

Improvement of Opportunities of Religious Tourism in Bangladesh: Current Outlook and Future Direction

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Abstract: *Tourism is the growing industry in the modern world which has vast and inexhaustible potentials to enhance national economy. Religious tourism, a relatively new product in Bangladesh, is promoted with a distinct emphasis on the historic, artistic and architectural aspects of traditionally religious sites of our country. Religious tourism, as a part of tourism, has always influenced the tourist activities. The religious tourist is a fixture of both ancient and modern cultures. The aim of this paper is to show the present potentials of the religious tourism industry in Bangladesh, different religious attractions in this country, identifying the constraints of this sector and provide recommendations. This study is limited to dealing with major four religions in Bangladesh.*

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Bangladesh, Historic, Architectural Aspects, Culture.

Introduction

Tourism is treated as one of the world's fastest growing industries. According to WTO, "Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." There are different kinds of tourism dominant around the world and for those; religious tourism is one of them. Religious tourism is one of the newer forms of tourism in Bangladesh with a tendency to develop. Bangladesh is a country of natural beauty. The seven Bangladeshi Division offers both individually and combining a variety of natural, cultural & religious destinations suitable for tourist attractions.

The term "religious" emerged as a result of the understanding of tourist's motivation. Tourism and religion are connected with each

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other by several interactions and combinations as determined by the type of relation between the holy places and the motivation of tourists.

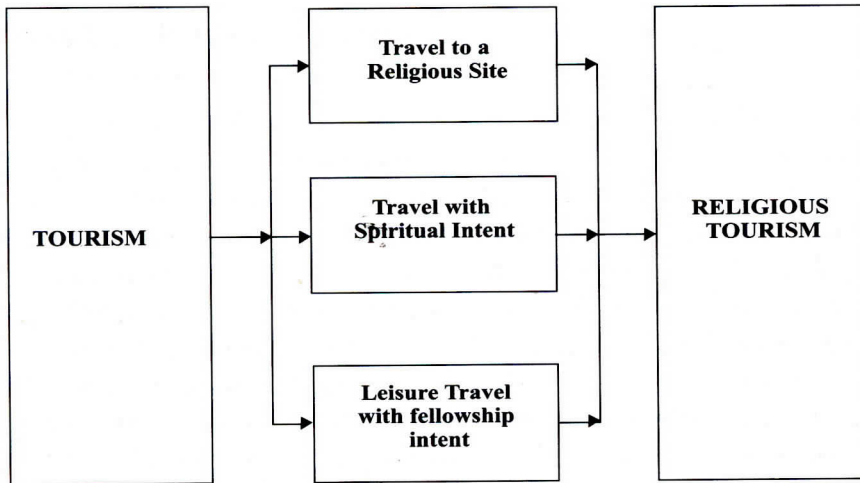


Figure 1: Interaction between Tourism & Religion

According to UNWTO around 300 to 330 million people visits the world's key tourism sites every year. In this 21st century religious and spiritual tourism can represent a great opportunity for men and women of all faiths, philosophies and religions. This tourism follows the footsteps of the prophet & saint because their life is a guideline for believers. In 1984, Cohen states that tourism is a modern form of pilgrimage, as the trip is also something sacred. Religious tourism, as a special interest event has a highly complex impact on local communities. According to Cohen (1984) during the stay in the destination, tourist interact with local residents and the outcome of their relationship changes the host individuals' & communities' quality of life, value system, labor division, family relationship, attitude toward the tourist, behavioral patterns, ceremonies & creative expressions. Religious tourism can also be a powerful instrument for raising awareness regarding the importance of safeguarding one's heritage and culture.

Religious tourism, as its simplest can be explained by Yeoman (2008) as "traveling to visit a place, a building or a shrine, which is sacred". This form of travel is either about observing or participating according to one's belief, sharing a religious experience with someone and

witnessing the faith (Kasim, 2011; Yeoman, 2008).

Religious tourism is also said as peace tourism in the modern world. If Hajj is taken into consideration, there are multiple beneficial effects which are visible (material) and non-visible (spiritual) in this gathering. The same can be said during visits to major mosques in the Islamic world and holy places in Iraq (Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimiyyah and Samara) and Palestine (Jerusalem and Al-Khalil). Religious Tourism becomes the top priority of those who are responsible for tourism in the Islamic world. Thus, they should devote considerable attention to mosques which have mausoleums of prophets and saints, (Shakiry, 2008).

Literature Review

Religious tourism is not easy to define. In the literature of tourism studies, it is often categorized in different ways by different authors. Thus, religious tourism, pilgrimage tourism, cultural tourism, cultural heritage tourism and spiritual tourism are often used interchangeably (Nieminen, 2012).

