

Sustainable Tourism Development Approaches of Natural Scenic Resources of Kuakata, Bangladesh

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Abstract: *Though it is a small country, it has a vast resources like natural gas, coal, minerals, fertile soil, bio-mass, fisheries, scenic resources etc. all over the country. Kuakata is another one of the major scenic resources of Bangladesh containing huge potentiality of socio-economic benefit for Bangladesh. Through this paper, the sustainable developing approaches have been highlighted coordinating all public and private sectors as per partial case analysis of Pakdeepinit model (2007). All of the approaches mentioned here are discussed considering all cultural, natural and spatial resources adopting all groups of people, groups, communities and organizations in local and national level. This study has been done by the primary observation, data collection, in-depth interview and overall content analysis of secondary data on sustainable strategies. The approaches discussed here are the major development scopes and recommendations for the overall sustainable development of this valuable natural scenic resource of Bangladesh.*

Keywords: Kuakata, Sustainable Tourism, Natural Resource

1. Introduction

Our natural resources are facing a large number of exploitation and greater changes owing to vast population than the limited natural resources. It can be said that more population more exploitation. So at present sustainable development is must which refers to the meeting of the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own

According to statistics of the country's National Tourism Authority (NTA), a total of 349,837 foreign tourists visited Bangladesh in 2008, about 21 percent higher than that in 2007. Despite NTA also noticed that, the rise in number of tourists' visits, the incomes from the tourism sector in 2008 reduced to 4.60 billion taka (\$65.7 million) in 2008 from 5.27 billion taka (\$75.3 million) in 2007. This clearly indicates the necessity of taking steps to ensure sustainable development of the tourist spot.

Among the most popular tourist spots, Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, Sundarban, Chittagong Hill Tracts (Rangamati, Bandarban, And Khagrachari), and the South-Eastern greater Sylhet inclusive haor, baor and the green hills around tea gardens etc are the most visited spot by our local, national, and foreign tourists. After Cox's Bazar, another attractive sea beach in our country and world is the Kuakata sea beach known as 'Ocean's Daughter. It is about 32 km long including 17 km long natural forest that exceptional to the Cox's Bazar sea beach. It has a vast contribution to our tradition, culture, history, society, economy and environment.

About 115000 tourists visit this appealing place in spite of having numerous limitations in contrast to other spot in Bangladesh. This tourist spot has crucial need for SD strategies in order to continue to its significant role as an ecotourism spot. The implementation of sustainable development and management actions and policies can play a major role on this spot.

Objective of the study

To determine Possible options for the sustainable development of tourism industry of Kuakata compared to specific model

2. Literature Review

Brief History of the Tourism Sector in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Parjatan Sangstha was formed soon after the liberation war of 1971, aimed at developing the tourism industry of the country. The organization was restructured as Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) in 1973, and they subsequently drew up a five-year plan for developing the industry as part of the government's First Five Year Plan (1973-78). Under the plan the government was expected to provide the necessary facilities and develop the natural beauty of the country in a manner that would be attractive to tourists. The second, third, and fourth five-year plans and two year plans were intended to implement by the past Bangladesh governments to develop tourism sector but these plans have not been implemented properly by the government due to various impediments including ministerial legacy problems. Some of these problems still persist and it is hampering the effectiveness of the resources that are being apportioned to the sector. While BPC remains the leading public sector body in the tourism industry of Bangladesh, the private sector has also invested in the sector quite successfully. These private entrants into the sector have entered the industry through developing hotels, or tour operators. As many as thirty two tour operators functioning in the country, some of whom cater to domestic tours while others offer both domestic and outbound tours (Bangladesh Monitor, 2007). Thirty two such private tour operators are members of an association named "Tours Operator Association of Bangladesh (TOAB)", formed to carry out their activities more efficiently, to lobby the BPC and the government for the realization of justified rights, and to promote the country's tourism together (Khondker, Ahsan, 2015)

Impact of tourism

Tourism can bring many economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly in rural areas and developing countries, yet mass tourism is also associated with negative effects. Tourism can only be sustainable if it is carefully managed so that probable negative effects on the host community and the environment are not permitted to outweigh the financial benefits.

