

PARADIGM SHIFT IN TOURISTS BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM AREA LIFE CYCLE: A STUDY ON SUNDARBANS

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Abstract: *This paper presents how knowledge of tourist behavior plays an important role in tourism planning and marketing activities for tourism business managers. It analyzes the role of tourist consumer behavior and tourist typologies in globalization era. This study also analyzes the tourism consumer decision making process and the motivators and deterrents in visiting Sundarbans. In addition, discussions on how knowledge of tourist consumer behavior can be useful in developing, promoting and selling tourism products are made in this study. To explain destinations development life cycle, Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model has been adopted. In each life cycle stage there are changes in the morphology, the types of tourists' visitation, and residents' attitudes towards tourism. Responses of 250 respondents were collected through a structured questionnaire for this study and the findings confirm that Sundarbans is now in the development stage. It is also observed that tourism has brought substantial changes and various attempts are required by the private and the public sectors to make Sundarbans as an important tourist destination of Bangladesh.*

Keywords: *Tourism Consumer Behavior, Tourist Typologies, Motivators, Deterrents, Tourism Area Life Cycle, Destination.*

INTRODUCTION

Marketers must exercise care in analyzing tourist behavior. Tourists often discard what appears to be a winning offer. As soon as managers believe that they understand their customers (tourists), buyers decisions are made that appear to be irrational. But what looks irrational behavior to a manager is completely rational to the tourists (Kotler et al., 2011). So, tourist behavior is never simple. According to Williams (2006), tourism and hospitality have become key global economic activities as expectations with regard to our use of leisure time have evolved, attributing greater meaning to our free time. This results in marketing having potentially greater importance in tourism than in other industries but sadly potential that is not always fulfilled (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002). Lin et al. (2012) believe that a major reason for such unfulfilled potential lies in most

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tourism marketing focusing on the destination or outlet (in other words the products being offered) and lacking focus on the consumer.

Answering whether knowledge about tourists' behavior is useful for practicing managers of tourism industries would involve a consideration of various important issues regarding current tourism trends. In general, tourists' behavior involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit (Leiper, 1997). Referring the Leiper's statement, it can be confirmed that understanding tourist consumer behavior is not merely of academic interest but doing so would provide knowledge for effective tourism planning and marketing.

Tourism in Bangladesh provides a number of untapped opportunities relative to other countries in the South Asian region. Travel and tourism sector in Bangladesh has not exploited its full potential yet, although significant growth has been made in the recent years. A total of 0.467 million tourists visited Bangladesh in the year 2008. This was a sharp rise from 0.289 million in 2007, 0.20 million in 2006 (BTB, 2010). Highest number of inbound tourists was contributed by neighboring India, followed by United Kingdom. Bangladesh has the world's longest 120 km unbroken sea beach (Hossain, 2006) slopping here down to the blue water of the Bay of Bengal in Cox's Bazar and Kuakata. In addition to that, there are other beaches like Inani beach in Ukhia, St. Martin Island, and Patengha beach which are also attractive to foreign as well as local tourists (MoCAT, 2006; Hossain, 2006). In Bangladesh, there are some attractive hilly regions which also are considered beautiful tourism spots and attract a large number of tourists. Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, is another major attraction. It is one of the last natural habitats of the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger. Sundarbans has been declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 (Islam, 2009). The Worldwide New7Wonders of natural campaign included Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar among more than 440 candidate locations from 220 countries. Along with only 27 locations Sundarbans was the part of the final competition (The Daily Star, 2011).

Bangladesh is trying to develop her tourism status to compete in local and global market. Tourism is one of the main roots of developing the country's economy and as well as skilled professional human resource. Governmental and non-Governmental institutes can keep such a vital role by giving emphasis on tourism marketing. For this reason author has selected Sundarbans, one of the major tourist destinations in the Bangladeshi tourism industry. To do this, the rest of the paper is structured around seven sections where the first and second section describes the introduction of the study and the literature review respectively. The third section will offer the objectives of the study. In section four, a brief

explanation is given on the methodology of the study that has been undertaken to do this study. This would be followed by the findings of the study in section five. The section six will arrive at a conclusion to get a portrait of the tourist behavior that will follow the future scope of the study in section seven.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist behavior has been a major topic for decades under academic scrutiny in tourism research literature. Contributions have been made from various aspects to the understanding of tourist behavior. Tourists' spatial and temporal behavior was empirically investigated in a number of studies (Pearce, 1988; Fennell, 1996; Huang and Wu, 1997). Behavior frameworks were also developed to account for the differences between tourists' home-based behavior and their vacation behavior (Burch, 1969; Graburn, 1983; Nash, 1996; Turner, 1969; Pearce, 1982; Currie, 1997) conceptualizing such differentiations as the compensatory the spill-over/familiarity the liminal and the liminoid. Additionally researches on segmentational differences in tourist behavior are often found in cross-cultural studies with a tourism context (Pizam and Jeong, 1996). Furthermore, it is also not uncommon for tourist behavior to be examined in comparison to residents' leisure behavior (Xiao, 1997).

