



## Reasons Why Elite- & Middle Class Citizens are Shunning Domestic Tourism in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, Bangladesh's tourism industry has seen substantial expansion. Right now, Bangladesh's tourism industry relies heavily on domestic travelers because there are so few foreign visitors coming for tourism purposes. However recently, many middle-class and elite-class citizens of Bangladesh have started to shun domestic travel for a variety of reasons. The goal of the paper is to investigate the causes behind elite and middle-class peoples' reluctance to domestic tourism and favor more foreign tourism. This research has followed an open-ended questionnaire that was used here to collect primary data through the survey method, and a total of 100 respondents offered their thoughts on why they were no longer interested in traveling to Bangladesh. As per the result analysis, the common issues which tourists have faced during traveling at the domestic tourist spots are excessive price of different services, lack of professionalism, lack of security and safety, price fluctuation during peak and off-peak season, bad services of the travel agencies, lack of concern of the government and etc. In order to keep these elite-class and middle-class citizens' enthusiasm for travel in this nation, the paper ends by outlining various solutions to the issues.

Keywords: Elite- & Middle Class, Domestic Tourism, Bangladesh, International Tourism, Price Fluctuation, Safety & Security.

### 1. Introduction

In the past, travel and tourism were exclusively available to the wealthy and elite classes of society, but this is not the case anymore. Everyone enjoys traveling at least once a year, from the middle class to the elite class. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the country's population is over 160 million. Of which, 40 million people, or 25% of the total population, fill the middle-class bracket, and approximately 3% of the population belongs to the elite class (Dhaka Tribune, 2021). The standard monthly income of a middle-class family stands between Tk70,000 and Tk 150,000, and above this, it is considered upper class or elite class (Billah, 2020).

People travel when they leave their usual location to visit another location for pleasure. It can be in their own nation or another one. When someone travels within their own country, it has been referred to as "domestic tourism". Bangladesh's tourism business is entirely dependent on domestic travelers due to the small number of foreigners who visit for tourism. Most travel-loving Bangladeshi citizens visit their own nation, which is helping to grow the Bangladeshi tourism business. Currently, Bangladesh's tourism sector is one of the leading service and revenue-generating industries. Due to Bangladeshis' regular participation in travel and tourism, the sector has recently grown rapidly. In 2023, it is anticipated that the travel and tourism sectors will generate US\$1,853.00 million in revenue. An estimated market volume of US\$2,499.00m by 2027 is the result of revenue growing at a projected annual rate of 7.76% (CAGR 2023–2027) (Dhaka Tribune, 2021). According to the data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), at present, the tourism industry's contribution to GDP is 3.02 percent, or Tk 76,690.7 crore, and the sector accounts for 8.07 percent of the total employment of the country (The Business Post, 2022). But this promising sector of Bangladesh is losing its charm day by day to the elite class and middle-class families.

Recently, a huge number of Bangladeshis have been seen traveling all over the world. Every year, two million Bangladeshis travel overseas, and that figure is rising quickly. They primarily visit India, Nepal, Malaysia, and Thailand. UAE, UK, and USA. (The Financial Express, 2022). Day by day, this number is rising while the number of Bangladeshi tourists visiting the country for leisure purposes is falling, and because of this, it is becoming a threat to domestic tourism. A lot of Bangladeshis, especially from the affluent (elite and middle class) classes, have lost interest in visiting Bangladesh or in domestic tourism recently because of the numerous difficulties they encounter when traveling. This research is going to find out the factors that have forced the elite class and middle-class people to choose domestic tourism.

### *Aim of the research*

The aim of the research is to find the factors that influence the elite class and middle-class people to show less interest in domestic tourism and to choose more international tourist spots for vacation over domestic tourism.

## **2. Literature Review**

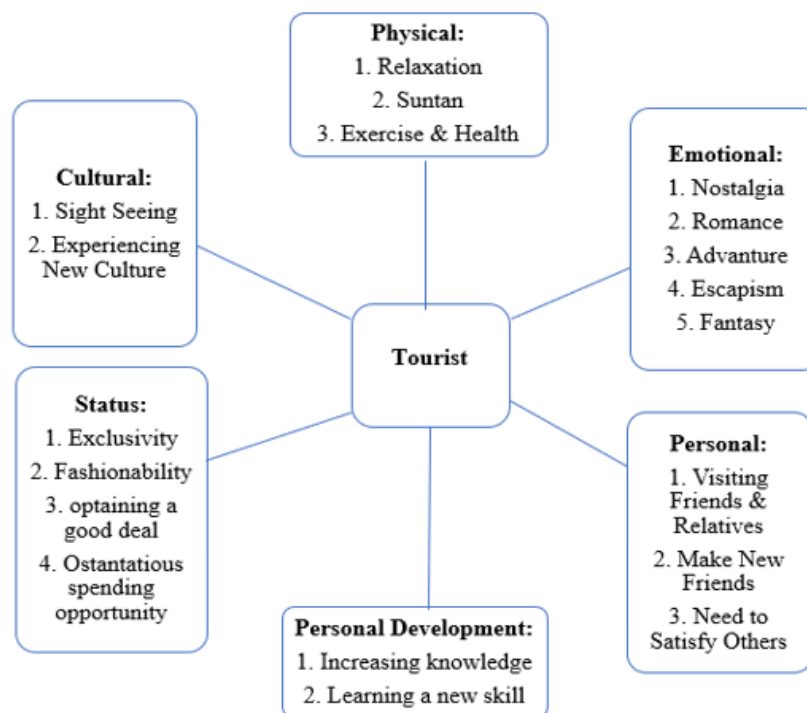
All around the world, including Bangladesh, the tourism business is rising quickly. It is one of the major industries in Bangladesh that is expanding dramatically. Akhter and Hassan (2020) pointed out in their research that the tourism industry in Bangladesh is extremely distinctive, diverse, and multidimensional. It currently ranks as one of the main economic activities in the country.

