

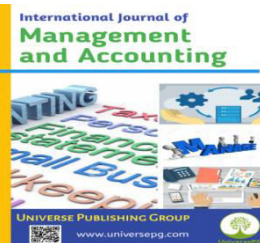


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Prospects of Parasailing Activities in Bangladesh: A Study on the Opportunities and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Parasailing is considered as the modern and popular part of seaside recreational activities. Bangladesh has recently added 'Parasailing' to her service list in Cox's Bazaar and Himchori in 2010. The purpose of this study is to investigate the tourists' perceptions towards parasailing activities and to analyze the opportunities and challenges of parasailing in Bangladesh. The study is based on primary as well as secondary data, and has applied descriptive research method on the basis of data collected through a questionnaire consisting of 33 questions from 52 respondents. The reason behind choosing this topic is that 'parasailing' has a great opportunity in the future tourism business in Bangladesh. Moreover, the aim of this study is to spread this activity in different areas of Bangladesh, like Saint Martin's island and Patenga sea beaches, so that tourists can enjoy the taste of same. Thinking from a commercial perspective it has a great potential of increasing recreational facilities, earning a huge amount of income, and employing many people from the local communities to bring a change in their lives.

Keywords: Parasailing, Bangladesh, Prospects, Patenga, Challenges, Himchori, Opportunities, and Threats.

INTRODUCTION:

Parasailing is a part of sports and adventure tourism. It can be called adventure sports. Like other tourism sectors, sports tourism is growing day by day. Sports are considered as the best sources of passing leisure time. Active tourists keep the sports tourism in their first priority. People think it is the best way of relaxation and entertainment. "It is considered to be one of the most enjoyable water activities in the world. The experience of being up in the air in the middle of the ocean can truly be a feat worth trying (Deakin, 2010)". Now many people travel for experiencing thrilling activities or sports. It increases their self-pride. Tourists who have a strong emotion always want

to experience something exceptional, many of them choose parasailing. Once in the air all you have to do is relax in the harness, enjoy the view and bask in the enjoyment of this one of a kind sport (Deakin, 2010).

For this parasailing is getting attention of many tourists now a day. Of course, parasailing has also life risk and accidents involved in it. Many accidents occur for bad weather, carelessness and lack of control. By its specification, it is clear that parasailing is a high-risk sport. On the other hand, parasailing is the wonderful way to enjoy and feel natural beauty from the top. It is a simple parachuteride from top of the hill and sea. When people start flying, they just listen to their heart beat and sound of wave, which bring mental peach to

them. “Parasailing has been popularized by the sensation that it brings. Such sensation of freedom, discovery, and absolute bliss make the participant happy. The reward of an unforgettable experience is overwhelming for an activity that requires very little effort to perform (Deakin, 2010)”. Because of this, parasailing is getting popular now a day. Bangladesh added ‘parasailing’ in her service list in Cox’s Bazaar and Himchori in 2010. Dariyanagar is well known for parasailing. Anyway, parasailing brings great opportunity for sports tourism of Bangladesh. If it is maintained carefully by expertise and made it affordable then it will be the first demand for the thrill-seeking tourist in Bangladesh.

Rationale of the Study

Bangladesh is enriched with huge sports tourism opportunities. Some new types of sports are entering in sports tourism but most of them are unfamiliar. Parasailing is one of those sports. It can draw a new picture in the beach site sports activities. Bangladesh has world’s largest sandy beach (Wikipedia). Opposite of seaside there is appealing view of mountains. As a result, parasailing brings a great opportunity to enjoy the view of sea and mountain together. For this reason, parasailing is getting popularity in Bangladesh. Funfest group has started parasailing with some experts and trained up the new comers. Although parasailing has life risk but parasailing activities are growing with high speed. In this paper, researcher has tried to investigate the opportunities of parasailing according to Bangladesh’s perspective and what types of challenges tourist and businessmen face for parasailing activities.