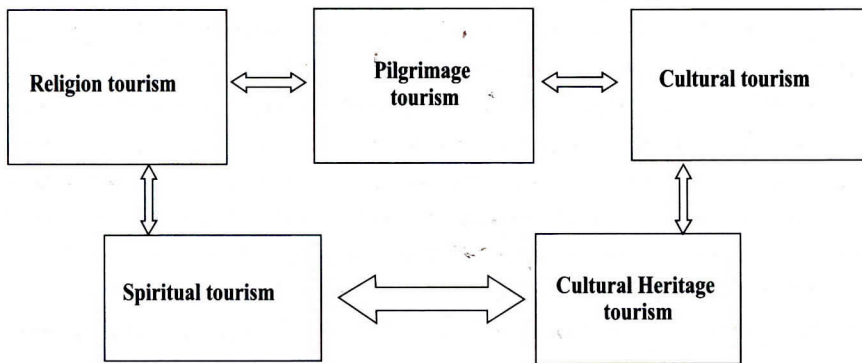


Figure 2: Nieminen's definition of religious tourism

As human beings, it is essential to believe in something superior. Different cults & beliefs related to different gods were discovered to express our feelings. The religious value & beliefs that people have today is the result of the ancient beliefs & myths (Mashhadi, 2000). The major four religions in today's world are Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhism. Nowadays Religious tourism is considered as a motivational travel and according to Jackwoski (2000) more than 240 million people

travel every year because of the religious purposes. From genesis to these days, tourism & religion are linked to each other as most of the young & rich people visit different country for learning & study purposes as well as for religious purposes (Esteve, 2002).

Religious tourism is one of the least studied areas in tourism research, which is interesting as it is also the oldest form of tourism (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). There is much literature that suggests that Religion is the fundamental elements of culture and is linked to many aspects of people's life & behavior (Bailey & Sood, 1993; McDaniel & Burnett, 1990; Walter, 2002). In today's world, there are thousands of religious places of different religion where many people visit every year. According to Vukonic (1996), most of the religions require to visit the holy places as these may help people to reinforce their belief in god seeing that the personages they believe in were real people who lived in our world in other times.

Religion was found to be a factor linked to the supply of tourism on both a macro and micro level. An example of influence on the macro level is provided by Israeli and Mehrez (2000), who associated the approach towards gambling and its future in Israel. On the micro level, Brown (1996) in his ethnographic study of the 'Borscht Belt' provides evidence of how religious taboos influence the provision of hotel services, such as the variety of food ingredients and the service procedures. Another area of research that has linked religion to tourism is the relationship between the tourists (the guests) and the local community (the hosts) or the site. Din (1989) suggests that a difference between the religion of the host and the guest may influence the service supplied to the guest in certain Muslim countries. Din also argues that, due to certain religious beliefs, tourism is discouraged in some Muslim countries because of its impact on the local community. Joseph and Kavoori (2001) suggest that tourism being seen as a threat by a local community is linked to its perceived influence on local traditions, including religious habits.

Rotherham (2007) argued that religious tourism and the visiting of sacred places offer experiences to meet both demands. They can cater for those demanding spiritual retreats or provide a priest to accompany a group of pilgrims. They commented that religious tourism including

pilgrimage- is embedded within a complex of heritage tourism and mass tourism activities.

The aim of religious tourism is not all about to obtain the blessings of god, but along with this, its main objective is to attract tourists. The aim is to promote & introduce the country to tourists. Visitors would maybe unable to know more about the people of a country if religious tourism did not exist there. (Al-Amin 2002)

Rationale of the study

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry which has far reaching and inexhaustible potentials to enhance national income, foreign exchange reserves and opportunities of employment. The size and economic significance of travel and tourism have attracted the attention of many countries in actively promoting tourism as a way to stimulate their economies. Religious tourism is one of the newer forms of tourism in Bangladesh with a tendency to develop. Religious issues have always influenced the tourist activities. In religious communities some religious commandments have overwhelmed the quantity and quality of tourism. This research deals with religious tourism in Bangladesh. The current study was undertaken with a vision to understand what religious tourism is, who the tourists attracted to religious tourism are, what the destinations and motives for religious holidays are, what the future of religious tourism looks like and what do people expect to gain by visiting such religious places. People normally wish for things according to their values and needs. Needy people wish for wealth, sick people wish for health, discontented people wish for happiness, peace and harmony.

