



Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism Development In Bangladesh: Theoretical Perspectives And Empirical Evidence

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh has huge tourism prospects for its abundant and captivating natural resources such as beaches, picturesque scenery, indigenous culture, historical events, religious rituals, heritage sites, forests, wildlife, hill resorts, and so on. Through improving livelihoods, and sociocultural development, tourism can contribute to the economic development of the country. This paper aims to explore people's perception of poverty alleviation through tourism development. The majority of tourism products and services are available in rural and remote areas. Using a quantitative survey technique, this study collected 319 samples to analyze peoples' perception of tourism development that has the potential to alleviate poverty in Bangladesh. The study found that tourism significantly generates employment opportunities for the local people and plays a crucial role in the preservation and conservation of local heritage and culture. Multiple regression results show that tourism can contribute immensely to poverty alleviation. The study highlighted various guidelines, programs, and measures aimed at poverty alleviation through tourism development in Bangladesh. This paper also acknowledges that a concerted effort is a must in poverty alleviation from all relevant parties including government, NGOs, national tourism organizations, private tourism organizations, international aid agencies, and native communities.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation, Tourism Development, Employment, Local Community, and Economic Development.

Introduction

Poverty is one of the alarming conditions that deters the development of the world (Gantait *et al.*, 2018). It has become a perennial problem in South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. South Asia is the residence of approximately 24.8% of the world's population. About half of the people who live in poverty (15%) are found in South Asian nations, where 33% of the world's population resides (Ortiz & Roser, 2016). Global tourism and hospitality are growing rapidly in South Asian countries including Bhutan, Nepal, and Malaysia. The rapid growth helps mitigate poverty in addition to

boosting their economies. Bangladesh is known for its stunning scenery and has a wealth of historical and archeological monuments that are just waiting to be discovered.

Travel and tourism have been growing gradually and are essential to the nation's socioeconomic development (Huq & Alam, 2016). The industry is considered a potential instrument for poverty alleviation Ashley, Boyd, and Goodwin (2000). A 'bottom-up' strategy for tourist development is recommended by Ashley, Goodwin, and Roe (2001) to better serve the needs of the underprivileged. These days, tourism not only generates revenue and foreign exchange profits, but it also draws foreign direct investment and offers job possibilities.

Athanasopoulou (2013) stated that tourism is one of the key players in the economic emancipation as well as the social development of any developing country. It generates revenue, and jobs, fosters infrastructural development, brings remittances, exchanges culture, preserves cultural heritage, and overall promotes the economic progress of any country (Amin et al., 2024).

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) have recognized the opportunities and importance of tourism to alleviate poverty. By developing the tourism industry, Bangladesh can alleviate its poverty level on a larger scale. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of Bangladesh (2013) indicated that Bangladesh is more capable of developing the tourism and hospitality industry. The country is blessed with natural, cultural, and social attractions that persuade tourists from home and abroad to travel to the destinations. Efficient development and marketing tactics can considerably enhance the number of foreign visitors and stimulate economic expansion. The government of Bangladesh's 7th Five-Year Plan (2015) estimates that in the fiscal year 2013, tourism contributed to approximately 2.2 percent of the country's GDP. This turned out to be about US\$ 5 billion, which is only 10% of the US\$ 55 billion global average. These numbers indicate how much more the economic effect of tourism services may possess (Bhuiyan, 2019). This growth may be essential to Bangladesh's attempts to reduce poverty. Using their comparative advantages, tourism, unlike many other sectors, provides growth potential for countries with high rates of poverty. In addition, it can directly provide revenue for the underprivileged areas in which they reside.

Rationale of the Study

Tourism is now seen as a “sunshine” sector worldwide. Being the fastest-growing industry, it brings huge prospects in terms of employment creation, empowerment of the local community, and increasing purchasing power for the destination countries. Tourism fosters interrelationships among different cultures, traditions, and ways of life. This exposure can broaden one's perspective, increase cultural awareness, and foster mutual understanding and respect among people from different backgrounds. The tourism industry has significantly contributed to poverty alleviation through employment generation, income creation, micro-enterprise development, environment quality enhancement (through tourism), infrastructure development, and supply chain development (Chiffon, 2010). Tourism also contributes to raising the standard of living, lowering the poverty rate, and improving community welfare (Susila et al., 2019). As such, many destination countries have focused on reducing poverty through sustainable tourism development (Bhuiyan & Akter, 2024). However, few researches have been conducted on how tourism can help reduce poverty in Bangladesh. The present study will be an attempt to find out the association between tourism development and poverty alleviation. The UNWTO recently created the ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty) project to help developing nations and least-developed countries (LDCs) reduce poverty through tourism.

Literature Review

Discrepancies among different domains such as political, economic, and social lead to poverty because certain groups earn profit from policies implemented by the government while others suffer from them in the tourism and hospitality industry. These discrepancies show up as absolute poverty, which signifies people who live below a certain income level, and relative poverty. It also measures how money is distributed across various social classes. Dean J., (2001) shows a comparative study between absolute poverty and relative poverty. He proposed a structured questionnaire design to measure the sensitivity of estimated household consumption to survey design.

The travel and tourism sector provides opportunities to increase local incomes and create jobs. The industry has become an effective tool for social advancement and poverty alleviation. Both full-time and part-time jobs need to be ensured for the local communities (Bhuiyan, 2019). There are various small and medium-sized businesses are encouraged to be established so that local communities can receive basic services like clean water and road access in combination with tourism development.