Objectives of the Study

Parasailing is one of the fashionable sports in the world. For the high cost it is afforded by only rich people. Bangladesh has started parasailing in Cox’s Bazar and Himchori. It has full of opportunities for developing tourism activities. This is why we divide our objectives in two parts:

Primary objectives - The primary objective of the study is to explore the prospects of parasailing activities and to find out the challenges and opportunities of the same in Bangladesh. The study will also introduce

parasailing activities among adventurous-minded tourists and to find out new places for parasailing activities in Bangladesh.

Secondary objectives - The secondary objectives of this paper are as under:

- a) To examine the stakeholders involved in the parasailing activities;
- b) To introduce the parties involved in the supply chain for parasailing business;
- c) To identify the safety system within this kind of activity;
- d) To explore the respondent attitudes on the opportunity and challenging factors of parasailing activities; and
- e) To identify the major challenges and barriers within the development of parasailing activities in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

The growth of tourism has led to increased participation in marine-based activities and interest in species found within aquatic ecosystems (Hoque *et al.*, 2020). Many tourists now want to participate in marine activities during their trip such as parasailing, snorkeling, diving, surfing, and ocean kayaking (Van Beukering, 2004). (Deakin, 2010) opined that almost anyone and everyone can do parasailing. To him, not much skill is required of the user when he or she does it. He also mentioned that an adept team of parasail specialists will take you through some basic safety and training lessons before the parasail. People now-a-days want activities-based tourism and enjoy their holiday or leisure time. Sea always attracts people with its beauty and for its coral reefs, beaches, warm climate, unique topography, and warm clear waters (Kabiri, 2014).

Among the all-sea tourism activities parasailing is one of them and Bangladesh has a great opportunity to prosper in this sector because Cox’s Bazaar is the longest natural sea beach in the world (Wikipedia). Local community can play a major role in parasailing activities. Tourism activities in the island or beach area have both positive and negative impacts on the natural as well as social and environment aspects of the island (Ansari, 2006). Allowing tour companies to operate on

public lands and in public marine areas, for example, may generate employment and be more cost effective for public land-management agencies, but may exclude individuals unable to pay for the activities. Proliferation of private tour operators may also generate a rapid increase in visitation, causing impacts such as crowding, pollution, and conflict among operators, visitors, and local residents. It deserves to be noted that coastal tourism management, planning, and education programs are often designed and implemented by the same agencies and organizations. This overlap is often desirable and is found in some instances of larger efforts of government to promote integrated coastal zone (Cicin-Sain, 1998).

Berkes, (2010) emphasized that 'Natural resources' and 'management' must be re-conceptualized. The resources are not solely free goods for human-centric use and that's why natural resources must be re-conceptualized to include the protection of ecosystems and ecosystem services as resources for human well-being. Management must move away from efficiency, simplification, and command-and-control to an emphasis on stewardship, collaboration, partnerships, and adaptive governance. As the 21st century comes into focus, tourism is being revealed as a major socio-cultural force with a potential to destroy, protect, or otherwise dramatically reconfigure coastal and marine ecosystems and societies (Miller, 1991).

METHODOLOGY:

Research Design - The main purpose of this research paper is to find out the opportunities and challenges of parasailing in Bangladesh. Therefore, descriptive research design is applied here. Descriptive research method is a scientific method that describes situations. There are three main types of descriptive methods: observational methods, case-study methods, and survey methods.

The present research has used 'Survey Method' for this paper. In survey method research, participants answer questions through a questionnaire. As such, we constructed a survey questionnaire for this survey. The number of questions on the survey questionnaire was 33. Close ended questions were used to form the survey questionnaire. The researcher has tried to give

her best efforts to make a reliable and informative questionnaire. After getting responses from the participants, the responses have been described and analyzed.

Target Population - The target population is the totality of individuals from which the sample might be drawn. A sample is the group of people who take part in the investigation. However, for this paper the target population was those who had the real experience in parasailing activities. Besides, those who had little experience or had desire for this kind of activity were also counted as target population.

