

## Economic Contribution of Sustainable Tourism Development in Bangladesh

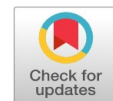
ZAKARIA LINCOLN \*

IBIAS University in Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Abstract:** The current research paper examines the tourist exports and arrivals, thus Bangladesh's foreign exchange income and expenditure. To reach a meaningful conclusion, the study is quantitative in nature but descriptive in style. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. The researcher conducted a field survey through a structured questioner and informal discussions. Secondary data have also been collected from different organizations. The earnings from tourism exports were BDT 11.1bn in 2016. The number of tourists forecasted to 23.9bn in 2027, which will be generated BDT 25.64bn. The contribution of tourism exports of Bangladesh is not satisfactory. The highest value of tourist exports over the last 10 years was 0.73% of total export in 2005, which requires less expenditure but higher foreign currency earnings. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to the GDP of Bangladesh was 2.2% of total GDP in 2016. The capital investment scenario of the tourism sector of Bangladesh is optimistic, which was 72.5bn in 2016. It is forecasted to rise by 9.5% over the next 10 years, and the amount will be BDT 201.8bn in 2027. This study principally analyzed the economic contributions of travel and tourism in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's tourism industry, with its enormous potentials, is striving to reach a satisfactory level to play the expected role in the economy of the country. Tourist exports or currency spent of tourists from foreign countries to Bangladesh can be the main cash cow of immediate benefaction for this country from the tourism sector. Although the world tourism businesses are booming and almost imperceptibly it has become single fastest-growing sector industries in the world.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Economic contribution, Sustainable tourism.

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### INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a country in this arena that has the few inbound tourists and foreign currency earner from tourism sector. Lack of updated valid data about Bangladesh tourism sector makes it difficult to conclude about the potentials of tourism demand and its potential of sustainable economic development (Mahpara Nodde, 2016).

In Bangladesh tourism sector is an almost new in business and the development is fully depended on the local markets. Both Bangladesh government and private tour operators represented by different organizations, nevertheless co-operations are aiming at strategies and policies to develop a prosperous and sustainable tourist industry. Even the existing strategies and policies are not implemented properly (Lincoln, 2019). To develop a successful tourism industry in Bangladesh, a domestically established mechanism is essential. Because the development is not possible in absence of missions, visions, policies and goals for this sector. Government and non-government initiatives manage the development of national tourism and take steps to booster the domination of resident communities. The private sector of Bangladesh should have a large influence if the national tourism development is to be sustainable and consistent. Still Bangladesh ha lacking in connection of professionalism.

To meet the expectations of the foreign market, it is necessary to investments in the existing infrastructure and other tourism related services like; product improvement must result in a desired tourist product, which must take existing Bangladesh attraction, supply and foreign demand into account. Bangladesh tour operators should be well researched before reaching the foreign tourist and they need to convince the expatriates market first (Lincoln, 2008; Sharpley, 2020). In 2004, the US Department of

\*Corresponding author: Zakaria Lincoln

†Email: [ibaiszl@bol-online.com](mailto:ibaiszl@bol-online.com)

State estimated the daily cost of staying in Dhaka is BDT 191. Expenses in other areas can be much lower. So, thus daily expenses are much lower than other competing countries. Our industry can promote these cost effectiveness to attract foreign tourists.

### Objectives

The broad objectives of the study are to investigate the economic contribution of the sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh and the specific objective is as follows:

- i. To investigate the trend of tourist export for economic sustainability of tourism development of Bangladesh.
- ii. To examine the contribution of tourism for sustainable economic development of Bangladesh.
- iii. To analysis the economic sustainability of tourism development of Bangladesh.

### RESEARCH METHOD

The study is quantitative in nature but descriptive in style. Both primary and secondary data have been used. Researcher himself conducted field survey through structure questioner and informal discussion. Secondary data have collected from the publication of ATAB, NTOs, NGOs, Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, UNWTO, WTTC, World Bank, APTF, WTB-UNWTO and other tourism related publication. Questionnaire was mainly on the role of sustainable tourism for economic impact, international tourism arrivals, capital investment, visitor exports, contribution to GDP, contribution of poverty reduction and employment.

### FINDINGS

This findings presents the analysis and interpretations of the respondents. The data have been collected by conducting field survey among local communities, stakeholders, government administrators, tourists, tourism related associations and organizations.

