THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TOURISM INDUSTRY GROWTH IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Social media has taken a staggering role in the tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. This also turned into a major marketing and strategic decision making tool for tourism enterprises. The rapid growth of Internet has facilitated expansion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which has contributed to increase social media users. To investigate the reasons behind tourism industry growth, a survey conducted on 1,060 respondents that includes different professionals. The research reveals that social media has fueled recent growth of tourism industry in Bangladesh. In this study, 97.26 percent respondents think that social media has significant impact on the tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Social Blogs are the leading sources to find travel information. As a result, the industry has found more flow of tourists than before. Thus, authorities, travel agencies, advertising firms, and tourism enterprises can use social media as a competitive weapon to promote sites, explore tourist spots and improve facilities to expand the industry.

Keywords: Bangladesh, ICT, Impact, Industry, Internet, Social Media, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is a country of natural beauty and there are six seasons that has made the country unique from many part of the South Asian region. At present, the economy of Bangladesh highly depends on the Ready-made Garments products. 60% of the foreign currency derives from the export of various garments products. Bangladesh needs more diversification for its sustainable economic growth. According to the Bangladesh Tourism Board, some of major industries are

shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals, light engineering, leather products, handicrafts, ceramics, cement, fertilizer, food processing, electronics and agriculture. In addition, tourism is very potential and promising industry in Bangladesh. The country has the opportunity to attract more local and foreign tourist and earn foreign currency. Social media can play a vital role to explore and incubate the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

In the era of internet, social media can use as a marketing weapon to promote tourist attraction, and provide information about transport and hotel. In the vision 2021, the government focuses on digital Bangladesh that is consistent with the use of social media platform inpromoting tourism industry. All the stakeholders can use social media to gather information and promote businesses to potential travellers. In many instances, social media users are the prime categories of tourists. It is not too late to reinforce the industry to attract national and international tourists and turn them to visit popular tourist spots in Bangladesh by using the social media platform.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2015), the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was BDT627.9bn (4.1% of GDP) in 2014 . It is forecasted to rise by 5.9% to BDT 314.1bn in 2015.It is forecast to rise by 6.5% pa to BDT1252.8bn (4.4% of GDP)by 2025.The total contribution of Travel and Tourism to employment was 1,984,000 jobsin 2014 (3.6% of total employment). This is forecast to rise by 2.1%pa to support 2,492,000 jobs (3.6% of total employment) by 2025.

This research reveals the strategic importance of social media in the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh. In the age of information technology, social media has broaden the opportunity for marketing in many business including tourism and hospitality management. In Bangladesh, social media also playing vital role to attract tourists to travel more destination. Social media can explore this market for international tourist if utilize properly. The following table represents popular tourist attractions in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Popular Tourist Attractions in Bangladesh

Division	Tourist Attractions
Barisal	Kuakata Sea Beach, Durga sagar, Guthia Mosque, Lebur Char, Kuakata Buddhist Temple, Sonar Char, Fatrar Char, Gangamati Reserved Forest and Jhau Forest.
Chittagong	Patenga Sea Beach, Foy's Lake, War Cemetery, Cox's Bazar, St. Martin's Island, Himchori and Inani Beach, Parki Beach, Lalmai, Moinamoti and Shalbon Bihar, Chittagong Hill tracks: (Rangamati, Khagrachari, Bandarban and Kaptai), Boga Lake, Nilgiri, Nilachal, SajekVally and Hanging Bridge.

Dhaka	Shaheed Minar, JatiyoSmritisoudho, Ahsan Manzil, Lalbagh Fort, HatirJeel, Dakeshwari Temple, JatiyaSangshadBahavan, National Museum, National Zoo, Ramna Park. Tangail: Tangail D.C. Park, Modhupur National Park, KaratiaDhanbariJamidar Bari, Jamuna Bridge, Pora Bari, Modhupur Temple, SagorDighi
Khulna	Sundarban, Sixty Dome Mosque, Hiron Point, Rabindranath Tagore's Shilaidaha Kuthibari, Shahid Hadis Park, 1971: Genocide-Torture Archive & Museum, Khulna Museum, Khan Jahan Ali Bridge, Kamrul Islam Siddiqui Park, Mozaffer Garden Zoo, Raja Sitaram Palace.
Rajshahi	Mahasthangarh, Varendra Research Museum, Somapura Mahavihara, Natore Rajbari, Choto Sona Mosque, Rabindranath Tagore's Shilaidaha Kuthibari, Padma Garden, Mahasthangarh Museum, Uttara Gonovobon, Shah Makhdum Mosque, Hard Point, Kamrul Islam Siddiqui Park, Mohanto State, Jamuna Ananda Park, and Tohakhana Complex.
Rangpur	Kantaji's Temple, Sayedpur Railway Junction, Tajhat Palace, Rangpur Zoo, Shopnopuri artificial amusement park, Parbatipur Shohid Minar, Jolkar Moar, Swapnopuri Mini Zoo, and Nawabganj National Park.
Sylhet	Jaflong, Ratargul, Madhabkunda Waterfall, Satchari National Park , Bisanakandi, Srimongal Tea Garden, Lawacherra Rain Forest, Lawachara National Park, Tanguar haor, The Central Muslim Sahitya Sangsad, Khadimnagar National Park, Osmani Museum, Sreemangal Bird Park, Adventure World Amusement Park, HumHum Waterfall, Borakbeel, Rema Kalenga Reserved Forest, and Kala Pahar.

There are many popular tourist attractions in Bangladesh.Travellers are interested to visit natural, archeological, historical and artificial places that can satisfy their thrust of travelling. Bangladehs is one of the beautiful countries in the South Asian resign for its natural beauty and hospitality. However, the country isstill far behind in attracting tourists compared to other neighbouring countries in South Asian due to poorpalanning and inappropriate marketing for this industry.

