

Resort development challenges in Bangladesh: A conceptual elaboration

Abdullah Al Muneem, Uchinlayen, & Sadia Afrin Ananya

Abstract

Bangladesh is a beautiful country for both domestic and international visitors. There are a variety of tourism attractions for the tourists from home and abroad. Many resorts have been established in the country to serve the increasing demands of the tourists. There are now imminent opportunities for resort sector in Bangladesh. Resorts may be regarded as the home far away from the natural stay of livings. This paper investigates qualitatively to reflect the understandings of resorts' businesses in Bangladesh, which are located in the different parts of the country. The primary purpose of the study is to highlight resorts, the attributes of resorts, facilities, amenities, and impacts of resorts in the country. Accordingly, this paper has focused on the prospects and challenges of resort development to facilitate the increasing tourist' demands in Bangladesh. The paper concludes by scoping some measures to overcome resort business challenges and improve service offerings by the resorts. The findings of this research will be helpful in particular for the resort business owners to shape their offerings. In addition, the policymakers will be benefitted from the key insights of resort development considerations at a local or destination level.

Keywords: resort development, tourism attractions, facilities, amenities, service offerings, destination, Bangladesh.



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Introduction

Since the ancient time, traveling has been a mode of survival for searching food, shelter, and escaping adverse weather. However, with the flow of time, travelling is now considered as a medium of entertainment, education, leisure, lifestyle, recreation, and for many other purposes. When a tourist visits a place in order to pursue the travelling purpose, they need to stay at the destination for a certain time. To meet the varied needs of a tourist, resorts are developed in a way to provide accommodations, food and beverage services, spas, conference facilities, rest, relaxation, entertainment etc. Food and beverage services, comfort, and security play a vital role to provide tourists' travel experiences (MacDonald, 1997; Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002). Resorts can be defined as the diverse products of lodging industry to integrate destinations or places to offer facilities to tourist (Brey, Morrison & Mills, 2007). Furthermore, resorts itself are considered as a destination inside a destination and as a part of tourism activities and attractions. Nowadays, a large number of people travel to remote resorts located in beautiful destinations to get involved in tourism activities. Tourists travel those destinations in order to escape from their daily work life and enjoy (Walker, 2006; Yang & Chan, 2010). Resorts could be established as a form of sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation. Whatever the type is, the main purpose of establishing a resort is to attract tourists, to deliver warm facilities, to serve guests, and to make the guests loyal customer (Mujtaba & Johnson, 2004).

In Bangladesh, travel and tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries. This industry can play key role for the economic growth as it creates employment opportunities for the local communities as well. Due to the development of resorts and hotels, many experienced and educated or skilled personnel are getting jobs. In addition, tourism stakeholders including investors, entrepreneurs, and other public and private organizations are getting benefits from resort business. Moreover, this business generates revenues that contribute to the economic growth of the country. To ensure development of the country most resorts in Bangladesh are ready to serve visitors with rooms, foods, facilities, and amenities.

Literature review

Tourism is perceived to be one of the fastest growing industries in the world. This industry makes significant contribution in a particular country or destination. As tourism is booming worldwide, a number of activities or destinations emerged to attract and retain the tourists. From this point of view resort business is seen as an opportunity for the development of a country or destination. Resorts provide facilities to visitors when they initiate a tour and involve in tourism related activities. Smith et al. (2011) highlighted that proper management and development of beach resorts, in order to shape island tourism, can control various negative impacts of tourism. Further, the economic growth of tourism and beach resorts is closely related. Bangladesh, being a country of natural and scenic beauty, possesses enormous opportunities to promote tourism by targeting tourists from both home and abroad. Bangladesh is a country where significant number of islands are located at different parts of the country. To promote islands as tourist destination lodging, food, safety and security etc. are necessary. Resort business could supply the tourists with facilities to meet rising demand during their visit in a destination. Through the development of the resort business in a destination many elements such as infrastructure, accommodation, jobs, income, and other facilities could be well developed and managed. According to deRoos (2011) the development of any resort should be based on functional, layout, design, and aesthetic features.

Subsequently, resort development must be based on structural design. Aesthetic attributes of a resort provide visitors with good experiences. When resort is developed it should be charming, safe, cost effective, and should also maintain quality.