Objectives of the study

- To know about the religious tourism in Bangladesh
- To acquire the knowledge about different historical religious sites in Bangladesh
- To identify the problem area for the development of religious tourism
- To suggest some suggestion for the development purpose

Methodology

Sample

In this study data are collected from those parties or firms who are directly involved in the business activities of Bangladesh religious tourism industry, development process of tourism infrastructure or facilities in the country and interaction process of rendering or receiving tourism services. Sample data are collected from BPC, private tour operator & different religious organization. Besides that academicians, professional guides, religious institution and national & regional cultural authority have also been considered and included in the sample. Population data are collected by dividing our country into five regional divisions and then identify the most popular religious attraction based on archeological value & tourist perception.

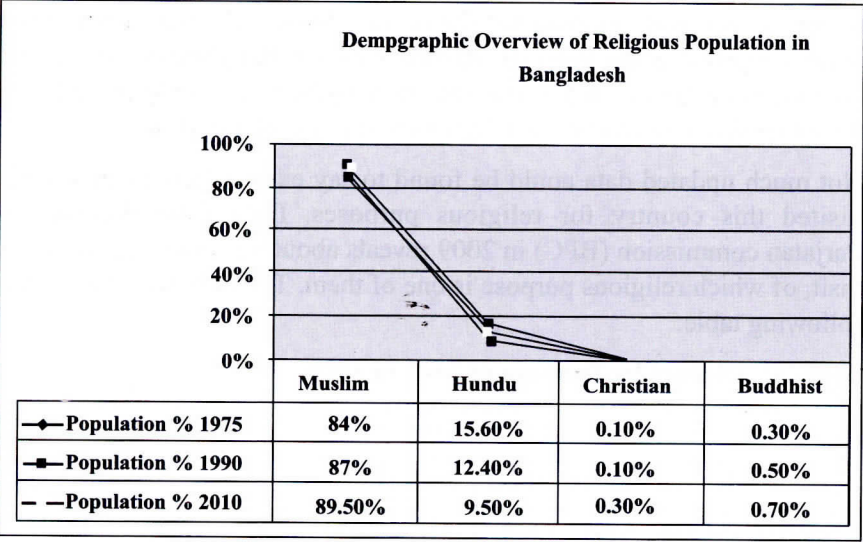
Data Collection

This paper is mainly based on secondary data. Data are collected from internet sources, articles & publications about religious tourism, library research, daily newspaper, books etc.

Findings: Religion & Religious Tourism in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, Muslims, Hindus & other believers live in relative harmony. Islam is the official religion in Bangladesh and is practiced by some 88 percent people of our country. So the Muslim majority is the religious leaders and may observe their customs & rituals with pomp way. Other religions that are active in Bangladesh include Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, animism and tribal belief systems. The variety of religion is increasing day by day, the following chart show that fact.

The following graphical presentation shows the percentage rate of major four religions in the country based on the overall population. In the year 1975, almost 85% people are Muslim which are gradually increasing at 87% in 1990 and 89.5% in the year 2010. Following to the other three major religions, i.e. Hindu, Christian & Buddhist, are also increasing/decreasing at a lower rate. Considering the year 1975 where Hindu population rate is only 15.6%, and was gradually decreasing at 9.5% in the year 2010. Christian population rate is increasing only at 0.2% comparing between the year 1975 & 2010. Similarly Buddhist population rate is also increasing only at 0.4% comparing between the year 1975 & 2010.



Source: Statistical Pocket Book, different issues

In Bangladesh, tourism is developing slowly but steadily. In the recent times, it has started contributing to the national GDP as well as foreign currency earning sector of the country. The country has much to attract international and domestic tourists. In present times, the government of Bangladesh has realized the importance of tourism in its economic and social life. Therefore, the government has decided to combine both the tourism department and Private Corporation into one organization for better coordination, promotion, development and marketing of tourism in Bangladesh.

Religious tourism is not a new issue worldwide but in Bangladesh it's very much new. Bangladesh has vast potential of this area, if proper planning and marketing are undertaken. Bangladesh, with its rich history and heritage has always been a hub for different religious activities and preachers as nearly all the major religions had made their base in this country at some point of time or other. Be it Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or Christianity - major establishments like mosque, monastery, temples and other remnants from the past still remain on the soils of this land beckoning those who are interested to come and discover. Bangladesh consists of different religious sites of its major four religions. There are so many beautiful & attractive mosques, temple, churches, monastery and pagoda in the country which may open another door of tourism

sector i.e. religious tourism for the tourist. These religious sites are the main religious attractions & destinations of Bangladesh. If utmost endeavor is made, then it is possible to introduce these religious sites to the entire world and promote religious tourism in Bangladesh.

