
- Political instability.
- Tourism-based extortion.
- Safety and security issues in tourist destinations.
- Natural disaster.
- Demolition of historical sites.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data has been analyzed with the help of Microsoft Excel 2019

Table 1 shows foreign tourist arrivals in India, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan from 2014 to 2019, a period of six years. In terms of foreign tourist arrivals in Bangladesh, the lowest number of tourist arrivals in 2014 was 134, 000 and the highest in 2019 was 323, 000, but compared to neighbouring countries like India, Myanmar, and Nepal, more growth is needed. First, we must improve our infrastructure and place a greater emphasis on local tourists because Bangladesh has a lot of potential in terms of making tourism viable.

Table 2 indicates that from 2014 increasing Bangladesh tourism revenue rapidly year by year. At the year, 2019 shows a high trend in revenue with USD 391. If we look at the above bar graph, we will see that the revenue is almost twice as much from the years 2015 to 2019 and the lowest was in 2015 at USD 150.3. Tourism is currently one of Bangladesh's most lucrative sources of revenue.

Table 3 depicts Annual data of Archaeology department, Kotbari, cumilla where we can see the highest income achieved in FY 2016-2017 BD TK. 12215114 and the lowest was in FY 2012-2013 BD TK. 4275401 but from FY 2012-13 increasing income of these places rapidly year by year and Kotbari's tourist attractions contribute significantly to the government's revenue. The government owns and operates the Shalbon Bihar & Mainamoti Museum.

Figure 1 We see that all the respondents to the study are male and female. The total response was 100. There are 79 males and 21 females in the population. Among this sample, there were 82 domestic tourists, and 18 of them were related to different commercial activities that are related to these tourist places.

Table 4 exhibits that 15.8% of respondents select Mainamati war cemetery, 13.2% select Kullapathar shaheed cemetery & 9% select Palace of Queen Mainamati, 7.1% select Gumti bank, 6.8% select Padma Beel (Marsh) Dakshin village which they have already visited (Total respondent was 82, but they had chosen one or more options). Tourists come from different parts of the country to see the historical, natural, and archaeological sites in Burichang and Kasba sub-districts each year.

Table 5 indicates that 23.5% of the respondents select historical reasons. 21% select study tour. Also, 20.6% select natural beauty (Total respondent was 82, but they had chosen one or more options). For their visiting reasons, the study area is full of historical, natural, and archaeological sites, and it is one of the best places for an easy study tour. Especially the Mainamati war cemetery and the Kullapathar Shaheed cemetery, which represent the history of World War II and the Bangladesh Liberation War. Tourists visit to learn about the history. Also, Gumti Bank and Padma Beel are full of natural beauty.

Table 6 illustrates that 45.9% of respondents knew about Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts sites by local people, 21.3% by relatives & 14.8% by social media like Facebook (Total respondent was 82, but they had chosen one or more options). Most of the undiscovered tourist attractions are promoted by local people and relatives because there is an information gap about potential tourist attractions. Another effective way for tourists to get information about tourist attractions is through social media like Facebook.

Table 7 demonstrates that 28% select transportation, 20% respondents select space, 18.2% select security & easy to access behind their selection (Only 80 respondents answered this question, but they had chosen one or more options). A majority of the respondents agree

that transportation is in good condition currently. That's the reason 18.2% of the respondents select easy to access and security issues at a satisfactory level.

Table 8 represents that 25% of respondents' select the absence of public toilet availability, 23.2% select Security & 18.8% select no sign to reach the destination behind their dissatisfaction (Only 70 respondents answered this question but they had chosen one or more options). A majority of the respondents feel dissatisfied because of the absence of public toilets. Due to a lack of security and a lack of signs directing tourists to the tourist attractions, tourists do not visit all the tourist attractions.

Table 9 shows that 95% of respondents' select yes & 4.9% select no. A majority of the respondents say they will visit again (Only 81 respondents answered this question).

Table 10 demonstrates that 32.9% of respondents suggest infrastructure development, 29.8% suggest taking some Initiatives to advertise the places & 22.4% suggest ensuring tourists' security (Only 78 respondents answered this question). Every year, if the authorities want to draw a good number of tourists, both domestic and foreign, some initiatives must be implemented, such as infrastructure development, ensuring security, advertising the attractions, etc.