Sampling: The sample included respondents from all genders, ages, social statuses, professional backgrounds, etc. Simple random sampling methods have been used to choose the respondents. The reason for using simple random sampling is low cost and limited resources at researcher's hand. Utmost care has been given to collect accurate and reliable responses. The sample included actual and potential travelers, and college and university students. Besides, data were collected using "Google doc" from the "researchers' Facebook friend list". Thus, the study included a sample of approximately 52 persons for collecting necessary information.

Data Collection Procedure: Both primary and secondary data have been used in this research. For getting primary data, five adventure-minded tourists and forty-seven general people were selected for interview with a pre-designed questionnaire. The sources of secondary data and information includes: Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation (BPC), The Statistical Year Books, The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and UNWTO- 2013. In addition to that, literature review and theoretical analysis of available articles on different journals, periodicals, newspapers, internet and other related materials have been consulted and used as references.

Data Processing and Analysis: Data processing means conversion of raw data into a usable format. Appropriate statistical tools have been applied for this purpose. These include percentage, means, standard deviation, variance, etc. Besides, the data collected from the respondents were processed using SPSS to get usable information for this paper.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

Stakeholders - A stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by its business. The primary stakeholders in a typical corporation are its investors, employees, customers and suppliers. In a corporation, as defined in its first usage in a 1983 internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute, a stakeholder is a member of the "groups without whose support the organization

would cease to exist (Ansari *et al.*, 2006). The theory was later developed and championed by R. Edward Freeman in the 1980s. Since then, it has gained wide acceptance in business practices and in theorizing relating to strategic management, corporate governance, business purpose and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The stakeholders for parasailing are given below:

Stakeholders	Stakeholder's concerns
Government	VAT, legislation, employment
Employees	rates of pay, job security
Customers	value, quality, customer care, unique experience providers
Suppliers	providers of products, other material tools, equitable business opportunities
Creditors	credit score, new contracts, banks and financial institutions
Community	jobs, income, involvement, environmental protection.
Owner(s)	profitability, raising capital, growth, social goals

Supply Chain of Parasailing - Supply chain management, the management of the flow of goods and services, involves the movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-process inventory, and of finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption. The following are the necessary elements of supply chain for parasailing business:

Place: Parasailing is water activity. This is why it is done near the beach area and this beach must be clean and safe for all aged travelers. We have found better beach area in Cox's Bazar and this beach is also suitable for the parasailing and customer get a good view there. Cox's Bazar is the sources of natural and hilly views. Therefore, many people eagerly want to do parasailing. Here customers are available. Another fine and suitable beach area is Saint Martin's. It is a coral island. Parasailing spots in Saint Martin's are attracted because of its whole view of the island. This beach has clean blue water and also safe for customer.

Transportation System: To reach in Cox's Bazar from Dhaka you can use bus, train, air plane. If you want to go Saint Martin's from Cox's Bazar, one can again start journey by ship. There are different types of ship for Saint Martin's. By plane you have to reach first in Cox's Bazar from Dhaka/Chittagong (Inter-country) by Biman Bangladesh Airlines or by Private

Airlines such as Regent Airlines, United Airways, Best Air, etc. The fare from Dhaka-Cox's Bazar is around BDT 3000-4500 as of December, 2021. Cox's Bazar airport is the closest airport to Teknaf. After reaching Cox's Bazar by Plane, there are several ways to reach Teknaf. There are private cars for rental services whose cost is approximately BDT TK. 100-150. There are public buses which start from Cox's Bazar to Teknaf and cost BDT 60-80. Another way would be a group rental of a mid-level micro bus or jeep to travel to Teknaf which is safer and may cost less.

Materials: For years, the parasailing industry was a modern version of the Wild West: Buy a boat, a rope, a chute; you are in the parasailing business (Scolaro, 2014). Parasailing can be one of the most popular activities in Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin's. Therefore, the materials that are needed for parasailing there are given below:

- Life jacket
- Speed boat
- Parachute
- Rope

These materials must be needed. It also requires minimum standard equipments that parasail operators must use in order to offer rides as well as a minimum

level of experience and professional competence for those who operate parasailing vessels (Scolaro, 2014). Some materials are available in the local market. Other materials can be collected from Cox’s Bazar local market. These materials available include -Speed boat and Tunic, Macro. Winwe enterprise produces parachute and distributes in the local market of the country.