The report (2002) of the United Nations World Tourism Organization on tourist and poverty alleviation combines the results of four studies that exhibit the potential of tourism to stimulate efforts to reduce poverty, increase incomes, and enhance the influence of tourist development in challenging poverty. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) explains that tourism is the only one in which developing countries continuously maintain a surplus among all the key sectors of international trade services. The tourism and hospitality industry has become a major force by exploiting labor intensiveness as well as the natural and cultural resources of underprivileged areas. A case study in China found a correlation between tourism and poverty alleviation by outlining the cash flows to the local poor. Interestingly, US\$7.11 (13.67%) of visitor

expenditure goes toward food and drink, while hotel services give US\$22.33% of direct or indirect advantages to residents. A paper by Das and Chakraborty (2012) also shows the importance of tourism's ability to boost ecological balance, reduce poverty, and create job opportunities.

The tourism and hospitality industry as a modern event, is essential to the economic development of any country (Gantait *et al.*, 2018). The industry plays a vital role in enhancing major infrastructure, including drainage systems, waste management, sanitation, water supplies, flood protection, local transportation, and traffic control are among its advantages (Hugo & Nyaupane, 2016). The local communities also benefit from better metropolitan services, more housing options improved land management techniques, and support for urban agriculture (Rogerson, 2006). By providing special possibilities, pro-poor tourism highlights the interconnectedness of tourist development and economic growth in efforts to alleviate poverty (Runyon, 2019). Government support of tourism development encourages more capital to be invested in the travel and hospitality industry. It boosts local economies and increases the purchasing power of the marginal people of the host communities. Those in need can benefit from tourism via cooperation and commitment from both parties (public and private sector) (Roe & Urquhart, 2001). The private sector can be directly involved in this effort through pro-poor partnerships. Not only should public and corporate policy acknowledge the potential of tourism to reduce poverty, but they also need to be aware of its ability to fuel inequality (Milon, 2024). The cooperation between public and commercial organizations can ensure a practical approach to product and market development. The life of Native Americans is improved by the Pro-Poor tourism reform adoption. It creates more economic opportunities for them by protecting the environment and conserving culture. Government agencies and donors must implement PPT strategies that prioritize the development of impoverished communities as the central focus of their efforts.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2013) that the main components of the poverty reduction strategy indicate some policies and programs that include promoting growth by sustaining increases in labor productivity and job creation in services; growing farm income through better output; increasing employment opportunities in remote areas by improving connectivity with growth poles through better infrastructure (Yusuf & Rohman, 2020). The tourism and hospitality industry can provide material benefits to the poor people of the destinations (Rahman *et al.*, 2024). In addition to providing immediate financial benefits, it gives the underprivileged long-term economic opportunities, promotes cultural pride, and a sense of ownership, reduces vulnerability through diversification, and develops personal skills (WTO, 2002). Ashley *et al.* (2000) assert that the tourist industry significantly contributes to the elimination of poverty by providing employment possibilities in the tourism industry for economically disadvantaged parts of society (Bhuiyan, 2023).

After studying this research, the study reveals that creating jobs, increasing income, encouraging entrepreneurship, empowering local communities, and fostering economic growth are important ways to reduce poverty. Also, it is found that many researchers such as Das and Chakraborty, (2012), Gantait *et al.*, (2018), Hugo & Nyaupane, (2016), Rogerson, (2006), and Ashley *et al.* (2000) discussed the various benefits that stakeholders got from the sustainable tourism development. They also focused on some strategies that needed to be developed to foster the tourism and hospitality industry (Poli *et al.*, 2024). They didn't focus on poverty alleviation by developing tourism development more specifically. However, the authors of this paper mainly provide an in-depth analysis of the several issues of tourism development and their possible impact on poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. The study also provides some guidelines for the tourism stakeholders seeking to leverage tourism for poverty reduction.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this paper is to study the prospects of tourism development for poverty alleviation. Based on this broad objective, some other objectives have been set which are given below;

1. To give an overview of the current situation of poverty level in Bangladesh;
2. To highlight how tourism development can help alleviate poverty in Bangladesh; and
3. To suggest some guidelines to formulate effective policies, implement those effectively, develop a strong tourism base, and thus alleviate poverty in Bangladesh.

Research Gap

The analysis of relevant secondary data and review of several literatures on tourism development and poverty alleviation shows that there is a deficiency of research on how tourism can alleviate poverty in destination countries. A few researches have been done on how to alleviate poverty in Bangladesh through tourism development to the local community. Keeping in mind that, the study undertakes a comprehensive study on poverty alleviation through tourism development in Bangladesh. The study aimed to analyze the relevant data to portray the current poverty level in Bangladesh and to find out ways and means to alleviate the same by promoting tourism throughout the country.

Theoretical Framework

Vanegas *et al* (2014) and Medina-Munoz *et al* (2016) reported in their study that tourist development and poverty reduction have garnered considerable attention both domestically and globally. Tourism development

is regarded as both a catalyst for economic expansion and a means of reducing poverty and promoting food security, particularly in developing nations. In their study, Asongu and Odhiambo (2019) explained that a well-established tourist sector contributes to economic development by generating money, particularly in economies that rely heavily on tourism as a primary driver of overall economic growth.

The relationship between tourism and economic growth has offered indirect support for tourism in reducing poverty. Croes *et al* (2008) highlighted that tourism spurs economic growth which ultimately contributes to alleviating poverty. International organizations like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD), and the International Labor Organization (ILO) recognized the role of sustainable tourism in poverty alleviation. WTO (2002) mentioned tourism as a principal export for developing countries and also considered tourism as a significant source of generating foreign exchange after petroleum. The United Nations World Tourist Organization (UNWTO) established a universal set of ethical principles for the tourist industry. According to UNWTO (2001), these principles emphasize the need to ensure that local communities involved in tourism operations get fair and equal distribution of the economic, social, and cultural advantages that arise from such activities.