Table 11 illustrates that the total number of respondents is 18. Among this sample, 38.9% of respondents are vehicle drivers, and this is the largest sample size in the study. 27.8% of respondents are boatmen. 16.7% are local shopkeepers & hawkers (*Only 18 respondents answered this question*). Data shows there is a lack of good hotels, restaurants, and bungalows, and the existing sector is not at a satisfactory level. The authorities should support those who are enthusiastic about being involved in the tourism sector.

Figure 2 shows that the working experience of the respondent ranged from below 5 to above 9 years. Based on their working experience, the respondents were classified into three categories: (Below 5 years), (5 to 9) years, and (above 9) years. The result shows that the large group of respondents below 5 years is 8. Of those, 7 are between 5 and 9 years. Lastly, only 3 of them are above 9 years (Only 18 respondents answered this question).

Figure 3 represents that 72% of respondents' select good, 17% select excellent & 11% select not bad (Only 18 respondents answered this question). A majority of the respondents feel good because the tourism industries in Burichang & Kasba draw huge numbers of tourists each year. Due to a lack of governmental support and a lack of funds, employees don't take the initiative to launch new employment in the tourist area.

Figure 4 demonstrates that 85% of respondents' select satisfied and 15% select highly satisfied with their present job (Only 18 respondents answered this question). The majority of respondents are satisfied because the tourism sector is a blessing for Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts, and all of the sites are geographically located in extremely good positions for easy access.

10. RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

After analysing the data, the study has come to some important points:

- The Burichang and Kasba sub-districts have many tourist attractions to visit. Tourists are very enthusiastic about visiting, but not all of the places are well known because tourists are not aware of all the spots and there is a lack of promotional activity.

- From the observation, all of the locations are well-located geographically, and the travel costs are reasonable. Furthermore, since the distance between places is not long, tourists can easily cover all of them at a time.
- The majority of the respondents said the reasons for visiting were historical, archeological, self-refreshment, and natural beauty.
- The highest number of respondents knew about the attractions from locals, relatives, and social media sites such as Facebook.
- Most of the respondents are satisfied with the transportation, space, security & easy to access.
- The majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with a lack of public toilets, security, and road signs.
- The vast majority of responders said they would travel again.
- The majority of them suggest for increased infrastructure development, tourist security, and increased promotional efforts.
- From the observations, it is understood that there is a lack of good hotels, restaurants, and bungalows, and the present industry is limited and unsatisfactory.
- From the observation, respondents like local shopkeepers, vehicle drivers, hawkers, and others stated that the tourism sector in the study area is presently in good shape and that they are satisfied with their occupations.

Table 1. Foreign Tourist Arrival in – Different countries

Name of Country	Tourist Arrival in '000'					
	Year					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
India	13107000	13284000	14570000	15543000	17423000	17914000
Myanmar	3081000	4681000	2907000	3443000	3551000	4364000
Nepal	790000	539000	753000	940000	1173000	1197000
Bangladesh	134000	126000	182000	237000	267000	323000
Bhutan	133000	155000	210000	255000	274000	316000

Source: World Bank data, 2022

Table 2. Bangladesh's Tourism Revenue

Year	Revenue from tourism in USD (million)
2014	154
2015	150.3
2016	214.3
2017	348
2018	357
2019	391

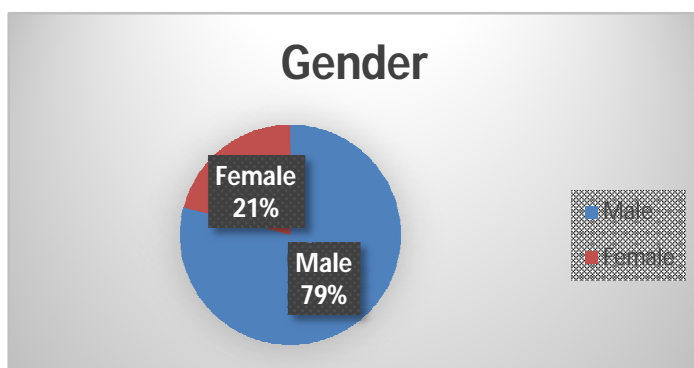
Source: www.ceicdata.com, CEI data, 2022

Table 3. Govt. Income of the tourism area

Fiscal Year (FY)	Income (BDT)
2009-10	4989975
2010-11	5517697
2011-12	5018240
2012-13	4275401
2013-14	6141885
2014-15	6614206
2015-16	9437234
2016-17	12215114
2017-18	10545991

Source: Annual data of Archaeology department, Kotbari, 2020

Figure 1. Gender of the Respondents



Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4. The places in where tourists visited in Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts.