The Government of Bangladesh has reinforced the economy with digital technologies. The digital systemhas already implmented   in many sectors (e.g., Education & Financial)   . Bangladesh government is determined to enter inthe middle-income country inthe Vision 2021 with peace, prosperity and dignity. The government is implementing a large number of projects (e.g., metro rail and electronic voting systems) using digital technologies.

Rahman (2015) mentioned that National ICT Policy-2009 was developed for the purpose of achieving middle-income status by 2021 and high income status by 2041. Nazmul (2013) mentioned that since 1971, Bangladesh has primarily focused on agricultural industry and built this sector as the backbone of the economy by producing and exporting jute (known as golden

fiber), rice, and tea that comprises about 18.6% of the country's GDP and contributed to almost 45% of the total employment in 2010.

In recent years, t he growth of agricultural industry has declined significantly . It is decreased from 5.24% in 2009-2010 to 5.13%, 3.11% and 2.17% in 2010-2011, 2011- 2012 and 2012-2013 respectively. In 2009-2010, the contribution of agriculture to the GDP was 18.36%that fell into 16.33 percent in the 2013-2014 (Md. Nazmul, 2013).

In the late 1970s, Readymade Garments (RMG) industry has grown in Bangladesh and became a major player in the economy. The industry has contributed to export earnings, employment creation, poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. This sector accounts for approximately 76% of the total earnings and nearly 10% of GDP. During 2008 and 2009 the RMG sector was affected by the global recession and financial crisis (Nazmul, 2013).

The contribution of tourism industry is within the top five export categories for around 83% of countries that constitutes as a major source of foreign earnings for38% percent of countries in the world. Many developed countries like USA, UK, Italy, and France are dominating this industry. But many Asian countries such as: India, Singapore, Maldives, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, and Bhutan are attracting more tourists in last few decades due the climate, nature, and overall beauty of the country (Sultana, 2016).

Bangladesh has huge potentiality in tourists because of natural attraction .Yet government has not given adequate attention to improve the industry. Social media playsimportant role since government has improved ICT industry. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2015), the direct contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was BDT296.6bn (1.9% of GDP) in 2014and is expected to rise by 6.1%pa to BDT 566.3bn (2.0% of GDP) by 2025. This industry has generated 903,500 jobs (1.6% of total employment) in 2014 and forecast to create 1,062,000 jobs with an increase by1.4%pa by 2025.

Ali and Mobasher (2004) mentioned that from the ancient period, Bangladesh is known for stunning beauty. Foreign tourists praised this country for wonderful natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and hospitality of people. Pennington and Thomsen (2010) stated that total arrivals of tourists in Bangladesh compared to other south Asian countries are very low.

Islam and Islam (2006) mentioned that Bangladesh is very potential country to develop tourism industry in South Asia. At past, Bangladesh was an attractive destination. But at present, her position is not significant in terms of international tourism. According to Johannesburg Summit (2002), tourism directly helps a country to build necessary infrastructures which not only benefits the tourists but also the local community. The economy of the destination country affected because tourism initiates development of physical facilities and infrastructure.

In addition, growth of tourism industry can be a potential source for poverty alleviation in developing countries. Tourism contributes to social welfare by providing material benefits to the poor in many forms. It can bring long term earnings opportunity, cultural pride, sense of ownership, reduced vulnerability through diversification and the development of skills of the poor people (WTO, 2002). Roy and Roy (2015) discussed that tourism can bring many economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly in rural areas and developing countries, although mass tourism is also associated with negative effects. He has shown that the variety of tourist places and proper tourism policy can contribute a lot in the economy.

The contribution of tourism has increased in last few years. This industry has created lots of employment. There is a significant research gap to measure the impact of social media ont he tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. Some research studies has articulated the importance and role of tourism industry in the economy of Bangladesh. Other research studies reveal the importance of social media on tourism from the marketing perspective.

This study attempts to explore the strategic importance of social media in developing tourism industry in Bangladesh. Social media is not only a marketing weapon but also the source of information for many travellers and stakeholders. Social media influence the decision of tourists and provide guidance to tourism business entities to take necessary remedies for improving their services and enhance satisfaction among current and potential customers.

Objectives of the Study:

Primary Objectives: The primary purpose of this study is to contribute in the tourism industry development in Bangladesh by providing factual information to relevant stakeholders. The findings of this research may guide public and private authorities to formulate and implement strategies and policies for the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Secondary Objectives: The secondary objectives are to provide original information in the existing literature on tourism industry. Scholars in different country and international tourism agencies may use this information for further research and tourism industry development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a significant research gap in determining the impact of social media on tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. Some research depicts the problems and prospects of tourism industry in Bangladesh. Other focuses on the impact and significance of tourism industry in the economy of Bangladesh. However, realizing the importance of this sector, government has reformed national tourism policy. The objectives of this policy are to increase employment, ensure economic development, and maintain environmental purity and sustainability (Siraj et al., 2009).

The major objective of national tourism policy is to develop Eco-tourism through conservation of natural resources, promote well-being of the society, increase participation, preserve cultural values, and share benefits with the local communities. Government of Bangladesh has enacted an Act named "Protected Areas of Tourism and Special Tourism Zone" to rescue this industry (Kabir et al., 2012).

Bangladesh attracts less international tourists and generates small revenue from the tourism industry (Pennington and Thomsen, 2010). Tourism is one of the profitable sectors for Bangladesh (Elena et al., 2012). Tourism industry in Bangladesh is facing many constraints (Arif; Islam; & Islam, 2011).

