

Broadening Tourism and Cultivating Sustainability: Exploring Opportunities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper explores how tourism can be understood as an opportunity to develop sustainable enterprise, providing business opportunities while also advancing social and environmental goals. While every country has multiple challenges to manage in the future, we argue that comprehensive planning for sustainable tourism can integrate several policy goals and realize compounded benefits as governments declare their commitment to ‘build back better.’ The need to plan for sustainable development is especially salient in the wake of the pandemic, and with climate change looming. Using Bangladesh as our case study, we consider how integrated and cross-sectoral planning for tourism could help provide more opportunities for visitors to appreciate the rich resources located there, such as the cultural heritage, and the rare species and mangroves of the Sundarbans, while simultaneously advancing policy goals for social welfare and the environment. We outline opportunities on the horizon, and by drawing on demographic data about the Bangladeshi diaspora, it becomes clear that heritage tourism has potential and merits further study. Finally, targeting the expansion of sustainable livelihoods can strengthen local economies and simultaneously help Bangladesh advance its efforts toward related national goals, including the UN’s SDGs (United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals).

Keywords: Bangladesh, sustainable development goals (SDGs), heritage tourism, sustainable enterprise, community-based tourism, sustainable livelihoods

1. Introduction

Sustainable tourism is a recently-articulated concept, established only a few decades ago, and is expected to continue expanding into the 21st century; meanwhile, challenges continue. For example, the attractiveness of the fragile venues where ecotourism is centered are often under threat from tourism itself, along with other social processes including the difficulties of adapting to climate change. It is typical for governments worldwide to have ‘tourism planning’ efforts, however, these initiatives are almost always located within economic development agencies. While the global pandemic continues to have significant impacts on tourism overall, and many researchers are exploring exactly what that may hold for the future, this study is premised on the notion that many of the core dynamics within the tourism sector will be re-established as the recovery proceeds (Dias et al., 2021; Rastegar et al., 2021; Sheller, 2021).

Both sustainable tourism and ecotourism have been variously defined, now generally referring to nature-based activities that are antithetical to mass tourism (Fennell 2020); the concept is evolving as the practice expands and the theories explaining it become more sophisticated. While the activities of the ecotourism sector are generally convergent with sustainability goals, the connections may not always be as strong and effective as the term suggests (ibid.). Skeptics have questioned whether ecotourism actually contributes to sustainable destination development or not (Wondirad, 2019), and investigators have worked to identify strategies that can help reinforce the promise(s) of ecotourism, while avoiding the pitfalls that undermine it. Some have asserted that, in the wake of neoliberalism’s reliance on continued growth, a rethinking of tourism is required, in order to “...focus on the rights of local communities and a rebuilding of the social capacities of tourism” (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Building on these perspectives, we argue that purposeful planning - rather than a laissez-faire approach - is called for now, in order to help tourism achieve the social and environmental benefits that are frequently (merely) implicit in the

concept of sustainability. By joining-up governmental programs in multiple sectors (including economic development, poverty alleviation, environmental management, etc.), administrators and leaders can increase the chance that ecotourism will have impactful results on the ground in specific locations.

We argue that by embracing sustainable enterprise in tourism planning, agencies can conduct tourism planning in a cross-sectoral way that engages social and environmental goals along with economic purposes, yielding more positive, diverse, and resilient long-term outcomes for countries such as Bangladesh. This will come about for three reasons: first, the term ‘sustainable’ immediately evokes the three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic, and environmental) and their interconnections (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019). Second, for economic development, the term ‘sustainable’ in the phrase ‘sustainable enterprise’ introduces a focus on the material dimensions, forcing firms to engage environmental impacts, and without an explicit focus on sustainability, tourism planning can proceed like any other type of economic planning, treating natural resources and ecosystems as yet another input to a business plan. The third benefit of the sustainability dimension is that it changes the metrics used in the evaluation of tourism planning, in that it includes systematic attention to factors including resource depletion, ecosystem dynamics, and life cycle assessment, among others. One example of the society-wide benefit that can emerge when planners and policy specialists adopt cross-sectoral integration at the national level comes from the field of environmental policy and how it evolved: while the end-of-pipe approach was made sense at first, it was overly focused on managerial goals and limited opportunities for information sharing (Durant, Fiorino, & O’Leary, 2017). The shift in strategy came about as a result of sustained efforts to push back against the ‘siloing’ that is all too common among policy areas and government agencies (Korfmacher, 2019; Boschken, 2013). Similarly, cross-sectoral action was recommended in a recent article explaining why we need the ‘whole of government’ involved in climate change policy (McKibben, 2021).