Poverty

Poverty refers to the condition in which an individual or a group lacks the necessary financial means and necessities to meet the minimum requirements for a decent standard of existence. Mohanty *et al* (2015) claimed poverty is one of the most irritating and unpleasant realities that hinders worldwide growth and advancement. Shaw, G. B., (1907) mentioned in his famous book 'Major Barbara' that poverty is the greatest of evils and worst of crimes. The World Bank Organization (1993) stated that income is the predominant method for assessing poverty. Furthermore, it contended that an individual is deemed impoverished if their income falls within a certain threshold required to fulfill necessities. The term commonly used to refer to this minimum level is the "poverty line". Poverty is defined as the state in which individuals are unable to meet their fundamental necessities. Poverty can have a wide range of implications, encompassing social, political, legal, environmental, economic, and political causes and consequences. It is regarded as a hindrance to development and progress (Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, poverty thresholds differ depending on the specific time and location, with each country employing thresholds that are suitable for its level of advancement, societal standards, and principles.

The Causes and Manifestations of Poverty

The root cause of poverty varies from country to country. It is very difficult to determine an effective tool for the eradication of poverty. The World Development Report (2001) identified some primary causes of poverty like the lack of income and assets to attain necessities of food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education. The 'Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022' in Bangladesh has revealed that the current poverty rate stands at 18.7 percent, with an extreme poverty rate of 5.6 percent. In the 8th Five-Year Plan (2020-2025), the government has implemented measures to decrease the poverty rate to 15.6 percent by 2025.

Two distinct studies previously introduced a fundamental shift in the idea of tourism development and poverty reduction, as depicted in Figure 1. Historically, local tourism development has mostly focused on promoting regional economic prosperity. Ashley *et al.* (2000) and Deloitte & Touche *et al.* (1999) argued that poverty reduction is a subsidiary objective or an inherent result of regional economic progress. On the other hand, pro-poor tourism and ST-EP focus on creating a direct connection between tourism and reducing poverty. They prioritize the perspectives and requirements of the impoverished in the development of tourism (Ashley *et al.*, 2001; UNWTO, 2002).

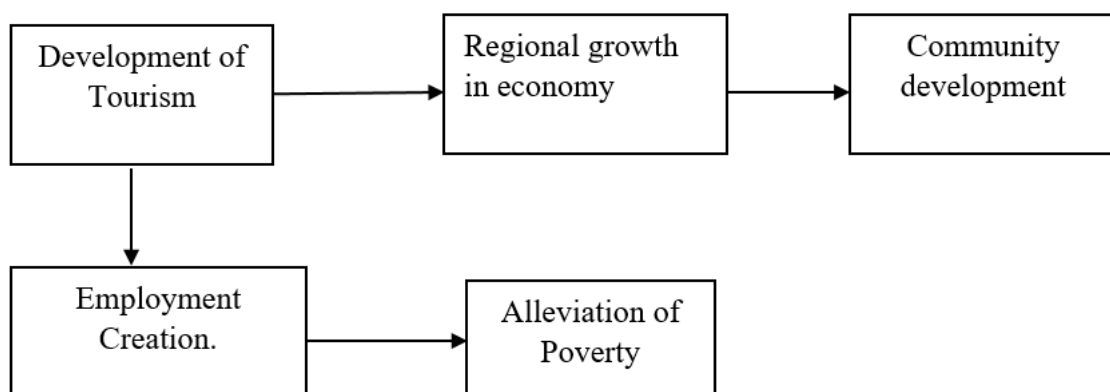


Figure 1: A shift in the philosophy regarding tourism and poverty alleviation (Hall, 2007)

Hall (2007) also highlighted that the poor become the prime focus as they can reap the potential benefits from tourism. The study expected that the new mindset will significantly increase the likelihood that the local people will gain from tourism.

Weapons of Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation is a must to maintain peace, harmony, environmental conservation, and sustainable development. Bangladesh Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013) mentioned that the key issues of the poverty reduction strategy consist of some policies and programs. The programs include promoting growth by enhancing labor productivity and creation of employment in manufacturing and services; increasing farm income through better productivity; generating employment opportunities in comparatively deprived regions by developing an efficient link through better infrastructure, and by investing in human capital; developing poor households' access to education, health and nutrition issues; Determination of social protection programs etc. Chok et al., (2007) emphasized that Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) would bring enormous benefits for the reduction of poverty (Bhuiyan et al., 2023a). He also added in a country with few options for exports, tourism would be a crucial option that can grab the opportunity. Schilcher, D. (2007). Offers a paradigm that places tourism in the antipodes of protectionism and neo-liberalism along a spectrum of methods of reducing poverty. He further criticized the underlying growth bias in the traditional pro-poor tourist strategy. Anwar, J. M. (2012) investigated sustainable tourism and its role in poverty alleviation. He also examined the potential of Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) for economic development in developing countries like Bangladesh through a qualitative study using a sample of 100 respondents. His findings revealed some positive aspects as well as some negative aspects. The study concluded with the suggestions that pro-poor tourism development can contribute to reducing poverty.

For bridging tourism actors with the local community, tourism scholars suggested Community-based tourism (CBT) strategy would provide benefits to the poor and ultimately contribute to the economic development of a nation. (Manayara & Jones, 2007; Sebele, 2010; Ashley, 2006; Harrison & Schipani, 2007).

