

# Preservation of Culture and Economic Sustainability Through Cultural Tourism

Malay Sarker

Associate Professor, Department of Hotel Management and Tourism, Royal University of Dhaka

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## ABSTRACT

The preservation of culture is crucial for the sustainable development of tourism, alongside economic sustainability. A nation can be well known through the presentation of its own culture. Bangladesh has great potential for cultural tourism since it is diversified with different cultures, heritage and festivals spread over the different regions of the country. The current state of cultural tourism in Bangladesh has been examined in this study, along with its potential, significance, and difficulties. The study also finds some weaknesses, challenges, and threats which hinder the growth of cultural tourism that need to be solved for economic growth and development. After examining the importance of tourism in Bangladesh, several promotional tactics have also been proposed.

**Keywords:** Preservation, Culture, Tourism, Sustainability, Development.

## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describes cultural tourism quite nicely. People who travel primarily for cultural purposes are referred to as engaging in cultural tourism, according to the UNWTO. This includes going on pilgrimages, going on study tours, going on performing arts tours, going on cultural tours, going to festivals, and going to see historic sites and monuments [1]. Additionally, cultural tourism may promote the exchange of historical and cultural traditions, which typically helps to preserve local history and revives national cultures, cultural arts, and traditional crafts. One of the key industries that may improve investment prospects, address the unemployment issue, and provide foreign exchange for our nation is tourism. Tourism is a combination of diverse economic, socio-cultural, and environmental activities when seen as a global issue. Economic, societal, and environmental effects will always result from the total growth of tourism [2],[3]. Additionally, reference [4] found that tourism benefits regional economies. According to reference [5], the host community is a village or town that welcomes visitors and offers them the services they require. The preservation of cultural heritage is regarded as a strategy for sustainable development, especially for the developing world, and is stated to be the fourth pillar of sustainable tourism, maybe even more so than the preservation of other forms of cultural expression [6], [7], & [8].

## THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

It is important to point out that cultural and heritage tourism is a tool for economic progress that generates economic growth by luring tourists from different nations who are interested entirely or in part in the historical importance, artistic beauty, scientific evidences, or lifestyle products or services of a community, geographic location, group, or organizations [9]. Due to the fact that its visitors spend more time and money

than other tourist categories, cultural and historical tourism is a crucial instrument for an economy to grow. Cultural tourism has great potential in Bangladesh. To grow this industry, appropriate regulations and funding are necessary. The Bangladeshi government has the power to implement effective development measures. The present study may be paved the future way to make proper planning for the conservation of culture to sustain our national economy.

## OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives have been taken into account for the study:

1. To know different significant aspects of cultural tourism,
2. To determine how to preserve various cultures and their economic impacts on Bangladesh and
3. To provide policy recommendations to promote cultural tourism in

## METHODOLOGY

The data and information needed for this study were mostly qualitative in nature and were gathered through document analysis. This study was especially crafted using theoretical ideas and secondary data. A literature review had been done for this reason. Numerous journals, magazines, books, newspaper articles, acts, rules, and policies of Bangladesh, websites, yearly reports, and documents of various agencies were carefully studied in order to get trustworthy secondary data.

## LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study can be generalized after considering certain limitations. Though the study is mainly based on reliable secondary data, existing literature on the cultural tourism development in Bangladesh and even on the overall marketing aspects is not adequate.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture may be defined as learned behavior, skills, values, and technology that are transmitted symbolically from one generation to the next [46]. The well-known definition of “society” by E.B. Taylor comprises the beliefs, ideas, traditions, law, morality, arts, and other capacities and skills that a person acquires as a member of a community. According to reference [10], social scientists who are interested in either society or cultures will find both of them to be relevant. A people’s manner of life is, in reality, reflected in their culture as a whole. According to reference [11], it is both a part of nature and apart from it. Development is best understood in terms of time, which denotes a transition from one condition to another or to a different ethos. The Globe, 1990 conference on environment and industry defined sustainable tourism as the fulfilling of the economic, social, and creative needs and upholding the cultural integrity, vital ecological process, biological diversity, and life support systems [12]. In general, it is said that culture was a significant factor in the tourism of the 19th-century as it was seen as an essential component of the education of the people of the upper classes. However, the second part of the 20th century saw an upsurge of cultural tourism across the globe. As a result, culture and tourism are able to work together to cater to the specific wants and requirements of travelers, many of whom visit primarily to experience the performing arts, visual arts, and crafts, museums, and cultural institutions. Due to the development of tourist infrastructure brought about by the birth and growth of mass tourism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as well as a continuous period of peace, cultural tourism has entered an age of extraordinary advancement in both the established and rising worlds [13]. Maintaining physical integrity of building, which symbolizes a society’s history and tradition, is the best approach to safeguard constructed heritage. According to the 1987 ICOMOS Washington

Charter, it may be any architectural ruin or structure [14].