According to Lickorish and Jenkins (1997), tourism is the practice of spending time away from home in search of leisure, relaxation, and pleasure while utilizing the services offered by businesses for a fee. Tourism is defined as the movement of individuals for social, cultural, business, educational, religious, or medical reasons from one nation or location to another. People who travel and spend money on lodging, transportation, food services, and entertainment are also engaged in tourism. The tourism industry includes all businesses that offer goods and services created for travelers in various travel and tourism phases.

Sharma (2021) added that there are two salient forms of tourism: domestic tourism and international tourism. The term domestic tourism refers to travel within one's own country without the use of formal travel documents or time-consuming formalities. Visits to friends and family, leisure travel, business travel, and other similar activities are all examples of domestic tourism. Traveling internationally requires the right documentation, including a valid passport, visa, medical documents, and foreign currency. International tourism is the practice of visiting a place other than the home country for leisure or business for a period of time no longer than a year. A person who travels abroad as an international tourist is one who spends at least one night in the country where they are visiting, primarily for business or pleasure. In the case of international tourism, those who do not get any allowance or payment from the country in which they are visiting for a length of time that does not exceed 12 months are addressed as international tourists.

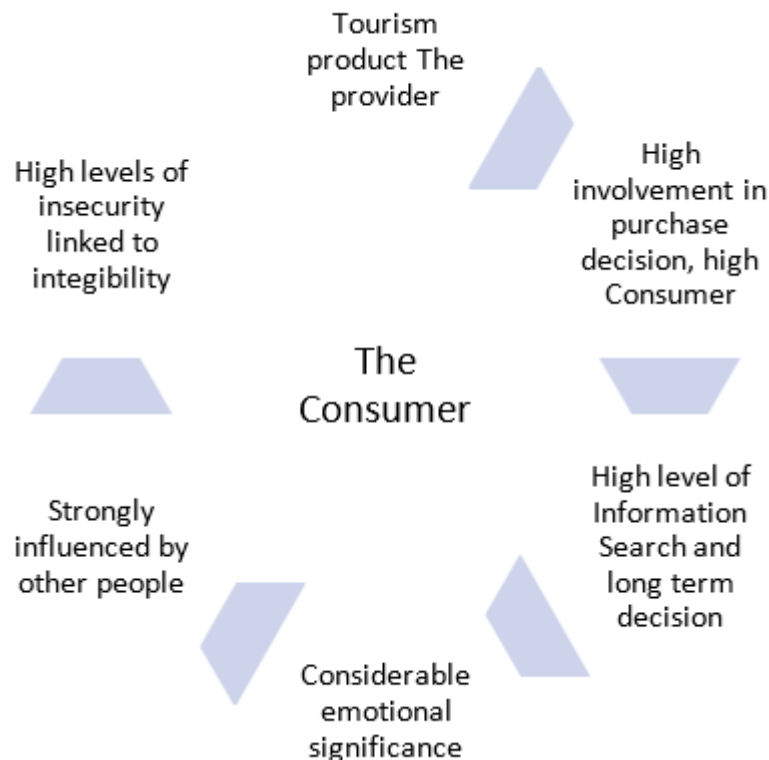
Lickorish and Jenkins (1997) also said that outbound and inbound tourism are the additional two categories that make up international travel. When a citizen of a certain country travels outside of that country, the travel is referred to as outbound tourism. When a resident of a foreign country spends time in their home country, it is considered as inbound tourism. There are numerous tourism-related industries, or categories, as a result of the diversity of needs and desires that travelers may have. These categories include services that help tourists plan trips to new places based on the needs and wants they might have when visiting a certain location. Organizations that determine the kinds of services that passengers can access in various regions are also included in these tourism-related industries. The tourism industry is divided into five primary segments, including: accommodation, transportation, entertainment, attractions and food services.

### *Models of Consumer Behavior in Tourism*



**Fig. 1 - A Typology of Motivators in Tourism (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2021).**

According to Horner & Swarbrooke (2021), there are numerous potential variants on a theme for each individual motivator and a plethora of ways in which they can be combined; the most prominent ones are depicted in the figure. There are numerous potential motivators that could relate to either or all of these characteristics. As per the above model, there are significant motivators in tourism, and each is equally important to motivating an individual to take a trip to a particular location.