There are economic, socio-cultural and environmental key benefits of tourism.

- 1) Economic benefit: Tourism can provide direct jobs to the community, such as tour guides and hotel housekeeping. Indirect employment is generated through other industries like agriculture, food production and retail. Infrastructure development and visitors' expenditure generates income for the local community and can lead to the alleviation of poverty.
- 2) Social benefit: In addition to the revenue, tourism can bring about a real sense of pride and identity to communities. It allows them to look at their history, and community identity. This helps the local residents to maintain their tradition and culture.
- 3) Environmental benefit: Tourism provides financial support for the conservation of ecosystems and natural resource management, making the destination more authentic and desirable to visitors.

Negative effects of tourism are also not ignorable.

These are:

- 1) Negative economic effect: Jobs created by tourism are often seasonal and poorly paid, yet tourism can push up local property prices and the cost of goods and services. Place of tourism can be affected by terrorism.
- 2) Negative social effect: Visitor's behavior can have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the host community. For example, crowding and congestion, drugs and alcohol problems can occur. Interaction with tourists can also lead to an erosion of traditional cultures and values.
- 3) Negative environmental effect: Tourism poses a threat to a region's culture and natural resources, through overuse (Roy, 2015)

The sustainable development approach of Tourism

The abovementioned approaches fail to recognize the needs of the local community and the importance of environmental and cultural conservation in development. As a result, a more contemporary approach was originated, the sustainable development approach. The concept of sustainable development is a complex and also an internationally contested concept. Appeared in the early '80ies initially as economic development new point of view aiming to reduce negative impact on natural environment, lately developed and was adopted by the ecology movement for protecting and preserving the world natural environment. In 1993, United Nations has decided after voting in 1992 to form the World Commission on Environment and Development with a main clear objective to protect the natural environment and apply the principles of sustainability. The major aim of sustainable development is to direct changes from development towards 'a more idealized and greener future'.

The concept of sustainable development has been defined in many ways. The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development has been given by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundland Report 'Our Common Future', describing it as: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ... (It is) a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. From the above definition it is clear that sustainable development, as with all the other development approaches, is a process of change. However, this approach gives importance on the preservation of resources and respects the needs of future generations. (Rahman, 2009)

Problems of Tourism Industry in Bangladesh

There is lack of budgetary allocation and scarcity of trained people for the development of tourism sector in the country. Bangladesh is lagging behind in projecting her attractions to international tourist through advertisement in international print and electronic media. Besides meager budgetary allocation of the government, appropriate plans and programs short term, long term and medium term –was absent before 90s. Tourists do not come here to sleep ideally in hotel, but tourists do not find any night-life activities after spending the day at Cox's bazaar beach. There is no proper water and sewerage system in Cox's bazaar. Gas connection is absent and only a limited number of flights land there. Kuakata is a second priority beach of the country. Though road communication has improved than before, tourists do not tend to go there for second time due to the lacking of standard facilities. There is a popularity of archaeological sites in the north-west of Bangladesh. But because of the absence of interpreter and facilities tourist do not make overnight stay there. There is no involvement of the local people of the tourist site. They get little benefit from tourist activities at their own areas. They are also neglected in tourism planning and development process. There are a lot of things to do for Bangladesh Porjoton Corporation; creation of hotels, motels is not the only aspect of tourism development. Both the local and potential foreign tourists face the problem of easy access to information related to Bangladesh tourism and its facilities. (Hassan et.al., 2013)

3. Methods and Materials

The study area

The research had been undertaken over the Kuakata municipality area. Globally it is situated at the 21°48'55.98" north latitude and 90°07'18.62". Nationally it is a newly declared municipality area (paurashaba) is located at last corner of the southern part of our country by the touching and closure relation onto the coast of Bay-of-Bengal and under the latakhalia union, kalapara upazila, Patuakhali district in Barishal division. It is 350 km away from capital city Dhaka. The distance from district (patuakhali) and upazila (kalapara) town is 77 km and 22 km.

