

Opportunities of Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Sylhet

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Submitted By

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Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “Opportunities of Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Sylhet” is an original work of mine. This dissertation is prepared for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) under the kind supervision of honorable Professor Dr. M. Badruzzaman Bhuiyan and Professor Dr. Shaker Ahmed, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Dhaka. It is worth mentioning here that the materials embodied in this thesis have neither in part nor in full been submitted to any other institution for any other academic degree. I do humbly request to accept this thesis for evaluation.

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Supervisor's Certificate

We are pleased to certify that Nazwa-Al-Zannat has completed her M. Phil thesis titled “Opportunities of Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Sylhet” under our supervision and guidance. To the best of our knowledge and belief, no part of this thesis has not been previously submitted to any other institution for any other academic degree and has been copied from any other previously published or written reports without due reference(s). Nazwa-Al-Zannat has worked sincerely for preparing her thesis and we have gone through the draft and final version of the dissertation thoroughly and found it as satisfactory for submission to the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, for fulfilling of the Degree of Master of Philosophy.

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Dedication

DEDICATED TO MY RESPECTED FATHER AND MOTHER

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I praise and acknowledge to the Almighty Allah, the most sympathetic and beneficent for giving me the strength to carry out this study. This dissertation could not be completed without the encouragement, assistance and cooperation of many individuals, industry practitioners and institutions. I am indebted to all of them. Among them, first of all I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my reverend supervisor Professor Dr. M. Badruzzaman Bhuiyan, Professor, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Dhaka for his cordial advice, guidance, continuous encouragement and inspiration in conducting my study. Despite his busy schedule with academic and administrative matters, he patiently spared a lot of his valuable time to my work. I feel myself as a blessed one to have Professor Dr. Shaker Ahmed as another supervisor of this dissertation.

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Abstract

Tourism is extremely diverse and labour-intensive industry creating thousands of jobs in various sectors of a country. In modern times, tourism is not only confined to entertainment, or travel pleasure, but also a key to the development of a country. Reports from various global tourism organizations on tourism statistics highlight its notable contribution to the world economy. According to the WTTC data, tourism accounts for approximately 10.2% of world's total GDP in 2016. Hence, the importance of tourism in the world economy is now universally acknowledged.

Realizing the prospects of tourism in Bangladesh, this study particularly attempts to generate a clear understanding about the opportunities of developing tourism industry in Sylhet. Sylhet, located in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh, is prevalently known as "*The land of two leaves and a bud*". Apart from the picturesque tea gardens, the natural beauty, the innumerable extensive haors, and water bodies of Sylhet definitely attract a tourist. In addition, there are numerous archaeological and historical monuments which have a long tradition from cultural point of view. Despite the huge potential with reference to international standard beautiful luxury hotels and resorts and lots of eye-catching natural attractions, tourism industry in this region fails to attract both the domestic and foreign tourists as well as the government and policy makers.

That's why, the study was conducted to examine the opportunities and potentials behind the development of tourism industry in Sylhet. In this study, attempts have been made: (i) to illustrate the current scenario of tourism industry in Sylhet, (ii) to measure the level of tourists' satisfaction on tourism products and services of Sylhet, (iii) to examine the safety perception of tourists and stakeholders, and (iv) to advise on issues that should be given the priority for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet. To achieve the above-mentioned objectives of the study, data were collected from 368 native tourists and 20 foreign tourists using a structured questionnaire survey. The disproportionate stratified sampling procedure was used when collecting the primary data. Habigonj district was excluded from this study as this region has yet not become so much popular among tourists. To analyze the data, conventional statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentage, and weighted average was used.

Regarding the opportunity, 'what we do not have' a question proceeds. The tourism industry is centred on three facets, i.e. service, facility and attraction. Given that, the present study considers

five indicators as relevant and important for tourism industry development in Sylhet and these are: attraction, tourism infrastructure, tourists' satisfaction, role of tourism stakeholders and safety and security issues. Using observation, interviews with tourism experts and a structured questionnaire survey, the study measures the tourists' level of contentment and safety perception using 5-point Likert scale. According to the results of this study, Sylhet is in a good position only in terms of natural beauty but there is lack of facility and services. In fact, a great majority of tourists were dissatisfied with such facilities as inadequate tourist information services, dilapidated road conditions together with congested bus fleet and uncontrolled vehicle fare, lack of basic infrastructural facilities in the destination, recreational facilities, syndicate in vehicle fare, and shopping facilities. Furthermore, most of the tour operators have been seen offering lucrative packages for outbound tourism. In the course of the study, it has been noticed that Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, a reflection of the dream of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's visionary leadership, provides tourists facilities only through building hotels, motels, restaurants etc. which alone cannot persuade tourists to stay more at a destination. The study found that the majority of the tourists spend maximum one day in a destination due to lack of entertainment facilities and outdoor activities. Hence, in addition to building hotels, motels, restaurants, BPC can offer recreational facilities as well as well-trained workforces to guide the tourists. Besides, it is upsetting that the dependence of local people on natural resources for their livelihood is a threat to the development of the tourism industry in Sylhet. In this context, "Community based Tourism" will play a positive role in creating employment opportunities for the local community.

With regard to safety perceptions of tourists and stakeholders, domestic tourists suffer from insecurity to some extent because of the run-down conditions of road and poor quality of transportation system. Additionally, few tourists feel somewhat insecure at night regardless of being alone or in a group. The results obtained pertaining to the role of stakeholders indicate that the role of government in tourism development seems to be disappointing because of the ignorance and lack of foresight of the government together with adequate support. Additionally, hiring bureaucrats inexperienced about tourism in the top echelons of government-run tourism institutions is also an obstacle to the smooth development of this industry. Properly planned tourism development is challenging as there exists a considerable lack of inter-ministerial coordination among the stakeholders. Therefore, avoiding the long-standing conventional

bureaucratic mentality, experienced subject matter experts should be given the responsibility in the top positions in government-run tourism institutions for the desired and planned development of tourism.

In light of the findings and observations of this research, a set of recommendations have been put forward that can help the concerned authorities in taking steps to develop the tourism industry in Sylhet. Some key recommendations are:

- Intensive investment to ensure suitable infrastructural facilities
- Increase attention on sustainability issues
- Target the right market segment(s) and adopt strategies
- Developing a separate tourism database
- Community participation
- Take proactive measures to prevent exploitation by opportunistic people

The outcome of this empirical research will help government policy planners and private stakeholders to formulate and implement effective strategies for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet.

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Lists of Abbreviations

AC: Air Conditioning/Conditioner

ADC: Additional District Commissioner

ATM: Automated Teller Machine

BBS: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

BDT: Bangladesh taka

BGB: Border Guard Bangladesh

BPC: Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation

BTB: Bangladesh Tourism Board

CBT: Community based Tourism

CCTV: Closed-circuit Television

CNG: Compressed Natural Gas

DC: District Commissioner

DGFI: Directorate General of Forces Intelligence

DoE: Department of Environment

DU: Dhaka University

ECA: Ecologically Critical Area

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GoB: Government of Bangladesh

HSC: Higher Secondary Certificate

IATA: International Air Transport Association

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

ID: Identity Document

IDIs: In-depth Interviews

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

LDC: Least Developed Countries

MoCAT: Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism

NHTTI: National Hotel & Tourism Training Institute

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation

PATA: Pacific Asia Travel Association

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SSC: Secondary School Certificate

TDAB: Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh

TOAB: Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh

TTCI: Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index

UK: United Kingdom

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

UP: Upazila Parishad

VAT: Value Added Tax

VIP: Very Important Person

WEF: World Economic Forum

WiFi: Wireless Fidelity

WTO: World Trade Organization

WTTC: World Travel and Tourism Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is considered as the top most industry in the world emerging as a leading global economic force in the 21st century for many countries. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), travel and tourism creates jobs, drives exports, and generates prosperity across the world¹. The largest economic sectors mean that, in 2016 it contributed 10.2% of global GDP (US \$7.6 trillion) and generated over 292 million jobs, equivalent to 1 in 10 jobs in the global economy². The growth of this industry was stronger than the growth recorded in the financial and business services, manufacturing, public services, retail and distribution, and transport sectors. Statistics of the year 2016 shows that international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) reached a total of 1,235 million in 2016 which was 46 million more than in 2015, or an increase of 3.9%. The global pace of growth was slightly more moderate than in 2015 (4.5%)³. Furthermore, in case of the year 2017, international tourist arrivals grew by 6% in the first four months of this year compared to same period last year, thus receiving 369 million international tourists in 2017 which was 21 million more than in the same months of 2016⁴. Thus, international tourist arrivals worldwide are expected to increase by 3.3% a year between 2010 and 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to UNWTO's long-term forecast report 'Tourism Towards 2030'⁵.

On the other hand, an unprecedented growth in tourism is seen in South Asia encompassing Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Despite political instabilities, earthquakes, floods and other natural calamities in various part of this region, South Asian performance in this sector has continued to improve over the past few years.

Bangladesh, one of the countries of South Asia, is located in north-eastern part of this region. From a tourism perspective, Bangladesh is known around the world for her 120 kilometers long unbroken sandy beach in Cox's Bazar and the world's largest mangrove forest. In addition to these, she has many incredible travel destinations and attractions, including historical and archaeological

¹ World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "Travel and Tourism economic impact 2017 Bangladesh". p. i

² World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "Travel and Tourism economic impact 2017". p. i

³ World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2017 Edition", .p.4

⁴ World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "UNWTO Travel and Tourism Barometer", Volume 15, June 2017. p.1

⁵ World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), "UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2017 Edition", .p. 3

sites, historical mosques and monuments, hilly areas and forests and wildlife in the Chittagong hilly area etc. Thus, it is widely accepted that Bangladesh is an inexhaustible source of natural and panoramic beauty, which a tourist wants to enjoy.

Bangladesh has the potential to become one of the most attractive rural tourism products in the world by highlighting her cultural and traditional ways of life. Here visitors can experience village-style daily activities such as preparing traditional food, going to the orchard to collect fruits, feeding the animals in the farm, fishing, flying kites, enjoying cultural dances, musical performances or even a tribal wedding. The traditional Bangladeshi charm is endless as it has been preserved for ages for giving visitors a wonderful experience of our warm hospitality.

Sylhet, located in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh, is called "*The land of two leaves and a bud*". Historically Sylhet has a glorious tradition of Hazrat Shahjalal (R), Shahporan (R), and their cohorts who have illuminated this region with the light of Islam about 800 years ago. It is well known for its tea gardens, lush tropical forests, different tribal communities having different lifestyles, colorful occupations, long history and enriched culture, and natural water falls, crystal clear water lakes bordered by ever green hills, haors, and shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (R.) and Hazarat Shahparan (R.). In short, different landscapes, unique range of flora and fauna, and a large of rivers, natural lakes and waterfalls have established Sylhet as one of the major tourist destinations in Bangladesh. Not only in Bangladesh, but also in entire South Asia, Sylhet is considered as one of the most naturally resourceful and archaeologically rich regions.

Despite immense potentials for the development of the tourism industry in Bangladesh and Sylhet in particular, the country is failing to make the expected progress. In fact, tourism growth in Bangladesh is lagging behind compared to her neighboring countries in terms of TTCI indicators. Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, published by the World Economic Forum, provide a ready competitiveness index encompassing a variety of "Pillars" related to traveling and tourism. In the 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, Bangladesh remains less developed on almost all fronts, especially on tourist service infrastructure and ICT readiness. In fact, the country came at No. 125 in a ranking of 136 countries in 2017 and the overall score stood at 2.9 out of 7⁶. Also, she was the lowest ranked country among the South Asian countries in 2017.

⁶ World Economic Forum (2017), "The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017". p. 9, 23

Bangladesh now aspires to be a developing country from LDC by 2021. In this context, tourism can be an effective tool in accelerating sustainable economic growth as well as employment-generation. There is ample development factors of tourism industry in Bangladesh. The country can earn a huge amount of foreign currency from this industry. Hence it is very important to give attention on developing our tourism industry. In particular, it is important to examine to what extent the country is proactive to capture tourism opportunities in a meaningful way utilizing its existing resources.

1.2 Justification of the Study

It is widely known that there are treasures of the beauty of nature scattered all over the Sylhet. Sylhet is such a beautiful place where tourists can enjoy wonderful natural views and the taste of global eco-tourism. The country's only swamp forest named Ratargul is located in Sylhet. There are many more treasures of attractions all over the Sylhet as mentioned earlier. But it is unfortunate that poor communication and transportation system, political instability, strikes, terrorist activity and the adverse security situation within Bangladesh and Sylhet in particular discourage tourists from exploring this region. Bangladesh now aspires to be graduated out from LDC to a developing country by 2021. In this context, she can leverage her tourism potential for accelerating sustainable economic growth as well as employment-generation. The country can earn a huge amount of foreign currency from this industry. Hence it is very important to give attention on developing our tourism industry. In particular, despite having international standard beautiful luxury hotels and resorts in Sylhet and a lot of eye-catching natural attractions, it fails to lure tourists, both domestic and foreign. In view of this, research is needed to explore the facts about the opportunities and potentials behind development of tourism industry in Sylhet.

1.3 Literature Review

A thorough review of literature was studied for supporting the study as well as formulating a theoretical framework. The literature survey helped to acquire knowledge as well as to understand and appreciate the previous research conducted in the field of tourism.

Problems and prospects of tourism industry at Sylhet region was subjected to study by Md. Amdadul Haque and Fakhru Islam. They opined that, though Sylhet has a bright prospect to develop its tourism sectors because of its scenic beauty, the industry is lagging behind due to

absence of proper plan and realistic steps. As such, they investigated problems and prospects for tourism industry development. They found that tourists were very enthusiastic for visiting Sylhet frequently. Roads and railway were found very popular as a means of communication to Sylhet. But it's a matter of surprise that airways were not found suitable to the tourist. Also, most of the respondents don't think tourism could bring any positive result for natural environment and they were hesitant that it would destroy the natural environment. Finally, they suggested for monitoring the activities of travel agencies, proper orientation to local community and a renovation of tourism policy in tune with the new national economic, social, environmental policies and trends.

Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan, Debashish Roy, Md. Gulam Mokta Dhir investigate the core factors that can influence satisfaction level of tourists with specific reference to tourism industry in Sylhet region. They found that the tourists' satisfaction greatly depends on natural beauty, transportation and accommodation facilities, safety and security, and costs. This study also revealed that tourist satisfaction depends on a complex process where the role of every actor is fundamental and those actors should be harmonized with each other.

Md. Khairul Islam in his doctoral thesis made an elaborate examination of tourism as an industry and put forward some comprehensive tourism strategies that will guide in developing tourism sector in Bangladesh. He found that there is a high potential for tourism as an industry in Bangladesh. In his study he found that a relatively little attention has been paid to the issues of tourism development by the professionals, researchers and other concerned agencies. Therefore a set of recommendations have been put forward for sustainable development of tourism industry in Bangladesh. Strategies are development of well-functioning public infrastructure, improving public transport, investments into new high standard accommodation facilities and increase standards of existing accommodation facilities, relaxation of visa and immigration formalities, employing strategic marketing to promote a country's identity, diversifying the hotel products and other tourism products tailored to specific target groups, building efficient National Tourism Organization raising awareness of the local people by institutions and so on.

Anisur in his doctoral thesis undertook a detailed study of the issues and strategies of tourism industry in Bangladesh. According to him, despite having a lot of tourism attractions for tourists in Bangladesh, this sector is almost in the dark and has failed to draw proper attention of the government and policy makers. In addition to examine tourists' satisfaction, market potentials,

safety and security issues, he also evaluated the active role of tourism stakeholder for the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh. Finally, he recommended several distinct strategies to each and every tourism stakeholder for the development of tourism sector in Bangladesh such as enhancing and developing the existing tourist products, identifying and locating the target market with a view towards putting into place cost-effective means of communication, creating Tourism Development Fund, raising public awareness and responsiveness etc.

Fathema tried to find out pull factors that affect tourists' decision when they chose a destination for tourism. To Fathema, proper knowledge about the pull factors helps the tourism marketer to build destination image. Therefore, she found seven aspects that are to be given special importance and these are: easily reached and cleanliness of the destination, availability of hygiene food and beverages, pleasant and safe accommodation, personal security, reasonable rent of accommodation, personal security, availability of recreation facilities are the.

Nusrat and Ruhul analyze the social, cultural, environmental, economic, political and other factors affecting the sustainability of the Sylhet. They opined that Sylhet, most picturesque and naturally affluent regions in Bangladesh, has the great potential to be developed and promoted as a major sustainable tourism destination of Bangladesh. The authors found many vital variables that influence the potentiality of Sylhet, such as purchasing preference, condition of major supporting services, quality of service demanded, involvement of locals and concerned authority, natural resources and environment. The study also found that about more than half of the tourists visiting Sylhet are interested about the sustainable tourism development.

Several other national and international studies were also reviewed to get greater insights about tourism development in Bangladesh.

Dimensions of tourist satisfaction with a destination was subjected to study by Suthathip Suanmali. He investigated six significant factors influencing tourists' satisfaction and these are hospitality, attraction, accessibility, infrastructure, environment and cost. This study revealed that the most significant factor affecting the overall satisfaction is the cost of staying, and other significant factors are hospitality, attractions and accessibility, and infrastructure. Hence, he suggested for controlling the standard of the price to be the same for both domestic and foreign tourists can raise

the level of satisfaction among tourists as well as called for collaboration of government and private sector to capitalize on opportunities of tourism.

Pannell Kerr Froster Associate (1988) has mentioned its comprehensive report on the Strategic Master Plan for Tourism in Bangladesh that for the development of infrastructure, national airlines, and overall tourism in the country, the government of Bangladesh has taken attempts to make substantial investments which require to be properly supported by effective management and marketing activities in order to meet the policy objectives and ensure a realistic return from these investments. The report has also pointed out that the comfort, services and management of tourism firms in Bangladesh are all below the level expected by the international tourists and the foreign community residing in Bangladesh. It has also identified the shortcomings as difficulty in obtaining the operating supplies of sufficiently high quality, poor communication system, lack of infrastructure, bad image and more importantly even, a lack of true professional management. The report finally emphasized on the balanced marketing activities along with the improvement of the infrastructure, quality of services, facilities, and efficient management in order to cater to the needs of the existing and potential tourists.

Ahmed (1986) has criticized in his study that despite all the efforts and measures of the government, the BPC and other private firms, the tourism industry in Bangladesh had not yet taken off, got a solid footing, and been able to give a true sense direction towards its development. He has pointed out the main reasons including the lack of co-ordination, imagination, effective policy planning and resources responsible for such backwardness and underdevelopment of this sector. He has also advocated the need for the expansion and development of infrastructure with a view to developing the tourism industry of the country.

In another study, Hasan (1992) has described the tourism industry of Bangladesh and analyzed its potential market and marketing strategies. He has blamed that Bangladesh, in comparison to other South Asian countries, has failed to develop its tourism as yet and attract a sizeable number of tourists to visit the country, though it is endowed with different tourism attractions. Hasan has suggested to create a separate organization for performing the marketing activities of the BPC owned tourist plants and installations. Hasan has further recommended for planning the necessary strategies aiming at the potential markets and avoiding aimless policies to develop mass tourism at the initial stage of this new industry in Bangladesh.

1.3.1 Review of National Policies

A number of important and relevant national policies have been reviewed for this study. Some relevant national policies are briefly discussed in following paragraphs:

1.3.1.1 National Tourism Policy of Bangladesh 2010

Bangladesh, as a case and as an emerging economy, arguably possesses considerable potentials to diversify, promote and thus to attract tourists from other parts of the world. Before 1992, Bangladesh had no tourism policy but rather a strategic Master Plan for tourism development prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1988. The government of Bangladesh formulated a National Tourism Policy in 1992 for the first time. After necessary review of this policy, the government has further revised and updated the National Tourism Policy 2010. The main responsible ministry and governmental agencies for implementing the policy is the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Bangladesh Tourism Board, respectively.

The main objective of the ‘National Tourism Policy-2010’ is to develop tourism industry as one of the major sectors for the development of Bangladesh by employment generation, socio-economic development through involving local government institutes and local people, sustainable tourism development by maintaining ecological balance and conserving biodiversity. According to the policy some of the areas in the Sylhet region that are suitable for development of nature-based tourism are Tamabil, Jaflong, Madhabkundo, Sreemangal, Lawachhara National Park and the haors of Syhet-Sunamganj. Funding for the identification of potential sites and development of facilities should be sought from the government and development partners. Necessary measures will be taken with support from relevant departments, policy makers and agencies. This policy is just limited on paper because in this new policy, although multidimensional steps and strategies including thirty aims and objectives for the development of tourism industry has been mentioned, no noteworthy steps have been taken so far to implement it. In addition, the uneasy access of this policy in other languages, particularly in English creates a communication gap between national and international experts. Also, the policy falls short of identifying the priority sector in tourism for both the domestic and foreign tourists and to draft and implement policies, in accordance. In this regard, considerable lack of vision exists among the individuals who are in the charge of government’s officials and bureaucrats for implementing the government’s decision.

1.3.1.2 The Bangladesh Wild Life (Preservation) Order, 1973

The Bangladesh Wild Life (Preservation) Order, 1973 (President's Order 23 of 1973) was the first comprehensive legislation for control and management of wild animals including its habitat. This law clearly defined a 'wild life sanctuary' and elaborated prohibitions thereto (Rahman, 2005) as follows:

As per Article 2 (p) "Wild Life Sanctuary" means an area closed to hunting, shooting or trapping of wild animals and declared as such under article 23 by the Government as undisturbed breeding ground primarily for the protection of wild life inclusive of all natural resources, such as vegetation, soil and water."

As per the Article 23 (1), **The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare any area to be wild life sanctuary.**

(2) No person shall-

- (i) enter or reside in any wild life sanctuary; or
- (ii) cultivate any land in any wild life sanctuary; or
- (iii) damage or destroy any vegetation in any wild life sanctuary; or
- (iv) hunt, kill or capture any wild animal in any wild life sanctuary or within one mile from the boundaries of a wild life sanctuary; or
- (v) introduce any exotic species of any animal into a wild life sanctuary; or
- (vi) introduce any domestic animal or allow any domestic animal to stray into a wild life sanctuary; or
- (vii) cause any fire in a wild life sanctuary; or
- (viii) pollute water flowing in or through a wild life sanctuary:

Provided that Government may, for scientific purposes or for aesthetic enjoyment or betterment of scenery, relax all or any of the prohibitions specified above.

(3) The Government may declare any area to be a national park where the following acts shall not be allowed, namely-

- (i) hunting, killing or capturing any wild animal in a national park and within the radius of one mile outside its boundary;

- (ii) firing any gun or doing any other act which may disturb any wild animal or doing any act which may interfere with the breeding places of any wild animal;
- (iii) feeling, tapping, burning or in any way damaging or destroying taking, collecting or removing any plant or tree therefrom;
- (iv) clearing or breaking up any land for cultivation, mining or for any other purpose;
- (v) polluting water flowing in and through the national park:

Provided that the Government may, for scientific purposes or for betterment of the national park or for aesthetic enjoyment of scenery or for any other exceptional reasons, relax all or any of the prohibitions specified above.

In addition, The Act also has a provision to set up Wildlife rescue center to give treatment, food, shelter and security to the wounded, seized, confiscated or abandoned wildlife. To combat with the crime related to wildlife and to enforce provisions of international conventions, protocol, treaty etc. the Act has made a provision for forming a unit comprised of member of law enforcement agencies.

1.3.1.3 Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995

Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 was published in the Bangladesh Gazette, extraordinary issue of 16-2-1995 and amended by Act Nos 12 of 2000 and 9 of 2002, to provide for conservation of the environment, improvement of environmental standards and control and mitigation of environmental pollution.

In the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995, section 5, the Government has declared some wetlands of the country as ecologically critical Areas (ECA) for the protection of natural environment and sustainable environmental management, for example, St. Martin's Island, Hakaluki Haor, Tanguar Haor, Marjat Baor and Gulshan-Baridhara Lake. All activities that may deteriorate the environment further are prohibited in these areas (DoE 2002).

As per section 6, the Government has imposed some restrictions regarding vehicles emitting smoke injurious to environment. As per Section 6 (1), a vehicle emitting smoke or gas injurious to health or environment shall not be operated nor shall such vehicles be switched on except for the purpose of test-operation for stopping the emission of such smoke or gas.

1.4 Problem Statement of the Study

From the foregoing discussion, it is known that tourism in Sylhet is not yet developed properly to attract domestic tourists let alone foreign tourists. One of the major problems in Sylhet is that the inter-regional road of Sylhet is in a pitiful state of disrepair, too narrow and accident prone. Although many beautiful international standard resorts, hotels have been constructed in Sylhet to cater the flock of tourists, both domestic and foreign, and people are opting to come there rather than Cox's Bazar or Chittagong, the roads, accommodation as well as the law-and-order situation is not satisfactory, which is a disincentive for tourists. In fact, it is not the only means of attracting tourists by constructing international standard beautiful luxurious resorts and hotels. There are a lot of stuffs to do for attracting tourists. But fatefully, tourism industry in Sylhet has failed to attract the attention of the government and policy makers. Hence, from the above point of view, research is needed to generate a clear understanding about the opportunities of developing tourism industry in Sylhet by utilizing the existing resources.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate into the opportunities and potentials behind the development of tourism industry in Sylhet and to provide necessary suggestions to reform the tourism sector in Sylhet and turn it as one of the centers of tourism industry in Bangladesh.

In the light of the development of tourist industry in Sylhet region, specific objectives of this study are:

1. To illustrate the current scenario of tourism industry in Sylhet.
2. To measure the level of tourists' satisfaction on tourism products and services of Sylhet.
3. To examine the current safety and security issues of tourist.
4. To suggest the areas where priority should be given for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

No research work is without limitations. The investigator faces some limitations when conducting a study. A few of the constraints that the researcher faced while conducting this study are as follows:

- The most elementary limitation of this study is the limited number of foreign tourists interviewed. The results can be justified further if the number of foreign tourists can include all the foreign tourists visiting Sylhet.
- Tourists were usually busy while visiting the destinations during survey, therefore interacting with them was difficult sometimes.
- Lack of experience has also acted as constrains for the exploration of the topics.
- The published secondary data provided limited information. In this situation, the analysis became rather difficult.

2.2 Sample Design

The sample design consists of:

2.2.1 Defining Target Population

According to Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1993), “It is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a precise definition of the population of interest”. According to Zikmund (2015), “Population is any complete group of entities that share some common set of characteristics”.

In this particular study, the target population is defined to be the stakeholders of the tourism industry in Bangladesh because they are deemed appropriate to gain insights of each stakeholder towards the development of tourism industry. In this case, a tourism stakeholder is considered to be any individual, group, or organization that is affected by or affects the tourism development of Bangladesh.

Hence, the target population was grouped into following four categories:

1. Tourists

- i.** Domestic tourists
- ii.** Foreign tourists

2. Policy Makers from

- iii.** Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB)
- iv.** Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism

3. Player

- v.** Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC)
- vi.** TOAB Members
- vii.** Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh (TDAB)
- viii.** Managers employed in hospitality sector in Sylhet
- ix.** Travel agency
- x.** Transport service

4. Academicians

For the first category, according to the 2011 data of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the actual population in each district was considered as the population of the domestic tourist group. Since there is no specific statistics on foreign tourist arrival in Sylhet, the size of population

for this segment is unknown. The subsequent three categories included current executive. An up-to-date list of TOAB (Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh) members with names and addresses of firms was used as the base of population for the sixth category. Since an up-to-date list of hotels, restaurants, and resorts operating in Sylhet was not found, the size of population for this sector again remains unknown. Then, all the executives of TDAB were considered as the population for the seventh category. Mid-level managers of travel agency and transport service operating in Sylhet were considered as the population for the eighth and ninth category. Finally, individuals concerned with tourism education in public and private universities were considered as the population for the last category.

2.2.2 Sample Size Calculation

Since the study aims to identify the opportunities of developing tourism industry in Sylhet, the researcher conducted surveys with two different groups with the same questionnaire: (i) domestic tourists (ii) foreign tourists.

As such, sample size is calculated using the commonly used formula, setting a margin of error at 5 percent and confidence interval at 95 percent.

The sample size n is given by:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{E^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample size

p = Estimated variability in the population

$q = 1-p$

E = Margin of Error

Z = Critical value for the confidence interval

So, the sample size is:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{1.96^2 (.5 * .5)}{.05^2} \\ &= 384.16 \end{aligned}$$

The above formula shows the sample size is 384.

2.2.3 Allocation of Samples

Since the number of foreign tourists is limited and there is no reliable data, we propose to select a sample of 20 foreign tourists and the remaining will be the domestic tourist. However, 368 domestic tourists were actually interviewed, instead of 364.

Table 2.1: Planned and Actual Sample Size

Districts	Planned	Actual
Domestic tourist	364	368
Foreign tourist	20	20
Total	n=384	n= 388

During data collection, the stratified sampling procedure was used to select the tourists that represent the whole group of the population living in each districts of Sylhet division. The actual population number in every district was based on the 2011 data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). The district wise distribution of samples is shown below (Table-2.2):

Table 2.2: District wise Distribution of Samples

Districts	Population ⁷	Disproportionate Stratified Sampling	Percent
Sylhet	34,34,188	133	34.2
Moulvibazar	19,19,062	138	35.6
Sunamganj	24,67,968	117	30.2
Total	N= 78,21,218	n= 388	100

It is seen from above table that there are strata in the population of interest that are quite small but very important, potential for tourism industry development and also popular among mass tourists. In this case, if proportionate stratified sampling was used, they may not be adequately represented. Hence disproportionated stratified sampling was used during data collection. It is to be noted that Habigonj was excluded from this study as this region has yet not become so much popular among tourists.

On the other hand, the table below shows the qualitative sample distribution:

⁷ Bangladesh Population Census 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

Table 2.3: Sample of tourism stakeholders

Research Tool	Participants/ Respondents	Number
In-depth Interviews (IDIs)	CEO of Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB)	1
	Executives of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC)	1
	TOAB members	4
	Managers in Hospitality sector in Sylhet	5
	Executives of Tourism Developers Association of Bangladesh (TDAB)	2
	Managers of Travel Agency	2
	Managers of Transport Service	2
	Local stakeholders	2
	Academicians	2
Total		21

Different sampling methods were used to obtain a representative sample from each population group. Among the different respondents as shown in the table above (Table-2.3), the private tour operators were selected from the TOAB members' list using convenient sampling technique. It is worth mentioning here that most of the tour operators are located in Dhaka and very few of them are located in Sylhet. That's why all the tour operators for interview were selected only from Dhaka. Samples of both the domestic and foreign tourists were conveniently chosen. In addition, purposive sampling technique was used to obtain information from top officials of tour operators, BPC, BTB, TDAB, travel agency and transport service and from some academicians, since they are considered the most appropriate to the researcher for providing the relevant data for this study.

2.3 Questionnaire Design and Pre-testing

A questionnaire consists of a number of questions designed to generate necessary data for achieving study objectives. Keeping this view in mind, the questionnaire will be developed in such a way so that respondents' cooperation and involvement can be maintained throughout the interview. In this study, a structured questionnaire (See Annex 1) was prepared to conduct the field survey. On the other hand, a checklist was developed for in-depth interviews (IDIs) (See Annex 2) to collect qualitative data from the top officials of BPC, TOAB, TDAB, BTB and some academician.

Before finalizing the questionnaire for field survey, the questionnaires were pretested. For this purpose, a pilot survey was conducted at Jaflong to find out the limitation of the questionnaires and to examine the practicability of the questionnaire. The pilot survey also included the

conversation and interviews with experts in the relevant field. Necessary modifications were made in quantitative questionnaire with consultation with concerned supervisor based on the feedback of pre-testing.