**Fig. 2 - The complexity of consumer behavior in tourism: the demand side (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2021)**

Horner & Swarbrooke (2021) also explained through their writing that when tourists purchase any tourism-related services, they actively participate in the entire research process. As part of this process, tourists seek feedback from their friends and family and are greatly impacted by them and their opinions, but it is a time-consuming process. Individuals also experience some emotional memories when choosing a final location for tours. Additionally, people experience anxiety and lack of security because they are unable to try out or examine the services before making a purchase.

According to the ILO (2010), changing consumer expectations and behavior towards environmental issues and climate change gives the tourism sector the opportunity to modify its ways of operating in terms of consumption levels, efficiency, and impact on the environment.

As per the research results of Chockalingam and Ganesh (2010), nowadays, tourism is an industry with various elements and different activities. It necessitates flawless coordination among the many parts that make up this sector. It's possible for tourists to run into issues with unanticipated costs, pollution, safety and security, etc. Chockalingam and Ganesh (2010) also added that society and civilization are composed of three categories of individuals. The first set of individuals deal with issues with service, safety, and security, subpar infrastructure, unneeded fees, and unfavorable arrangements that are not very serious. Regarding transportation options, assistance, and lodging, they have encountered a fair number of issues. The second group of tourists has a low degree of discontent with the accommodations provided during their trip, as well as with the local dialect, beggars, tour guides, pollution, and health-related issues. They report a fair amount of discontent with elements connected to infrastructure, hygienic conditions, safety and security, transportation facilities, arrangements, unforeseen costs, and services. Most discontent has been reported in relation to dense crowds. Due to accommodations, safety and security measures, and services, the third group of people encounters few obstacles. Additionally, they show a significantly greater level of unhappiness with the infrastructure, sanitary conditions, pollution, direction, planning, and preparations for transportation. Because they are perfectionists, women, senior citizens, and individuals in business frequently complain about corruption, pollution, high traffic, and beggars. Ritchie and Hudson (2009) stated that reducing the severity of tour issues encourages individuals to go on regular tours, which makes it possible to create a better society and improve national economic growth than previously.

As per the research study of Patel & Ayre (2020), people are facing different domestic problems such as soiled rooms, uncomfortable rooms, and noisy neighbors. Staff and customer service and sunburn are less affecting as compared to unclear or soiled rooms, uncomfortable rooms, and noisy neighbors. The problems of losing boarding passes, losing luggage, mosquito bites, staff not respecting the "do not disturb sign, and no free Wi-Fi are strongly

affecting the travelers. Muscle aches and pains and vomiting problems are also affecting the travelers, but not like other health related problems. Patel & Ayre (2020) also added that it is a quite difficult task to determine the different problems faced by travelers and tourists while traveling to different destinations across different regions of the world. This is because every region has its own customs, traditions, and culture, which are then all different from each other. The purpose of the study was to understand the common problems faced by travelers. Through this study, clusters of hurdles have emerged by which travelers and tourists are greatly influenced: airport-related problems, accommodation-related problems, health-related problems, and losing problems.

According to Chowdhury (2020), tourism industry in Bangladesh has an immense prospect due to the excellent tourist centers by the side of the Bay of Bengal located at the Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, Sundarban areas, Saintmartin, Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Sylhet areas etc. Bangladesh has nice natural world heritage centers that need regular maintenance and protection. There might be increasing revenues from the preservation and conservation of that cultural heritage through long-term strategic plans. Major difficulties arise from the shortage of international-standard hotels or restaurants in different places. The Bangladesh tourism sector needs more attractions for our local and foreign tourists by ensuring security measures and providing incentives for their day-to-day attractions.

As per the research of Ahmed and Rahman (2001), the majority of people in Bangladesh had a propensity for travel. However, various issues, including security, lodging, food, transportation, infrastructure, a lack of amenities, information, and guides, among others, prevent people from traveling. If these issues can be resolved and the necessary amenities are offered, people will be encouraged to travel within the nation, domestic tourism will grow, and this could eventually draw foreign tourists to our country.

By growing the tourism sector of the economy, Bangladesh can increase employment possibilities, produce foreign exchange, and move money around the economy. However, the primary criterion for the development of this industry is the growth of domestic tourism. Some issues were discovered here through gathering information from the responses. Security (80%), a lack of appropriate transportation (77%), infrastructure issues (65%), organized tour facilities (57%), a lack of tourism-related information (51%), a lack of residents in the tour destinations (41%), and a lack of tour guidance (38%), are the main issues mentioned by the respondents. Even at Cox's Bazar, where there are some facilities for domestic tourists, the whole spectrum of utilities required for tourists is lacking (Ahmed, 1998). It is evident from the above research and interpretation that individuals seek to include travel in their lives. However, the people are disheartened as a result of numerous travel-related issues. The most significant factors for passengers were found to be transportation and location appeal, followed by security and food accessibility.

According to Mansour & Mumuni (2019), familiarity and trust with the local environment, perceptions of a safer domestic environment, and restrictions imposed by respondents' vacation timing are the main reasons for choosing to spend their vacations locally, while a lack of high-quality domestic tourist sites and services (including entertainment facilities), a lack of tourism information, and an inadequate tourism organization are the main reasons for choosing to spend their vacations abroad.

