

Competitive Marketing Strategies for Tourism Industry in the Light of “Vision 2021” of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladesh is a riverine country with some attractive natural beauties. It has hills, mangrove forest, rivers, sea, valley, lakes, canals, eco-park and so on. The government is trying its best to develop its tourism industry. Current govt. is also setting its sight on tourism development and this became evident when Bangladesh tourism board launched “Beautiful Bangladesh” campaign during the ICC world cup 2011 with the aim of promoting Bangladesh as a tourist destination. However there is a lack of a comprehensive master plan. Government organizations related to tourism are not that much responsive regarding developing a comprehensive marketing strategy for tourism industry. However Bangladesh has been maintaining a steady growth of 6% over the past few years. Development of our tourism industry can significantly affect our economic growth as well as help Bangladesh to achieve its vision 2021. Tourism is a service industry. According to the “Bangladesh Economic Review-2013”, service consists of 48.84% of the total GDP in the year 2012-13. Development of service industry will accelerate our economic growth. The study will therefore try to develop some competitive strategies in the light of vision 2021 and therefore achieve sustainable economic growth.

Key words: tourism, marketing, growth, Strategy, Bangladesh.

1. Introduction:

Bangladesh has achieved notable successes in recent decades, with average life expectancy increasing to 65 years, economic growth sustained at about 6% a year, GDP increased to US\$ 433 per person, and the percentage of people living in poverty reduced to 40% by 2005. These trends are likely to continue in the next decade, but are not sustainable (Bangladesh Environment and Climate Resilient Sustainable Development-Vision 2021, 2010). Tourism is an increasingly important component of the economies of many countries. For some countries including Bangladesh it is a significant source of income, employment and investment. Tourism in Bangladesh has the potential to spur overall economic development of the country and result in: growth of the Gross Domestic Product; human resource development; poverty alleviation through development of rural livelihood and employment of women; even promotion of local cuisine. It requires extensive preparation with a huge financial backup. It is possible for Bangladesh to use tourism development as an integral tool for economic progress, provided that the necessary infrastructure is put in place. With the realization of tourism's multi-dimensional potential, including balance of payments, economy diversification, and revenue expansion and direct and indirect employment opportunities, it makes perfect sense for Bangladesh to give its tourism industry top priority. However a competitive marketing industry for the tourism industry in Bangladesh can change the economic growth of the country and therefore can establish Bangladesh a global tourist destination.

2. Literature review:

Definition of tourism can be found in the variety of forms. The term tourism can be defined as the temporary movement of people to destination outside their normal place of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater their needs (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). It is the sum of the phenomena & relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business supplier, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting the tourists and other visitors (Macintosh & Goeldner, 1986). For effective development of the tourism industry, balanced development is needed. It is also related to current affairs and economic diplomacy. Tourism sector should be properly explored, so that it will have positive contribution towards increase of Gross domestic product (Ali & Mohsin, 2008). Tourism is a complex industry and its promotion needs to be directed at a large number of people in various lands of different socio-economic structures having different needs, tastes, attitudes, expectations and behavior pattern. Effective marketing promotional strategy must go through in the people's tastes and preferences (Shafi, 1985). Execution of the marketing concept in tourism can be achieved through the use of a variety of marketing tools and techniques (Popadopolous, 1989). Creating a Tourism Development & Marketing Plan is the first rule for successful tourism. The plan should include several details like product development, upgrades and improvements, repositioning and/or branding, attractions and events, visitor amenities and services, marketing and public relations, public/private partnerships, recruitment, funding and budgets, and organizational responsibilities. The plan should integrate existing comprehensive plans and economic development and Main