2.4 Data Collection

The data for the study was collected through both the primary and secondary sources. For collecting the primary data, tourists visiting Sylhet were treated as primary source of this research. The study employed five field researchers for collecting the data. The data was collected using android mobile application. The field researchers were given orientation for collecting the data. Apart from field survey, qualitative data was collected through personal interview with relevant stakeholders. On the other hand, to collect the secondary data, annual reports of BPC, related journals, periodicals, newspapers, BPC's web page etc. were used. The researcher also reviewed several foreign and local scholarly works in this field. The research was conducted in Dhaka and Sylhet.

2.5 Data Processing

The collected data were tabulated and processed through SPSS software. The data is analyzed with simple conventional statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentage, and weighted average. Analysis of data is presented by charts and graphs. Finally, interpretation of the result has been made to draw the conclusion.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework of the Study

3.1 Introduction

Opportunity refers to a set of facts or circumstances that makes it possible to do something or the possibility of doing something. In other words, the word opportunity means that we can do something that we want to do. In this study, opportunity will indicate the prospect. To be more specific, this study attempts to identify factors that play an important role for tourism industry development in Sylhet. Since the proposed study is concerned about the opportunities of developing tourism industry in Sylhet, following indicators are considered relevant and important for tourism industry development:

1. Attractions
2. Tourism infrastructure
3. Tourists' satisfaction
4. Role of tourism stakeholders
5. Safety and security issues

3.2 Tourism-A General Review

Tourism is an important field of discussion which covers many interrelated areas. The term 'Tourism' started to be known from the very beginning of human civilization. It is imperative to define 'tourism' for a clear understanding of the term itself. But the agreement on a universally accepted definition of tourism has proved difficult to reach since there are some differences of the outlook among academicians and practitioners.

The World Tourism Organization, an intergovernmental set-up under the aegis of the United Nations, has defined a tourist as a temporary visitor staying for at least twenty-four hours in a country visited where the purpose of the journey can be classified under any of the following headings:

- a) Leisure, recreation, holiday, health, study, religion and sports, or
- b) Business, family, mission and meetings

Another popular definition was quoted by Goeldner et al (2000) as:

“Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors”.

The authors also stated that tourism is a composite of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience: transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities and other hospitality services available of individuals or groups that are traveling away from home.

The word tourist was coined in the late eighteen century with the literal meaning of “one who tours” which very quickly gained the related sense of “one who tours for pleasure or recreation”. Tours then were for the wealthy, and were generally quite lengthy, in part because it took so long to go anywhere.

While the term “tourist” usually connotes travel for leisure, recreation and holidays, the definition of tourist above is much broader (it can be subsumed, for example, many types of business travel). The World Tourism Organization has offered a definition of tourism, which appears a comprehensive one. The World Tourism Organization (2010) defines tourists as people *“traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”* (WTO, 2010). As tourism has become a popular global leisure activity, it can be either domestic or international. International tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country’s balance of payments.

The above definition is comprehensive, because, firstly, it brings within tourism’s fold all activities undertaken by visitors from the time of their arrival at a destination until their departure, including their stay, dining, movement, visits, interaction, entertainment, purchase and other related activities; Secondly, the place visited may be anyone other than the visitor’s usual environment; thirdly, the duration of a visit may be any period, which is less than 12 months (meaning thereby that even the same-day visitors are also to be covered); finally, the main purpose of the trip may be anything that is lawful other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place

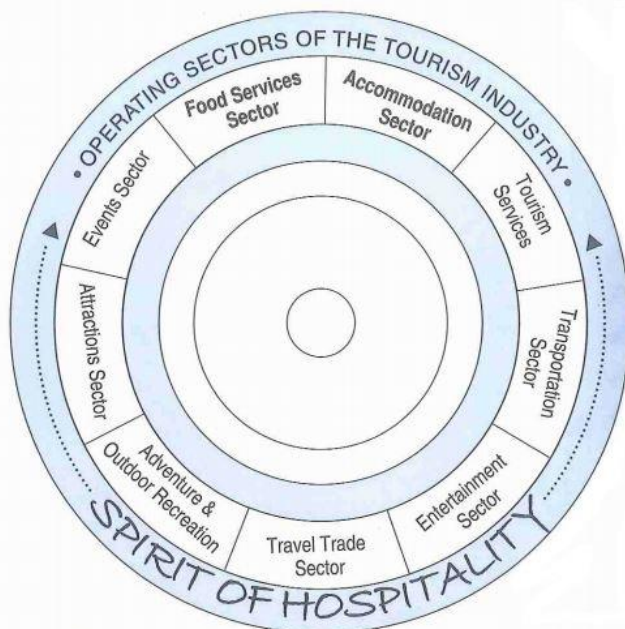
visited. Keeping in view its comprehensiveness, the above definitions of tourism have been accepted and applied for the present study.

3.3 Tourism as an Industry

Tourism, as an industry, is composed of a group of firms that are engaged in the business of selling to or serving tourists. In other words, tourism industry is an amalgam of different businesses and organizations which is connected by the common factor of providing services to tourists. Hence, tourism industry encompasses various types of firms such as hotels, restaurants, transportation, travel agencies, tour operators, amusement, etc. In a broad sense, the tourism industry is the aggregate of businesses that directly and indirectly provide goods or services for the convenience of business, pleasure and leisure activities.

The operating sectors of the tourism industry is illustrated below:

Figure 3.1: Operating sectors of tourism industry⁸



3.3.1 Accommodation Sector

Accommodation is one of the basic requirements for any tourist activity and plays a central role in tourism destinations as it gives the tourist a place to live and stay for a specified period of time. A warm hospitable accommodation makes tourists feel right at home, whether it be for a weekend

⁸ Source: Adapted from Goeldner, C. R; Ritchie and J.R. Brent (2006), *Tourism –Principles, Practices and Philosophies*, 10th edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Canada, p. 14.

getaway or a family vacation or a business trip. Accommodation sector includes hotels, motels, guest house and resorts.

3.3.2 Transportation Sector

Tourism and transportation are inextricably linked. Transportation sector tends to typify the movement of people and travel. This sector covers air, land and water travel, which included cruises, trains, taxis, motor coach and airplanes etc.

3.3.3 Attractions Sector

Attractions are a vital and vibrant part of tourism industry. The attractions sector has many well-known icons in the tourism industry. Attractions include places such as museums, historic sites, heritage homes, art galleries, zoo's, botanical gardens, water parks, amusement parks, cultural attractions etc.

3.3.4 Events Sector

Events sector is closely related to attractions. Festivals and events are important part of the tourism industry. They can serve as a powerful tool to attract tourists during the off-season and to create an image and awareness for an area⁹. Its icons include the Pohela Baishakh in Dhaka University, Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany; the Boston Marathon etc.

3.3.5 Adventure & Outdoor Recreation

The adventure and outdoor recreation sector is one of the fastest growing components of modern tourism. Adventure tourism can be categorized into two types; hard tourism and soft tourism. Hard tourism involves danger and/or risk as well as a sense of challenge and escapism, while soft tourism is less risky and requires minimal preparation. Recreation is an activity done voluntarily for pleasure and satisfaction.

3.3.6 Entertainment Sector

This sector is equally the fastest-growing component of tourism industry. Certain destinations, most notably Las Vegas, Nashville, and Branson, Missouri, have grown up on heavy diet of world-famous entertainers.

⁹ Goeldner, C. R; Ritchie and J.R. Brent (2006), *Tourism –Principles, Practices and Philosophies*, 10th edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Canada, p. 228.

3.3.7 Travel Trade Sector

The travel trade comprises the retail travel agent and the wholesale tour operator. Both of these entities are critical to linking “experience suppliers” and the tourists. It is a whole sale of companies, for charter, tour and inbound operations. This sector puts together packages and idea for people to travel.

3.3.8 Tourism Services

The multifaceted travel industry services sector provides yet another type of critical support for successful tourism. Computer support services, retail services, financial services, specialized consultation services, and tourism educators all make an important and usually unique contribution to the effective and efficient functioning of the complex tourism system¹⁰.

3.3.9 Food Services Sector

Food services sector can range from restaurants and bars to nightclubs and posh dining rooms. This sector includes a broad spectrum of brands and logos that has become a part of everyday life in many communities. Examples include McDonald’s, Pizza Hut, Burger King etc.

3.4 Indicators Important for Tourism Industry Development

The very basic indicator or basis for tourism industry development is attraction. In fact, destination’s resources and attractions are the basis of tourism industry development because attractions are the reasons why people travel. Without attractions, there would be little need for all other tourism services such as transportation, accommodation, food, entertainment and so on. That’s why attractions as well as destination’s resources are considered as most important component in the tourism system.

Then the matter of tourism infrastructure comes which is a sine qua non for the development of tourism industry. Tourism infrastructure refers to facilities and services necessary for the functioning of the tourism industry as well as for developing a destination. It provides the basis for tourism development and utilization of existing destination resources. Even if a destination has a number of natural, historical, archeological, cultural beauties and attractions, poor tourism

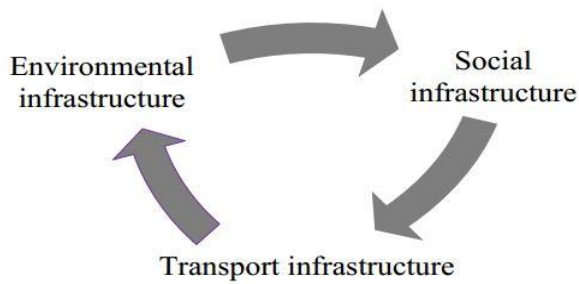
¹⁰ Goeldner, C. R; Ritchie and J.R. Brent (2006), *Tourism –Principles, Practices and Philosophies*, 10th edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Canada, p. 18.

infrastructure can be an obstacle for successful tourism development. As such, tourism infrastructure is an important driver in improving the tourism sector.

Multifarious views on the components of tourism infrastructure are found in literature. Thus, according to the Tourism & Transport Forum (Tourism & Transport Forum, 2012), tourism infrastructure is the supply chain of transport, social and environmental infrastructure collaborating at a regional level to create an attractive tourism destination.

Transport infrastructure in this chain provides destination access to tourists from the international and domestic markets and includes roads, airports, and railways. **Social infrastructure** relates to accommodation facilities in the form of rooms to accommodate tourists and other supporting physical structures for various kinds of activities and services that attract tourists. This infrastructure includes hotels, convention centers, stadiums, galleries, and other necessary facilities. **Environmental infrastructure** is a natural value and refers to national parks, marine parks, and reserves which visitors can tour (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Types of tourism infrastructure¹¹



The third parameter of tourism industry development is tourists' satisfaction. The heart of tourism is undeniably the tourists and their travel experiences. The essence for the success of tourism industry is certainly tourist satisfaction because it ensures the long-term viability of this industry. To be more specific, tourists influence the choice of destination, consumption of tourism products and services, the ultimate choice among the activities in the spot and the like. That's why it is considered important to measure the level of tourists' satisfaction. In addition, tourists' perception

¹¹ Source: Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF), (2012) Tourism Infrastructure Policy and Priorities

helps the policymakers to understand their travel motivations and thereby help formulate effective strategies.

In this study, five major factors are used to measure the level of tourists' satisfaction. A short description of these factors is given below:

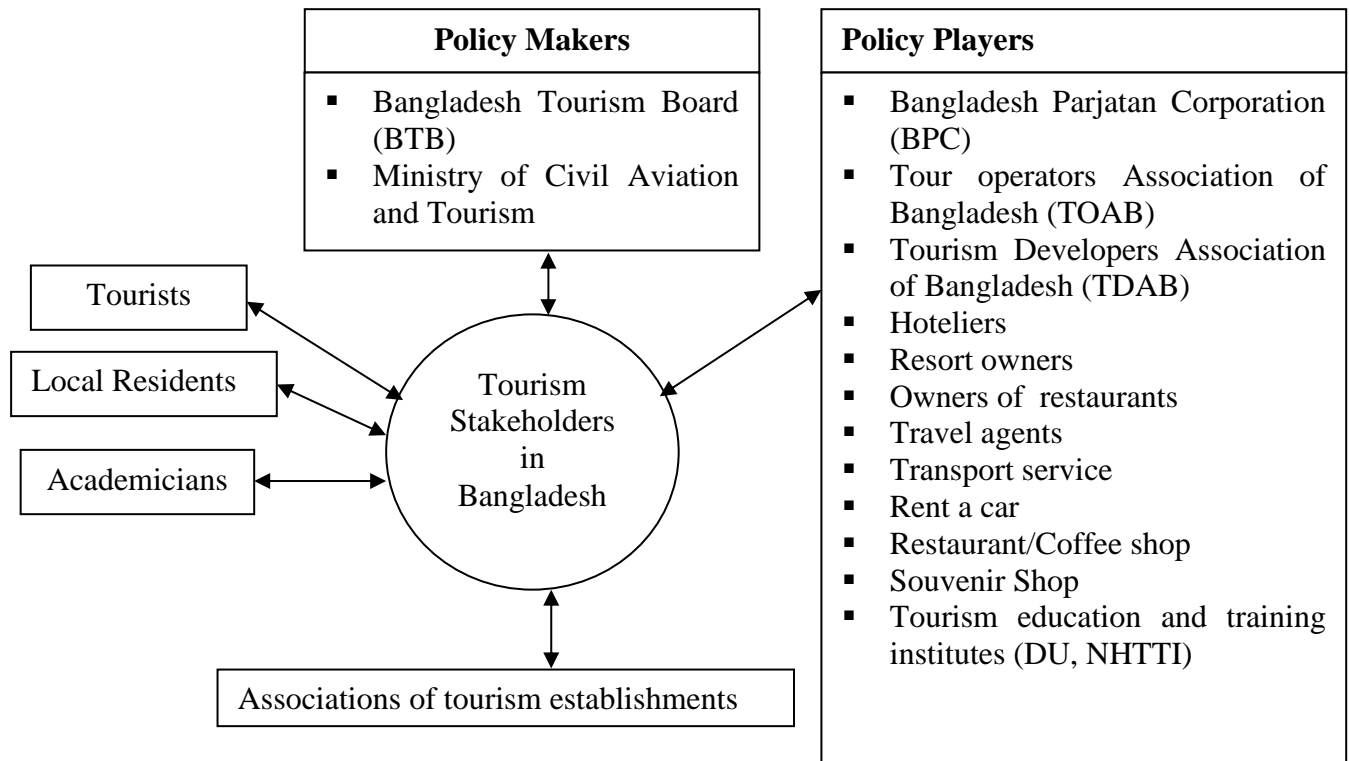
Table 3.1: Factors influencing Tourists' Satisfaction

Factor	Definition
1. Accessibility	The ability to provide tourists with easy transport and communication that enable them to reach the destination.
2. Hospitality	Tangible and intangible elements that have an effect on tourists' satisfaction, such as friendly and generous reception and entertainment of tourists, welcoming attitudes of local communities, a variety of food and beverage etc.
3. Expenditure	Sum of costs incurred in accommodation, local transport, food and beverages and other services.
4. Attraction and entertainment facilities	Attraction and entertainment facilities include natural as well as cultural beauty as well as recreational and/or outdoor activities that allure tourists to visit the destination. For example, scenic beauty, souvenir shop, tribal festivals, cycling, trekking etc.
5. Environmental factors	Sum total of all conditions and influences surrounding the tourist area, such as cleanliness, water quality etc.

In addition to tourists' satisfaction as well as investment in and modernization of tourism infrastructure, the role of tourism stakeholder is very crucial for tourism industry development. A stakeholder is 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives' (Veitch, et.al, 2002).

For this study, tourism stakeholders who contribute to the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh are presented in the following figure:

Figure 3.3: Tourism Stakeholders of Bangladesh



In case of Bangladesh, stakeholders like private tour operators, travel agents, resort owners, hoteliers etc. are playing a great role in tourism development by making new and more investments, providing tourists with international standard services.

And finally, the safety and security issue are another essential pillar for creating a competitive advantage in tourism industry. Safety and security in tourism industry refer to the safety of a tourist's personal life, his property and free movement during his/her stay and departure from the destination. In 21st century, safety and security issues have become one of the most indispensable conditions for travel and tourism. The risks to tourists arising from exposure to safety and security concerns may have serious repercussions on any tourism destination, if destinations are located in the border area. Hence in this study, safety and security issues include such initiatives that can possibly reduce, control or prevent accidents and/or crimes.

Chapter 4: Existing Structure of Tourism Industry in Sylhet

4.1 Demography

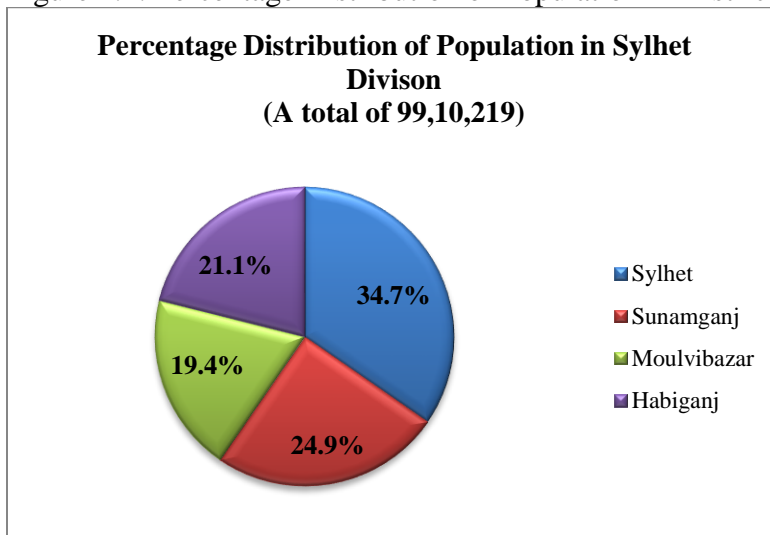
Sylhet is located on the north-east corner of Bangladesh having a total area of 12,596 square kilometers. There is 99,10,219¹² people living in this division. It is bordered by the Indian states of Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura to the north, east and south, respectively; and by the Bangladeshi divisions of Chittagong to the southwest and Dhaka and Mymensingh to the west¹³. There are, in all, four districts (Zila) within this division, namely Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj and Sylhet. The most populous district is Sylhet and the least populous district is Moulvibazar. All four districts of this division have a lot of potentials regarding tourism as they have a lot of eye-catching destination. The distribution of population in abovementioned four districts is presented in following table:

Table 4.1: Population distribution in Sylhet Division

Districts	Population		Total
	Male	Female	
Sylhet	17,26,965	17,07,223	34,34,188
Sunamganj	12,36,106	12,31,862	24,67,968
Moulvibazar	9,44,728	9,74,334	19,19,062
Habiganj	10,25,591	10,63,410	20,89,001

Source: Table Bangladesh Population Census 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

Figure 4.1: Percentage Distribution of Population in Districts of Sylhet Division



¹² Bangladesh Population Census 2011, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylhet_Division

4.2 Ethnic Population

There are numbers of ethnic people in different districts of Sylhet division. But they represent just about 1.5% of Sylhet Division, and are situated mostly in Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts, or in colonies on tea estates where they live and work as laborers.

Table 4.2: Ethnic Population distribution in Sylhet Division

Districts	Bengali	Tribal People	Total Population
Sylhet	34,21,407	12,781	34,34,188
Sunamganj	24,61,057	6,911	24,67,968
Moulvibazar	18,55,596	63,466	19,19,062
Habiganj	20,23,199	65,802	20,89,001
Total	97,61,259	1,48,960	99,10,219

The total ethnic population of the Sylhet district is 12,781. Among the total population of the Sylhet district, only 0.37% constitutes the ethnic population. About 0.28%, 3.4% and 3.3% constitutes the ethnic population in Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj district respectively.

4.3 Attractions of Sylhet

Sylhet, popularly known as ‘*The land of two leaves and a bud*’, is located on the north-east corner of Bangladesh having a total area of 12,596 square kilometers and the population is about 9 million. The picturesque tea gardens on the undulated high and low hillocks in the borderland, the natural scene of the innumerable extensive Haors, Baors and Waterbodies in the basin of Sylhet attract a tourist easily¹⁴. The world’s leading tourism magazine ‘Lonely Planet’ briefly describes Sylhet division’s appeal as follows:

“Pastoral Sylhet packs in more shades of green than you’ll possibly find on a graphic designer’s shade card. Blessed with glistening rice paddies, the wetland marshes of Ratargul and Sunamganj, the forested nature reserves of Lowacherra, and Srimangal’s rolling hills blanketed in waist-high tea bushes, Sylhet boasts a mind-blowing array of landscapes and sanctuaries that call out to nature lovers from around the world.”

¹⁴ Tourist Attractions in Bangladesh, Sylhet Division, Dept. of Films & Publications, Ministry of Information, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, in association with Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

Though the entire Sylhet division is a tourist destination, some zones can be separated on the basis of spots' popularity and potentials for tourism development. In fact, the main tourist attractions fall within three districts namely: Sylhet, Sunamganj and Moulvibazar. Some of the attractive places and spots in Sylhet division are delineated in subsequent paragraphs:

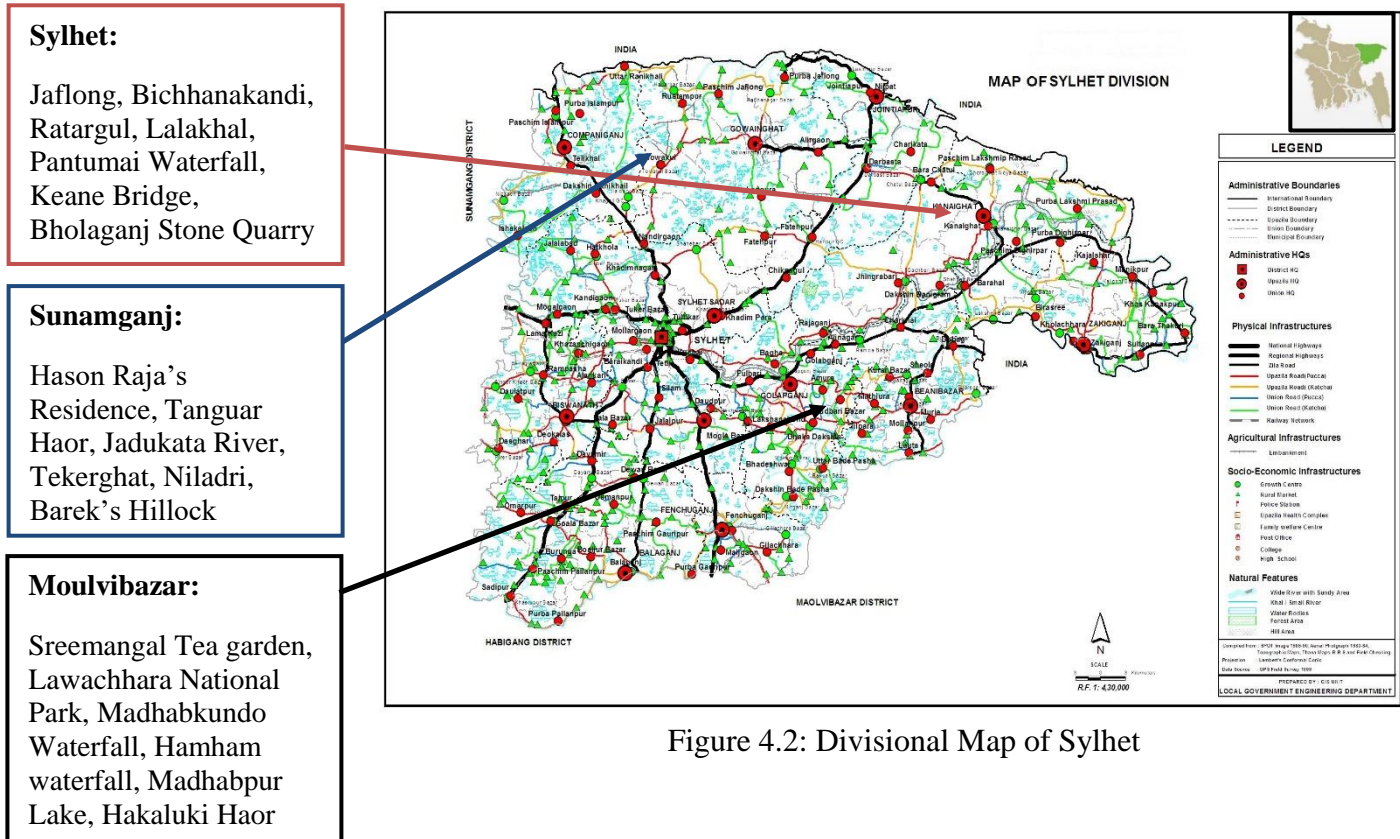
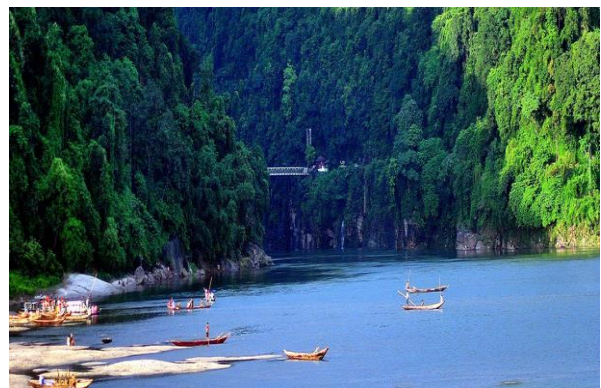


Figure 4.2: Divisional Map of Sylhet

Jaflong: Jaflong is one of the most attractive natural tourist spots in the Division of Sylhet, Bangladesh. Jaflong stands in Gowainghat upazila 62 kilometres to the north-east from Sylhet town. Jaflong of Sylhet is known as the daughter of nature to the whole of the country. The fountain created by the flowing of the River Piyain originated on the Dawki hill at the foot of the Khasia-Jainta hill across the border, has made Jaflong a wonderful pleasure ground of natural beauty. At the same time, because of the hanging Dawki Bridge, transparent and cold water



of the River Piyain, high hills, deep forest, and pin drop of silence of this area irresistibly attracts the tourists. To enjoy such scenes, everyday native and foreign tourists come to the spot. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has built restaurant and has provided accommodation facilities here.

Bichhanakandi: Bichchanakandi in Gowainghat upazila adjacent to the Bangladesh border is an exquisitely beautiful tourist spot. The confluence of the River Gowain and the highland fountain water that flows down from other side of the border is known as Bichhanakandi. The presence of pebbles scattered in the crystal clear water attracts the visitors. The beauty of green highland that extends up to the horizon and the flow of contain water can very easily relax a tourist. Boat trip facilities for the tourists are available here.



Lalakhal: Lalakhal is a beautiful canal with its crystal clear blue water. It is 41 km away from Sylhet town and located at Jaintiapur. Lalakhal is the place of highest rainfall in Bangladesh. Besides river cruising, tourists can enjoy the beauty of tea garden and may like to visit Khashia village there.



Pantumai Waterfall: The Pantumai Waterfall is located at a distance of 12 kilometres from Jaflong Tourists Spot of Sylhet. Actually Pantumai is the name of a hill and a village of east Khasia district in the Meghalaya state of India. The village Pantumai lies to the east from the Maturtola Bazar which is 9 kilometres away from Gowainghat upazila Sadar and is close to the bank of the River Piyain. This hilly waterfall is located to the east of the Bangladesh-India pillar no 1269. Locally the waterfall is known as



‘Fatachhara’. Though the hill lies inside India, yet its front part or beauty is viewed from Bangladesh. Tourists enjoy the beauty of pantumai Waterfall from Bangladesh border.

Ratargul: Ratargul, which is known as Sundarban of Sylhet, is the only swamp forest in Bangladesh. This swampforest which has an area about 505 acres of land is surrounded by a river and a haor and is situated in the village Ratargul, under Union Fatepur and Police Station Gowainghat. In this forest three species of trees *Hijal*, *Korocho*, *Boron* and *Patibet* grow more. In addition *Ikra*, *Khagra*, *Murta*, cane and deep tall grass have made the swamp forest unique and matchless. With 73 species of plants, 25 species of mammals, 20 species of reptiles, 175 species of birds, and 9 species of amphibians live in the forest.



Bholaganj Stone Quarry: Bholaganj Stone Quarry, which is 29 kilometres away from Sylhet Sadar, is situated in Islampur Union under Companiganj upazila. It is a potential tourist spot. Cherrapunji and Shillong of India are on the other side of the hill. The crystal-like transparent



water, reflection of the shade of green hill on the surface of water, mass of high and low hills- altogether the beauty of Bholaganj is matchless. There is scope for river cruising and the tourists can enjoy the activities of stone collection from here.

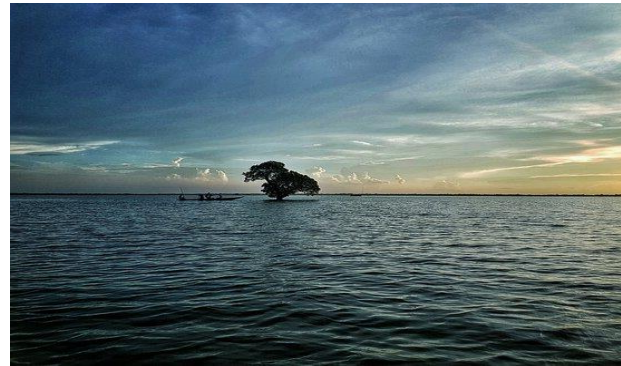
Lawachhara National Park: This park is located on about 1250 hectares of land in Kamalganj upazila 30 kilometres away from the Moulvibazar district. Lawachhara forest area was declared the National Park in 1996. The stems of the trees grow much high without branches. This is one of the rain forests. In this forest there are about 167 species of plants, 4 species of amphibians, 6 species of reptiles, 20 species of mammals,



and 246 species of birds are there. This forest is surrounded by some big and high hills. There are three walkways. This is the oldest of the 17 reserved forests in the county. This forest, which is naturally beautiful and full of diverse animals, has various species of trees and plants. Besides these, there are slow loris, gibbons, langurs, wild-fowls, leopards and along with kul banar a good number of birds and animals of rare species. Lawachhara Khal (canal) is one of the attractions of the forest.



Hakaluki Haor: Hakaluki, which is rich in biodiversity in Asia continent and includes three upazillas Kulaura, Juri and Baralekha, is the largest Haor of Bangladesh. It is situated on the east of Baralekha upazilla. It is 30 kilometers to the south-east of Sylhet and 40 kilometers to the north-east of Mouivibazar district town. And 40% of the area of Haor is included in Baralekha, 30% in Kulaura, 15% in Fenchuganj, 10% in Golapganj and 5% is in Beanibazar upazila. The area of the Haor is 181 sq.km. The flow of water comes to the Haor from the Juri, Piyain, Kushiara, Kantinala rivers. There are various hearsays about its naming. Many years ago, the head of Kuki of Baralekha hid himself in the



extensive bushy and marshy area because of the fear of army of Moharaj Omar Manikyo of Tripura. From this happening this area has been named as 'Hangor Luki' or 'Hankaluki'. According to another hearsay-about two thousand years ago, a devastating earth quake occurred, as a result, a king named Aka and his kingdom went under earth. And then in course of time, this subsided

low land became known as ‘Dhokaluki or Hakaluki.’ Various species of plants grow in the permanent water bodies of Hakaluki Haor. Every year about 200 birds of various species come here in winter. The true bird-lovers and observers come regularly to see the birds.

