Development of Muslim Friendly Tourism (MFT) in Dhaka

Dr. Md. Anowar Hossain Bhuiyan
Assistant Professor
National University
Gazipur, Bangladesh
MFT in OIC

• Many OIC countries possess rich and diverse natural, historical, cultural, and archaeological attractions

• It is expected that, by the year 2026, about 230 million Muslim tourists will travel around the globe and expected contribution into the global economy will be USD 300 billion

• Bangladesh is the fourth largest Muslim populated country having numerous potentials for Muslim Friendly Tourism development

• OIC has selected Dhaka as ‘OIC City of Tourism for 2019’ based on its’ Muslim friendly tourism potentials
MFT Potentials in Bangladesh

• **Crescent Rating** calculated that four type’s travels-leisure (75%), religious (10%), healthcare (1%) and business (10%) travels are happening among the Muslim tourists considering their travel demand

• Leisure travel
• Business travel
• Religious travel
• Healthcare service
• Bangladesh is the nineteenth most popular tourist destination for Muslims in the world (GMTI index)
• **Dhaka as ‘OIC City of Tourism for 2019**
State of MFT in Bangladesh

- On average 13% tourists from OIC countries arrived in Bangladesh during 2006 to 2014 (BBS Statistics)

**Key facts of tourism for Bangladesh**

- Total contribution to GDP: 4.3% (2017)
- Total contribution to employment: 3.8% (2017)
- Capital investment: BDT 72.5 billion (2016)
- Earning from tourism: BDT 11.1 billion (2016)
- Total size of tourism sector: BDT 460.3 Billion (2014)

- MFT hotels
- Tour Operators
Initiatives of MFT in Bangladesh

- Muslim friendly destination and general safety
- Availability of halal foods
- Access to prayer places
- Airport and transport facilities
- Alias named with Muslim motives
- 20% attractions are MFT attractions (Bhuiyan and Darda, 2018)
- Muslim friendly facilities in tourism attractions, shopping places, event venues
- Provide high cultural heritage and experiences, create eagerness to explore the destinations, ease access to prayer facilities, high Muslim travel market (Crescent Rating, 2015)
National Level Strategy to Develop MFT

- Bangladesh has **no specific strategies** within the tourism policies to give emphasize and prioritize the MFT development
- Bangladesh **hasn’t yet established a national committee** or body to focus and formulate necessary policies and regulations for MFT development in the country
- The country has **attention to develop Bangladesh as MFT hub** to popular this segment in home and abroad
Supporting Initiatives in Policies

• The Tourism Policy 2010

✓ To fill the gaps of existing tourism rules and regulations
✓ Promote responsible tourism through proper participation of relevant stakeholders- government, local communities, business organizations
✓ Maintain tourism friendly environment in the country
✓ Develop sufficient human resources through training facilities
✓ Support to small tourism-based businesses
✓ Arrange tourism related fairs, exhibitions, and promotional activities

• Medium Term Budget Framework until 2021

✓ Update the laws and policies related to global perspectives and implement them
✓ Co-ordinate with tourism-related organizations at locally and abroad
Supporting Initiatives in Policies

- **Seventh Five Year Plan on Tourism (2016-2020)**
  - Promoting the Muslim archaeological sites
  - Discover the archaeological treasures including religious sites
  - Pre-dominant types of tourism- Nature, Cultural, Religious
  - Factor of Success- Private sector initiatives
  - Identifying potential tourist attractions in the country (BPC)
  - Capacity building in the tourism sector (BTB)

- The country need to make special strategies in **8th 5-year Plan (2021-2025)** and formulate suitable regulation to enhance MFT development
Key Challenges in Developing the MFT

- Tour operators and guides
- Accommodation options
- Human resource development
- Visa issuing system
- Awareness and outreach
Prioritized Initiatives for MFT Development

- Ensuring political commitment, establishing national committee for MFT development, formulating halal regulations, infrastructure development, and facilitate halal certification

- Increasing awareness for MFT: product and services, halal market niche, and online contents for MFT

- Separate recreation facilities according to gender

- **SESRIC (2017)** recommended for market research, conducting seminar and workshop, formulating national strategy, skill human resource, standardization and certification
Development of MFT in Dhaka

- **Government initiatives**
  - Integrate MFT development guidelines in existing policies and strategies
  - Public-private partnerships
  - Inspire the private entrepreneurs
  - Campaign and develop image of the country as MFT destination (foreign missions, media, travel agents)
  - Arrange simple visa issue system
  - Increase visa on arrival (VOA) facilities
Development of MFT in Dhaka

• **Private stakeholders**
  ✓ Tour operators should be arranged halal tour packages can attract Muslim tourists through their Islamic requirements
  ✓ The tourism spots should be arranged separate prayer facilities for the tourists, provide halal food, and facilitated recreation facilities with Shariah complaints

• **Training and professional institutes**
  ✓ Include MFT issues in education and training programs
  ✓ Equip the young generation and make them skillful towards tourism and hospitality services specially, in MFT perspectives
References


• SESRIC (2017). Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries. The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Ankara, Turkey.

THANK YOU