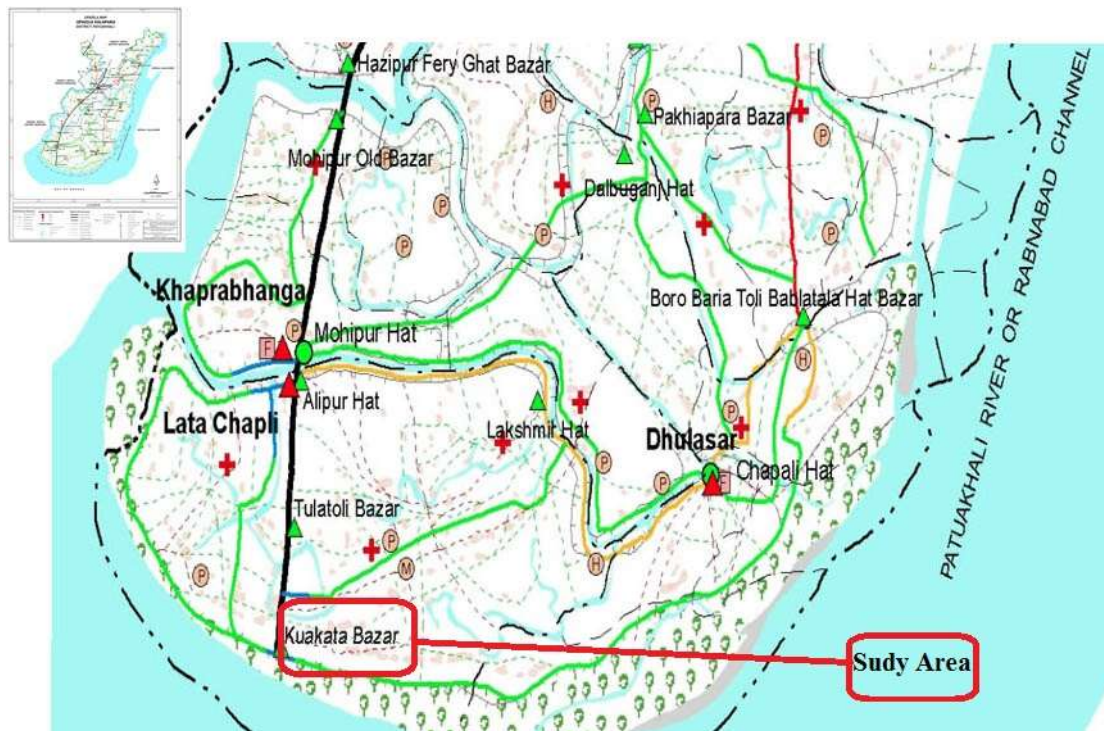


Figure 2.1: Upazilla map showing union of study area (Banglapedia, 2005)

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data were collected through the open-end and in-depth questionnaire process over the associated personnel and field observation. The observation, investigation and opinion collection were based on the Department of Environment (DOE); Forest Department; Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation; Municipal authority; Hotel and Motel management Association; LGED, Kuakata and local people opinion. All of the data collected from field observation and investigation and from secondary sources were arranged and processed by the use of content analysis. The study had been undertaken and accomplished compared to the model of Prakobsiri Pakdeepinit based on "A Model for sustainable Tourism Development in Phayao Lake Rim Communities, Phayao Province, and Upper Northern Thailand". Though the above model was based on a lake but it was one kind of wetland related eco-spot, so here were tried to highlight the most related development factors from the model to kuakata. The beach related facilities had been compared to the model of O.T. Adejumo which was on "Sustainable beach tourism: formalisation of local agenda for Eleko (South-Western Nigeria) community coastal resources".