The study of Kotler et al. (2011) discussed another model to look at how tourists make buying decisions. It focuses that the decision process consists of five stages: **(a)** need recognition, **(b)** information search, **(c)** evaluation of alternatives, **(d)** purchase decision, and **(e)** post purchase behavior. This model emphasizes that the decision process starts long before and continues long after the actual purchase. It encourages the marketer to focus on the entire decision making process rather than the purchase decision.

Figure 01: Tourists Decision Making Process



Source: Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., and Makens, J. C. (2011)

As it has been mentioned before, the choice of a tourism product is the outcome of a very complex set of decisions. When buying a holiday, the tourist is buying several tourism products, products which are different in nature as well as interdependent. As consequence the tourist will be affected by many factors, might be internal to the tourist or external in the environment, and which will influence the different elements of the holiday separately (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2007). Dasgupta (2011) identified various motivating and deterring

elements for tourist consumers in the perspective of Asian tourism industry. Motivation is considered a critical variable in the tourist decision making process. Measures of motivation often used as one of the segmentation bases for tourists. The sensitivity of tourists to a multitude of factors acts as a deterrent to a robust tourism environment. The most frequently observed deterrents are: **(a)** adverse climate conditions, **(b)** political instability, **(c)** language barriers, **(d)** terrorism, **(e)** unfavourable hygiene and health conditions, **(f)** lack of infrastructure, **(g)** lack of transportation network, **(h)** inadequate connectivity of telecommunication and **(i)** lack of security (Dasgupta, 2011).

Along the decades, researchers have tried to predict the tourism demand; with this, academics of specific areas of study such as psychologists, sociologists or even economists have formulated different typologies of tourist behavior. These classifications have been carried out with the aim to explain and create a bigger understanding of factors and patterns which make tourist interact in different ways in the travel decision process of the various consumer segments. Cohen (1972 cited Cohen 2004) the sociologist, identified four types of tourists: **(a)** *The organizational mass tourist* who buys tourists packages or all inclusive tours in order to visit classical mass tourism destinations, where everything is predetermined before hand and has a low degree of participation and involvement in the travel search for information. There is no sense of adventure or exploration, **(b)** *The individual mass tourist* is similar to the organizational mass tourist, however this one is flexibility on his/her decisions and wants to participate more in the process. The tourist strongly depends on the tourism industry but wants to try some new things out of the closed and predetermined packages, **(c)** *The explorer* is more adventurous, he wants to find his/her own experience participating actively in this decision choice. He arranges most of the elements of the travel by himself/herself, however sometimes he/she has to turn to a travel agency or tourism professionals to get some comfort or security amenities, and **(d)** *The drifter* looks for intensive experiences and he wants to feel immerse in local communities. He/she completely abandons his relations with the institutions of tourism systems planning everything by him. He Practiced a non institutionalized type of tourism.

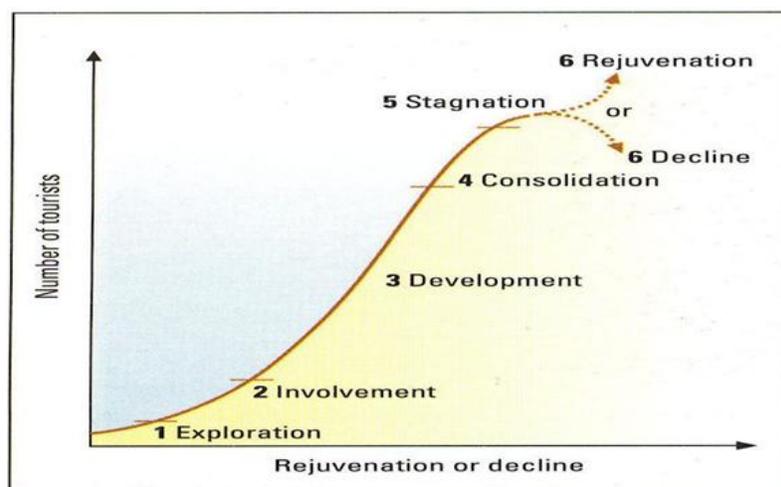
Various studies (e.g., Gilbert, 1939; Defert, 1954; Stansfield, 1978; Young, 1983) have attempted to illustrate the various stages of resort evolution through the concept of the life cycle. However, up to date Butler's (1980) hypothetical model of resort evolution is the most widely accepted model suggesting that "resorts become less attractive with the passage of time, as visitor numbers increase and their carrying capacities are exceeded, and are unable to compete with other newer resorts" (Smith, 1991). It is now three decades since the original Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) article first appeared (Butler, 1980), and rather surprisingly the model proposed in that article is still being cited and used in tourism research. That fact alone makes the TALC somewhat extraordinary, as most models have a short life span before they are relegated to

at best a passing reference in current text books or articles (Griere 2004). According to this model the stages of resort evolution are: **(a)** exploration, **(b)** involvement, **(c)** development, **(d)** consolidation, **(e)** stagnation and **(f)** decline or rejuvenation (Figure 02).