Not much updated data could be found to say exactly how many people visited this country for religious purposes. Data from Bangladesh Parjatan commission (BPC) in 2009 reveals about the visitor's purpose of visit, of which religious purpose is one of them. The data are given in the following table:

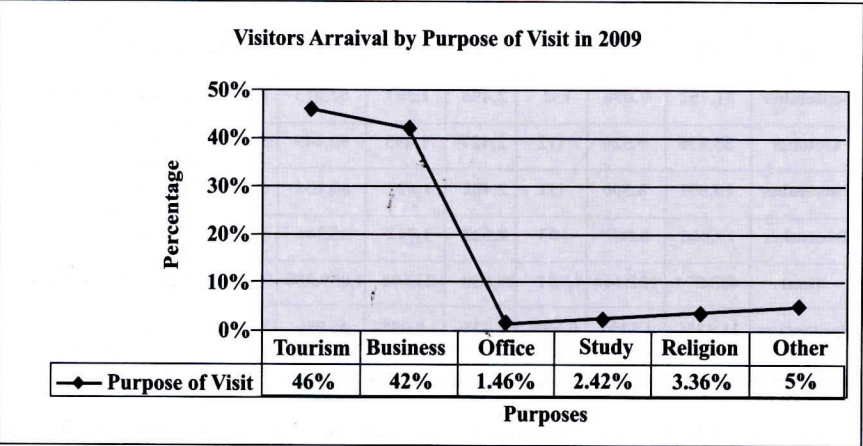
Table 1: Visitors by Purpose of Visit in 2009

Month	Purpose of Visit						Total	Percentage
	Tourism	Business	Office	Study	Religion	Other		
January	14,028	9,985	823	605	2,102	1,089	28,632	10.72%
February	13,047	9,882	279	454	1,599	1,025	26,286	9.84%
March	12,747	9,679	327	540	627	1,194	25,114	9.4%
April	12,858	9,319	312	578	578	1,141	24,786	9.28%
May	12,541	8,613	340	616	449	1,145	23,704	8.87%
June	8,924	10,504	295	672	523	1,326	22,244	8.33%
July	9,122	10,187	364	549	506	1,052	21,780	8.15%
August	7,908	8,108	231	533	479	980	18,239	6.83%
September	5,947	6,678	234	498	502	890	14,749	5.52%
October	7,504	10,236	222	429	498	1,074	19,963	7.47%
November	7,612	9,492	209	479	507	1,037	19,336	7.24%
December	10,661	8,886	259	522	613	1,333	22,274	8.33%
Total	122,899	111,569	3,895	6,475	8,983	13,286	267,107	100%
Percentage	46%	42%	1.46%	2.42%	3.36%	5%	100%	

Source: Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, 2009

The 2009 statistical year book of Bangladesh Parjatan commissions (BPC) shows that there are mainly 5 purposes based on which tourists may visit in Bangladesh. Statistics of BPC shows that 46% people visit

for tourism purposes, 42% for business purposes, 1.46% for official workshop, 2.42% for study purposes and 3.36% people for religious purposes. Beside these there is also 5% people visit in our country for other several purposes like attending a cultural program, visiting friends & relatives, attending special ceremony etc. Very few people visit our country for religious purposes i.e. only 3.36% people, but this sector may open a new era if proper attention is given for its development purposes. As a result lots of people may also visit for religious purposes in Bangladesh and the country may also gain lots of revenue. The following graphical presentation shows the visitors arrivals in Bangladesh for the purpose of visit in the year 2009.



Source: Survey Data

Outbound tourism is a term that is used to refer to visitors from outside the financial territory of the country of reference and provided by non residents. Outbound travels means when someone goes out of their own country, it can for holidays, business, trip etc. The following table shows BPC's statistical yearbook for outbound travelers.