Resort businesses in Malaysia emphasize physical environment, perceived value, image, and customer behavioral intentions. All these attributes should be positively presented in the development of resort business (Ali, Omar & Amin, 2013). Andriotis (2001) highlighted resort business in the light of product lifecycle in which introduction, growth, maturity, and decline stages of a resort have been discussed widely pursuing product stage. Different approaches are necessary for resort business to survive and sustain in this cycle. However, marketing approaches in terms of product offering, price, and promotions in resorts have been useful to sustain in this environment.

Resort is a destination with particular attributes to facilitate tourists. Several attributes including amenities, attractions, human resource, price, accessibility, and image should be considered in developing resorts (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016). In terms of resort business, these features are carefully taken into consideration. For example, the main characteristics for developing a health resort are environment friendly hunting and fishing, and health issues (Zelinskaya, Chueva & Chuev, 2016). For creating loyalty among guests or tourists; service quality, recreation, location, environmental practices are considered as prerequisite for resorts development (Yusof, Rahman & Iranmanesh, 2015). Resort business appears as identification of tourism actors in an area. It also helps to motivate entrepreneurs for local cooperation for regional development though some challenges exist (Kulusjärvi, 2016). Considering the discussion above, this study aims to explore the basic attributes that a resort possesses; and to determine the impact of resort businesses within a country, in context of Bangladesh.

Methodology

This research is anchored in qualitative approach. For describing the overall concept of the resort business in Bangladesh, desk-based literature review has been conducted. Similarly, the study is based on secondary sources of data. In this connection, we consider research articles, book chapters, newspapers, magazines, publications, relevant websites, and so on.

Findings and discussion

Considering the present context of Bangladesh, the prospects of resorts business cannot be explained in a word. Tourism is booming not only throughout the world but also in Bangladesh for possessing unique natural beauty. Tourism is such a sector where people working in different sectors try to manage time to spend leisure and vacation with friends, families, and relatives. In this context leisure, recreation, accommodation, facilities, food and beverage etc. are necessary for tourists to enjoy with families and friends. To facilitate both domestic and foreign tourists' resorts can play the role of a destination for recreational, lodging, car parking, relaxation, and other services. A large number of domestic tourists are increasing day by day in Bangladesh. Due to the rising tourist demand, resort business has high potentials and opportunities for developing in Bangladesh. Resort could be of different types based on the location and facilities. The most notable resorts are beach/ocean/lakeside resorts, golf resort, spa/health, wellness resort/destination spa, historic resort, ski/mountain resort, casino resort, water part/aquatic resort, tennis, fishing/hunting/marina, and theme park resort (Wisnom, 2013). In Bangladesh beach, spa/health resorts, golf resort, and hills

resort are found rather than other types. Historical resort, fishing resort, lake resort, and health resort have huge potentiality in Bangladesh to develop because of many significant historical destinations, lakes, healthy environment, fishing scopes in rivers, and rural areas. Location is an important consideration for the development of resort in Bangladesh. Most of the cases sea beach or beach areas, hilly regions, lake and canal areas are focused for establishing resorts. However, these establishments should be eco-friendly, environment sensitive, and pollutant free. Facilities are also part and parcel for resort business to serve a tourist. Tourist visits a destination to get service where they travel and stay. There are many resorts established in different parts of Bangladesh to facilitate tourist. For serving the tourists some facilities, such as, accommodation, food and beverage, swimming pools, gyms, spa, car parking, games, meeting, conference facilities etc. are notable. Facilities or amenities in terms of resort business are spa, beach, ski, and golf (Brey, 2011). Services are also prerequisite attribute for the development of a resort business. Resorts are established in a destination for providing service to the tourist. Service is intangible in nature. However, services must be ready for the tourist when they stay at the resort to fulfill demands. Employees should be trained and be able to meet the guests' requests.

Attributes and/or facilities of a resort

Facilities of a resort are core things for serving tourists. Tourists visit a particular place for various reasons and expect recreational facilities from a resort. Certain features are necessary for a resort, which are provided to the tourists. For example, services, recreation, leisure activities, spa, golf, horse riding, nature tour, cultural tour, beaches, hiking, tennis, bathroom, guest room, skiing, attractions, swimming facilities, experiences, and seasonality are essential features. Some other features of a resort business are quiet, good and convenient place, quality food, and equipment for entertaining tourists' needs, support, and flexibility of services. Table 1 systematically summarizes resort attributes as identified by Tanyatanaboon (2014, p. 129).