4. Possible options for Sustainable Ecotourism Development

From the study discussion it was clear that the development approaches of Kuakata should be included all of the social, economical, political, municipal, service and development factors. According to the Prakobsiri Pakdeepinit, sustainable development of that tourist area can be accomplished and achieved by following the strategic conceptual model which is based on the five major aspects relevant to the proposed area of sustainable development. The development model and plan of Kuakata can be compared using the following components from Prakobsiri Pakdeepinit given below.

4.1 Community Participation Promotion

From the survey it was found that the educational facilities are very poor which result in most of the people are uneducated and do not know how to participate in tourism administration and management actions. It was also found that community supporting facilities are at hardly level due to the direct communication and association of all types' local people. According to the Prakobsiri model, community participation programs must be promoted in Kuakata. The aspects of community participation include:

4.1.1 Provision of Knowledge and Understanding

Community participation in Kuakata is at very poor level due to the lacking of proper of knowledge and understanding about the sustainable development and importance's of the sustainable development and planning of Kuakata. All associated (e.g. local and national government, different non-governmental and private) sectors and authorities should include and apply such knowledge's and understanding in their planning and development process with new and improved attitudes and awareness so that the community people can accept and understand easily and apply to the implementation programs.

4.1.2 Selecting Appropriate Patterns of Tourism Management of Kuakata

There was no form of formal and empirical tourism management, and group formation in the communities of Kuakata. According to the model there should be formed a "civil tourism committee in Kuakata areas", consisting of various representatives of occupational groups in the communities of the relevant authorities. local fishermen, small local entrepreneurs, arts and handicrafts groups, the stone craving group, and the blacksmith group, additionally some community groups (i.e. a village temple group, a youth group, school committees and other agricultural

producing groups) involved in the planning process. Those group representatives may participate in creating, planning and projecting the future of tourism management covering marketing promotion, self-development, and resolving any conflict of interests.

4.1.3 Creating employment opportunities

Natural disasters, salt water intrusion, domination and tenure of lands by the local rich people, intolerable burden of loan taking from NGOs and uneducated problems specially in the youth people etc are the common phenomenon in Kuakata which result in marginal poverty to a large number people specially on fisherman and farmers communities. According to Prakobsiri, local government and leading groups related tourism sectors should promote the tourism activities and distribute the scopes according to the equity of the poor communities which may be beneficial to local earning and participation of all types of people of the society for the sustainable tourism development. The employment opportunities can be promoted and accurately distributed by the following ways.

- 1) Tourism associated the entire employee and workers should be as possible as appointed and adopted from the local sources.
- 2) Local higher educated people should be trained and included in the profession of tourist guide and higher quality hotels and motels management.
- 3) Secondary level educated people can be adopted into the medium level hotel and motels management where mostly stay the national medium earning tourist.
- 4) Secondary level educated people should also be trained and included into beach related business opportunities for example sports car, sports materials renting (ball, tire, time spending beds, horse riding etc)
- 5) Young and experienced with driving people can be trained properly and adopted into the internal spots communication business by bike, zip etc.
- 6) Poor fishermen can be included into the lake boating and sea boating business with proper instruments, knowledge and training.
- 7) Women can be adopted into the local hand-made products e.g. fan, knives, showpieces etc.

4.1.4 Network Creation for Sustainable Tourism

No systematic and organized plan and implementation related to Network creation among the all related sectors of development was found there. A implicit and rigorous network and relationships have to be built up among the district and sub-district administration, sports and recreation body, municipality, different governmental, non-governmental and private agencies.

4.2 The Activity Route Component for Tourism Development

The route components as well as the travelling patterns are very low quality while travelling Kuakata. There should be a number of options to access the area which would be comfortable, cost and time effective and easy to signing and finding all of the tourist spots. According to Prakobsiri (2007) the activity route for travelling in Kukata can be developed according as the following three aspects given below.

4.2.1 Development of Tourism Pattern

The travelling pattern in different spots in Kuakata should be developed including various options of visiting easily and comfortably. It can be fulfilled with the integration of water and land travel with various activities. These could be using speed boat driving, trawler riding, biking, cycling, horse-riding as well, as freely walking along the beach. In order to help the tourists to get some variety according to their different needs, travelling guidelines might be arranged according to time available.