Street efforts (Let's Talk Business, 2004). Marketing constraints affect the attitude of the foreign tourists. However Bangladesh tourism industry should position its marketing mix elements in a way that attain positive attitudes of the foreign tourists that ensure growth of the country (Afjal et al. 2005). Bangladesh is a developing country in Asia, holding high potentiality for tourism. The country has the lacking of proper study and attention on tourism promotion. As Bangladesh tourism appears to have suffered mostly due to inadequate and ineffective promotional activities, it is necessary to study the strategic promotional approaches of the tour operators in Bangladesh and find out the remedies to overcome the problems or limitations identified (Ahmmed, 2013). Bangladesh does not have enough effort to promote the country as a tourist destination. Bangladesh has to make aware to the tourists about what to see, where to stay and what to eat. Bangladesh need to develop the infrastructure like hotels, resorts, promoting more places and there should have a link of the government tourism organization with the private sector to boost up the promotional activities for the same (Mitra, 2005). To make a tourism brand appropriate; infrastructure development, proper management and marketing is essential. Since Bangladesh is not known as tourism brand in international market, it needs to work to restructure its tourism sector to introduce it as a tourism brand in the international market. Because branding in tourism not only attract tourists but also attract international investors to invest money (Hossain, 2013). Bangladesh tourism is facing so many problems including marketing strategy. By applying niche market strategies she can earn more foreign currency because Bangladesh is blessed with four key tourism products: Beaches, Forest, Hills and islands, Historical place and Archaeological Sites that are mostly pleasing to many tourists (Sarker & Begum, 2013). There are a number of tourist facilities in Bangladesh but in some cases information is not available to the tourists. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) needs to change its marketing strategy with an aim to building up a good country image of Bangladesh (Hasan, 1992).

3. Objectives of The Study:

The study of developing a competitive marketing strategy for the tourism industry in Bangladesh has the following objectives:

- ❖ Analyze the environment of tourism industry in Bangladesh.
- ❖ Identify the strategic factors of our tourism industry.
- ❖ Develop competitive strategy in the light of vision 2021.
- ❖ Measure the probable impact of those strategies on our economy.

4. Methodology:

The study is based on secondary data analysis. In addition existing literatures have been extensively used for the purpose of strategy development. Data from the published (local & international) sources has been used as well. Furthermore ideas from the experts as well as academicians have also been taken into consideration.

5. Recent Economic Scenario of Bangladesh:

Bangladesh grew by 6¾ percent in FY11 and on average by 6 percent a year during the past decade. Over the same period, external trade increased by almost four-fold in U.S. dollar terms and more than doubled as a share of GDP. At the same time, the poverty level nearly halved, in line with achieving most of our Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These achievements are stunning given where this country was at its birth. Bangladesh's Vision 2021 aims to raise growth to an average of 8 percent a year over during this decade and make further decisive inroads in reducing poverty, in line with our aspiration to achieve middle-income status in the next 10 years. In FY10 and FY11 the global economy was reeling from the global financial crisis of 2009 and in order to avert an impact on the Bangladesh economy, broad money growth and specifically private sector credit growth were eased. The Bangladesh economy as a consequence of this stance, and other pro-active measures, emerged largely unscathed from the global crisis, averaging over 6% growths between FY2009 and FY2011 (Bangladesh Bank's governor speech, 2012).

The increasingly globalised economy of Bangladesh is facing a number of challenges in recent times in view of the ongoing global economic stagnation. Performance of the economy in FY2012-13, and also beyond, will critically hinge on how the political challenges facing Bangladesh at the moment are addressed in the coming months. Any prolonged uncertainty in this context will have serious implications for the performance of the economy (CPD working paper 101).

According to the World Bank report on "Bangladesh development update-2013" some of the economic indicators are:

- GDP growth in fiscal 2013 is likely to fall to around 6 percent compared with 6.3 percent in fiscal 2012.
- A broad-based declining inflation trend appears to be gaining ground.
- The overall external balance continued to remain positive with a record increase in reserves to over US\$14 billion
- Financial development is riding a bumpy road.
- Prudent monetary and fiscal management contributed to sustained growth and macroeconomic stability.

- Progress on structural reforms has been slow.