Expert opines that the prime weapon for the eradication of poverty is the creation of employment, development of entrepreneurship, community development as well as economic development. The World Tourism Organization argues that tourism has the significant potential to alleviate poverty, safeguard society, preserve and conserve of environment, provide economic value to cultural heritage, generate job sources, and attract huge foreign exchange earnings. To increase the likelihood that this will occur, it has already implemented several calculated measures including participating in world trade negotiations, promoting sustainable tourism, and forming a special initiative on poverty (ST-EP) in collaboration with other organizations (Bhuiyan et al., 2023b).

Poverty Situation in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been fighting for economic freedom since its independence. The nation must address poverty as a key concern in addition to severe political unrest and frequent natural calamities. The poverty situation scenario is shown in the following table:

Year	% of people in poverty	% of ultra-poor
2016	24.3	12.9
2010	31.5	17.6
2005	40.0	25.1
2000	48.9	34.3

Table 01: Year-wise poverty situation scenario. (Ahmed, R., and Byron, R. K 2023).

HIES indicated that during 2005 the poverty rate was 40.0 percent. However, the poverty rate declined to 24.3 percent in 2016. During 2019, the predicted poverty rate was 20.5 percent. Individuals who are impoverished and susceptible to harm primarily rely on physical work, encountering challenges in securing consistent employment and therefore struggling to cover their basic needs. Recently, the government has set up a target for the 8th Five-Year Plan (2020-2025). Even though, Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in poverty alleviation as compared to many developing nations, almost 25 percent of people in the entire economy live below the poverty rate. Attaining the desired level of socioeconomic development may not be feasible if a significant proportion of the population remains below the poverty threshold. Therefore, poverty reduction is a significant focal point in the country's policy and development agenda. However, the economy encountered various challenges in its efforts to reduce poverty through tourism, such as insufficient backing from the government, and non-governmental and financial organizations, limited awareness among local communities, and a lack of training and technical assistance (Faridul I., Carlsen J., 2015).

Tourism and Poverty Alleviation in Bangladesh

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the tourist industry contributes approximately 3.02 percent to the country's overall gross domestic product (GDP). The whole sum is approximately Tk 76,690.7 crore in the domestic currency. In addition, according to data from the fiscal year 2018-19, the Tourism Satellite Account 2020 published by the BBS reported that the industry represented 8.07 percent of overall employment. Byron, R., K and Hasan, M., (2021).

According to historical data, the tourist industry generated 1,328,500 jobs directly in 2013. It was projected to experience a 4.0% growth in 2014. The hotel, airlines, travel agencies, and passenger transport sectors are

projected to achieve an average annual growth rate of 2.7 percent during the next decade. According to the WTTC Report 2014, it is projected that by 2024, travel and tourism will contribute to 4.2% of the overall workforce. The table and figure provided illustrate the overall impact of travel and tourism on job creation in Bangladesh.

Particulars	2013	2014	2024
Direct	2.2	2.2	2.3
Indirect	3.5	3.6	3.6
Induced	4.2	4.5	4.7

Table 2: Contribution of travel and tourism to create employment opportunities in Bangladesh.

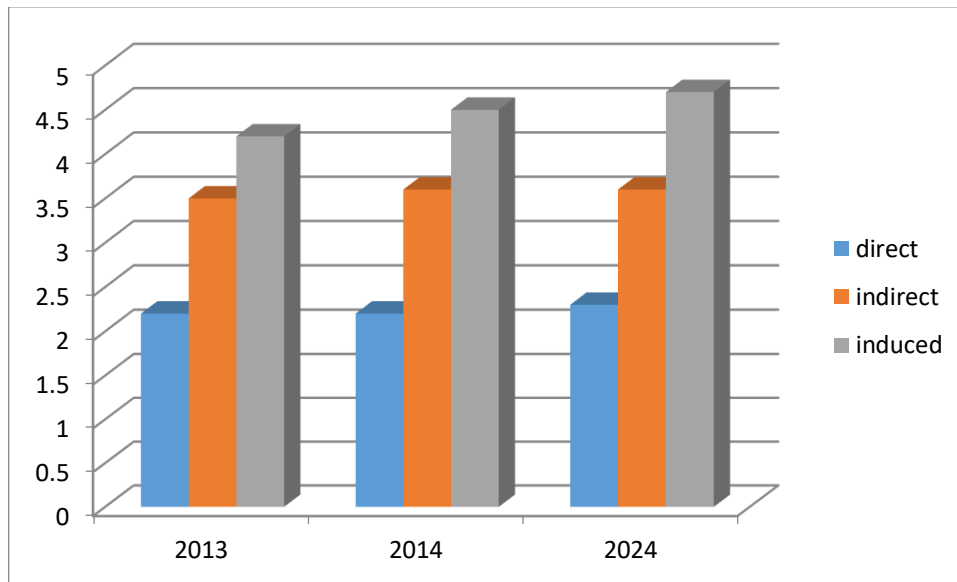


Figure 2: Contribution of travel and tourism to create employment opportunities in Bangladesh (WTTC, 2014).

In 2023, the travel and tourism sector's contribution increased by 23.2 percent compared to 2022, reaching 9.1 percent. This figure is only 4.1 percent lower than the contribution in 2019. In 2023, there was a 9.1 percent increase in new employment, resulting in the creation of 27 million jobs. This number was just 1.4 percent lower than the number of jobs generated in 2019. According to the analysis, it is projected that the travel and tourism industry will directly create 126,257,000 employees by 2024, with an annual growth rate of 2.0% over the next decade (WTTC, 2023).