Many have already explained why tourism, and especially ecotourism, should attend to sustainability goals (Mondino & Beery, 2019). Ecotourism generates revenue ways that reinforce sound support ‘greener’ management practices (K.C. et al., 2015; Donohoe & Needham, 2008), and provides opportunities for small and medium-scale enterprises to grow and benefit the local communities, helping to build their natural, social, and cultural capitals (Porter et al., 2017). In less developed countries, social entrepreneurs often lack supportive institutions, so it can especially significant when governments provide the necessary infrastructure and mechanisms for development (Mair & Lanuza, 2006). Furthermore, studies have supported the ways ecotourism benefits destinations (e.g. K.C., 2015); Regmi and Walter (2016) have shown solutions to the complexities associated with tourism and conservation, highlighting ways that community-based ecotourism (CBET) can establish a mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental conservation, local economic livelihood, and cultural preservation. It is helpful that the United Nation’s SDGs provide guidance for inclusive development processes, including suggested metrics to help monitor natural and social carrying capacity. We argue that the attention needs take place not just among the enterprises themselves but rather at the level of government, and specifically within agencies with planning responsibilities. This is because the government is uniquely positioned to ensure that the social infrastructure to support the sector is in place (which may include elements such as education, job training, business advisors, faculty research, etc.). It is also because the government is able to do the integrated cross-sectoral planning, since it is the government that makes commitments to policy goals. Finally, it allows governmental planners to make use of the UN’s Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs): drawing on the SDGs in the context of tourism planning would provide another way to realize national commitments, and possibly one of the most uniquely cross-sectoral ways to manifest the goals they articulate. Bangladesh’s General Economic Division (GED), under the Planning Commission, embraces comprehensive planning for implementation of 17 goals of SDGs within the country’s 7th five year national development plan (UNDP, 2019; GED, 2018). In addition, there is a tracking system to navigate present status of achieving targets of SDGs (United Nations, 2021). However, in the tourism sector there are not yet any guidelines or databases that can help it directly participate in the SDG achievement targets.

2. Materials and Methods

The research presented here explores current understandings about what constitutes ecotourism, and how it could be developed in the future. A mixed method approach is used in this research: qualitative methods form the foundation of the analysis of the key concepts covered, and quantitative methods support the discussion of the Bangladeshi diaspora. We use concepts and definitions put forward by researchers and journalists as well as policy analysts working in key organizations. The case study presented here, Bangladesh, is important as a large, less developed country, with a forward-looking government and many opportunities for policy development. We explored how tourism planning is conceptualized by drawing upon multiple sources including: academic publications, popular press and social media, governmental reports, ‘grey literature’ web published by NGOs

(nongovernmental organizations), and statements prepared by advocacy groups.

In addition to the literature review and analysis, we drew on data from organizations that track demographic changes, economic indicators, and ecosystem disturbance. Taken together, this information was used to analyze several ways that additional planning elements can be considered along with sustainable tourism, and what benefits might potentially result from such an integrated approach. By analyzing both the literature reviewed and the data sources cited, we help answer the questions that have been raised about the future of tourism in Bangladesh.

3. Results

Our research examined how the concept of sustainability is realized, and its implications for livelihoods, in the tourism context, and specifically in Bangladesh. We explore two concepts significant to our larger goal: heritage tourism and sustainable enterprise (Zollo et al., 2013). Finally, we present data on the Bangladeshi context, and the Bangladeshi diaspora, highlighting potential market dimensions that have yet to be investigated.