In the *exploration stage* the resort is isolated with a ‘sleepy’ appearance and with little or no development. A limited number of businesses exist. The provided facilities are used and owned by locals. The destination is not developed, and may consist of only one or two houses erected for the view and the proximity of the destination. Tourists are restricted by lack of access and facilities. In the *involvement stage* visitors from the overcrowded urban centers are attracted by the relaxing and unspoiled landscape of the resort. Local entrepreneurs realize the economic significance of tourism and begin to provide facilities and services to tourists.

Given the success in attracting tourists, there is a kind of “neighborhood effect” with the increase in the construction of more accommodation, infrastructure, commercial, and recreational facilities and second homes facing the sea. As a result, the resort expands and reaches the stage of *development*. The number of tourists’ increases and at peak periods far outweighs the size of the local population. Many locals appear to tolerate tourism unwanted effects because of its substantial economic effects (Bramwell, 2003). In the *consolidation stage* the rate of increase in number of visitors declines. The industry responds to the decline in the growth rate through wide ranging advertising campaigns and efforts to extend the tourism season and market area. Facilities and infrastructure start to show signs of age.

Figure 02: Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area



Source: Butler, R. W. (1980)

When the resort reaches the *stagnation stage*, the tourism landscape becomes dominant and little room is available for further expansion. As a result, accommodation establishments are constructed in inland areas. The resort has become urbanized and its capacity levels are reached or exceeded, to the extent that it loses the local quality that made it attractive in the first place. The end of the cycle is marked by the *post-stagnation* phase, which may result in *decline*, if the tourist market continues to wane and the resort is not able to compete with newer resorts, or *rejuvenation*, through the development of an artificial attraction, e.g. the introduction of casinos, as Stansfield (1978) reported for Atlantic City.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to identify the contemporary tourism consumer behavior and tourism area life cycle (TALC) stage of Sundarban. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the nature and characteristics of the behavior of tourists of Sundarban.
2. To highlight the decision making process of tourists in choosing a destination to visit.
3. To explore the motivators and deterrents for tourist consumers of Sundarban.
4. To recommend strategies and actions to be adopted to face the challenges in the twenty first century tourism consumer behavior for the marketers.

METHODOLOGY

The paper undertakes a qualitative study on the consumer tourism behavior and TALC model issues. As the purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of such activities this study takes the form of case study. In particular, the reason for conducting the study as a case study is the desire to maximize realism (Brinberg and McGrath, 1985) i.e. to obtain holistic understanding of multifaceted, interrelated phenomena within their real world context. Data were collected both from the primary sources and secondary sources. The major sources of secondary data include brochures of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh, tour operators along with these various journals related to tourism, books, newspapers, and internet are also used as secondary resources.

The In-depth interviews with key informants and the structured questionnaire acted as the primary source of data for this study. Five in-depth interviews were conducted of the key informants of BPC and Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism. Along with in-depth interview, survey of 250 tourists were conducted, who visited Sundarban at least for once. The study was conducted on the basis of non-probability sampling procedure. In this regard, both the convenience and judgmental

sampling method were used. Data have been processed and tabulated by using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0. Then an attempt has been made to summarize data in the table by calculating the percentage point for each response in terms of total number of respondents. Final analysis has been made on the relevant statistics like weighted average and mean.

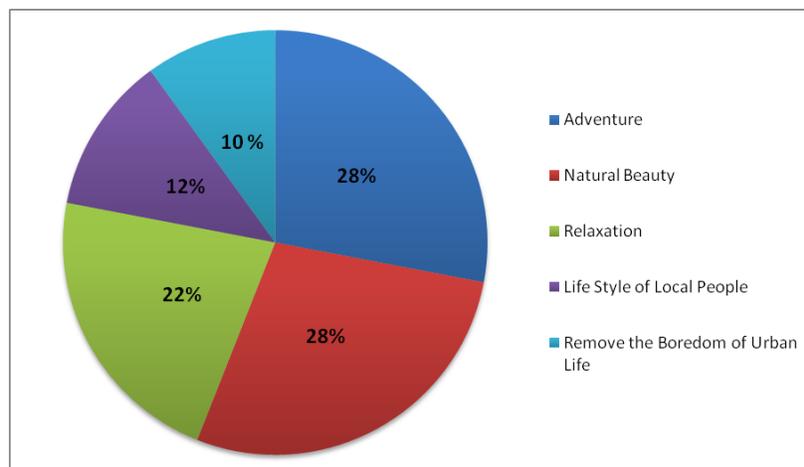
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Decision Making Process:

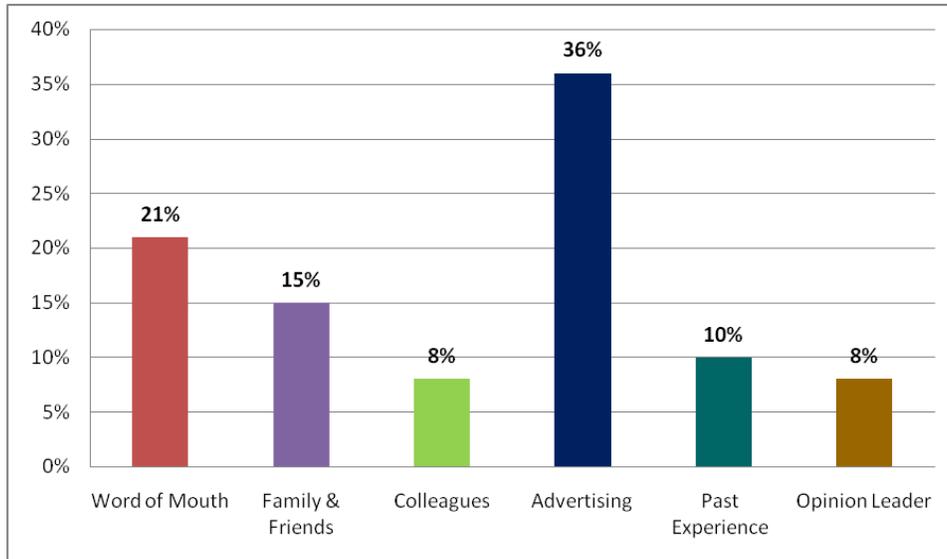
According to Kotler (2011) consumers search and decision process start from need recognition to post purchase behavior. Generally people overcome the previously mentioned steps to post purchase behavior.

Need recognition: The tourists' decision process starts with a problem or need recognition by them. Need may be raised by initiator, family members, influencers, colleagues, friends, relatives, users to fulfill the intrinsic needs. Tourists can also be stimulated by travel portals, media advertisement, travel books, tour operators, travel agents etc. The study explored that need to visit Sundarban mainly recognized by some intrinsic and extrinsic factors. People think to travel Sundarban to enjoy the taste of adventure of wildlife and its beauty of nature which have been shown in the following figure 03. There are some extrinsic factors like advertising of different tourism corporations who ensure to take all the responsibilities of transportation, food and security. However, family and friends, and the people who visit Sundarban before also act as another key influencer in this stage as suggested the findings of the study that is shown in figure 04.

Figure 03: Purpose of visiting Sundarban



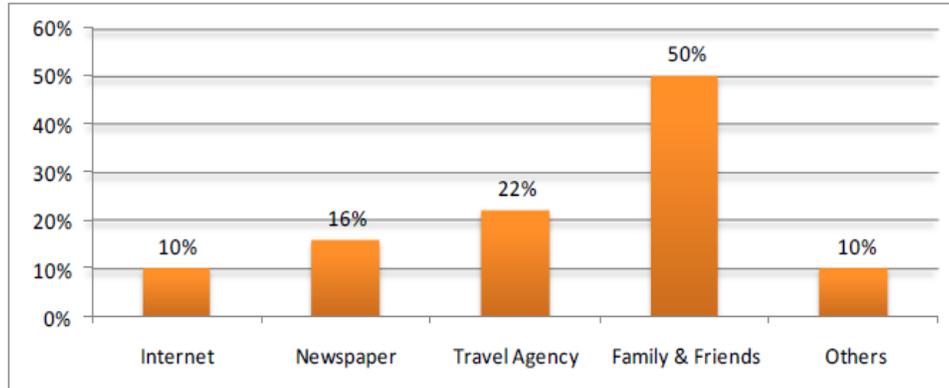
Source: Field Study

Figure 04: Key Influencers in Visiting Sundarban

Source: Field Study

Information search: In this stage, people collect available information of different tourist places. Travelers collect information mostly from secondary sources. Among them internet, travel agents, newspaper adds, magazines, portals or family & friends are notable. The study suggests that most of the travelers (72% in total) get proper information from travel agents (22%) & family and friends (50%) who visit the place before as shown in the figure 05. Foreign tourists collect information from internet or travel guide books or travel agencies about sundarban but local people collect information from friends & relatives or local travel agents.

Alternative evaluation: The third stage of information search is evaluation of alternatives. Here the tourists evaluate all available alternative places to select their destination. They compare sundarban with other destination such as Cox's bazar, Saintmartin, Madhabkunda, Jaflaong, Hill tracts etc. They also compare travel agents service availability, accommodation & transportation facilities and costs.

Figure 05: Information Search Process of the Tourists of Sundarban

Source: Field Study

Purchase decision: When the tourists think that expected price, benefits, arrangements, security and facilities are suitable for them; they decide to purchase the travel package or visit the place. Field study shows that in most of the cases tourists decide to purchase travel packages available in different tourism agencies. Sometimes people arrange tour in group by themselves to Sundarbans in the holiday seasons. They mostly focus on the preference & economic viability. Travelers also involved in buying different local handicraft, souvenirs, local dresses that are unique for them.