However this report also extracted some of the major opportunities that Bangladesh can avail. These are:

- Bangladesh has a historical—but time-bound—opportunity to reach 8 percent growth.
- Bangladesh has the potential to capture at least 15 million jobs.

GDP growth in fiscal 2013 will likely fall short of the fiscal 2013 Budget target (7.2%), but is still expected to be a healthy 5.8%, roughly on par with recent years. The slight slowdown from fiscal 2012 (6.3%) will likely be due to weak exports and investments because of the adverse impact of the euro area crisis, domestic supply constraints, and political uncertainties in the run up to tenth parliamentary elections likely to be held in early 2014. On the other hand, strong remittance and a robust service sector performance will likely help cushion the slowdown. Favorable international commodity prices and monetary tightening have contributed to lowering inflation. Looking ahead, the increasingly fragile political environment does not bode well for revival of investments needed to accelerate growth. (Bangladesh development update-2013).

Table 1: Bangladesh Current Macro Economic Indicators

	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY131	(Projection)	FY13	(Jul-Feb)
GDP Growth (%)	6.1	6.7	6.3	6.3	5.8	..	..
Inflation	7.3	8.8	10.6	10.6	7.2	7.9	10.4
Export Growth (%)	4.1	41.5	5.9	5.9	7.2	9.4	13.0
Import Growth (%)	5.5	41.8	5.3	5.3	2.1	-3.3*	20.8*
Remittance Growth (%)	13.4	6.0	10.2	10.2	14.6	17.4	12.2
Reserves (Months of Import)	5.1	3.9	3.3	3.3	3.5	4.4	3.2
Exchange Rate (Taka per Dollar)	69.2	71.2	79.1	79.1	82.0	79.0	83.0
Total Revenue (% of GDP)	10.9	12.2	12.8	12.8	13.2	..	..
o/w Tax (% of GDP)	9.0	10.5	10.8	10.8	10.9	..	..
Total Expenditure (% of GDP)	14.6	16.3	17.3	17.3	17.7	..	..
o/w Current Exp. (% of GDP)	9.7	9.8	10.0	10.0	9.7	..	..
o/w Subsidies² (% of GDP)	1.4	2.0	3.2	3.2	3.3	..	..
ADP (% of GDP)	3.7	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.7	2.3	1.9
Fiscal Deficit (% of GDP)	3.7	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.5	..	..
NBR Revenue Growth (%)	18.0	27.6	19.1	19.1	18.8	16.1	17.5
ADP Spending Growth (%)	31.8	26.7	15.2	15.2	35.8	38.1	23.6
M2 Growth (%)	22.4	21.3	17.4	17.4	17.6	18.7*	17.9*
Growth of Credit to Public Sector (%)	-1.7	33.6	18.8	18.8	21.4	12.3*	43.2*
Growth of Credit to Private Sector (%)	24.2	25.8	19.7	19.7	16.0	14.8*	18.9*

Source: Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Export Promotion Bureau, IMF, and WB staff estimates.

6. Vision 2021:

The government of Bangladesh is dedicated to build a country whose citizens are able to live prosperous and happy lives. The year 2021 will mark the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence, while the year 2020 will be the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This policy visualizes a democratic system where people choose their government freely and get services from it without hassle; enjoy freedom from fear and intolerance, live with dignity; where every citizen is assured of social justice, environmental protection, human rights and equal opportunities; and where the rule of law and good governance flourish. Simultaneously this policy envisages a Bangladesh which by 2020/2021, will be a middle income country where poverty will be drastically reduced where, our citizens will be able to meet every basic need and where development will be on fast track, with ever-increasing rates of inclusive growth (Bangladesh board of investment, government & policy).

