

Chapter 5


Marketing Strategies for Promoting Heritage Tourism in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores effective marketing strategies for promoting heritage tourism in Bangladesh, a country rich in historical and cultural assets. The proposed strategies leverage digital platforms, including social media, blogs, and virtual tours, to reach a global audience. Public-private partnerships with tourism boards, agencies, and collaborations with influencers and cultural organizations can amplify awareness and engagement. Sustainable tourism practices, community involvement, and innovative technologies like IoT and mobile apps are crucial to providing an immersive visitor experience while preserving heritage sites. Cultural festivals and heritage workshops further enhance local and international interest. By integrating these approaches, Bangladesh can elevate its heritage tourism offerings, attract more visitors, and contribute to the sustainable development of its tourism industry. The paper provides a roadmap for successfully promoting Bangladesh's rich historical and cultural landmarks.

INTRODUCTION

Heritage tourism, an increasingly popular niche within the global tourism industry, explores historical, cultural, and architectural landmarks that define a nation's identity. In Bangladesh, a country with a rich and diverse history, heritage tourism has immense potential (Islam et al., 2021). From ancient

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archaeological sites like Mahasthangarh and Paharpur to historical landmarks such as the Lalbagh Fort and Bagerhat, Bangladesh offers a tapestry of cultural experiences that can attract both domestic and international tourists. However, despite its abundance of heritage assets, Bangladesh's heritage tourism remains underexplored and under-promoted globally (Sharmin, 2021). Promoting heritage tourism in Bangladesh demands a multifaceted marketing approach that aligns with contemporary travel trends and technological advancements (Sharmin et al., 2020). Digital marketing strategies, including social media, virtual tours, and influencer collaborations, can broaden the reach and create interest among tech-savvy travellers.

Moreover, leveraging public-private partnerships with local tourism agencies, global travel platforms, and cultural institutions can make tailored travel packages and events, enhancing the overall tourist experience. Integrating technology, such as mobile apps and IoT-driven solutions, can offer tourists an interactive and immersive experience while ensuring sustainable management of heritage sites. Furthermore, promoting heritage tourism requires an emphasis on sustainability and community engagement to protect cultural landmarks while benefiting local economies. Eco-friendly tourism initiatives and active participation from local communities through homestays, handicrafts, and artistic performances can create an authentic and responsible tourism ecosystem (Moli, 2011). By combining digital strategies with traditional community-based approaches, Bangladesh can position itself as a premier destination for heritage tourism, showcasing its unique historical and cultural heritage to a global audience (Baloch et al., 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage Tourism

Tourism is a commercial activity that thrives on economic benefits. These benefits are the source of the multiplier effect, whose beneficiaries are the stakeholders at multiple levels (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). The 1970s witnessed the emergence of culture as one of the niche areas that generated the attention of tourists, professionals, and policymakers as it opened new vistas of recreation (Timothy, 2018). No doubt, religion-based pilgrimages were taking place all over the world and are even taking place today with the same religious fervour based on belief systems, but the cultural aspect of tourism made it be seen as a management issue (Papatheodorou, 2004). Heritage, the foremost outcome of the cultural moorings, not only crystallized as the concrete form of its expression but gave marketers a niche area that can be utilized to sustain the civilization aspects in a concrete, sustainable way (Vaccaro & Beltran, 2007).

The need was felt to define heritage in totality and strategize for its associated tourism. ICOMOS has defined heritage as a broad concept that includes tangible assets, both natural and cultural environments, besides intangible assets like rituals, traditions, art forms, recollections from the past, oral traditions, and living experiences (Sandholz, 2017). It stressed the need to preserve the heritage. The important thing about most definitions relating to heritage is that the element of preservation and conservation finds predominance. Thus, heritage is a legacy, but the present generation conserves it for posterity. The unique characteristic of heritage is that it is a continuous legacy with the element of fragility in both hard and soft elements that add refinement to the concept of heritage (Silberman, 2015). Documentation also plays an essential role in shaping definitions and policies on heritage. Once heritage has been identified, the professional way to proceed in any related activity is documentation once the identification part has been resolved

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