#### Economic sustainability of tourism development

The bellow mentioned bar chart shows us a mixed perception regarding the economic sustainability of Bangladesh tourism industry. While 45.50 percent respondents are highly agreed that the economic sustainability is essential for sustainable tourism development of Bangladesh; 31 percent respondents are highly disagreed with it. Similarly 3.50 percent respondents are agreed, 6 percent moderately agreed whereas 5 percent are disagreed.

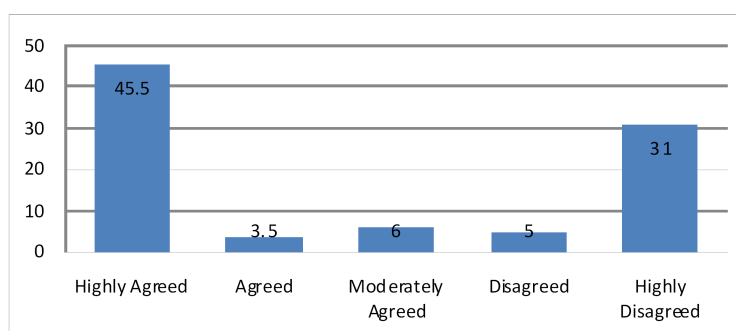


Figure 1. Perception of executives and experts regarding economic sustainability of tourism development

#### Potentiality of sustainable tourism to poverty reduction

The bellow pie chart shows that the potentiality of poverty reduction through sustainable tourism industry in Bangladesh. According to the chart, most (82 percent) of the respondents are highly agreed that poverty can be reduced through sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh, while only 2 percent respondents are highly disagreed with it. Moreover, 5 percent of the respondents are agreed and 5 percent are moderately agreed, whereas 3 percent are disagreed and 3 percent has not passed any comments.

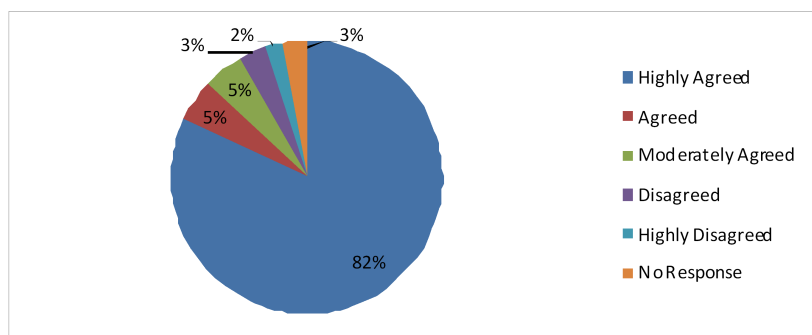


Figure 2. Perception of local communities and stakeholders about the potentiality of sustainable tourism to poverty reduction

**Sustainable tourism development increases employment opportunity**

According to the bellow pie chart, most (64.50 percent) of the respondents are highly agreed that sustainable tourism increase employment opportunity at the destination. They agreed that tourism must be consumed at the point of production and that create job opportunities for local communities, while 4.50 percent of the respondents are highly disagreed with this issue. Additionally, 15 percent are agreed and 7.50 percent of the respondents are moderately agreed. 7 percent are disagreed and 1.50 percent has no respond with this question.

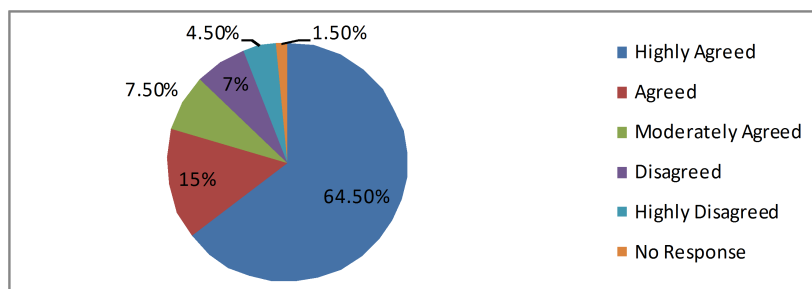


Figure 3. Perception of local communities and stakeholders whether sustainable tourism development increases the employment opportunities

**Economic and social benefits of local people from the sustainable tourism development**

The bellow bar chart explains that 56 percent of the respondents are highly agreed that local people will be economically and socially benefited through sustainable tourism development. They said that sustainable tourism development provides employment and income to economically depressed communities and areas. While 10 percent of the respondents are highly disagreed and 19 percent are disagreed. Additionally, 14 percent respondents are simply agreed and 1 percent is moderately agreed with this question.