“Vision 2021” consists of 8 basic objectives. These are:

1. Democracy and effective parliament
2. Political framework, decentralization of power & people's participation
3. Good governance through establishing rule of law and avoiding political partisanship
4. Transformation of political culture
5. A society free from corruption

6. Empowerment and equal rights for women
7. Economic development & initiative
 - ✓ This includes meeting basic needs, alleviation of poverty, Food & nutrition, health care, industry, infrastructural development, Environment, sustainability and so on.
8. Bangladesh in the global arena

7. Tourism Industry In Bangladesh:

Bangladesh has plenty of tourists' attraction places. The country was listed by Lonely Planet in 2011 as the "best value destination". Bangladesh's tourist attractions comprise, historical and monuments, resorts, beaches, picnic spots, forests and tribal people, wildlife of various species. Bangladesh offers ample opportunities to tourists for angling, water skiing, river cruising, hiking, rowing, yachting, sea bathing as well as bringing one in close touch with pristine nature. In the northern part, comprising the Rajshahi division, there are archaeological sites, including the temple city Puthia in Rajshahi; the largest and most ancient archaeological site, Mahasthangarh in Bogra; the single largest Buddhist monastery, Paharpur in Naogaon; the most ornamental terracota Hindu temple in Bangladesh Kantaji Temple, and many rajbaris or palaces of old zamindars. In the south-western part, mainly the Khulna Division, there is the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest of the world with Royal Bengal Tiger and spotted deer. The historically and architecturally important sixty domed mosque in Bagerhat is a notable site. In the south-eastern part, which is the Chittagong division, there are natural and hilly areas like Chittagong Hill Tracts, along with sandy sea beaches. The most notable beach, in Cox's Bazar, is a contender for the title of longest unbroken sandy sea beach in the world. In the north-eastern part, Sylhet division, there is a green carpet of tea plants on small hillocks. Natural reserved forests are great attractions. Migratory birds in winter, particularly in the haor areas, are also very attractive in this area. Ministry of Tourism and The Civil Aviation Ministry design national policies for the development and promotion of tourism. The Ministry also maintains the Beautiful Bangladesh campaign (Bangladesh Tourism-Wikipedia)

According to Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation during the year 2008, total number of foreign tourists visited in Bangladesh is 93,831 which are 44.35% of the total visitors arrival by purpose of visit in Bangladesh. The followings are some of the statistics from the Bangladesh parjatan corporation website.

Table 2: Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism & Other Travels (2001-2010, Million Taka)

Month	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Jan	273.80	297.50	259.00	457.00	450.42	653.71	561.13	749.28	649.24	495.98
Feb	218.10	260.60	327.00	393.70	502.73	554.11	624.04	585.06	579.46	496.98
Mar	196.10	336.20	355.90	425.90	468.50	538.94	471.90	527.79	518.90	565.97
Apr	219.00	312.50	241.10	309.40	335.56	411.62	387.22	459.35	473.85	427.37
May	240.50	282.70	226.30	305.00	347.95	452.02	449.95	423.06	538.21	342.11
Jun	221.70	313.00	288.00	279.70	301.23	394.96	366.17	509.52	417.71	473.03
Jul	207.10	267.50	302.30	303.60	296.98	398.14	346.63	461.98	453.03	320.97
Aug	170.50	251.50	232.00	285.90	354.61	424.16	363.72	417.30	439.32	431.37
Sep	193.40	245.90	217.30	293.10	334.14	362.29	342.54	464.46	350.65	368.06
Oct	187.00	205.00	265.10	247.90	332.67	327.95	359.68	415.67	361.99	525.26
Nov	234.80	277.70	224.20	250.42	324.45	444.50	440.25	519.39	461.28	477.14
Dec	291.80	262.50	371.80	415.94	444.65	568.25	551.96	591.66	518.60	638.46
Total	2653.80	3312.60	3310.00	3967.56	4493.89	5530.65	5265.19	6124.52	5762.24	5562.70
% Change	1.02	24.82	-0.08	19.87	13.27	23.07	-4.80	16.32	-5.92	-3.46

Source: Bangladesh Bank & Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation

Table 3: Visitors Arrival by Purpose of Visit 2009

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

Source: Bangladesh Parjatan corporation statistics 2009

Table 4: Foreign Visitors Arrival by Months 2000-2009

Month	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	23,160	25,548	23,711	22,193	23,670	20,213	16,382	16,733	39,345	28,632
February	18,730	20,724	16,152	19,041	25,012	15,848	13,473	17,308	30,788	26,286
March	15,982	20,062	17,898	16,506	24,262	19,853	13,659	17,579	30,079	25,114
April	14,976	19,216	15,372	15,299	23,173	16,234	12,261	23,956	25,128	24,786
May	15,647	15,926	15,771	17,996	14,959	18,535	20,971	20,853	36,929	23,704
June	14,212	16,606	15,754	21,867	23,020	17,496	17,002	24,483	39,158	22,244
July	14,809	15,517	14,345	22,957	26,991	19,773	25,604	32,223	42,457	21,780
August	13,399	16,739	14,315	19,041	21,938	15,292	14,244	20,614	36,017	18,239
September	12,874	11,015	13,022	17,968	19,860	13,166	16,823	18,509	26,723	14,749
October	15,855	13,053	18,601	23,498	21,785	15,568	17,237	27,073	43,213	19,963
November	19,489	15,265	17,136	21,028	27,208	18,399	14,734	30,308	39,996	19,336
December	20,078	17,528	25,169	27,115	19,392	17,285	17,921	39,471	77,499	22,274
Total	199,211	207,199	207,246	244,509	271,270	207,662	200,311	289,110	467,332	267,107
% Change	15.30	4.01	0.02	17.98	10.94	-23.45	-3.54	44.33	61.65	-42.84

Source: Bangladesh Parjatan corporation statistics 2009

8. Impact of Tourism On The Economy of Bangladesh:

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported in 2013 that the travel and tourism industry in Bangladesh directly generated 1,281,500 jobs in 2012 or 1.8 percent of the country's total employment, which ranked Bangladesh 157 out of 178 countries worldwide. Direct and indirect employment in the industry totaled 2,714,500 jobs, or 3.7 percent of the country's total employment. The WTTC predicted that by 2023, travel and tourism will directly generate 1,785,000 jobs and support an overall total of 3,891,000 jobs, or 4.2 percent of the country's total employment. This would represent an annual growth rate in direct jobs of 2.9 percent. Domestic spending generated 97.7 percent of direct travel and tourism gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012. Bangladesh's world ranking in 2012 for travel and tourism's direct contribution to GDP, as a percentage of GDP, was 142 out of 176. Visitor exports generated BDT 7.7bn (0.4% of total exports) in 2012. This is forecast to grow by 3.2% in 2013, and grow by 4.9% pa, from 2013-2023, to BDT12.8bn in 2023 (0.5% of total). Travel & Tourism investment in 2012 was BDT37.3bn, or 1.6% of total investment. It should rise by 0.5% in 2013, and rise by 6.0% pa over the next ten years to BDT67.4bn in 2023 (1.5% of total). Travel & Tourism is expected to have attracted capital investment of BDT37.3bn in 2012. This is expected to rise by 0.5% in 2013, and rise by 6.0% pa over the next ten years to BDT67.4bn in 2023. Travel & Tourism's share of total national investment will rise from 1.5% in 2013 to 1.5% in 2023. Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) generated 73.2% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2012 (BDT241.9bn) compared with 26.8% for business travel spending (BDT88.5bn). Domestic travel spending generated 97.7% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2012 compared with 2.3% for visitor exports (i.e. foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts). Domestic travel

spending is expected to grow by 7.3% in 2013 to BDT346.2bn, and rise by 6.0% pa to BDT619.4bn in 2023. Visitor exports are expected to grow by 3.2% in 2013 to BDT7.9bn, and rise by 4.9% pa to BDT12.8bn in 2023.