Table 1. Attributes for resort criteria

Environmental attributes	Services and amenities	Others dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural beauty/environment - Suitable location (near to attractions/easy access - Calm and quiet area - Wonderful atmosphere - Environment for rest and relaxation - Friendly nature of local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitable price - Beautiful decoration - Comfortable lodging - Service quality - Resorts amenities/facilities - Clean environment - Resort activities - Recreation and entertainment facilities - Acceptance of pet to the industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family and friends - From internet/TV advertisement - Family vacation - Nice place for honeymoon - Reputation - Business trips as a part - Satisfaction from past offer - Free/complementary stay - Tour package - University arrangement - Past experience - Photo gallery - Novel feelings - Availability of rooms

The development of resort business is very promising around the world as every year the movement of travelers is increasing. Over the last few decades, the resorts industry in Bangladesh is booming predominantly for weekend visitors. It has been a place for everyone who loves to spend a weekend at one of these popular resorts in Bangladesh away from the bustle of the city life. Keeping in mind about booming number of tourists, many resorts have

been established to facilitate with service. Considering the availability of attributes as specified in the Table 1, we have classified different resorts in Bangladesh and subsequently reported in the Table 2.

Table 2. Conceptual categorization of resorts in Bangladesh

Category	Resort name	Location
A	Royal Tulip Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa, Royal Beach Resort	Cox's Bazar, Chittagong
	Babui Eco-Resort	Moheshkhali Island, Cox's Bazar
	Grand Sultan Tea Resort & golf	Sreemangal
	Nishorgo Eco-resort	Dhaka
	Mermaid Beach Resort	Ramu
	DuSai Resort & Spa	Maulovibazar
	Himachol Resort	Sreemangal
	Sikder Resort & Villas	Kuakata
	Grand Palace Hotel & Resorts	Rangpur
B	La Riveria Resort & Park	Mear Kanchan Bridge, Kendua
	Bangladesh Butterfly Park and Resort	Patenga, Chittagong
	Inani Royal Resort	Marine Drive Road, Ukhia, Inani
	Rangauti Resort	Taltola Bazar, Moulovibazar
	Nokkhottrobari Resort, Bhawal Resort & Spa	Gazipur
	Pakshi Resort	Pabna
	Elenga Resort	Tangail
	Lemon Garden Resort	Sreemangal
	YC Resort & Picnic Corner	Khulna
	Diaz Hotel & Resorts	Saidpur
	Meghmati Village Resort	Mymensingh
	Saheb Bari Resort	Dolipara, Rajendrapur Cantonment
	C	Grand Selim Resort & Tour
Shanti Bari Resort		Radhanagar, Sreemangal
All Season Lodge		Sylhet
Tea Heaven Resort		Sreemangal, Moulovibazar
Fanush Resort		Nilachal Tiger Para, Bandarban
Foy's Lake Resort		Chittagong
SKD Resort, Saint Martin		Jliapara, Teknaf
Reverie Holiday Resort		Gazipur
Chitra Resort		Narail
Rupsha Resort & Restaurant		Khulna
Dream Square Resort		Mymensingh
Sajek Hill View Resort, Sajek Resort		Sajek

Resort is a place where tourists stay and perform activities during their visit to a particular place. There are some certain characteristics to form a resort. Tanyatanaboon (2014) highlighted some required attributes which are natural environment, suitable location, calm atmosphere, friendly, reasonable price, decoration, comfortable lodging, facilities, service quality, entertainment, recreation facilities, TV, internet connection, photo gallery, family vacation opportunities, parking facilities, honeymoon opportunities, rooms availability and so on. We consider these attributes to classify resorts of Bangladesh. Price or cost is another attribute for considering a resort of tourists. Moreover, we focus on price range of resorts adopted from available websites. Based on purchasing capacity of a tourist resort of all