Blanke and Chiesa(2006) mentioned that over the past several decades, travel and tourism has become a key sector in the world economy. Yilmez (2008) said that tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the global economy. Tourism consists of many small and medium size enterprises that operate in a very competitive and rapidly changing business environment.

Sahin&Sengun (2015) focuses on the importance of social media in tourism marketing. He mentioned that tourism industry has started to use social media as a new marketing approach in the growing internet technologies. His study reveals that social media influences tourism sector in both positive and negative ways. Travel decisions of young generation are highly affected by the comments and personal experiences of other users on the social media. Masud (2015) revealed that Bangladesh has a positive trend in tourist arrivals and foreign earnings. This trend can be increased to a higher level if tourism businesses undertake appropriate promotion measures by increasing the allocation for this purpose. The country also needs to employ creative people for this purpose, and the quality of the promotional materials also needs to be developed.

Redwan (2014) in his study highlighted the importance of tourism industry in Bangladesh along with its benefits in the socioeconomic development. The contributions of tourism industry are multifaceted, such as GDP contribution, employment generation, foreign currency earnings, infrastructure development, investment opportunities, poverty alleviation, government earnings, and cultural development.

Ferdoush and Faisal (2014) has shown the significance of tourism from many angles like economic, social, cultural, and political. The contribution of tourism to GDP is less than one percent. If it could be brought to five percent then it would generate half million direct and indirect employment, which would move the economic index in the upper direction in all areas. Ali (2010) reported that by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of services of tourism sector, providing better facilities, following cost cutting techniques, and developing

infrastructural and technology, both local and foreign tourists can be encouraged to travel more for many different causes.

Parveen (2013) investigated the current growth and development of tourism industry and examines some limitations and challenges of the industry. She suggested some policy measures to resolve its existing barriers as claimed by the respondents. Sandip (2014) mentioned that the development of service industry will accelerate economic growth. The study proposed some strategies in light of vision 2021 to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Ali and Mohsin (2008) examined various aspects of tourism marketing strategies. They suggested that tourism should be acted as an important ingredient of economic development of the country for which synergy may be applied between tourism marketing plan and its implementation process. Integrated marketing communications channel should be used to develop tourism sector of the country.

Rahman (2016) mentioned that it is necessary for the tourism companies to cope-up with the technology based customers. Social branding strategy is becoming popular in the hospitality and tourism industry. Social branding increases the opportunities for the industry to connect with their customers and employees in a quick and efficient way. Musa (2013) defined that tourism marketing is an integrated effort to satisfy tourists by ensuring the best possible services available for them. Sultana (2016) mentioned that tourism marketing is a tool to transform potential tourists into actual tourists. It is the safest way to generate demand and expand tourism businesses.

HospitalityNet (2015) mentioned that social media has made a huge impact on the tourism industry. Travellers use social media to find relevant travel information, take informed decisions about their trip and share their experiences about places, hotel, restaurant and transport. TripAdvisor, a popular site for visitors, has had a wide-reaching effect on the tourism industry. It has 50 million visitors per month who are actively seeking travel information and get advice from this trusted source. With more than 200 million reviews and opinions posted on TripAdvisor to date, and more than 800 million active users on Facebook posting updates and sharing images, social media is dominating the industry.

Carnoy (2017) mentioned that social media has fundamentally changed the way that many companies communicate with and market to their target demographics. For the tourism and hospitality industry, the rise of the Internet and the increase popularity of social media have altered the marketing strategies. In this article, Pixlee has discussed about 5 ways by which social media has transformed to tourism marketing: social media has transformed travel research, increased social sharing, enhanced customer service, attracted travel agencies, and changed loyalty programs.

Olenski (2014) has mentioned that worldwide around one-fifth of leisure travellers use social media to make their travel plan and get inspiration in searching travel information for different categories: Hotels (23%), Vacation activities (22%), Attractions (21%), and Restaurants (17%).In his study, Facebook is the leading social media platform that is most used by travellers.

Kazak(2016) mentioned that social media has a huge impact on our daily lives including the tourism industry. Travellers often rely on social networking sites when make key decision about their trips.People share travel experiences including opinions about hotels, restaurants, airlines and car rental services that have a direct impact on their future travels decisions.Thus, professionals who are working in tourism industry should pay special attention on social media platform.

According to Kazak (2016), Dunloe Hotel has identified 5 major trends about social media, such as: online reputation management (ORM), social media as a customer service channel, inbound marketing, search engine optimization (SEO) and mobile apps that contributes to the value creation process.

According to Social Samosa (2014), social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are very popular websites that has a big impact on the world tourism business.Among all other social media, Facebook is the winner. 52% of Facebook users said that their travel plans are influenced by their friend's picture of a trip. A study showed that over 74% travellers share their experience with other people by writing reviews on the website. 98% travellers mentioned that reviews in Trip Advisor are accurate and helpful. Over 70% of people think online reviews are the second most trusted form of advertising. Thus, travel and tourism agencies can promote their offers on these sites.

Bennett(2012) mentioned that travel and tourism heavily depends on word-of-mouth to spread opinions and recommendations. Social media platforms, such as, Facebook and Twitter allow customers to easily share their trip experience, and suggestions that can be extremely valuable when they are positive. A recent study has reported that 52 percent respondents have changed their travel plans after finding required travel information on social media. Another study showed that 85 percent travelers use Smartphone when travel abroad, and 52 percent Facebook users mentioned that they were inspired for vacation choices by seeing holiday photos of their friends.

Sahin, and Sengün (2015) mentioned that social media influences tourism sector both in positive and negative ways. Tourism decisions of young generation have been strongly affected by comments, reviews, and experiences of other users on social media. Today, many tourism businesses utilize social media effectively. Since there are many social media network sites

including online booking sites, the guests can post comments promptly. Thus, enterprises can provide solutions as soon as they enter in the process to prevent their brand reputation.