The tourist business, as a rapidly growing economic sector, presents numerous opportunities in terms of generating foreign exchange, creating jobs, increasing purchasing power, and alleviating poverty (Ali, M. M. and Parvin, R. 2010). Tourism offers significant opportunities for preserving natural equilibrium, alleviating poverty, and generating jobs. The phenomena described by Das and Chakraborty (2012) are of great importance in the economic and social progress of the majority of countries worldwide. Bangladesh has achieved a significant edge over numerous wealthy nations in the field of tourism. Recently, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has projected that tourism contributes 3.02 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. Bangladesh possesses various capital assets, including its rich culture, art, music, geography, wildlife, and climate. This encompasses, for instance, World Heritage Sites, where tourist visits can engender employment and revenue for nearby communities while also aiding in their preservation.

Tourist arrivals to a destination or local community provide opportunities for the selling of additional goods and services produced by residents. The resultant increase in income and employment opportunities has the potential to alleviate poverty levels, specifically in terms of income poverty, among the local population, especially those who are economically disadvantaged. Engaging in these activities can directly alleviate poverty for those who are relatively impoverished. Furthermore, impoverished individuals can alleviate their poverty by utilizing the income generated by tourism to enhance their healthcare and education services. These services are directly associated with poverty reduction since they enhance the overall welfare and capacities of the individuals. Tourism is essential for stimulating local economies. It can be readily implemented in impoverished and marginalized regions that have limited alternatives for exporting and diversifying their economies. Rural and distant places often appeal to tourists due to their unique origins, cultural heritage, abundant wildlife, and scenic landscapes.

Methodology

The research conducted in this study is primarily descriptive in nature, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The data collected for this study includes both qualitative and quantitative information, allowing for a more holistic analysis of the research topic. The collection of data involves the utilization of both primary and secondary sources. The primary data presented in this study encompassed various significant areas of data. The collection of primary data was facilitated through the utilization of interviews and survey techniques. At the outset, a comprehensive interview is carried out with a sample of 20 carefully chosen stakeholders in the tourism industry. This sample includes individuals such as tourism professionals, hoteliers, travel agents, members of the host community, and tourists. The interviews are conducted through both email correspondence and telephone conversations. According to the expert opinion, the study has successfully identified certain specific issues about the development of tourism as a means to alleviate poverty. The present study has undertaken a comprehensive literature review to gain further insights into the subject matter.

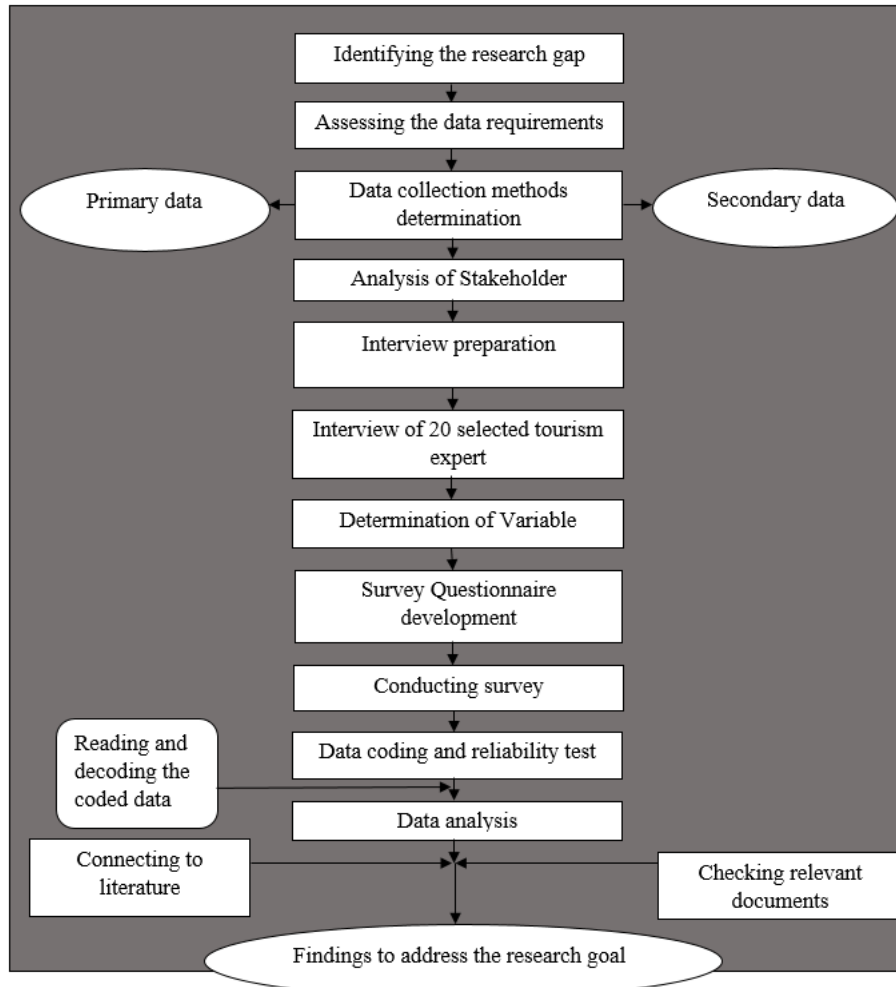


Figure 3: Data collection methods and techniques.