### 3. Research Methodology

The researcher has followed an exploratory research design here to get in-depth knowledge about the factors that have forced the elite class and middle-class people to choose domestic tourism in Bangladesh. The research has applied a qualitative research strategy here because data has been collected through an open-ended questionnaire and analyzed to generate a deep insight on the reasons of elite and middle-class people. The researcher has collected primary data through the survey method used here. In this research, the sample size is 100, and people from the elite and middle classes have been chosen as respondents; moreover, the researcher has used the quota sampling method here to choose the respondents.

### 4. Result analysis and discussion

In this study, a total of 100 responses were collected. Among them, 39% were female and 61% were male. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 25-35 (60%), which is the highest number. The current survey also discovered that every respondent was highly educated, with the majority holding a bachelor's or master's degree. Additionally, 3% of the respondents also had a Ph.D. degree. Among the occupations, 63% were private job holders, as it is clear that most people in Bangladesh rely on private sector jobs for a living. Apart from this, 18% of people worked for the government, while the remaining 19% ran their own businesses. Additionally, it was discovered that the majority of respondents (40%) came from the middle and upper classes, which is exactly what the researchers were looking for in their target population. There were also some significant responses from those whose annual income were 120,001 or more and belonged to the elite class. Along with a total of 100 responses to the study, 86% were from the urban area of Bangladesh, and 14% were from the rural area of Bangladesh.

The socio-demographic background of the respondents has been delineating in the following table (Table 1).

**Table 1 - The respondents' socio-demographic profile**

Components	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	61	61
Female	39	39
<b>Age</b>		

25-35	60	60
36-45	24	24
46-55	16	16
<b>Educational level</b>		
HSC	5	5
Bachelor	43	43
Masters	49	49
Ph.D.	3	3
<b>Occupation</b>		
Govt. Service	18	18
Private Service	63	63
Business	19	19
<b>Income Level</b>		
20,001-40,000	10	10
40,001-60,000	14	14
60,001-80,000	16	16
80,001-1,00,000	40	40
1,00,001-1,20,000	8	8
1,20,001 & above	12	12
<b>Location</b>		
Urban	14	14
Rural	86	86

#### **Reasons for Shunning Domestic Tourism by Elite and Middle-Class People**

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##### ***4.1 Safety and Security Issues in Domestic Traveling***

In the survey, 100 people took part and said what they thought about the safety and security problems they ran into when visiting tourist spots in Bangladesh. Some respondents have pointed out that the safety issues in the bus and on the road, the reckless driving of the drivers, the frequent road accidents, the poor environment in the restrooms, and the high price with fewer options of food in the highway restaurants while the buses took breaks are the major concerns for them to invest less in domestic travel. Again, scammers, rude locals, the risk of theft and pickpocketing, bad service from tour guides, and corruption have kept some people from traveling in their home country. According to some tourists, they don't feel safe roaming at tourist spots during the night, some even after 7 p.m., because of the absence of proper security measures. Respondents also added that most tourist spots in Bangladesh are not child and female-friendly, and they didn't find it safe to travel alone, whereas it's safer and more comfortable to travel alone in other countries, with no one to give a look at or harass a solo female traveler. Another reason for tourists' disappointment in domestic tourism in Bangladesh is a lack of proper tourist-friendly infrastructure. Those who travel by air in domestic tourism face mishandling of baggage and less cooperation from immigration and baggage carriers in Bangladesh, and these have influenced them to spend nothing on domestic tourism and invest all the money in traveling abroad to make the best use of those resources. For the above issues, which came from the survey result analysis, the elite and middle-class citizens of Bangladesh are shunning domestic tourism and showing more interest in traveling abroad to get better facilities.

##### ***4.2 Excessive Price of the Services in Domestic Tourism***

To this question of the survey, 80% of respondents answered positively, and 20% answered negatively. Most of the respondents said that the prices of different services are too high compared to many other developed countries in Bangladesh. During the picking season, all forms of entertainment, including hotels, food, and transportation, are overpriced, and sometimes the price becomes higher than the rack rate. Some respondents said that when they saw how much hotels and resorts cost, they sometimes had to cancel their vacation plans. Some tourists think the price is too high in Bangladesh when compared to prices in neighboring countries. It is often cheaper to take a trip to India or even Nepal than to travel to domestic tourist spots. Respondents added that for the same price as visiting Cox's Bazar, they can go to Kolkata, Thailand, and many more places. It takes a significant financial investment for a tourist to enjoy peaceful holidays in his or her home country. The respondents also added examples, such as if someone wants to spend a night at Sairu Hill Resort, Bandarban, it takes around BDT 20–25k; however, for BDT 25k, someone can spend a week in Shillong, Meghalaya. So unnecessary high prices of different services, amenities, local transport, foods, hotels, and resorts in domestic tourism are one of the major reasons that are shifting the elite and middle-class citizens of Bangladesh from domestic tourism and influencing them to travel abroad because the consumers are becoming more knowledgeable and conscious, and they can get any information quickly by searching Google, social media, and different websites.