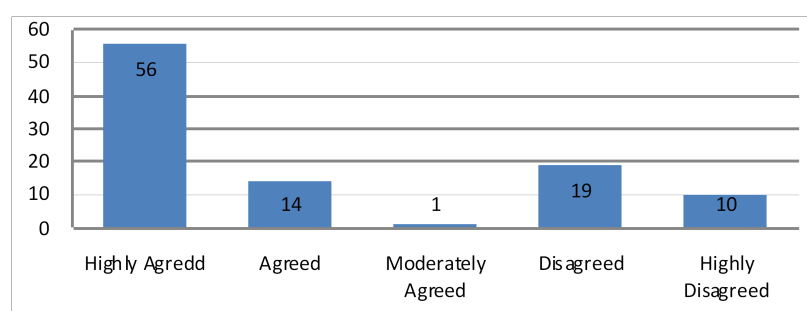


Figure 4. Perception of local communities and stakeholders about economic and social benefits of local people from the sustainable tourism development

## IMPACT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

Tourism can be considered as a business industry. It has recognized among the industries as a rapid cultivate around the world (Ali & Chowdhury, 2008). The regions of rapid growing are the interest of people to invent new, less known and fantastic places, to look for diversity in environment and to feel with unknown experience.

Tourism is the biggest export sector in the world. Its make around USD 7.6 trillion, which is 12 percent of total worlds GDP and employments are 292 million in 2016 (one tenth of total jobs) of the world for the economy of a total sum of 1.14 billion tourist worldwide (UNWTO, 2017).

The foreign exchange earnings of international tourism was, as the Table 1 shows that the latest value of international tourism receipts in Bangladesh was USD 154,000,000 as of 2014. Over the past 10 years, the value for this indicator has fluctuated between USD 82,000,000 in 2005 and 154,000,000 in 2014.

Table 1: International tourist arrival, departure, foreign exchange earnings and expenditure in Bangladesh

Year	No. of International Tourist Arrival	Foreign Exchange Earning	No. of Departure	International Tourist Expenditure
2005	208000	82000000	1767000	371000000
2006	200000	79000000	1819000	481000000
2007	289000	80000000	2327000	578000000
2008	467000	59000000	875000	708000000
2009	267000	95000000	224000	664000000
2010	303000	104000000	1913000	852000000
2011	155000	97000000	2127000	819000000
2012	125000	105000000	2773000	889000000
2013	148000	131000000	146000	1308000000
2014	125000	154000000	–	782000000

Source: Author Summarized form World Tourism Organization and Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, 2015

Above table shows that the other then employment and income, it also reaching opportunities of different types of amenities for local people of Bangladesh. Residents can also benefited of international standard entertainment, shopping and public transportations facilities because of tourists traffic.

## CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM AND TRAVELS TO EMPLOYMENT

The following figure shows that tourism and travel created 1,057,000 jobs in 2016 directly, which is 1.85% of total jobs and this is forecasted to rise by 1.8% and number rise to 1,076,000 in 2017, which is 1.8% of total jobs. These include recruitment by hotels, motels, airlines, tour and travels organizations, leisure industries, restaurants, and transportations especially for the tourist (expect suburbanite service). It is forecasted that tourism and travel will increase of 0.6% jobs pa and number rise to 1,138,000 jobs end of the following tenth year in 2027.

