

# 방글라데시의 성공적인 생태관광을 위한 개발 전략에 대한 연구

타스누바 칸\*, 한경일\*\*  
안양대학교 대학원 경영학과 박사과정<sup>\*</sup>, 안양대학교 경영학과 교수<sup>\*\*</sup>

## A Study on Developing Strategy for Successful Ecotourism in Bangladesh

Tasnuva Khan<sup>\*</sup>, Kyung-II Han<sup>\*\*</sup>  
Dept. Business Administration Anyang Graduate School<sup>\*</sup>,  
Dept. Business Administration Anyang Univ.<sup>\*\*</sup>

**요약** 이 논문의 목적은 개발도상국에서 이미 검증된 성공적인 생태관광지들의 성공 요인을 확인하고 이를 근거로 방글라데시 순다르반스의 성공적인 생태관광을 위한 전략을 개발하는데 있다. 연구목적에 위하여 기존의 성공적인 생태관광지들의 성공요인을 통하여 방글라데시의 성공적이고 수익성이 있는 생태관광 명소로 부각시키기 위한 효과적인 전략 대안인 순다르반스의 경제적 잠재력을 분석하였다. 또한 방글라데시의 경제 성장을 위한 수익성 향상 방법으로 방글라데시의 관광 명소의 개발방법과 순다르반스의 경제적 잠재력도 함께 분석하였다. 마지막으로 순다르반스의 성공적인 생태관광을 위하여 열 가지의 제안을 하였다.

**주제어** : 생태관광, 경제성장, 개발도상국, 맹그로브림, 순다르반스, 생태관광지

**Abstract** The purpose of this paper is to develop strategy for successful ecotourism in Sundarbans, Bangladesh, based on studying and explaining the ecotourism destinations success factors in already developed successful ecotourism mostly in developing countries. This thesis will analyze the economic potentiality of Sundarbans as an ecotourism spots of Bangladesh and its proper utilizations to enhance ecotourism as a profitable approach for economic growth of Bangladesh. The findings of the study are the current condition of Sundarbans and some applicable recommendations according to the needs.

**Key Words** : Ecotourism, Economic Growth, Developing Country, Mangrove forest, Sundarbans, Ecotourism destination

### 1. Introduction

Ecotourism is considered one of the largest upscale

buzz words for the economic industry, which is strongly recommended by economists for sustaining development, fighting against the global poverty,

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Corresponding Author: Kyung-II Han (Dept. of Business Administration, Anyang University)

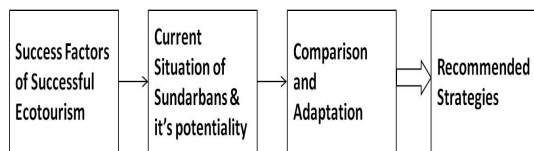
Email: kihan@anyang.ac.kr

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source of economic growth, foreign exchange earnings and job creation for the developing countries as well as the developed countries with an environment friendly impact[1]. The current trend of ecotourism accompanied with effective marketing strategies, modern communication media, access to information and technology, and the awareness of environmentally friendly tourism practices has made more remote communities around the world aware of ecotourism development as a viable economic activity[6]. Even though Bangladesh is a ‘gold mine’ for ecotourism ‘products’, ecotourism is still a new idea for tourism industry in Bangladesh.

The purpose of this paper is to develop strategy for successful ecotourism in Sundarbans, Bangladeshi, based on studying and explaining the ecotourism destinations success factors in already developed successful ecotourism mostly in developing countries.



[Fig. 1] Research Method

This research is based on a systematic review on secondary data and information. The research method is divided in to four parts discussing four different aspect [Fig. 1]. In the first section, we gathered the successful destinations features. Depending on the character for each resource type, the factors (e.g., purposeful investment, marketing strategy, GDP growth, effective policies, etc) which are currently practiced and implemented for the economic impact are parameterized. Then in the next part, the research performs a detail study on the similar ecotourism resources available in “Sundarbans”, current conditions and problems. In the third section, we show the comparison between successful examples and Sundarbans, and also present adapting the success

factors can develop ecotourism of Bangladesh as an economic growth industry. In the last part, we discuss some recommendations along with limitations and future research of the study.