Tanguar Haor: At the foot of the Meghalaya ranges in the middle of Tahirpur and Dharmapasha Upazilla under Sunamganj district in north-east Sylhet is a vast wetlands popularly known as Tanguar Haor. It lies close to the foot of Khasia-Jaintia, and the Meghalaya hills of India about 40 Kilometres away from Sunamganj town. Including near about 50 villages, the total area of this haor is about 100 sq. km. Every year about 200 species of birds come here. There are 120 Bils (marsh) of big and small size. It is one of the fish resources in the country. 140 species of sweet water fish are available here. Moreover, *Kabach*, *Nolkhagra* (reeds), *Banatulshi* and many other are species plants are found in this region. The natural beauty of the Bils that pleases our eyes attracts tourists easily. Of the other Haors, Nolua, Dhankunia, Dirai and Sullah are noteworthy. The best time to visit Tanguar Haor is winter (December to February) when thousands of local and migratory species of birds welcome tourists as well as the rainy season (June to August) when incessant rains together with Meghalayan clouds create a scenic beauty.



Sreemangal Tea Garden: The tea gardens of Sreemangal, as if, covered with green carpets are very attractive to tourists. There are in total 7 hill valleys in Bangladesh, of which 6 valleys are in Sylhet. And there are 138 tea gardens, of which 38 tea gardens are in Sreemangal. For this reason Sreemangal is called the capital of tea too. Mile after mile the area is like mosaic in green of well trimmed and 60-70 cm high tea plants. Some where the area is high, somewhere low, again somewhere slope. The name of the most beautiful tea garden is Rajghat Finlay Tea Garden.



Madhabpur Tea Garden and Lake: Madhabpur Tea Garden is located five kilometres to the South of Kamalganj upazila and about 50 kilometres from Moulvibazar Sadar district. Madhabpur artificial lake has added beauty to the tea garden. There are many blue water-lilies and blue lotuses in the lake. In natural beautiful surroundings, there is a scope for a pleasure trip in the lake by native boats. In the winter season, a lot of migratory birds of various species get together here. The tea garden which is situated on the surrounding high hillocks of the artificial lake is an attractive tourist spot.



Jadukata: The Jadukata, one of the most beautiful rivers in Bangladesh, is situated in Laurergorh under Tahirpur Upazilla in Sunamganj District. Previously called the Renuka, this river flows from the Meghalaya ranges. The shrine of Hazrat Shah Arefin (R) is situated beside the river. Spectacularly visible behind the shrine (in the rainy season) is a waterfall. There is a beautiful hill on the other side of the river called Bariker Tilla, and behind that hill there is a church.



Apart from natural spots, Sylhet has numerous historical, archeological and religious tourist attractions. In fact, it is popularly known as the holy land of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R.). Some of them are delineated below:

Mazar (Shrine) of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R.): The Mazar (Shrine) of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) is 3 kilometres away from the Circuit house of Sylhet town. Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) was known as the chief of all saints and historic Sufi and Pir (spiritual guide) in the subcontinent. His full name is Sheikh Jalaluddin. He spread Islam in Sylhet region. It is learnt that Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) with his 360 companions travelled to Sylhet crossing the Surma River on the prayer mat after knowing the happening that Raja Gaur Govinda inflicted oppression on Sheikh



Burhanuddin, the first Muslim in Sylhet. Defeating the tyrannical king Gaur Govinda in battle, this famous spiritual saint started preaching Islam and living permanently in Sylhet. He has buried there after his death and this mazar has been named after his name. Immediately after the main gate there is a mosque and behind it there is a one-domed building on a hillock. Around the mazar there are countless Jalali pigeons and in the pond there are large *Gazar* fish (Spotted snakehead). Apart from that, a pair of wooden sandals, a sword and a few utensils which are preserved here are considered as his mementoes.

Mazar (Shrine) of Hazrat Shah Paran (R): Hazrat Srah Paran (R) was a great Sufi who followed the religious way of Suhrawardia and Jalalia. It is learnt that he is the nephew of Hazral Shah Jalal (R) and was as born in Yemen. And this Mazar (Shrine) has been named after his name. He made a Khanka (a saint's house) at Khadim Nagar in Dakshingachh Pargana



about 7 kilometres away from Sylhet and started his spiritual practice there. His death anniversary with feast and prayer is held on Arabic Rabiul Awal 4, 5, and 6 every year. His Mazar is made of bricks and is surrounded by wall on high hillocks. On the north of the Mazar there is an old tree named 'Ashagachh' (a tree of hope) and there is ancient mosque beside the Mazar.

Shahi Eidgah (Royal Field for Eid prayers): The Shahi Eidgah of Sylhet is one of the spectacular Eidgahs of Bangladesh. This picturesque and artistically beautiful Eidgah has its historic importance. Its location is on a small mound not far away from the old court house. During the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, Farhad Khan, commander of forces of that



area, built it. This Eidgah is laid with matchless artistic design and is decorated with 15 domes. On all sides of the boundary walls, there are 10 gates big and small. There is a big pond in front of the Eidgah for performing ablution. Many political personalities such as Moulana Mohammed Ali, Moulana Shawkat Ali, Mahatma Gandhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and many others delivered their speeches on the field of Shahi Eidgah. In 1782 two brothers Syed

Mohammad Hadi and Syed Mohammad Mehedi led uprising against English soldiers. In the face-to-face fight with the English soldiers, the two brothers were martyred. Besides the Shahi Eidgah Mosque on the north, there are forest officer bungalow, Bangladesh Television Sylhet Centre on the south and the Sylhet Meteorological office on the east. Every year in Eid-ul-Fitr and, Eid-ul-Azha about one hundred and fifty thousand Muslims can say their prayers together.

Ali Amzad's Clock: The gateway of Sylhet is close to the River Surma, where Ali Amzad's famous Gharighar (clock-house) is located on the right hand side of the Keane Bridge. Locally it is known as Ali Amzader Gharighar. The diameter of this clock is 2 feet and a half, and the hands of the Ghari are 2 feet long. Ali



Amzad Khan, the renowned Zamindar at Pritthim Pasha of Kulaura made this historical Ghari in 1874. The dome-shaped high clock-house was made of iron corrugated sheets on iron poles, and since then it has been known as Amzad's Gharighar. Until before the liberation war, the clock worked well. But during the liberation war, the bullet shots of the invading army destroyed the Gharighar. Of late, the clock has been repaired and modernized on the initiative of the Sylhet City Corporation.

Keane Bridge: This Keane Bridge is located across the River Surma on the gateway to Sylhet. In these thirties of 20th century, the then Governor of Assam province Michael Keane visited Sylhet, and in order to keep the memory of his visit unfading, this iron bridge was made in 1936. At



that time, the necessity of the construction of the bridge arose as a means of communication of trains with Assam. The length of the bridge is 1150ft and width is 18ft. During the liberation war in 1971, one part of the north side of the bridge was damaged and after achieving independence that damaged part was restored with wood and bailey parts. In 1977, on the initiative of Bangladesh Railway, the damaged part of the bridge was repaired again with concrete.

Osmani Museum: In commemoration of General M.A.G. Osmani, Commander-in Chief of Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters), this museum was founded at his residence. This was officially handed over to the national museum authorities in 1986. The cloths, furniture, paintings, photographs, books and similar other things used by General Osmani have rightly been preserved in three galleries.



Museum of Rajas: This museum was founded at Zindabazar, heartland of Sylhet in order to commemorate the renowned mystic poet Hason Raja (born in 1854) of Sylhet and the other members of his family. The valuable useful things (articles) and the manuscripts of Dewan Hason Raja and Dewan Eklimur Raja Chowdhury are lying with it. The greatest attraction of the museum here is the small edition of the holy Quran the size 1''x3/4''. Beside these and out of other things, the horse belt of Hason Raja, the list of the names of tame birds and elephants, utensils made of marble and silver, and the useful things of his wife etc. are lying there. This mystic poet breathed his last on December 7, 1922.



Hason Raja's Residence: A mystic poet and votary Hason Raja came of a Zamindar Family at Lakshansri village, Rampasha of Bishawnath Upazilla of Sunamganj in 1854. His actual name is Dewan Hason Raja Chowdhury. He was a God-loving, and he , in the message of his song called himself 'Pagla Hason Raja'(devoted Hason Raja), 'Udasi' (indifferent to worldly interests), 'Dewana'(one who has renounced the world for the sake of God), 'Baula'(a



class of unorthodox religious devotees singing devotional songs in a special mode) and so on. His

paternal race and the mother's line both were the inhabitants of Ayodhya and followers of Hinduism. Later they embraced Islam and came to Sunamganj and settled there permanently. He died on 7 December in 1922. A good number of tourists visit the house.

Dolura Monument: 48 martyred freedom fighters were buried in 1971 at Narayantala-Dolura 12 kilometers away from the Sunamganj town. This Dolura Smriti-shoudha (monument) was built to commemorate them. These mass graves are preserved with due care. Narayantala attracts the visitors not only for historical ground but for the natural beauty too.



Manipuri Village: Adampur and Madhabpur are two important habitations of the Manipuri Community. These human habitations exist in Kamalgonj Upazilla 35 kilometers away from the Moulvibazar district. The variety of life-styles of Manipuri community in this area surrounded by hills and forests attracts tourists. Every year on the day of full moon in Kartik (October-November), colorful Ras Fair is held. A Manipuri cultural academy was set up at Madhabpur in 1977.



Tea Museum: The first tea museum in Sreemangal was set up on the initiatives of Bangladesh Tea Board in order to preserve the country's 150 years' old history and heritage of tea industry and the equipment used in tea garden during the British rule. Besides 44 old furniture used in tea garden during the British rule, the chair & the table used by Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur



Rahman while he was the chairman of tea board, are preserved in this sole tea museum of the country. Even kerosene-operated refrigerator and the different kinds of coins used for the workers of the tea garden are preserved here. Moreover, there are compasses, clocks, pump tube wells,

filters of British time, tools and tables made for the plant, fossils, iron pipes, rings, spades, and many other implements along with arrows and bows.

Denston Cemetery: There are 46 graves in the graveyard of Denston Tea Garden, 15 kilometers away from Sreemangal. The foreigners who died here after the tea plantation were buried here.



Ancient Shiva Temple: In commemoration of Asitbaran Pal, this Shib Mandir (Shiva Temple) was built in 1385 near the Madhabkundo waterfall. On both sides of the temple, there are two tigers made of stone. Close to the Shib Mandir, there is another tomb-temple to commemorate Asitbaran Pal.



4.4 Accommodation

Sylhet has been recently so popular destination among the Bangladeshi tourists as the region offers loads of picturesque landscape with lush green hills, tea gardens and waterfalls. Accordingly the number of hotel has been increasing for the last few years. As provided by Sylhet Hotel Owners' Association, 25 hotels were built in different districts of Sylhet division for last 4 years which are shown below:

Table 4.3: Number of hotel built during last 4 years

District Name	Number of Hotel
Sylhet Sadar	10
Moulvibazar	10
Sunamganj	5
Habiganj ¹⁵	-
Total	25

It can be inferred from above table that the number of hotel in Sylhet will continue to increase as the number of tourists is increasing day by day. It is to be noted that the numbers of hotels are

¹⁵ Data were not provided by Sylhet Hotel Owner's Association

concentrated mainly in Sylhet Sadar and Moulvibazar which are popular for some unique natural attractions.

4.4.1 Type of Accommodation

In Sylhet, hotel is the main form of accommodation facility followed by newly developed topnotch resorts. Apart from hotels and resorts, few guest houses and Govt.-run bungalows are also seen in this region.

4.4.2 Number of Accommodation

In Sylhet division the number of hotel, motel, resort, and guesthouse is 69 with 3020 room altogether.¹⁶ In Sylhet Sadar, there are 23 hotels with 1060 room altogether. In Moulvibazar, this number is 30 and in Sunamganj there are 16 hotels. Number of hotels in Hobiganj is unavailable.¹⁷

Table 4.4: Total number of hotels and rooms in Sylhet

District Name	Number of hotel, motel, resort, and guesthouse	Total Rooms
Sylhet	23	1060
Moulvibazar	30	1480
Sunamganj	16	480
Habiganj ¹⁸	-	-
Total	69	3020

4.4.3 Rent of Accommodation

Rent of accommodation in Sylhet varies across districts. However this can be categorized according to the type of facilities offered. As provided by Sylhet Hotel Owners' Association, this is summarized as follows:

Table 4.5: Category wise room rent in Sylhet

District Name	Price Range (BDT.)		
	Budget/Single	Midrange/Twin/Couple	Exclusive/ Family Suit
Sylhet Sadar	BDT 300-500	BDT 350-5600	BDT 5600-12000
Moulvibazar	BDT 250-500	BDT 2000-4500	BDT 7500-15000
Sunamganj	BDT 200-400	BDT 1000-2500	BDT 2500-5650
Habiganj ¹⁹	-	-	-

¹⁶Sylhet Hotel Owners' Association

¹⁷ Sylhet Hotel Owners' Association

¹⁸ Data were not provided by Sylhet Hotel Owner's Association

¹⁹ Data were not provided by Sylhet Hotel Owner's Association

4.4.4 Occupancy rate

Sylhet region is incomparable in all seasons. In fact, the natural beauty of this place is changed and enhanced in winter and rainy season, which is rare in other tourist destinations of our country. Yet tourism in Sylhet is seasonal in pattern. Tourists visit Sylhet in Monsoon specifically from May to August. Especially huge numbers of tourists gather in shrine to join ‘Urs’ in August or October. Additionally, during the Eid-ul-Fitre and Eid-ul-Azha, people from different parts of the country come here to enjoy their vacation. In peak season from May to August or November to February, the average occupancy rate is around 78%. But in off-peak season the occupancy rate is 25% in whole division.

Table 4.6: Occupancy rate of hotels in Sylhet

District Name	Occupancy Rate (%)	
	<i>Peak season</i>	<i>Off-Peak season</i>
Sylhet Sadar	80%	25%
Moulvibazar	85%	30%
Sunamganj	70%	20%
Habiganj ²⁰	-	-
Average Occupancy Rate	78.3%	25%

4.5 Transportation

Transport is one of the major components of the tourism product. Transport is used both to transport passengers to and from their destination. Road, train and air services are the means of communication between Sylhet and other divisions or districts, including Dhaka.

With regard to road transport, bus and private rent a car service are the means of reaching Sylhet. Various normal bus services including luxury bus services are available to come here. In fact, bus service from Dhaka to Sylhet can be divided into two categories:

- i. General / non-AC bus service and
- ii. AC bus service
 - a) Economy Class
 - b) Business Class

Communication between district headquarters and other divisional headquarters are shown below:

²⁰ Data were not provided by Sylhet Hotel Owner’s Association

- **Sylhet-Habiganj:** Vehicles are found from South Surma Kodomtoli bus stand to reach Habiganj.
- **Sylhet-Moulvibazar:** Vehicles are found from South Surma Kodomtoli bus stand to reach Moulvibazar.
- **Sylhet-Sunamganj:** Vehicles are found from Sylhet Sadar Kumargaon bus stand to reach Sunamganj.

However, local mini bus, easy bike, leguna, CNG, auto rickshaw is the main types of local transport for the transportation of local people and tourists to go different tourist spots from Sylhet. In fact, auto rickshaws are popular among tourists as one may reach exactly where he/she wants to. Auto rickshaws as well as traditional rickshaws are also available in Sylhet town. However, it is to be noted that the main bus stand of Sylhet is Kadamtali bus stand where a sprawling collection of buses are available to go anywhere from Sylhet. In regard to the fare of these local transports, the rates are different for different types of vehicles subject to the destination or route.

On the other hand, as Sunamganj district is surrounded by haor, the only transportation mode is water transportation. To come to this district from the capital and other important cities, tourists are required to come first to Sylhet on the train/plane. After traveling around 70 km, tourists reach this district.

In case of railway transport, a numbers of train services are available from Dhaka and Chittagong, such as Parabat Express, Kushiara Express, Joyantika Express, Upaban Express, Surma Mail, Kalni Express, Paharika Express, Jalalabad Express etc. All these trains stop at Sreemangal. The Chittagong trains also stop at Comilla.

Finally, in case of air access, Sylhet MAG Osmani Airport is an international standard airport where both the domestic and international flights are in service. Internal transit aircraft include:

- Bangladesh Biman
- United Airways
- US-Bangla Airlines
- Novoair

In addition, a number of flights are available from Dhaka, Jessore, Chittagong and Saidpur.

Price range can be categorized according the mode of transportation. From secondary source, the following price range is summarized:

Table 4.7: Price range of transportation in Sylhet

Route	Road		Rail				Air	Remarks
	AC	Non-AC	Shovon	Shovon Chair	AC Seat	AC Berth		
Dhaka-Sylhet	*1000-1200	*470-550	265	320	736	1099	2500-6500	*Price variation depends on facilities
Dhaka-Sunamganj	Not available	550	Not available				Not available	
Dhaka-Sreemangal	600	*380-400	200	240	552	828	Not available	*Price variation depends on facilities
Chittagong-Sylhet	1100	700	315	375	857	1287		
Chittagong-Sreemangal	Not available	Not available	250	300	685	1024	Not available	

4.6 Tour Operators and Travel Guides in Sylhet Division

Though reliable data regarding the number of tour agency and tour operator are not available, it was observed that most of the tourists prefer to visit some remarkable places of Sylhet such as Jaflong, Bichanakndi, Ratargul, Sreemangal tea garden, Madhabkunda Waterfall, different lakes and haors with their own plan. Thousands of people come to Sylhet for visiting shrines as it is considered a holy place for the Muslim community. Even tourists are inclined toward visiting shrines to pay their respect and honor for Saint and to ask for help from Almighty. Only tourists who come to visit the shrine have no predetermined plans of visiting a particular place. Therefore, they gather information from hotels or transports about the places must visit and then decide instantly.

A good number of information can be found about tour operators offering tour package for Sylhet. Sylhet Bangla Tours, Sylhet Tourism, The Bengal Tour, Tourism Window, Bangladesh Expeditions, Nijhoom Tours and few other tour operators are found offering different tour packages to tourists for Sylhet. In this case, tour operators are found mostly arranging and offering their tour packages for some popular destinations such as Jaflong, Bichhanakand, Lalakhal, Panthumai, Shari River, Ratargul Swamp Forest, tea gardens, waterfalls and lakes nearby the tea gardens. But the most shocking and regretful matter was that during interview with tour operators it was found that some of them are not interested about domestic tourism let alone Sylhet. Despite having amazing natural beauty in Sylhet with varied resources they are reluctant to offer package tour to tourists. The main reason behind their disinclination is the area's undeveloped infrastructures and poor transportation system. Also, lack of minimum services and facilities in the tourist places that tourists normally expect discourage tour operators from planning and offering tour packages. Furthermore, most tour operators are involved in outbound tourism. It was found from the study that majority of the tourists are only photographers and the young adventure-loving university students who visit some places that lacks minimum infrastructures such as Jaflong, Bichhanakandi, Ratargul Swamp Forest, Pantumai Waterfall, Bholagonj Stone Quarry, Tanguar Haor. These segments of tourists do not worry about the services and do not seek the services from tour operators and travel agencies.

Chapter 5: Presentation and Analysis of Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and results of the data collected at the field level. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 is used to analyze the data. The chapter starts with the demographic profile of the tourists, followed by their travel behavior. Then detail descriptive analysis of tourists' satisfaction with tourism products and services, their safety perceptions, understanding of tourism crime and safety is presented.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Tourists

In this section, the socio-demographic information about tourists' gender, age, marital status, education level, professional status, and income is presented.

5.2.1 Gender

Table 5.1 given below reveals percentage distribution of tourists according to gender across the 3 districts of Sylhet.

Table 5.1: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Gender

Gender	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Male	88% (117)	75.4% (104)	88% (103)	83.8% (324)
Female	12% (16)	24.6% (34)	12% (14)	16.2% (64)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is clear from the above table that the majority of tourists were male. Across all the study areas, the number of male tourists was higher (83.8%) than that of female tourists (16.2%), with a relatively higher number of male tourists in both the Sylhet and Sunamganj district (88%), followed by Moulvibazar district (75.4%). However, percentage distribution of female tourists was relatively higher (24.6%) in Moulvibazar district.

5.2.2 Age-sex

The table below shows that majority of the male tourists belong to 20-29 age group (47.9%) followed by 30-39 years age group (36.3%). In contrast, the least number of tourists (3.4%) is of

above 50 years age. However, considering both male and female tourists, 21 (5.4%) are from the age group up to 19 years, 186 (47.9%) from 20-29, 141 (36.3%) from the age group of 30-39, 27 (7.0%) from the age group of 40-49 and 13 (3.4%) are from the above 50 age group.

Table 5.2: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Age-sex

Gender	Age Group					Total
	Up to 19 years	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50+ years	
Male	61.9% (13)	79.6% (148)	90.1% (127)	85.2% (23)	100% (13)	83.4% (324)
Female	38.1% (8)	20.4% (38)	9.9% (14)	14.8% (4)	0% (0)	16.6% (64)
Total (n)	5.4% (21)	47.9% (186)	36.3% (141)	7.0% (27)	3.4% (13)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.2.3 Marital Status

Table 5.3 shows the marital status of tourists across the study areas. The survey reveals that 218 (56.4%) tourists are married and 167 (42.9%) are unmarried. However, small percentages of tourists are divorced (0.5%) or separated (0.3%). In Sylhet, the numbers of married, unmarried, divorced and separated tourists are in the ratio of 75:56:1:1, in Moulvibazar 73:64:1:0 and in Sunamganj 70:47:0:0.

Table 5.3: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Marital Status

Marital Status	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Married	56.4% (75)	52.9% (73)	59.8% (70)	56.4% (218)
Unmarried	42.1% (56)	46.4% (64)	40.2% (47)	42.9% (167)
Divorced	0.8% (1)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Separated	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.3% (1)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.2.4 Education

Results show that out of the 388 tourists, 2 (0.5%) have no education, 20 (5%) completed primary education, 47 (12.2%) completed SSC, 75 (19.8%) completed HSC, 93 (24%) are graduates and

151 (38.5%) are postgraduates. Following table also reveals that majority of the tourists are post-graduates. In fact, the number of postgraduates is relatively higher in Moulvibazar districts, followed by Sylhet districts.

Table 5.4: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Education

Level of Education	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
No education	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)	0.5% (2)
Primary	11.3% (15)	2.9% (4)	0.9% (1)	5.0% (20)
SSC	17.3% (23)	7.2% (10)	12.0% (14)	12.2% (47)
HSC	10.5% (14)	18.8% (26)	29.9% (35)	19.8% (75)
Graduate	22.6% (30)	24.6% (34)	24.8% (29)	24.0% (93)
Post Graduate	37.6% (50)	46.4% (64)	31.6% (37)	38.5% (151)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.2.5 Occupation

Table 5.5 reveals that the majority of the tourists (33.3%) are employed in private service. Out of the 388 tourists surveyed, about 22.6% (87) are students, about 21.6% (84) are owners of some type of business, 8.3% (33) are housewives and expatriates, 6.3% (25) are government officers, 5.2% (21) are professionals, and 3.0% (12) are unemployed. A negligible portion of tourists is retired.

Table 5.5: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Occupation

Occupation	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Students	15.8% (21)	23.9% (33)	28.2% (33)	22.6% (87)
Self Employed / Business	27.8% (37)	18.1% (25)	18.8% (22)	21.6% (84)
Professional (Teaching, Doctors, Engineer etc.)	6.0% (8)	8.0% (11)	1.7% (2)	5.2% (21)
Government Officer	3.8% (5)	10.1% (14)	5.1% (6)	6.3% (25)

Private Service	29.3% (39)	26.8% (37)	41.0% (48)	32.4% (124)
Unemployed	5.3% (7)	2.9% (4)	0.9% (1)	3.0% (12)
Retired	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Others (Expatriate, Housewife)	12.0% (16)	8.7% (12)	4.3% (5)	8.3% (33)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.2.6 Household Income

Household incomes of the surveyed tourists provide a good picture of their financial conditions. Hence, the table 5.6 shows that overall, about 34.9% of the tourists belong to the income range Tk. 30001-40000, followed by the income range Tk. 20001-30000 (31.3%) and about 24.9% tourists belong to above Tk. 50000. Only about 8.9% of the surveyed tourists belong to the income range less than BDT 20,000.

Table 5.6: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Household Income

Family Income	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Less than Tk 20,000	11.3% (15)	5.1% (7)	10.3% (12)	8.9% (34)
Tk. 20001 - Tk. 30,000	37.6% (50)	24.6% (34)	31.6% (37)	31.3% (121)
Tk. 30001 - Tk. 40,000	35.3% (47)	32.6% (45)	36.8% (43)	34.9% (135)
Tk. 50,000+	15.8% (21)	37.7% (52)	21.4% (25)	24.9% (98)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is to be noted that, there is not any significant difference in tourists' family income that lies between Tk. 20001-30000 to Tk. 30001-40000 across three districts. For Sylhet, proportions of income range Tk. 20001-30000 are higher (37.6%) compared to the other income range. For Sunamganj and Sylhet, proportions of income range Tk. 30001-40000 are higher (36.8% and 35.3% respectively) compared to another income range. However, among three districts

Moulvibazar (37.7%) has the highest percentages of tourists' family income that is above Tk. 50000.

5.3 Travel Behaviors of Tourists

This section provides information about tourist' area of origin or living, their purpose of visit the destination, length of stay, travel mates, type of accommodation choices, mode of transportation used, and the source of hearing about the destination information.

5.3.1 Tourists' Area of Living

Table 5.7 shows that majority of the tourists (77.7%) come from another district to visit different destinations of Sylhet division. For all three districts, the majority of the tourists come from another district, while 11.1% of tourists come from different sub-districts to visit different destinations of the same district. With respect to foreign tourists, majorities (13.8%) visit Moulvibazar district, while no foreign tourists were found in Sunamganj district.

Table 5.7: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Area of Living

Area of Living	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
From different upazilas of the same district	24.1% (32)	5.1% (7)	4.3% (5)	11.1% (44)
From different districts of Sylhet division	4.5% (6)	9.4% (13)	5.1% (6)	6.4% (25)
From another district	70.7% (94)	71.7% (99)	90.6% (106)	77.7% (299)
From another country	0.8% (1)	13.8% (19)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (20)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.2 Purpose of Visit

Results show that more than 95% of the tourists visit destinations for recreation purpose while a negligible portion of tourists visits destinations for business, official, education or another purpose. In fact, for all three districts named Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Sunamganj, above 95% of tourists visit different destinations of Sylhet division for recreation purpose.

Table 5.8: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Purpose of Visit

Purpose of Visit	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Recreation	96.2% (128)	90.6% (125)	97.4% (114)	94.8% (367)
Business	0.8% (1)	3.6% (5)	0% (0)	1.5% (6)
Official	0.8% (1)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (1)	1.0% (4)
Education	1.5% (2)	4.3% (6)	0.9% (1)	2.2% (9)
Honeymoon	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)	0.5% (2)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.3 Length of Stay

The table below shows that overall about 51.4% of the tourists in the total sample of three districts stay in all three districts for 0-1 day, followed by 44% for 2-3 days; while a negligible portion of tourists stays there for 4-5 or more than 6 days. Among the three districts, the majority of the tourists (53.8%) spend most of their time in Moulvibazar for maximum one day. About 50.4% tourists stay for a day in Sylhet, followed by 45.1% for 2-3 days. For Sunamganj, 56.4% of the tourists spend their time for 2-3 days. However, very few tourists spend 4-5 or more days in these districts.

Table 5.9: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Length of Stay

Length of Stay	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
0-1 day	50.4% (67)	63.8% (88)	40.2% (47)	51.4% (192)
2-3 days	45.1% (60)	30.4% (42)	56.4% (66)	44.0% (100)
4-5 days	3.8% (5)	2.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (4)
6 or more days	0.8% (1)	2.9% (4)	3.4% (4)	2.4% (4)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.4 Accompanying person

Table 5.10 shows that friends and relatives were the usual group during a tour in most of the cases and the overall percentage is about 68.4%. For Sylhet, more than 69% of the tourists in the total sample of three districts were accompanied by friends and relatives, followed by spouse and children (21.8%). The same scenario was seen for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj districts. About 6% of tourists traveled alone. Only a very small percentage of tourists traveled with others, accounting for 2.0%.

Table 5.10: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Person Accompanied

Accompanying Person	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Travel alone	7.5% (10)	8.7% (12)	1.7% (2)	6.0% (24)
Spouse and children	21.8% (29)	27.5% (38)	21.4% (25)	23.6% (92)
Friends/relatives	69.9% (93)	60.1% (83)	75.2% (88)	68.4% (264)
Others (Colleagues, students, Cyclist, Sports team)	0.8% (1)	3.6% (5)	1.7% (2)	2.0% (8)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.5 Type of Accommodation

The table below shows percentage distribution of various types of accommodation used by tourists during their traveling period. It is obvious from the table that majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts stayed at the hotel during their traveling period, accounting for 54.6%, whereas a small percentage of tourists stayed at the bungalow. For Sylhet and Moulvibazar, more than 60% of the tourists stayed at a hotel. For Sylhet, about 24.8% tourists intend to stay at their residence. For Moulvibazar, about 13.8% tourists stayed at their own house, followed by the resort (12.3%), while a negligible portion of tourists (1.4%) stayed at the bungalow or other types of accommodation. For Sunamganj, about 48.7% of the tourists stayed at the boat, followed by 38.5% at the hotel.

Table 5.11: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Type of Accommodation

Type of Accommodation	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Hotel	60.2% (80)	65.2% (90)	38.5% (45)	54.6% (215)
Resort	2.3% (3)	12.3% (17)	0.9% (1)	5.1% (21)
Bungalow	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (1)	0.8% (3)
Own house	24.8% (33)	13.8% (19)	5.1% (6)	14.6% (58)
Friends / family	12.8% (17)	5.8% (8)	6.0% (7)	8.2% (32)
Others	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	48.7% (57)	16.7% (59)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.6 Mode of Transportation

The result shows that greater part of the tourists used the bus as a means of transportation. For Sylhet and Moulvibazar, about 41.6% tourists in the total sample of three districts used the bus as a medium of transportation. Some tourists sought safe, secure and comfortable journey by train, accounting for 29.1% and 28.5% respectively. For Sunamganj, the majority of the tourists (51.8%) used the bus as a medium of transportation, followed by car (32.4%). It is noteworthy that only a few tourists used airways except Sunamganj, accounting for 1.6% and 6.0% for Sylhet and Moulvibazar respectively.

Table 5.12: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Mode of Transportation Used

Mode of Transportation	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Car	30.8% (56)	31.0% (62)	32.4% (55)	31.4% (173)
Bus	38.5% (70)	34.5% (69)	51.8% (88)	41.6% (227)
Air	1.6% (3)	6.0% (12)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (15)
Train	29.1% (53)	28.5% (57)	15.9% (27)	24.5% (137)
Total (n)	100% (182)	100% (200)	100% (170)	100% (552)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.3.7 Source of Destination Information

Table 5.13 reveals percentage distribution of various sources of information on where tourists come to hear about the destination. It is apparent from the table that friend and relatives account for the highest percentage (36.4%) for the source of information about the destination across all three districts, followed by social media (22.6%). It is worth mentioning that few tourists are informed about a destination from fairs and exhibitions and other sources, accounting for less than 1%.

For Sylhet, friends, and relatives, social media, and media (print and electronic) contribute to 40.7%, 22.1% and 19.3% tourists respectively as sources of information about the destination. Whereas books and guides, travel agency and fairs and exhibitions are reported at below 5%. For Moulvibazar, about 36.4% of tourists were informed about the destination through word of mouth from friends and relatives, followed by social media (22.5%). And for Sunamganj, apart from friends and relatives, social media and internet are reported second and third highest source of destination information; thereby corresponding percentages are 23.1% and 19.7% respectively.

