

Strategies for Promoting Kaptai Lake as a Water-based Tourism Destination of Bangladesh

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***Abstract:** Despite having beauty and serenity, Kaptai Lake is one of the most overlooked tourist destinations of Bangladesh. The study aims to identify various tourist segments of Kaptai Lake. The nature of the study is descriptive and explanatory. It aims to find and analyze the influence of socio-demographic characteristics and travel behavior of the tourists on the choice of Kaptai Lake over other destinations and the ways to promote Kaptai Lake as a tourist destination. Both primary and secondary data have been used and a survey has been conducted. The study revealed that the tourists who visit this lake usually enjoy the tranquility, natural beauty of the hills surrounding the lake and also the sunset. The tourists need to have economy and business class accommodation, easy accessible routes, comfortable transports, hygiene and sanitation, safety and security and emergency services. The findings of the study can help the tourism experts and marketers to position Kaptai Lake to attract and retain both domestic and international tourists to visit this destination and ensure its competitiveness.*

Introduction:

Dotted with islands, Kaptai is Bangladesh's biggest artificial lake, made in 1960 for a hydroelectric undertaking. It is a lovely spot, and favorite to Bengali tourists, but there are movement restrictions and extremely limited scopes for the outsiders to visit other spots.

To build up a strong marketing strategy, market segmentation and targeting the right customers are important (Park and Yoon, 2009). One of the most essential components of target advertising is market segmentation (Witt and Moutinho, 1989; Morrison, 2002) on the grounds that it can help advertiser to build up the correct item appropriate to each target market. Kotler (1994) stated that appropriate tourists can be attracted by segmenting the market, aiming the targeted customers and positioning the destination into the hearts of the target customers.

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To live we require water. From the inception of living beings, the ancient human communities have been living on the bank of streams. From ancient time, livelihood of people was dependent on the water flow to a great extent. At that time, water was the primary way of correspondence. Waterways were used in the first Grand European Tour. Still today, people are dependent on water vehicles. Bangladesh is not exception to this. We verified the importance of water-based channels in the lives of the people of Bangladesh. Dhaka is situated on the bank of Buriganga River, Barisal is situated on the bank of Kirtonkhola, Rajshahi is based on the bank of Padma etc. For different needs, people need to live close to the stream since waterways provide with the necessary things for existence. People can earn and establish connection to the outer communities through stream, lake, ocean and so forth. Individuals can go by water vehicles at low cost. Numerous nations of the world have turned out to be fruitful in water based tourism. Bangladesh is attempting to attract more travelers by promoting different water-based tourism destinations. We have enough number of water-based attractions. Unfortunately, we still lack tourism framework, which needs a significant amount of attention and investment from public and private sectors. In addition, it requires less cash to create water based tourism.

Bangladesh has diverse forms of tourism destinations. Different destinations target different segments of tourists in different ways. If a traveler decides to visit a place of utmost serenity and industrialization at the same time, then without a moment's delay one must visit the Kaptai Lake of Rangamati.

Kaptai Lake is based on a long 11,000 square kilometers range which makes an astounding symbol of industrialization that lures the travelers. The lake is an outcome of the Kaptai dam that was built for the hydro-electric enterprise on the Karnafuli River. The stream of financial commitment and development of this territory relies upon the level of satisfaction of tourists who visit this lake to enjoy the natural beauty and serenity. This study aims to recognize the impact of socio-demographic factors of the tourists in their choice of destination and their travel behavior. It further aims to suggest strategies that can help to appeal the appropriate type of tourists considering their need, wants and demand.

Literature Review:

Amnuay-ngertra and Sonoda (2013) stated that water tourism can be an incredible instrument to bring tourists from the city based countries as waterways are interesting travel spots that are considered as tourism asset of social legacy and indigenous habitat. Lade, (2006) concentrates on the regional market situated along the Murray Waterway, Australia which he thought increased the value of their normal living standard. Business groups are considered as a huge source of increasing the living standard of the community constituting the path in which related and supporting ventures develop. Tour

operators are assumed as an imperative part in creating water based tourism. Navaratil, Picha, and Navarilova (2010) perceives both push and pull factors to have effect on the rate of satisfaction perceived by a visitor initiating a water tourism. School of Inn and Tourism Administration, The Hong Kong Polytechnic College, (2011) discovers 4 types of business exercises in water based tourism:

1. Visit to the nearby water attractions in the weekends
2. Single travels
3. Scuba jumping and
4. Fishing.

Hudson (1998) stated that despite the fact that most of the time the guests choose their travel destination for reasons other than the interest of waterfalls, these scene highlights critical parts of attractions. Frequently connected with ecotourism, waterfalls help to enhance the tourism destination, spread the benefits to the economy and helps to enhance the conditions of the less developed countries. While Ouma, Hayombe, and Agong (2014) finds that improper behavior of the tourists in destination may harm the environmental and cultural biodiversity of the destination. Dokulil (2014) recommends to keep honesty, outside or intimal irritations underneath the conveying ability to keep up environmental wellbeing or biological community.

So far, we know, no rich literature has been directed to cover the understanding of business sector, target market and the significant factors influencing visitors to select water-based tourism in Bangladesh, specially water-based tourist attractions like Kaptai Lake of Rangamati. Kurleto (2014) proposes that the concerned authority of lake tourism must consider the distinctions in the impression lakes by different visitors and their perception towards sustainability and ecological mindfulness.

As Kaptai Lake constitutes huge tourism potentialities, it needs extraordinary consideration. From this setting, this study has been taken by the researchers.

Rationale of the Study

Tourism includes an excursion, touring, recreational exercises, gathering information and so on. UNWTO has defined tourism as the activities performed by people after flying out to and remaining in places outside their normal environment of living for not more than one back to back year for relaxation, business and different purposes. One of the real objectives of tourism is the stay outside the typical condition. In this way, to go to a tourism attraction one needs to use various kinds of transports to cover the way. Water transport is one of them. Alternate modes are train and road transport, aero plane and so on. Individuals utilize train, bus or plane just as a method of transport and can also enjoy the sight scenes while they are on the vehicle. Just water transport itself can

be utilized as a tourism goal. In spite of the fact that Bangladesh has a considerable amount of possibilities to acquire from tourism segment, it could not utilize its full assets to accomplish the targeted level. Bangladesh possesses about 800 streams including tributaries that move through the nation constituting a conduit of around 24,140 km. In addition, there are a decent number of lakes and wetlands, haor, baor and so forth. There is the Bay of Bengal in our southern part. The sightseers who lean toward marine courses utilize this water route as a way. There is an enormous potential to utilize this water route as traveler destinations. We have a great deal of water assets which can be shown to the vacationers. The majority of the sightseers visiting Bangladesh are well knowledgeable only about Cox's Bazar, Sundarbans, Chittagong Hill Tracks, Sylhet and so on. In this way, they pay visit in these particular regions. Bangladesh needs to find a way to broaden its tourism items. Water tourism at Kaptai Lake can be one of the conceivable options. Additionally, the waterways of Bangladesh are being dirtied, trenches are being topped off, and oceanic assets are being misused imprudently. To ensure these water assets Bangladesh ought to go for water based tourism. With the goal that it can enhance the vacationers' understanding and the assets can be released to draw in more tourists. This paper traces the possibilities of understanding the influence of socio-demographic profile of the tourists on the choice of destination and creating water based tourism in Kaptai Lake.

Up until this point, we know, no rich study has been led to cover the understanding of business opportunities, target market and the significant factors influencing travelers to pick water tourism in Kaptai Lake.

Objectives of the study:

The prime objectives of this study are:

1. To find the influence of socio-demographic features and travel behaviour of the tourists on the choice of Kaptai Lake over other destinations.
2. To portray the critical components (facilities and services) considered by travellers while visiting Kaptai Lake as a vacationer attraction.

The study has been conducted to find the relationship between:

1. The socio-demographic features of the tourists and their selection of water-based tourist destination.
2. The travel behaviour of the tourists and their selection of water-based tourist destination.