#### ***4.3 Satisfaction Level with The Available Travel Services***

As for travel services, Bangladesh's domestic tourism can be broken down into bus, rail, air, launch, and ship local transportation; hotels and resorts; food service; and outdoor recreational activities. On this question of the survey, 16% of those who answered are satisfied, 60% are somewhat satisfied, and 24% are not happy with the travel services available for domestic tourism. Respondents who weren't happy with the travel services mentioned things like overpriced hotels and resorts and expensive sightseeing packages offered by the hotels; expensive in-house dining if there aren't any other restaurants nearby that will take it; overpriced local transportation; and no pharmacies or medicine stores near the hotel. Some respondents added that bus rides are uncomfortable, extremely dangerous, and a constant worry for life; trains are filled with thieves and money-grabbers; when it comes to the point of the train, there needs to be some more carefulness because sometimes a few people with standing tickets usually enter the air-conditioned box that is not safe for the remaining passengers; boats and ships are packed and not well-maintained; airplanes are also not well-maintained. Moreover, all transport services in Bangladesh have expensive tickets that are very hard to get, and most often travelers have to purchase tickets from the black market at higher prices; the support staff of the transport services is also often ill-behaved and aggressive. According to some respondents, the term hospitality is absolutely missing from our hospitality industry. They believe they are in the business of renting rooms and selling food to tourists. Other service providers in tourist zones often form unofficial syndicates and charge high prices for their services and products, assuming the tourists have no other option. For example, prices of green coconut go down significantly on St. Martin Island in the evening after ships carrying day-long tourists have left and go up again when ships come back with tourists the next day. Respondents also added that in the case of budget-friendly services, the quality is hardly satisfactory. Some respondents have mentioned that there are few options for outdoor recreational activities in domestic tourism; some spots have a few amusement options, but those are very overpriced due to syndication issues. In the survey results, respondents mentioned other travel agencies in Bangladesh whose services are not satisfactory because of a lack of professionalism and proper communication. All of the aforementioned issues with domestic tourism and travel services have influenced the elite and middle-class citizens of Bangladesh to travel to a foreign country where they can obtain good services and a variety of activities for the same or slightly more money. Apart from these negative sides, a few respondents have also mentioned that the domestic tourism sector has been developing and advancing day by day.

#### ***4.4 Negatively Influence of Waste (litter) on Tourists***

To be exact, 92% of respondents have mentioned that waste and trash around tourist spots is a matter of disturbance and frustration for travelers in domestic tourism, and to avoid litter, elite and middle-class citizens of Bangladesh travel to a foreign country by paying more because tourists go to the natural place to see the natural, sustainable beauty, not the waste or garbage. According to the survey results, tourism creates a lot of waste and pollution because it is an industry that tends to use too much. In some places, tourists produce up to twice as much waste as local residents. This can put an incredible strain on local waste management systems, causing landfills and sewage plants to overflow. The waste in tourist spots affects nature and the environment. Foreigners gradually lose interest, and it gradually causes people to lose appeal. Respondents have mentioned that most natural places of domestic tourism are littered; it has been found that the hill tract tourist places are full of tourist litter. Sajek is a match for Farmgate now in comparison to crowds and trash. It is disrupting the aesthetics of tourist destinations in Bangladesh. Improper waste management can make tourists less interested in visiting a place. Based on the above research result analysis, it can be declared that, due to improper waste management and litter issues, tourists from the elite and middle-class are gradually losing interest in domestic tourism in Bangladesh and focusing more on traveling abroad.

#### ***4.5 Possibility of Price Fluctuating (During Peak and Off-Peak Season)***

Regarding this survey inquiry, most of the respondents to this research are worried about the price fluctuation during their travel in the peak and off-peak seasons. This survey dictates the facilities and hindrances for tourists' travel experiences in Bangladesh. Price fluctuation is a common fact for tourists in Bangladesh. Almost all visitors respond negatively to the price hike during their travels. As per the research, 87% of respondents are concerned about the sudden price fluctuation and evaluate the price fluctuation before their travel, and 13% are slightly worried about the price fluctuation. It can be seen that during the vacation period, the price range goes up drastically at all tourist spots in Bangladesh. For this reason, people face various issues regarding their travel experience, such as transportation, accommodation, availability of foods, and so on. A number of respondents share their experiences, such as that in peak season, all hotels and resorts are fully crowded with tourists, and it is difficult to find accommodation facilities with an appropriate price range. Some respondents said that they are completely dissatisfied with entertainment and refreshment packages during peak season due to price fluctuations. As a matter of fact, they have to pay over-priced for different services that are not worthy. Several respondents shared some incidents related to transportation aid, including high range and unavailability of tickets during vacation time. But the point of fact is that, however much they are giving, they don't receive good facilities; they have faced congestion and heavy traffic problems that make the tour experience bad. Others say that they are always well prepared for price hike issues. Few respondents are aware of the price hike issues and plan their holidays during the off-peak season to avoid excessive expenses. That is why about 7% of respondents evaluate travel costs and expenses before an outing. On the other hand, 6% of respondents said that they are not worried at all about price fluctuations in peak and off-peak seasons. Considering the overall experiences and opinions of visitors, it can be demonstrated that most upper- and middle-class travelers are shifting their destinations from local to foreign destinations in Bangladesh.