Distribution: There is a distribution process that helps to distribute their product. The distribution process of parasail business is simple. This process is: Producer→ to local dealer→ to the resort→ Bought by local people→ Rent.

Supplier: ‘Tadib’ started first parasailing in Himchori. He sets up his firm whose name is 'Fun Fest'. Fun Fest is located in Himchari Beach, not far from the main beach. They offer regular parasailing, where the adventurers wear a parachute to catch the wind and fly up like a kite while being towed by a boat. There is also “super fun” parasailing, a longer, and more thrilling ride that makes one drop into the middle of the sea until the feet touch water. Additionally, visitors to Fun Fest have the opportunity to do other activities such as land sailing, zorbing and banana boating. They have offered 2 types of packages:

- Package-A: 2 km, 5 minutes (1500 Tk.)
- Package-B: 3km, 10 minutes (2000 Tk.)

They have direct booking system. No advance booking is required.

Safety system for Parasailing Activities - For parasailing adventure activities safety must always be an important concern. A team of parasailing professionals must be there to train users and make sure that customers get nothing but pure pleasure in the parasailing experience (Deakin, 2010). It is the job of the operator to make people feel as safe and comfortable (<http://www.furycat.com/key-west-blog/parasailing-key-west>). There must have a parachute and a hydraulic platform that will provide the users launch pad. Wind and speed combinations will be carefully studied to achieve an almost zero margin of error (Deakin, 2010).

Respondents’ Socio-Economic and Demographic Profiles - The following Table provides the respon-

dents’ socio-economic and demographic information. Out of a total of 52 respondents listed for analysis, 24 (46.2%) were male and 28 (53.8%) were female. Data were collected from different age-groups. Large group of respondents were from 19-25 years (78.8%) age-group, followed by 26-30 years (19.2%) age-group and less than 18 years (1.9%). Among them 48 respondents (92.3%) were single and 4 respondents (7.7%) were married. Surprisingly, 50% of the respondents have completed their graduation and 34.6% of the respondents have completed their post-graduation. In addition, 88.5% of the respondents were students, 11.5% service holder at the time of the survey. Respondents listed 78.8% of their income less than 10,000 Taka, 5.8% have income of 11,000-20,000 Taka, 3.8% have income of 21,000-30,000 Taka, 7.7% have income of 31,000-40,000 Taka, and 3.8% have income of over 40,000. Respondents’ socio-economic and demographic profiles are given below:

Table 1: Showing Respondents’ Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile

Descriptions	N	(%)
Gender:		
Male	24	46.2
Female	28	53.8
Total	52	100
Age:		
18 or less	1	1.9
19-25	41	78.8
26-30	10	19.2
Total	52	100
Education:		
S.S.C	1	1.9
H.S.C	5	9.6
Graduation	26	50.0
Post-Graduation	18	34.6
Others (ACCA, Diploma)	2	3.8
Total	52	100
Marital Status:		
Single	48	92.3
Married	4	7.7
Total	52	100
Profession:		
Student	46	88.3
Service Holder	6	11.5
Total	52	100
Monthly Income:		

Under 10000	41	78.8
11000-20000	3	5.8
21000-30000	2	3.8
31000-40000	4	7.7
Over 40000	2	3.8
Total	52	100

Respondent Attitudes on Opportunity Factors - Respondent attitudes on opportunity factors of parasailing activities (Source: SPSS Primary Data) are shown under:

Table 2: Respondent attitudes on opportunity factors

Attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Suitable location for parasailing activities: sea side or river side	52	4.38	.820	.673
Sufficient infrastructure	52	3.25	1.186	1.407
Availability of information	52	3.25	1.186	1.407
Cheaper price	52	3.06	1.349	1.820
Safety and security equipment	52	3.62	1.239	1.535
Ease of access to the destination	52	3.79	.871	.758
Availability of parasailing camp within the beach	52	3.56	1.092	1.193
Promotion: Social Media, TV and Newspaper	52	3.73	1.122	1.259
Increasing number of adventure-minded tourists	52	4.17	1.080	1.166
Sufficient training for parasailers	52	3.67	1.339	1.793
Valid N (listwise)	52			