Table 5.13: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by Source of Information about Destination

Source of Information	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Internet	12.1% (35)	14.2% (46)	19.7% (68)	15.3% (149)
Friends & Relatives	40.7% (118)	36.4% (118)	32.1% (111)	36.4% (347)
Media	19.3% (56)	15.7% (51)	17.6% (61)	17.6% (168)
Social Media	22.1% (64)	22.5% (73)	23.1% (80)	22.6% (217)
Books & Guides	4.8% (14)	5.2% (17)	6.9% (24)	5.7% (55)
Travel Agency	0.7% (2)	3.1% (10)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (12)
Fairs & Exhibitions	0.0% (0)	1.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (5)
Others	0.3% (1)	1.2% (4)	0.6% (2)	0.7% (7)
Total (n)	100% (290)	100% (324)	100% (346)	100% (960)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.4 Tourists' Level of Satisfaction with Different Dimension during Their Trip in the Destination

As mentioned earlier in chapter three, the tourists, their travel experiences as well as their satisfaction is of paramount importance for ensuring sustainability of this industry. That's why, following five dimensions were used to measure the level of tourists' satisfaction in this study:

1. Accessibility,
2. Hospitality,
3. Expenditure
4. Attraction and entertainment facilities and
5. Environmental factor.

Each of these dimensions was further divided into related statements. About 30 statements were placed before them to rate their level of contentment. Each category is measured by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one to five. The outcomes of the entire exercise are shown in Table 5.14 to Table 5.43 below:

5.4.1 Accessibility

One of the most important elements of a tourist destination is accessibility. Accessibility is the ability to provide appropriate visitor access into a destination, and travel throughout the destination. A tourist destination is of no value or little importance if it is not accessible by easy transport and communication that enable tourists to reach the destination. The findings of tourist satisfaction with reference to accessibility are given below-

5.4.1.1 Availability of Tourist Information

Table 5.14 shows the percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with the availability of tourist information in three districts of Sylhet division. It is evident that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (62.7%) are dissatisfied regarding the availability of tourist information about the destination, whereas 17.0% tourists are satisfied. About 9.8% tourists express their neutral opinion. While 3.3% tourists express high level of satisfaction with aforesaid facility, another 7.2% tourists are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.46 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to availability of adequate information. Similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.14: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Tourist Information

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	2.3% (3)	5.8% (8)	1.7% (2)	3.3% (13)
Satisfied	10.5% (14)	26.1% (36)	14.5% (17)	17.0% (67)
Neutral	11.3% (15)	8.7% (12)	9.4% (11)	9.8% (38)
Dissatisfied	65.4% (87)	55.1% (76)	67.5% (79)	62.7% (242)
Highly dissatisfied	10.5% (14)	4.3% (6)	6.8% (8)	7.2% (28)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.29	2.74	2.37	2.46

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Figures presented in above table reveal that majorities are dissatisfied with the inadequate tourist information facilities. For all three districts, more than half of the tourists are dissatisfied with the availability of adequate tourist information stating that there is no tourist information center in common places for tourists, accounting for 65.4%, 55.1% and 67.5% for Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Sunamganj respectively. On the other hand, tourists who are satisfied with adequate tourist information mention that local people, photographers, guide, boatman, and hawkers willingly provide information to the tourists and therefore corresponding percentages are 10.5%, 26.1% and 14.5% for Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Sunamganj respectively. A few tourists are highly satisfied with this facet. Yet, the average score of 2.29 and 2.37 for Sylhet and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' dissatisfaction to some extent with respect to the abovementioned facility. And the average score of 2.74 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to the abovementioned facility.

In regard to the adequacy of tourist information, tourism stakeholders assert that those who are satisfied with the availability of tourist information would be from the same districts or other districts of Sylhet division. As such it's not a tough matter to get to know about the destination. An experienced TOAB member associated with tourism for a long time told that many youth communities now open pages on Facebook and actively work to promote and disseminate tourist

attractions. A manager of a hotel near Jaflong reports that there is a proposal to provide an Information Center beside the BGB camp at Jaflong Zero point/Sonatola so that tourists can easily get information and keep track of guides as well.

5.4.1.2 Availability of local transportation services

Tourists express divergent feelings on their satisfaction with the availability of local transportation services. It is observed from the table 5.15 that overall 45.5% of tourists are satisfied with the aforesaid facility, while about 32% of tourists are dissatisfied. About 19.5% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the availability of local transportation services. However, few percentages of tourists in the total sample of three districts (2.5%) are highly dissatisfied, while a negligible percentage (0.5%) is highly satisfied. Their average score is 3.10 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the above-mentioned service. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.15: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Local Transportation Services

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Satisfied	30.8% (41)	58.7% (81)	47.0% (55)	45.5% (177)
Neutral	27.1% (36)	19.6% (27)	12.0% (14)	19.5% (77)
Dissatisfied	36.1% (48)	18.8% (26)	41.0% (48)	32.0% (122)
Highly dissatisfied	4.5% (6)	2.9% (4)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (10)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.89	3.34	3.06	3.10

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is seen from above table that particularly for Sylhet, about 36.1% of the tourists is dissatisfied with the availability of local transportation services, followed by 4.5% are highly dissatisfied, whereas 30.8% are satisfied. They report that there is a scarcity of the mode of local transportation to reach a destination from Sylhet city. Although there is a good number of train and bus to come to Sylhet, there are inadequate local transportation facilities to go to different destinations in Sylhet

district. From qualitative findings, concerned stakeholders tell that nearly about thousands of tourists go to refresh themselves by coming close to the serenity of nature in Sylhet, particularly Jaflong, Bichhanakandi, Ratargul Swamp Forest, tea gardens, reserved forests. But there is a considerable shortage of vehicles compared to the increased number of tourists. Apart from such shortages, tourists also have to walk a long way on their foot to reach some destinations which may be a disincentive for their satisfaction. While about 27.1% of tourists visiting Sylhet are in a neutral position relating to the local transportation system, few tourists (1.5%) are highly satisfied with this aspect. However, tourists' average score of 2.89 implies their neutrality with respect to the availability of local transportation services in Sylhet district.

For Moulvibazar, a majority of the responses (58.7%) are satisfied with local transportation facilities, whereas about 19.6% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Tourists, in this connection, told that there is the availability of good numbers of vehicles in Moulvibazar. In fact, CNG, Auto, Mahindra are the popular modes of local transportation services. On the other hand, the local transportation system is available in Sunamganj from the points of view of tourists; thereby about 47% tourists express their satisfaction with local transportation services. On the other hand, about 41% of tourists are not satisfied with aforesaid services as the only mode of transportation there is Honda and CNG. In fact, the average score of 3.34 and 3.06 for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' neutrality with respect to the abovementioned facility.

5.4.1.3 Quality of transportation services

The table 5.16 represents the percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with the quality of local transportation services in above three districts. It is seen from the table that overall majority (44.8%) of the tourists in the total sample of three districts are dissatisfied with respect to the quality of local transportation services, followed by 33.0% are in a neutral position. A negligible portion of tourists (0.2%) are highly satisfied. Their average score is 2.71 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the quality of local transportation services. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.16: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Quality of Local Transportation Services

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.2% (1)
Satisfied	6.8% (9)	37% (51)	15.4% (18)	19.7% (78)
Neutral	28.6% (38)	27% (37)	43.6% (51)	33.0% (126)
Dissatisfied	59.4% (79)	34% (47)	41.0% (48)	44.8% (174)
Highly dissatisfied	5.3% (7)	1% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.2% (9)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.37	3.01	2.74	2.71

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is evident from the data above that, among the three districts, the highest percentage of tourists visiting Sylhet district (59.4%) express their dissatisfaction with the quality of local transportation services as they feel discomfort inside the bus. Delayed boarding time is also mentioned by some tourists as helpers of the vehicle pick up passengers from unspecified stops.

On the other hand, about 28.6% of tourists express their neutral opinion toward the quality of local transportation services. It might be a sign of satisfaction as they visit destinations with their own personal car or reserved vehicle. Conversely, 5.3% of tourists are highly dissatisfied stating that apart from discomfort, space crisis inside the vehicle is present in most of the vehicles. One of the tourists says like this:

“In most of the local buses and/or leguna, I find very little leg space, as the space between seats is not enough to sit comfortably especially for those who are a bit taller and healthier.”

Indeed, the average score of 2.37 for Sylhet district implies tourists’ dissatisfaction with respect to the abovementioned facility.

About 37% of tourists are satisfied with the quality of local transportation services because CNG is more spacious compared to other public transport. On the other hand, 34% are dissatisfied

because of poor service of bus and high fare of CNG. About 27% of tourists opine neutral view at Moulvibazar district. A negligible portion of tourists (1%) are highly dissatisfied with this facility.

In case of Sunamganj, about 43.6% of the tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of local transportation services meaning that they are indifferent to the quality of local transportation services. In fact, about 41% of tourists are dissatisfied as there is no bus service from Sunamganj Sadar to Tahirpur, followed by 15.4% are satisfied with the prevailing standard of local transportation services. It is noteworthy that no tourists are either highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied. However, the average score of 3.01 and 2.74 for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' neutrality with respect to the abovementioned facility.

Qualitative findings demonstrate that one of the major reasons for the poor quality of local transportation services is that there are no other alternatives for local public transports. Hence, tourists must have to use local buses and/or other modes of local transport for reaching the destination. In fact, there are no separate public transports for tourists. Some stakeholders also assert that although the city road of Sylhet is fairly good, huge traffic jam is seen due to the increased number of Rickshaws. A number of public transport is limited and private transports are expensive. In addition, lack of surveillance, Govt. ignorance and lack of foresight is also responsible for poor quality of local transportation services. In fact, from the comment of the interview, one of the stakeholders said,

“Although Bangladesh Govt. says they are doing a lot for tourism, they haven't even give a vaccine for its development yet”.

5.4.1.4 Convenience to travel

Ease of travel across destination is another factor influencing tourists' satisfaction. Table 5.17 reveals percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with the convenience to travel across different spots in three districts of Sylhet division. From the table, it is seen that overall a majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (45.8%) are dissatisfied with convenience to travel, followed by neutral position (26.5%). It is also evident from the table that not a single tourist from three districts expresses their high level of satisfaction with the above-mentioned fact. Their average score is 2.64 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the convenience to travel across different spots in three districts. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.17: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Convenience to Travel

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	7.5% (10)	42.0% (58)	15.4% (18)	21.6% (86)
Neutral	19.5% (26)	27.5% (38)	32.5% (38)	26.5% (102)
Dissatisfied	56.4% (75)	29.0% (40)	52.1% (61)	45.8% (176)
Highly dissatisfied	16.5% (22)	1.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	6.0% (24)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.18	3.10	2.63	2.64

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For Sylhet and Sunamganj, majorities of the tourists are dissatisfied with the ease of travel across different destinations and the corresponding percentages are 56.4% and 52.1% respectively. Tourists report that there are numerous ditches and huge craters across Tamabil-Jaflong, Bollaghat zero point or Goinghat-bound roads where vehicle gets stuck. Also, mud and dust fly off vehicle wheels. In this regard, a local tea shop owner states that road conditions are so poor that a picnic bus is reluctant to come again and even if they agree to go then they demand almost double or triple fare which discourages tourists to visit Sylhet again. About 16.5% tourists visiting Sylhet express their high level of dissatisfaction with aforesaid facility mentioning that they suffer a lot not only because of dilapidated road conditions but also poor local bus service and inadequacy of good quality public bus. Yet, the average score of 2.18 for Sylhet district implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the abovementioned facility.

On the other hand, about 52.1% of tourists coming to Sunamganj also express their discontent with regard to convenience to travel. They opine that transportation system is not in an expected level there as they have to ride different types of the vehicle depending on the destination and routes. Furthermore, there is only minibus service where space crisis is seen inside the bus. On the other hand, although motorcycle is used to reach Tahirpur, this is too risky to drive on such dilapidated road. Talking about the condition of the Sunamganj-Tahirpur road, a motorcyclist said,

“It is also very risky to drive over the broken parts”.

On the other hand, about 15.4% of tourists are satisfied with aforesaid facet stating that knowing about the deplorable condition of Sunamganj-Tahirpur road they come to Tahirpur from Sunamganj by boat via Jadukata River. However, the average score of 2.63 for Sunamganj district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to the abovementioned facility.

In case of Moulvibazar, more than 40% of the tourists are satisfied with the ease of travel across destinations as they find road conditions, travel routes, number of vehicles as well as nearby airport petty fine compared to other districts, whereas about 29% of the tourists are dissatisfied with the above fact. In this regard, local elite persons assert that road condition has worsened due to recent continuous heavy rainfall. In addition, vehicles cannot move on the roads as potholes are developed in maximum points from Bhanugachi turning point to Madhabpur Lake. A negligible percentage of tourists (1.4%) are highly dissatisfied with the convenience to travel. As such, the average score of 3.10 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to the abovementioned facility.

Qualitative findings demonstrate that, although Sylhet is very potential for its scenic beauty, but access to some tourist destinations is pretty troublesome as no infrastructural facilities have yet been developed there. For example, one of the tour operators tells that tourists have to go Bichhanakandi via the backyard of another's house as no separate route has yet been prepared for tourists. In this regard, one of the ex-high officials of TDAB contends that infrastructural development is not possible by private enterprises' initiatives. According to him, if the country's head is not directly involved with tourism development, then development is not possible. Hence, he expresses his disappointment in mentioning the role of Govt. Majority of the stakeholders also assert that lack of adequate government support, willpower, and initiative together with very small budgetary allocation is one of the reasons for inadequate infrastructural facilities. With regard to government support, one of the stakeholders said,

“Govt. provides 14% VAT free loan to industrial establishments, whereas, we've to give 8% VAT and tax to govt. let alone receiving any loan facilities from govt.”

Apart from infrastructural facilities, a qualitative finding also emphasizes the quality, ease, and safety of transportation system. According to a manager associated with hospitality sector, Sylhet as a destination is very safe for travel. But in the case of travel, he does not consider transportation

system safe, particularly Ena Paribahan. According to him, the train journey is the safest mode of transportation. In addition, although it takes less time to fly in the sky, the guest has to travel by road to reach the destination after being landed on the airport. In fact, he expresses his disappointment as Dhaka-Sylhet-Dhaka route is not good. On the other hand, a tour operator mentioned that the four-lane road from Dawki border will be connected to the Asian Highway. If it succeeds, he thinks the tourism sector of the two countries, i.e., Bangladesh and India will be much improved.

5.4.1.5 Accessibility to basic medical treatment

Results show that across all three districts, the majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (57.9%) expresses their displeasure with reference to emergency medical service, while a negligible portion of tourists (0.3%) are highly satisfied with this facility. Their average score is 2.22 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the accessibility to basic medical assistance near the tourist spots. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.18: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Accessibility to Basic Medical Treatment

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.3% (1)
Satisfied	10.5% (14)	10.9% (15)	1.7% (2)	8.4% (31)
Neutral	20.3% (27)	25.4% (35)	13.7% (16)	19.8% (78)
Dissatisfied	48.1% (64)	48.6% (67)	76.9% (90)	57.9% (221)
Highly dissatisfied	20.3% (27)	15.2% (21)	7.7% (9)	13.7% (57)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.23	2.32	2.09	2.22

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is seen from the table above that, in Sylhet, about 48.1% tourists report that there is no basic medical assistance near the tourist spots if an emergency arises. They state that several tourists go missing and drown while swimming in the Zero point or Pyain River. But unfortunately, there is no immediate arrangement for first aid treatment in the spots if any unpleasant situation occurs.

About 20.3% of tourists also express their high level of dissatisfaction, while 10.5% of tourists are satisfied with this aspect. It may be due to the fact that they may not feel the need for such facilities. Yet a negligible portion of tourists (0.8%) are highly satisfied.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 48.6% of the tourists respond that there is no provision for basic medical treatment for tourists. If something happens to a tourist, he/she has to move to the main city (Sreemangal Sadar) for medical assistance. About 25.4% of tourists opine neutral view on this facility meaning that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with this aspect. It may be due to the fact that they may not have realized or faced any such needs or difficulties during their trip. On the other hand, about 10.9% of the tourists are satisfied with the basic medical facility, while no tourists (0%) are highly satisfied with this issue.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, a great majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (76.9%) expresses their displeasure with reference to basic medical service as there is no provision for basic medical treatment for tourists. About 7.7% of tourists are highly dissatisfied stating that apart from the absence of basic medical service, no lifeguards or rescue services are available there if any tourists fall in the haor. In short, the average score of 2.23, 2.32 and 2.09 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the above-mentioned facility.

5.4.2 Hospitality

Hospitality is another factor that affects tourists' satisfaction. It comprises of tangible and intangible elements that have an effect on tourists' satisfaction. Quantitative findings on tourists' satisfaction toward a various aspect of hospitality are given below:

5.4.2.1 Appealing accommodation

Table 5.19 shows percentage distribution of attractive accommodation facility that affects tourist satisfaction. It is obvious from the table that overall about 46.7% tourists in the total sample of three districts opine neutral view on their satisfaction toward attractive accommodation facility, followed by 36.0% are satisfied. On the other hand, about 14.9% of tourists are dissatisfied, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (0.6%) are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 3.23 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the attractive accommodation facility. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.19: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Appealing Accommodation

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.1% (1)	4.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	1.8% (6)
Satisfied	32.2% (28)	58.6% (68)	17.1% (18)	36.0% (114)
Neutral	58.6% (51)	32.8% (38)	48.6% (51)	46.7% (140)
Dissatisfied	8.0% (7)	3.4% (4)	33.3% (35)	14.9% (46)
Highly dissatisfied	0.0% (0)	0.9% (1)	1.0% (1)	0.6% (2)
Total (n)	100% (87)	100% (116)	100% (105)	100% (308)²¹
Mean Score	3.26	3.62	2.82	3.23

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in above table, about 58.6% tourists visiting Sylhet are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the aforesaid facility, meaning that they are moderately pleased with the existing facility. In fact, about 32.2% of tourists respond that the standard of accommodation is pleasant and attractive, while not a single tourist (0%) is highly dissatisfied. On the other hand, about 8.0% of the tourists are dissatisfied with appealing accommodation facility in Sylhet. The mean score of 3.26 for Sylhet district implies tourists' neutral stance with respect to the above-mentioned facility.

In case of Moulvibazar district, about 58.6% tourists report that a good number of hotels, resorts, and cottages are available here with a few variations in facilities they serve, whereas about 3.4% tourists express their disappointment regarding this facility as they claim that rooms are unclean and smelly, wardrobe and other furniture are poorly maintained. However, about 4.3% of tourists are highly pleased with this facility, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (0.9%) are highly dissatisfied with this aspect. The mean score of 3.62 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' satisfaction to some extent with respect to the above-mentioned facility.

²¹ Tourists who are either got into friends & relative's house or their own house are not asked to rate this statement for all three districts. Hence out of total 388 tourists, 46 tourists (34.6%) from Sylhet, 22 tourists (15.9%) from Moulvibazar and 12 tourists (10.3%) from Sunamganj are excluded.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, about 48.6% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the aforesaid facility. It may imply that they are not satisfied with existing facility because about 33.3% of tourists express their displeasure regarding this facility claiming that there is no formal provision for accommodation, particularly in Tanguar Haor. The only place for tourists to stay there at night is troller-boat. Furthermore, the facilities in the boat are not of that standard to satisfy all types of tourists. On the other hand, about 17.1% of tourists are satisfied with accommodation facility claiming that there is only one hotel named ‘Hotel Tanguar Inn’ where hotel authority can accommodate only 38 persons. Besides, numbers of hotels, bungalow and rest houses of different categories are available in Sunamganj Sadar, although they are very limited in number. However, the average score of 2.82 for Sunamganj district implies tourists’ somewhat neutral position with respect to the above-mentioned facility.

According to qualitative findings, the majority of the tourism stakeholders contend that few numbers of high-quality hotels and resorts have been built outside the main city of Sylhet for the last few years, specifically for the last three years (2014-2017). Such as Grand Sultan, DuSai, The Palace Luxury and the like. Although these establishments have a range of options with multiple facilities, they are expensive as they target expatriate Bangladeshis visiting Sylhet and its environs. However, such resorts or hotels are popular among foreign tourists as well as a businessperson.

5.4.2.2 Safe accommodation

Percentage distribution of tourists’ level of satisfaction towards the safe accommodation is seen in table 5.20. It is apparent from the table that overall about 47.4% tourists in the total sample of three districts express their satisfaction with respect to safe accommodation, followed by 44.6% tourists give their neutral opinion. On the contrary, about 6.8% of tourists are dissatisfied with the aforesaid facility. Also, one conspicuous statistics seen from the table is that no tourist (0%) is highly dissatisfied. And about 1.2% of tourists are highly satisfied with the aforesaid facility. Their average score is 3.43 indicating tourists’ neutrality with respect to the safe accommodation. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.20: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Safe Accommodation

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.1% (1)	2.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (4)
Satisfied	43.7% (38)	68.1% (79)	30.5% (32)	47.4% (149)
Neutral	46.0% (40)	25.9% (30)	61.9% (65)	44.6% (135)
Dissatisfied	9.2% (8)	3.4% (4)	7.6% (8)	6.8% (20)
Highly dissatisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total (n)	100% (87)	100% (116)	100% (105)	100% (308)²²
Mean Score	3.37	3.70	3.23	3.43

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

About 46.0% tourists have a neutral opinion about this aspect, meaning that they are some sort of average tourists because approximately 43.7% tourists express their satisfaction mentioning that they are staying in such hotels in the Sylhet city which are noisy and always crowded with lots of people. On the other hand, about 9.2% of tourists are dissatisfied with this matter. The average score of 3.37 for Sylhet district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to safe accommodation.

For Moulvibazar, more than half of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (68.1%) state that security and safety of hotel, cottage or resort is good enough covering with 24 hour CC camera and hence they are satisfied with safe accommodation facility. On the other hand, about 3.4% of tourists express their discontent regarding this aspect claiming that apart from the absence of adequate CC camera, in some cases no door viewer is even attached to the door. However, the mean score of 3.70 Moulvibazar district implies tourists' satisfaction to some extent with respect to above facility.

Finally, in Sunamganj district, more than half of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (61.9%) opine that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with safe accommodation facility. It

²²Tourists who are either got into friends & relative's house or their own house are not asked to rate this statement for all three districts. Hence out of total 388 tourists, 46 tourists (34.6%) from Sylhet, 22 tourists (15.9%) from Moulvibazar and 12 tourists (10.3%) from Sunamganj are excluded.

may indicate that they are satisfied with this facility because about 30.5% tourists tell that there is a BGB camp next to a watchtower located in Golabari village where all the boats of the haor have to stay right next to that camp. However, some tourists state that they do not think so much about security after getting a shed to relax as there is a dearth of accommodation for tourists in Sunamganj. On the other hand, about 7.6% tourists are dissatisfied about this aspect claiming that as they have to stay at boat during their trip in haor, so they always have to be careful all the time about their valuables. Furthermore, some tourists also feel somewhat insecure to stay at the boat as they have a female companion with them. However, the mean score of 3.23 for Sunamganj district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above facility.

From qualitative findings, hoteliers, resort owners claim that they have adequate provision, like CCTV, fire extinguisher, well-trained staffs to protect the guest and the like for ensuring safety and security of all guests. Even in some cases, the concerned authority of hotels or resorts are bound to take the responsibility for the security of foreign and/or special VIP tourists as DGFI or the local administration is indifferent to provide security to those tourists. Some renowned hoteliers, resort owners also mentioned that they have adequate provision for ensuring tourists' valuables. A young tour operator mentioned dormitory facilities available in Nepal for backpackers. He also tells that although there is an arrangement of the tent (BDT 300-BDT 500) for tourists in Remakelenga Reserve Forest under Govt. supervision, they are limited in number. In this case, BPC has all the security measures to provide a safeguard to tourists. However, another tour operator asserts that backpackers cannot contribute to tourism development as they travel at a very low cost. As a result, the government is not much benefitted from it.

On the contrary, one of the stakeholders associated with TOAB has a different opinion in this regard. He shares his experience in this way:

“We were heading straight toward Jaflong from Sreemangal on eco-tourism. It was 7 o'clock in the evening to leave. It was about the year 2016. Our driver told us to stay silent on the street and turned off the inside lights of the microbus because the driver was afraid of hijack or robbery in the street. Moreover, when we stopped our microbus and went to a local shop for snacks, local people there also told us to reach our destination as early as possible. They were also concerned about security. If local people are afraid of security, then we cannot go safely”.

He also added to this:

“I was in a cottage located in Sylhet. The staff in charge of that cottage also forbade me to smoke outside the cottage after 8 pm. Do you like to visit these places under such situations?”

5.4.2.3 Variety of food and beverage

In regard to a variety of food and beverage, it is obvious from the table below that overall more than half of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (48.8%) are in neutral position about their level of satisfaction, followed by 43.3% tourists' satisfaction. It is also to be noted that except Sylhet, no tourist from other two districts is highly dissatisfied about the variety of food and beverage and thereby the percentage is 0.8% for Sylhet and 0% for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj districts, while a negligible percentage of tourists (0.8%) are highly satisfied. Their average score is 3.38 indicating tourists' satisfaction with respect to the variety of food and beverage. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.21: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Variety of Food and Beverage

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.8% (1)	0.7% (1)	0.9% (1)	0.8%
Satisfied	42.9% (57)	57.2% (79)	29.9% (35)	43.3%
Neutral	49.6% (66)	37.7% (52)	59.0% (69)	48.8%
Dissatisfied	6.0% (8)	4.3% (6)	10.3% (12)	6.9%
Highly dissatisfied	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.3%
Total (n)	100% (120)	100% (120)	100% (117)	100% (300)
Mean Score	3.37	3.54	3.21	3.38

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For Sylhet, about 49.6% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with an aforesaid aspect. It may indicate that they are satisfied with existing arrangement because about approximately 42.9% tourists express their contentment by claiming that there is plenty of different traditional fresh and delicious food in the majority of the hotels and restaurants. Some of them say that ‘Panshi’ and ‘Pachvai restaurant’, located at Zindabazaar, has an adequate arrangement for various

types of food items depending on the time of the meal. On the other hand, about 6% of tourists report that there is an inadequate number of restaurants in some tourist spots that offer some limited food and beverage. There are also some other small food shops offering only bread and banana with a cigarette.

In case of Moulvibazar district, more than half of the tourists are satisfied with abundance of a range of food and beverage, while 37.7% tourists express their neutral opinion on their satisfaction with variety of food and beverage which may point to the fact that they are not satisfied with aforesaid matter as about 4.3% tourists report that there is no food and beverage outlets near some tourist spots, such as Lawachhara National Park, Madhabpur Lake, Sreemangal tea garden etc. However a negligible percentage of tourists (0.7%) visiting Moulvibazar are highly satisfied.

For Sunamganj, about 59% of tourists are in neutral position, i.e., they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Less than one-third (29.9%) of the tourists express their satisfaction with an assortment of food and beverage services, whereas about 10.3% of tourists are dissatisfied with this service. Yet the mean score of 3.37, 3.54 and 3.21 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' satisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

From qualitative findings, the majority of the tourism stakeholders contend that Sylhet division is famous for its delicious and delectable food. Particularly it is famous for its "Shatkora", a citrus fruit which is suited to meat dishes and pickles (Achar). Apart from traditional Bangla dishes, some restaurants and hotels serve multiple types of Continental, Chinese, Indian, Thai and Italian cuisines.

5.4.2.4 Quality of food and beverage

It is seen from the table 5.22 that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (52.6%) express their satisfaction with the quality of food and beverage services, followed by 40.4% in a neutral position. About 4.5% of tourists are dissatisfied with this aspect. About 1.8% of tourists express their high level of satisfaction, whilst a negligible percentage of tourists (0.8%) are highly dissatisfied toward this. Their average score is 3.50 indicating tourists' satisfaction with respect to the quality of food and beverage. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.22: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Quality of Food and Beverage

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.5% (2)	2.9% (4)	0.9% (1)	1.8% (7)
Satisfied	58.6% (78)	62.3% (86)	36.8% (43)	52.6% (207)
Neutral	34.6% (46)	31.9% (44)	54.7% (64)	40.4% (154)
Dissatisfied	4.5% (6)	2.9% (4)	6.0% (7)	4.5% (17)
Highly dissatisfied	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (2)	0.8% (3)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.56	3.65	3.29	3.50

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

More than half of the tourists (58.6%) visiting Sylhet and Moulvibazar are satisfied with aforesaid aspect and thereby the corresponding percentages are 58.6% and 62.3%. Tourists in this regard report that quality of food is satisfactory in the majority of the hotels and restaurants of Sylhet and Moulvibazar. About 1.5% tourists visiting Sylhet are so satisfied with the food of some restaurants that they admire them just like their homemade food, while 2.9% tourists visiting Moulvibazar express their high level of satisfaction mentioning the well-known ‘Seven-layered tea of Nilkantho Cabin’ which is distinctive and pleasant in taste. About 34.6% of tourists visiting Sylhet express their neutral opinion about the aforesaid facility. It may indicate that they are dissatisfied with existing quality of food and beverage because approximately 4.5% of tourists visiting Sylhet mention that they find food spicy and some also do not like the ‘sunned rice’. It is to be mentioned here that few tourists are highly satisfied as well as highly dissatisfied with this issue. In fact, the mean score of 3.56, 3.65 and 3.29 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists’ satisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

In case of Sunamganj, about 54.7% tourists respond neutrally about the quality of food and beverage services. It may reveal that they are satisfied with existing quality of food as approximately 36.8% tourists report that during their tour at haor areas, they have some raw food items with them which are then cooked and served inside the boat. As such, they can enjoy a hot

fresh meal. Some tourists also bring packet food from Tahirpur local market with them if they plan to visit haor areas for a single day. On the other hand, about 6.0% of tourists are dissatisfied with the quality of food as the restaurant facilities are not well enough in Tahirpur and Tekerghat. During field survey, it was found that there is a hotel in Golabari village which requires advance booking for taking lunch and dinner. About 1.7% of tourists are highly dissatisfied mentioning few establishments for food and beverage services in Tahirpur.

With regard to quality of food and beverage, hotel and/or resort managers contend that they serve hygienic food and drinks to their guests. In this regard, one of the managers of a resort told that foreign guests particularly cannot tolerate our spicy food. So, they always prepare less spicy food. Furthermore, they also expect safe drinking water too much.

5.4.2.5 Hygiene at the restaurants

With regard to hygiene at the restaurants, it is seen from the table 5.23 that overall 41.4% tourists in the total sample of three districts are in neutral position, followed by 34.7% are satisfied. About 22.1% of tourists express their dissatisfaction with aforesaid fact, whilst few percentages of tourists (1.3%) are highly satisfied. Also, a negligible percentage of tourists (0.5%) are highly dissatisfied with above matter. Their average score is 3.14 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the hygiene at the restaurants. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.23: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Hygiene at the Restaurants

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.8% (1)	2.2% (3)	0.9% (1)	1.3% (5)
Satisfied	39.1% (52)	47.1% (65)	17.9% (21)	34.7% (138)
Neutral	23.3% (31)	42.8% (59)	58.1% (68)	41.4% (158)
Dissatisfied	35.3% (47)	8.0% (11)	23.1% (27)	22.1% (85)
Highly dissatisfied	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.02	3.43	2.97	3.14

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

As the table shows, in case of Sylhet, about 39.1% tourists respond that some new restaurants are established near some tourist spot, like Jaflong, Zero points, Khasia Polli where neatness, cleanliness and hygienic procedures are maintained. On the other hand, about 35.3% tourists are dissatisfied as they find some spots with very few numbers of small shops offering rice with few items, or bread, biscuit and banana with a cigarette and few types of soft drinks. Such establishments are not hygienic as shop owners do not cover those foods with a lid. Yet, 23.3% tourists express their neutral opinion toward hygiene at the restaurants. A negligible percentage of tourists (1.5%) express a high level of dissatisfaction toward this aspect. Yet, the mean score of 3.02 for Sylhet district implies tourists' neutrality with above aspect.