#### ***4.6 Tourist Hotspot Becomes Too Crowded to Handle***

In response to this survey question, 70% of respondents have said that there are some points at which a tourist hotspot becomes too crowded to handle, 15% have said that there are no problems maintaining a tourist hotspot when it becomes too crowded, and 15% have said that they are neutral about this

opinion as they have never faced any negative issues during travel in peak season. There are some factors that can cause a tourist hotspot to become too crowded to handle. It is commonly known to all that tourist hotspots become more crowded during holidays in Bangladesh. Most of the visitors who have traveled in peak season mentioned that it is too difficult to maintain and organize the tourist places in Bangladesh. Many respondents express their opinion that the Bengalis from the elite and middle classes are shifting their destination from a local to an international spot to avoid overcrowding problems.

#### ***4.7 Challenges in Crowded Holiday Destination***

In this survey, 100 people participated as respondents and shared some challenging experiences during their holiday travel that they faced in domestic tourism because of overcrowding in their destination. Visitors to Bangladesh on a public holiday during their travel period identified a number of issues and difficulties. Out of all respondents, 56% have faced some common challenges for themselves with this issue, including transportation, accommodation, and congestion problems. Among the rest of the respondents, 18% said that heavy crowds make the destination useless and diminish its scenic beauty. For this reason, they could not enjoy their travels. 16% of the respondents shared that they faced price hikes and the unavailability of hygienic foods. Because increasing demand makes the unavailability of hygienic foods impossible, the product's price will undoubtedly go up within a few moments. 10% of respondents said they shifted their destination if they saw their chosen place was already overcrowded. So, these responses through data collection give evidence that when visitors face many more challenges in a local tour spot and in domestic tourism in Bangladesh, they want to shift their destination to an international place.

#### ***4.8 Role of Ministry of Tourism***

According to this survey, most of the respondents feel like the ministry of tourism in Bangladesh hasn't done enough to properly plan for the future. 55% of respondents mentioned that the government should take necessary steps to flourish the tourism industries of Bangladesh. For example, it should focus on monitoring systems, proper plan execution, security issues, natural resources, and infrastructure. 20% of respondents said that the ministry of tourism has no concern about the growth of the tourism industry. 14% of respondents have written that the ministry of tourism is taking some initiatives to flourish this industry. 7% of respondents said that they were unaware of this issue. 4% of respondents said that the government and ministry of tourism in Bangladesh should take some necessary steps to attract foreign tourists to our national tourist spot.

#### ***4.9 Mismanagement of The Host Community***

60% of respondents have confirmed that they have experienced some form of host community mismanagement while on vacation in Bangladesh. They noticed that the majority of tourist locations have inadequate management, which the government could simply change but doesn't receive much attention. Once more, they believe that the host community lacks the mentality needed to "host" visitors. Tourists are treated no more than customers who are paying for the goods or services they are receiving. According to some respondents, water issues had led to poor management of the host community. The hotel administration struggled to solve the issue because they were careless with their responsibilities and ignorant of the water demands of their guests. Some respondents believed that service providers only cared about making money from tourists and never paid attention to the quality of their services. Some respondents also added that they faced transgender people asking for money in Cox's Bazar, right in front of Sayeman Beach Resort. They were threatening people for money. That is also an alarming issue for tourists. But the positive fact is that 40% of those surveyed claimed that they had never seen any sort of host community mismanagement and that they believed hosts in Bangladesh were consistently good towards tourists.

#### ***4.10 Role of the Tourist Police***

When asked if they had observed any differences in the role of tourist police when traveling, 76% of the respondents responded no. A total of 12% of respondents claimed they had observed visitors' police being actively engaged, sincere, and correctly helping tourists, some respondents claimed to have seen tourist police escorting visitors who were concerned about being the target of a planned attack by kidnappers. The respondents also added that the Cox's Bazar tourist police had taken the appropriate action to inform visitors of the high tide and low tide times. Since the tourist police are not very well educated, it can be difficult for them to communicate with some tourists because they barely understand other languages and are not very proficient in English. This makes it especially difficult for them to communicate with foreign tourists who visit Bangladesh. Respondents also think it might not always be beneficial to learn English since some foreign visitors struggle with good English and the tourist police have a difficult time instructing visitors, especially foreign visitors. While the other 12% indicated they had never been in a situation where tourist police were involved in domestic tourism in Bangladesh. They consider it risky to travel at night in places where there aren't any tourist police present, and they add that they frequently hear about violent incidents happening in those locations in the news, making them feel anxious about going there. As a result, elite and middle-class tourists are increasingly less interested in domestic travel and more interested in international travel.

