

## **Pro-Poor Tourism: Unlocking the Opportunities for the Pooro Kuakata Sea-Beach of Bangladesh**

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### **Abstract**

Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is an innovative idea in tourism sector that has been introduced to strengthen economic well being of local communities. It emphasizes participation of poor people of the society, makes them engaged in employment and self-help sector and establishes a synthesis between development of tourism by upgrading the degree of livelihood status of poor people so that poverty eradication is possible and socio economic status of poor people is improved. However, a number of barriers prevent the poor from participating in such programs that need to be addressed before the benefits of PPT can be realized. Here, the ultimate objective is to achieve the net benefits that go in favor of poor people. Tourism has changed to some extent the socio-economic status of the poor of surrounding villages of Kuakata Sea Beach. However, the villagers also find it difficult to be actively engaged in tourism due to some constraints. These barriers need to be eliminated to get the benefit of tourism in respect of poverty reduction. The purposes of this study are to investigate the potentiality, constraints and actions to overcome those constraints of pro-poor tourism in Kuakata, Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Constraints, Kuakata, Local Community, Pro-Poor Tourism, Participation, Scopes.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the 20th century, globalizations of capitalism, movement of populations, and advances in transportation and communication technology have helped to develop tourism into one of the world's largest industries (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2006). Tourism has been considered as an effective vehicle for economic development of many countries in the world. For some countries including Bangladesh it is a significant source of income, employment and investment (UNWTO, 2008). Bangladesh is endowed with resources and the potential for a tourism industry. Kuakata is a panoramic sea beach of Bangladesh which is located in the Patuakhali district. It is a good source of revenue for Bangladesh and important to its economy. Every year many national and international people visit there which also plays an important role to grow local economy. But poverty rate of the area is high and most of the time local communities especially poor are deprived from the benefit of the tourism industries. In this regard, this study employs the concept of pro-poor tourism (PPT) as an approach that could be adopted by the local people of Kuakata in order to be benefited from the local tourism industry. As there has been limited study covering this area, so it is expected that this study will provide sufficient information on the scope of pro-poor tourism in Kuakata. The study has explored the role of existing tourism of the study area in

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changing the socio-economic condition of the local community. It has identified the barriers to take pro-poor tourism initiatives in Kuakata and the possible ways to overcome these as well.

### **PRO-POOR TOURISM**

At the outset, it is important to define poverty. It is defined as “a multidimensional phenomenon that consists of a ‘lack’ of certain things upon which human health, wellbeing, and autonomous social functioning depend, including the ability to meet ‘basic needs’ (i.e. food, shelter, clothing etc.). This lack may consist of insufficient income, consumption or assets, entitlements, rights, or security” (Cattarinich, 2001). Poverty can be defined as the difficulty in satisfying one’s basic needs or financial constraints. It includes vulnerability to poor health and education, deprivation in knowledge and communication, inability to exercise human and political rights and the absence of dignity, confidence and self respect.

By definition, pro-poor tourism (PPT) is “tourism that generates net benefits for the poor”

(Ashley et al, 2001). Benefits in this context are not only economic but also socio-cultural and environmental. The core aim of PPT strategies is to “unlock opportunities for the poor, rather than to expand the overall size of the sector” (Ashley et al, 2001). It must be stated that PPT is not a specific product, sector of tourism or an alternative form of tourism, but an approach to the industry that involves a range of stakeholders operating at the micro and macro levels. It consists of a set of principles and the initiatives represent practical steps that can transform strategies and principles into concrete action (Cattarinich, 2001).

Several alternative forms of tourism have emerged notably ‘sustainable tourism’ and ‘eco-tourism’ that emphasize environmental conservation and ‘community-based’ tourism that aims to increase local people’s involvement in tourism. While a pro-poor approach can involve these forms of tourism, PPT seeks to be much broader in scope and not limited to alternative or niche tourism (Torres and Momsen, 2004). It extends beyond ‘community tourism’ by striving to “unlock opportunities for the poor at all levels and scales of operation” (Ashley et al, 2001).

Proponents of PPT argue that tourism possesses certain characteristics that make it potentially more conducive to poverty elimination than other economic sectors (Ashley et al, 2000; Roe and Khanya, 2001). Tourism delivers consumers to the product. This opens up opportunities for the poor for local access to markets for other goods and services.

Given the diverse nature of the industry, tourism provides a wide scope for economic diversification, as well as increased opportunity for participation by the poor who often operate informally. Tourism is also highly dependent on natural capital e.g. wildlife, culture. According to Torres and Momsen (2004), “this may potentially provide local people with an opportunity to leverage their assets to obtain equity in joint venture partnerships, as well as to extract value and decision-making power through their ownership of unique tourism resources.” Tourism provides relatively labour intensive opportunities. It also appears to offer more job and income earning opportunities to women than do other sectors (Roe *et al*, 2004).