## 2. Successful Ecotourism Cases

### 2.1 The Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

The Galapagos Islands are an archipelago of volcanic islands in on the west of continental Ecuador. In 1979 UNESCO declared the Galápagos Islands Natural Heritage for Humanity and a World Heritage site in 2009.

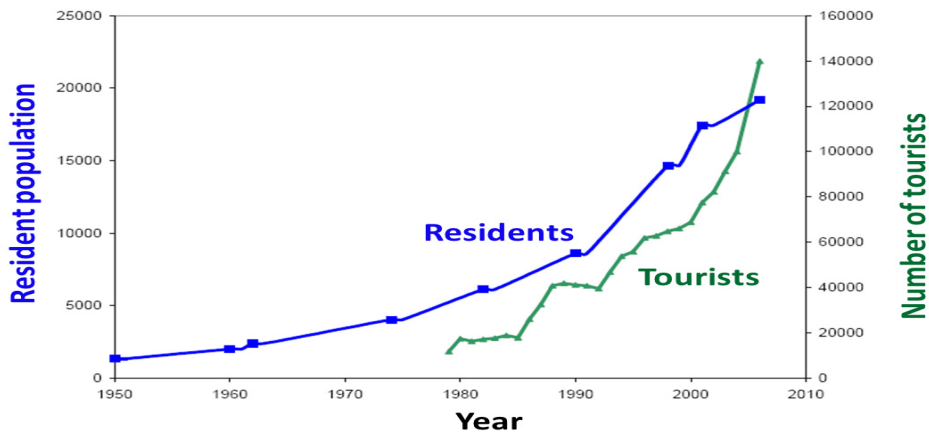
#### • Success factors

The direct involvement of local community in ecotourism sector as guide, tour operator, hotel and restaurant business, local product selling is the main success factor for improving the Galapagos Islands economy. Even though the Islands were under intense political conflicts in the 1990’s, the effort by the alliance among the Ecuadorian government, conservationists, and tourism enterprises and the enactment of a law ensuring local participations in the tourism protected the damage of the ecotourism sector and created significant local autonomy in managing economic development through ecotourism industry[2].

#### • Economic Impacts

Since 1970 nature tourism has grown steadily in Galapagos, to the present level of The total number of visitors to the islands increased from 66,071 in 1999 to 108,600 in 2005[10], as shown in the [Fig. 2]. Currently 60,000 visitors visit per year. By anchoring on ecotourism, total income of the islands increased by an estimated 78% between 1999 and 2005 placing Galapagos among the fastest growing economics in the world.

Over 70,000 visitors a year making a USD 100 million-plus contribution to the Ecuadorian economy[2].



Source: Galapagos Conservancy

[Fig. 2] Trends on the Number of Tourists to the Galapagos, 1950–2010

## 2.2 Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica

The Corcovado National Park (CNP) is a protected area in Osa Peninsula in the South West of Costa Rica. It has one of the widest varieties of flora and fauna and the incredible marine biodiversity.

Costa Rica developed their infrastructure tourism-friendly and good transportation facilities to attract more ecotourists. Ecotourism infrastructure is centered by to nearby towns (within 150km of the park) of Carate and Puerto Jimenes where dozens of cabins offer accommodation for budget-minded ecotourists. There are air services and bus services available from the capital to this park.

They also made well balanced ecotourism destinations considering environmental impacts and established sustainable ecotourism policies.

Primarily development agencies and NGO's, secondarily governments started to promote and fund ecotourism.