Name of the place	Frequency	Percent
Padma Beel (Marsh) Dakhshin village	21	6.8
Mainamati war cemetery	49	15.8
Palace of Queen Mainamati	28	9.0
Mainamati kali mondir	18	5.8
Gumti bank	22	7.1
Gungur River	18	5.8
Kalikapur hill scenario	14	4.5
Kullapathar shaheed cemetery	41	13.2
Laxmipur shaheed cemetery	9	2.9
Kasba Border Haat	19	6.1
Gowsaisthalpadmabeel (Kasba)	6	1.9
Kalyan Sagor Dighi	13	4.2
Titas River	16	5.1
Salda River	19	6.1
Salda Gas field	18	5.8
Total	311	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 5. The motive for the visit

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Natural beauty	49	20.6
Archaeological	21	8.8
Historical	56	23.5
Self-Refreshment	24	10.1
Religion	2	0.8
Cultural	8	3.4
Family vacation	15	6.3
Adventure	13	5.5
Study tour	50	21
Total	238	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 6. The way by which they knew about the places

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	18	14.8
Newspaper	4	3.3
You Tube	3	2.5
Google	7	5.7
TV reports	2	1.6
Local people	56	45.9
Relatives	26	21.3
Others	6	4.9
Total	122	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 7. Most facilitate part to the tourist

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Transportation	37	28
Security	24	18.2
Easy to access	24	18.2
Space	27	20.5
Hotel	1	0.8
Food	5	3.8
Community based culture	11	8.3
Religious heritage	3	2.3
Total	132	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 8. Most dissatisfied part to the tourist

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
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No sign to reach the destination	21	18.8
Transportation	5	4.5
High cost of Transportation	5	4.5
Environment	2	1.8
Security	26	23.2
Public toilet availability	28	25
Service/availability of Hotels & Bungalows	12	10.7
Food	10	8.9
Others	3	2.7
Total	112	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 9. Opinion about visiting for the second time

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Yes	77	95
No	4	4.9
Total	81	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 10 Suggestion for improvement of tourism

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Develop infrastructure (transportation, security, hotels/bungalows, food quality, public toilet)	53	32.9
Ensure the security (local police, tourist guide, monitoring)	36	22.4
Taking some Initiatives to advertise the places	48	29.8
Reducing transportation cost	11	6.8
Promote community-based tourism	13	8.1
Total	161	100.0

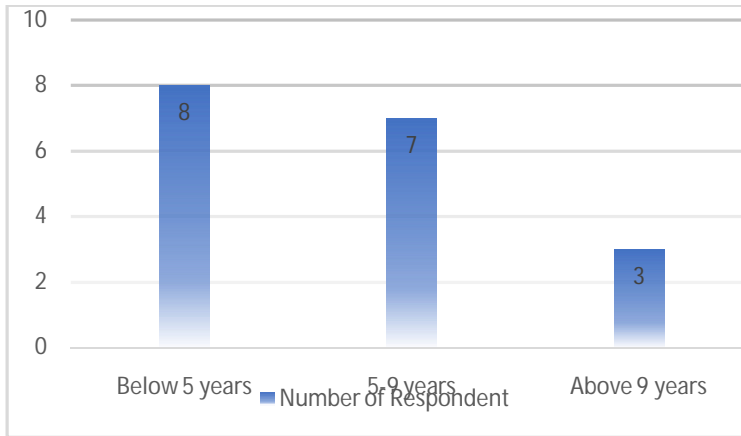
Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 11. Employment of the local people

Particulates	Frequency	Percent
Local Shopkeeper	3	16.7
Boatman	5	27.8
Vehicle driver	7	38.9
Hawker	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