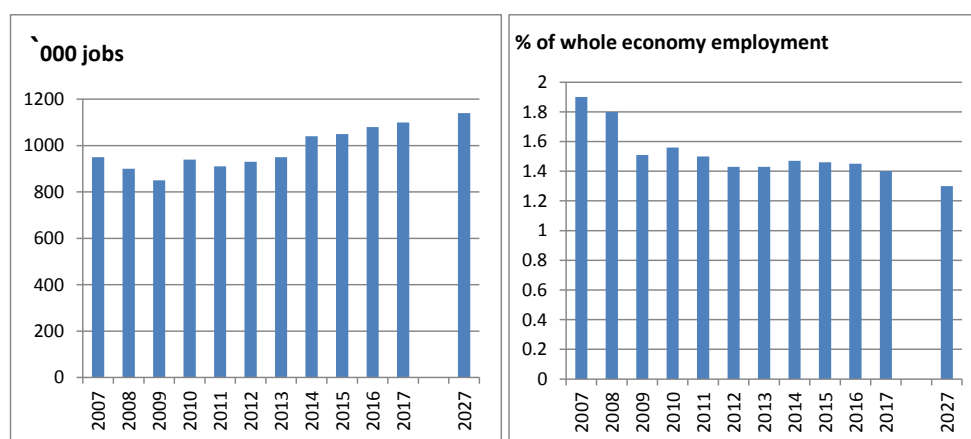


Figure 5. Contribution of tourism and travel to direct employment of Bangladesh

Source: WTC, 2017

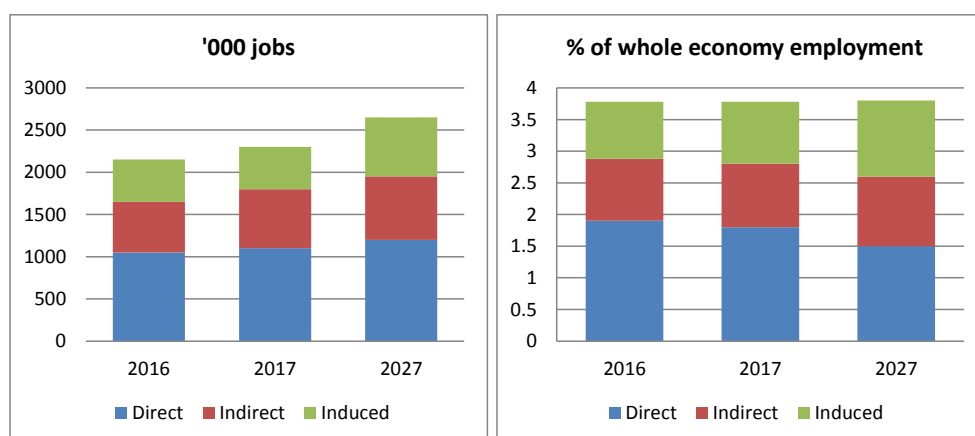


Figure 6. Tourism and travel contribution to total employment of Bangladesh

## LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVEMENT TO REDUCE POVERTY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT

One of the important requirements of sustainable tourism development to ensure local communities participation of tourism activities (Godfrey, 1994; Pathumporn & Nakapaksin, 2015). According to the respondents opinion it is clearly understand that the tourist activities creates income opportunities for the local people. Respondents said that many local people are involved with the making of the locally made handicrafts, Ornaments, foods supply, tourism related organizations, agricultural products for tourists, livestock and fishing for fulfill the tourist requirements, and some local people are engaged in trading all those things. Some tourist destination of Bangladesh namely Coxs Bazar, Kuakata, Rangamati, Bandarban, Kaptai, Khakrasri including other hilly areas and some place of Mymensingh have tribal people. The life style, dress and culture of those treble people are much more different than that the people of plain land of Bangladesh and many other countries. Based on that specialty of the tribal people of our tourist destinations are involved in different types of employment including tribal dance and home stay program.

Besides those local communities are also involving to educating tourism professionals by establishing tourism related educational institution. All those tourism related activities and employment are reducing poverty of the tourist destination as well as the country. Some respondents point out of sex activities (Lincoln, 2011, 2019). They said that each and every tourist destinations of Bangladesh have unauthorized sex workers and to sell those sex worker to the hotels, motels and direct to the tourists, a remarkable number of brokers are involved in these profession which also help to poverty reduction of the local

communities.

Each and every tourist destinations of Bangladesh must be equipped with necessary hotels, motels, resorts, eco-resort, restaurant, theme park, casino, Safari park, tea stall and many more are creating employment opportunities for local communities. Each and every districts of Bangladesh have more than one tourist destinations and most of the poor people are living nearby those destinations. So though sustainable tourism development Bangladesh can reduce its poverty.

Shopping mall, handicrafts store and souvenir shops for the tourists usually creates employment for the local communities which can pay the role to poverty reduction of the destination of Bangladesh. Water supply and sanitation is essential for sustainable tourism development in respect of ecological sustainability. Local peoples of Bangladesh have opportunities to employ in this sector.

### TOURIST EXPORTS AND ARRIVALS

Tourist exports or currency spent of tourists from foreign counties to Bangladesh can be the main cash cow of immediate benefaction for this country from the tourism sector. Bangladesh has made BDT 11.1bn from traveler exports in 2016. The number of arrivals of foreign tourists is predicted to 239,000 are in total generating amount of expenditure to BDT 25.64bn, an increase of 7.67%pa. (0.3% of total) by 2027.