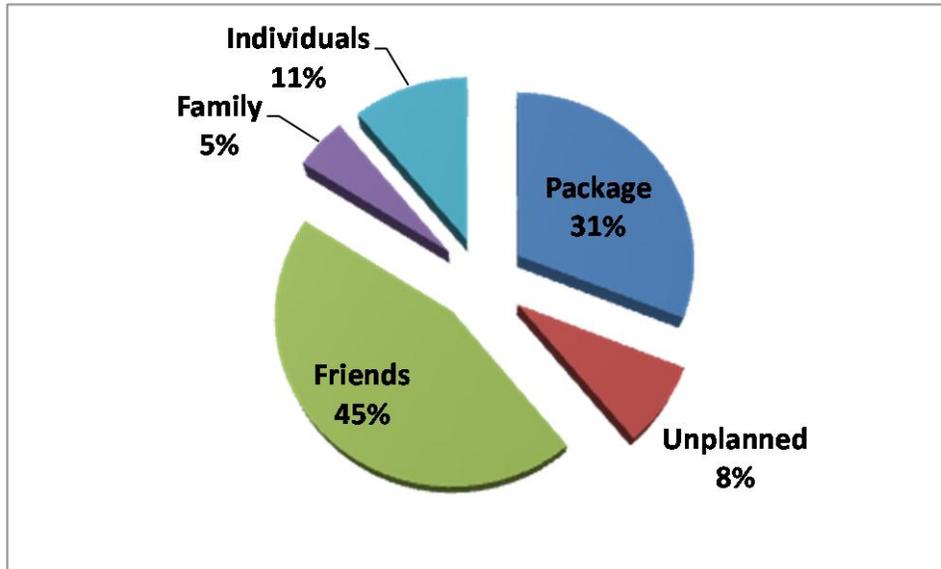
Post Purchase Behavior: This is the last stage of the decision process in which the travelers take further actions after purchase or travel of the destination, based on their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This study tried to find out the gap between tourists expectations and the destination perceived performance through the field study. Most of the respondents said that they did not see most expected Royal Bengal Tiger. They also claimed the instant change of weather that causes diseases. Some of them claimed that there are no available tower facilities and water facilities. But adventure & youth travelers were more satisfied rather than adult & women travelers.

Typologies:

The early Gray (1970) used the terms sunlust and wanderlust tourism to categorize two types of tourism. Sundarban is basically under the categorization of sunlust. Because tourists are coming in Sundarban mainly for adventure and explore. Later Cohen (1972) developed four typologies based on their individual capabilities to explore and adapt to the unfamiliar environment: (a) The organizational Mass tourists, (b) The individual mass tourists, (c) The explorers, (d) and The drifters.

From the figure of tourist preference on visit, we can see that preferences on friends and package have the highest percentages. That indicates the characteristics of organized mass tourists and individual mass tourists' behavior. 31% respondents are having the organizational mass tourist behavior because they preferred package tour to visit Sundarban which will ensure them to stay in familiar environment as far as possible. It will also help them to have a well-organized and well planned tour because of low degree involvement and participation in the tour period. 50% preferred friends and family that focuses on the individual mass tourist behavior which is similar to the organized mass tourists except the fact that a small percentage of freedom or decision making is maintained by them.

Figure 06: Tourist Preference on Visit



Source: Field Study

Though the percentage is low (11%) some tourists are having the explorer characteristics because they are adventurous and they want to have their own experience by participating actively in decision making. There are some tourists who are complete wanderers and do not stress on familiarity at all. Such tourists intend to venture away from their accustomed ways of life as far as possible so that they can immerse completely the culture of that destination. There are 8% tourists who have the intention like this and they are termed as drifters. The above findings indicate that all types of tourists are present in Sundarban but unfortunately there are no segmented facilities for various typologies of tourists.

Motivators and Deterrents:

Motivators:

Tourism motivators are the factors that inspire people to visit any tourist spot. In other words, the reasons of why people travel can be described as tourism motivators. It is a driving force behind a tourist's intention and behaviors. Tourism motivators play a critical role in the destination selection of the tourists. There are some variables that act as motivators in the selection of Sundarban to visit, such as: **(a) Adventure:** Sundarban is the best tourist place in Bangladesh for the people who love adventures. Sundarban is famous for its flora and fauna. Numerous kinds of species like Royal Bengal Tiger, spotted deer, tortoise, wild cock, leopard, crocodile etc. are available here. There are many places named Tiger Point, Hiron Point, Kotka Beach etc. which are really adventurous for visitors. That's why backpackers and adventurous tourists feel thrilled to visit Sundarban. **(b) Exploration:** The Sundarban, on the southeast coast of the Bay of Bengal and comprising 10,000 square kilometers of Bangladesh and India, is the world's largest mangrove forest, of which more than 60% is located in Bangladesh. About one-third of this gigantic forest is covered in water. Due to the wild life and wild nature, tourists get an absolute taste of nature and exploration through visiting Sundarban. **(c) Scenic Beauty:** The Sundarban has exquisite natural beauty. There are 315 species of birds including 80 species of migratory birds. There are 400 varieties of fish and crocodiles, turtles, tortoises and many other marine creatures. Prominent among the different categories of trees in the Sundarbans are '*sundari*', '*gheoa*,' '*goran*,' '*kewra*,' '*poshur*,' '*singra*,' '*khalsi*' etc. The forest is called Sundarbans for the predominance of the beautiful '*sundari*' trees. These satisfy the trust of calm and green nature loving people. **(d) Watching Tiger:** It is also the home of the world famous Royal Bengal Tiger. According to a survey of UNDP there are at present about 440 of them in the Sundarban. The presence of the rare and gorgeous Royal Bengal Tiger enhances the attraction of the Sundarban. **(e) Visit the only mangrove forest of Bangladesh:** Sundarban is the largest mangrove forest of the world. In 1999, it is declared as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Many tourists visit Sundarban to enjoy the natural beauty and wildlife of the largest mangrove forest of the world. **(f) Vacation:** Sundarban is an attractive place to visit in vacation for the local people. The journey itself is a very enjoyable one if the tourists' hire a ship. Tourists can easily enjoy their vacation seeing the combination flow and wave of water and nature. **(g) Experience:** Sundarban is the largest mangrove forest and one of the World Heritage Sites. It was also nominated for the selection of one of the Seven Wonders of the World. So, many tourists visit Sundarban to gather experience of mangrove forest and a wonderful giving of this earth.