It has a wide range of aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, historical, documented, social, political, and religious significance [15]. The Burra Charter emphasizes that conservation is the practice of maintaining a location in order to preserve cultural relevance [14]. It makes clear that there are a number of procedures that must be taken in order to preserve the cultural relevance of the locations. A location's cultural relevance is described as the whole spectrum of social and cultural elements that give each place a distinct identity and explain its importance to society [16]. Why historic sites important for a country depends on how its citizens perceive its cultural values [17]. Ignoring the fact that cultural legacy is now widely acknowledged as a collection of tangible and intangible assets that are created, conveyed, and processed to improve a territory's identity and economic standing would be highly foolish. As a result, cultural values and legacy might be considered a resource. It is a fragile resource that is frequently irreplaceable and needs cautious handling. Given that it serves as a tool for conservation and as a vital component of the national constitution, cultural heritage has turned into an asset for a nation [18]. We should keep in mind another important viewpoint from reference [19], who attempted to demonstrate the significance of legacy for economic growth, namely from the perspective of its function as intermediary consumption for companies seeking recommendations for their new goods. Based on the distinction between heritage supports (non-reproducible and non-substitutable) and heritage Services, reference [20] conducted an analysis (repeatable and largely interchangeable). This has the potential to provide enormous economic advantages, including those that are monetary, non-monetary, economic, social, cultural, and environmental, as well as employment opportunities [21].

### **Concept of Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism has been conceptualized in a way that is similar to how the concept of heritage has evolved over the past several decades. It is that type of tourism whose objectives include, among others, discovering monuments and historical sites [14]. We may all agree that this definition has a strong connection to a constrained and imposing understanding of legacy. The International Cultural Tourism Charter was updated by ICOMOS in 1999, and it states that living cultures, diversity, and the world's natural and cultural assets are the main draws for tourists. Living cultures, variety, and the world's natural and cultural treasures are said to be the key attractions for travelers, according to the International Cultural Tourism Charter, which was rectified by ICOMOS in 1999. Experience has been as a crucial idea nowadays, and travelers are always searching for fresh, inspiring experiences. It can be difficult to decide how to define cultural tourism—should we go by the goods that are consumed, or by the reasons why people travel there? Are tourists get attracted to historic sites for any particular reason? What type of experience may visitors expect to achieve? These queries may be legitimately expressed while attempting to define what tourists want to get from cultural heritage and what we, as conservators, are expected to accomplish in the process of adding cultural importance in the tourism offer. It is also important to note that festivals and events, commonly connected to cultural and ecological importance, are increasingly acknowledged as important elements of cultural tourism. They play significant roles in preserving cultural traditions and differences and giving communities the means to generate revenue and employment opportunities. Although there is a chance that greater demand could result in a loss of authenticity in terms of procedures and product, tourism can help in maintaining and developing historical craft skills [22].

### **Culture and Its Preservation**

This section summarizes some of the main theories about culture, how it manifests physically in the tourism industry, and how historic areas are preserved [23], [24] & [25]. According to the World Bank [22], culture is the entire set of unique spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics that constitute a community or society. It encompasses not just the arts and letters but also lifestyles, human rights fundamentals, values, traditions, and beliefs [26]. It may be said that any society's heritage is one of its most

valuable resources. Tangible heritage may be viewed as a tangible symbol or sign of cultural expression, whether it is a tradition from a current civilization or one from a previous society that once lived in the same place. Therefore, if one wants to understand society better, one must consider material legacy. All levels of government, non-governmental groups, and developers have played a significant role in the preservation effort. Laws and regulations that safeguard whole surroundings were created in response to worries about the limitations of recognizing and defending individual structures. Crafts are typically a big part of the cultural tourism in geographic locations. Many nations retain historical sites for interpretation and teaching; these locations are frequently distinguished by intensive government focus, high levels of study, and documentation. Challenges and concerns related to preservation differ accordingly. The legal framework for preserving cultural assets is frequently greater than the managerial competence in underdeveloped nations. As a result, more individuals could participate in the heritage protection process, and a history that encompassed both ordinary occurrences and significant occasions was established.