Descriptive Statistics: The above table shows that out of 10 attributes 2 attributes have the highest mean score <(M=4.00) and rest of the attributes scored above 3. The highest mean score with respect to the opportunities of parasailing activities insuitable location is (M=4.38) that must be within the sea side or river side, followed by increasing number of adventure-minded tourists (M=4.17) and ease of access to the destination (M=3.79) and promotion (M=3.73). Moreover, sufficient training for parasailers scored (M=3.67), and safety and security equipment

scored mean of (M=3.62), availability of parasailing camp within the beach (M=3.56) is also an influential factor for parasailing in Bangladesh. On the other hand, here, the lowest mean of cheaper price (M=3.06) indicates that it does not matter to the adventure-minded tourists to enjoy this kind of recreational activities at a high price. Image attributes mean scores below 2.75 are interpreted as poor; scores between 2.75 to 3.25 indicated average; scores 3.25 to 4.00 were interpreted as good and above 4.00 as excellent (Birgit, 2004).

Respondent Attitudes on Challenging Factors - Respondents’ attitudes on challenging factors of parasailing activities (Source: SPSS Primary Data) are shown below:

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Limited target customers	52	3.37	.950	.930
Low income of tourists	52	3.29	1.109	1.229
Less adventure-minded tourists	52	3.00	1.120	1.255
Bad weather condition	52	3.37	1.172	1.374
Lack of Parasailing camp	52	3.67	1.043	1.087
High risk involvement during high tide	52	3.73	1.012	1.024
Seasonal barriers	52	3.79	1.054	1.111
Less community involvement	52	3.44	.938	.879
Widespread apathy among the tourists for the	52	3.60	1.053	1.108

sake of high price				
Natural calamities within the destination.	52	3.58	.957	.916
Lack of promotion	52	3.96	1.084	1.175
Technical problems	52	3.87	1.048	1.099

The above table revealed that out of 12 attributes respondents showed highly positive attitude only on five attributes which have highest mean score < (M=3.60) and 7 attributes scored between (M=3.00) and (M=3.60) respectively. **Table 3** shows the opinion given to the attributes by the respondents. Surprisingly, statistics shows that lack of promotion (M=3.96) is one of the most challenging factors of parasailing activities in Bangladesh. This is harsh truth for the present situation of parasailing in Bangladesh. Technical problem (M=3.87) has been found as another major burden of parasailing activities in Bangladesh. Seasonal barriers (M=3.79), high risk involvement during high tide (M=3.73), lack of parasailing camp (M=3.67), widespread apathy among the tourists for the sake of high price (M=3.60) are also some significant challenges that have been detected from the response of the respondents.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations for the operations of parasailing activities effectively in Bangladesh:

- 1) Sustainability of parasailing should be ensured by regulatory authority. “Leesfield Scolaro with other key advocates has been at the forefront of promoting the passage of laws and regulations to increase parasailing safety. The regulations are a stepping stone to increase parasail safety, but much more needs to be added (Scolaro, 2014).
- 2) Parasailing is a risky game which has risk of injury. By the very nature of parasailing, accidents invariably result in either catastrophic injuries or death (Scolaro, 2014). As such, safety and security must be ensured in beach areas. “After speaking with members of the Coast Guard, Leesfield understood that human error was the common denominator in almost every single parasailing accident. Faulty equipment, inadequate weather-tracking equipment, operator error, or lacks of training are always contributing factors of parasailing tragedies (Scolaro, 2014).

As parasailing is new game, so people have lack of proper training and knowledge of flying. Training is needed for the operators of parasailing activities. The goal is simple: Safer parasailing experiences for consumers and to eliminate human errors associated with parasailing activities (Scolaro, 2014). “Of course, the ride is controlled 100% by an experienced captain who uses a mechanical winch to send the user up and reel him back in. The captain is also well aware of the wind and its direction in relation to the boat, so there is no need to worry. Parasailing Tips”.