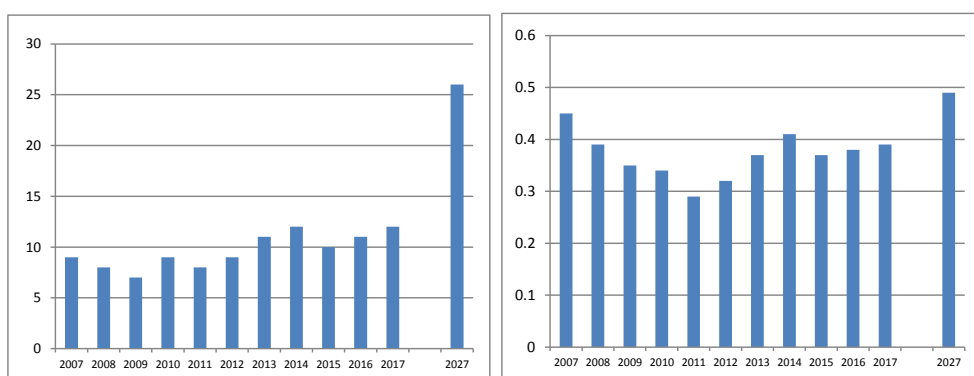


Figure 7. Visitor exports and international tourism Arrivals. Source: (WTTC, 2017)

In 2005 the arrivals of foreign visitors arise by 4.4% and total number rise to 1,148 million (UNWTO, 2017, 2019). In the year 2014, 50 millions overnight international visitors are visited the tourism destinations around the world (UNWTO, 2017). After the world economic crisis, since 2010 international travelers have still increase every year. In 2015, 4% international tourist has increased and the year 2015 is select as the 6th consecutive year of more than average growth (UNWTO, 2017). The in year 2015 international visitors has marked a new heights. The vigorous production of the tourism industry giving to financial growth and employment generation in many countries around the globe.

Table 2: International tourism receipts percentage of total export

Year	Percentage of Total Exports
2005	0.73
2006	0.61
2007	0.57
2008	0.34
2009	0.56
2010	0.48
2011	0.36
2012	0.38
2013	0.41
2014	0.47

Source: UNWTO (2015)

The contribution of tourism in the export business of Bangladesh is very poor. It is evident from the above table that the percentage of international tourism receipts of total exports in Bangladesh was 0.47% as of 2014. Its highest value over the past 10 years was 0.73% in 2005, while its lowest value was 0.34% in 2008.

### ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM IN BANGLADESH

Travel and tourism business has become most crucial financial source of many countries in the world. Tourism has its direct financial blow, as well as the sector has remarkable implied and convinced concussions. The United Nations Division of Statistics approved TSA, Recommended Methodological Framework (TSA: RMF-2008) (United Nations Statistical Division, 2008) calculated the direct benefaction of tourism and travel only. But World Tourism and Travel Council recognize that tourism and travels total contribution is much greater (WTTC, 2017).

#### Contribution of Tourism and Travel to GDP

Bellow bar chart shows that in 2016, direct contribution tourism and travel to GDP was 421.4bn (BDT) which is 2.2% of total GDP. This firstly flows the financial transactions generated from by different firms of this industry like restaurants, hotels, lodges, motels, airlines, tour and travel agency, and transportations services (excepts suburbanite service). By 2027 the direct benefaction of tourism and travel hope to rise by 6.1% per annam to GDP and amount will be raise to BDT 806.6bn which is 2.1% of total GDP (WTTC, 2017).