Table 2: Outbound Travels by Purpose of Visit in 2009

Month	Purpose of Visit							Total	Percentage
	Tourism	Business	Office	Study	Religion	Service	Others		
January	46,380	7,092	101	2,857	3,405	103,080	48,965	211,880	9.39%
February	48,958	7,757	101	3,605	2,500	99,999	44,874	207,794	9.21%
March	51,206	5,438	106	746	2,577	102,151	47,266	209,490	9.29%
April	42,463	10,668	79	2,523	1,994	94,273	45,808	197,808	8.77%
May	44,403	10,065	249	2,444	1,814	102,101	45,586	206,662	9.17%
June	50,338	9,577	480	2,756	1,771	89,856	41,482	196,260	8.70%
July	63,059	9,592	264	2,421	1,716	95,510	33,558	206,120	9.14%
August	36,883	7,886	113	2,567	1,493	73,668	43,954	166,564	7.39%
September	31,752	7,096	132	2,495	1,507	62,813	40,068	145,863	6.47%
October	33,876	9,526	112	2,427	1,495	90,449	58,580	196,465	8.71%
November	14,691	8,560	111	2,482	1,622	60,154	68,363	155,983	6.62%
December	19,065	8,887	103	2,527	1,712	85,246	36,149	153,689	6.52%
Total	483,074	102,144	1,951	29,850	23,606	1,059,300	554,653	2,254,578	100%
Percentage	21.43%	4.53%	0.09%	1.32%	1.05%	46.9%	24.60%	100%	

Source: Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, 2009

In the above table, the statistical yearbook of BPC shows the number of outbound travelers in the year 2009 who visit other countries because of various purposes. BPC says that 21.43% people visit for tourism purposes i.e. seeing other countries historical & beautiful attraction, knowing the culture of different countries & scenic beauty. Besides these other 4.53% people visit for business purposes, 0.09% people for official work, 1.32% people for study tour or going for higher study in abroad, 1.05% people for visiting religious & sacred places, 46.9% people for various service purposes. Another 24.60% people also visit for their personal work like visiting friends & family or other purposes. Every year lots of Muslim people visit Saudi Arab for performing Hajj. Other religious group of our country i.e. Hindu, Christian & Buddhist people may seldom visit other countries for religious purposes. So that's why outbound travels for religious purposes is very much low in Bangladesh i.e. only 1.05%. The following graphical presentation shows the outbound travels by purpose of visit in the year 2009.

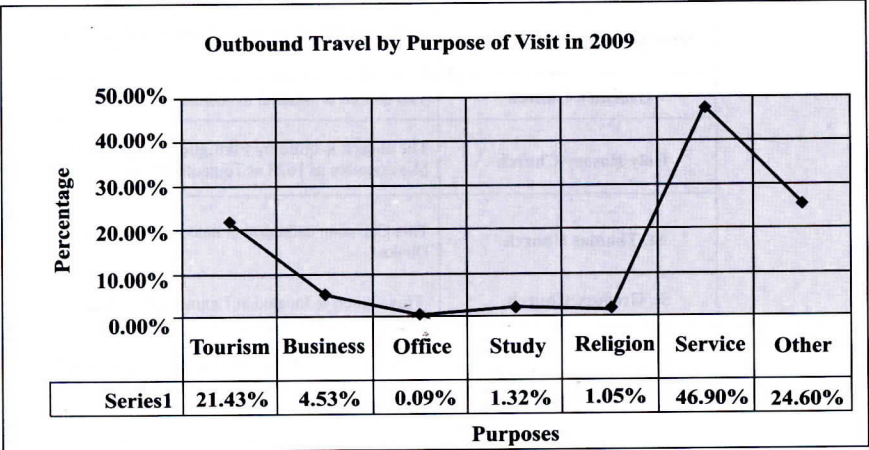


Table 3: Mojor Religious Tourism Sites in Bangladesh

Division	Name of the Attractions	History
Dhaka	Baitul Mukkaram Mosque	Central mosque of Bangladesh situated at the center of Dhaka. The mosque was built in 1959.
	Seven Dome Mosque	Established by Shaista khan at Mohammadpur, Dhaka. The mosque has attractive archeological attraction
	Star Mosque	The mosque was established by Mirza golam pir in 19th century at Armanitola Dhaka.
	Baitul Mukkaram Mosque	This is a pre-mughal architecture build in 1454AD by Bakht binat, Its situated at Narinda, Dhaka.
	Dhakeshwari Temple	Ballal sen established this temple in 12th CE at Dhaka. This is the national temple of our country.
	Ramkrishna Mission	The temple was established in 1916 at Gopibagh, Dhaka.
	Ramna Kali Temple	The temple is located at Ramna park Dhaka, which is also famous to known as Ramna kalibari.
	Joy Kali Temple	The temple is build in old Dhaka at 16th century by Late Tulsi Narayan & Late Nabh Narayan Gosh