Methodology:

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. The sample population for this study are the travelers who went to and stayed at Kaptai Lake from 1st of March,

2017 to 25th of March, 2017. Convenient sampling method has been used to gather information for this study, utilizing self-managed questionnaire, dispersed to guests at the place of study. The questions included inquiries concerning the financial and demographic profile of the guests (e.g. age, gender, income, nationality, etc) and also inquiries regarding their travel conduct (e.g. length of stay, choice of accommodation and transport, sources of information, etc.) The characteristics of Kaptai Lake that attracted the tourists to the destination were also inquired. For the purpose of the research, the guests were asked to rank the significance of Kaptai Lake on various qualities utilizing a range of 1 to 5 (5 being very vital and 1 being the least vital). Out of 220 surveys 200 were useable responses with a reaction rate of approximately 95%. Some relevant information has been collected from different secondary sources including, research reports, magazines, daily papers, books, internet site and promotional brochures of BPC, tourism personnel and practitioners, and from the back and front office staffs of the hotels at Kaptai Lake.

Socio-Demographic & Travel Behavior of Respondents:

Table 01 (Appendix) gives the respondents' socio-demographic and travel conduct data. Out of a sum of 200 respondents recorded for investigation, 150 (75%) were male and 50 (25%) were female. Information were gathered from various age groups. A significant number of travelers were from the age group of below 25. Most of the respondents (38.5%) have finished graduation level. And 17.5% have completed their secondary level. Also, 14% respondents were understudies, whereas 22.5% respondents addressed that they have completed their post-graduation. On the other hand, 11% of them were unemployed, 8% works in the private organizations and 12% works in the public organizations. Other class incorporates independently employed in sole proprietorship organizations.

Among the respondents, 10% of them has monthly salary of more than Taka 75,000 and the highest visited travel group has income range from taka 10,000 to Taka 25,000. 60% of the people have monthly income of below Taka 10,000.

The marital status of the travelers shows that around 60% respondents are unmarried and 20% got recently married and the rest are in other class. The data gives a reasonable thought regarding male, youths with graduate degrees and understudies are the primary guests at the Kaptai Lake.

Again, the travel behavioral qualities of the respondents demonstrate that a little 5% of sightseers remained more than 10 days and 57% stayed from 3 to 5 days. Individuals becoming acquainted with the Kaptai Lake through "Friends and Relatives" is 82.5% and the rest became acquainted by using the electronic media (25%), print media (4%), BPC sites (1%) and tourism fairs.

The importance given by travelers towards the decision of choosing lake as an attraction are condensed in Table 01.

Table 01: The importance given to the Kaptai Lake by its visitors:

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very significant	90	45%	45
Significant	56	28%	73
Average	45	22.5%	95.5
Less significant	8	4%	99.5
Not significant at all	1	0.5%	100
Total	200	100%	

N.B. While selecting Kaptai Lake as a water-based tourist destination, the level of importance given by the tourists have been collected by using Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (not significant at all) to 5 (very significant).

Table 01 shows that, 45% of the respondents opined that as a traveler attraction Kaptai Lake is very significant. On the other hand, 28% said that the destination is significant, 22.5% are average in their assessments, and 4% of the respondents feel that the destination is less significant as a travel destination. The remaining 0.5% thinks that the destination is not significant at all.

The demographic profile of the tourist:

Table 02 demonstrates that the gender classification, age groups and marital status of the travellers are significant and thus, they have influence on the choice of destination of the travellers. This means that, the choice of water-based tourism attraction of people of one age-group will differ from that of another. Similarly, the choice of destination varies based on gender orientation and also based on marital status. Apart from these, it has been found that the choice of Kaptai Lake as a tourist destination is not much affected by the tourists' educational level, occupation and income.

Table 2: Analysis of the respondent's social and demographic profile

Social and demographic profile:	F value	Significant
Gender classification	7.589	0.007*
Age groups	7.163	0.006*
Education	0.985	0.516
Occupation	2.854	0.132
Monthly Income	0.965	0.556
Marital status	4.225	0.042*

N.B: *p < 0.05

Besides, mean contrasts in decision between various tourists' demography are condensed in the table 03.