The almost similar scene is observed in Moulvibazar district. About 47.1% tourists find restaurants hygiene, while approximately 42.8% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 8% of tourists express their dissatisfaction, whereas about 2.2% of tourists are highly satisfied. In fact, the mean score of 3.43 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' satisfaction with above aspect.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, more than half of the tourists (58.1%) have a neutral view on satisfaction toward hygiene at the restaurants. It might indicate that they are dissatisfied with existing practices. This is so because, about 23.1% of the tourists claim that both the internal and external environment of few hotels and/or restaurants is dirty and smelly as well as drinking water is not pure as restaurant facilities are not well enough there. On the other hand, about 17.9% of tourists are satisfied with hygiene at the restaurants telling that they come here for enjoying the nature and local people lifestyle. That's why they are pretty satisfied with the abovementioned matter. However, a negligible percentage of tourists (0.9%) express a high level of satisfaction toward this aspect. Yet, the mean score of 2.97 for Sunamganj district implies tourists' neutrality with above aspect.

5.4.2.6 Friendliness of hotel staff

With regard to the friendly attitude of hotel staff, overall a majority of the responses (48.9%) are in neutral position, followed by 38.9% are satisfied. On the other hand, about 10.8% are dissatisfied with this issue, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (1%) are highly satisfied. Also, about 0.5% of tourists are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 3.29 indicating tourists' satisfaction to some extent with respect to the friendly attitude of hotel staff. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.24: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Friendliness of the Hotel Staff

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.5% (2)	1.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (4)
Satisfied	30.1% (40)	51.4% (71)	35.0% (41)	38.9% (152)
Neutral	51.9% (69)	39.1% (54)	55.6% (65)	48.9% (188)
Dissatisfied	15.8% (21)	7.2% (10)	9.4% (11)	10.8% (42)
Highly dissatisfied	0.8% (1)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.16	3.46	3.26	3.29

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For Sylhet, about 51.9% of tourists express their neutral opinion over the issue of the friendly and welcoming attitude of hotel staff. About 30.1% tourists tell that most of the staffs are friendly and amazing. In some cases, they help their guests get a suitable local transport to visit a place. On the other hand, about 15.8% of tourists are dissatisfied with this issue as they report that some of the waiters' behavior is not well-mannered. Furthermore, some hotel staffs are only keen on getting tips. In case of Moulvibazar, more than half of the tourists (51.4%) are satisfied with the friendly attitude of hotel staff, while 7.2% are dissatisfied. However, a negligible percentage of tourists (1.4%) are highly satisfied. However, the mean score of 3.16 and 3.46 for Sylhet and Moulvibazar district respectively implies tourists' satisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, the majority of the tourists (55.6%) express their neutral opinion over the aforesaid issue which may imply that tourists are somewhat satisfied (35%) as they tell that local people of haor area is very friendly and if requested, they can cook for the tourists. On the other hand, about 9.4% of tourists are not satisfied as they tell that majority of the hotel staff's behavior is not well-mannered that is supposed to be. One remarkable statistics for Sunamganj district is that no tourist is either highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied over the issue of the friendly and welcoming attitude of hotel staff and thus the percentage is 0%. Yet, the mean score of 3.26 for Sunamganj district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

5.4.2.7 *The warm and welcoming attitude of local people*

Following table 5.25 shows the percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with the warm and welcoming attitude of local people. It is obvious from the table that overall that a great majority of the responses in the total sample of three districts (67.9%) are satisfied over the issue of warm, friendly and welcoming attitude and personality of local people, followed by 21.6% are in neutral position, i.e., neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. One remarkable statistics of above table is that no tourist is highly dissatisfied over the aforesaid issue and thus the percentage is 0% for all three districts. Their average score is 3.81 indicating tourists' satisfaction toward the abovementioned issue. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.25: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Warm and Welcoming Attitude of Local People

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	3.8% (5)	10.9% (15)	9.4% (11)	8.0% (31)
Satisfied	61.7% (82)	71.0% (98)	70.9% (83)	67.9% (263)
Neutral	29.3% (39)	16.7% (23)	18.8% (22)	21.6% (84)
Dissatisfied	5.3% (7)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (1)	2.5% (10)
Highly dissatisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.64	3.91	3.89	3.81

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Across three districts, a great majority of the tourists express their satisfaction with welcoming attitude of local people and thereby corresponding percentages are 61.7%, 71% and 70.9% for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively. They say that local people of Sylhet are so enthusiastic to introduce their amazing spots, history, and culture that such cordiality and friendliness behavior give tourists a really good impression. In fact, some tourists express their high level of satisfaction with this issue. Some foreign tourists report that local people treat them cordially with whatever little they have.

On the other hand, some tourists express their neutral opinion over the aforesaid issue, thereby corresponding percentages are 29.3%, 16.7% and 18.8% for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively. About 29.2% tourists express their neutral opinion over the aforesaid issue, whilst some tourists visiting Sylhet and Moulvibazar are dissatisfied claiming that local people have a bad tendency to cheat tourists in some cases like charging high vehicle fair, syndicate etc. However, for all three districts, it is positive to note that no tourists (0%) are highly dissatisfied over the issue warm and welcoming attitude of local people. In fact, the mean score of 3.64, 3.91 and 3.89 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' satisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

From qualitative findings, a great majority of the country's tourism stakeholders assert that Bangladeshi people have a good reputation in hospitality around the world. So, Sylhet is no exception. In fact, from the comment of the interview, one of the stakeholders said,

“We may lack many things, but how we take care of our guests with inadequate resources, is really commendable and beyond description”.

Although Bangladeshi people are famous for pleasant hospitality, it is a matter of sorrow that very few tour operators greet properly tourist especially foreign tourists on their arrival at the airport. Additionally, there are no arrangements for welcoming a foreign guest to the airport. In this regard, a former high official of TDAB asserts that tourism-related business associations only work on their business interests. These associations do not come to develop country's tourism.

5.4.2.8 Availability of tourist guide

Results show that overall, 40.2% of tourists are satisfied with the availability of tourist guide. On the other hand, about 34.1% of the tourists are dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue, followed by 23.7% in neutral opinion. While only 1.5% of tourists are highly dissatisfied, a negligible percentage of tourists (0.5%) are highly satisfied. Their average score is 3.04 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the availability of tourist guide. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.26: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Tourist Guide

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Satisfied	35.3% (47)	39.9% (55)	45.3% (53)	40.2% (155)
Neutral	14.3% (19)	26.1% (36)	30.8% (36)	23.7% (91)
Dissatisfied	45.1% (60)	33.3% (46)	23.9% (28)	34.1% (134)
Highly dissatisfied	3.8% (5)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.5% (6)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.86	3.05	3.21	3.04

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

It is evident from the table that about 45.1% of tourists visiting Sylhet are not pleased with the availability of tourist guide and information services claiming that there is a shortage of trained tourist guide. More to the point, approximately 3.8% of tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction over this issue. On the other hand, about 35.3% of tourists are satisfied with this service. Tourists state that there are some tourist guides with an identity card who provide guide services to tourists in exchange for money. Some tourists also tell that local people, cameramen, hawkers and auto-rickshaw puller readily provide information to the tourist and sometimes act as tour guide. About 1.5% of tourists express their high level of satisfaction towards this service.

For Moulvibazar, a majority of the tourists (39.9%) claim that they are guided by a tourist guide in some places such as Lawachhara National Park, Nilkantha, Madhabpur Lake, Bharaura Lake and the like. On the other hand, about 33.3% of tourists state that a few tourist guide is seen while visiting some tourist spots. Some tourists report that they do not see any tourist guide during their visit at tea gardens. On the other hand, 35% of tourists express their neutral opinion about guide services. A negligible percentage of tourists (0.7%) are highly dissatisfied.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, tourists' satisfaction with availability of tourist guide is different from other two districts. In this district, a majority of the tourists (45.3%) are satisfied with this service. They claim that if someone wants to make a group trip at Tanguar haor, there is an

available tourist guide. On the other hand, about 30.8% tourists express their neutral opinion about guide services which may point to the fact that tourists are not satisfied with aforesaid service because 23.9% tourists report that they find available tourist guide neither in hotels nor in any haor areas. However, it is to be noted that no tourists (0%) of Sunamganj district are either highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied over the aforesaid service. Yet, the mean score of 2.86, 3.05 and 3.21 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' neutral stance with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

According to the qualitative findings, mostly, people who heard about the destinations from the neighborhood or from their ancestors work as a tourist guide. Some stakeholders think such guides as good or helpful to tourists. In fact, one of the stakeholders connected with TOAB tells that:

“Where there is no guide factory, those are good ones. I have been in this business for 10 years, whereas nobody came from NHTTI to get a job in this sector”.

Interview with managers of hotels and resorts reveals that they also have in-house trained tourist guide who can arrange excursion tour and provide guide services for their guests.

5.4.2.9 Cooperation of tourist police

It is obvious from the table below that overall more than half of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (53.6%) are dissatisfied with the cooperation of tourist police, while a negligible percentage of tourists (0.8%) are highly satisfied. Their average score is 2.42 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the cooperation of tourist police. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.27: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Cooperation of Tourist Police

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.8% (1)	1.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (3)
Satisfied	23.3% (31)	8.0% (11)	5.1% (6)	12.1% (48)
Neutral	24.8% (33)	33.3% (46)	17.1% (20)	25.1% (99)
Dissatisfied	39.1% (52)	46.4% (64)	71.8% (84)	52.4% (200)
Highly dissatisfied	12.0% (16)	10.9% (15)	6.0% (7)	9.6% (38)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.62	2.43	2.21	2.42

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For Sylhet, about 39.1% tourists report that they do not see any tourist police during their visit at some places of Sylhet although they see different posters on the road mentioning tourist police contact number. Besides, instead of cooperating with tourists, tourist police are engaged in various types of illegal activities. For example patronizing smuggling, trafficking of drugs, Indian products etc. About 12% of tourists are highly dissatisfied about the cooperation of tourist police. On the other hand, about 24.8% tourists express their neutral opinion about tourist police services which may point to the fact that tourists are satisfied with aforesaid service as 23.3% tourists find their role satisfactory. However, only a few percentages of tourists (0.8%) are highly satisfied with the cooperation of tourist police. In short, the mean score of 2.62 for Sylhet implies tourists' neutrality to some extent with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 46.4% tourists express their dissatisfaction over the issue of cooperation of tourist police. They say that no surveillance of tourist police is seen in tea gardens, reserved forests and the nearby lakes let alone their cooperation. On the other hand, about 33.3% of tourists give their neutral opinion about this fact. This may indicate that some tourists are highly dissatisfied with this aspect because some tourists (10.9%) are so displeased about their cooperation that they hardly tell any positive words about tourist police. However, about 8% of tourists are satisfied with their cooperation, followed by 1.4% are in high level of satisfaction. In

fact, the mean score of 2.43 for Moulvibazar implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

Finally, for Sunamganj district, a great majority of tourists (71.8%) are dissatisfied over the issue of cooperation of tourist police. They claim that except BGB camp, there is neither any tourist police nor any security forces near spots, especially in haor areas. About 17.1% of tourists give their neutral opinion about this fact. This may indicate the high level of dissatisfaction among tourists because about 6% of the tourists report that there is not any help desk service of tourist police that can be used by tourists to file complaints and issues. On the other hand, about 5.1% of tourists are satisfied, whereas it is imperative to note that no tourists (0%) of Sunamganj district are highly satisfied over the aforesaid service. Yet, the mean score of 2.21 for Sunamganj implies tourists' dissatisfaction to some extent with respect to the above-mentioned facility.

From qualitative findings, country's tourism stakeholders assert that tourist police has emerged to solve the problems of the tourists visiting a destination. But it is unfortunate that a number of tourist police in some popular destinations of Sylhet division is less than the required. In fact, their catchment area is also not properly defined. A young new tour operator thinks that tourist police of Sylhet is not so active compared to that of other destinations. In fact, he told that tourist spots of Sylhet are much scattered. As a result, despite the desire, tourist police of Sylhet will not be able to give service like Cox's Bazar police do. In addition, during an in-depth interview with local elite persons, they contend that in some destinations tourist polices patronize unscrupulous activities in connivance with the local administration let alone protecting tourists' interests as well as destinations' environment. So forming tourist police is not enough to secure tourists. Rather they should be given proper orientation to provide safeguards to tourists.

5.4.3 Expenditure

The expenses incurred while staying at the destination is an influencing factor of tourists' satisfaction. Before visiting destination tourists take into account various possible expenses, thus it is a sum of costs incurred in accommodation, local transport, food and beverages and other services. Expenditure can also alternatively be termed as 'cost of staying' at the destination. Quantitative findings on tourists' satisfaction toward various aspects of expenditure are given below:

5.4.3.1 Price of accommodation

With regard to the price of accommodation facility, it is obvious from the table 5.28 that overall about 62.8% tourists in the total sample of three districts express their dissatisfaction toward the price of accommodation facility, followed by about 19.5% opine neutral views. About 13.5% of tourists are satisfied with the aforesaid facility, whilst approximately 3.6% of tourists are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.45 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the price of accommodation facility. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.28: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Price of Accommodation

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	1.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (2)
Satisfied	12.6% (11)	15.5% (18)	12.4% (13)	13.5% (59)
Neutral	24.1% (21)	18.1% (21)	16.2% (17)	19.5% (95)
Dissatisfied	58.6% (51)	61.2% (71)	68.6% (72)	62.8% (143)
Highly dissatisfied	4.6% (4)	3.4% (4)	2.9% (3)	3.6% (9)
Total (n)	100% (87)	100% (116)	100% (105)	100% (308)²³
Mean Score	2.45	2.51	2.38	2.45

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in table 5.28, about 58.6% tourists visiting Sylhet express their dissatisfaction over the aforesaid issue as they find it expensive and subpar service quality, whereas about 24.1 % tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with aforesaid facility, meaning that they may be pleased to some extent with existing price because about 12.6% tourists respond that there are various categories of accommodation in Sylhet district with varied prices which is almost absent in other two districts. As such tourists have the options of choosing hotels and/or other accommodation types according to their budget. On the other hand, about 4.6% of tourists express

²³Tourists who are either got into friends & relative's house or their own house are not asked to rate this statement for all three districts. Hence out of total 388 tourists, 46 tourists (34.6%) from Sylhet, 22 tourists (15.9%) from Moulvibazar and 12 tourists (10.3%) from Sunamganj are excluded.

their high level of dissatisfaction over the aforesaid issue. In fact, the average score of 2.45 for Sylhet implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 61.2% tourists claim that the price of accommodation in Moulvibazar is too high. In addition, despite having a good number of hotels, resorts, bungalows in this district, the cost of staying is too high to avail by a tourist with moderate budget, whereas about 18.1% tourists opine neutrally which may imply their satisfaction to some extent because about 15.5% tourists express their satisfaction with the price of accommodation. However, about 3.4% of tourists are highly dissatisfied with the abovementioned issue. In fact, the average score of 2.51 for Moulvibazar implies tourists' slight dissatisfaction with regard to the above-mentioned facility.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, majority of tourists (68.6%) report that price is relatively high due to the limited number of hotels, bungalow and rest houses of different categories in Sunamganj district. Furthermore, there is a syndicate of a group of the local boatman who charges high rent of boat if tourists would like to enjoy a night staying in haor areas. On the other hand, about 16.2% of tourists have a neutral opinion about the price of accommodation. This may indicate to the point that tourists are contented with the aforesaid issue as approximately 12.4% tourists report that the natural beauty of haor areas is so enchanting that they are satisfied with whatever the price they pay for the accommodation, although about 2.9% tourists are highly dissatisfied. In short, the average score of 2.38 for Sunamganj implies tourists' dissatisfaction with regard to the above-mentioned facility.

From qualitative findings, the majority of country's tourism stakeholders contend that price of accommodation is pretty high throughout the division compared to other destinations in our country. In this regard, tourism stakeholders assert that the expatriates of London feel safe and comfortable staying in the hotel rather than at their own home when they come in Sylhet. In fact, local hotels are full of people coming from London all year round. Hence, rent of hotel is not cheap. There is also huge accommodation crisis in Sylhet. In fact, some tour operators and owners of travel agency including local elite persons inform that there are basically two types of accommodation throughout the Sylhet division, either too cheap or too expensive. Although there are a number of superior quality hotels and/or resorts, those costs about US\$ 150 to US\$ 200 per day which is too expensive to afford, whereas cheap hotel rooms are not suitable for tourists to

stay. Thus, during peak season, accommodation cost becomes so high and scarce that many tourists spend their night inside their vehicle or at clinic due to unavailability of rooms in the hotels or other forms of accommodation.

5.4.3.2 Price of food and beverage

With regard to the price of food and beverage, following table shows that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (57.4%) express their neutral opinion about the price of food and beverage, followed by 26.3% satisfied. On the contrary, about 14.5% of tourists are dissatisfied with an aforesaid aspect, and few tourists (1.6%) are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 3.09 indicating tourists' a neutral stance with respect to the price of food and beverage in above three districts. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.29: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Price of Food and Beverage

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.2% (1)
Satisfied	27.8% (37)	29.0% (40)	22.2% (26)	26.3% (103)
Neutral	62.4% (83)	50.7% (70)	59.0% (69)	57.4% (222)
Dissatisfied	7.5% (10)	18.8% (26)	17.1% (20)	14.5% (56)
Highly dissatisfied	2.3% (3)	0.7% (1)	1.7% (2)	1.6% (6)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.16	3.10	3.02	3.09

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

As the above table shows more than half of the tourists (62.4%) visiting Sylhet are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with an aforesaid aspect. It may indicate that they are fairly satisfied with the existing price of food and beverage. This is so because approximately 27.8% tourists report that quality and variety of food is so appetizing and diverse in most of the restaurants and/or hotels that they are not dissatisfied with whatever the price they are charged for their food. On the other hand, about 7.5% of tourists are dissatisfied with the price mentioning that price of food and beverage is higher compared to its quality and hygiene. Nevertheless, about 2.3% of tourists are highly

dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue. However, the average score of 3.16 for Sylhet implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

This scenario is almost same in Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district. A great majority of the tourists visiting Moulvibazar and Sunamganj opine the neutral view on their satisfaction toward the aforesaid issue and the resultant percentages are 50.7% and 59% respectively. Such a neutral stance of tourists may indicate that they are somewhat satisfied with the price of food and beverage as approximately 29% tourists visiting Moulvibazar admire of various traditional as well as Thai/Chinese/Continental cuisine available in most of the hotels and restaurants including seven-layered tea of 'Nilkantho Tea Cabin' and other flavored tea. On the other hand, about 18.8% tourists report that despite offering a variety of authentic Bangladeshi dishes by nearby DuSai Resort and Spa and Grand Sultan Tea Resort, their prices of food is high compared to other local restaurants outside.

Likewise, about 22.2% tourists visiting Sunamganj report that during their tour at haor areas, they have some raw food items with them which are cooked and served inside the boat and thereby people can enjoy a fresh meal in the middle of the haor. They opine that it seems not appropriate to compare the fresh food with its cost. On the other hand, about 17.1% tourists report that majority of the local man including boatman, hoteliers forming a syndicate charge much too fare to tourists in all respects, such as accommodation, conveyance, and food etc. in fact, about 1.7% tourists are also highly dissatisfied with this issue. In short, the average score of 3.10 and 3.02 for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district implies tourists' neutral stance with regard to the above-mentioned facility.

From qualitative findings, local elite persons including some managers of hotels and/or resort report that majority of vegetables, as well as grains, are imported from India. Furthermore, local restaurants and hotels are full of people coming from London all year round. That's why the price of food is always high.

5.4.3.3 Fare of local transportation

The table below shows percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with the fare of local transportation service. It reveals that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (51.1%) are dissatisfied with the fare of local vehicle, followed by 22.6% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. About 12.4% of tourists are highly dissatisfied, whereas about 13.9% of

tourists are satisfied with an aforesaid aspect. However, it is to be noted that no tourists (0%) from all three districts are highly satisfied with this issue. Their average score is 2.38 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the fare of local transportation service. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.30: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Fare of Local Transportation

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	9.0% (12)	26.8% (37)	6.0% (7)	13.9% (56)
Neutral	12.8% (17)	37.0% (51)	17.9% (21)	22.6% (89)
Dissatisfied	60.9% (81)	33.3% (46)	59.0% (69)	51.1% (196)
Highly dissatisfied	17.3% (23)	2.9% (4)	17.1% (20)	12.4% (47)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.14	2.88	2.13	2.38

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in table 5.30, apart from Moulvibazar district, the majority of the tourists visiting Sylhet and Sunamganj district express dissatisfaction with the fare of local transportation.

In case of Sylhet, more than half of the tourists (60.9%) visiting Sylhet report that drivers demand high fare of the vehicle as per their wish due to the dilapidated condition of the roads across the Tamabil-Jaflong, Bollaghat zero point or Goainghat. Besides, about 17.3% of tourists report that in many cases divers take an extra fare from them. In this regard, tourists state that on the way to Bichanakandi, they have to get into troller from Goainghat of which fare is fixed by the Govt. (BDT 800). Despite this high rate, boatmen are actually taking BDT 1800-BDT 2000. Thus, they are highly dissatisfied with this issue. However, about 12.8% tourists opine neutral view over the issue of the fare of local transport which may imply that tourists are somewhat satisfied with the aforesaid issue because 9% tourists assert that they do not face the problem of high transport fare

as they visit these places with their personal jeep or car. Nonetheless, the mean score of 2.14 for Sylhet district implies tourists' dissatisfaction with regard to above-mentioned aspect.

Likewise, the majority of the tourists (59%) visiting Sunamganj express their dissatisfaction regarding the fare of local transportation stating that transportation system is not in an expected level in this district, particularly in haor areas. They report that cost of local transport seems to be very high because of syndicate among local drivers, ravaged roads, seasonality of movement etc. About 17.1% tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction over this issue claiming that transport fare is not monitored by an appropriate authority that gives some opportunistic people to exploit tourists; particularly those who are first-time visitors. Yet, about 17.9% tourists express their neutral view on this matter. This may be an indication of tourists' satisfaction as 6% tourists express their satisfaction with the fare of transport. In fact, the average score of 2.13 Sunamganj district implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

With respect to Moulvibazar, tourists' satisfaction with a fare of local transportation is considered satisfactory. About 37% of tourists give their neutral opinion with the abovementioned issue. It may point to the fact that tourists are not satisfied with the fare of local transport because approximately 33.3% tourists report that most drivers do not offer them the opportunity to bargain for the fare they demand despite better road conditions compared to other districts, easy travel routes as well as the availability of vehicles. Some tourists also say that sometimes rail communication between Sylhet and rest of the country is stopped due to the derailment or another technical failure of the train. On the other hand, about 26.8% tourists are satisfied with the fare of local transport saying once more that vehicle fare is not higher than the captivating beauty of tea gardens, lakes, and forests etc. However, few tourists (2.9%) express their high level of dissatisfaction regarding the aforesaid aspect. Indeed, the mean score of 2.88 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' a neutral stance with regard to the above-mentioned facility.

Qualitative findings demonstrate that one of the major reasons for the high fare of local transport is the damaged and dilapidated road conditions along with traffic congestion in a tourist area. In addition, it is obvious from the conversation with local elite persons of Sylhet that a syndicate of locally influential people and transport authority, in connivance with the local administration, intentionally fix high transport fare to put out of sight their illegal activities. However, a young tour operator contends that local people of Sylhet have a cheating tendency regarding the fare of

the vehicle. Example, although the actual fare is BDT 150, drivers demand BDT 300 or more whenever they realize tourists. As a result, tourists fall in hassle.

5.4.3.4 Price of local products

Regarding the price of local products, table 5.31 reveals that overall more than half of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (58.1%) are in neutral position about their level of satisfaction with the price of local products, followed by 23.5% are tourists' dissatisfaction. On the other hand, about 16.7% of tourists express their satisfaction with this issue. It is also to be noted that a negligible percentage (0.2%) of tourist is highly satisfied with the price of local products, whilst about 1.5% of tourists are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.91 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the price of local products. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.31: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Price of Local Products

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.2% (1)
Satisfied	20.3% (27)	20.3% (28)	9.4% (11)	16.7% (66)
Neutral	60.9% (81)	54.3% (75)	59.0% (69)	58.1% (225)
Dissatisfied	15.0% (20)	23.9% (35)	31.6% (37)	23.5% (90)
Highly dissatisfied	3.8% (5)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.5% (6)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.98	2.96	2.78	2.91

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

In case of Sylhet, about 60.9% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with an aforesaid aspect. It may indicate that they are satisfied with the price of local products because about 20.3% tourists express their contentment stating that price of local products seems not to be high to them compared to other tourist destinations, like Cox's Bazar, Saint Martin, Chittagong or Dhaka. On the other hand, about 15% tourists are dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue as they say that local people charge excessive price, particularly from those who are first-time visitors, followed by

3.8%, are highly dissatisfied. However, the mean score of 2.98 for Sylhet district implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

Tourists visiting Moulvibazar and Sunamganj hold almost same perception with regard to the price of local products. About 54.3% tourists visiting Moulvibazar express a neutral opinion about their level of satisfaction with an aforesaid issue which may imply their dissatisfaction as approximately 23.9% tourists contend that prices of local products, such as orange, handicrafts etc. are relatively higher than that of other destinations. On the other hand, about 20.3% of tourists are satisfied with this aspect stating that they can purchase tea leaf with finer quality at affordable price. However, a negligible percentage of tourists (0.7%) are highly satisfied as well as highly dissatisfied with this issue in Moulvibazar district.

Similarly, in case of Sunamganj, about 59% of tourists opine neutral view on their satisfaction toward the price of local products which may point to the fact that tourists are somewhat dissatisfied over the aforesaid issue. This is so because about 31.6% of tourists report that there is a syndicate of local people from all sectors like lodging, transport, food etc. who are behind the high price of local products. In this regard, a tourist shares his experience in this way:

“We went to Tahirpur from Sunamganj by CNG. Then walking some paths on foot we came to a ghat. From that ghat, we got on a boat. The news of our arrival to haor went off to motorcycle drivers while fixing the boat at Tekerghat. After reaching the destination a motorcyclist told us,

You came after so long!”

Yet, about 9.4% of tourists are satisfied with the aforesaid issue. In fact, the mean score of 2.96 and 2.78 for Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' neutrality with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

5.4.3.5 Availability of high-speed internet and WiFi

The table below reveals percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction toward the availability of high-speed internet and WiFi at the hotels and/or restaurants. It is seen from the table that overall about 75.1% tourists in the total sample of three districts are dissatisfied, followed by 11.1% are neutral. Their average score is 2.23 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to the availability of high-speed internet and WiFi at the hotels and/or restaurants. The similar mean score is reported for other districts. However, it is to be noted that tourists who are either get into

friends & relative's house or their own house are not asked to rate this statement for all three districts. Resultantly, corresponding percentages are 34.6% for Sylhet, 15.9% for Moulvibazar and 10.3% for Sunamganj district.

Table 5.32: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the availability of High-Speed Internet and WiFi

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	5.7% (5)	14.7% (17)	4.8% (5)	8.4% (27)
Neutral	18.4% (16)	11.2% (13)	3.8% (4)	11.1% (33)
Dissatisfied	67.8% (59)	69.8% (81)	87.6% (92)	75.1% (232)
Highly dissatisfied	8.0% (7)	4.3% (5)	3.8% (4)	5.4% (16)
Total (n)	100% (87)	100% (116)	100% (105)	100% (308)²⁴
Mean Score	2.22	2.36	2.10	2.23

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in table 5.32, for all three districts, the majority of the tourists are disappointed with slow internet and WiFi services and the corresponding percentages are 67.8% in Sylhet, 69.8% in Moulvibazar and 87.6% in Sunamganj. Tourists from all three districts report that internet speed and WiFi signal is too low to communicate with friends and relatives let alone sharing any travel experiences. In fact, among three districts, the highest percentage of tourists visiting Sunamganj district (87.6%) expresses their dissatisfaction with the availability of high-speed internet and WiFi service as there is no arrangement for availing internet services inside the boat during their visit to haor areas. About 8.0% of tourists visiting Sylhet report that there is poor network facility in hotels and/or other establishments whereas the authority claims to have free 24-hour WiFi facility. In case of Moulvibazar, about 14.7% tourists express their pleasure with better internet and WiFi service in hotels and/or other establishments stating that some resorts, rest houses as well as bungalows have a reasonable number of access points inside rooms and/or

²⁴Tourists who are either got into friends & relative's house or their own house are not asked to rate this statement for all three districts. Hence out of total 388 tourists, 46 tourists (34.6%) from Sylhet, 22 tourists (15.9%) from Moulvibazar and 12 tourists (10.3%) from Sunamganj are excluded.

balcony to be connected with WiFi. In short, the mean score of 2.22, 2.36 and 2.10 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to above-mentioned aspect.

From qualitative findings, hoteliers and managers of different resorts and hotels contend that tourists from different professional groups require access to social media for instantly sharing travel experience with their friends and relatives. But it is unfortunate that apart from some lavish hotels and resorts in Sylhet, most of the establishments fail to provide a continuous connection of WiFi or internet facility to tourists. In fact, some hoteliers are not well acquainted with internet services.

5.4.3.6 Banking facilities near tourist spots

It is obvious from the table below that overall a great majority of tourists in the total sample of three districts (61.1%) are dissatisfied with a limited number of opportunities of banking facilities near tourist spots, followed by 18.2% are satisfied. It is also a matter of concern that about 10.2% of tourists are highly dissatisfied about the service. Their average score is 2.31 indicating tourists' neutral stance with respect to inadequate banking facilities near tourist spots. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.33: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Banking Facilities near Tourist Spots

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	15.0% (20)	31.2% (43)	6.5% (7)	17.4% (70)
Neutral	14.3% (19)	14.5% (13)	2.6% (3)	8.8% (35)
Dissatisfied	54.9% (73)	47.1% (65)	81.2% (95)	61.1% (233)
Highly dissatisfied	15.8% (21)	12.3% (17)	10.3% (12)	12.8% (50)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.29	2.59	2.04	2.31

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For all three districts, the majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts are disappointed with inadequate banking facilities near tourist spots and the corresponding percentages are 54.9% in Sylhet, 47.1% in Moulvibazar and 81.2% in Sunamganj. In this regard, tourists from all three districts report that numbers of ATM booths are insufficient compared to the number of people using ATM cards nowadays. Apart from insufficient in number, booths are beset with multifarious problems, such as being out-of-service, insufficient cash, network problem, defective machine etc. Among three districts, the highest percentage of tourists visiting Sunamganj district (81.2%) expresses their dissatisfaction with fewer scopes of banking facilities near tourist spots. Some tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction by stating that no resorts or hotels and/or bungalows have any arrangement of booths inside their premises. The mean score of 2.29 and 2.04 for Sylhet and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' dissatisfaction with reference to inadequate banking facilities.

