

# Chapter 4

## Cultural Heritage Tourism in Bangladesh: Balancing Preservation and Visitor Experience

**Mohammad Badruddoza Talukder**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1662-9221>

*International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh*

**Mushfika Hoque**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4645-5105>

*Daffodil Institute of IT, Bangladesh*

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to comprehensively assess the state of cultural heritage conservation practices at sites across Bangladesh, considering both their effectiveness and sustainability amidst growing tourism pressures. The study explores visitor perceptions and experiences at these heritage sites to enhance tourism management strategies. By understanding visitors' perspectives, including their satisfaction levels, cultural learning experiences, and challenges encountered, the research seeks to inform targeted improvements in visitor services and site management practices. The research aims to propose actionable recommendations for mitigating negative impacts while maximizing the benefits of tourism to local communities and heritage preservation efforts. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism development by advocating for integrated conservation and management strategies that balance the preservation of cultural heritage with the socio-economic benefits derived from tourism activities in Bangladesh.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage tourism holds immense potential to celebrate and promote Bangladesh's rich historical and cultural heritage (Ananya, 2021). With a legacy spanning millennia, Bangladesh boasts many archaeological sites, ancient monuments, traditional crafts, and vibrant cultural practices that attract tourists from around the globe (Amam, 2024). However, the challenge lies in maintaining a delicate equilibrium between conserving these invaluable assets and ensuring a fulfilling experience for visitors (Pande & Shi, 2023).

Bangladesh's cultural heritage encompasses diverse influences from ancient civilizations to colonial legacies, each contributing to the nation's unique identity (Talukder et al., 2024a). Sites like the ancient city of Mahasthangarh, the historic mosques of Bagerhat, and the natural landscapes of the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve exemplify the country's cultural richness and natural beauty. These sites are history repositories and living testaments to Bangladesh's enduring artistic traditions.

Yet, the surge in tourism poses significant conservation challenges. Increased footfall, infrastructure development, and cultural commodification can threaten the very heritage that draws visitors. Preservation efforts must, therefore, be meticulous, integrating sustainable practices that safeguard monuments, protect ecosystems, and respect local communities (Firoj & Mohammad, 2024). Moreover, cultural heritage tourism in Bangladesh holds promise for economic growth and community development (Pasternak, 2024). When managed responsibly, tourism can foster local pride, generate employment opportunities, and support heritage conservation through revenue generation (Ahmed, 2024). However, achieving this balance requires thoughtful planning, stakeholder collaboration, and innovative strategies prioritizing preservation and visitor experience.

This study explores the complexities of cultural heritage tourism in Bangladesh by exploring strategies for sustainable management, community involvement, and visitor education (Das et al., 2024). By examining successful case studies and global best practices, it seeks to provide actionable insights that can guide policymakers, conservationists, and tourism stakeholders in preserving Bangladesh's cultural treasures while offering enriching experiences for visitors (Knežević, 2017). Through these efforts, Bangladesh can strive towards a future where cultural heritage tourism thrives in harmony with conservation, ensuring that its storied past continues to inspire and endure for generations to come (Salimullah & Nabi, 2022).

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