3.1 Heritage Tourism

A concept that may have important and unconsidered implications for broadening ecotourism in Bangladesh is heritage tourism, and it may catalyze tourism to the region generally, or provide an additional attraction for those already travelling in the region. One interpretation of heritage tourism is that it gets established in an area based on the historical importance of specific locations to the visitors (Timothy et al., 2008), and other forms of heritage tourism emphasize traditional ways of life. In many developing countries, these ways continue in villages (Nuryanti, 1996), and because developing countries are also less urbanized, it is true that 'cultural capital' is often highly preserved in rural areas. It is well understood that ecotourism and heritage are interconnected, as the ecotourism approach conserves nature as well as the culture of destination by educating tourists can conserve heritage as well (Steele-Prohaska, 1996). With planning and purposeful development of the social infrastructure for tourism, it would be possible to combine heritage tourism and ecotourism, and this could help head off difficulties with seasonal business, allowing steadier income streams (Newland & Taylor, 2010; Benton & Shabazz, 2009).

Heritage tourism scholars have also distinguished 'roots' or genealogical tourism, acknowledging the interest of tourists exploring family heritage, especially those who are returning to their ancestors' homeland. The term 'diaspora' refers to a population that is dwelling outside of its traditional areas, and it become commonly used in connection with relocated populations of Jewish people (Cohen, 2008). Diaspora communities can develop through many different processes, with the initial move being either forced or voluntary, frequently job-related or family motivated, among other things (Basu, 2017); some demographics about the Bangladeshi diaspora are discussed in section 3.3 below. Motivations for travel can include connections to a 'home place,' desire to visit with relatives, learn about ancestors, and more. The extent of global connections among people's families and other social groups are strong and growing, at a time when digital technologies have reduced the difficulties with staying in touch, and air travel costs are less prohibitive. It is not unusual for expatriates to make regular visits back to a country of origin. The heritage-hungry population of the diaspora communities sometimes manifests the intention to search for their roots, generally or specifically, and deep emotions can be attached to these journeys (Huang *et al.*, 2013; Ari & Mittelberg, 2008). Later generations have also been documented as having feelings of obligation to visit their homeland, because of transnational attachments (Huang, 2018). The number of Bangladeshis living outside their country is very high: Table 1 represents data on the millions of citizens who are living abroad and the continents where they are located. A study by ERD (2018) shows almost 13 million people in diaspora communities in 162 countries around the world.

At this point in time, heritage tourism and genealogical tourism has developed in some areas of the world but not others. When people's motivation for targeting a location to travel is not based on the local amenities but rather their own perceptions of the location and its significance - a very personal and private set of perceptions (Timothy, 2020). Researchers have considered many aspects of it, for example, how heritage tourism in the Caribbean has multifaceted significance to the visitors (Scher, 2011), and how roots tourism in Ghana poses challenges for representation and promotion (Mensah, 2015; Yankholmes and McKercher, 2015). Travel to ancestral lands can also resonate with social justice goals, explain some researchers focused on African American roots tourism (Dillette, 2020). As mentioned, one of the most advanced areas for genealogical tourism is Eastern Europe (Podoshen, 2017), and what has emerged there illustrates some of the ways that Bangladesh could become a site for this form of tourism. We argue that South Asia, and specifically Bangladesh, may become a site for genealogical tourism, and further studies exploring opportunities are indicated. Because of overlapping and complementary interests between sustainable tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism, and sustainable livelihoods, it would be a promising topic for investigation by one or more government agencies.

The forms of tourism known as heritage tourism frequently center on peoples' own exploration of places of significance to them, for personal or cultural reasons (Graham and Howard, 2008). These travel destinations can be places they remember, or perhaps they have only heard about, and in some cases, it can be a place that was rarely spoken about, sometimes one remembered mainly because of stories of loss and pain (ibid.). The complexities of heritage tourism can involve how trauma is endured, people's memories, and the ways they engage with history. For example, knowing that ancestors were dwelling in places marked by antisemitism, in nation-states where Jews were explicitly forbidden from owning land, may seem like a past to try to forget, yet this shaped how people lived, and many are people are curious about these places and histories, perhaps even provoked by omissions or silences (Ray and McCain 2012; Santos and Yan, 2010). Clearly, there is much in the way of resistance and perseverance that took place, in order for the living to be here today, actively contemplating the past; for a growing number of Jewish people, roots tourism in Eastern Europe is strong and compelling, and it continues to become more sophisticated overtime (Podoshen, 2017; Lehrer, 2013). What started with basic encounters with the past, such as visits to cemeteries and former synagogues, has now expanded to involve multi-day immersions which can include deeper explorations of 19th-century lifeways, food systems, and even workshops in Yiddish language (Luzen, 2019).