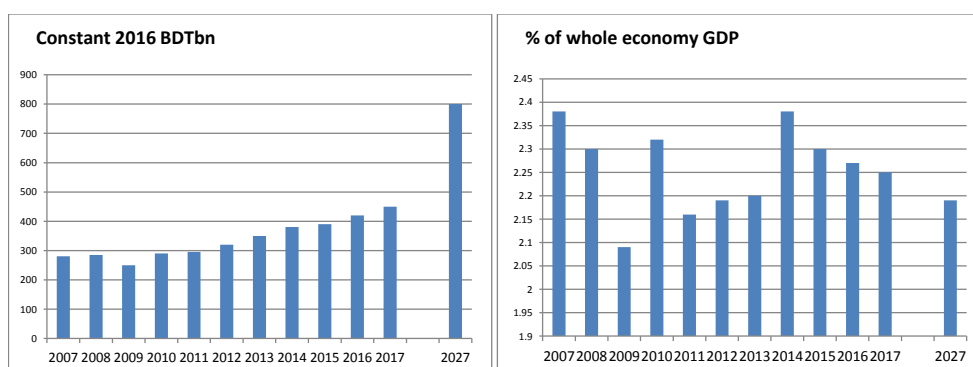


Figure 8. Direct contribution of tourism and travel to GDP of Bangladesh

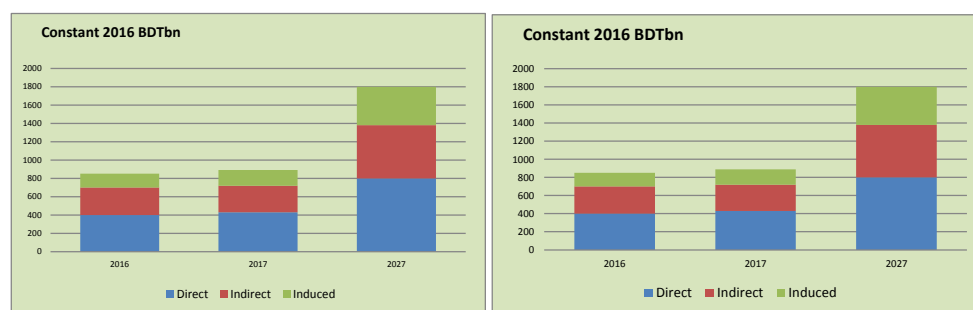


Figure 9. Tourism and travel total contribution to GDP of Bangladesh. Source: WTTC (2017)

Above bar chart shows that tourism and travel total endowment in 2016 to GDP containing border possessions form investing the induced interim and supply chain blows was 840.2bn (BDT), which is 4.3% of total GDP. Total contribution is forecasted to grow by 7.1%pa by 2027 to 1,783.0bn (BDT), which is 4.7% of total GDP.

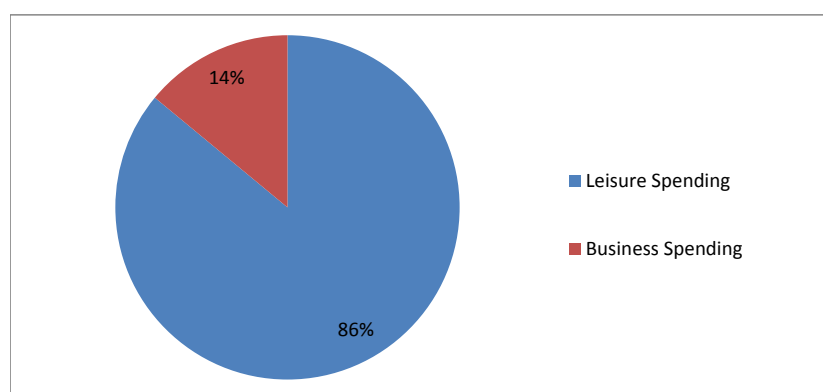


Figure 10. Contribution of tourism to GDP: Business versus leisure in 2016

Above Pie chart shows that leisure travel of inbound and domestic spending bring about 86.0% in 2016 of direct tourism and travel to GDP and the amount is 590.9bn (BDT) in comparison to business travel of 14.0% spending and the amount is 95.9bn (BDT). Leisure tourism is expected to grow by 6.1%pa in 2027 and the amount will be 1,135.2bn (BDT). In 2027 business spending is forecasted to grow by 5.4%pa in 2027 and amount will be 173.9bn (BDT)

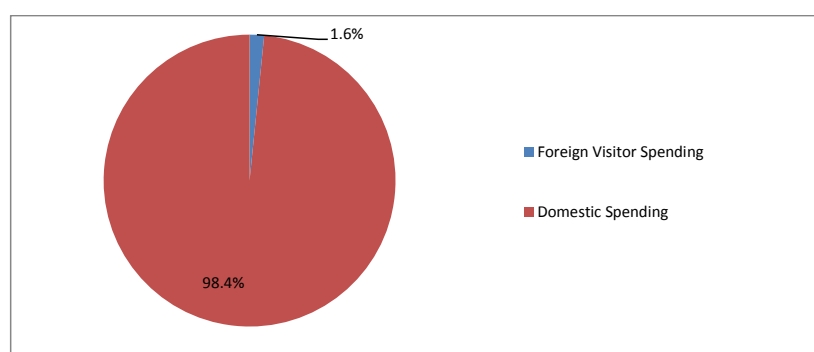


Figure 11. Travel and tourism contribution to GDP: Domestic vs foreign 2016

Above Pie chart shows that domestic tourism brings about 98.4% in 2016 of direct tourism and travel of GDP in comparison to visitor export of 1.6%. Domestic tourism spending in 2027 is forecasted to grow by 6.0% per annum to BDT 1,283.4 billion. Tourism exports are forecasted to grow by 7.6% per annum in 2027 to amount BDT 25.6 billion (WTTC, 2017).