- **Economic Impacts**

Replacing industrial and agricultural exploitation with ecotourism is paying off handsomely for Costa

Rica. In economic terms, ecotourism on the CNP has generated direct and indirect employment and revitalize the zone in the context of the decline of agriculture and gold mining (Scheyvens, 1999). Around 20% of the population in the area depends directly on ecotourism, while another 60% receive indirect economic benefits [7]. Tourism ranks as the country's third largest source of income. Visitor rates have leaped dramatically – 70% in just eight years. For example, the number of visitors to Corcovado National Park has increased from 307 in the 1970's; to 5,000 in 1990; to almost 20,000 visitors in 1999[16]. By 1995 the tourism industry in the country was generating USD 659.6 million per annum. This made tourism the top generator of the foreign revenues and 7.5% Costa Rican GDP[7].

## 3. Ecotourism in Sundarbans

### 3.1 Sundarbans Profile

Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world, is located in the southern part of Bangladesh. It has declared as world heritage site (798th) by the UNESCO in 1997. The area has been recognized

globally for its importance as a reservoir of biodiversity.

There are 334 plant species, more than 375 fauna species and 170 bird species are available in this mangrove forest. About 3.5 million people directly or indirectly depend on the resources of Sundarbans[9].

### 3.2 Current Conditions and Problems Identified by the Visitors

Sundarbans was fighting to be ranked as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in nature. Despite having all natural requirements, it failed to place in the list of Seven as the area is not developed well to fulfill other external ecotourism requirements and still unfamiliar to the international tourists. However, it ranked the 14th position that means it has the chance in the next term if it develops well.

<Table 1> Tourists Arrival & Revenue Earned by Ecotourism in Sundarbans

Name of Division	Year	Foreign Tourists	Domestic Tourists	Revenue (US\$)
Sundarbans, Khulna	2003	1757	46887	12651979
	2004			
	2004	1298	69078	3048730
	2005			
	2005	1582	92632	3287352
	2006			
	2006	2083	94754	2103193
	2007			
	2007	1861	78689	3287352
	2008			

Source: Khulna Forest Office, 2009

<Table 1> Shows just in five years the numbers of visitors are increasing and also shows the amount of revenue earns by the Sundarbans from 2003 to 2008 financial year[8]. The increasing rates rise hope to become successful ecotourism destination if it develops more. On an after survey of failure to be in the New Seven Wonders of Nature of the World, many problem factors are founded[3]. According to the visitors, the remarkable problems are poor infrastructure, insufficient toilets, accommodation problem, non-availability of food, non-availability of drinking water, poor sanitation system, lack of proper communication facilities, undeveloped transportation systems, lack of sufficient security and guiding[4].

## 4. Comparison & Adaption

### 4.1 The Success Factors & Economic impacts Comparison

In this part, we will show the comparison chat among Galapagos, CNP and Sundarbans by leveling their features and economic facts.

<Table 2> represents the comparison of successful features and factors levels in Galapagos and CNP with Sundarbans. Sundarbans has lower position in case of infrastructure, tourist's facilities, and tour aid whereas it has high natural categories like flora and fauna. CNP is not listed as world heritage site as Sundarbans

<Table 2> Comparison of features

Features & Factors	Destinations & Levels		
	CNP (Costa Rica)	Galapagos	Sundarbans
Flora	Mid	Low	High
Fauna	High	High	High
Infrastructure(transportation, communication, etc)	High	Mid	Low
Tourist Facilities(medical, hotel, food & drinking water, sanitation, Security)	High	High	Low
Tour Aid(bird watching, cruise, trekking, wild life watching, forest tour etc)	High	High	Mid
Inscription as world heritage site	No (IUCN Category 2)	Yes	Yes

\*IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Category 2: Preserved area

(Table 3) Comparison of economic effects

Economic Factors	Destinations & Levels		
	CNP (Costa Rica)	Galapagos	Sundarbans
Rate of tourist arrival every year	High	Mid high	Low
Rate of contribution to economy	High	High	Mid
Annual growth of economy	High	Mid	Low
Income increment	High	High	Low
Local employment & involvement	High	High	Low
Political turmoil & it's effect	Low	Low	High
Financial Support (Govt', NGOs, Overseas partners)	High	High	Low

though it has more manmade facilities and well known internationally than Sundarbans that made ai place for it in IUCN category 2, which ultimately enhances the chance to be a world heritage site.