Figure 07: Factors Affecting Tourist Destination Decision

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Adventure | | 84 |
| Exploration | | 64 |
| Scenic Beauty | | 80 |
| Watching Tiger | | 60 |
| Only Mangrove Forest | | 60 |
| Vacation | 20 | |
| Experience | 36 | |

Source: Field Study

Analysis indicates that most of the tourists become motivated to visit Sundarban for adventure and scenic beauty. Though appearance of tiger is completely uncertain but it is one of the major reasons of tourist attraction. Other factors also influence them like exploration, visiting the mangrove forest in Bangladesh.

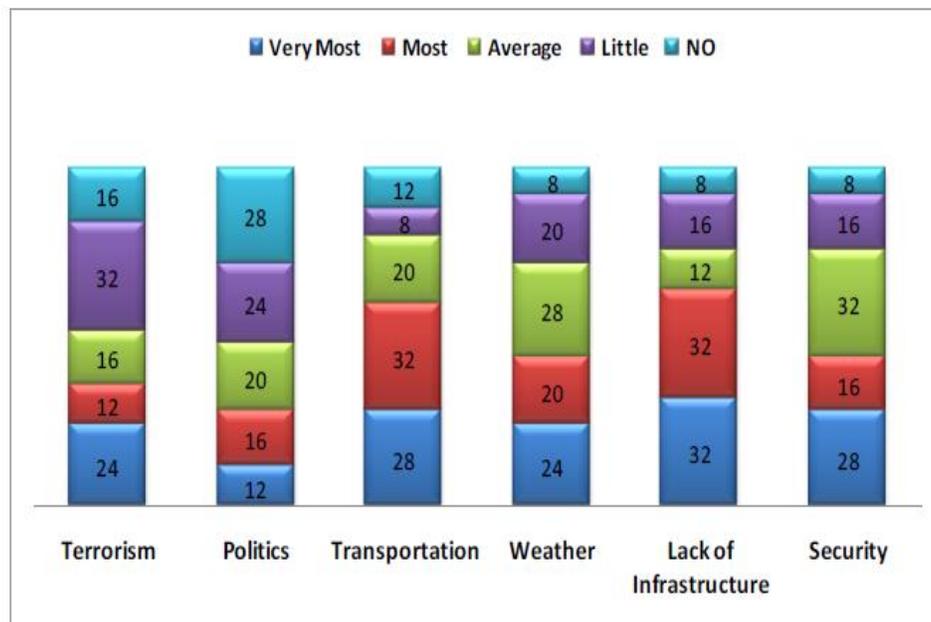
Deterrents:

There are some factors that de-motivate tourists to go on a particular destination. Tiger attack is the major deterrent of Sundarban. It is about 100 to 250 people are killed per year in tiger attack in Sundarban. The major factors that discourage people to visit Sundarban are given below:

(a) Terrorism: Nearly 25 armed terrorist groups controlling the Sundarbans are holding fishermen, bauyalis and mauyalis hostages. The terrorist groups have been carrying on their misdeeds with the help of local influential as well as political elements. Sometimes robberies also occurred in the deep forest. Sundarban lost its many tourists because of this terrorism. **(b) Politics:** Political situation is also a deterrent for visiting Sundarban. Local political situation is not stable so the tourist became de-motivated to visit Sundarban. **(c) Transportation Hassle:** Transportation is a big factor for the development of any tourist destination. To visit Sundarban from Khulna, water is the only means of transportation. Speedboats, country boats, private motor boats as well as mechanized vessel of Mongla Port Authority might be hired for the purpose of visit. These means of local transportation has not been developed so much and

this hassle becomes a deterrent for sundarban tourists. **(d) Weather:** The maximum average temperature of 29° C is felt during June and a minimum of 20° C is felt during December to January. This dynamic temperature is not a deterrent to the local tourists but this may be a problem for the foreign tourists to adjust with this hot and moist weather. **(e) Lack of Infrastructure:** Infrastructure is not so vital for the destination like Sundarban because most of the tourists are nature loving and adventurers. However, government initiatives for the development of infrastructural facilities are not sufficient. **(f) Security:** Sundarban still suffers by the lack of proper security to its tourists. There is no network of communication. Sometimes, different types of unexpected occurrences occur in the deep forest. So it is a big deterrent for the tourists. **(g) Hygiene:** One of the critical problems of Sundarban is the lacking of pure drinking water and adequate medical facilities. Tourists have to carry food and drinking water with them in their boat.