Table 5: The economic contribution of Travel & Tourism: Growth (Bangladesh)

Bangladesh Growth¹ (%)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013E	2023F₂
1. Visitor exports	-9.0	-12.4	-12.6	31.5	-5.4	13.5	3.2	4.9
2. Domestic expenditure (includes government individual spending)	7.6	4.2	-1.2	2.8	7.2	5.2	7.3	6.0
3. Internal tourism consumption (= 1 + 2)	7.1	3.8	-1.4	3.4	7.0	5.3	7.2	6.0
4. Purchases by tourism providers, including imported goods (supply chain)	9.0	5.8	4.2	4.1	9.4	4.4	6.4	5.4
5. Direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP (= 3 + 4)	6.0	2.5	-5.0	2.9	5.3	6.0	7.7	6.4
6. Other final impacts (indirect & induced) Domestic supply chain	6.0	2.5	-5.0	2.9	5.3	6.0	7.7	6.4
7. Capital investment	4.2	53.7	3.8	6.5	5.7	6.7	0.5	6.0
8. Government collective spending	6.6	2.0	6.0	8.5	15.5	6.8	6.3	6.5
9. Imported goods from indirect spending	3.1	8.9	13.4	10.0	12.0	3.6	4.7	4.7
10. Induced	5.7	2.8	-1.8	-0.4	0.2	7.9	8.3	7.7
11. Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP (= 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10)	6.2	4.8	-5.2	1.8	3.7	6.8	7.5	6.8
12. Employment impacts ('000)	1.6	-1.6	-8.8	-0.6	1.0	2.3	4.4	2.9
Direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment								
13. Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment	1.8	0.6	-8.9	-1.8	-0.5	3.1	4.2	3.2
14. Other indicators Expenditure on outbound travel	13.8	29.8	-22.7	30.5	-10.7	-6.9	-4.3	6.4

Source: World Travel & Tourism council report 2013 (Bangladesh)

9. Competitive Strategy For Tourism:

In order to formulate a competitive strategy it is necessary to identify the strategic factors of that particular industry. From the analysis of the existing literature and published data the study has found some of the strategic factors of tourism industry in Bangladesh. These are:

Table 6: SWOT analysis of Tourism industry in Bangladesh

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fairly new and rarely visited inbound tourist destination. ✓ Has exceptional natural beauty and greenery. ✓ Rich cultural diversity and religious harmony. ✓ The country possesses some unique archaeological sites, cultural heritage and eco-tourism. ✓ Abundant labor force. ✓ Positive image of hospitality. ✓ Largest sea beach in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of private and govt. investment. ✓ Lacks marketing professionalism; lack of public relations activity and sales promotion. ✓ Insufficient supply chain of tourism. ✓ Lack of transportation and communication to visit tourist spots. ✓ Social insecurity: Local people do not have experience with tourists, so visitors sometime feel uneasy in some places. ✓ Lack of policy direction and volatile staffing at Parjatan and a poor country image. ✓ Limited budget for promoting tourism overseas ✓ Limited knowledge about the demand, supply and competitors in the Bangladeshi tourism business.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relatively stable seasonable weather. ✓ Supports to core business economies. ✓ People responding to new ideas. ✓ Hosting international events e.g. world cup cricket, SAAF games. ✓ Has a strategic stopover position in the region to the largest inbound tourist destination in the region, India, as well as two prominent world ecotourism destinations, Nepal and Bhutan. ✓ Dissemination of information and communication media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Negatively affected by the lack of social and political commitment. ✓ Poor infrastructural development. ✓ Political instability. ✓ Illegal hunting and fishing of valuable wildlife. ✓ Absence of sufficient trained safe guards to save tourists. ✓ Insufficient accommodation and food supply. ✓ Absence of a sound tourism policy. ✓ Lack of awareness regarding environmental degradation. ✓ Inefficiency of public utility provider. ✓ Strong competition within the region.