### Relative ranking of tourism in context to contribution of GDP of Bangladesh

Bangladesh ranks in terms of absolute and direct contribution in 2016 to GDP at 54th (5.3 US\$bn), total contribution to GDP at 61st (10.6 US\$bn), direct contribution to employment at 16th (1.568 million job), total contribution to employment at 20th (21.869 million jobs), investment at 67th (0.9 US\$bn) and visitor exports at 185th (0.1 US\$bn).

The ranking of Bangladesh in relative contribution in 2016 in respect to direct contribution to GDP is 150th (2%) and the position for total contribution is 173rd (64.3%). The position of direct contribution to employment is 163rd (1.8%) and total contribution to employment is 174th (3.8%). The position in terms of total capital investment is 179th (12%) and in terms of visitor export contribution is 181st (0.4%). The country ranking of Bangladesh with respect to real growth in 2017 and in the contest of Direct GDP is 53rd (6.2%) and total contribution is 21st (7.2%). Ranking of direct contribution to employment in the respect of real growth is 134th (1.8%) and in respect of totality is 99th (2.7%). Investments ranking real growth is 1st (13.9%) and visitors ranking real growth is 12th (11.2%) Ranking of direct contribution to GDP in the respect of long term growth from 2017-2027 is 25th (6.1%) and in



totality is 6th (7.1%). Contribution to direct employment in long term is 175th (0.6%) and in total is 115th with 1.8% market share. Total capital investment in estimated long term growth is 3rd with 9.3% market share (WTTC, 2017).

### Capital investment in the tourism sector of Bangladesh

Bar chart 4 shows that tourism and travel is hope to attract financial investment in 2016 to amount 72.5bn, rising in 2017 by 13.9%. Over the next ten years it will has arisen by 9.3% in 2027 to amount BDT 201.8 billion. Tourism and travels total contributions to investment of Bangladesh will grow from 1.3% to 1.8% in 2017 and 2027 respectively.

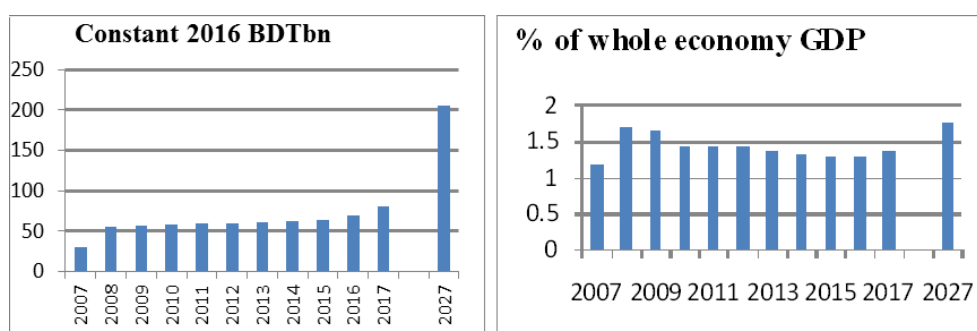


Figure 12. Bangladesh: Capital investment in travel and tourism. Source: (WTTC, 2017)

That is tourism and travels contribution to total investment of Bangladesh will rise in 2027 to 1.8% from the 1.3% of 2017. Bar chart 4 shows over the next ten years it will be arisen by 9.3% in 2027 to amount BDT 201.8 billion. Tourism and travels total contribution to investment of Bangladesh will expected to grow 1.8 in 2027.

## LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### Limitations

Every researcher faces same limitations in his or her researcher work. The present research is also of no exception to this. In this study the researcher has been tried to all possible limitations as much as minimal. Some limitations were out of control of the researcher. Although researcher has given much efforts. The major limitations of the research work are as follows:

- Number of tourists destinations included in the study does not reflect the overall picture of all Bangladesh tourist destinations. Number of tourists is also not sufficient to arrive at generalization of findings and observations.
- Absence of cooperation of management people and other stakeholders created troubles in data collection.
- Shortage of sufficient secondary and primary data creates restrictions in statistical tests.
- Lack of knowledge about sustainability of some respondents.
- Finally due to limited studies done earlier in this vital area, there has been difficulty in selecting the methodology of the study.