### **Culture as a Tourism Attraction**

The importance of culture and cultural legacy to a society's identity, self-respect, and dignity goes without saying. This is true for both wealthy and underdeveloped societies. A visitor who is conscious may be able to get a rudimentary understanding of the past and/or current culture through tangible legacy, which has adapted to and affected the environment they are attempting to comprehend. Cultural tourism got some great opportunities to better understand and respect between different cultures, provided that these fundamental facts are recognized and used as guidelines for presentation and communication between travelers and the local community. Surveying and monitoring mechanisms for maintaining the condition of cultural asset protection and putting the required safeguards in place are therefore exceedingly difficult. This kind of tourism has been around for a while, but recent developments in the major source nations' populations, societies, and cultures have given rise to a growing variety of new niche markets in the destination countries, including vacations focused on culture. For the tourist, nature is a notable gift. Due to these developments, tourism with cultural and natural features is becoming more and more popular. However, one may also see this rise in demand as a chance to spark curiosity and awareness across a larger segment of society than was previously feasible. Additionally, cultural attractions frequently draw market groups with high levels of education and money, which can result in places reaping relatively substantial net advantages [27].

### **Weakness and Challenges**

In this context, now we will try to make an attempt to review a model of cultural tourism to better understand the study. When it comes to the specific processes (identity formation, development, and change) occurring at the interface between the local side and the tourist side, concerning culture and cultural tourism, the model of cultural tourism as the common ground between culture and tourism (Figure 1) illustrates the reciprocal relationship between the two sides. In terms of tourism and culture, it is thought that these two reciprocal links exist more frequently. The sets of arrows pertaining to cultural tourism, however, are more significant to our study and are depicted with longer lines. Finally, the darkened area denotes "cultural tourism," which is the intersection of the two major circles of "culture" and "tourist." Sequentially, while the idea of sustainability provides opportunities for integrating environmental, social, and economic goals and considerations [28], [29] & [30], conflicting interests and pursuits frequently make it difficult or impossible to put it into practice, especially when the cultural factor is taken into account [31], [32], [33] & [34]. This issue not only pertains to but also exacerbates the operationalization of the notion in the context of tourism, a synthetic and multidimensional element by definition [35], [36], [37], & [38].

This work aims to contribute to the social sciences and tourism research principality by addressing some of the ambiguity and controversy regarding the applicability of the cultural sustainability concept to tourism, especially cultural tourism. In contrast to reference [39] "managed authenticity," maximum package vacationers most frequently want to participate in the hybrid, joyful resort culture or are content to enjoy a

marketed, “manufactured” or “pseudo-culture” of the host country [35]. However, when it comes to creating, maintaining, enhancing, or further expanding local culture and tourist sustainability, cultural tourism possibilities may become very desired and advantageous, contributing to the entire destination-sustainable development.



**Figure 1.** Model of cultural tourism as the common ground between culture and tourism adapted from [40].

### Cultural Tourism and COVID19

Due to COVID-19’s effect on world tourism, millions of individuals who are under quarantine are searching for cultural and holiday experiences away from their homes. Culture has become increasingly important throughout this period, and there has never been more demand for online access to exhibitions, historical places, plays, and performances. The lives of millions of cultural workers are now substantially in jeopardy as more than 80% of UNESCO World Heritage assets have been shuttered. If tourism is expected to help the cultural sector survive. Despite all the challenges, there remains a chance for new collaborations and collaboration in the tourist and cultural sectors. They must work together to broaden and reinvent the offerings, draw in new customers, learn new skills, and aid in the global adjustment to the new conditions (UNWTO) [47].