Sahin, and Sengün (2015) mentioned that firms can use social media as an effective advertising tool because people often share positive reviews on social media. As a result, the tourism enterprises should be aware about this new power of advertisement and use social media as a new communication and competitive advertising tool in the most efficient way to provide best service to the travellers. According to the survey results, tourism businesses, agencies, hotels, transportation enterprises should use social media effectively to gain competitiveness.

In thisresearch, users often share positive experience on the social media because they select destination after consulting with their friends either on social media or face-to-face. Social media induces people to travel more than before because friends share attractive pictures of location, hotel, and transport, and write comments and reviews on the social media. If users observe negative comments or experience of others on social media, they just change the destination. People travel that places what they see most people share on social media. Thus, tourists visit popular places more than the less popular places.

When visitors share negative experience and comments about certain spots, transportation, and hotel on the social media, tourism enterprises and government can take necessary actions immediately to resolve this. Thus, social media is not only a source for strategic decision making but also a weapon for marketing. Although social media is recent innovation of information and telecommunication technologies, it has significant impact on all the industries including tourism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey Location

This survey includes respondents from all over Bangladesh.

Survey Population

Students of the Department of Management Studies, Jahangirnagar University have conducted the survey on different professional under the supervision of the author.

Data Collection Method

Primary data have been collected through questionnaire survey in 2018. Secondary data have been collected from literature review, research publications and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

Sampling

The survey has conducted on 1060 respondents that includes students, teachers, business persons and private and public employees. Their age between 15 to 45 years.

This survey has used non-probability sampling method. Respondents have been selected on the basis of convenience sampling technique for their accessibility and timely survey.

Research Method

This is an empirical study. The nature of this research is exploratory and qualitative. The primary information are collected through questionnaire survey. This survey included open ended, close ended, Likert scale, and multiple choice questions.

Research Scope

The research results can be used for academic and professional purposes. Public and private tourism authorities, travel agencies, advertising firms, firms engaged in tourism businesses, scholars and academia can use research results for future study and industry benefits. Government can use findings to formulate policies and strategies for developing the industry.

Limitations

Since it is difficult to include all the population in the country, the survey results may not represent the motives and opinions of everyone in Bangladesh. However, the respondents were educated and rationale person to give logical answers for all questions.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Thestudyincludes questions to investigate what induces people to travel . Research reveals that the travel decision of people are influenced by the comments and reviews of friends, family, relatives, and colleagues on the social media. Social media is one of the leading sources to find required travel information aboutdestination, accommodation, restaurant, and transportation. The inspiaration of travelling arise from the experience shared by people on the social media. People easily find information about trurist attraction , hotel, transport and artifacts on the social media such as facebook, twitter, Youtube, and Instagram that can assist them select destination before making their travel plan.

Many tourists   findtheir favorite destination and travel information fromdifferent socialmedia platforms , such as, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Private Blogs.Facebook and Instagram are the leading stimulusamongtravellers to make travel

decision. Social media is now a competitive marketing weapon and strategic decision making toolfor many business firms. Here,survey questions are analyzed to depict the significance of social media on tourism industry development in Bangladesh.

1. The Preference for Traveling among People:

In response to a question about whether they like traveling and where they travel, 97.45% respondents mentioned that they like traveling and 96.98% respondents said that they travel outside the Dhaka City.

2. The Frequency of Travel:

How often the respondents travel, 20.47%, 44.34% and 27.74% respondents mentioned that they travel once a month, once in six months, and once a year respectively. 7.45% respondent said, they travel in each week. Thus, almost 28% respondents travel either weekly or monthly.

3. Number of Trips in a Year:

In response to the approximate number of trip in a year, 56.98% respondents mentioned that the number of trip in each year is 5 or less. However, 28.68%, 10% and 2.17% respondents mentioned that each year the number of trips around 5-10, 10-15, and 15-20 times respectively. 2.17% respondents mentioned that this number is more than 20 times in a year. Research shows that around 43% respondents travel at least five times in a year.

4. Duration of Each Trip:

The most likely duration of trip is 2-5 days and 5-10 days, said by 62.92% and 23.58% respondents respectively. 10.85% respondents said that they travel only for a day while 2.64% respondents said their travel duration is more than 10 days.

5. Traveling Partner:

Respondents were asked with whom they travel most, majority (45.47%) of respondents mentioned that they travel with their friends followed by 36.60% travel with family. 8.96% respondents said that they travel with colleague/classmate in office/university tour while 4.53% respondents travel with relatives. Only 4.43% respondents said that they like to travel alone.

6. Preferred Transport for Traveling:

What kind of transport did they used for travel, in response to this question, 59.43% respondents said that they travel by Bus. 23.40% respondents mentioned they travel by Train. 9.53%, 5.09% and 2.55% respondents mentioned that they travel by Car, Airplane and Boat/Ship respectively. Research reveals that Bus and Train are two major transports for 83.83% travelers.

7. Amount of Money Spend in Each Trip:

In response to a question about how much money they spent in each trip, 51.17% respondents mentioned that they spend less than TK. 5,000 in each trip. However, significant number

(40.25%) of respondents said that they spend TK. 5,000-15,000. Moreover, 7.26% and 1.32% respondents mentioned that they spend TK.15,000-25,000 and more than TK.25,000 respectively in each trip.