	Dharmarajika Budha Bihar	First Buddhist monestry in Dhaka build in 1960.
	Armenien Church	The church is situated in Armanitola, Dhaka.
	Holy Rosary Church	The church is build by Portuguese Augustinian Missionaries in 1628 at Tejgaon, Dhaka.
	St. Thomas Church	This Christian cathedral situated at Jhonson road, Dhaka.
	St. Gregory Church	This church is located at Laxmiibazar, Dhaka.
Chittagong	Khan Mohammad Mridha Mosque	This is a sunni affiliation mosque build by khan Muhammad mridha in 1705 Ad at Laldighi, Chittagong.
	The Dargah of Hazrat Shah Amanath	Sait hazrat shah amanat tomb was located here.
	Shrine of Hazrat Sultan Bayezid Bostami	This is the famous shrine of Chittagong the main attraction of these place is the tomb of Bayezid Boatami & turtles.
	Chandranath Hindu Temple	The temple is located at sitakunda, chittagong. Shiv chatirdashi festivals are held here every year which is attened by many pilgrimages.
	Comilla Jaganath Temple	This temple is established in 16th century by Sree Seejoktou maharaja in comilla.
	Bhudha Dhatu Jati	The temple is also known as the Bandarban golden temple found in 21st century by Ven. U Pannya Jota Mahathero in bandarban.
	Shalban Bihar	It is one of the best well known Bhuddhist bihar located in Mainamati, Comilla.
Rajshahi	Sompur Bihara	This bihara is located at naogaon district. It is said that pala dynestry build it in 8th century AD.
	Bagha Mosque	Sultan nusrat shah builds this mosque at Bagha, rajshahi in 1523 AD.
	Choto Sona Mosque	This is a Sultanat arechitectural mosque build by wali Muhammad in 1519Ad at Rajshahi.
	Kushumba Mosque	This Bengal architectural mosque build by Sulyman in 1958 at Naogaon, manda

	Puthia Temple Complex	Hindu zamindaras build the three temple in puthia rajshai, combinely which is known as puthia temple complex.
	Kantaji Temple	The temple is established in Dinajpur at 1752. This temple is famous for its terracotta architectural style.
Khulna	Sixty Domed Mosque	In 15th century khan jahan build this mosque in Bagerhat, khulna. The mosque has total 77 domes which is its main attractions.
	The shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal	The tomb of Hazrat shah jalal was located here. So that this place become a place of pilgrimage by many devotee around the world.
Sylhet		by many devotee around the world.
	The shirne of Hazrat Shah Paran	The sufi saint Hazrat shah paran tomb was situated there. It's a very much sacred place for the people of all religion around the world.
	Sri Chaitanya Temple	Around 15th century this temple was build in Sylhet.

Source: Wikipedia, online 2013

Major Findings

Religious tourism in Bangladesh is part of cultural tourism and represents a multicultural dialog. It can be successful as it presents a different civilization, different cultural style, the historical-cultural processes and changes that took place within the area. The mosques are the most monumental, the most important and the most cultivated resources of Bangladesh. These mosques are becoming increasingly important centers of cultural and religious tourism. The mosques, which represent an important part of our cultural heritage, are not very well promoted. During the time of Bishwa Ijtema, lots of people come to this country for religious gathering. Tourists' visits are the best option for promoting tourism within the country. Besides this some other things that were found:

- Attractive religious heritage with archeological attraction
- Lack of knowledge about religious tourism
- Lack of maintenance, management and promotional activity
- Lack of traffic infrastructure; accommodation, food & Underdeveloped Infrastructure etc.

- Lack of Patronization & conservative society
- Absence of enough and exclusive tourist & peripheral products
- Poor access to destination as there is a small number of tour operator, inefficient national Airlines, Insignificant role of travel agencies, Shortage of professional guidelines
- Bad image and misconception about the country especially international tourist misconception.

Recommendations on Development of Religious Tourism in Bangladesh

Tourism is an industry of providing services. It could not be isolated from other sectors; rather it depends on some combined effort of other service sub-sectors like hotel and motels, transports, foods, security, guide etc. Bangladesh is blessed with huge religious attractions for the tourist which constitutes major part of tourism industry. Proper maintenance of these heritage sites along with assuring other logistic facilities can make the religious tourism most lucrative sector. The improvements of the religious places in Bangladesh should be even more visible in the future since all the impediments to the trend of development of religious tourism in the country should be removed.

- **Develop & Improve existent product:** It is essential to develop & improve the existent religious product. So that it may enhance the value to inbound & outbound tourist.
- **Proper promotional Activity:** Proper promotional measures and advertising campaigns is to be adopted by destinations to enhance religious tourism based on market intelligence.
- **Offering New & exclusive tourist product:** Tourist always needs to view something new interesting. So that new innovation of these sector that is to say, combining it with cultural tourism or other types of tourism may attract the tourist lots. Besides that, creation of new intra and inter regional markets for religious purposes are also mentionable.
- **Proper Accommodation:** The accommodation of pilgrims and visitors has evolved a great deal over the past century: from great simplicity to luxury hotels. These accommodations should contribute to the sustainable development of religious and spiritual tourism at the destinations.