However, some tourists are satisfied with abovementioned facility mentioning the availability of bKash in various places. Compared to other two districts namely, Sylhet and Sunamganj, availability of such facilities in Moulvibazar district are quite satisfactory. In fact, about 31.2% tourists visiting Moulvibazar districts state that bKash agent shop is available in the town in addition to the availability of a good number of ATM booths in Moulvibazar Sadar. As such the mean score of 2.59 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' neutrality with reference to aforesaid facilities.

5.4.3.7 Mobile network near tourist spots

The table below shows percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction with mobile network facilities near tourist spots. It reveals that overall 40.4% tourists in the total sample of three districts give a neutral opinion about mobile network coverage near tourist spots, followed by about 28.5% are satisfied. On the other hand, about 25.6% of tourists are dissatisfied, while about 5.6% are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.92 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the availability of mobile network facilities near tourist spots. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.34: Percentage distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Mobile Network near Tourist Spots

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	43.6% (58)	19.6% (27)	22.2% (26)	28.5% (111)
Neutral	31.6% (42)	29.7% (41)	59.8% (70)	40.4% (153)
Dissatisfied	20.3% (27)	38.4% (53)	17.9% (21)	25.6% (101)
Highly dissatisfied	4.5% (6)	12.3% (17)	0.0% (0)	5.6% (23)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.14	2.57	3.04	2.92

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Among three districts, the majority of the tourists visiting Sylhet are pleased with the aforesaid issue, whereas the majority of the tourists visiting Moulvibazar are not pleased. About 43.6% of tourists visiting Sylhet are satisfied with mobile network coverage near tourist spots. They state that except Grameenphone and Airtel no other operators' network is good and strong enough to communicate. In fact, the mean score of Sylhet district (3.14) implies tourists' neutral stance with respect to this issue. On the other hand, the majority of the tourists from Moulvibazar district (38.4%) are dissatisfied with the mobile network, followed by approximately 12.3% are highly dissatisfied. About 25% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue. It may be an indication of tourists' satisfaction with this facility as approximately 19.6% tourists are satisfied. The mean score of Moulvibazar district (2.57) implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, about 59.8% of the tourists give a neutral opinion with an aforesaid facility which may indicate tourists' satisfaction because about 22.2% tourists state that mobile network is better than other spots of Sylhet. On the other hand, about 17.9% tourists express their dissatisfaction as they face network problem when they are close to Indian border. Thus, the mean score of Sunamganj district (3.04) implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue. However,

tourists' neutral opinions with the aforesaid issue imply that satisfaction may rise if other operators can ensure their good network coverage by taking necessary steps.

5.4.3.8 *The overall cost of stay*

With regard to the overall cost of staying at Sylhet, percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction is given in table 5.35. Results show that majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (55.1%) express their neutral opinion about the aforesaid issue, followed by 22.2% are dissatisfied. On the other side, about 20.8% of tourists are satisfied with this aspect, while few tourists (1.2%) are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.98 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the overall cost of their stay. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.35: Percentage distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Overall Cost of Their Stay

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	2.2% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.7% (3)
Satisfied	29.3% (39)	21% (29)	12.0% (14)	20.8% (86)
Neutral	54.9% (73)	47.1% (65)	63.2% (74)	55.1% (212)
Dissatisfied	12.8% (17)	29% (40)	24.8% (29)	22.2% (82)
Highly dissatisfied	3.0% (4)	0.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (5)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.11	2.95	2.87	2.98

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

For all three districts, about 55.1% tourists' neutral stance may imply their either level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Particularly for Sylhet, about 29.3% of the tourists report that such a scenic beauty of waterfalls, hillock and green environment Sylhet fades out all their hardships and complaints such as the absence of mediocre hotels, the high fare of vehicle, accommodation, vulnerable road condition, traffic congestion etc. On the other hand, about 12.8% tourists are dissatisfied with their overall cost of staying stating once more high conveyance cost, high rent of hotel plus poor quality of service, and the high price of food and other products. So if costs, as well as quality and number of transport, food, and accommodation, can be revised and improved,

tourists of neutral opinion may be satisfied. In fact, the mean score of 3.11 for Sylhet implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue.

About 29% tourists visiting Moulvibazar again express their dissatisfaction mentioning that the overall cost of staying is higher than that of other destinations due to some problems such as expensive accommodation, high vehicle fare caused by syndicate among local drivers etc. On the other hand, 21% of tourists think that Moulvibazar is famous for its numerous tea gardens which are not available in other districts of our country except Sylhet. So the overall cost of staying does not seem so high to them. In fact, the mean score of 2.95 for Moulvibazar implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue.

Finally, about 24.8% of tourists visiting Sunamganj are displeased with a syndicate of local people from all sectors like lodging, transport, food, whom they think are responsible for their high cost of staying. However, about 12% of tourists are happy with the overall cost of staying. The mean score of 2.87 for Sunamganj implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue.

5.4.4 Attraction and Entertainment Facilities

Attraction means a place of interest that allure tourist to make a visit. Attractions are the reason people travel and experiences of visiting attractions. It can be natural, built, cultural or historical offering leisure and enjoyment. Hence attractions and entertainment facilities are influential in the tourists' satisfaction. Quantitative findings on tourists' satisfaction with respect to this issue are given below:

5.4.4.1 Variety of cultural and natural attractions

With regard to a variety of natural and cultural attractions, percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction is given in table 5.36. Results show that overall 71.9% tourists in the total sample of three districts are satisfied, followed by 21.3% are highly satisfied. On the other hand, about 4.5% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, followed by 1.8% are dissatisfied, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (0.5%) are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 4.12 indicating tourists' satisfaction with respect to the variety of cultural and natural attractions. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.36: Percentage distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Variety of Cultural and Natural Attractions

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	16.5% (22)	26.8% (37)	20.5% (24)	21.3% (61)
Satisfied	72.2% (96)	66.7% (92)	76.9% (90)	71.9% (278)
Neutral	6.8% (9)	5.1% (7)	1.7% (7)	4.5% (18)
Dissatisfied	3.0% (4)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (2)	1.8% (7)
Highly dissatisfied	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.99	4.19	4.17	4.12

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

From the table 5.36, it appears that the majority of the tourists express satisfaction with the variety of natural and cultural attractions. In case of Sylhet, more than two-thirds of the tourists (72.2%) visiting Jaflong, Bichanakandi and nearby places such as Tamabil, Sripur, Jaintapur tell that the fountain from the peak of the hill, transparent and cold water of Piyain River, movement of patches of clouds on the greenish top of high hills, and incessant rainfall, presence of pebbles scattered in the crystal clear water, green highland extending up to the horizon etc. all these beauties has made these places really mesmerizing. About 16.5% of tourists express their high level of satisfaction mentioning that apart from scenic beauty, Sylhet has also various historical and archeological places, including holy shrines. Furthermore, they also mention *Khasia* who are enriched with diversified ethnic lifestyles and cultural rituals. On the other hand, about 3% tourists report that although Sylhet is adorned with diversified attractions, its scenic beauty and pin drop silence of some places are ravaged gradually due to the illegal stone extraction using Boma machine. As such, the areas are always become dusty and noisy. In fact, the serenity of these places is no more. Few tourists (1.5%) are highly dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue mentioning that in addition to environmental degradation, tourists also become sick because of its huge noise and dust. Moreover, after bathing in Piyain River, there are no arrangements for changing clothes, especially for women. Washroom facilities are largely absent in various tourist spots of Sylhet.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 66.7% tourists express their satisfaction stating that beautiful tea gardens and lush green tropical forests along with colorful lifestyles of diverse indigenous communities make this district a wonderful place of natural beauty. In fact, about 26.8% of tourists are highly satisfied mentioning that they have the privilege to enter some privately owned beautiful tea gardens which require special permission. On the other hand, about 5.1% of tourists give a neutral opinion with the variety of cultural and natural attractions. This may indicate that some tourists (1.4%) are dissatisfied as they find some places dirty and absence of such basic infrastructural facilities as a restroom, public toilet, scarcity of food and drinking water.

Finally, a great majority of the tourists (76.9%) report that Sunamganj district reminds them of TanguarHaor. According to tourists, vast waters, submerged small trees in Haor, unique biodiversity of plants and animals make Tanguar Haor an ideal place for wanderlust tourism. Furthermore, enjoying sunrise and sunset sitting on the roof of the boat, vast sky with countless stars at night is a superb travel experience as described by the tourists. Some tourists also tell that Niladri Lake and the hills surrounding it really give the place an otherworldly look. In addition, about 20.5% tourists express their high level of satisfaction mentioning that apart from the scenic beauty of Haor and lakes, some of them have the opportunity to visit a nearby village on the Jadukata River. One of the tourists explains their travel experience to a village on the Jadukata River in the following manner:

“We climbed up a small hill. High above in the sky, patches of dark clouds like cotton had gathered and stood on the hill, we could see the magnificent river and the nearby hills of India. The place was just dreamlike.”

At last, it is really praiseworthy to mention that apart from Sylhet district, no tourists (0%) from other two districts are highly dissatisfied. In fact, a negligible percentage of tourists from above three districts are dissatisfied. So, if abovementioned problems can be solved and improved, tourists who are in a neutral position may be a move toward the level of satisfaction. Also, the mean score of 3.99, 4.19 and 4.17 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Sunamganj respectively implies tourists' satisfaction with respect to the diversified attractions of Sylhet.

Qualitative findings demonstrate that the connection between various spots of Sylhet and nature is very charming since its spots are genuine. The natural beauty of this place is changed and enhanced

in winter and rainy season, which is rare in other tourist destinations of our country. In fact, Sylhet region is so diversified that it is not possible to visit all places during the month-long tour. Hills, plain land, low land, waterfalls, lakes, crystal clear water and haors (extensive water bodies) everything is there. In short, nature is the biggest and most important feature of the tourism industry of Sylhet. From the comment of interviews, one of the stakeholders of tourism industry said,

*“Sylhet is the **Gold Mine** of tourism”.*

“Sylhet is the best from the viewpoint of natural beauty”.

High officials of TDAB and other stakeholders associated with hospitality sector told that in addition to shrines, waterfalls, hills, crystal clear water, haors, Sylhet is also famous for its tea gardens, whereas it is not accessible for mass tourists to visit tea gardens. They tell that tourists who book their travel through travel agency they can visit tea gardens as travel agencies take the permission of the Tea Board and the garden authorities in advance prior to the arrival of tourists. Furthermore, those who have personal contact with high officials or Tea Garden authorities they can visit tea gardens with permission from them. But tourists who go there in the group cannot visit tea gardens, whereas tea processing tour is popular among tourists visiting Sylhet. Yet, one of the ex-high officials of TDAB asserts that the government can take, for instance, such initiatives as Bhutan’s mass tourism policy to minimize the negative impacts of excessive tourists’ visitation in tea gardens.

On the other hand, one of the stakeholders associated with hospitality sector and another high official of local tourism linked association assert that the scenic natural beauty of Jaflong is destroyed. Despite official prohibition and high court restrictions, illegal stone traders are lifting stones through digging the river up to 150-200 feet. As a result, there has been serious environmental degradation. Furthermore, the usage of ‘Boma machine’ and ‘Stone Crusher machines’ affect severely local people. In fact, they as well as tourists suffer from asthma, deaf, cold etc. Such illegal work is happening under the very nose of the administration, whereas their initiative is absent. The manager of a motel nearby Jaflong also mention that use of ‘Boma machine’ is totally prohibited and 20-25 crusher machines are allowed. But actually, there are about more than 20000 stone crusher machines. That’s why he says that the opportunity of the development of tourism industry in Sylhet region depends on the government's decision and desire.

A high official of local tourism linked association asserts that recently steps have been taken to remove stone crusher machine. But the stone traders and border smugglers of these areas have stopped the road repair by the syndicate. Even he says that the syndicate has the power to transfer the deputy commissioner.

5.4.4.2 Availability of quality souvenirs

The table below shows percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction toward the availability of quality souvenirs. It reveals that overall 43.4% tourists in the total sample of three districts are neutral, followed by 33.0% are dissatisfied. On the other hand, about 22.3% of tourists are satisfied, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (1.3%) are highly dissatisfied. However, it is crucial to note that no tourists (0%) are highly satisfied over the issue of availability of quality souvenirs. Their average score is 2.87 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the availability of quality souvenirs. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.37: Percentage distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Quality Souvenirs

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	24.1% (32)	28.3% (39)	14.5% (17)	22.3% (88)
Neutral	42.9% (57)	51.4% (71)	35.9% (42)	43.4% (170)
Dissatisfied	31.6% (42)	18.8% (26)	48.7% (57)	33.0% (125)
Highly dissatisfied	1.5% (2)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (1)	1.3% (5)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.89	3.07	2.64	2.87

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

About 42.9% of tourists visiting Sylhet are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. It may be an indication of tourists' dissatisfaction as about 31.6% of tourists report that there is no souvenir shop near destination from which they can do shopping. Local shops are full of Indian products as well. Some tourists also mention that although there are some shops near 'Mamar bazar' (on the way to Jaflong), the quality of the product is not so good. In addition, the vendor demands excessive price.

Few tourists (1.5%) express their high level of dissatisfaction with this issue. On the other hand, approximately 24.1% tourists express their contentment with souvenir stating that different handmade unique products of superior quality such as Muffler, Shawl, Bed-cover, Bag etc. made by indigenous tribes can be bought from local market as well as from local persons and/or hotel authorities who have the accessibility to those tribes. It was found that that these products are very limited in number in local shops. Furthermore, some tourists talk about Dargah souvenir shops near Shah Jalal Mazar where different handmade products, as well as food items, can be purchased. Some tourists are also satisfied as they can purchase Indian products at low price. However, the mean score of 2.89 for Sylhet implies tourists' neutrality with respect to this issue.

For Moulvibazar, about 51.4% of tourists have a neutral view on satisfaction toward quality souvenirs. This may indicate tourists' satisfaction as about 28.3% of the tourists admire of Manipuri community's handloom woven clothes such as *Thami* (skirt for women), scarf, *Dhuti* for men, bed sheet, and different types of tea leaves etc. On the other hand, about 18.8% tourists report that there is no souvenir shop from where they can purchase local specialty art and craft so that those remind them of their travel experience. From the comment of surveys, one of the respondents said,

"I really want to cherish the things which I can see and remember where I've been and what I've done during my holiday".

Finally, about 48.7% of tourists are dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue stating that there is no formal establishment or souvenir shop in Sunamganj district. Furthermore, handicraft items are very few in numbers here. On the other hand, about 35.9% tourists are in a neutral position that may mean tourists' satisfaction as about 14.5% tourists say that local community tells about 'Shital Pati' (An embroidered mat) and other few handicraft items which can be found in some villages on the way to haor areas and Jadukata river. Anyway, the mean score of 2.64 for Sunamganj implies tourists' somewhat a neutral stance with respect to this issue.

However, qualitative studies shed light on shopping facilities in this regard. Majority of the stakeholders assert that shopping is an important part of tourist's activities. But it is a matter of regret that there is no souvenir shop in Sylhet where locally produced craft article, gifts, souvenir can be sold to satisfy tourists. In this regard, speaking about tourists' shopping activities, a young

enthusiastic tour operator gives an example of ‘*Batik Village*’ of Indonesia where local people make and sell various products of Batik. Tourists visiting this village can see the life of the total process of a Batik product creation. As a result, their interests have increased. The most unique part for tourists visiting this village is that a tourist and the craftsman can interact and make transaction directly. He brought this matter as an example to use in the production and promotion of our local products. Another young tour operator tells that compared to Sylhet, all brands are available at affordable prices in Shillong, India.

5.4.4.3 Activity-oriented tourism place

Variety of recreational facilities and indoor/outdoor activity in hotels and/or other establishments or in the tourist spot is another factor influencing tourists’ satisfaction. Table 5.38 reveals percentage distribution of tourists’ satisfaction with this aspect. Results show that overall about 52.5% tourists are dissatisfied, followed by about 23.5% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. On the other hand, about 22.5% of tourists are satisfied, while 1.5% is highly satisfied. Their average score is 2.73 indicating tourists’ dissatisfaction with respect to the aforesaid facility. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.38: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Activity Oriented Tourism Place

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	3.0% (4)	1.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.5% (6)
Satisfied	21.1% (28)	26.8% (37)	19.7% (23)	22.5% (88)
Neutral	20.3% (27)	24.6% (34)	25.6% (30)	23.5% (91)
Dissatisfied	55.6% (74)	47.1% (65)	54.7% (64)	52.5% (203)
Highly dissatisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.71	2.83	2.65	2.73

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in above table, the majority of the tourists across all three districts express dissatisfaction with a recreational facility in the destination. About 55.6% of tourists visiting Sylhet are not pleased with recreational facilities in the destination or hotels’/resorts’

compound. They state that general recreational facilities such as barbecue, riverside tent, trekking, and boat cruise etc. for mass tourists are virtually absent. On the other hand, about 21.1% tourists report that they are satisfied with dipping themselves in the river and taking photographs. Some tourists arrange a barbecue on the rooftop of the hotel or in an open space of resorts. About 3% of tourists are highly satisfied as they are delighted with in-house recreational facilities in hotel/resort compounds. However, the mean score of 2.71 implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to this issue.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 47.1% tourists state that except tea gardens, some eco parks, lakes, and museums, there are no other activities that could be done after evening. Furthermore, few top-notch hotels and/ or resorts have the arrangements for such recreational facilities that cannot be availed by mass tourists. As such, sitting idle in the evening, they feel bored. On the other hand, approximately 26.8% tourists state that they recreate themselves, spend their leisure time by taking snaps of the area of the resorts or hotels, playing the game on mobile, watching TV, gossiping or walking on the street in a group. About 1.7% tourists are highly satisfied with the above facility mentioning the arrangements of the cultural show by the local tribal people, provision of indoor activities by some resorts or hotels, while about 24.6% tourists have a neutral view on this facility. In fact, the mean score of 2.83 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' neutral stance with respect to this issue.

Finally, in case of Sunamganj, about 54.7% of tourists express their dissatisfaction stating that while there has been no infrastructure development for the tourists yet, it seems a nightmare to think about the recreational facilities. On the other hand, about 19.7% of tourists are satisfied with the aforesaid issue as they consider sunbathing, fishing, bird watching, and photography etc. as recreation in the middle of the Haor. Yet 25.6% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with this issue.

However, qualitative studies shed light on shopping as well as entertainment facilities in this regard. It is a matter of regret that there is neither any souvenir shop nor any entertainment facilities at the destination. In addition, tourists do not find any night-life activities in Sylhet after spending their day at the tea gardens and/or other spots, but to sleep in hotel rooms, whereas arrangements

of such facility attract foreign tourists the most. In this regard, a young enthusiastic tour operator tells:

“Sylhet is not at all colorful at night”.

On the other hand, managers of hotels and/or resorts claim that they have adequate arrangements for tourists’ delight and their security. In fact, they provide high-quality service to satisfy tourists. In this regard, one of the managers associated with hospitality sector tells that,

“Five-star is not a building, rather it is a service”.

5.4.4.4 Special events or festivals

Table 5.39 represents percentage distribution of tourists’ satisfaction with special events or festivals. Results show that overall a great majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (64.9%) are dissatisfied with the special events or festivals in following three districts, whereas about 16.7% are satisfied. On the other hand, about 13.2% of tourists are in neutral position, followed by 5.2% are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 2.41 indicating tourists’ neutrality to some extent with respect to an aforesaid aspect. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.39: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Special Events or Festivals

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	18.8% (25)	20.3% (28)	11.1% (13)	16.7% (66)
Neutral	12.0% (16)	22.5% (31)	5.1% (6)	13.2% (53)
Dissatisfied	62.4% (83)	53.6% (74)	78.6% (92)	64.9% (249)
Highly dissatisfied	6.8% (9)	3.6% (5)	5.1% (6)	5.2% (20)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.43	2.59	2.22	2.41

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Data presented in table reveal that particularly for Sylhet, about 62.4% of tourists are dissatisfied with the above issue. They report that they are not aware of special events or festivals of the tribal

community except yearly festival held at the shrine locally known as '*Urs*'. On the other hand, about 18.8% tourists are told that during their visit to Sylhet being informed from an acquaintance, they have the opportunity to visit '*Ras fair*' organized by Manipuri communities during their great festival '*Ras Purnima*' and they also participate in a yearly festival held at shrines. About 12% tourists give a neutral opinion about this issue, whereas about 6.8% tourists are highly dissatisfied mentioning that during a yearly festival held at the shrine, they have to face huge traffic congestion and accommodation crisis. Besides, they cannot see '*Ras dance*' or '*Dhrupodi Dance*' (Special dance of Manipuri community) although they hear about them from local people. About 53.6% of tourists visiting Moulvibazar report that apart from the yearly festival at the shrine, there are no other festivals or events are enjoyed by them. Some tourists also state that although different tribal cultural programs are supposed to be organized there frequently but no such events/festivals take place in reality. On the other hand, about 20.3% of tourists express their satisfaction with aforesaid facet mentioning the main attraction of the '*Ras fair*'. However, the mean score of 2.43 and 2.59 for Sylhet and Moulvibazar district respectively implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to this issue.

Finally, about 78.6% of tourists visiting Sunamganj district express their dissatisfaction about aforesaid issue mentioning that no events or festivals take place here frequently. Conversely, about 11.1% tourists are satisfied with special events/festivals stating that they have the chance of attending '*Wangala*' (Biggest festival of Garo community) festival through which they come to know about their traditional dances, dresses, foods, and other rituals. However, about 5.1% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. In fact, the mean score of 2.22 for Sunamganj district implies tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to this issue.

Contrary to the above findings, according to qualitative findings, tourism stakeholders assert that there is a great potential to promote *Halal tourism* in Bangladesh, particularly Sylhet as it is known as famous holy land. Particularly, if the heritage of Muslim community can be projected outside the world, numbers of foreign tourists will increase. But it is a matter of regret that promotion of such tourism is not done. Furthermore, the majority of the stakeholders give emphasis to the extensive publicity campaign and branding through media so that tourists can be well acquainted with a destination's other activities, history, and culture. On the other hand, one of the stakeholders

associated with TOAB contended that their organization is branding entire Bangladesh at the tourism fair outside the country. In this regard, he told,

“Firstly, we brand our country, and then we will go for branding our country’s places”.

Specifically, according to him, the country has to be branded before branding of certain tourist spots. Then every spot in the country will become a tourist spot. As a result, the whole country will benefit. On the other hand, another stakeholder associated with govt.-run tourism institution claimed that most of the tour operators of Bangladesh are involved in outbound tourism instead of promoting inbound tourism.

5.4.4.5 Availability of music club, cinema hall, bar facilities

With regard to availability of music club, cinema hall, bar facilities, percentage distribution of tourists’ satisfaction is given in table 5.40. Results show that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (70.9%) are dissatisfied with the availability of music club, cinema hall, casino facilities, bar facilities etc., followed by 16.1% are highly dissatisfied. On the other hand, about 2.4% are highly satisfied, followed by 3% are satisfied. Yet, 7.5% are in neutral position. Their average score is 2.05 indicating tourists’ dissatisfaction with respect to the aforesaid issue. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.40: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Music Club, Cinema Hall, Bar Facilities

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.8% (1)	2.2% (3)	4.3% (5)	2.4% (9)
Satisfied	3.0% (4)	4.3% (6)	1.7% (2)	3.0% (12)
Neutral	7.5% (10)	11.6% (16)	3.4% (4)	7.5% (30)
Dissatisfied	68.4% (91)	71.7% (99)	72.6% (85)	70.9% (275)
Highly dissatisfied	20.3% (27)	10.1% (14)	17.9% (21)	16.1% (62)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	1.95	2.17	2.02	2.05

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Across all three districts, the majority of the tourists contend that availability of above-mentioned facilities are virtually absent and the corresponding percentages are 68.4% in Sylhet, 71.7% in Moulvibazar and 72.6% in Sunamganj. In fact, tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction with these facilities stating that authorities of some moderately expensive hotels or restaurants apologize for not able to bring any drinks if required by the guests. On the other hand, some tourists express a high level of satisfaction stating that in some places, such as Bichanakandi, Jaflong-Tamabil, and Zero point, they can buy drugs as well as foreign alcohol at a very cheap price. In case of Moulvibazar, some high-class resorts have their own cinema or theatre hall for guests. Conversely, tourists who are satisfied with the unavailability of this facility contend that such facilities are forbidden from a religious point of view. However, the mean score of 1.95, 2.17, and 2.02 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively imply tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to this issue.

According to the qualitative findings, the majority of the tourism stakeholders argue that there is no provision for setting up open liquor shop in any establishments. Yet, although hotels and/or resorts have no official liquor shop inside their premises, most of them have this facility unofficially. However, in most of the cases, foreigners are also allowed to bring their alcoholic drinks with them. In regard to bar facilities, one of the managers associated with hospitality industry told that,

“Powerful government manpower and a hefty amount of money are required to get any bar privileges”.

Another manager of a resort asserts that there are no arrangements for giving license to bring alcohol for foreign tourists in international standard hotel or resorts. As a result, it cannot be supplied in most cases as per the needs of foreign tourists. In addition, hotel staffs are harassed by law enforcement forces on the way to bringing alcohol from the railway club. Even DGFI often visits hotels and resorts and interrogate foreign tourists about various issues which is a matter of embarrassment for them.

5.4.5 Environmental Factor

The environment can be defined as the overall state of the world's natural environments which include air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelation. Such environmental conditions as water quality, cleanliness, and feelings towards the destination are

influential in the tourists' satisfaction. Quantitative findings on tourists' satisfaction with respect to this issue are given below:

5.4.5.1 *Quality of water supply*

With respect to the quality of water supply, percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction is seen in table 5.41. Results show that overall about 50% tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, followed by 30.9% are satisfied. On the other hand, about 18.5% of tourists are dissatisfied, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists (0.5%) are highly dissatisfied. Their average score is 3.11 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the quality of water supply. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.41: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Quality of Water Supply

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	42.1% (56)	31.9% (44)	18.8% (22)	30.9% (122)
Neutral	45.1% (60)	52.9% (73)	52.1% (61)	50.0% (194)
Dissatisfied	11.3% (15)	15.2% (21)	29.1% (34)	18.5% (70)
Highly dissatisfied	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.28	3.17	2.90	3.11

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to the data presented in above table, about 45.1% of tourists visiting Sylhet express their neutral opinion about the quality of water supply. This may be an indication of tourists' satisfaction because about 42.1% of them admire crystal clear water of Jaflong and Bichanakandi coming from the top of the hills which can be consumed. In addition, tourists also commend the quality of supply water. On the other hand, some tourists (11.3%) express their dissatisfaction mentioning that they buy water in some cases where drinking water in hotel seems not hygienic to them. A negligible percentage of tourists (1.5%) are highly dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 52.9% tourists give a neutral opinion with the quality of supply water. This may imply that some tourists (31.9%) are satisfied as they do not find any problem with the water supply. On the other side, about 15.2% tourists express their dissatisfaction stating that during their trip in Lawachhara National Park or other reserved forests, they do not find any water tap inside those premises.

Finally, more than half of the tourists (52.1%) are in a neutral position which may mean tourists' dissatisfaction because about 29.1% tourists state that water of Haor is contaminated as there are no arrangements for toilet facilities. Instead, there are several floating toilets in the Haor areas which is responsible for water pollution. In addition, local people use water for their household chores. However, about 18.8% of tourists are satisfied stating that they bring water with them.

5.4.5.2 Availability of clean public toilet

With respect to the availability of clean public toilet, percentage distribution of tourists' satisfaction is seen in table 5.42. Results show that overall majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (55.2%) are dissatisfied, followed by 23.1% are highly dissatisfied. On the other hand, about 11.5% of tourists are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, whereas about 10.1% are satisfied with the aforesaid issue. Their average score is 2.09 indicating tourists' dissatisfaction with respect to this issue. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.42: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Availability of Clean Public Toilet in the Tourist Spot

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	15.0% (20)	9.4% (13)	6.0% (7)	10.1% (40)
Neutral	13.5% (18)	11.6% (16)	9.4% (11)	11.5% (45)
Dissatisfied	45.1% (60)	52.2% (72)	68.4% (80)	55.2% (212)
Highly dissatisfied	26.3% (35)	26.8% (37)	16.2% (19)	23.1% (91)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.17	2.04	2.05	2.09

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Across all three districts, the majority of the tourists contend that public toilet services are virtually absent in the tourist area and the corresponding percentages are 45.1% in Sylhet, 52.2% in Moulvibazar and 68.4% in Sunamganj. Tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction stating that there is lack of adequate public toilets, even separate washroom facilities for women are largely absent in the tourist area. In fact, in some destinations, no infrastructural development has developed yet for the tourists let alone cleanliness. For example, although local people build a temporary toilet in Bichanakandi, visitors have to incur extra money (BDT 50) to avail the toilet. In case of Moulvibazar, tourists mention that except ‘Nilkantho Tea Cabin’, there are no arrangements for public toilet across the tea gardens. In fact, about 26.8% tourists visiting Lawachhara Nation Park are too dissatisfied that they state although a few public toilets are seen inside the park, they are unusable due to wrecked door, unhygienic condition, scarcity of water, and no soap. Finally, about 16.2% of tourists visiting Tanguar Haor express their high level of dissatisfaction reporting that instead of hygiene toilet facilities there are several floating toilets in the Haor areas which are also responsible for water pollution. However, about 6% of tourists are satisfied with this facility stating that there are arrangements for toilets in some of the big boats. However, the mean score of 2.17, 2.04, and 2.05 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively imply tourists’ dissatisfaction with respect to the aforesaid issue.

On the other hand, some tourists are satisfied with the aforesaid issue. They say that there are some public toilets in Sylhet town where people have to pay money to use the toilet. As concerned person take money from the public so they keep those toilets clean. If clean public toilet will be available in the tourist spot, percentages of dissatisfaction may be escalated toward the satisfaction continuum.

5.4.5.3 Cleanliness of the streets and public places

The table below reveals percentage distribution of tourists’ satisfaction the overall cleanliness of the streets and public places near tourist spots. It is apparent from the table that overall 38.9% are dissatisfied, followed by 37.2% are in neutral position. On the other hand, about 20.5% of tourists are satisfied, whereas 3.4% is highly dissatisfied with the aforesaid issue. Their average score is 2.75 indicating tourists’ neutrality to some extent with respect to the aforesaid issue. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.43: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Satisfaction about the Overall Cleanliness of the Streets and Public Places

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Highly satisfied	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Satisfied	19.5% (26)	28.3% (39)	13.7% (16)	20.5% (81)
Neutral	14.3% (19)	39.1% (54)	58.1% (68)	37.2% (141)
Dissatisfied	63.2% (84)	25.4% (35)	28.2% (33)	38.9% (152)
Highly dissatisfied	3.0% (4)	7.2% (10)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (14)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	2.50	2.88	2.85	2.75

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to the data presented in above table about 63.2% tourists visiting Sylhet state that Tamabil-Jaflong, Bollaghat zero point or Goainghat-bound roads are always dusty in monsoon and muddy during the rainy season due to stone excavation and numerous crusher machines. Furthermore, numerous ditches and huge craters are created because of movement of heavy vehicles carrying stones in these roads. About 3.0% of tourists express their high-level dissatisfaction with garbage management stating that in addition to the dilapidated condition of the roads, there are no litter bins available for dumping garbage. Furthermore, local people running their temporary hotel business near some spots such as Jaflong, Bichanakandi, and Zero point also dispose of rubbishes such as used dirty water, leftovers of fish, meat, vegetables, chips packet and so on. As a result, streets and public places are always dirty and smelly. In case of Sunamganj, about 28.2% tourists state that tourists themselves throw rubbishes such as leftovers of dry food items, poly bag, water bottle, chips packet etc. in the haor.