4.2.2 Connecting the Tourism Sources

From the study, it was found that about six individual tourist spots were in Kuakata which are situated at the fixed distances ranges between 3-11 km. Therefore it must be connected the all of the spots by the both water and land roads except the using of beaches along the sea so that tourists can get enough opportunity and interest to visit the spots.

4.2.3 Tourism Activity Development

Whole tourism sector of Kuakata was entirely dependent on the natural resources except only two ancient temples. Two temples of hundreds years old and historical well were not well managed and conserved for the better excursion of tourists. Therefore, some of other tourism resources and products should be introduced and existing resources must be properly managed and conserved. Other different tourism activities may be making of traditional woody knives and ornaments by various coastal stones slabs, engraving on the products with the tourists name, introduction, conservation, improvement and marketing of the cultural home-made product through the direct participation and involvement of the respected communities and tribal.

4.3 Tourism Resource Conservation

There were no structured and formal rules and regulations in terms of protection and conservation of the natural resources in Kuakata. According to model, the tourism resources conservation of Kuakata can be implemented by adopting the following steps.

4.3.1 Legal Measures

Though nationally many of rules and regulations are existed associated to conservation of natural and cultural resources, the natural resources of Kuakata are being decreased and damaged day by day due to lacking of strictly enforcement, implementation and enactment through the various public service forces (polices, army, BAF, Navy etc). For the conservation of natural resources and development of Kuakata local and national rules, regulations, and policies must strictly enforced and changed in particular requirement.

4.3.2 Raising Awareness in Tourists

Tourists and guides should be made to understand and be aware of natural and environmental protection. Raising awareness on tourism resource conservation can be done through organizing a nature loving program, establishing a nature center at every tourist attraction, providing tourists with relevant printed materials, organizing signboards for exhibition/description, and training guides to enable them to

explain the ecological system and local ways of life to tourists.

4.3.3 Raising Awareness in the Communities

The community members, guides and local state officers should have their awareness raised about natural and environmental conservation of Kuakata by implementing the following measures:

- 1) Natural, environmental and cultural conservation plans should be established as a guideline for implementation in order to bring about the desired behavior of concerned individuals.
- 2) Should be arranged different types cultural programs to get together all types of people with a view to introducing and informing them about the significance of all types of resources.
- 3) The municipal authority should be arranged a brief discussion meeting in different religious institution before prayer.

4.4 Sustainable Tourism Marketing Development

Besides others limitations, focusing and marketing pattern and activities are one of the most drawback of Kuakata. Local community, community leader, local and national administrations are busy in making their profit and capital without thinking about the significance of focusing and highlighting the spot and conservation of the cultural, folkways, natural and environmental resources on which their entire tourism industry is dependent. According to Prakobsiri the following aspects should be considered for the sustainable tourism marketing development.

4.4.1 Measures of Standardization of Goods and Services

There are no measuring activities and programs for the quality assessment of goods and services in most of the tourist spots of Bangladesh successively in Kuakata. The respected authority should take the necessary steps for food safety by monitoring and assessment programs with the direct help of Ministry of Public Health, quality of trawler, rowing boats, and speed boats; quality of bikes and others transports and the local hand-made products by making a committee or organization of related experienced persons.

4.4.2 Pricing Measure

The communities associated to different business sectors should be involved in setting the standard prices for their merchandise and service charges that are fair both the villagers and tourists. The pricing measures should be adopted for most of the tourism products. For example Food, Handicrafts, Products stone slabs and traditional goods, Bike fair, Accommodation cost, Tourist guide cost, Fair of different motorized and non-motorized vehicles etc.