8. The Most Preferred Sites to Visit:

Most (64.91%) of the respondents like natural place to visit and followed by Historical places mentioned by 21.70% of respondents. 8.21% respondents like Archeological and 5.19% respondents like Artificial/Manmade places to visit. The following chart represents percentage distribution of respondents with regard totheir preference of sites to visit:
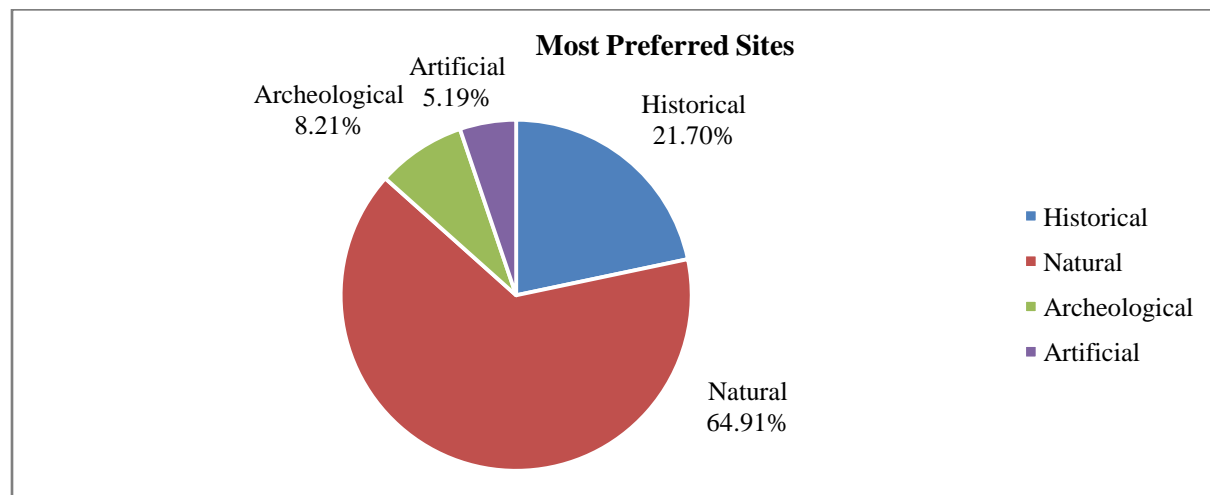
Figure 1: Most Preferred Sites of Tourists

9. Divisions that have the Highest Inflow of Tourists:

Which division they travel the most, the respondents ranks and orders their answers. The highest number of people (36.50%) said that their travel destination is Chittagong division followed by Sylhet division (23.05%) and Dhaka division (14.35%). However, remaining divisions such as: Rajshahi, Barisal, Khulna, Mymensingh and Rangpur has growing number of tourists for historic reason. The following chart shows all the eight divisions that the respondents travel the most:
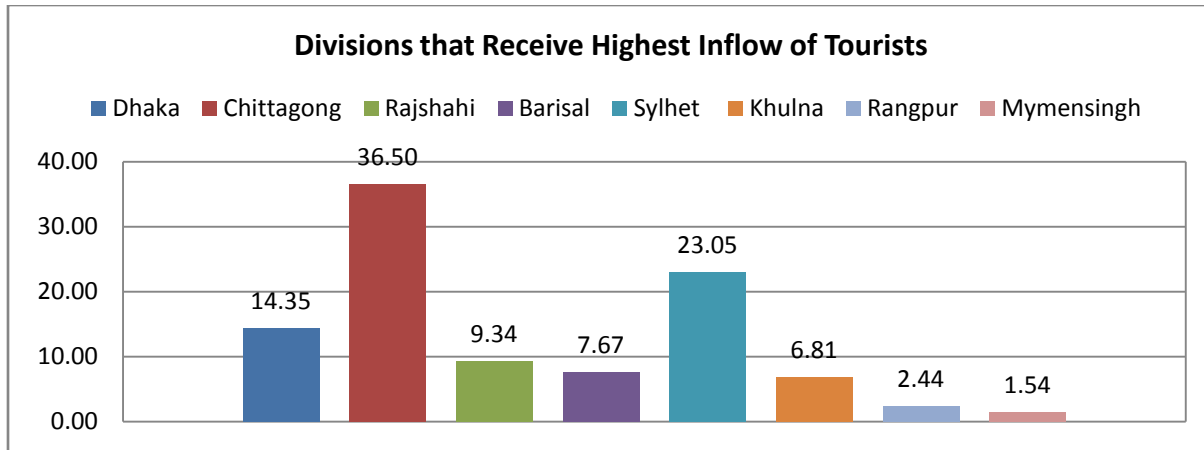
Divisions that Receive Highest Inflow of Tourists

Figure 2: Divisions that Receive Highest Inflow of Tourists

10. Sources Used to Gather Travel Information:

In response to the sources used to gather information, 42.74% respondents said that they use social media to find information about destination, hotel, and transport because friends share travel experience and reviews on social media. 26.60%, 15.57%, 7.74% and 7.36% respondents consults with Friends/Family, Websites, Newspaper/Magazine, and Tour Guide respectively. The following chart shows distribution of percentage for media used to search travel information.
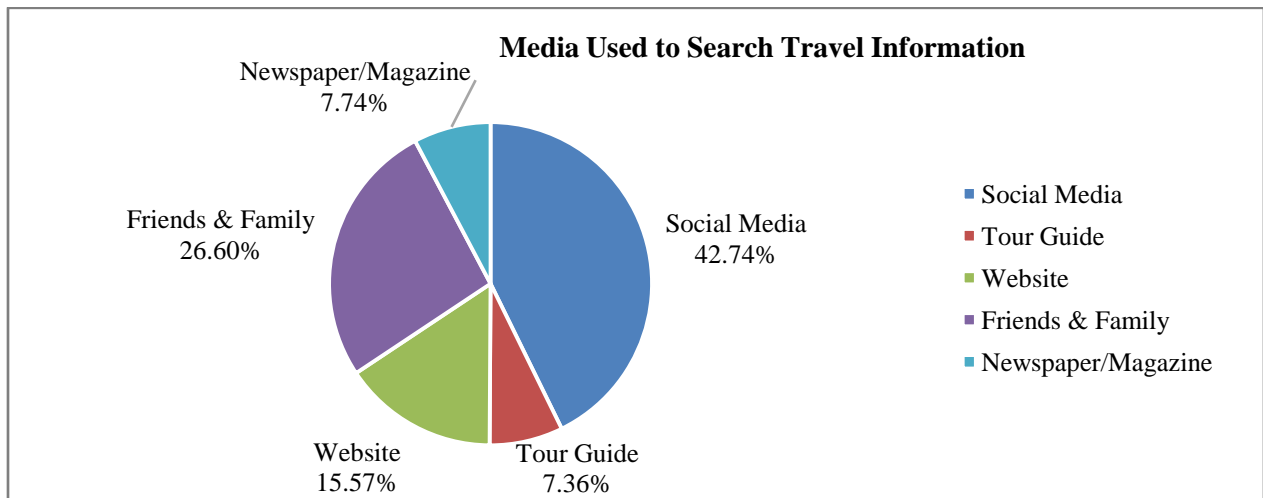