Base on the above SOWT analysis the study therefore formulated an alternative TOWS Matrix. These are:
 Table 7: TOWS Matrix

<p style="text-align: center;">Internal Factors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External Factors</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exceptional natural beauty ✓ Rarely visited inbound tourist destination. ✓ Positive image of hospitality. ✓ unique archaeological sites ✓ Abundant labor 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of investment. ✓ Lack of marketing professionalism ✓ Lack of social security. ✓ Poor transportation and communication ✓ Lack of policy direction ✓ Limited budget
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stable weather. ✓ Disseminating information easily. ✓ Hosting international events. ✓ Strategic stopover position ✓ People responding to new ideas 	<p>SO strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Branding Bangladesh. ❖ Attract foreign investors by cheap labor. ❖ Build stadiums near tourist spots. 	<p>WO Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More foreign investment citing the strategic position. ❖ Promotion through different Medias. ❖ Creating public awareness regarding benefits from tourism.
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Political instability. ✓ Illegal hunting and fishing. ✓ Insufficient trained safe guards. ✓ Strong competition within the region. ✓ Insufficient accommodation. 	<p>ST strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Promote environmental sustainability to minimize illegal hunting. ❖ Strong promotional activities to divert tourists from nearby region. ❖ Developing infrastructure among the tourists destinations 	<p>WT Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Separate budget for tourism industry. ❖ Formulate a favorable tourism policy. ❖ More investment to create jobs and reduce illegal activities.

After consider the strategic factors in the tourism industry in Bangladesh, the study therefore suggests some of the strategic actions in the light of “vision 2021”. These are:

- ❖ At first a strong positive country image should be developed. Diplomats, ambassadors as well as counselors representing Bangladesh in different countries must take initiatives to promote Bangladesh as a global tourist destination.
- ❖ Bangladesh tourism board and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation need to be more active in formulating policies and implementing those policies.
- ❖ Government should attract more FDI in the tourism sector. According to the Australian department of foreign affairs and trade Australian govt. is looking for investing in the Bangladesh tourism sector. Some other countries like Japan are also eyeing on this.

- ❖ Bangladesh should ensure a sound political environment. Recent political scenario portrays that it can't attract more tourists in Bangladesh.
- ❖ Country branding is necessary to promote Bangladesh tourism. For example: Thailand position itself as "Amazing Thailand", India promotes its tourism as "Incredible India". Recently Bangladesh tourism board launched "Beautiful Bangladesh" campaign at the time of ICC world cup 2011. However frequency of promotion needs to be increased.
- ❖ People of Bangladesh are not aware about the environmental sustainability which is at present a significant concern for the survival in the earth. Illegal activities like cutting trees in Sundarbans, removing hills from the Chittagong hill tracks significantly affecting our environment and imposing question on our existence. Laws and order must be geared up.
- ❖ Government can include tourism studies in the academic curriculums in all levels so that people can be aware of this and can identify the significance of this.
- ❖ Government need to focus on infrastructure development like roads, highways, hotels, restaurants, motels, rest houses etc. our neighboring countries like India, Nepal are doing good in this segment. Since they are our primary competitors, we need to be in the same level to compete against them.
- ❖ Bangladesh lack promotional initiatives like sales promotion as well as public relations. To overcome this govt. need to take initiatives to promote its tourists destinations.
- ❖ Data regarding tourism is not available. This is one of the major problems of conducting research in this sector. Ministry of civil aviation & tourism can open a separate research & development division which will provide data on a regular basis regarding tourist arrivals, stay, spending and also taking regular feedback from the tourists so that Bangladesh govt. can take steps to make necessary changes and satisfy them.
- ❖ The country need to ensure safety and security for the tourists. Foreign tourists have a negative idea about visiting Bangladesh. They perceive Bangladesh as a country of extreme poverty and lack of safety and security. However strong promotional initiatives can help to overcome this problem.
- ❖ Govt. can formulate separate budget for the tourism industry. This will help to achieve desired economic growth.
- ❖ Govt. can provide training to the tourism businesses. At the same time to attract local private investment in this sector govt. can give subsidies in different forms.
- ❖ Govt. can arrange tourism fair in an adequate number in home and abroad to inform the latest updates of our tourism products, services and overall tourism industry to attract the tourist.
- ❖ Experts and consultants can be hired from universities, world bank as well as IMF to implement different projects.
- ❖ More domestic airports need to be built specially in the area where there are attractive tourists' spots. It also needs to be ensured that sufficient number of flights is available.
- ❖ More international events can be arranged. Recently Bangladesh hosted ICC world cup 2011 and going to host ICC world t20 2014. However stadiums should be built near tourist spots like coxs-bazar, Khulna, Chittagong so that spectators can also view those natural beauties.
- ❖ Govt. needs to give more emphasis on use of information technologies. Current govt. is also promoting Bangladesh as "Digital Bangladesh". An website can be built where foreigners can get each an every