4.4.3 Establish Distribution Channels for the sales of Tourism Products

There were no formal and direct distribution channel for the focusing and introduction of the local products in Kuakata. There might be three main types of channel for distributing the local villager's products and goods in order to make The Kuakata's community products well known in public level.

i. The direct sales outlet

Sales outlets may be developed to link tourists and the original producers at the village level. Traveling programs should be made available for tourists who want to go by themselves. Some optional programs should be developed for them to visit various places with clear signs and publications.

ii. Agency system channel

The idea of agency system channel is not well known and implemented through the community of Kuakata. The tourism programs should be provided to all types of business groups with souvenir, short documentation through identification card, leaflets, manuals etc requesting to spread and distribute fluently telling with the significances of tourism marketing, such as travel agency, hotels and restaurants, hotel, motel and guest house, bike drivers, stalls and street vendors, Shopkeepers and shopping malls, markets' stalls, gatekeepers of different protected spots, transport ticket counters etc

iii. A distribution channel through the internet

Internet is now the most favorable, easy and popular media to focus and sell tourism spot. There are a few advertisement in internet about kuakata even with no formal, structural and appropriate description and instructions easy to influence and access to this area. So the tourism board and authorities should consider and install a web committee or association to highlight and sell the tourism products of Kuakata.

4.5 Developing Service Capacity of the Local Community in Tourism

From the study result, it was clear that there were great problems at the travelling sites such as a lack of facilities including an insufficiency of toilets, parking spaces, signs, and harbor facilities. These facilities play a very significant part in the tourists deciding to re-visit the traveling sites in the future, and also in making further publication either negatively or positively about the sites and Kuakata tourism areas. Development of service capacity of Kuakata can be accomplished by the following way given below.

4.5.1 Improvement of Facilities in the Tourism Sites

Improvement of facilities should be under the following sectors

- 1) Garbage disposal should be carefully monitored at attraction sites. For example, rubbish bins should be sufficient, healthy, clean and available on sites, including efficient and frequent garbage collection.
- 2) Public toilets should be made available, and should be sufficient, healthy and clean.
- 3) A security system for tourists could be arranged in advance by the community in order to assure the tourists of their safety and satisfaction. Safety measures should be enforced to include road and waterway accidents, crimes, overcharging on merchandise for tourists, and narcotic drugs.

4.5.2 Communicative Media in the Tourism Sectors

This type of measure for the sustainable ecotourism development was very rare in Kuakata. For the spreading

and marketing this valuable site the following steps should be taken.

- 1) Some training courses should be organized for the community members, tourism source owners and guides by focusing on how to interpret the cultural components of the villages meaningfully and clearly.
- 2) Tourism guides and handbooks should be developed and published for the visitors to learn about the tourist sites by themselves.
- 3) Tourism information centers are needed by tourists everywhere in the world. The research found that there was no center in existence for the time being and the Kuakata Municipality should establish a tourism information center to provide information for tourists in forms of brochures, folders, maps, cassette tapes, and knowledgeable volunteers to serve with service mind.
- 4) Maps, road signs, and other communicative signs should be produced in Bengali and English and made available for tourists at all tourism sites and appropriate restaurants and information centers.

4.5.3. Personnel Development

There should be a responsible body for conducting tourism management in Kuakata. This organization, at the initial stage, may be the Upazilla Office under the Governor functioning as the District or divisional tourism overall management. This body should conduct a needs assessment with some specific target groups relating to the tourism source owners, stakeholders, authorities and potential tourists to find out their prioritized needs for development of the tourism quality, types, problems and activities based on a participatory approach.

4.6 Visitor Monitoring

Visitor monitoring is necessary to monitor the anthropogenic load on the nature objects, follow the dynamics of visitor

numbers, make conclusions about the most visited/loaded sites and services, efficiency of events, the necessity to manage visitor flow, and to demonstrate to the stakeholders social and economic impact of tourism in the territory. There was no monitoring task in Kuakata on which the development programs would be undertaken. According to model, it can be integrated through the following steps given below.