- 3) Parasailing can come as a solo activity or packaged with other water sports and because of parasailing’s popularity, it is commonly found as a regular activity in seaside areas (Deakin, 2010). “It is also a very peaceful experience. Most of the time people come back down to say that it was a surprisingly peaceful and quiet (<http://www.furycat.com/key-west-blog/parasailing-key-west>)”. As such, more seaside areas in Bangladesh should be identified for parasailing activities.
- 4) Advertisement and campaign should be done regularly to know about parasailing. As parasailing is a peaceful, popular and recreational kiting experience, effective promotional activities will help to make it popular in the seaside areas of Bangladesh as well.
- 5) “Parasailing is a popular aero sport that involves the thrill of flying high like a bird. It is a recreational activity turned into a sport in which the participant is tied with a canopy wing also known as a parasailing wing. (<http://sportsmatik.com/sports-corer/sports-know-how/parasailing-g/>)”. Public and private coordination is needed for growing parasailing activities. Public sector should arrange the required training facilities and safety measures for this business. As it is a small business requiring a small amount of capital, private sector should come up to participate and popularize parasailing activities in Bangladesh.

All commercial parasail operators should have a valid Coast Guard License for carrying passengers for hire (<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter450/section30/>).

- 6) Parasailing time should be increased for more experience. Parasailing shall only be conducted from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. It is very stressful to fly in the hot weather and also sun affects the eyes. Because of this that time is chosen by organizer to reduce the risk of accident.
- 7) Cost for parasailing should be reduced. As a developing country, here maximum people have low income and they can save few for their holiday. All the level of tourist can take the taste of parasailing if the cost is reduced.

Last Thoughts with Concluding Remarks

Adventure tourism has become a new trend now-a-day. Generally, most of the tourists are young people. Young people love adventure. From the above discussion we found that parasailing is not widely available in Bangladesh. Only Himchori area is used for parasailing activities. But the cost is too much high (5 minutes for TK. 1500 and 10 minutes for TK.2500). Some of the people are aware of safety and security of the equipment which are used for parasailing activities. Developing adventure tourism in some places like Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin can help Bangladesh to promote more adventure tourism. The main objective of this paper is to explore the possibility of parasailing activities and identify the problems associated with parasailing. At last, we can say that developing parasailing activities in Cox's Bazar needs to be considered as the best way to diversify the growing of tourism industries in Bangladesh. But sustainability as well as safety should be considered as the main concern for parasailing in Bangladesh. With care and proper regulation Cox's can be the best place for parasailing. Local people can play a good role for parasailing but proper training must be ensured by regulatory authority. Moreover, campaign and awareness should be increased to developing parasailing in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION:

Adventure tourism has emerged as a new trend now-a-day. Generally, many of the adventure tourists are

young people. Young people love adventure. From the discussion above, we found that parasailing is not widely introduced in Bangladesh. Only Himchori area is used for parasailing activities. But the cost is too much high (5 minutes for TK. 1500 and 10 minutes for TK. 2500). Many adventure-minded tourists are sensitive to safety of the equipment which is used for parasailing activities. Developing adventure tourism in places like Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin can help Bangladesh to promote more of this type of adventure tourism. The main objective of this research paper is to investigate and explore the likelihood of introducing parasailing activities and identify the problems associated with parasailing. At last, we can say that developing parasailing activities in Cox's Bazar needs to be considered as the best way to diversify the growing of tourism industries in Bangladesh. But sustainability and safety should be considered as the main concern for parasailing in Bangladesh. By taking proper care and enacting appropriate regulation Cox's can be turned into the best place for parasailing. Local people of parasailing sites should play good role in parasailing activities. But they should be given proper training and that should be ensured by the regulatory authority. Moreover, campaign and awareness should be increased to developing parasailing in Bangladesh

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

I have written this article independently. For writing this article, I took help from some secondary literatures for which I have cited references properly. As such, I believe that the article will not create any conflict or competing interest with those authors.

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