Table 3: Variance on the choice of destination based on the demographic profiles:

Variables	Characteristics	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Significant
Gender	Male	150	4.09	0.796	7.589	0.007*
	Female	50	4.53	0.578		
	Total	200				
Age	Below 25	115	4.50	0.724	7.163	0.006*
	26 – 40	69	4.63	0.711		
	41 – 55	8	3.68	0.786		
	56 – 70	6	4.10	0.768		
	Above 70	2	4.00	0.789		
	Total	200				
Marital Status	Single	120	4.28	0.745	4.225	0.042*
	Newly wedded	40	4.47	0.865		
	Married with children	20	3.84	0.569		
	Married without children	20	4.44	0.756		
	Total	200				

Mean in the Table 3 indicates that the level of significance given by the tourists while selecting Kaptai Lake as a tourist destination, which is calculated using Likert scale. In view of the outcomes, there are many differences in the significance level of the decision factors amongst male and females. The data depicts that when choosing Kaptai Lake as a tourist destination, females are more willing to visit than the males. The destination choice is varied from one age group of visitors to another. The destination is mostly visited by the age group of below 25 and age group of 41-55 are less willing to visit the destination. Considering respondents' conjugal status, Kaptai Lake is preferred by the recently wedded couples. On the contrast, the lake is not much visited by the families with children.

Table 04 demonstrates that expected length of stay and propelled plan to visit have noteworthy influence on destination decision. Besides, no mentionable influence has been found in sources of information, group structures, kind of transportation and kind of accommodations with respondents' lake choice decision.

Table 04: Result by tourists' behavior characteristics

Travel behavior characteristics	F value	Sig.
Length of Stay	4.210	0.040*
Sources of Information	2.425	0.078
Composition of Group	1.654	0.325
Modes of transportation	1.052	0.485
Use of Accommodation	0.453	0.751
How long in advance planned to visit	5.268	0.030*

Moreover, mean contrasts in decision between various tourists' travel conduct attributes are compressed in the table 05.

Table 05: Differences in Choice with respect to tourists' travel behavior Variable

Variables	Characteristics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F Value	Significant
Time spent at the Kaptai Lake	Less than 2 days	56	4.29	0.950	4.143	0.040*
	3 - 5 days	114	4.75	0.850		
	6 - 10 days	20	4.35	0.770		
	More than 10 days	10	4.11	0.111		
	Total:	200	4.30	0.873		
Preparations taken before the tour	Suddenly	44	4.14	0.815	5.761	0.049
	6 months prior or less	150	4.32	0.887		
	7 months to 1 year	3	4.41	0.743		
	1 year or more	3	4.11	0.995		
	Total	200	4.30	0.871		

The mean in the table 05 indicates the level of significance given by the tourists while selecting Kaptai Lake as a tourist destination, calculated by using 5 point Likert scale. The outcomes demonstrate that, while choosing Kaptai lake, tourists' who stayed 3-5 days gave the highest mean score (M= 4.75) and tourists' who stayed 10 days gave the least mean score (M=4.11). It was also found that the respondents who get ready to visit 7 months to 1 year prior are the highest in mean and the respondents who plans to visit Kaptai lake from 1 year in advance are the least in mean.

Results point out that relationship 1 can be accepted just for respondent's gender orientation, age, and marital status. Relationship 2 can be accepted only for tourist's

length of stay and time of preparation taken before travel. The analysis demonstrated that female, age group of below 25 and recently wedded couples are inclining towards Kaptai Lake as a vacation destination than other groups. Respondents who stayed 3-5 days and get ready to visit 6 months to 1 year before, lean towards visiting Kaptai Lake more than other groups. So here a picture has been discovered to develop Kaptai Lake as tourist attraction and target to the right segment of travelers.

Conclusion:

The alluring beauty and serenity of Kaptai Lake has significant contribution in the economy of Bangladesh as a tourist destination. It has huge monetary commitment to the regional economy. In light of this research the tourism policy-makers and decision-makers can approach the tourists after properly segmenting, targeting and positioning Kaptai lake into the minds of the visitors. Finally, the scope of future implementation of the results should be considered. This study has been conducted over a time of 25 days, which allowed the travelers who had visited the destination in the month of March, 2017 (i.e., during off-season). Thus, respondent's views were taken just from those of a specific group of visitors, which limited the scope of conducting the research on the tourist's behavior for the whole year. Henceforth, it is prescribed that future research considers the peak season (October- March) because the information collected from the tourists throughout the year may influence tourist's reaction in other ways.