#### ***4.11 Dangers in The Event of a Natural Disaster in Domestic Tourism***

To this question of the survey, the majority of the respondents, around 62%, have said that in times of natural disaster while they were traveling in different tourist spots in Bangladesh, they stuck to places without electricity, food, or communication options. Moreover, roads were closed, transportation was closed, and they trapped the destination. In the opinion of several respondents, they were visiting Cox's Bazar, St. Martin, and other locations during Cyclone Sidr, but they ended up stuck in their hotel room and unable to explore the beach. Additionally, the respondents mentioned that being in a boat

at Kaptai during high winds and rain was terrifying and made them feel extremely unsafe. In addition, they find themselves in a scenario where they have no shelter, no food, and no utilities, and they can no longer be reached because of power and network outages. Therefore, they believe that Bangladesh lacks sufficient tourist safety support during natural disasters, which will eventually lead to the majority of elite and middle-class tourists abandoning interest in domestic travel. On the other hand, 38% of respondents never had that kind of experience.

#### ***4.12 Transportation Strike in Domestic Tourism***

As per the survey, 64% of respondents claimed they had never faced this kind of circumstance, and the other 36% confirmed that they had encountered situations where they were unable to find any vehicles or tickets for public transportation during the time of the transportation strike in Bangladesh. They claimed that in a similar circumstance, they had to pay five times as much to rent a car. For this, they encountered numerous challenges and went over their travel budget. Others who responded said that they were forced to spend three to four days at the same location without a plan due to the transportation strike. Also, as a result of a strike in the local transportation sector, some tourists had to cancel their vacation. As a consequence of this, Bangladesh's upper and middle classes are turning away from domestic tourism and exhibiting a greater interest in international travel.

#### ***4.13 Current Levels of Investment in Domestic Tourism***

Nearly 75% of respondents mentioned that the current standards of deposit in the luxurious tourism industry are enough to secure different destinations in Bangladesh. The investment needs proper distribution, and this is more important. Some of the respondents to this research are very negative about the current investment situation, though this number of respondents is very low, like 10%, and according to them, more investment can assure more facilities. And the other 15% of respondents represent some different ideas regarding the investment in domestic tourism in Bangladesh. As per those respondents' opinions, domestic tourism investment is high, but service assurance is low. There is a lot of investment from the private sector. Investments need to be made to train the people to understand what it means to be in the 'service/hospitality' industry; more important is proper distribution and less corruption.

#### ***4.14 Effects of recent price increase in Domestic Tourism***

Price is a very sensitive fact in Bangladesh. The discretionary income of the people is very low for the Asian continent. When people think about the price of tourism, they become so delicate. In this paper, with this research question, the highest number of respondents, like 75%, delineate that they change their mind about long and short tours because of uncontrolled price hikes in Bangladesh. The other 5% of participants have mentioned that they did not face any issues regarding the price hike of the all-inclusive tour. On the other hand, nearly 20% of people complain about some different issues, like tour cancellation and customized tours in domestic tourism, because of the price hike. Recent price hikes changed the tour planning of the respondents because, at this time, it is difficult to maintain daily life commodities. In this situation, it is tough to make any kind of travel plan. Respondents claimed that they changed the hotels from 4 stars to 3 or 2 stars because of the price hike, and they are also reducing the frequency of trips to compensate. The government of Bangladesh should take the necessary steps to reduce fuel prices, such as diesel and octane prices, because transport is one of the significant elements of the tourism industry.

#### ***4.15 Costs of Vacation Packages Sold by The Travel Agencies***

60% of the respondents argued that the overall prices for vacations offered by travel agencies in Bangladesh are not worth the money. On the other hand, nearly 20% of respondents said that they don't think that travel agencies charge that much for a vacation. 20% of respondents' responses expressed different types of feelings about the price of all-inclusive packages that the travel agencies ask for. Sometimes it is high; sometimes it is cost-effective, depending on negotiations, place, and time. Sometimes travel agencies make too much profit.

#### ***4.16 What makes a trip abroad more appealing than a trip home?***

Usually, people are so fancy in their minds. As some other countries distribute some flawless tourism elements in comparison with the domestic tourism, people start to compare those with the elements of the tourism of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has the longest sea beach in the world, but other countries also have more natural and beautiful resources, are less expensive comparatively (if air fare is deducted), and offer more value for money in terms of service level. More security, a cleaner, tidier environment, and a more orderly method by which the tour was conducted—environment, infrastructure, and lower hotel rent at 3/4-star hotels other than airfare—make foreign trips more cost-effective compared to some of the tourist attractions in domestic tourism. Businesses related to tourism abroad are focused on repeat customers, so they try to make their stay more pleasant, which is totally missing in domestic tourism. Some respondents added that abroad, the cost is more worth it, and in most cases, it costs less for food and to stay abroad than in Bangladesh. To some respondents, trips abroad are more appealing because tourists can experience different cultures and natural beauties in a cost-effective way. Again, as per the declaration of the respondents, safety, security, cleanliness, and fewer congestion issues make a trip abroad easier considering a trip at home, and less interference in personal matters by locals in tourist spots, comparatively less cost, almost no syndicates, availability of helping hands from tourists, police, well decorated hotels and resorts, etc. are the factors that influence the elite class and middle class people to avoid domestic tourism, and it makes a trip abroad more appealing than a trip home to them.