Figure 3: Media Used to Search Travel Information

11. The Most Travailing Age Group: In this survey, 60.38% of the respondents belong to 15-25 years age group that represent students. 25.47% and 10.66% of respondents fall into 25-25 and 35-45 age group respectively. Only 3.21% and 0.28% respondents fall into less than 15 and

more than 45 years age respectively. In this survey, major portion of traveling age group are young people. The following pie chart shows the percentage distribution for major traveling age group.
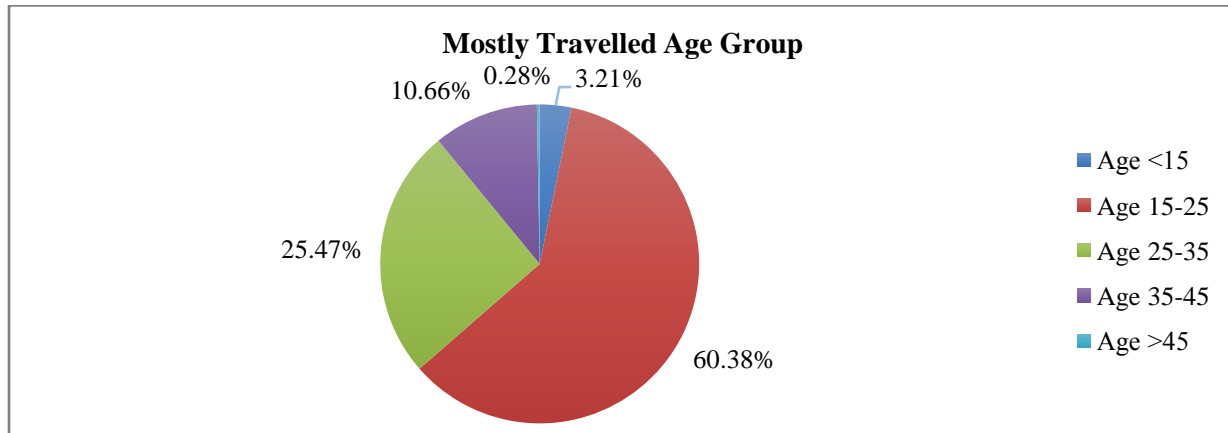

Figure 4: Mostly Travelled Age Group

12. Devices used to Subscribe Social Media:

Majority (79.43%) of the respondents use Smartphone to subscribe social media followed by 11.79% Laptop, 3.96% Desktop computer and 2.55% use Tablet. Only 1.23% respondents use Notebook and 1.04% respondents use other kind of devices to subscribe social media.

13. Mostly used Manufacturers' Mobile Devices:

52.74% of total respondents use Samsung phone followed by 14.15% Nokia, 12.64% Symphony, 5.57% Apple, 5.09% Huawei, and Sony/Ericson 3.77%. Remaining 6.04% respondents use other devices (e.g., Siemens, Oppo, Walton, Xiaomi, Asus, Lava, HTC and BlackBerry).

14. Mostly Used Telecom Services:

45.38% respondents use Grameenphone telecom service. Remaining 18.87%, 15.47%, 14.15%, and 3.87% of the respondents use Bangla Link, Robi, Airtel and Teletalk respectively. Only 2.26% users use other services. So, Grameenphone is the leading telecom service provider according to our survey results.

15. Mostly used Social Media to Search Travel Information:

Research reveals that 75% of the respondents use Facebook among all other social media to search travel information. They become interested when they see their friends upload pictures of exclusive location, and share experience about hotel, and transport on the Facebook. 4.25% Instagram, 1.79% LinkedIn, 1.98% YouTube, 0.94% Twitter, Google 2.83% and 13.21%