Findings and Recommendations:

1. The results of the study depict that there is a relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and the choice of water based tourism destination. These relationships were found in the factors on respondents' "age", "gender orientation", and "conjugal status". There is also a connection between the length of stay of the travelers and their preparation time before visiting the water based tourism destination. So, this finding has reflected the importance of segmenting and targeting the market of water-based tourism, specially Kaptai Lake.
2. The results of this study concludes that the travelers of Kaptai Lake are heterogeneous. In this manner, separated segmentation and marketing techniques are ought to be focused and executed by the relevant authorities.
3. Moreover, the results of this analysis show that there are some complications for strategy makers for targeting and marketing the right tourism products to the tourists. Tourists prefer to have clean environment, tidy surroundings, convenient service, hygienic and affordable foods. Thus, to enhance the impression of the tourists about Kaptai lake, the concerned authorities can focus on these factors. In arranging these services, the nature of biodiversity of the region must be considered.

4. There is another point that security, quality transportation facilities, watch tower services, activities based on water, wellbeing and zone managing systems must be offered to the visitors, who are going to Kaptai Lake. The concerned professionals of this lake need to enhance the attractions, restaurants and transportations, particularly in the tourists' peak seasons, as a huge number of tourists are visiting the destination at that time. Apart from these, care have to be taken to preserve the natural habitat of the lake. Unlawful accommodation systems have to be strictly handled and steps have to be taken to protect the environment. The individuals who are engaged in the enhancement of the traveler experience, need to contribute more in terms of their innovativeness to attract the tourists.

5. Moreover, the policy-makers need to stress on the other factors, such as vacationer caring services, waste disposal, the behavior of local community towards the tourists, etc. Since travelers have given most significance on these variables, at least 2 police for each sq. kilometer and one watchtower should be used to oversee the safety and security issues near the lake. [Source: Field survey]. The prevalent security systems are not adequate for keeping up security and saving lives from uninvited dangers.

6. Besides these, the destination management organizations have to work for the proper utilization of the prevalent resources and further plan to make pragmatic techniques to promote Kaptai Lake, the artificial lake of utmost serenity, in both domestic and international tourism arena.

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Appendix:

The socio-demographic profile and travel characteristics of the people visiting Kaptai Lake:

Descriptions:	N	Percentage	Descriptions:	N	Percentage
Gender Classification:			Length of stay:		
Male:	150	75%	Less than 2 days	56	25%
Female:	50	25%	3 - 5 days	114	57%
Total:	200	100%	6 - 10 days	20	10%
			More than 10 days	10	5%
Age classification:			Total:	200	100%
Below 25	115	57.5%	Information source:		
26 - 40	69	34.5%	Friends and relatives	165	82.5%
41 - 55	8	4%	Internet	25	12.5%
56 - 70	6	3%	BPC	2	1%
Above 70	2	1%	Newspaper	8	4%
Total	200	100%	Total:	200	100%
Educational profile:			Composition of Group:		
No education	8	4%	Alone	46	26%
SSC	28	14%	Family	75	37.5%
HSC	35	17.5%	Friends	65	32.5%
Graduation	77	38.5%	Travel groups	14	7%
Post-Graduation	45	22.5%	Others	00	0%
Others	7	3.5%	Total:	200	100%
Total:	200	100%	Modes of travel:		
Income classification:			Air	10	5%
Below 10,000	60	30%	Bus	115	57.5%
10,001 - 25,000	82	41%	Rail	65	32.5%
25,001 - 50,000	27	13.5%	Others	10	5%
50,001 - 75,000	21	10.5%	Total:	200	100%
Above 75,000	10	5%	Choice of accommodation:		
Total	200	100%	Standard class hotel	25	12.5%
Occupation:			Medium class hotel	115	57.5%
Unemployed	22	11%	Economy hotel	20	10%
Student	66	33%	Relative's home stay	35	17.5%
Business	46	23%	Others	5	2.5%
Government job	24	12%	Total:	200	100%
Private job	16	8%	Advanced plan to visit:		
Others	26	13%	Suddenly	44	22%
Total	200	100%	6 months prior or less	150	75%
Marital Status:			7 months to 1 year	3	1.5%
Single	120	60%	1 year or more	3	1.5%
Newly wedded	40	20%	Total	200	100%
Married with children	20	10%			
Married without children	20	10%			
Total	200	100%			