Data collection methods and techniques: A strict process is followed to gather and examine the data. The overall research methodology is depicted in Figure 3. An extensive review of the literature has been conducted for 'Poverty Alleviation through Tourism Development in Bangladesh: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Evidence.' The data collection process commenced by gathering information from various secondary sources, such as articles, reports, journals, and newspapers. Subsequently, a comprehensive interview is undertaken with a cohort of 20 carefully chosen tourism stakeholders, encompassing individuals from various sectors such as tourism professionals, hoteliers, travel agents, host community members, and tourists. The interviews are conducted using both email and telephone communication methods. Through conducting interviews, a total of ten independent variables have been identified.

Dependent variable Y: Tourism development helps in poverty alleviation.

Independent variables:

X1: Employment Creation.

X2: Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage.

X3: Enhance government investment in the locality.

- X4: Increases supporting business.
- X5: Increase the standard of living.
- X6: Generates additional income.
- X7: Increase foreign investment.
- X8: Infrastructure and superstructure development.
- X9: Preservation and conservation of historical sites.
- X10: Cultural exchange between tourists and host community.

Multiple variables have been used to determine the dependent variable “Tourism development helps in poverty alleviation” (Y). The independent variables (X1 to X9) are determined to figure out their role in impacting the dependent variable (Y). As a statistical tool, the study used regression analysis. A survey questionnaire was developed to gather data from the population. Only 332 respondents took part in the survey. The survey questionnaire was sent to domestic tourists who traveled to different tourist locations and attractions in Bangladesh. The following figure summarizes the demographic profiles of respondents:

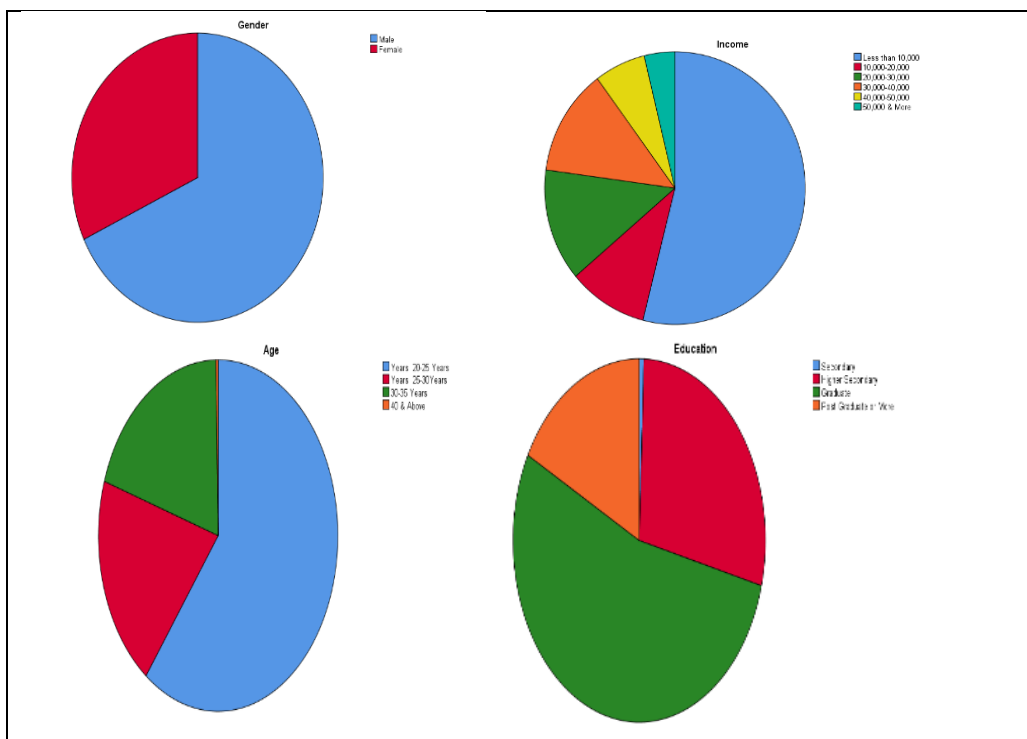


Figure 4: Respondent's demographic information age, gender, income, and level of education (SPSS 26).

Figure 4 depicts the demographic profile of the respondents most of whom are individual tourists who traveled to different tourist locations and attractions in Bangladesh randomly. Among the respondents 54.2% were students, 21.2% were Businessmen, 8.2% were Private service holders, 11.5% were Government Service holders, 4.2% were social workers, and .6% were engaged in other sectors. The percentages of male and female respondents are 68% and 32% respectively. The age frequency of the respondents was 60.3% (20-25), 19.7% (25-30), 19.7% (30-35), and .3% (40 & above). The level of income varies among 54% (Less than 10,000), 9.8% (10,000-20,000), 13.3% (20,000-30,000), 12.7% (30,000-40,000), 6.3% (40,000-50,000), and 3.8% (50,000 and more). The level of education of the respondents was 17.2% (Postgraduate or more), 53.8% (Graduate), 28.4% (Higher secondary), and .6% (Secondary).

Findings of the study:

Reliability test (Using Cronbach Alpha technique)

The dependent variable “Tourism development to poverty alleviation” served as the basis of data collection. “SPSS 26” was used to evaluate the collected data from the respondents. Split methods and Cronbach alpha were employed to assess the reliability of the data. Reliability Analysis using Cronbach Alpha Techniques result is depicted below:

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.853	.859	11

Table 3: Reliability Analysis, Using Cronbach Alpha technique, (SPSS 26).