respondents use other (e.g., Yahoo, and Mozilla) to find information. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents use different types of social media to get travel information.
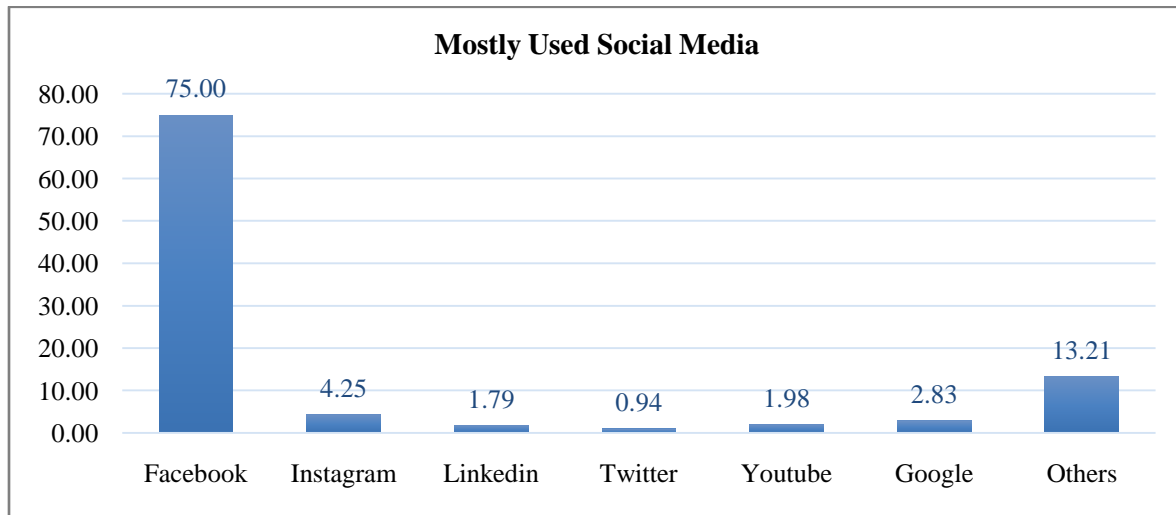
Mostly Used Social Media

Facebook	75.00
Instagram	4.25
Linkedin	1.79
Twitter	0.94
Youtube	1.98
Google	2.83
Others	13.21

Figure 5: Mostly Used Social Media

16. Impact of Social Media on Tourism Industry Growth:

In a question regarding the impact of social media on tourism industry growth in Bangladesh, 97.26% respondents said thatsocial media has significant impact on tourism industry growth in Bangladesh. Only 2.74% respondents think this impact is less on tourism industry. People said that their travel decision are influences by the comments, posts, and reviews of other people on the social media. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents who have mentioned that there is a significant impact of social media on the tourism industry growth in Bangladesh.
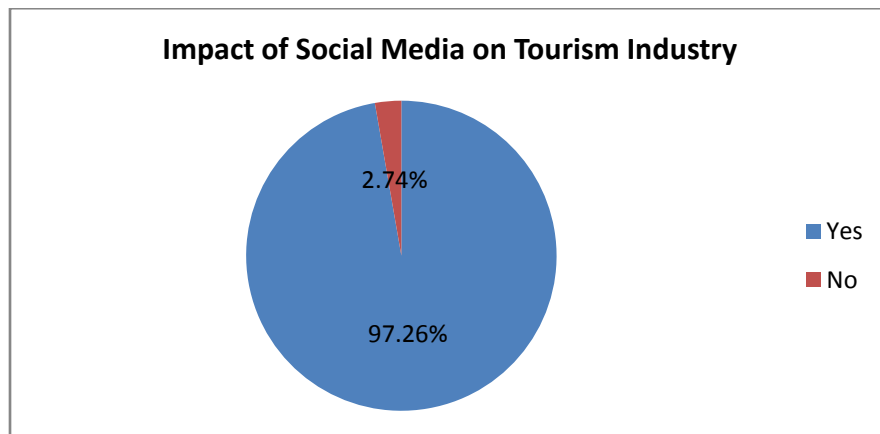
Impact of Social Media on Tourism Industry

2.74%

97.26%

- Yes
- No

Figure 6: Impact of Social Media on Tourism Industry

17. The Degree of Impact of Social Media on the Tourism Industry:

In the subsequent question, respondents were asked to rate the degree of impact of social media on tourism industry, 90% responds rated the impact of social media on tourism industry is very high to moderate. Only 8.21% respondents rated the impact from low to very low. 1.79% respondents did not answer this question. The following chart shows the degree of significance of social media on tourism industry that most of the respondents' view:
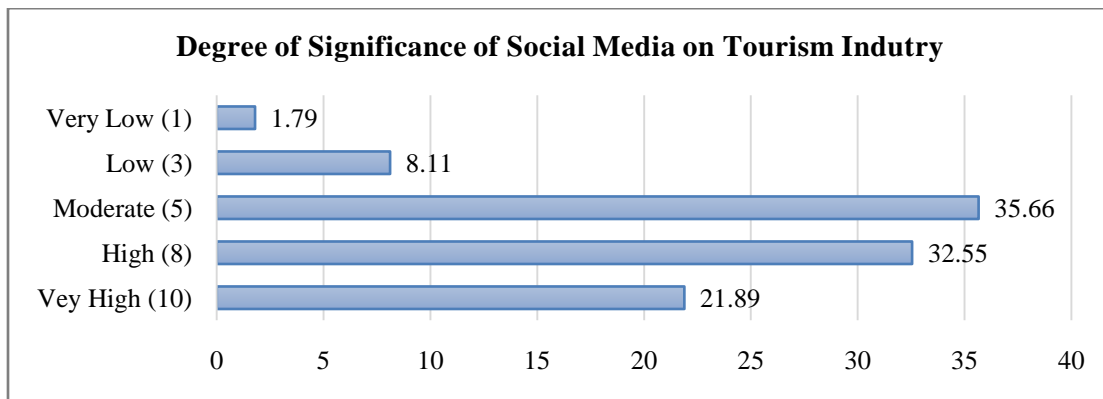
Degree of Significance of Social Media on Tourism Indutry

Category	Value
Very Low (1)	1.79
Low (3)	8.11
Moderate (5)	35.66
High (8)	32.55
Vey High (10)	21.89

Figure 7: Degree of Significance of Social Media on Tourism Industry

18. Government Focus on the Social Media to Explore Tourism Industry:

In this survey, 95.47% respondents think that Govt. should focus on social media to explore tourism industry nationally and internationally. Only 2.64% respondents answered negative and 1.89% respondents did not answer this question.