information regarding hotel booking to price and transportations. Information access should be given priority in this sector.

- ❖ Different long term and short term master plans can be formulated for the tourism development considering the growing interest to the investors and commercial organizations.

10. Probable Impact:

Today we are talking about the term that is branding Bangladesh and many seminars workshops as well as talk shows are being held on it and perhaps one of the most important aspects of nation branding is as a means of promoting a country's tourism industry. According to the World Tourism Authority since 1950, tourist activity has grown each year at an average rate of about 7 per cent, increasing from 25 million to 808 million in 2005. Some estimates suggest that worldwide receipts for international tourism presently amount to US\$ 630 billion per year. In recent years, Asia has done particularly well, with Thailand the undisputed leader with annual tourism revenues per head of US\$ 157 (2004). By contrast, Bangladesh has one of the worst performing tourism sectors, with less than US\$ 0.5 per capita which compares with Sri Lanka at \$ 26 and India at \$ 6 (World tourism Organization 2004).

However the recommended competitive strategy for tourism industry in Bangladesh will help to achieve it "vision 2021" in many ways. This can be like

- Strategy like promoting Bangladesh or branding Bangladesh will help country to achieve its 8th objective stated in "Vision 2021" that is "Bangladesh in the global arena. This strategy will position Bangladesh as a global tourist destination with a positive brand image.
- Development of tourism industry means heavy investment from both private and govt. sector. This will create an industrial base. More investment will create more jobs. Countries economic growth will accelerate. Therefore country will achieve 7th objective which is basically sustainable economic growth.
- More jobs creating through investment will eradicate poverty by a significant percentage. This will help country to achieve "Millennium Development Goals".
- Country's infrastructure will be developed significantly. More roads and highways will be built. More hotels and restaurants will be established.
- Environmental sustainability which is on the major concerns of today's world can be achieved.
- One of the major barriers of developing tourism industry is political instability. However in order to achieve desired objectives in tourism development our political culture needs a transformation which is stated in the 4th objective of "Vision 2021". Therefore there is a chance to achieve this goal as well.
- In 2009 a cyclone named SIDR brought havoc to the people of southern part of Bangladesh. at the same time, in the southern part there is a largest world heritage site named "Sundarbans". Development of tourism industry means those affected people will get some jobs to live.
- Finally tourism industry requires use of information technology. Current govt. is also promoting the concept "digital Bangladesh". Therefore development of tourism industry can help the country to develop a technological infrastructure.

11. Conclusion:

Tourism in Bangladesh is a slowly developing foreign currency earner. The country has much to attract international and domestic tourists. 21st century will see a higher percentage of the total population traveling, especially in developing countries, and people will be going on holidays more often sometimes two, three or four times a year. Bangladesh therefore, should immediately take necessary measures to develop infrastructure, improve the existing products, develop peripheral products, and undertake marketing promotional activities on priority basis with a view to attracting larger share from these potential visitors and keeping pace with this trend. Actually Bangladesh is a highly prospective country with fantastic tourism potentials. A strong competitive

marketing strategy can change the scenario of our tourism industry if it is implemented in a proper way. Thus the country will be able to achieve its desired economic growth in the coming years.

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