categories can be found at different corner of Bangladesh. Considering certain attributes and price, from economy to luxurious resorts are available for tourists in Bangladesh. From these points of view, resorts price may range from BDT 500 to BDT 25000 approximately. For economy facilities, price may range between 500 BDT to 5,000 BDT, for mid-range facilities it may be BDT 5,000 to BDT 12,000, and for luxurious facilities it may range from BDT 12,000 to BDT 25,000. Based on facilities and price range, a concept positioning for categorizing resorts in Bangladesh is presented in Table 2. The table has been developed by the authors given the theoretical attributes and criteria available in a resort. Therefore, we acknowledge the limitation of subjective judgement associated with qualitative research approach. The resorts of Bangladesh, listed in the Table – 2, are providing warm hospitality and facilities for tourists and visitors. Further, there are also numerous resorts across the country, which promote services and facilities for visitors at reasonable prices. In Bangladesh resorts are accompanied with AC/non AC accommodations facilities, restaurant services, indoor and outdoor games, spas, golf facilities, car parking places, fitness centers, eco-friendly environment, MICE facilities, and mini bars, garden, flowers and ponds for natural beauty, swimming pool, conference rooms, meeting room, 24 hours room service, medical center with first aid treatment facilities, having a tropical small forest, tea garden, playground facilities, boating and fishing facilities, rural atmosphere, fitness center with gym, providing their own transportation system, celebrating various festivals, nice picnic spot, having good quality room service, buffet service etc. These facilities are available in a reasonable price for all classes of travelers or tourists. The prospect of resort business in Bangladesh is promising. These resorts provide tourist-friendly amenities on call. However, there is a close relationship between resort business and tourism industry. Resorts have been established for providing services and thus tourism industry gets flourished. For facilitating tourists, a significant number of facilities and amenities have been offered in resorts for fulfilling rising demand of tourists. These resorts are established in such a way where tourists can enjoy services, entertainments, recreations, and facilities in a reasonable price. Moreover, entrepreneurs, stakeholders, local community, private and public sectors will get benefits from resorts, which are established in the country. Moreover, the whole process contributes for resorts business development of Bangladesh.