19. The Reasons for Traveling:

Majority (57.45%) of the respondents mentioned that they like traveling because it is the source of pleasure and fun followed by 20.94% for family reasons, 12.36% for academic purpose, 6.60% for business purpose and 2.64% for other reasons. The following chart shows the percentage distribution of respondents regarding the reasons of traveling:
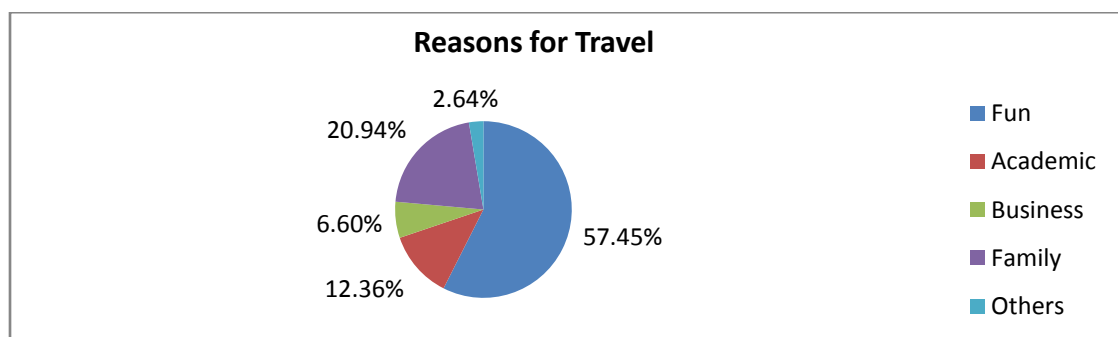
Reasons for Travel

2.64%
20.94%
6.60%
12.36%
57.45%

- Fun
- Academic
- Business
- Family
- Others

Figure 8: Reasons of Travelling

20. Major Barriers in Traveling:

58.30% respondents mentioned money is the prime barrier in traveling. 16.04%, 10.38%, 4.72%, 4.15% respondents said that poor transport, weather condition, security and stress are major barriers respectively. 4.06% respondents said poor hotel facilities and 2.36% mentioned other reasons. The following chart shows the major barriers in tourism industry that most of the travellers have identified:
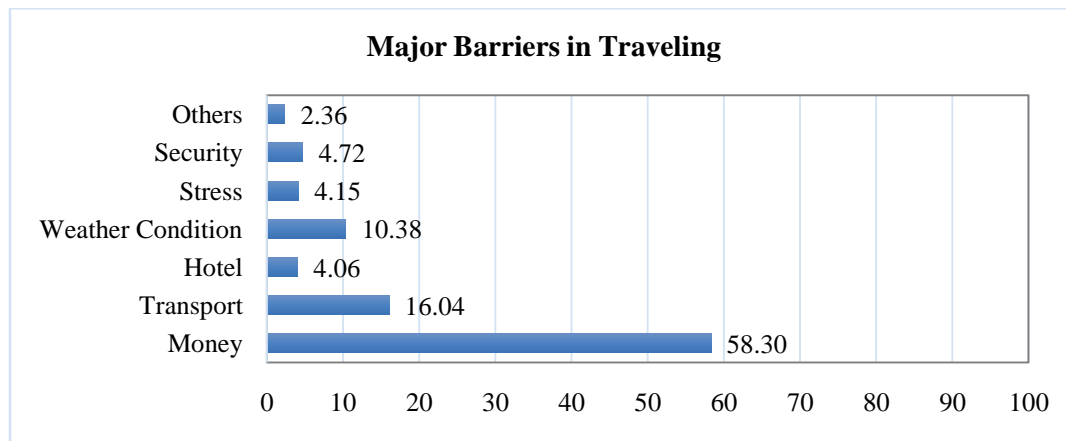

Figure 9: Major Barriers in Travelling

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research reveals that social media is a competitive marketing weapon and a strategic decision making tool for many tourism enterprises. The strategic importance of social media is not only from marketing perspective but also from the connectivity among travellers to get access in travel information. The following recommendation can be drawn from the study:

Developing ICT industry: Tourism is highly dependent on the information and communication technology. Travellers need information about sites before they select their preferred destination. If ICT industry develop, it facilitates social media to explore. Thus, social media encourage people to share their travel pictures, reviews and comments on the social media that attract other travellers to visit the place.

Improving Supporting Industry: To improve tourism industry government should improve other industries related to tourism business. Research reveals that transportation, safety at the location, hotel and resort facilities, restaurant and dining systems are the major concern among tourists. These sectors need to be improved to attract national and international tourists.

Use of Social Media as a Marketing Tool: Businesses involved in tourism industry should focus on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and other search engines to promote tourist attractions, discover new sites, and provide travel information

to potential tourists. People use social media platform to search travel destination, share pictures, comments, reviews, and experience on social media that allow tourism enterprises to take necessary initiatives to improve their services.

Discover and Improve the Potential Tourist Spots: Bangladesh is full of natural beauty and there are lots of archeological and historical sites that can attract many national and international tourists. Government and private tourism business enterprises should focus on developing new tourist spots and improving existing sites to attract more travellers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of social media has increased significantly over last two decades. The development of ICT industry has contributed to the growth of social media. Now, all the industry including tourism are using social media as a competitive marketing weapon. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn are the leading social media where the users find travel information. People like to share their travel experience on social media that induce other people to travel. Thus, firms engage in tourism industry can focus on social media to attract more travellers. Government can use social media to collect information about anonymous travellers and improve the industry for future competitiveness. Bangladesh has potentiality to become one of the destination countries for many national and international tourists in South Asia if the government take appropriate initiatives to improve this industry. As a result, the contribution of tourism industry will increase significantly to the economy of Bangladesh.

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