An additional factor influencing heritage tourism is genetic testing, and it has become a popular way to explore ancestral relationships and genealogy (23andme, 2021; Braun, 2019). Websites such as Ancestry.com offer new ways to learn about family relationships. Consumer use of DNA for heritage research is new within the past decade (Angelo et al., 2020; Mountain and Guelke, 2008), but impacts are already being examined (Leith & Sim, 2016). These avenues of connection may fuel roots tourism in Bangladesh, but it has not been explored to date.

3.2 Sustainability and Sustainable Enterprise

Sustainable tourism (and ecotourism) can be broadened through planning that draws on several important concepts, and this will also achieve other social goals simultaneously. We explore how more sustainable enterprise could be stimulated, using two strategies: sustainable livelihoods, and community-based ecotourism, and we address them in turn.

Sustainable Livelihoods: The sustainable livelihoods concept helps emphasize the importance of planners combining long-term economic planning with attention to people's day-to-day needs and relationships to ecosystems and resources. In many developing countries, people's lack of participation in decision-making hinders them from being empowered, causing them to struggle more than they otherwise would. The rural poor in the developing economies are dependent on the subsistence economy, and this can drive them into situations where they are unable to fulfill their basic needs (Shen, Hughey & Simmons, 2008). However, focusing on sustainable livelihoods targets poverty alleviation as the main strategy to help the rural poor (UNODC, 2011). The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) addresses the sustainability of various assets by improving and diversifying livelihoods, and by enhancing resilience capacities relative to various vulnerabilities, shocks, and seasonality, underscoring an 'asset-vulnerability approach' (McKeller & Sardon, 2012; Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003). The concept of SL was first mentioned in a report by World Commission and Development (WCED) in late 1980s (Scoones, 1998), and more fully developed in the late 1990s (e.g. IDS, 1998). By recommending the use of all types of assets in a sustainable way, it improves the income, ecological restoration, economic integration, and satisfaction to the community (Giannoukou & Beneki, 2018). The SLA also analyzes the vulnerability inherent in the activities on which the livelihood assets depend, and can provide solutions to the poor communities to reestablish livelihoods in ways that can adapt to natural and anthropogenic disasters (Serrat, 2017; Ashley & Carnery, 1999; Scoones, 1998). SLA also analyzes the role of gender, especially in governance in the rural system, and it bridges connections between households and decision-makers at the community level (Scoones, 1998).

One of the initial projects using the SLA was jointly run by three organizations (United Nations, DFID, and FAO); the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Program (SFLP, from 1999 to 2006), and it included around seven million people who were directly or indirectly involved in fishing activities, practiced the SL framework within SFLP (Allison and Horemans, 2006). Several other SL-based projects were carried out in India, Pakistan, Zambia, and Namibia by DFID (Ashley, 2000). Mbaiwa (2011) states that community-based tourism in Okavango Delta, Botswana transformed traditional lifestyle (subsistence economies) into a cash economy, similar to that of the west, which brought gradual positive changes to the poor communities of the Delta region. Many examples also help illustrate how the SLA can work to confirm social justice, and focuses on people's assets, strategies, and strengths, transcending the narrower approaches (Ashley 2000; Tao & Wall, 2009).

In cases where seasonality has been ignored in tourism, and especially in rural areas, the off-season poverty could be replaced by alternative sources of income from ecotourism development. The Livelihood Capital Index (LCI)

could be used to fit in tourism when seasonality exists (Su *et al.*, 2019). Many rural areas feature cultivable lands where different crops are produced, as well as rivers or wetland where fisheries resources are extracted. Hence, identifying LCI and SLA for specific areas can assess and work as a poverty alleviation mechanism. Nyaupane (2011) argues that tourism can benefit local livelihoods in various ways, and can conserve biodiversity as well. For example, in Danayigu Ecological Park, Taiwan, SLA is a very good example that involves the local community, including a marginalized group, to participate in diversified livelihood processes that enhanced their economic sustainability by offering year round income generation. Communities in rural areas often rely on just one kind of economic activity or livelihood process, however, in this example, tourism in the park systems opened broader opportunities for them to be involved in sustainable livelihood generation (Tao & Wall, 2009).