• **Proper Food Facility:** In the case of religious tourism development, special attention should be given to the food service facility that is to say, the different families and types of food and the way they are prepared and cooked. Nowadays, this is taken very seriously by transport operators, restaurateurs, hoteliers and other accommodation establishments, cruise operators, tour operators, and this goes beyond food services for religious tourism.

• **Available information for tourist:** It is essential to enhance the potentials tourist knowledge about Bangladesh by introducing leaflet, documentary film, tourist guide etc.

• **Special service at the time of Bishwa Ijtema:** Bishwa ijtema, the 2nd largest Muslim congregation in the country. This type of religious events & gathering requires proper management, promotion, communication technology & strategies as lots of pilgrims may travel the country at this time from the neighboring countries. Besides these the other elements that should also be taken into consideration for Bishwa ijtema is :

- ✓ The measurement and the management of the flow of persons during this event specially the Aakhri Munaazat time.
- ✓ The environmental protection of this site is necessary as this event is held beside the River Turag in an open area.
- ✓ The issues that must be addressed for this event are handling and controlling flows and access to the event place, ensuring that participants are received and accommodated under good hygienic and public-health conditions, food services for participants that observe the dietary rules of their religion, the safety and security of persons and their property, assistance for the sick and old people, for children who may get lost, and information and communication on the programme of the gathering (times of ceremonies, meals, types of meals according to dietary traditions, etc.).

• **Proper Dealing with Operational Problems:** With regard to religious destinations, the issues that we have to be concerned about are how to equip and maintain monuments, rehabilitation & environmental protection of natural sites and traffic corridors in

order to prevent congestion and not to exceed load capacities. Pilgrimage routes and religious itineraries require well coordinated partnerships among the communities along the way, host communities, tourism professionals and territorial development authorities.

- **Tourist should given the maximum preference:** The most noticeable contribution of religious heritage to local development lies in its capacity to attract tourists and its positive effects on revenues and employment. In order to avoid any weakening of this contribution, it must be ensured that tourists are given preference over same-day visitors, and price formation mechanisms should be controlled.
- **Destination should be internationalized:** Destinations have become internationalized with the advent of globalization, lower transport costs, group rates and online information and appeals from religious and spiritual associations. Issues related to safety and security, assistance and insurance for religious travel and pilgrimages are taking on greater importance than ever with the development of these markets.
- **Proper Strategy making Policy:** Proper policy making, marketing strategies & marketing programmers should be adopted as well as implemented properly to increase the religious tourists flow in our country. It should be ensured that these policies & strategy must overcome the seasonality congestion problem in certain destinations.
- **Special care for handicap people:** Religious authorities should provide special services for the seriously ill or handicapped people who go on pilgrimage in the hope of a cure or a miracle. Particular attention should be given to Muslim pilgrimages which require insurance in the form of "takaful", which means "guaranteeing each other", and that such insurance observe Islamic jurisprudence and Sharia principles.
- **Adopting Sustainable guideline:** Sustainability guideline should be build for the development purpose of this sector. We should adopt sustainable tourism development of the religious heritage sites in accordance with the resources & potential. Tourism offices are establishing divisions whose mission is to

better coordinate potential religious tourism partners, especially in the commercial sector. For both destinations and religious tourism operators, training is and will continue to be a decisive element for the sustainable development of religious and spiritual tourism.