### Implications

Economic sustainability makes sure that the developments are effectives in economically and the wealth is over seen in a way, that the resources can reinforce subsequent generations. To ensure economic sustainability of tourism development in Bangladesh the following things and issues should be considered:

- Provide employment and opportunities for income to economically depressed communities in destinations areas.
- Providing financial incentives or interest free loan to encourage local ownership, management and operation of tourist products and services.
- Local stakeholders should be provided special incentives, where the local incomes and investment

are insufficient.

- Improve the international standard quality of tourism products and services for sustainability of the industry of Bangladesh as a whole.
- Increase the productivity of sustainable tourism products and services for sustainability of tourism industry in Bangladesh.
- Develop modern life style at the tourist destination and workplace for sustainability of tourism sector of Bangladesh.
- Modernization of the working methods and the work stations of the tourist destination.
- Encourage public-private partnership in the tourism sector of Bangladesh.
- Encourage private sector investment for the sustainable of tourism development of Bangladesh.
- Minimize expenditures to develop new tourist place and facilities for economic sustainability of tourism in Bangladesh.
- Sustainable initiatives for foreign tourists for sustainable foreign exchange earnings.
- Introduce budget carrier for transportation of domestic and foreign tourists for economic sustainability.
- Developed of communication, transportation, accommodation and other tourist services for sustainable tourism development of Bangladesh.
- Increase economic activities in the tourist areas of Bangladesh.
- Establishing strong economic and cross-cultural linkage with other neighbor countries.
- Establishment of more budget hotels and resorts in the destination areas of Bangladesh.
- Use as much as possible local goods and services in tourism sector of Bangladesh for economic sustainability.

### **Future research directions**

Enough research-based literatures on economic contribution of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh are not available. Therefore, it has not been possible to draw any precise hypothesis regarding the problem under this study. Nevertheless, on the basis of the survey of available literature and expert opinion, the researchers have attempted to draw some theoretical propositions and have evaluated those in light of the analysis of findings. These broad propositions are related to the key issues of the research problem and have been developed to achieve the objectives of the study. These propositions along with the scope of the study have defined the extent and coverage of the study and guided the researchers have forwarded those propositions for the future research.

Bangladesh tourism industry has not been able to provide necessary economically sustainable tourism infrastructure and facilities for the tourists. But further research are required in these regard.

Adequate number of tourism firms is not available in the country and the existing firms are not yet fully equipped with necessary manpower, technology and facilities for economically sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh. So, necessary investigations are essential for the future.

Further researches are needed to the overall performance for economically sustainable tourism of the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

The measures undertaken by the government are modest in nature and much research need to be done for economically sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh can expect to become an important visiting destination by adapting effective and practical sustainable strategies in the future research by following the context of the findings of this study.

### **CONCLUSION**

Economic sustainability ensures the economic development of the country. So economic resources should be managed to support future generation by providing employment opportunities, financial incentives and encourage local ownership among the economically depressed communities and areas. Establish participatory land use planning and zoning. Urban renewal programs can boost the local economy and correct past mistakes.

Increased demand for food, water, power and luxury goods can be minimized by incorporating

recycles-techniques and using of renewable resources when and where possible; diversification of local agriculture and food processing, increased regional trade; providing training and education for local people as needed for job career, and creating business opportunities for the sustainability of tourism industry.

In recent years the economic contribution from tourism export is satisfactory and it is increasing year to year, which is a positive trend for sustainable economic development of tourism sector of Bangladesh. Bangladesh government authorities have identified tourism as a means of generating employment and foreign currency. The economic significance of tourism varies from country to country. Bangladesh tourism industry with its enormous potentials is striving to reach at a satisfactory level in order to play the expected role in the economy of the country. As a major sector of the services economy, tourism is increasingly recognized as giving economic and social advancement for the destinations countries and local residents to reduce unemployment through creating jobs in this sector directly and indirectly. Tourism is naturally contributing to rural and remote area development, especially in economically depressed remote and rural location vulnerable by the downfall of conventional agricultural professions, where maximum poor living. Although the world tourism businesses are booming and almost imperceptibly it has become single fastest growing sector of industries in the world (WTTC, 2017). The General Assembly of United Nations recognized tourism development in a sustainable way as an effective tool for poverty reduction and the development of the peoples quality of life. The also recognized the crucial capacity and extent makes economic and social advancement mainly for the less developing countries, and sustainable tourism expose as a main effort to the development of global understanding prosperity and peace.

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Increased demand for food, water, power and luxury goods can be minimized by incorporating recycles-techniques and using of renewable resources when and where possible; diversification of local agriculture and food processing, increased regional trade; providing training and education for local people as needed for job career, and creating business opportunities for the sustainability of tourism industry.

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