The already-existing practices and knowledge base in a community can provide an excellent foundation for developing the SLA. For example, Rauf *et al.* (2019) found that indigenous people get more benefit from ecotourism established in the Saiful Malook National Park in Pakistan because of SLA and their traditional knowledge. Meilani *et al.* (2019) found that while ecotourism in Sebangau National Park in Indonesia was not generating much more income relative to their existing livelihood, however, there was optimism about the future of diversified and sustainable livelihood from ecotourism as it evolved further. In India, an SL project expanded some already-successful livestock operations that were being carried out by the rural poor, and this was done by adding some modern technology and opening up avenues for value chain assimilation (Hegde, 2019). In China, a study by Su *et al.* confirmed the importance of grounding initiatives in the local community, in establishing integrated tourism and teas projects in Anhui Province (2019). Clark (2017) documented a close relationship between marine fishing and knowledge of dolphins in the seas of Myanmar and Bangladesh, concluding that only ecotourism can help restore the vitality of the fishing community there; otherwise, the use of electrical fishing systems threatens to destroy not only the long-cherished fishing heritage, but also rare species of dolphins found only in that region.

By applying the sustainable livelihood model of the United Nations, it becomes clear which part of the country's five forms of assets need to be cultivated in order to fully embrace a sustainable livelihoods strategy. These five types of assets (sometimes called capital) are: natural, human, social, physical, and financial. Bangladesh has considerable natural resources for tourism which are yet to be utilized; social assets are also fairly plentiful although the institutions may not yet be ideal for supporting sustainable livelihoods; the human capital, which is also known as labor, refers to trained workers, and this category is lacking as there are few institutes providing training for careers in tourism or ecotourism, and more would need to be established particularly in rural or peripheral settings; physical capital including infrastructure, is still somewhat basic, as in many developing countries. And finally, financial assets is the category that needs the most development and the government's financial instruments remain limited and there has been no specific emphasis on ecotourism development as of yet. Thus the potential for developing sustainable livelihoods is present but will need additional focused attention in order to help this strategy be fully realized.

Community-Based Ecotourism: Another concept that can be especially helpful in reaching broader social goals is community-based ecotourism (CBET), which emphasizes the role of geographically proximate residents in carrying out the economic activities comprising the tourism sector. Because it directs attention to local communities, and to issues related to income distribution and concentration of wealth, it provides opportunities to engage concerns that might have been bracketed out of the planning process. In that way, it allows political concerns to be addressed, without necessarily labeling them as tightly connected to one particular political party or group. Several case studies have shown the success of CBET, and particularly in the peripheral and rural areas of ecotourism destinations (Regmi and Walter, 2016). This helps show how sustainable livelihoods can combine with ecotourism, and furthermore, it also illustrates how multiple income-generating activities can be developed so that communities are providing tourism services in the peak seasons of tourism, and other livelihood generating activities in the off-season.

Proper policy instruments are needed for human resources development, which will be directly involved in supporting the ecotourism enterprises. For implementation in Bangladesh, several kinds of financial instruments would need to be developed such as: scholarships, grants, loans and other business incentives. It would also be possible to focus on women and marginal groups in establishing economic regeneration strategies and participation processes (Aregu *et al.*, 2018). Another important aspect would be developing the larger infrastructures that support this form of ecotourism, such as: improved waste management processes, local food systems, enhanced accessibility, and ease of renewable energy accessibility. And most importantly, If the community is engaged in the tourism development process, it can build on existing strengths (for example the traditional markets described by Ahmed in 2010), and this will enhance the likelihood for order and security to be more fully implemented in

ways that enhance local job security. Already the government of Bangladesh has a tourist police force to help ensure safety; support for security could be anchored in the communities own self-guided development process, if this CBET strategy is embraced.