- 1) Review and select the most appropriate visitor monitoring methods (e.g. survey, interviews, visitor counting using electronic counters and entrance tickets, photo monitoring of the objects, sample plots in attraction sites to observe trample, etc.);
- 2) Set the monitoring period and points of reference;
- 3) Carry out monitoring activities;
- 4) Analyze monitoring data;
- 5) Present monitoring results to the local society at the evaluation events of the sustainable tourism model operation.
- 6) Use monitoring data in planning of further activities regarding the required improvements, tourism products and services, visitor flow management, infrastructure development, cooperation between all interested parties.

Tourism Facilities Needed at Kuakata Beach

Though Kuakata is one of the most popular tourist place as it contains quiet and calm sea beach with outstanding natural scenery, there were hardly beach related facilities in Kuakata. The services required for national and international tourists have not been considered and installed yet; as a result it is losing its natural attraction and demand with enormous appealing to all types of tourist. Here are given the status of beach services within the following table

Table 5.1: Status of beach related services

Services	Status	Comment
Beach Access road – Local government	√	The services related to beach are not adequately available and are of poor quality.
Parking lot	×	
Piped-borne water or borehole	×	
Health centre	×	
Beach safety	×	
Public toilet facility	×	
Beach changing Rooms	×	
Telecommunication	×	
Power supply	×	
Solid waste disposal	×	
Park or community square	×	
Life guard post	×	
Community motor park or bus terminal	√	
Beach Sport Rental Stalls	√	

According to the survey result (Table 5.1), it was found that most of the beach facilities and services were not present in Kuakata sea beach. Toilet facilities, beach changing rooms, fresh food stalls, picnic rentals, beach administrative office, portable water sources, community hall, fire brigade post etc beach related facilities were entirely absent in Kuakata. Therefore, the local and national government as well as community personnel should implement and improve the

above beach related development model made by O.T.Adejumo, (Undated).

Kuakata has become an attractive and popular tourism spot as it contains a wonderful and outstanding natural scenic safe and flatten sea beach along the coastal belt at southern part of the country. According to O. T. Adejumo. (Undated) a beach should have management services, beach shelters,

cabin support services, linkage center and necessary community infrastructure conveniences. But there were no plans and programs for the saving, conservation and ultimately development for the most valuable resource of the zone. If the necessary conservation and development steps are not taken, one day this resource will be place of dilapidated and tourist deficiency. The necessary facilities for the sustainable implementation and development of such valuable beach of Kuakata can be products grouped under 5 sub headings as follows:

1) Management Services

- Beach Administrative Office
- Security post
- Local Government or State Government liaison offices
- Life guard post
- Central car park

2) Beach Shelters

- Group picnic cabins
- Individual picnic cabins
- Overnight beach Camp cabins

3) Cabin Support Services

- Local Restaurants/ Non alcoholic beverages stall
- Fresh food stalls
- Souvenir stalls
- Picnic Rentals
- Beach Sport Rental Stalls
- Toilet facilities
- Standard changing room with bathing facilities

4) Linkage Center

- Artisan fishing boat anchor
- Seafood cold room and stalls
- Local crafts/cottage industries

5) Necessary Community Infrastructure

The following community infrastructures are necessary for the successful development and management of this recreational beach project.

- Portable Water source
- Police post
- Fire brigade post
- Community Communication center
- Land fill or certified refuse dump
- Community motor park or bus terminal
- Community hall, square or park

5. Conclusion & Recommendation

It is acknowledgeable that Kuakata is a place of which may be a great resource for local people and whole nation by its proper utilization and sustainable management considering not only its economic outcome but also its resource conservation. By the active and regular observation, analysis, corrective action plan and monitoring of all the problems concerned to resources conservation and tourists facilities arisen presently and potential in future, it will next second highest tourism spot in Bangladesh after the Cox's Bazar the longest sea beach in the world. Now it is must to

work together and coordination with every sections and departments of local and national level adopting all public and private sectors for sustainable development of Kuakata and boost-up another source of economic development of local people and national earnings also for generation to generation by the direct and active implementation of the sustainable approaches discussed in this paper or any other standard guideline available now.

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Author Profile



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