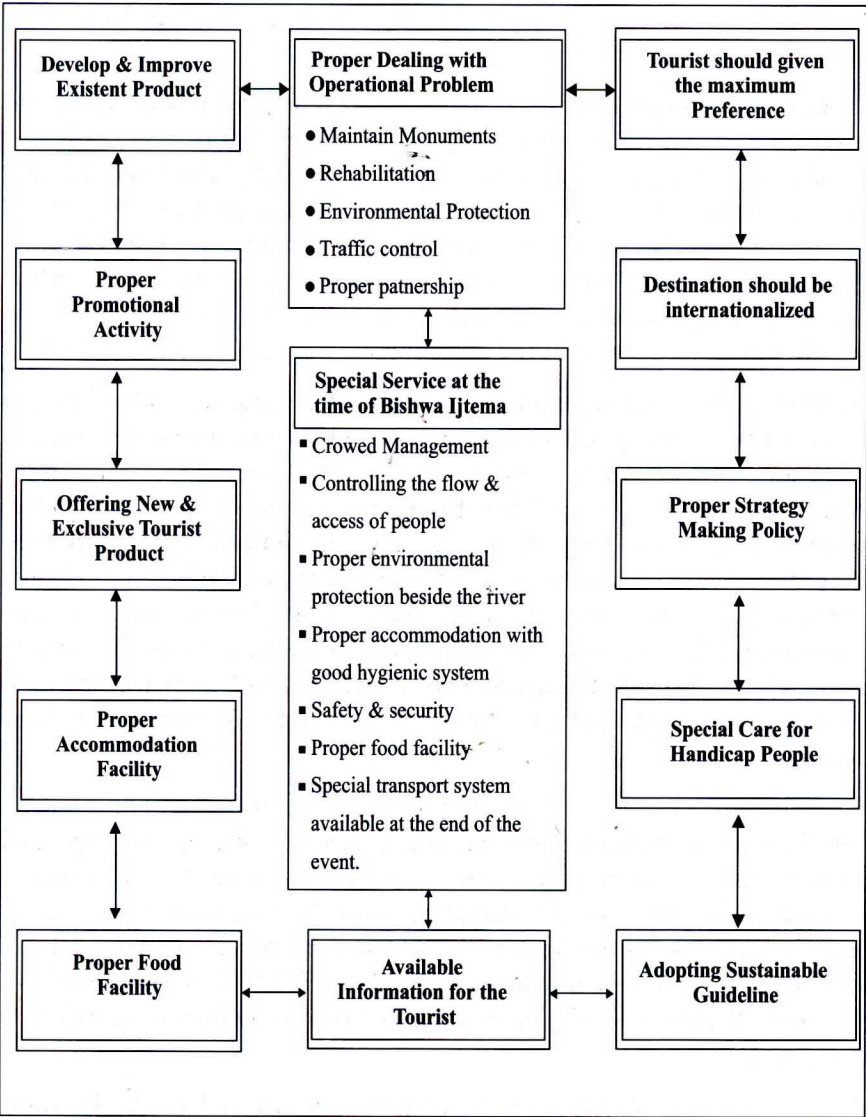


Figure 3: Recommendation on Development of Religious Tourism in Bangladesh

Remarks & Conclusions

Globalization has opened up religious tourism to a process of commercialization, transforming it into “marketable product” which it was not in its beginnings. Pilgrims in the olden days were exempt from taxes and toll levies as it was not necessary to pay to enter “Houses of God”.

At present the world tourism industry has appeared as a competitive and promising sector which is not exception in Bangladesh. It is not only that tourism is a foreign currency earning sector in Bangladesh but also that tourism creates an image of this country and makes a brand name of Bangladesh worldwide. This country has its potential to differentiate its product from other countries for its uniqueness. As discussed earlier, Bangladesh has relatively historical & heritage religious attractions which may attract tourist of different countries as well as archeologists.

In Bangladesh, Religious tourism requires more adequate studies in order to gain a better grasp of its dimensions, forms, management and impacts on monuments, sites and territories. BPC needs to create their own up-to-date research work to find out the proper statistics about how many tourists may visit Bangladesh for religious purposes, their gender, perception, popular choices of attraction; other motivational or spiritual purposes etc. There is a need for better collection, compilation and international harmonization of statistics on religious tourism. These data may help & motivate the researchers & tourism professional to do their own research work and may analysis the supply & demand of these sectors.

Historical religious places should be well preserved and may be arranged for showing to attract the tourist. Those who are pilgrims and spiritual tourist must be well entertained and to fulfill their level of satisfaction in religious spots arrangement should be properly done so that the tourists are satisfied. But policy makers must also take preventive measures so that nobody can create any negative use of religion as all religions have the basic theme that religion is used for peace, humanity, mankind & discipline.

Today, promotional activities through the internet and other electronic media including TV can be utilized properly so that tourist may build up their interest about this country. Social networking sites can also play a vital role in these purposes. Government of Bangladesh, various

concerned ministries and the industry itself should take necessary measures to make religious tourism popular in Bangladesh & abroad. Government may also encourage the private sector to play positive role in the development and diversification of tourist facilities to promote religious tourism. If proper measures, marketing strategies along with policy measures are coordinated, tourism sector in Bangladesh as well as religious tourism sector would yield a positive result

Limitations of the Study

Nothing in the world is perfect. So, the present study too has some limitations, which were not avoidable. This study is mainly based on secondary data; the presence of primary data is very limited. BPC's (Bangladesh Parjatan Commission) Statistical Yearbook doesn't offer data concerning religious tourism, which makes research in this field rather difficult. Moreover, problem of collecting information and shortage of literature about this topic are also realized.

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