The consistency of the items was calculated and confirmed using the Cronbach alpha test (Zikmund and Babin, 2020). For any exploratory study to represent the data reliability, the Cronbach alpha score should be 0.70 (Malhotra, 2010). According to the current findings, the score of the 11 identified items is 0.853, indicating a high level of reliability in the data.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarizes and presents data in a meaningful manner so that the underlying information is easily understood. Among measures of central tendency, the Mean or average method is commonly used to indicate the center of distribution (Malhotra, 2010). On the other hand, to observe how the data is varied from the mean value, standard deviation is used. (Malhotra, 2010). The present research presents some of the tools for summarizing various kinds of data with the help of SPSS.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage	4.25	.657	319
Tourism development helps in poverty alleviation.	4.65	.533	319
Employment Creation.	4.45	.585	319
Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage	4.18	.620	319
Enhance government investment in the locality.	4.39	.598	319
Increases supporting business	4.24	.592	319
Increases standard of living.	4.28	.704	319
Additional income	4.30	.745	319
Increases Foreign Investment	4.33	.626	319
Infrastructure and super structure development	4.26	.717	319
Preservation and conservation of historical sites	4.18	.832	319
Cultural exchange between tourists and host community.			

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics (SPSS 26).

Table 4 Through descriptive statistics table it represented that the mean value and standard deviation of 10 independent variables. The study has been seen that the mean value of the dependent variable is 4.25. The value indicates that tourism can significantly help in poverty alleviation. The mean value of other variables such as Employment Creation. (4.65), Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage (4.45), Enhance government investment in the locality (4.18), Increases supporting business (4.39), Increases standard of living (4.24), Increases Foreign Investment (4.30), Generates additional income (4.28), Infrastructure and superstructure development (4.33), Preservation and conservation of historical sites (4.26), and Cultural exchange between tourists and host community (4.18) are some of the means of poverty alleviation.

Regression analysis

The coefficients of all the independent variables on the dependent variable "Tourism development helps in poverty alleviation" are shown the **Table 5**.

$$Y = .339 + .193 X_1 + (-.075) X_2 + .029 X_3 + .026 X_4 + .281 X_5 + .077 X_6 + .056 X_7 + .137 X_8 + .124 X_9 + .055 X_{10}$$

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			B	B
1	Poverty Alleviation	.339	.325		1.042	.298	-.301	.978
	Employment Creation.	.193	.071	.157	2.733	.007	.054	.333
	Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage	-.075	.069	-.067	-1.091	.276	-.210	.060
	Enhance government investment in the locality.	.029	.059	.027	.488	.626	-.087	.145
	Increases supporting business	.026	.061	.023	.422	.673	-.094	.145
	Increases standard of living.	.281	.063	.253	4.448	.000	.157	.405
	Additional income.	.077	.052	.083	1.483	.139	-.025	.180

Increases Foreign Investment	.056	.047	.064	1.208	.228	-.035	.148
Infrastructure and superstructure development	.137	.061	.130	2.227	.027	.016	.258
Preservation and conservation of historical sites	.124	.050	.135	2.482	.014	.026	.222
Cultural exchange between tourists and host community	.055	.042	.069	1.307	.192	-.028	.137

a. **Dependent Variable: Alleviate poverty.**

Table 5: Regression Analysis (SPSS 26)

It has been seen that the coefficient of ‘Employment creation’ (X₁), ‘Increases standard of living’ (X₅), and ‘Preservation and conservation of historical sites.’ (X₈), and Preservation and conservation of historical sites (X₉) are reached at 1% of significance. The values of all four coefficients show that tourism plays a crucial role in alleviating poverty.

Model summary

The calculated model has a higher medium-adjusted R value, indicating a strong fit for the regression model of the data. Table 6 displays the R square value of .356, the adjusted R square value of .336, and the Standard Error value of .536.

Model summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.597 ^a	.356	.336	.536	.356	17.061	10	308	.000

Table 6: Model Summary (SPSS 26).

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural exchange between tourists and host community, increases foreign investment., Increases supporting business, preservation, and conservation of historical sites, generate additional income, Employment creations, enhances government investment in the locality, increases the standard of living, infrastructural and superstructural development, and Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage.

ANOVA: The following ANOVA model (**Table 7**) shows that the F test is significant. It is justifying to say that all the independent variables significantly affect the dependent variable. The estimated multiple regression model is more acceptable for the study. The overall acceptability of the ‘βi’ has been tested by the ‘ANOVA’ model. The results of the ANOVA model indicate the significance of the model.

ANOVA ^a							
Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares
48.991	48.991	48.991	48.991	48.991	48.991	48.991	48.991
88.444	88.444	88.444	88.444	88.444	88.444	88.444	88.444
	137.436	137.436	137.436	137.436	137.436	137.436	137.436

Table 7: ANOVA table (SPSS 26).

a. **Dependent Variable:** Alleviate poverty.

b. **Predictors:** (Constant), Cultural exchange between tourists and host community, increases foreign investment., Increases supporting business, preservation, and conservation of historical sites, generates additional income., Employment creations, enhances government investment in the locality, increases the standard of living, infrastructural and superstructural development, and Tourism increases the value of local culture and heritage.

Discussions

Tourism is considered a fast track for development. The tourism industry in Bangladesh has tremendous prospects in generating job opportunities. Recently the World Trade Organization (WTO) has stated that one incoming tourist in a particular country provides direct and indirect employment to nine persons. Often tourism affects poverty alleviation either positively or negatively. Positive impacts include the creation

of employment, generation of income, acquisition of assets, fulfillment of the basic needs of people, and development of the local community. On the other hand, tourism can offer several negative impacts such as pollution of the environment, damage to attractions and heritage sites, exploitation of local culture, wildlife destruction, deforestation, ecological imbalance, immoral behavior including prostitution, and so on. Even uneducated people or people who have low skills can get jobs in the tourism sector as travel and tourism is a labor-oriented sector. For instance, in a Five-Star Hotel or chain hotel, as a room attendant, an average employee is required. In addition, someone may be employed there as a guide, a driver, a gardener, and a laundry boy, and the total number rises to four persons per room. Again, it is mentionable that women have also equal opportunities to grab employment opportunities as their male part.