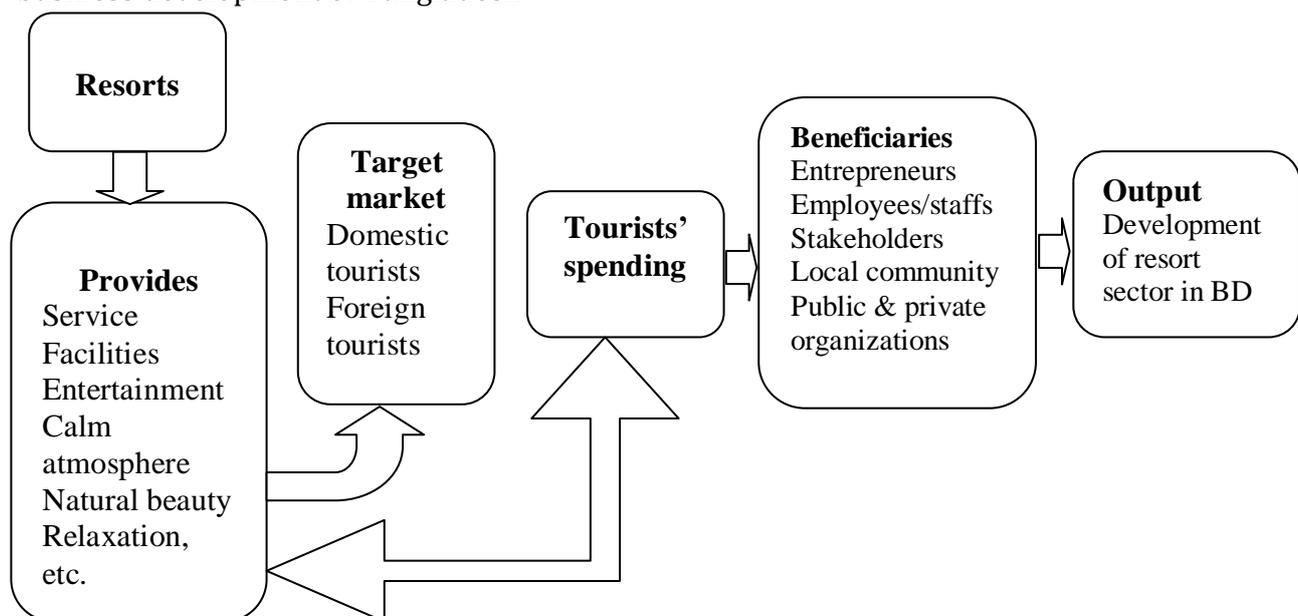


Figure 1. Resort development process and beneficiaries in Bangladesh

The figure-1 depicts a proposed model of resort development process and beneficiaries in Bangladesh. The model shows that resorts facilitate services (facilities, entertainment, clam atmosphere, natural beauty etc.) to the targeted market (domestic & foreign tourist) in exchange of money (tourist's expenditure for availing facilities). Thus, money is spread among organizations and communities involved in tourism. As tourists spend money some group of interested people get benefits (entrepreneurs, employees, local community etc.) from resort business and these factors contribute for developing resort business in the country. Moreover, resort businesses are encouraged to increase their income, positions are generated in their organizations, partners spend and search for advantages, city workers are engaged in activities associated with tourism. Public and private sector leaders may collaborate together to grow tourist industry. Furthermore, from these development activities many tourism parties get benefited directly and indirectly as well.

Challenges for resort development

Sustainability is a burning topic in the world at present. According to the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, tourism industry is responsible for emitting 5% of global greenhouse gas, which is expected to increase by 130% by 2035. Moreover, according to International Tourism Partnership to align with the Paris Climate Agreement the emission of greenhouse gas per room every year will be reduced by 90% by 2050 (Trivago Business Blog, 2019). Tourism and sustainability are very closely related to each other. Resorts are part of hospitality industry where facilities/services/amenities are served to guests and tourists. Whenever travelers/tourists are served they should be facilitated in a sustainable way. Moreover, when services are provided to tourists social, economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability need to be ensured for the tourist as well as for the local community. Every development has both positive and negative impacts but positive changes need to be ensured at every stages of development. For sustainability the tourist should honor towards culture, society, community, and environment. Considering this entire wellbeing of the country; resorts should be established in a sustainable manner. However, environmental pollution is a great concern in the present days. Tourism planners, stakeholders, and government should think about when developing resort business.

For sustainable resort tourism development some criteria should be considered. According to Blancas et al, (2010) and Day & Cai (2012) sustainable tourism should:

- Provide socio-economic benefits to stakeholders and local communities reduce poverty through providing employment, fostering earning facilities, and social service to community.
- Preserve and protect socio-cultural authenticity, respect local culture, and preserve cultural heritage sites.
- Conserve local environment and biodiversity, and make a proper use of environmental resources in sustainable manners.

There are some challenges for sustainable resort development and in its processes. These challenges are poor infrastructures, poor transportation facilities, lack of awareness about sustainable tourism, reluctant to follow sustainable development policy, and poor human resources. On the other hand, natural calamities as Bangladesh lies to prone natural disastrous areas, insufficient safety and security in resorts, poor image about the country, poor marketing strategies, poor waste disposal systems, food-service sustainability, annoying

local cultural and society, excessive pressure on destinations during peak season, and poor promotional activities are major challenges for resort business development of Bangladesh. However, resort business in Bangladesh is promising because many tourists travel domestically in every corner of the country. Every year the number of domestic tourists is increasing at a great extent. As visitors visit the tourism resources of Bangladesh, their movement has a significant influence. In order to meet the demands of this rising market a lot of facilities are necessary where resorts can play a vital role through providing services.

Impacts of resort businesses in Bangladesh

Resort business in Bangladesh is booming because a significant number of domestic tourists are rising day by day. For meeting rising demand of tourists many resorts get established at different parts of the country. Tourists are facilitated with services and amenities when they stay in these resorts. Moreover, these resort businesses have social, economic, cultural, environmental impacts. Hence private and public sectors involvement along with community involvement is being required in making decision.

Socio-economic impacts

The development of resort business has social and economic impacts of a country. A nation will benefit from social and economic gains from resort sector as visitors spend on service and socializing. For facilitating tourists and to fulfill their demands many resorts are available in Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Kuakata, St Martin Island, Cox's Bazar and other destinations. A large number of tourists travel to enjoy scenic beauty and to enjoy the cultural diversity. The tourists should be served at the destinations during their stay. Tourists spend money to get facilities, which has tremendous impacts on the economy of the country. In order to facilitate the needs of tourists, employment opportunities are also created for the people living surrounding the destination. Thus, the standard of living of employees engaged in resort business is ensured. Moreover, tourists travel to learn the culture, taste different regional cuisine, dine out in the restaurants, and spend quality time with friends and relatives. From these activities' mutual respect to other culture and society get more importance. Furthermore, resort business plays an important role for the social and economic growth of the country.