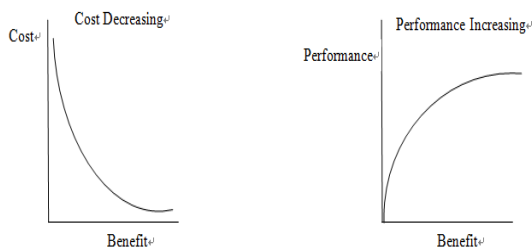
<Table 3> exhibits the economic factors level of the three destinations. In most cases Sundarbans leveled lower than the two successful destinations. Economic factors like rate of tourists arrival, contribution to economy, income increment, local communities involvement and financial support by government and NGO's is in negative position comparing with Galapagos and CNP. However, political turmoil effects negatively in ecotourism in Sundarbans[5].

**4.2 Returns of Learning and Adaptation**

Ample empirical evidence shows that the more a method is used, the more it is developed and more effective and efficient it becomes. If successful ecotourism destination's success factors can be adopted, it will generate revenues that can be reinvested in further developing and used in other ecotourism spots.

Furthermore, as host countries accumulate with success, they find ways to use the process more effectively based on prospective of the destinations. Learning effects is manifest in the impact of the cumulative profit on cost and return; this is known as the "learning curve"[11]. As followers repeat a process, they learn to make it more efficient, often discover new solutions that may enable them to reduce input costs or waste rates. In case of ecotourism sector, the learning curve function as a multiplying output: profit increases, or investment cost decreases with the number of unit output, usually at a decreasing rate [Fig. 3]. The standard form of learning curve is formulated as  $y=ax-b$ , in case of ecotourism we can present y as the number of direct labor time required to produce xth profit, a as labor time required to get first profit, x as the cumulative number of profit and b is the learning rate. Learning curve has been identified by using a variety of performance measures, including profits, total costs, total accidents and total waste[12].

Sundarbans resembles with Galapagos in Ecuador and Corcovado National Park in Costa Rica in type, so if Sundarbans learn and adapt the same developing features than definitely Sundarbans can gain success in economic growth.



[Fig. 3] Learning Curve for Ecotourism in Sundarbans

**5. Conclusions**

A practical approach of implementing the success management factors in ecotourism industry can open a

window of opportunity for booming Bangladeshi economy. The thesis emphasizes that it is time to initiate better policies that reinvest the revenues generated by ecotourism into proper ecotourism planning and management. Ecotourism is no more a regional objective but a global objective for long term effect. The proper practice of ecotourism industry will help Bangladesh to remove its name from the developing country and give an establishment as a developed country[9].

The following are some recommended strategies for a successful action plan for ecotourism through the Sundarbans and strategies to promote sustainable ecotourism development:

1. Destination development is the first approach for the planning to develop ecotourism destinations and their long-term management.
2. One of the most important factors in the success of any ecotourism venture is increasing knowledge of the benefits among the host community.
3. It is vital to include the local communities in the project, not merely as grateful beneficiaries of charity, but as empowered and informed team members. Improve the quality of life of the host community by ensuring a fair distribution of benefits and costs[12].
4. A successful implementation of ecotourism depends on the development of up scaling soft and hard infrastructure. This includes currency exchange rates, transport systems, peace and security, internet, electric supply and good telecommunication systems[13].
5. Ecotourism needs proper scientific support policies and programs that should be based on studies and expertise carried out by the research departments of the local universities.
6. For economic benefit, ecotourism is required to successfully market ecotours to the national and international markets. Internet is a good place for

marketing. A list of existing ecotourism locations, activities, experiences and components in Bangladesh needs to be organized for the ecotourism plan. The list should be publishing in key international ecotourism wholesales, educational tourism web sites and Internet booking sites.