In case of Moulvibazar, about 28.3% of tourists say that compared to other places, Moulvibazar seems neat and clean to them, particularly the tea gardens. However, about 25.4% tourists say that few streets are dirty due to the emergence of some potholes filled with mud and dust that are observed on their way to nearby reserved forests, eco-parks, and lakes. Besides, about 7.2% tourists express their high level of dissatisfaction pointing their finger at the individuals having

political link and clout who are responsible for the poor quality of road construction that cause so much distress among the mass people as well as visitors.

However, tourists who are satisfied with aforesaid issue contend that cleanliness is not maintained in many spots of Bangladesh. Since Sylhet is popular for its scenic beauty, lots of public gathering is seen here. Consequently, they do not seem to be concerned so much about the overall cleanliness of spots.

From qualitative findings, tour operators tell that in addition to enjoying the scenic beauty of Sylhet, particularly foreign tourists also expect safety and clean environment. That's why foreign tourists generally get into Nishorgo resort, Shantibari Resort etc. Since these resorts are located much far away from the city, tourists can easily see and know the local community.

5.5 Role of Tourism Stakeholders

Tourism stakeholders include any individual or group involved in, and/or affected by tourism industry. Each group of stakeholder plays important roles in the development of tourism industry. While some stakeholders are actively engaged, role of some are rather passive. During an in-depth interview with each of the country's tourism stakeholders, following issues have come up in the discussion:

Majority of the stakeholders assert that the ignorance and absence of vision is one of the major reasons why the government is lagging behind in the development of Bangladesh's tourism industry. In this regard, they contend that govt. tends to take decisions whimsically. In fact, one of the stakeholders associated with tour operating told that the govt. declared "Vision 2016" without undertaking any research on tourism or discussion with any relevant stakeholders. Number of stakeholders asserts that the govt. has to play an active role for the infrastructural development of the country, such as roads and highways, sewerage lines, availability of fuel, investments in accommodation sector which is not possible for private stakeholders alone. But tourism stakeholders think that the govt. lacks enough positive intention for that. That's why one of the stakeholders associated with TDAB expressed their high level of dissatisfaction mentioning the role of Govt. in tourism development. He compares govt. initiatives with the game of "*Musical Chair*" where children take a seat for their entertainment. He stated this,

“The Govt. only thinks about when to sit, how long to continue and when to leave this musical chair.”

Moreover, an ex-high official of tourism stakeholder raised the question with due respect to the qualifications of government staffs who assume top key positions in government-run tourism institutions. Mentioning government staffs as *“Jack of all trades, but master of none”*, for instance, he tells that although these staffs are District Commissioner (DC) or Additional District Commissioner (ADC) and have adept knowledge about the country, they lack relevant knowledge about aspects of tourism. Hence, they cannot influence the ministers either for their respective area of development or the country’s development. On the other hand, speaking about the role of ministers he told that,

“The ministers do not do any work themselves until the Prime Minister herself orders them to do so, because they are not concerned about their duties and responsibilities and hence they do not take risks.”

Furthermore, speaking about the appointment of bureaucrats, a top official of local tourism association told that usually individuals, who cannot be placed in other sectors or ministries, are given responsibility in government-run tourism institution. In this regard, another high official of national tourism organization told that:

“I am not from this (tourism) background. I am here just because of seniority.”

Evidently, despite having inadequate qualification and experience, the government appoints him in this position. Hence, he requires some breathing time to learn about tourism. Yet he also contends that it would be better if a qualified tourism expert is appointed to assume the responsibility.

Apart from inexperienced bureaucrats, infrequent key stakeholder meeting has become a nightmare for tourism stakeholders. With respect to such meetings, almost each and every stakeholder asserted that facilitation of stakeholder meetings is very infrequent. While the tourism councils are scheduled to meet 1-2 times each month, only two meetings were held in last 20-25 years. Another key person associated with local tourism association reported that although coordinated meetings on the overall situation of the tourism sector were supposed to be facilitated,

he could not recall when the last time such meeting about tourism was held. With regard to infrequent key stakeholder meetings, one of the high officials of TDAB told that,

“Only three meetings were held during 1997-2017 where tourism stakeholders were absent.”

In this regard, stakeholders think that there is a gap in coordination among the stakeholders. Although inter-ministerial coordination among the stakeholders was supposed to be facilitated as per national tourism policy, in reality, there exists a considerable lack of coordination. According to one of the high officials of national tourism organization, only a single ministry or department cannot be successful in the development of tourism by its single endeavor. Rather, all ministries/ departments should prioritize tourism in all their development activities. But complainingly he said,

“There are no tourism-centric development ideas in the ministry.”

One of the private stakeholders associated with tour operating business told that many effective initiatives outlined in national tourism policy cannot be implemented due to intra-and-inter organizational discord and gap of coordination among the stakeholders. That’s why one of the high officials of TDAB emphasizes more on public-public partnership than on public-private partnership.

With regard to government support, the divergent opinion of tourism stakeholders is observed. One of the stakeholders associated with TOAB told that the govt. calls for a meeting with TOAB at least once in a month. He also added that the present government’s willingness for the development of tourism industry is much more like the current slogan of the country: *‘Digital Bangladesh’*. He thinks that tourism would be the next slogan of the country. Number of stakeholders asserted that different international tourism fair has been organized in collaboration with the government. For instance, one of the private stakeholders associated with tour operating business told that the government took a stall at the ‘World Tourism Market’ supposed to be held in the UK on November 2017, where nine travel agencies took space for BDT 25000. In that fair, they represented Bangladesh. He also mentioned that more than 22 countries were supposed to participate in that fair. Another high official of national tourism organization told that the government organized the successful fair of UNWTO-29 in Chittagong on 15-17 May 2017 with participation of representatives from 25 countries. Furthermore, he said that the country is going

to organize the 10th OIC International Conference of Tourism Ministers supposed to be held in February 2018 where a representative from 57 countries will participate. Apart from participating in international fairs to promote the country's tourism industry, the Bangladesh Tourism Board also provides financial support for the development of various destinations.

Conversely, some stakeholders, both public and private, express their disappointment over the inadequate support from the government. One of the ex-high officials of government-run tourism institution stated that the govt. is incurring unnecessary expenditure on the tourism sector. Apparently expressing displeasure over the recently held BPC's carnival show he told that,

“There is no need for it (carnival show). These are the last level of marketing. First, develop, and then private individuals will do the marketing.”

Again, another stakeholder associated with travel agency said,

“Govt. provides 14% VAT free loan to industrial establishments, whereas, we've to give 8% VAT and tax to govt. let alone receiving any loan facilities from govt.”

One of the ex-high officials of govt.-run tourism institution focused on introducing tourism law. He told that every facet of a tour is formed through a contract. But no such contract is applicable in Bangladesh. In fact, tourists in our country do not know about this law. He added that in the case of tourism, both the buyer (tourist) and the seller need to have a legal contract for the benefit of both the parties. If one party breaches the contract, another party can take legal protection. Emphasizing on tourism law he told,

“In tourism, intangible products are sold where seller's promise and commitment is a prime factor. If this promise is not fulfilled, then where will tourists go since there is no tourism law?”

On the contrary, another high official of govt.-run tourism institution opposed to tourism law. He said that there are many laws in our country, but there is no implementation of it. In this case, he told the law of crossing roads using the foot-over bridges is written only in law but there is no implementation of it. Hence, he told that,

“What is the point of tourism law? Tourism is not lagging behind due to tourism law, is it?”

In short, qualitative findings with respect to stakeholders’ role have revealed the following aspects:

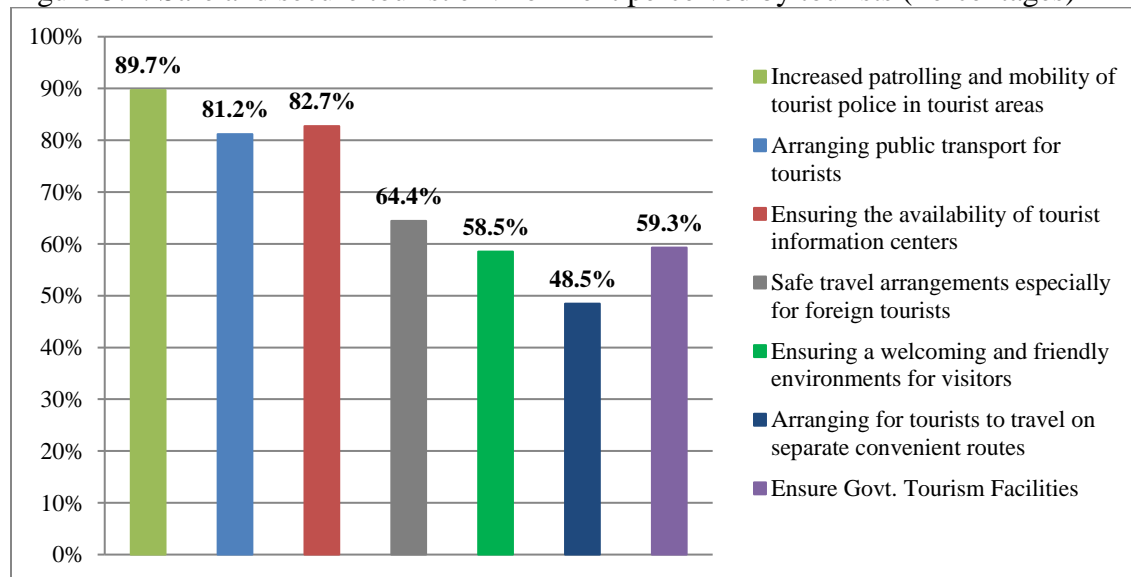
- Lack of vision of the government
- Lack of knowledgeable tourism expert
- Inadequate government support
- Insufficient allocation of budget
- Lack of cooperation among tourism stakeholders
- The absence of tourism research
- The absence of clear and specific tourism law

5.6 Safety & Security Issues

5.6.1 Safe and secure tourist environment perceived by tourists

In an attempt to know the extent to which tourists perceive safe and secure tourist environment in the study areas, they are asked to respond and rank to some statements (Refer to Figure No. 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Safe and secure tourist environment perceived by tourists (Percentages)



Source: Field Survey

According to the results of the analysis, the rankings of the statements that are considered important for safe and secure tourist environment in the study areas are illustrated below:

Firstly, “Increased patrolling and mobility of tourist police in tourist areas” is seen as the most important aspect of safe and secure tourist environment to approximately 89.7% tourists. “Ensuring the availability of tourist information centers” is considered as the second most important aspect to 82.7% tourists. About 81.2% tourists consider the “Arranging public transport for tourists” as a third important aspect of the rankings. “Safe travel arrangements especially for foreign tourists” considered the fourth important aspect of the aforesaid issue to 64.4% tourists. Govt. tourism facilities, welcoming and friendly environments for visitors, and provisions for tourists to travel on separate route are ranked at the lowest. However, it is important to note that although most of the activities and facilities in the table are not available in the study area, tourists have a pretty good idea about safe tourist environment.

According to the qualitative findings, mostly, tourism stakeholders assert that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the security of tourists. But unfortunately, Govt. in this case is incapable and unaware. Furthermore, country’s chaotic political situation also affects negatively in the tourism industry. But the image of the neighboring country, India is a little different. In this regard, one of the tour operators said,

“There is no security arrangement for tourists in our country. But we had been traveling to Kashmir by tourists’ car during curfew. The Indian army said nothing to us.”

5.6.2 Tourists’ safety perceptions in certain circumstances

In order to know the perceptions of tourists about safety in the study area, they are asked to respond to some specific situations as illustrated below:

5.6.2.1 Touring in the group during the day

Table 5.44 shows the percentage distribution of tourists’ safety perceptions of touring in the group during the day in the spots of three districts. Results show that majority of the tourists in the total sample of three districts (88.4%) feel safe walking in the group during the day in the destination of all three districts, while negligible percentages of tourists (0.8%) feel unsafe in this regard. Their average score is 4.07 indicating tourists’ feeling of safety with respect to the aforesaid situation. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.44: Percentage distribution of Tourists by their Degree of Satisfaction on Safety about Touring in the Group during the Day

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Very safe	15.0% (20)	10.1% (14)	3.4% (4)	9.5% (38)
Safe	84.2% (112)	87.0% (120)	94.0% (110)	88.4% (342)
Somewhat unsafe	0.8% (1)	1.4% (2)	1.7% (2)	1.3% (5)
Unsafe	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	0.9% (1)	0.8% (3)
Very unsafe	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	4.14	4.06	4.00	4.07

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

5.6.2.2 Touring alone during the day

Following table shows the percentage distribution of tourists' safety perceptions of touring alone during the day in the destination of three districts. As the table shows, the majority of the tourists (74.9%) feel safe wandering around alone during the day in the destination of all three districts. On the other hand, few percentages of tourists (4.7%) feel unsafe in this regard. Their average score is 3.69 indicating tourists' feeling of safety with respect to the touring alone during the day in the destination. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.45: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Degree of Satisfaction on Safety about Touring Alone during the Day

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Very safe	1.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (2)
Safe	84.2% (112)	79.7% (110)	60.7% (71)	74.9% (293)
Somewhat unsafe	10.5% (14)	14.5% (20)	31.6% (37)	18.9% (71)
Unsafe	0.8% (1)	5.8% (8)	7.7% (9)	4.7% (18)
Very unsafe	3.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (4)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

(n)	(133)	(138)	(117)	(388)
Mean Score	3.80	3.74	3.53	3.69

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in above table, tourists visiting Sylhet (84.2%) indicate higher perception of safety touring alone during the day in the destination than that of Moulvibazar (79.7%) and Sunamganj (60.7%). On the other side, the highest percentages of tourists visiting Sunamganj (31.6%) feel somewhat unsafe when touring alone during the day, followed by Moulvibazar (14.5%) and Sylhet (10.5%). The highest percentages of tourists visiting Moulvibazar (5.8%) feel unsafe when they move around alone during the day, followed by Sunamganj (7.7%) and Sylhet (0.8%). About 3% of tourists visiting Sylhet feel very unsafe during the abovementioned situation. However, the mean score of 3.80, 3.74, and 3.53 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively imply tourists' feeling of safety with respect to aforesaid circumstance.

5.6.2.3 Walking street at night

With respect to tourists' safety perceptions of walking in the streets at night, table 5.46 shows that overall 35.7% tourists feel safe walking in the streets at night, whereas 33.9% tourists feel unsafe. About 27.8% tourists feel somewhat unsafe, followed by 2.7% feel very unsafe. Their average score is 2.96 indicating tourists' neutrality with respect to the walking street alone at night in the destination. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.46: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Degree of Satisfaction on Safety about Walking the Street at Night

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Very safe	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Safe	45.1% (60)	26.8% (37)	35.0% (41)	35.7% (138)
Somewhat unsafe	19.5% (26)	30.4% (42)	33.3% (39)	27.8% (107)
Unsafe	33.8% (45)	37.0% (51)	30.8% (36)	33.9% (132)
Very unsafe	1.5% (2)	5.8% (8)	0.9% (1)	2.7% (11)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Mean Score	3.08	2.78	3.03	2.96
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Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Data presented in above table reveal that tourists express divergent feelings on their safety perceptions of walking street at night in the destination. Tourists visiting Sylhet (45.1%) indicate higher perception of safety when they walk in the streets at night than that of Moulvibazar (26.8%) and Sunamganj (35.0%). Tourists visiting Sunamganj seem to be the largest percentages (33.3%) who feel somewhat unsafe in an aforesaid situation, followed by Moulvibazar (30.4%) and Sylhet (19.5%). Besides, the highest percentages of tourists visiting Moulvibazar (37.0%) feel unsafe, followed by Sylhet (33.8%) and Sunamganj (30.8%). However, tourists visiting Moulvibazar (5.8%) appear to feel very unsafe, whereas a negligible percentage of tourists visiting Sylhet and Sunamganj feel like this way. In fact, the mean score of 3.08 and 3.03 for Sylhet and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' feeling of somewhat unsafe, while the mean score of 2.78 for Moulvibazar district implies tourists' unsafe with respect to aforesaid circumstance.

5.6.2.4 Using public transport

It is apparent from the table 5.47 that overall majority of the tourists (72.6%) feel safe using public transport in the destination of all three districts, while a negligible percentage of tourists (2.3%) feel very unsafe in this regard. Their average score is 3.67 indicating tourists' feeling of safety with respect to the use of public transport in the destination. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.47: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Degree of Satisfaction on Safety about by Using Public Transport

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Very safe	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Safe	65.4% (87)	74.6% (103)	77.8% (91)	72.6% (281)
Somewhat unsafe	15.0% (20)	20.3% (28)	18.8% (22)	18.0% (70)
Unsafe	12.8% (17)	5.1% (7)	3.4% (4)	7.1% (28)
Very unsafe	6.8% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (9)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Mean Score	3.39	3.70	3.74	3.61
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Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

About 77.8% of tourists visiting Sunamganj indicate higher perception of the safety of using public transport in the destination than that of Moulvibazar (74.6%) and Sylhet (65.4%). Some tourists think that using public transport is fairly insecure and thus the corresponding percentages are 15%, 20.3% and 18.8% for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively. On the other hand, about 12.8% tourists visiting Sylhet indicate higher perception of insecurity using public transport compared to other two districts namely Moulvibazar (5.1%) and Sunamganj (3.4%). However, except Moulvibazar and Sunamganj, tourists visiting Sylhet (6.8%) feel that using public transport is very unsafe. Yet, the mean score of 3.48, 3.73, and 3.80 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively implies tourists' feeling of safety with respect to aforesaid circumstance.

5.6.2.5 Overall feelings of personal safety

With regard to tourists' overall perceptions of personal safety during their stay in the destinations table 4.48 reveals that overall a great majority of the tourists (83.4%) feel safe during their stay in the destination of all three districts, while a negligible percentage of tourists (1.2%) feel unsafe in this regard. Their average score is 3.85 indicating tourists' feeling of safety with respect to overall feelings of personal safety during their stay in the destination. The similar mean score is reported for other districts.

Table 5.48: Percentage Distribution of Tourists by their Degree of Satisfaction on Safety about Overall Feelings of Personal Safety

Degree of Satisfaction	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Very safe	0.0% (0)	1.4% (2)	2.6% (3)	1.3% (5)
Safe	88.0% (117)	87.0% (120)	75.2% (88)	83.4% (325)
Somewhat unsafe	9.8% (13)	10.1% (14)	22.2% (26)	14.0% (53)
Unsafe	2.3% (3)	1.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (4)
Very unsafe	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)
Mean Score	3.86	3.88	3.80	3.85

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

According to data presented in above table, overall the highest percentages of tourists visiting Sylhet (88.0%) feel safe during their stay in the destination, followed by Moulvibazar (87.0%) and Sunamganj (75.2%). On the other side, the highest percentages of tourists visiting Sunamganj (22.2%) feel fairly unsafe during their stay in the destination, followed by Moulvibazar (10.1%) and Sylhet (9.8%). However, except Sunamganj, few tourists visiting Sylhet (2.3%) and Moulvibazar (1.4%) state that they feel unsafe during their stay at the destination. However, the mean score of 3.86, 3.88, and 3.80 for Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj district respectively imply tourists' feeling of safety with respect to aforesaid circumstance.

5.6.3 Tourists' insights regarding tourism crime

With a view to knowing how tourists perceive the concept of tourism crime, they are asked to answer multiple questions on the above topic. Following table reveal their understanding.

Table 5.49: Tourists' insights about tourism crime

Statements on tourism crime	Percentage (%) of Response
Non-respect of local laws	96.6%
Any kind of harassment	99.0%
Trafficking of illicit drugs, tobacco, cigarettes or alcohol	94.6%
The absence of adequate police force and lack of legal response	88.1%
Uncontrolled supervision and management of unlicensed vendors, taxi drivers, tour guides, etc.	82.5%

Source: Field Survey

As the above figure shows, a great majority of tourists (99%) think that any kind of harassment with tourists is tourism crime. Findings from the qualitative study also reflect the same scenario. In this regard, a tour operator said that our country's immigrant police also create much trouble with tourists. A manager of a hotel nearby Jaflong told that tourists have been harassed by tourist guides and cameramen in the spots as their complete information or bio-data is not collected. Although they show their ID card signed by the local administration to tourists, actually it is not provided by the local administration. Rather, it is their owned organized association. As a result, it is not possible to be assured of the activities of their association. About 96.6% tourists recognize that not adhere to local laws is also considered as tourism crime. Some tourists and local people in this regard state that a group of influential people and unscrupulous businessmen support the

callous act of indiscriminate stone excavation, hill cutting, and destruction of trees without paying any heed to existing laws. Such practices not only affect tourism but also pose serious environmental degradation. Besides, a high official of the local association told that various anti-social activities occur at the tourism hotel, and many colleges/university students are given unethical benefits without recording their name in the register.

Trafficking of illicit drugs, tobacco, cigarettes or alcohol is perceived to be a tourism crime to 94.6% tourists as it is likely to endanger residents as well as visitors. Local elite person mentions that there are a lot of drug businesses near Zero-Point and Bichhanakandi as these areas are very adjacent to the Indian border. Due to the availability of drugs from India, many young people are taking drugs and hence harassing tourists and also being harassed.

Additionally, about 88.1% tourists contend that absence of adequate police force and lack of legal response should be treated as tourism crime. Tourists in this regard say that when a tourist falls in trouble in a spot, say for victims of hijacking, he/she will first ask for help from tourist police. But in reality, in some cases, tourist police is also engaged with cross-border illegal activities in connivance with the local administration. Furthermore, the number of tourist police is less than the required in the study area. That's why tourists think that inadequate police force in tourist areas and their sluggish role is considered as tourism crime.

Finally, about 82.5% tourists assert that uncontrolled supervision and management of unlicensed vendors, taxi drivers, and tour guides are also regarded tourism crime because it is not possible for the concerned authority to trace unlicensed vendors or taxi drivers or tour guides if they do any unlawful activity.

According to the qualitative findings, tourism stakeholders have differing views on tourism crime. Some assert that less number of crimes is seen as there are relatively few numbers of migrated people in Sylhet. They think that local people have fewer tendencies to commit a crime because of their social responsibility and strong social ties. But the fact is that employment opportunities are limited in Sylhet as it is a border area. That's why; they considered "Community based Tourism" as helpful in this regard. However, mixed opinion is observed regarding the role of tourist police. While some admire of the positive role of tourist police, others pointed their finger at the inadequacy of them. In this regard, a manager of a hotel nearby Jafalong told that there are

only four tourist-polices at Jaflong Zero point which is very inadequate compared to the number of tourists. In addition, there is a BGB camp at Zero points where members of BGB do not stay. Rather tourists guide and cameramen/photographers are staying which may create a security problem for tourists.

Apart from the inadequacy of tourist police, a high official of the local association told that instead of setting permanently tourist police in charge, they are being transferred frequently. Besides, those individuals are appointed who are ignorant about tourism. In fact, they do not even have ideas about technology. However, security of tourists cannot be ensured by deploying only the tourist police. Rather, goodwill, commitment, and awareness of local people are essential for this. However, a young new tour operator thinks that tourist police of Sylhet is not so active compared to that of other destinations. Furthermore, he said that tourist spots of Sylhet are much scattered. As a result, despite tourist police of Sylhet has the desire, they will not be able to give service like Cox's Bazar police does.

Qualitative studies shed further light on unregistered tour operators, travel guides and/or agency, taxi drivers. Different stakeholders hold different perceptions on this issue. While some stakeholders consider unregistered tour operators, taxi drivers, travel agencies or travel guides as a threat to tourism, others not. In fact, those stakeholders who hold a positive attitude toward abovementioned aspect assert that not getting the membership of some associations such as TOAB, IATA, and PATA is being said unregistered. But availing such membership through registration requires a hefty amount of money (BDT 3,00,000-BDT 4,00,000) which is difficult for many. Furthermore, these memberships are also required to be renewed yearly with a fee. Since it is a great opportunity to work independently particularly for a youth group and such business is basically service based so being unregistered should not be considered as a threat to tourism. In fact, instead of getting memberships from abovementioned associations, some tour operators start their venture with obtaining a trade license from Govt. Nonetheless, from the comment of the interview, one of the stakeholders said,

“Unregistered travel agencies are no threat to us. We are a service provider. If we can provide good service, then tourists will come only to us.”

However, a young tour operator told that youths have more spirit to work than aged persons. In fact, senior persons emphasize their own financial gain/ self-interest.

On the other hand, managers of resorts and/or hotels as well as Govt. stakeholders argue that unregistered tour operators, taxi drivers, travel agencies or travel guides are a threat to tourism. They assert that there is a possibility of any mishap if the travel guides or drivers are not registered. From the comment of the interview, one of the managers of a famous resort said,

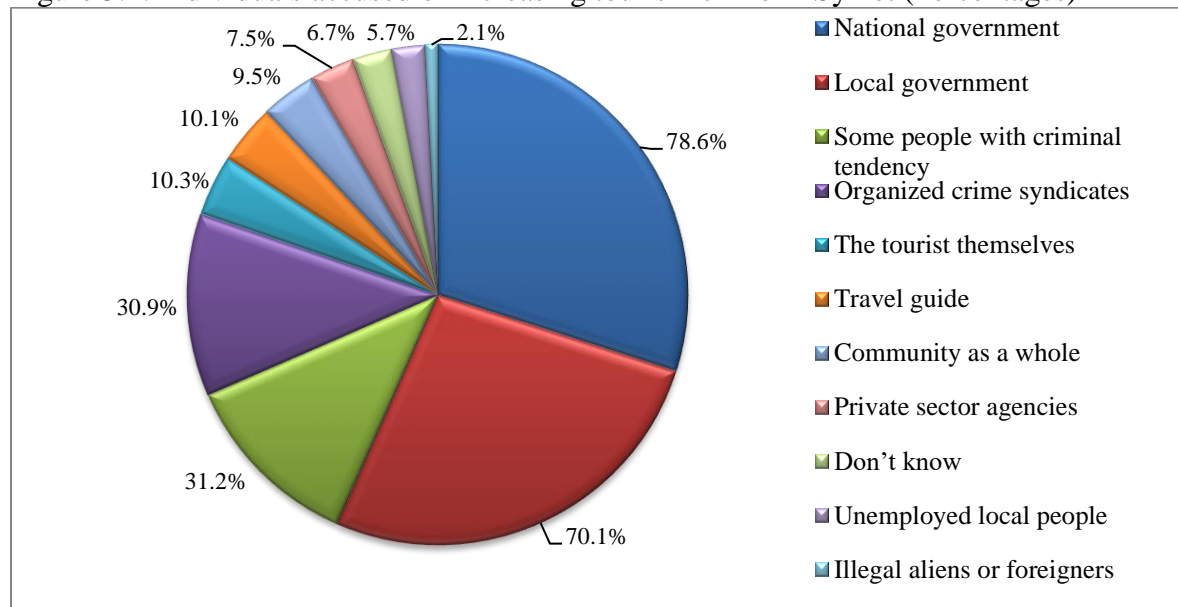
*“Being unregistered means to open **Pandora’s Box**”.*

Mentioning ‘Uber’ as an example, a manager of a resort told that all information about driver, car as well as the owner of the car is stored in the concerned organization. As a result, there is less chance of a mishap as they can easily be tracked down.

5.6.4 Individuals accused of increasing tourism crime in Sylhet

To comprehend who is responsible for the increase in tourism crime in the study area, tourists are asked to answer from the following 11 factors:

Figure 5.2: Individuals accused of increasing tourism crime in Sylhet (Percentages)



Source: Field Survey

According to the results of the analysis, the highest percentages of the individuals that tourists perceive as responsible for increasing tourism crime in the study areas are illustrated below:

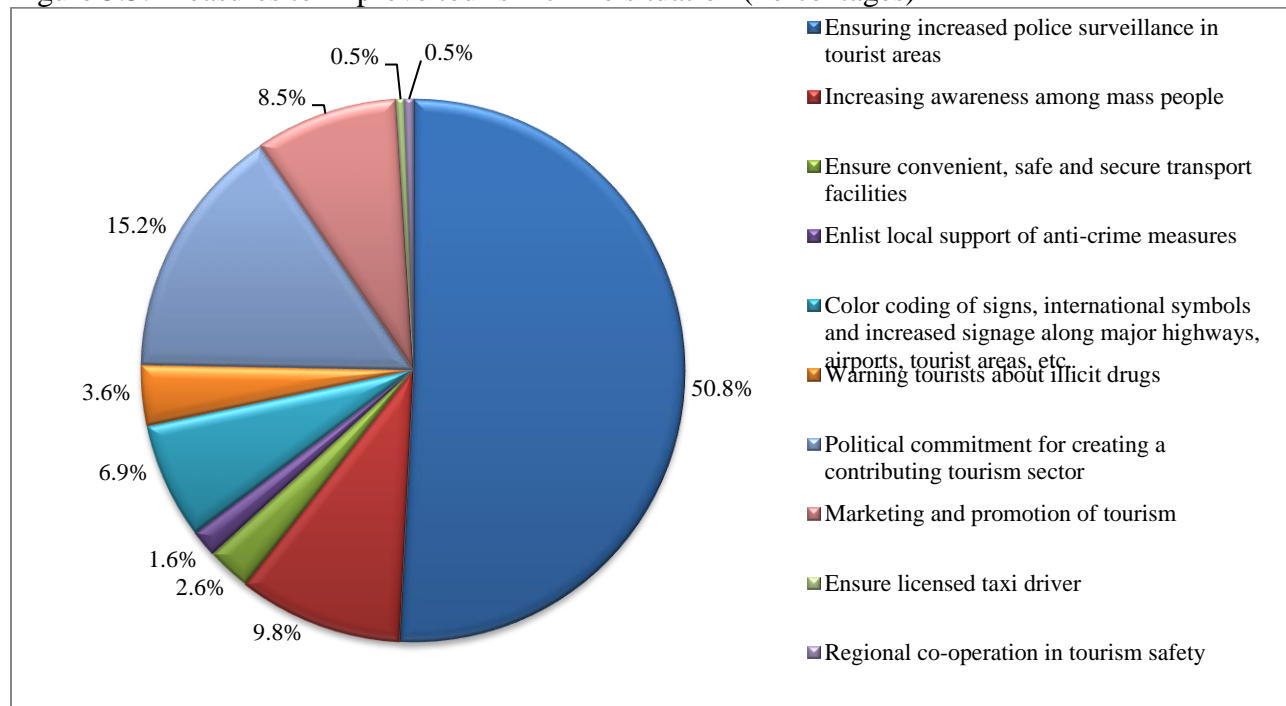
“National government”, “Local government”, “Some people with criminal tendency” and “Organized crime syndicates” are seen as the most important factors to 78.6%, 70.1%, 31.2%, and 30.9% tourists consecutively and thus positioned in rank as 1, 2, 3 and 4 likewise. Tourist themselves, travel guide, community as a whole and private sector agencies are considered fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth important factors of the aforesaid issue to 10.3%, 10.1%, 9.5%, and 7.5% tourists respectively. Finally, unemployed local people and illegal aliens or foreigners are ranked at the lowest that indicates their involvement in illegal activities. However, 6.7% of tourists do not know about the aforesaid issue.

5.6.5 Measures necessary for improving the tourism crime in Sylhet

The table below shows respondents’ recommendations that they think are important for improving the tourism crime situation in Sylhet. The respondents were asked to rank in order of preference for ten measures that they would suggest for achieving a safe tourism environment in Sylhet. Their responses are shown below.