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## 5. Recommendation

Domestic tourism plays a crucial role in boosting the economy and promoting local culture within a country (Turner 2018). However, in Bangladesh, there has been a noticeable decline in the participation of elite and middle-class citizens in domestic tourism activities. From the overall analysis, the followings encourage elite and middle-class citizens to engage in domestic tourism, several steps can be taken:

Domestic destinations should work to improve the level of luxury and amenities available to visitors. This could involve upgrading hotels and resorts, offering high-end dining options, and providing unique and exclusive experiences. The local government should encourage the local people and make them understand the importance of tourism to the local economy so that they can act more hospitably towards the tourists.

Creating a powerful tourism brand for the country is crucial to attracting visitors. The brand should accurately reflect the country's unique characteristics, culture, and attractions, and be easily recognizable and memorable to potential tourists. The brand should be consistent across all marketing materials and communication channels. Promoting unique and exotic experiences in domestic destinations can help attract visitors who are looking for something new and different. This could involve highlighting outdoor recreational activities such as theme parks, cultural events, local customs, pristine buildings, wildlife safaris, and bird-watching tours.

Safety protocols should be improved and promoted to reassure visitors' well-being. This could include enforcing regulations for the harassment of snatchers, nippers, stalker beggars, passer-by and third gender people. Security issues should be emphasized to ensure the quality of the excursion. Extraordinary police task forces and proper implementation of law and enforcement can lead to a synergy between security management and visitors. Their role in enhancing safety and security, crime prevention, providing assistance and support services, mediating conflicts, and shaping a positive public image. There should be proper facilities and safety-security for female traveller in every location, including the hotel where they stay, the modes of transportation they use, and any locations they visit on their own. Solo traveller should get the same privileges.

Tourism can be a big trigger for any country. So that adequate investment is needed and proper planning and distribution of the investment can make a huge change for the industry. The investment should be in infrastructure that supports tourism, such as airports, roads, and public transportation. Improving these infrastructure elements can significantly enhance the travel experience of tourists and make the country a more attractive destination. Personalized and attentive service, professionalism and knowledgeability, a customer-centric approach, efficient complaint resolution, and consistent service delivery are key factors that influence the decisions of elite and middle-class travelers. By investing in training, empowering staff, and fostering a culture of service excellence, domestic tourism destinations can attract more visitors, boost customer satisfaction, and contribute to the growth and development of the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Travel agencies and tour operators should be more reasonable and closer to the door for the local people of the country. These agencies can help create customized travel packages that cater to different interests and budgets, making it easier for tourists to plan and book their trips. Tour-guides can provide in-depth local knowledge, a tailored experience, dual language (Bangla and English) proficiency, proper communication skills, and professionalism for inspiring visitors' confidence, building trust, and creating memorable experiences.

Domestic tourism should be promoted as an equally prestigious and glamorous option for travelers. By showcasing the beauty and diversity of domestic destinations, and highlighting the benefits of domestic travel, the perception of domestic tourism can be changed. Offering niche tourism experiences such as eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and wellness tourism can also attract visitors with specific interests.

The price of each element of tourism should be more reasonable for domestic people. It shouldn't be overpriced. This can vary for peak or off-peak seasons. During peak season, there should be some regulations and rules for stakeholders to set the price for everyone at the same time.

In today's digital age, a country's online presence is crucial to attracting foreign visitors. A country should have a well-designed website that is easy to navigate, contains up-to-date and accurate information, and is optimized for search engines. Social media platforms should also be used to showcase the country's unique features and interact with potential visitors. Proactive risk assessment and preparedness, effective communication, evacuation procedures, collaborative partnerships, post-calamity recovery, and rehabilitation efforts are key aspects of a robust calamity management system. With tentative information about natural calamities, visitors can easily fix the long tour in advance.

Finally, to encourage elite and middle-class citizens to engage in domestic tourism, it is essential to address the factors that are currently causing them to shun this type of travel. By improving the level of luxury and amenities, promoting safety protocols, highlighting unique experiences, and changing the perception of domestic tourism, it is possible to attract more visitors to these destinations. When domestic people are dependent on or prefer domestic tourism, then foreigners will get an ultra-motivation to visit the domestic country.

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## Conclusion

The goal of the study was to comprehend the typical issues experienced by elite or upper-class and middle-class tourists who currently favor international travel over domestic travel. Through the study, travelers or tourists are significantly impacted by the problems such as price hike, theft, peak season syndicate, harassment, lack of proper planning and distribution. The limited availability of high-quality accommodations, transportation options, and recreational facilities dampens their enthusiasm for exploring local attractions. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach. Enhancing domestic tourism infrastructure, improving the quality of facilities, and investing in marketing campaigns that showcase the diverse offerings within Bangladesh are vital steps. Additionally, promoting a sense of pride and appreciation for local heritage and natural beauty can help shift attitudes and

encourage citizens to explore their own country. By recognizing the untapped potential of domestic tourism and addressing the underlying reasons for its neglect, Bangladesh can foster a more vibrant and inclusive tourism industry that benefits both its citizens and the economy as a whole.

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