During the data collection period, respondents were asked an open-ended question seeking their valuable opinions, suggestions, and expectations. According to the respondent's feedback, it is depicted that tourist activities generate employability, generate additional and seasonal income, improve people's standard of living, improve local culture and heritage, and so on. Respondents also indicated that the local community is actively involved in producing handicrafts, ornaments, clothing, and food items that are traditional to the area. Additionally, they mentioned that tourism-related organizations, agricultural products, livestock, and fishing are utilized to meet the needs of tourists. Furthermore, some locals are involved in trading these goods. Every tourist attraction and destination in Bangladesh should have essential amenities such as hotels, motels, resorts, eco-resorts, restaurants, theme parks, casinos, Safari parks, tea stalls, and other necessary facilities. The presence of shopping malls, artisan stores, and souvenir shops in tourist destinations can contribute to poverty reduction in Bangladesh by generating employment opportunities for local residents. The various tourism-related activities and employment opportunities are effectively mitigating poverty both inside the tourist destination and the country as a whole.

The country's infrastructure needs to be set up significantly close to the tourist destination. The government should collaborate with concerned parties including Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh Parjantan Corporation (BPC), Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB), Association of Travel Agents in Bangladesh (ATAB), Tour Operators' Association in Bangladesh (TOAB), and other stakeholders. More and more roads and highways need to be built. To boost the tourism industry, hotels and restaurants should be established depending on the tourism attractions and heritage. In addition to infrastructure, the development of superstructures such as hotels, motels, restaurants, inns, amusement, and theme parks is crucial for attracting tourists to places.

Contributions of the research

The study makes several key contributions to the existing literature on poverty alleviation and tourism development in Bangladesh. The paper provides an in-depth analysis of the various issues of tourism development and their possible impact on poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. The data analysis of the paper shows that the tourist sector is essential to reducing poverty as it creates jobs, raises living standards, and improves infrastructure and superstructure. The empirical insights of the paper provide details on the real experiences and outcomes of the tourism development steps in Bangladesh. By documenting the impacts of tourism development on the local communities, the paper will provide guidelines for the tourism stakeholders seeking to leverage tourism for poverty reduction. The study shows some key policy implications for developing inclusive tourism in Bangladesh. By focusing on the significance of community participation, the study suggests actionable recommendations for the stakeholders to mitigate poverty by developing sustainable and inclusive tourism in Bangladesh (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2024). The study explains some areas for future research such as the exploration of innovative tourism models, the assessment of long-term sustainability impacts, and the integration of tourism development with broader poverty alleviation strategies. By identifying the research gaps in the existing literature review for future inquiry, the study keeps a groundwork for future researchers (Islam et al., 2024). The study provides an in-depth understanding of the relationship between tourism development and poverty alleviation in Bangladesh and offers valuable insights for policymakers and researchers.

Conclusion

Bangladesh is blessed with thousands of tourist places with diversified resources. It has both thrilling and challenging prospects for mitigating poverty through tourism development. Although the tourism and hospitality industry have a lot of opportunities to improve local communities by providing jobs, and money, its impacts must be managed properly to ensure fair and sustainable results (Akter et al., 2023). The theoretical perspectives of the paper show that encouraging economic diversification and infrastructural investment provides insights into decreasing poverty through the development of tourism (Khanom et al., 2022). The empirical analysis of the paper shows a positive relationship between tourism development and poverty reduction in Bangladesh.

The findings of the paper further explain that tourism has a long-term effect on wider economic growth and development and, therefore, is a potential means of poverty reduction (Molla et al., 2023). The paper also shows that the travel and tourism industry create 11 jobs out of 100 jobs all over the world. So, the growing income of people leads to a good standard of living in a country. Besides it has been found that necessary steps for conservation and preservation of tourism resources need to be taken to develop sustainable tourism for future

generations (Mani, 2019). To maximize the beneficial impacts of tourism on poverty alleviation, sustainable tourism practices, community participation, and inclusive policy frameworks are needed. After analyzing the data of the paper, it has also been found that the main weapons of poverty alleviation are employment creation, income generation, entrepreneurship development, community development, and economic development. Every opportunity can be created through sustainable tourism development (Mia et al., 2024).

The study faced some shortcomings in undergoing the research such as the inclination of the respondents to answer for their secrecy, difficulties in getting more information from secondary sources, tough to considering all the issues related to the tourism and hospitality industry because of its largest industry, etc. To deal with the limitations, the paper provides some guidelines for future research.

The incremental value is that the paper will play an important role in connecting the tourism industry with other sectors to create a robust economic bond within various economic sectors in Bangladesh (Milon, & Zafarullah, 2024). It will not only alleviate poverty successfully but also other existing and upcoming challenges of the economy can be faced effectively. In sum, it can be said that future researchers may be able to conduct research with a large sample on national and international tourism based on this paper. The researcher may also do descriptive research in order to gain further insights using a substantial sample size. Finally, the fruitful research and the consequences of its results will contribute to the global profitability of the tourist and hospitality sector.

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Conflict of interest

The authors assert that they have no conflicts of interest with any other party during the preparation of this research article.

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