Cultural impacts

Bangladesh is a diverse and multicultural country. People of various cultures, castes, creeds, religions, customs, traditions, and beliefs live in Bangladesh. The cultural diversity of the country is precious resource for travelers or tourists. People all over the world can visit Bangladesh to see unseen things, to experience cultural diversity, to learn about the life styles of varied cultural people. To facilitate this rising number of tourists many infrastructural developments are necessary. Resorts business or its development plays a vital role for offering services. Tourists should be entertained or satisfied with facilities at the resorts. Tourists and resorts owners get benefits through this process. The foreign tourists would be able to learn our culture and the owners can sell or offer service to them which brings money contributing to national development. Moreover, foreign tourists tell the story of their visit to Bangladesh when they return to their own country. Further, tourists prefer to visit religious or historical places, nearby museums, to attend cultural events, meet/talk with others cultural people, and try to shop, and even visit zoo or parks during stay at a destination.

Environmental impacts

The environmental factors need to be considered for the development of the resort business in Bangladesh. For the selection of destinations environmental attributes are most important factors (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016). For raising the number of environmental tourists;

demand for eco-friendly resorts are needed because resorts are the main contributors for environmental impacts on tourism and hospitality industry (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). Furthermore, resort businesses have some adverse impacts on the environment. To reduce these adverse impacts environment friendly policies or practices like sewage systems, and proper waste disposal systems are necessary to develop resort business. However, resorts should be established in such a way that does not hamper the environment. Moreover, the waste disposal system is a must to ensure eco-friendly environment for tourists. The nearby areas of a resort should be very neat and clean.

Public and private sector involvement

The development of resort business is not possible in a country, which is based on only public sectors or private sectors (entrepreneurs, stakeholders, foreign investors, NGOs). To provide facilities and services to tourists the interaction of both sectors is necessary. Under the supervision of these sectors resorts business should be established to meet the demands of tourists. However, private sectors can take initiative but public sectors are responsible to ensure safety and security for the local and foreign tourist at the destinations.

Community involvement

Community is another important factor for tourism business. As resort business is flourished at a destination so community wellbeing, benefits and profits should be considered. Communities are also important contributors for the development of resort business. For such circumstances, community people should be given priority before, during and after the establishment of resort business. Employment opportunities for the local people should be created in these resorts. In every decision-making process community involvement should be considered. Moreover, adverse impacts on community must be kept in mind to avoid these activities. Eco-friendly resorts are vital to minimize adverse impacts on community.

Conclusion

The prospects of resort business in Bangladesh are promising. Many resorts in different parts of Bangladesh have been set up as a large number of domestic and foreign tourists are increasing. The number of domestic tourists is still growing. Tourists travel everywhere to see and enjoy natural and man-made beauty of the country. During their stay they need to stay, eat, travel, and enjoy various activities. For such reasons resort establishment in Bangladesh has potentiality. Further these resorts fulfill very basic needs of the tourists when they make tour at different parts of the country. However, the resort business is not out of challenges. Lack of entrepreneurship, lack of financial aid, lack of knowledge, shortage of skilled and trained personnel in hospitality industry etc. cause hindrances. It is a seasonal business and macro environments such as environment, economic condition, political situation, technological advancement etc. are some challenges for running resort business. For running resort business government, public, private organizations, community people, stakeholders and other beneficiaries should work together.

For developing resort business in Bangladesh transportation facilities need to be developed and repaired in many routes. On the other hand, traffic jam should be decreased for tourist in the country to safe time. Skilled labor is another hindrance for tourism development. Consequently, the preparation and support offered by government and private programs will build adequate human capital. Not only will this be guaranteed, but also protection and security in a resort for local and foreign visitors should also be ensured. For proper branding about Bangladesh positive activities should be published in local and foreign media. To ensure that marketing strategies should be modernized to cope up with the world standard.

Moreover, promotional activities should be circulated in mass media as well as in social media like Facebook, twitter, YouTube, etc. Another good source of publicity for tourism promotion is bus terminal and airport boarding rooms and stations to present positivity about Bangladesh. Proper waste disposal systems, respect to local culture, guest room energy conservation, and effective sustainable tourism design etc. are equally important for resort development.

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