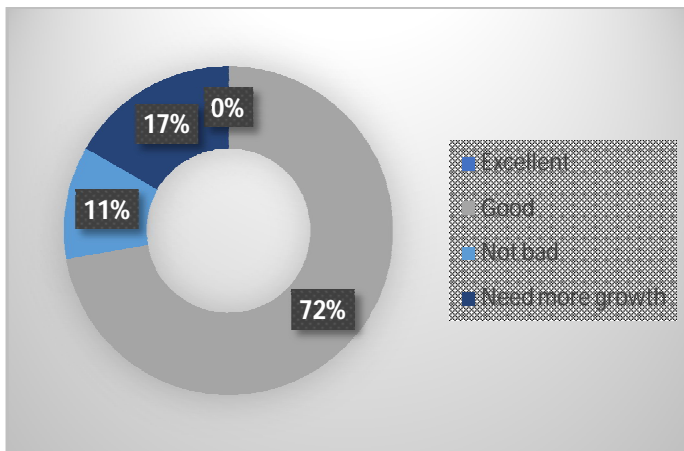
Source: Field survey, 2022

Figure 2. Year of working experience



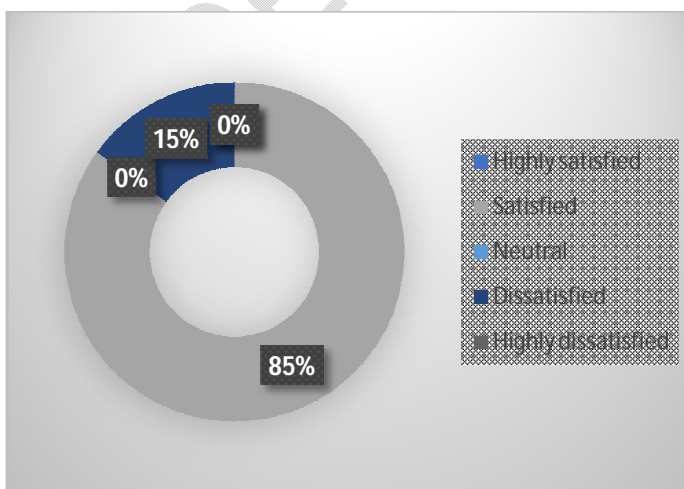
Source: Field survey, 2022

Figure 3 Economic growth after being involved in tourism



Source: Field survey, 2022

Figure 4. Level of satisfaction with their present job



Source: Field survey, 2022

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Bangladesh has immense potential and several tourism attractions, the majority of which are little recognized. This study discovered certain recommendations that should be adopted by tourism authorities and government, as well as policymakers and others in the country, to establish a good tourist environment and to increase rural or countryside tourism.

- To strengthen the potential and current tourism sector, tourism authorities and the government should take appropriate steps to build necessary infrastructure in potential locations and develop the infrastructure that is currently in place.
- Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and each localized tourism agency should keep all the significant information on their websites up-to-date and, where there is no available online website, organize a well-designed website. The authorities should promote the significance of the attractions by describing them in detail in both Bangla and English.
- Every year, the government loses a large amount of revenue from all of the attractions in the study area because there is no entrance fee. All tourist attractions should be preserved and charged a reasonable entrance fee.
- The authorities should recruit professional tour operators to handle tasks like selling tickets, keeping the area clean, and conserving ancient monuments, etc.
- The government is currently planning the construction of a transit route between Brahmanbaria and Tripura. It should be developed through the Kasba sub-district because it has a wealth of historical and archaeological monuments that will appeal to Indian tourists.
- Bangladesh Porjoton Corporation should cover all potential attractions, including the study area to provide all the necessary information.
- The tourism authority may develop a bus service that would cover all of the tourist attractions at the same time.
- Authorities should provide more effective road-side signboards with more effective information for directing travelers to destinations, as well as tourist guide books and tourist blogs.
- The authorities should engage in some promotional activities, such as creating documentaries with all of the relevant information on tourist destinations, which should be advertised on TV channels, YouTube, and social media, among other platforms.
- To address the needs of visitors, the authority should take the initiative to reopen Cumilla airport and provide premium-service hotels and restaurants, as well as public toilets.
- The administration should adopt proper management measures to ensure the security of tourists' risk-free movements by security forces.
- Authorities should be mindful about tourists' consumption of local products such as clothing, food, and handicrafts and they should create chances for small businesses associated to tourism employment such as local shopkeepers, restaurants, local labor, and local transportation services.

12. CONCLUSION

The overall tourism potential in the study area is satisfactory, and rural tourism is one of the newest expanding fields with a significant impact on the national economy. The empirical data showed both positive and negative factors. The majority of the tourists are very enthusiastic about visiting, and all of the locations are well-located geographically. The analysis shows that the travel costs are reasonable and that tourists can easily cover all of the places at a time. The majority of the respondents said the reasons behind their visit were historical, archaeological, self-refreshment, and natural beauty. The majority of tourists hear about the attractions through locals, family, and social media platforms such as Facebook,

and they are pleased with transportation, space, and simplicity of access. But as a result, there is cause for anxiety and concern about some negative factors of the study area like the absence of security, lack of promotional activities, hotels, motels, bungalows, restaurants, public toilets, and the present industry is limited, etc. Negative aspects are always a serious hindrance to expanding tourism potential. This should be reassigned in order to avoid a widespread catastrophe. According to the findings, tourists demand for the development of infrastructure, the protection of tourists, and the expansion of promotional activities. As per the survey, all of the attractions in the study area do not have a significant competitive advantage over other nearby districts. To solve this gap, the authorities must have plans as quickly as possible to keep tourists in all of the sites. They must also follow the guests' wishes for the authorities to develop, such as tourism investments, necessary infrastructure, ensure security, promotional activities, hotels, motels, bungalows, restaurants, effective road-side signboards, tourist guide books, tourist blogs, promotional activities, public toilets, risk-free movements by security forces, and so on.

13. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study only had 100 participants, but the number of samples could be increased in the future studies to broaden the scope of future research. This study focuses on the Burichang and Kasba sub-districts, but future research will include the entire Brahmanbaria district in Bangladesh.

14. LIMITATION OF THIS RESEARCH

Some facts hindered the study, such as the use of stratified random sampling in data collection, which does not reflect the entire population of the area, and the possibility of sampling error, which cannot be avoided. There was a lack of adequate budget that was needed as travel cost to get more reliable information from the field survey. Another obstacle was the short time frame, because appropriate time should always be available to analyze data in depth. In addition, there was a scarcity of necessary data on the internet, which is required for in-depth data analysis. Another major issue was that those women were afraid to express their opinions because most of them were hesitant about what to say.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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APPENDIX

Tourism survey questionnaires

Challenges and Expectations of Tourism industry in Bangladesh: A Study on Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts, Cumilla and Brahmanbaria Districts.

Please answer these following questions

1. Respondent name.....
2. Village name.....
3. Sub-district.....
4. Respondent gender (Please tick appropriate box)
 Male Female
5. Respondent age (Please tick appropriate box)
 Below 25 years 25-40 years old 41-60 years old
6. Respondent occupation (Please tick appropriate box)
 Student Teacher Business man Gov. Service holder Private Service Farmer Housewife Unemployed Others

❖ **Visitor's Part (FROM 7 TO 13)**

7. Have you ever visited any tourist spots in Burichang and Kasba Sub-districts?

(Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- Padma Beel (Marsh) Dakhshin village
- Mainamati war cemetery.
- Palace of Queen Mainamati.
- Mainamati kali mondir
- Gumti bank
- Gungur River
- Kalikapur hill Scenario
- Kullapathar shaheed cemetery
- Laxmipur shaheed cemetery
- Kasba Border Haat
- Gowsaisthalpadmabeel (kasba)
- Kalyan Sagor Dighi.
- Titas River
- Salda River
- Salda Gas Field

8. Reason for visiting this area (Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- Natural beauty
- Archaeological
- Historical
- Self-Refreshment
- Religion
- Cultural
- Family vacation
- Adventure
- Study tour
- Others

9. How did you know about this place? (Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- Face book
- Newspaper
- You Tube
- Google
- TV reports
- Local people
- Relatives
- Others

10. Most facilitate part to the tour (Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- Transportation
- Security issues
- Easy to access
- Space
- Hotel
- Food
- Community based culture
- Religious heritage
- Others

11. Which most dissatisfied to the tour (Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- No sign to reach the destination
- Transportation
- High cost of Transportation
- Environment
- Security
- Public toilet availability
- Service/availability of Hotels & Bungalows
- Food quality
- Others

12. Opinion about visiting for the second time (Please tick ✓ appropriate box)

- Yes
- No

13. Please give your opinions regarding to (Please tick ✓ appropriate boxes)

- Develop infrastructure (transportation, hotels/bungalows, food quality, public toilet)
- Ensure the security (local police, tourist guide, monitoring)
- Taking some Initiatives to advertise the places
- Reducing transportation cost
- Promote community-based tourism

❖ **(From 14 to 17 For those who are local shopkeepers, hotel or bungalow owners, boatmen, vehicle drivers, and local restaurant owners,)**

14. Tourism related Employments (Please tick ✓ appropriate box)

- Local shopkeeper
- Hotel/Bungalow owner
- Boatman
- Vehicle diver
- Hawker
- Local restaurant owner
- Others

15. How long have you been working with? (Please tick ✓ appropriate box)

Below 5 years 5-9 years Above 9 years

16. Economic growth after involved in tourism (Please tick ✓ appropriate box)

Excellent Good Not bad Need more growth

17. How satisfied are you with the present job? (Please tick ✓ appropriate box)

Highly satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Highly dissatisfied

UNDER PEER REVIEW