Figure 08: Deterrents for Tourists' Destination Decision



Source: Field Study

The survey report shows that 40 percent of the respondents perceived security problem is the main reason that reduces their interest to go to Sundarban. Transportation problem and undeveloped infrastructure are other factors that act as deterrents in most of the cases. Moreover, health and hygiene factor often get priority to the people who think to visit Sundarban with their children in vacations.

TOURISM AREA LIFE CYCLE (TALC) STAGE OF SUNDARBAN

Like a product, every destination also goes through different stages of life cycle (Griere, 2004; Dasgupta, 2011). According to Butler (1980), destinations undergo an evolutionary cycle of six stages. These stages are critically analyzed below to find out the current stage of Sundarban in the TALC model.

Theoretically, the *exploration* stage is characterized by the presence of a few adventurous tourists who are attracted to the area because of its unique and different natural & cultural attractions. Sundarban has been one of the few tourist destinations in the world symbolizing the largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest (Pasha and Siddiqui, 2003). Consequently ever since its recognition as a tourist destination, it has attracted people in huge numbers. The period from 1860 (the year in which the systematic management of this forest tract started) to 1971 (the year in which Bangladesh attained independence) had not been a period of high tourist involvement. Local population and the people from surrounding areas formed the bulk of the tourists during this period. Moreover, the existing statistical data meant that a suitable period for a detailed analysis of this destination could only be from 2007 onwards (Laskar, 2010). Sundarban has always remained in focus since its conception more than centuries ago. Thus the exploration stage is not applicable to this mangrove forest. This study suggests that the period from 1971 to 1997 can be considered as *early involvement* phase for this forest. The number of tourists, both domestic and foreign was not very high due to the limited accessibility and a lack of focus on tourism by the policymakers in the pre-independence era and then the immediate post-independent era as well. This mangrove forest was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997 (Laskar, 2010). This marked a new chapter in the history of Sundarban and since then, there has been a gradual increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting it. The year 1997, thus, also signaled the beginning of the *late involvement* stage for Sundarban. The increase in number of tourists exerted pressure on the Government to provide infrastructural facilities for the development and projection of Sundarban as a tourist destination.

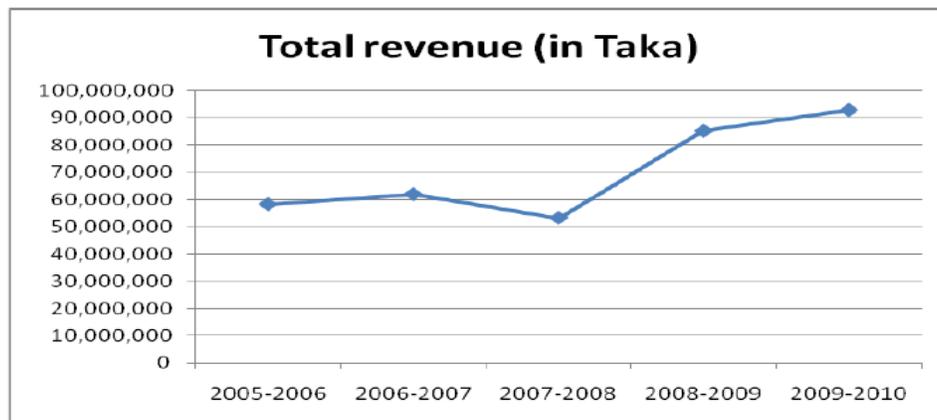
The late 2000s and early 2009 period can be marked as the *development* phase for Sundarban. There were concerted efforts by the authorities to promote Sundarban. In the year 2009 Sundarban was in the final nomination list of the World's Top Seven Wonderers (Haque, 2009). The Governmental agencies and involved parties started participating and promoting Sundarban. Consequently, the number of local and foreign tourists visiting Sundarban showed a significant rise. The increase in the number of tourists during this period can also be attributed to the economic prosperity of Bangladesh. Sundarban continues to be in the *development* stage. The following parameters further strengthen this conclusion:

1. The number of tourists to Sundarban is shown in the following figure. The destination continues to attract foreign and local people. The statistics

explored in the Table-1 that the number of tourists rose from 48344 to 199239 in the year 2003-04 to 2010-11.

2. The revenue collected from foreign exchange earned from Sundarban is rising sharply as shown in the figure 9.
3. The heavy advertising given by the Government of Bangladesh, various tour operators and the other involved parties with Sundarban.
4. Now a day, a huge number of tour operators are involved with tourism sector of Sundarban. This number is increasing day by day. The young educated and talented groups of people are engaging themselves more and more in operating tours. In the year 1989 the first tour operator started its operation in Sundarban but now this number is more than 20 (Bengal Tour Ltd., 2011).