3.3 The Bangladeshi Context

Bangladesh is a sizeable nation (163 million people, eighth largest in the world), with an economy that is growing strongly (growth rate of GDP 5.2% even during the pandemic and 8.3% in 2019, highest in south Asia, according to the Asian Development Bank). Its tourism sector forms a notable part of the nation's economy, at 3%, and as of 2019, its annual growth rate was 6.8% (WTTC, 2020). Tourism in Bangladesh includes both in-country and transnational visitors. Information on the number of Bangladeshis living abroad documents the scale of the Bangladeshi diaspora (ERD, 2018; ILO, 2015), Table 1 showing millions of Bangladeshis living abroad, primarily in developed countries. (In the wake of the pandemic, recent migration patterns have been disrupted from previous years.) Still, Bangladeshis in the diaspora are living in wealthier countries and earning significantly more than those living in Bangladesh, where the per capita GDP and GNI are estimated at \$2,110 and \$1,968 respectively (World Bank, 2020). Though the numbers of international tourists (pre-pandemic) have been lower than those of neighboring countries (only about 0.3 million annually according to the World Bank, 2019), domestic tourist flows are higher. There is lack of statistical data on domestic tourist flows within the country, however, from a discussion with the president and secretary of the association of Tour Operators and Travel Agents of Bangladesh (TOAB) it has been found that a single site, Cox's Bazar, is receiving more than 25 million visitors each year, and at busy times, overflowing beyond its capacity. In the past decade, many resorts, including international chain hotels, are becoming established and diversified services are being offered in the country, but these products and services remain concentrated in just a few destinations, and broader distribution has not been maintained because of lack of proper planning and management.

Sustainable tourism and ecotourism in Bangladesh have been addressed by researchers for more than twenty years (Tisdell, 1997), yet the scale and scope of ecotourism there remain fairly modest, and much of the attention is centered on just a few destinations. Sites that have been most thoroughly discussed include the World Heritage Site the Sundarbans (Haque *et al.*, 2016), as well as the country's three UNESCO-designated ecologically critical zones (IUCN, 2015). The private sector is the main actor in tourism in Bangladesh and several organizations represent the interest of participating firms, for example: the Tour Associations of Bangladesh (TAB), the Tour Operators Association Bangladesh (TOAB), and the Bangladesh International Hotel Association (BIHA). In addition, there have been a number of so-called eco-travel efforts made by various private groups, however, their understanding of green or sustainable tourism practices is limited. Some observers have made arguments for the potential to develop specific types of tourism, for example: fisheries-based ecotourism (Mozumder *et al.*, 2018) and ecotourism related to the coast (Islam, Iftekhhar, & Islam, 2011). Another focus has been tourism related to Indigenous communities there (Carr, Ruhanaen, & Whitford, 2016), and one important conclusion about that niche is "NGOs need to go beyond service delivery and adopt an advocacy role in order to address some of the underlying structural inequities faced by such communities," (Hoque, Lovelock & Carr, 2020). In addition, many researchers have chosen to work empirically, interviewing current tourists on-site, to get a better understanding of their impressions and motivations (e.g. Rahman *et al.*, 2013). Transnational initiatives have helped establish projects: the European Union has funded a program to stimulate ecotourism, developed by the nongovernmental organization Relief International, starting in 2014 (Relief International, 2021); the US Agency for International Development sponsored an ecotourism development project in the Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary (USAID, 2016).

Because nation-states are dynamic entities, it is essential to acknowledge the history of the place presently known as Bangladesh and to do this in connection with the cultural groups that call it home. The partitions severed both places and families, so heritage tourism may be more inclusive than imagined: it frequently targets a country of origin, as explained by elders through recounting of family histories. While only formed as such in 1971, the Bangladeshi nation incorporated much of the region known as Bengal, and this is interrelated with the modern history of Bangladesh (Van Schendel, 2020). British rule ended in the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and at that time, portions of what was known as Bengal got incorporated into the Republic of India, and these parts were West Bengal Bihar and Odisha. The province of East Bengal became known as East Pakistan, and in 1971 following the Bangladesh liberation war, it became an independent nation, gaining full membership in the United Nations in 1974. The early history of the region is extensive and beyond the scope of this paper, but visitors to the country have opportunities to learn about its impressive history as part of the Mughal empire's wealthiest province, the Bengal subah. During the 16th to 18th centuries, it was a rich source of trade and resources, making up half of the GDP of the empire, which in turn accounted for about 12% of the world's GDP, which was more than western Europe's at that time. Early strengths in fields including the arts, various crafts, fabrics, sculpture, and navigation

and watercraft have helped distinguish the region. For these reasons, the place names and the stories coming from grandparents and ancestors should be considered carefully for those making connections to today's worlds.