### The Economic Impact of Cultural Tourism

The advantages of cultural tourism in terms of the economy are numerous. It injects fresh money into the economy, increasing companies and tax revenues, and it generates new employment opportunities, enterprises, events, and attractions, aiding in the diversification of the local economy. Additionally, it encourages active preservation and conservation of significant local resources and helps small enterprises grow. It fosters crucial connections between and among local communities, supports the creation and upkeep of new and ongoing community amenities, and promotes overall economic growth. Alternatively, macroeconomic and microeconomic levels may be used to study the economic effects of cultural tourism [41]. From macro point of view, the economic value of cultural tourism may be characterized as a set of benefits for a given society. Through direct, indirect, and induced impacts, the macroeconomic relevance of cultural tourism is mirrored in the encouragement of other economic sectors. Therefore, cultural tourism is a strategy of development since it encourages the growth of different economic sectors, which ultimately helps achieve a certain aim. The consumption of cultural tourists is influenced by four fundamental factors: average consumption, duration of stay, cultural attractions, and cultural activities [42]. However, in general, cultural tourism has induced, indirect, and direct economic effects [43]. As a result of visitors’ spending on lodging, dining, transportation, communications, and retail establishments, direct income is generated, as well as government revenue, employment impacts, and some direct imports of products and services [44].

The challenge of tracking and determining the economic effects of cultural tourism is highlighted by recent study. Two schools of thinking exist. Because of the exceedingly complex character of tourism, which results from the interdependence of the industry with other sectors, some experts believe it is difficult to determine the economic effect of tourism. Although there is disagreement about how to measure and quantify the economic benefit of cultural tourism, some scholars contend that it is difficult but not impossible to do so [45]. Because the creation of a cultural tourism product transforms non-economic resources into ones that have economic value and have an impact on the economy, it is important to assess the economic impact of cultural tourism. For strategic plans to optimize economic impacts by valorizing cultural resources, it is necessary to identify economic consequences in order to analyze the impact of cultural tourism.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study attempts to present some recommendations as follows:

1. Focus on quality and authenticity: When discussing legacy or history, excellent service is essential, and quality is a must for any cultural heritage tourism. For existing architectural heritage to retain their authenticity, they must be protected.
2. Collaborate: Creating partnerships increases the active involvement of politicians, businesspeople, operators, creative people, artisans, hoteliers, and many other individuals and groups. Collaborations across regions are advantageous for the tourism of cultural heritage. The resources might include facilities (traveler lodgings) or knowledge in tourism, preservation, or the arts, in addition to money for marketing initiatives, for instance.
3. Find the fit: A few factors, such as matching the requirements of locals and tourists, and the match between communities' and visitors' expectations, must be taken into account for heritage tourism to be effective. Making sure that everybody benefits from cultural heritage tourism is essential.
4. Preserve and protect: A community's natural, historical, and cultural treasures are priceless and frequently unique. For the long term, it is crucial to conserve the historic and cultural treasures because they are crucial to tourism.

Some other recommendations have been suggested for further promotion of cultural tourism:

5. Develop information and data exchange between sectors: With the use of detailed data on the economic consequences of COVID-19 on culture and tourism as well as the solutions being taken to safeguard the preservation of cultural tourism, more focused mitigation strategies that may adapt to diverse needs and copy good practices would be conceivable.
6. Introduce innovative alliances: To expand access to online programs for building capacity in culture and sustainable tourism throughout this digital transformation, tourism and culture may form partnerships with tech companies and the commercial sector.
7. Create a workforce for tourism and culture that is more resilient: To increase access to online activities for strengthening in culture and sustainable tourism throughout this digital transformation, tourism and culture may form partnerships with tech companies and the commercial sector. Both sectors need to develop creative and inventive employment solutions to provide resilience to the workforce after decades of precarity.
8. Promote a more prosperous future for cultural tourism: To encourage a more prosperous future for tourism industry, the tourist and cultural sectors must continue to collaborate. Tourism marketing

strategies emphasize regional cultural manifestations to appeal to new audiences and to promote ethical travel.

9. In order to effectively coordinate efforts and exchange information, governance institutions should be strengthened: Platforms should support efficient dialogue, consensus-building, and agreements regarding the parameters of tourist development incorporating cultural resources.
10. Draw in new audiences: In the years to come, the emotional connections that are presently forming between people and cultural producers will matter.

## CONCLUSION

Without being too specific, we can say that cultural tourism in Bangladesh has a lot of potential because the country is home to a variety of ethnic groups with distinctive subcultures, traditions, and festivals that may be of great interest to both domestic and foreign visitors. The government ought to put its attention on the nation's rich cultural legacy in order to introduce and develop Bengali culture. Although there are certain restrictions on cultural tourism in Bangladesh, there is still a lot of room for growth if the right strategy and plan are provided and put into place.

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