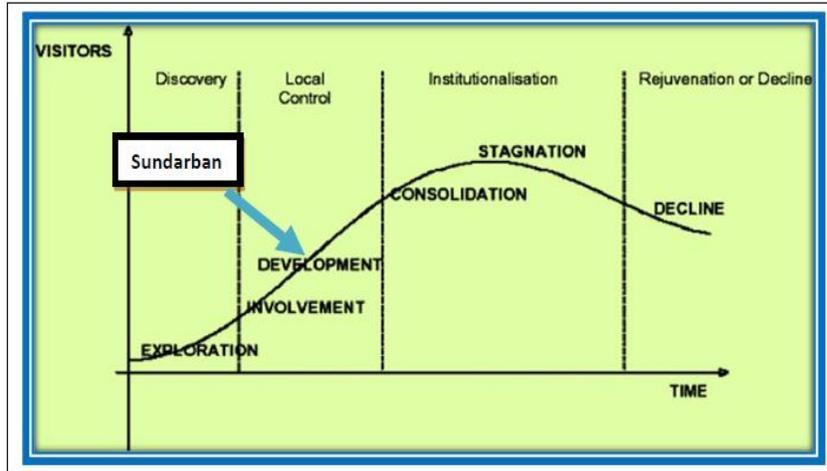
Figure 9: Total Revenue Earned from Sundarban



Source: Bengal Tours Ltd. (2011)

5. There is a new trend regarding investment on Sundarban is that, various foreign investors are willing to invest on Sundarban. There are some foreign investing organizations already in Sundarban who are doing collaborations with some local organizations.

Figure 10: Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) Stage of Sundarban



Source: Adapted from Butler (1980) and Modified by the Author

CONCLUSION

Tourists are defined as persons travelling away from their normal places to other unusual places (Leiper, 1997). They can be classified according to their characteristics of travel or their so-called consumer behavior. Tourist typology is therefore a term used to identify how each group of travelling persons behave in the tourist destination. From all the information presented, it is possible to say that the knowledge about tourists' behavior is not merely of academic interest but it also proves valuable information for practicing managers to be able to plan effectively. This study reveals that almost four tourist typologies are available in Sundarban but majority of tourists are *individual mass tourists* that will help the marketer to understand consumer behavior and to develop tourism products. It is also an integral source of information for promoting tourism products and highlights how to sell tourism products particularly in this globalized era, in which the patterns of tourist travelling is highly influenced by some motivational factors such as adventure, scenic beauty, exploration, watching tiger, only mangrove forest, experience and passing vacation. On the other hand, deterrents like: terrorism, political instability, insufficient transportation, lack of infrastructure, hygiene factors can affect adversely in the development of Sundarban as a world class tourist destination. In short, the study of consumers' behavior is solely of not academic interest but it is also substantially beneficial when practicing managers have the need to know and respond to tourists' needs and wants correctly. For this marketers have to have the knowledge about the total decision making process of tourists who are willing to visit Sundarban. To attract more tourists, marketers need to focus more on advertisement because they are highly influenced by the advertisement.

This paper has tried to outline the evolution of Sundarban and current stage of Sundarban by applying Butler's model of Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) through the presentation of historical data from the start of the 20th century up to now. Despite the constrain of data availability for Sundarban, it is evident that the most important change in the development of tourism, at first slowly, then at increasing pace under the supervision of Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation. Nevertheless, the exploration stage, characterized by traditional activities, was very long, not only because of the lack of infrastructure, but also because of the unconcerned attitude of our Government. The mid 1990s was the time that most facilities started to reach the involvement stage and there has been a fast growth of tourism places by the construction of tourist accommodation, businesses and other types of buildings frequently functioning as second home areas for the population of the island's urban centers. During early 2000, Sundarban started to reach the development stage and tourism started to be a dominant economic activity for the Sundarban. It is continuing its development phase that can be the potential area to focus for the future marketers who will deal with Sundarban.

Today, most destinations are at the point of maximum touristic impact and have either reached consolidation, or leading towards stagnation. The Government has recognized many areas of the Sundrban as saturated and no further construction of accommodation establishments is allowed. Concurrently, local authorities seek to increase the product appeal and tourist spending by promoting alternative forms of tourism, the environmental and cultural resources of the island and attempting to diversify the tourist product. The economic significance of Sundarban for the local communities suggests that their number will increase in the future. Therefore, there is a need for careful planning, financing, and policy implementation if the problems of past unplanned development are to be avoided or at least minimized.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Tourist Arrival on Sundarban

| Name of Division | Year | Foreign Tourists | Domestic Tourists | Total |
|------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|--------|
| West division | 2003-2004 | 212 | 6508 | 6720 |
| | 2004-2005 | 98 | 9854 | 9952 |
| | 2005-2006 | 149 | 11399 | 11548 |
| | 2006-2007 | 57 | 11504 | 11561 |
| | 2007-2008 | 132 | 11104 | 11236 |
| | 2008-2009 | 138 | 13767 | 13905 |
| | 2009-2010 | 145 | 14211 | 14356 |
| | 2010-2011 | 148 | 15505 | 15653 |
| East division | 2003-2004 | 1245 | 40379 | 41624 |
| | 2004-2005 | 1200 | 59224 | 60424 |
| | 2005-2006 | 1433 | 81233 | 82666 |
| | 2006-2007 | 2026 | 83241 | 85267 |
| | 2007-2008 | 1729 | 97585 | 99314 |
| | 2008-2009 | 2240 | 120510 | 122750 |
| | 2009-2010 | 2905 | 142020 | 144925 |
| | 2010-2011 | 3369 | 180217 | 183586 |

Source: Chowdhury, A. H. (2009)