It is also important to discuss the Bangladeshi diaspora with reference to past and present migration streams, including the people who have emigrated from there, across time. Research on African American communities in the United States has recently uncovered migration streams from the lands now called Bangladesh, dating back to the late 19th century (Bald, 2013). Bengali Muslim seamen and traders began entering New York in the 1880s, and these men were subject to systemic racism that dictated their options for work and family life (ibid.). Many of the workers returned home, but those who stayed typically settled into African American and Puerto Rican communities (Bald, 2007), and cultural practices including names and foodways are manifest in their hidden histories (Roy, 2021; Howell, 2014). While the scale of this migration may have been modest, it illustrates how people's sense of themselves and their heritage can shift over time, potentially expanding interest in tourism in Bangladesh.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

It is essential that the tourism sector continue adapting to risks associated with the country's natural environment (including climate change) and its socioeconomic context (acknowledging poverty, uneven development, and challenges with refugees). Private firms involved in tourism industries, and entrepreneurs in medium and small enterprises, can incorporate sustainability into their business through changes to their operational practices (including green technologies, renewable energy, life cycle assessments, waste minimization, sustainable sourcing of products purchased, etc.). The nature of these adaptations will depend on the availability of assets, including people with job skills, education, social resources, imagination, and favorable policies that facilitate planning among the key stakeholders. It would be beneficial for governmental and university researchers to develop a plan for ecotourism, in order to broaden it and help create a strategy for the conservation of heritage and ecosystems as well as sustainable livelihood, establishing enterprises that will advance the utilization of assets in a sustainable way. Finally, comprehensive research is essential to help outline the future of Bangladesh's sustainable tourism enterprises, and their implications for resilience and sustainable livelihood generation.

The impacts of the global pandemic on tourism overall continue to shift and change; observers in the media speculate about impacts by asking questions like "has covid-19 killed globalization?" (The Economist, 2021). Researchers have documented ways that international travel was limited and the potential ramifications of that on how people think about travel planning (e.g., Samdin et al., 2021); academics teaching tourism faculties are contemplating impacts in teaching (Wassler and Fan, 2021). Many have pointed out that it is important to consider opportunities that are present in the wake of chaos around the virus: for example, there is a renewed chance to address social welfare and equity as the economy gets re-established (Benjamin et al., 2020; Rowen, 2020). And even pre-pandemic, it has been argued that the future of tourism is centered in rural areas, in part because dispersed settlements are also more amenable to growth that is understood as sustainable (Di Domineco and Miller, 2012). Furthermore, when firms manage to recover from disruption, they are manifesting their resilience, and there's evidence that this enhances sustainability as well as local belongingness (Sharma, Thomas, and Paul, 2021).

Government at the national level is uniquely positioned to address integrated planning efforts. While studies completed by trade associations, academics, and other types of organizations can have important impacts, it is the government that is understood as the key authority in planning and governance, with specific responsibilities and commitments, and the power to plan cross-sectoral programs. Taken together, the concepts reviewed (heritage tourism, sustainable livelihoods, and community-based tourism) represent effective strategies for enriching the vision of ecotourism in Bangladesh in the future.

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Table 1. The Bangladeshi Diaspora

Name of Continent		Country	Bangladeshi Population (est.)	GNI \$ (2020) ¹⁴ of country	GDP per capita \$ (2020) ¹⁴ of country
Asia	1.	Saudi Arabia	2,000,000 ¹	21,930	20,110
	2.	UAE	1,089,917 ²	43,470	43,103
	3.	Malaysia	1,000,000 ³	10,580	10,401
	4.	Oman	680,242 ⁴	14,150	15,343
	5.	Qatar	400,000 ⁵	56,210	50,805
	6.	Kuwait	350,000 ⁶	36,290	32,374
Europe	7.	UK	447,201 ⁷	42,130	40,249
	8.	Italy	140,000 ⁸	31,676	32,200
	9.	Spain	30,000 ⁹	27,057	30,360
Africa	10.	South Africa	300,000 ¹⁰	5,410	5,090
North America	11.	USA	800,000 ¹¹	65,910	63,544
	12.	Canada	100,000 ¹²	43,242	43,440
Australia	13.	Australia	41,233 ¹³	51,812	53,730

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