It is known by analysis, the highest rankings of the measures that tourists recommend mostly to promote a tourism safety and security assured environment in the study areas are illustrated below:

Figure 5.3: Measures to improve tourism crime situation (Percentages)



Source: Field Survey

A great majority of tourists (50.8%) rank first the deployment of adequate tourist police in the destination which is the most important step taken to achieve a safe tourism environment in the study areas. Secondly, about 15.2% of tourists think that ensuring political commitment is second most important steps to be taken for achieving a safe and secure tourism environment. Increasing awareness among mass people, marketing, and promotion of the destination and major sign amplification and improvement along major highways, airport, and tourist areas are considered third, fourth and fifth important steps to 9.8%, 8.5% and 6.9% tourists respectively. Warning tourists about illicit drugs and ensure convenient, safe and secure transport facilities are ranked sixth and seventh most important steps to fight against tourism crime by 3.6% and 2.6% tourists respectively. Finally, solicit local support for anti-crime measures, licensed taxi driver and regional cooperation are ranked at the lowest by a negligible percentage of tourists.

5.7 Possibility of Repeat Visit

Despite all the hardships and complaints of tourists travelling to different spots in Sylhet, they are still willing to travel to Sylhet. Following table shows the percentage distribution of tourists' willingness to make a repeat visit to different spots of three districts. The results obtained by analysis show that overall majority of the tourists (77.9%) want to revisit different destinations in all three districts, while 22.1% are reluctant to visit again.

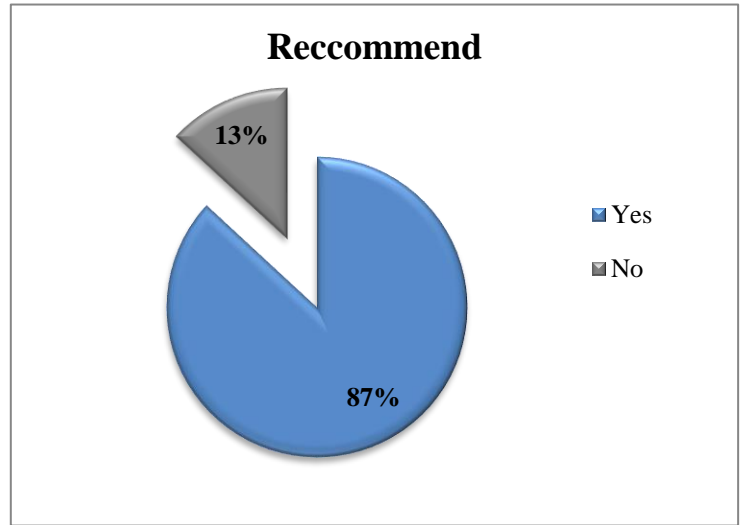
Table 5.50: Percentage Distribution of Tourists' Willingness to Repeat Visit in Sylhet

Response	Districts			Total
	Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj	
Yes	83.5% (111)	68.1% (94)	82.1% (96)	77.9% (301)
No	16.5% (22)	31.9% (44)	17.9% (21)	22.1% (87)
Total (n)	100% (133)	100% (138)	100% (117)	100% (388)

Source: Field Survey

NB: Figures in parentheses indicate the number of tourists considered in the survey

Among three districts, the highest percentage of tourists (83.5%) would like to repeat their visit at Sylhet, followed by Sunamganj (82.1%) and Moulvibazar (68.1%). Although tourists are not completely satisfied with the accommodation, transportation, entertainment facilities, etc. in above three districts of Sylhet division, they have expressed interest to visit Sylhet again. In fact, they will also recommend other to visit Sylhet. This is shown in pie chart right beside the text.



Chapter 6: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the key findings described in the previous chapters of both tourists' and stakeholders' insights towards tourism development. Finally, the recommendations and the overall conclusions are described. The major findings of the study can be presented in the following sections and sub-sections:

6.2 Discussion on Findings

The main purpose of this research was to explore the opportunities and potentials behind the development of tourism industry in Sylhet and to make recommendations for all stakeholders and tourists for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet. Through this research, there have been many findings identified, which will be outlined for the development of tourism in that region. The major findings is represented in subsequent paragraphs:

6.2.1 Tourism Industry in Sylhet

From the interview that took places among various stakeholders, it was quite clear that Sylhet has huge potential for tourism industry development. Sylhet and Moulvibazar have been the main attraction for the tourist of all ages. Simultaneously, Haors such as Tanguar Haor, Hakaluki Haor, Baikka bill is popular among youths.

Analysis of the present scenario of the tourism industry in Sylhet reveals that the number of hotels in Sylhet Sadar and Moulvibazar has been increasing rapidly for the last few years. As mentioned earlier, the number of the hotel in Sylhet Sadar in 2018 is 23, whereas it was only 13 about 3 or 4 years ago. The number of restaurants is also increasing. From this, it can be inferred that tourists are getting interested to visit Sylhet.

Analysis of the travel behavior of tourists visiting Sylhet shows that almost 95% of the tourists come to Sylhet for leisure, recreation, and holiday, mainly enjoying natural beauty. But more than 50% of tourists spend maximum one day in a destination due to lack of adequate infrastructural as well as entertainment facilities.

6.2.2 Tourists' Satisfaction on Tourism Products and Services

30 statements under five major dimensions are given to tourists to rate their level of satisfaction.

The summary of the results is shown in the following table.

Table 5.51: Mean Scores for Tourists' Satisfaction

Dimension	Statements	Mean Value		
		Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Sunamganj
Accessibility	Availability of adequate tourist information	2.29	2.74	2.37
	Availability of local transportation services	2.81	3.34	3.06
	Quality of local transportation services	2.37	3.01	2.74
	Convenience to travel	2.18	3.10	2.63
	Accessibility to basic medical treatment	2.23	2.32	2.09
Hospitality	Appealing accommodation	3.26	3.62	2.82
	Safe accommodation	3.37	3.70	3.23
	Variety of food and beverage	3.37	3.54	3.21
	Quality of food and beverage	3.56	3.65	3.29
	Hygiene at the restaurants	3.02	3.43	2.97
	Friendliness of hotel staff	4.08	3.46	3.26
	The warm and welcoming attitude of local people	3.64	3.91	3.89
	Availability of tourist guide	2.86	3.05	3.21
	Cooperation of tourist police	2.62	2.43	2.21
Expenditure	Price of accommodation	2.45	2.51	2.38
	Price of food and beverage	3.16	3.10	3.02
	Fare of local transportation	2.14	2.88	2.13
	Price of local products	2.98	2.96	2.78
	Availability of high-speed internet and Wi-Fi	2.22	2.36	2.10

	Banking facilities near tourist spots	2.29	2.59	2.04
	Mobile network near tourist spots	3.14	2.57	3.04
	The overall cost of their stay	3.11	2.95	2.87
Attraction and entertainment facilities	Variety of cultural and natural attractions	3.99	4.19	4.17
	Availability of quality souvenirs	2.89	3.07	2.64
	Activity oriented tourism place	2.71	2.83	2.65
	Special events/festivals	2.43	2.59	2.22
	Availability of music club, cinema hall, casino facilities, bar facilities	1.95	2.17	2.02
Environmental factor	Quality of water supply	3.28	3.17	2.90
	Availability of clean public toilet in the tourist spot	2.17	2.04	2.05
	Cleanliness of the streets and public places	2.50	2.88	2.85

As the table shows, the level of satisfaction on different factors varies. Here, higher average mean higher level of tourists' satisfaction. In accessibility dimension, tourists visiting Sylhet and Sunamganj are more dissatisfied with the unavailability of adequate tourist information than those visiting Moulvibazar. With regard to the adequacy of tourist information center, the lowest mean values are 2.29 and 2.37 for Sylhet and Sunamganj districts respectively. The study found that in most of the spots there did not appear to be any information available to tourists on site other than that provided through the local people/guides.

Statement mentioning "quality of local transportation services" shows tourists' dissatisfaction particularly who visited Sylhet and their average score is 2.37 out of a total of 5. Although local transport services are readily available in Sylhet, the study shows that most of the bus fleets are old and the maintenance is almost absent or very poor. Some destinations are mainly accessible only by means of boat regardless of the season. In addition, the study found that majority of the tourists experience the travel inconvenient as a result of dilapidated road conditions and poor quality of local transport. In short, these findings suggest that apart from Moulvibazar districts tourists from other two districts are dissatisfied with accessibility.

Pertaining to hospitality dimension, it was found that Sylhet and its people are hospitable towards the visitors except two such factors as “availability of tourist guide” and “cooperation of tourist police”. The hospitality of Bangladeshis in particular has greatly inspired foreign tourists. Foreign tourists expressed that they are welcome by the locals wherever they go. Some people even offered them a cup of tea which surprised them.

Nevertheless, regarding appealing accommodation, the study found that there is a limited number of accommodation facility at Sunamganj Sadar. And only one hotel named ‘Hotel Tangua Inn’ at Tahirpur bazar was found that can accommodate 38 persons. Also, there is no formal provision for accommodation, particularly in Tanguar Haor. Although there are some troller-boats for tourists, the facilities in the boats are not of that standard to satisfy all types of tourists.

The mean value for the availability of tourist guide is 2.86 out of a total of 5 for Sylhet which demonstrates that the number of tourist guide needs to be increased. Furthermore, the findings reveal that some group of tourist guides and cameramen with ID card were seen in some spots who claim that the local UP provided them ID and gave permission to do so. But in reality, the ID card is not provided by the local administration. Rather, it is given by the local association. So there may be a chance of harassment of tourists by these unauthorized groups if they are not properly handled. In this case, lack of proper guideline for tour guides remains an issue. The study also found that in some destinations neither any tourist police nor any help desk service for tourists was seen except BGB camp.

In the context of expenditure dimension, domestic tourists are found unhappy with accommodation cost, local transportation cost, banking facilities and internet services. On the other hand, few foreign tourists expressed that cost of traveling in Sylhet is cheaper than other countries in the world. They also expressed that there is a tendency among the locals to think like that foreign tourists have high purchasing power.

The highest mean value for ‘variety of natural and cultural attractions’ is 4.19 meaning that Sylhet adorns itself with unparalleled scenic beauty that is different from other traditional destinations in Bangladesh. However, foreign tourists said that the attractions lack sufficient beautification though they are satisfied with the uniqueness of the natural resources. On the other hand, the study found that lack of recreational facilities is impeding the growth of tourism in Sylhet. The study also

revealed that small children and elderly persons became tired as they found not enough places to sit and relax in some places when moving around the parks. Therefore, a rest area can be created inside the park for tourists where provisions for drinking water and/or snacks, toilets etc. can also be provided.

The lowest mean value for the statement “availability of clean public toilet in the tourist spot” is 2.04 indicating the inadequacy and unhygienic condition of public toilet services. Furthermore, the survey also revealed that several floating toilets in the Haor areas are still common which is degrading the environment and biodiversity of haor areas. Taking it into consideration, there is a need to address the problem of public toilets in tourist spots. Furthermore, garbage remains a problem because most tourist spots do not have a garbage disposal system. As a result, visitors throw dirt into lakes and water without the slightest care for the environment or local communities. Hence a clean campaign titled “*Let it be clean*” can be launched to sensitize all about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in tourist destinations.

6.2.3 Safety and Security Issues: Tourists’ and Stakeholders’ View

Statements about safety and security on different circumstances reveal that roaming around the Sylhet seems safe and secure for tourists. But statements about safety and security on different issues reveal divergent opinions of tourists. However, with regard to tourists’ insights about the safe and secure environment, tourism crime, their perceptions, the study found that tourists are well aware of above matters.

Results regarding safety and security on different situations show that roaming alone or in a group around the Sylhet during the day seems reasonably safe and secure to domestic tourists, while at night few tourists feel somewhat insecure whether they are alone or in the group. Additionally, the study found that some tourists feel risky to some extent in using public transport in the destination due to rundown conditions of road and poor quality of local transport. The study also found that a number of tourists polices is insufficient compared to the number of tourists visiting a destination at Sylhet. Keeping these facts in view, there is a need to solve the problem of both the inadequate numbers of tourist police and absence of separate transportation system for tourists in the spots. On the other hand, few foreign tourists told that although there is confusion among foreigners about security for traveling to Bangladesh, they did not feel like while visiting Bangladesh.

Additionally, lack of employment opportunities in study areas results in increasing cross-border criminal activities as well as stone excavation, hill cutting etc. Hence, “Community based Tourism” will play a positive role in creating employment opportunities for the local community. However, it was quite surprising that both the tourists and local community express their anger pointing finger at the callous role of BGB which is already discussed above. Considering these facts, a strict code of conduct should be formed mentioning ‘*dos and don’ts*’ to sensitize BGB about their duties and responsibilities.

6.3 SWOT Analysis of Tourism in Sylhet

Sylhet has a huge potential to develop as a thriving tourist destination for nature-loving tourists. Although some unplanned and unscrupulous activities damage the ecology and environment of this region, it will turn into one of the paradises for nature-based tourism in future where tourists can enjoy the breath-taking panoramic view of boundless tea garden, tropical forest, incessant waterfall etc. The following SWOT analysis clearly examines the tourism-related strength, weakness, opportunity and threat for the development of tourism in Sylhet.

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One of the most unique tourist destinations with unparalleled beauty in Bangladesh. ▪ The perfect blend of natural beauty, culture, tradition, historical and religious significance. ▪ Country’s only swamp forest is located in Sylhet district. ▪ Numbers of beautiful waterfalls ▪ One of the most diverse places with two different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of concrete research on the competitive destinations of Sylhet. ▪ Seasonal tourism trend. ▪ No infrastructural facilities in some destinations ▪ Expensive accommodation facilities due to lack of mediocre hotel or other establishments ▪ The absence of houseboat concepts in Haor areas ▪ The vulnerable condition of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The potential market for developing the eco-tourism combined with CBT, Halal tourism, and adventure tourism. ▪ Opportunity to create diversified tourism package. ▪ The notion of trekking and tracking tourism is getting popularity and Sylhet will be one of the ideal destinations for this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecological imbalance due to the hill cutting, deforestation, and illegal stone extraction. ▪ Potential degradation of environment due to a huge influx of tourists if not properly handled. ▪ Having neighboring competitors offering similar tourism products (Shillong)

<p>appearances of natural beauty in two different seasons e.g., winter and monsoon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rich cultural environment and varied religious festivals of tribal communities. ▪ Huge opportunity to introduce track tourism, rest, relax, and recreation tourism. 	<p>internal roads (For instance, Kodomtoli to Jaflong)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor transportation system to and within Sylhet ▪ Risky and uncomfortable vehicles. ▪ Lack of sanitary and hygiene all around the Sylhet ▪ Very few formal tourism business associations to ensure coordinated tourism development ▪ Lack of recreational facility in a tourist spot. ▪ No arrangements for a city tour. ▪ Lack of quality souvenir shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong inclination of people of plain land toward seeing hills, mountains, and waterfall ▪ Arranging some eco-friendly infrastructure in the ecologically sensitive area can create a huge demand for the nature-loving tourists ▪ Attractive colorful cultural performances by different ethnic groups. ▪ Removing the problem of seasonality by promoting the destination all year round. 	
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6.4 Conclusion

Tourism has come into limelight with the human intense desire of knowing and discovering new and unknown place. People now seek to stay away from posh and crowded urban areas to the destination full of splendid natural surroundings. Apart from merely entertainment, travel pleasure, or holiday entertainment, tourism, in contemporary times, is considered an important driver of economic growth of a country. Bangladesh's tourism industry could be a huge potential sector to contribute to the national treasury after the RMG industry.

Sylhet has many incredible travel destinations and attractions. Sylhet region is incomparable in all seasons. The natural beauty of this place is changed and enhanced with the change in season, which is rare in other tourist destinations of our country. Hence, Sylhet is a unique destination for both

the domestic and foreign travelers. But in the course of the study, it was found that at present there is dearth of adequate infrastructural facilities and entertainment facilities coupled with run-down conditions of communication system. According to Data Leads in a recent infograph published by the World Economic Forum, Bangladesh's roads are among the worst in Asia. As such, despite having innumerable spots in the basin of Sylhet, tourism industry in this region is failed to make the expected progress. Although Sylhet is in a good position only in terms of natural beauty, there is lack of facility and services. Research has shown that while private entrepreneurs are keen to develop tourism, there is lack of interest and vision among government officials and bureaucrats.

In conclusion, it can be said that the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders both public and private including local community is indispensable for tourism industry development. So, a strong policy framework is required for each stakeholder where stakeholders' perceptions and ideas will be considered. To create a contributing tourism sector, political commitment, coordination among tourism agencies, identification of priority areas and support private sector investment should be encouraged. It is also important to create a conducive and tourism-friendly environment for sustained development of tourism. Sustainable tourism is achieved if natural resources and the environment are conserved to advance the tourism industry. Then the desired development of tourism industry in Sylhet is imminent.

6.5 Recommendations

Tourism development in Sylhet has immense potential to grow. The proper initiatives by concerned stakeholders can bring an incredible success to this sector. Based on the above analysis and discussion, some specific recommendations are put forward for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet:

- 1. Focus on sustainability issues:** As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study that destination's resources and attractions are the basis of tourism industry development. Hence the government should focus on sustainability in a tourist area, for instance, preservation and protection of natural resources. In this regard, the importance of Government and private sector's participation should not be overlooked. While Government needs to ensure adequate infrastructural facilities coupled with transport facilities in tourist areas, private sectors should extend their hand in developing accommodations and the proper utilization of sustainable and creative energy sources.

- 2. Ensure intensive investment in infrastructure:** As outlined in the introduction of the study that, in the 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, Bangladesh remains less developed on almost all fronts, especially on tourist service infrastructure, ICT readiness. In fact, the country came at No. 125 in a ranking of 136 countries in 2017 and the overall score stood at 2.9 out of 7. Hence, more intensive investment in modernization of infrastructure should be made that can contribute to increased efficiency of quality tourism services.
- 3. Ensure activity-oriented tourism:** Considering the seasonal pattern of tourism in Sylhet, different recreational and outdoor activities should be made for satiating tourists' desires and attracting them to stay more. For instance, if some eco-friendly infrastructures like temporary accommodation or tent can be arranged with other basic amenities like mattresses and other sleeping objects, food and beverages, separate wash and toilet facility, litter bins, electricity, arrangement for campfires, barbecue, safety and security etc., the tourists' length of stay at destination can be extended remarkably which in turn will increase income of the local community who are engaged in providing tourist services.
- 4. Arrangement for recreational and outdoor activities:** An open-air stage with required safety and security measures and distinguished platform for the tribal cultural show, small handicraft and/or souvenir shop, light food shop etc. should be constructed in some popular destination based on the availability and suitability of land and/or space. During peak season, this open-air stage may charge a nominal fee from tourists if tourists want to do any activity like barbecue, concert or just want to enjoy the cultural show by the local ethnic performer. In this regard, a training program in collaboration with NHTTI should be arranged for the local people. These initiatives will likely to conserve and develop indigenous culture and to increase the income of local community by providing them alternative employment opportunity, thereby they do not depend on natural resources and wildlife, in some cases for their livelihood. In addition, a sense of pride works among the local tribal community as such platform gives them the opportunity to present their own cultural performance.
- 5. Providing eco-friendly vehicles in ECAs:** As a good number of Haors exist in Sylhet, eco-friendly boats can be deployed in Haor areas as the engine-run local boats are creating sound pollution as well as water pollution through emission of fuel and lubricant. Watercraft can also be arranged for day-trippers with scheduled trips per day. Apart from above-mentioned boats,

houseboats of different standards and categories coupled with basic facilities for sleep, eat, and toilet for local and foreign tourists can also be introduced.

- 6. Establish separate tourism development fund for ECAs:** For some ecologically sensitive area like Haors, reserved forest, and national parks, a separate tourism development fund can be created to protect and preserve these spots. In this regard, a standard fee may be imposed on each tourist, tour operators, travel guides and other relevant stakeholders who are entering into those areas. This practice is prevalent worldwide for many of the most vulnerable tourist destinations. Furthermore, tourism carrying capacity should be taken into consideration by the government with a view to protecting them from getting exploited by the influx of tourists.
- 7. Address & assess safety issues for outdoor activities:** Although arrangements for zip lining, tent camp, trekking trail is already there, recently some tree activity has already been launched in Khadimnagar National Park that adds a new dimension to tourism activity in Sylhet. But in this regard, communication system, emergency situation handling capacity, adequate safety measures, potential risk to park visitors etc. need to be addressed and assessed.
- 8. Formation of code of conduct:** A strict code of conduct should be formed for both the tourists and local community mentioning “dos and don’ts” to sensitize them about protecting and preserving the nature of the destinations as some unscrupulous tourists throw waste packets, leftovers of food, bottles etc. into open spaces, lakes, forest, water bodies, and national and local heritage.
- 9. Build tourist information center:** Tourist information center in some popular destinations needs to be established where tourists have access to information to get the desired services in a swift and simple manner. In this regard, the proposed information center can arrange following educational and interpretative materials in both native and foreign language (English) for tourists’ convenience:
 - Destination maps
 - Interpretative signs
 - Eatery
 - Accommodation nearby the destination
 - Travel guide
 - Guest directory

- 10. Take proactive measures to prevent exploitation by opportunistic people:** Depending on the destination, there should be a specific fare chart, so that some opportunistic people cannot exploit tourists, especially those who are first-time visitors. Furthermore, a proper monitoring system should be in place to monitor the activities of tourism service providers, for instance, hoteliers or transport providers who jack up their rates in the peak season.
- 11. Target the right market segment(s) and adopt strategies:** For successful tourism development, it is necessary to diversify the tourist zone and/or segment target market and to adopt and develop sector wise tourism development initiatives thereof. For example, Mazar (Shrines) is an important item of Sylhet tourism sector. So, Halal Tourism development will be a good attraction for tourist.
- 12. Provision for national tourism award:** The National Tourism Award can be arranged in various fields related to the travel, tourism and hospitality industry in recognition of excellence in tourism and also to promote healthy competition.

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Appendix

Annex 1

Research on Opportunities of Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Sylhet

Survey Questionnaire for Tourists

Good morning/afternoon. My name is I come here from Dhaka to conduct a research. The work of this study will be used for the thesis of a student (Nazwa-Al-Zannat) studying M.Phil in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Dhaka University. I solicit your valuable cooperation in filling up research questions. All information collected from you through this study will be kept in strict confidence and I ensure you that your name will not be used in any place of this research. Your assistance will be highly appreciated. It is to be noted here that you can stop providing information even after giving permission. I sincerely apologize because perhaps I am disturbing you at this moment of your leisure time. Now, if you agree, can I ask you questions from the question paper used in the study?

Do you agree to give information?

1. Yes 2. No

SL	Question	Code
	Date	
	Tourist Spot	1. Jaflong 2. Bichhanakandi 3. Tanguar Haor 4. Lawachhara National Park 5. Sreemangal Tea Garden
	Respondent Name	

Section 1: Demographic Characteristics

SL	Question	Code
1.	Gender	1. Male 2. Female
2.	Age (in years)	1. Up to 19 years 2. 20-29 3. 30-39 4. 40-49 5. 50+

SL	Question	Code
3.	Nationality	1. Bangladeshi 2. Foreigner
4.	Marital Status	2. Unmarried 3. Married 4. Divorced 5. Widowed 6. Separated/Deserted
5.	Level of Education Completed	1. No education 2. Primary 3. SSC 4. HSC 5. Graduate 6. Post Graduate 7. Others (please specify).....
6.	Occupation	1. Students 2. Self Employed/ Business 3. Professional (Teaching, Doctors, Engineer etc.) 4. Government Officer 5. Private Service 6. Unemployed 7. Retired 8. Others (please specify).....
7.	Your family income per month	1. Less than Tk 20,000 2. Tk.20001 – Tk.30,000 3. Tk.30001 – Tk.50,000 4. Tk.50,000+
Section 2:Travel Behaviors Information		
8.	Where do you come from to visit this place?	1. From different upazilas of the same district 2. From different districts of Sylhet division 3. From another division 4. Another country, please specify.....
9.	Did you come here earlier?	1. Yes 2. No
10.	If yes, then how many times did you come here?	
11.	What is the main purpose of your visit?	1. Recreation 2. Business 3. Official 4. Education 5. Honeymoon 6. Others (please specify).....
12.	Accompanying person/ Who are you here with?	1. Travel alone 2. Spouse and children 3. Friends/relatives

SL	Question	Code
		4. Others (please specify).....
13.	Length of stay (Days)	1. 0-1 2. 2-3 3. 4-5 4. 6 or more
14.	Mode of transportation used (More than one response)	1. By car 2. By bus 3. By air 4. By train
15.	Where did you hear about this tourist destination? ((More than one answer allowed)	1. The Internet 2. Friends and relatives 3. Media 4. Social Media 5. Books and guides 6. Travel agency 7. Fairs and/or exhibitions 8. Others (please specify).....
16.	In what kind of accommodation are you staying?	1. Hotel 2. Resorts 3. Bungalow 4. Apartment complex 5. Villa with pool 6. Own house 7. Friends / family 8. Others (please specify).....

Section 3: Tourist Satisfaction on Tourism Products and Services

17. How would you rate your satisfaction during your trip for the following?

	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
Accessibility					
Availability of adequate tourist information, such as tourist map, as well as documents	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of local transportation services	5	4	3	2	1
Quality of local transportation services	5	4	3	2	1
Convenience to travel	5	4	3	2	1
Accessibility to basic medical treatment	5	4	3	2	1

	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
Hospitality					
Appealing accommodation facilities	5	4	3	2	1
Safe accommodation facilities	5	4	3	2	1
Variety of food and beverage of the restaurants	5	4	3	2	1
Quality of food and beverage of the restaurants	5	4	3	2	1
Hygiene at the restaurants	5	4	3	2	1
Friendliness of hotel's manager, staff, security staff personnel etc. to help tourists.	5	4	3	2	1
The warm and welcoming attitude of local people	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of tourist guide	5	4	3	2	1
Cooperation of tourist police	5	4	3	2	1
Accommodation Facilities					
Price of accommodation	5	4	3	2	1
Price of food and beverages	5	4	3	2	1
Fare of local transportation	5	4	3	2	1
Price of local products	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of high speed internet and Wi-Fi in hotels, restaurants, resorts and the like	5	4	3	2	1
Banking facilities near tourist spots and/or hotels, restaurants, resorts and the like	5	4	3	2	1
Mobile network near tourist spots	5	4	3	2	1
Overall cost of your stay in Sylhet	5	4	3	2	1
Attraction and Entertainment Facilities					
Variety of cultural and natural attractions	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of quality souvenirs	5	4	3	2	1
Activity oriented tourism place for whole year	5	4	3	2	1
Special events/festivals	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of music club, cinema hall, bar facilities	5	4	3	2	1

	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
Environmental Factor					
Quality of water supply	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of clean public toilet in the tourist spot	5	4	3	2	1
Overall cleanliness of the streets and public places	5	4	3	2	1

Section 4: Safety and Security Profile

18. In your understanding, which of the items listed below describe a **safe and secure** tourist environment? (More than one answer allowed)

1	Safe travel arrangements especially for foreign tourists
2	Increased patrolling and mobility of tourist police in tourist areas
3	Arranging for tourists to travel on separate convenient routes
4	Arranging public transport for tourists
5	Ensuring the availability of tourist information centers
6	Ensuring a welcoming and friendly environments for visitors
7	Others (Please specify)

19. Which means tourism crime according to you?

Statements on crime and safety related to tourism	Response	
	Yes	No
Do you think that non-respect of local laws is related to tourism crime?		
Do you think that any kind of harassment is related to tourism crime?		
Do you think that trafficking of illicit drugs, tobacco, cigarettes or alcohol is related to tourism crime?		
Do you think that absence of adequate police force and lack of legal response is related to tourism crime?		
Do you think that uncontrolled supervision and management of unlicensed vendors, taxi drivers, tour guides, etc. are related to tourism crime?		

20. Please rate how safe you feel when you are:

	Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Safe	Very safe
Walking on the streets at night	1	2	3	4	5
Touring alone during day	1	2	3	4	5
Touring in group during day	1	2	3	4	5
Using public transport	1	2	3	4	5

21. Overall, how would you rate your safety during your stay in Sylhet?

Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Safe	Very safe
1	2	3	4	5

22. Who do you think, who are responsible for increasing tourism crime in Sylhet? (More than one answer allowed)

1	National government
2	Local government
3	Travel guide
4	Community as a whole
5	Unemployed local people
6	Illegal aliens or foreigners
7	Private sector agencies
8	Some people with criminal tendency
9	The tourist themselves
10	Organized crime syndicates
11	Don't know

23. Rank in order of importance [01-10] those items of Tourism Crime, Safety and Security which you think are vital for improving the tourism crime situation. Give only one number once within 1-10 in each of the following 10 statements according to the importance of the statements. In this regard, giving value 1 to a statement will indicate the highest priority for improving the tourism crime situation.

1	Ensuring increased police surveillance in tourist areas	
2	Color coding of signs, international symbols and increased signage along major highways, airports, tourist areas, etc.	
3	Warning tourists about illicit drugs	
4	Ensure licensed taxi driver	
5	Enlist local support of anti-crime measures	
6	Increasing awareness among mass people	
7	Ensure convenient, safe and secure transport facilities	
8	Political commitment for creating a contributing tourism sector	
9	Marketing and promotion of tourism	
10	Regional co-operation in tourism safety	

24. Would you come here again?

1. Yes
2. No

25. If no, why not? Select from the listed reasons below.

1. Expenses are too high
2. Concerns about crime
3. Want to visit other destinations

4. Others (please specify).....

26. Would you recommend others to visit Sylhet?

1. Yes

2. No

27. What are your personal suggestions that need to be implemented for developing tourism industry in Sylhet?

Annex 2

In-depth Interview Questionnaire

(Used for interviewing members of TOAB, Executive of BPC, BTB, TDAB, Managers of Hotels and Restaurants etc.)

Dear concern, I, Nazwa-Al-Zannat, am doing M.Phil in the Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, University of Dhaka under the supervision of Dr. Shaker Ahmed, Chairman of aforementioned department. This Questionnaire has been designed to conduct a research on “**Opportunities of Developing Tourism Industry in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Sylhet**” to fulfill the requirement of my M.Phil program. Your active participation can be of great value to do my research. Your views and opinions based on practical experience count much. The researcher is interested only in your honest and frank opinions. The data collected through this interview schedule will be kept strictly confidential and be put to use only for this research work. Your kind cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Participant Type: Industry practitioners.

Participant General Information

Name	Age	Education	Occupation	Mobile Number

Questionnaire

1. To what extent Sylhet is potential for the development of tourism industry in regard to the development of tourism industry in Bangladesh and why? Give your opinion in detail.
2. What factors do you think affect tourists’ satisfaction?
3. What do you mean by safe and secure tourist environment? How safe do you think Sylhet to travel? Give your opinion in detail. Tell about the measures taken to ensure safety and security of tourists.
4. Express your opinion about tourism crime. Tell about the measures taken to prevent tourism crime in Sylhet.
5. What do you think about unregistered hotel businesses, tour operators, travel guides, taxi drivers etc.?

- 6.** Tell about the success or failure of implementing the steps or programs taken between your organization and Ministry of Civil Aviation or Tourism or Bangladesh Tourism Board.
- 7.** What are the services that are provided by your organization?
- 8.** What are your tourism related activities (such as recreational, cultural and sports etc.) during peak season and off-peak season?
- 9.** Measures taken by your organization to develop tourism industry in Sylhet.
- 10.** Mention the main 5 strong points for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet.
- 11.** Mention the main 5 obstacles for the development of tourism industry in Sylhet.
- 12.** Your feedback or suggestions to reform the tourism sector in Sylhet and to build Sylhet a successful and ideal tourist city.