7. In order to encourage investments, Bangladesh government may take a number of actions such as tax exemptions, remittance of up to certain percentage of the salary of foreign staff, facilities for repatriation and guarantees against nationalization.
8. Bangladesh needs peaceful political conditions to attract a wide range of international ecotourists. Like many developing countries Bangladesh also has many political uproars and strikes that have negative effects on ecotourism industry.
9. Microcredit finance has already succeed in giving loan to small agricultural business individuals or groups especially women without collateral, so Grameen Bank (by Dr.Yunus) Bangladesh can invest money on ecotourism sector to elevate country's economy and create an extraordinary example in Bangladeshi banking system.
10. In recent years, collaborative approaches commonly known as "co-management" have become significant strategy in many conservations and development related programs worldwide. In this framework, both government officials and local people play important roles in successful development initiatives. As developing countries are usually labor intensive countries, they promote high income opportunity with a non-tradable commodity like ecotourism.

Even though Sundarbans is enriched with sufficient natural assets to be a ecotourism hotspot, but lacking of proper strategy and concern from responsible parties such as government, local community and private sector, it could not attain the economic growth and

international attention. Also there are scarcity of research for finding the proper strategy. this thesis explored the comparison features with other successful ecotourism spots. This research also presented that ecotourism in Sundarbans may provide an important alternative source of revenue for Bangladesh by generating funds for the protected areas as well as creating new employment opportunities and local enterprises in the surrounding community in the impact zone. Finally, a set of strategies for the successful implementation of ecotourism in Sundarbans has been recommended. By applying those useful strategies properly, hopefully Sundarbans can made its' place in the next round of natural wonders in the world.

## 6. Limitations

The data obtained in this paper about ecotourism destinations are from journal articles, periodicals, reports, conference publications, newspapers, and Web contents, which are appropriately cited. It was quite challenging to obtain data in all aspects regarding an ecotourism destination. For example, in order to identify the economic aspects, data for all the parameters such as contribution to economy, number of tourist arrival, increasing rate of tourist arrival, etc. were not available for a specific site. We have not mention unsuccessful cases, which is another limitation lacking of data source. Lee and Mjelde (2007) evaluated the ecotourism resources with a view to promote ecotourism in Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which has been untouched by human interference for last half century and as there were no human living so many rare species of animals and plants grew there and the area became suitable for ecotourism. However, there were no human community, so Korean failed DMZ to fulfill some basic principle of ecotourism which relates the capacity building and economic development of the local community. Therefore, it can no be consider as an

unsuccessful of ecotourism. Nevertheless, we do not include this destination in our paper as the host nation is not a developing country.

## 7. Future Research

The goal of our paper was to develop a common strategy for successful ecotourism in Bangladesh for economic growth following the successful ecotourism destinations success factors in developing countries. However, such common framework may not sufficiently and particularly provide site specific implementation scenario. Consequently, there is a plenty of scope of appropriate site specific research for Sundarbans that can present strong background analysis for the scope and implementation of the strategy of successful ecotourism for economic gain.

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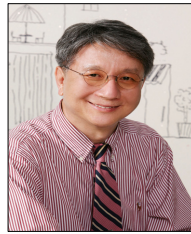
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#### Tasnuva Khan



- 2010. Feb : Anyang University (B.A)
- 2012. Feb : Anyang University (MBA)
- 2012. March~Present : Anyang University, Doctoral Program in Business Administration
- 2013. March~Present : Assistant Research Fellow, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements (KRIHS)
- Research Areas: International Business, e-Business
- E-mail: swastika\_lia@yahoo.com

#### 한 경 일(Han, Kyung Il)



- 1982년 2월 : 한국외국어대학교 불어과(문학사)
- 1986년 2월 : 한국외국어대학교(경영학 석사)
- 1999년 9월 : 연세대학교 대학원(경영학 박사)
- 1987년 1월 ~ 1992년 8월 : 쌍용컴퓨터 SIS컨설팅 그룹 수석컨설턴트
- 2000년 1월 ~ 2001년 12월 : 미국 인디애나대학교 초빙교수
- 2005년 1월~ 2007년 12월 : 디지털정책연구 편집위원장
- 2002년 2월~ 현재 : 안양대학교 경영학과 교수
- 관심분야 : 정보시스템의 성과측정, e-learning, e-government, 회계정보시스템
- E-Mail : kihan@anyang.ac.kr