Although the potential positive impacts of tourism are numerous, there are serious challenges to overcome. Several PPT case studies reveal that the distance between the poor and the tourism products is a significant issue. In St. Lucia, for example, cruise ship tourists have limited time to visit (and spend money in) inland communities (Cattarinich, 2001). The control of the tourism industry by multinational corporations, outsiders and local elites limits access to tourism markets

by the poor (Ashley et al, 2001). According to Cattarinich (2001), “the structure of the industry and the international political economy minimize the potential economic benefits that most developing countries and the poor can obtain from tourism.” Furthermore, participation by the poor in the industry is hindered by inadequate education and training; high tourism industry quality requirements; and a lack of economic and social capital (Torres and Momsen, 2004).

Other critics have stated that the industry with its many beneficial impacts have also encouraged negative consequences even to the extent of promoting maldevelopment in many of these developing countries (Cattarinich, 2001). Despite the various challenges facing PPT, empirical evidence suggests that adoption of explicit, pro-poor approaches can ‘tilt’ tourism, at the margin, to channel industry benefits to the poor (Roe and Khanya, 2001).

### PPT STRATEGIES

The literature on PPT prescribes a wide variety of strategies requiring implementation through a mix of stakeholder input. These strategies are divided into those that generate three different types of local benefits including economic benefits, non-financial livelihood benefits and enhanced participation and involvement. Table 1 further elaborates on the PPT strategies.

**Table 1: Three tired PPT Strategies**

<b>Increase economic benefits</b>	<b>Enhance non-financial livelihood impacts</b>	<b>Enhance participation &amp; partnership</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand local employment, wages: - commitments to local jobs, training of local people.</li> <li>Expand local enterprise opportunities – including those that provide services to tourism operations (food suppliers) &amp; those that sell to tourists (craft producers, handicrafts, guides etc.)</li> <li>Develop collective income sources – fees, revenue shares, equity dividends, donations etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building, training</li> <li>Mitigate environmental impacts.</li> <li>Address competing use of natural resources.</li> <li>Improve social and cultural impacts.</li> <li>Increase local access to infrastructure &amp; services provided for tourists – roads, communications, healthcare, transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a more supportive policy/planning framework that enables participation by the poor.</li> <li>Increase participation of the poor in decision making by government &amp; the private sector.</li> <li>Build pro-poor partnerships with the private sector.</li> <li>Increase flow of information &amp; communication between stakeholders to lay the foundation for future dialogue.</li> </ul>

*Source: Ashley et al, 2001*

### PPT EXPERIENCES IN LDCS

Pro-poor tourism initiatives have been implemented in many South American, African and Asian least developed countries. Implemented PPT initiatives have operated different activities following

all or most of all of the strategies stated in Table 1. Most of those initiatives have created positive impacts on different aspects of poverty alleviation. These impacts include more job formal and informal job opportunities, infrastructure development, skills and education for the poor, fund allocation for the community from return of tourism business and so on (Cattarinich, 2001). Although the potential positive impacts of tourism are numerous, there are serious challenges to overcome. Several PPT case studies reveal that the distance between the poor and the tourism products is a significant issue. In St. Lucia, for example, cruise ship tourists have limited time to visit (and spend money in) inland communities (Cattarinich, 2001). The control of the tourism industry by multinational corporations, outsiders and local elites limits access to tourism markets by the poor (Ashley et al, 2001). According to Cattarinich (2001), “the structure of the industry and the international political economy minimize the potential economic benefits that most developing countries and the poor can obtain from tourism.” Furthermore, participation by the poor in the industry is hindered by 1) Lack of education which limits the participation of poor in the tourism industry. The poor often are not accustomed to the expectations and needs of foreign tourists due to the lack of proper educations and skills (Torres and Momsen, 2004). (2) Lack of marketable assets that restricts poor’s involvement in tourism. Villages with no significant natural tourist attractions will have trouble participating in tourism. Such villages need to search for alternative attractions. One coastal village in Samoa of Oceania without a beach has come up with a successful alternative: its residents have built tourist accommodation on the water. One inland village has created a walkway beneath the rainforest canopy (i.e., a ‘treetop walk’) with foreign aid. (3) Lack of accommodation or other facilities for the tourists within the poor communities. In Nepal, the lack of lodges in the upper reaches of the Makalu-Barun region discourages many trekkers from going there (Saville, 2001). (4) Lack of financial capital which hinders the poor entrepreneurs to enter tourism market. In some cases lack of accommodation and facilities also is a function of insufficient financial capital (Cattarinich, 2001).

Other critics have stated that the industry with its many beneficial impacts have also encouraged negative consequences even to the extent of promoting maldevelopment in many of these developing countries (Cattarinich, 2001). Despite the various challenges facing PPT, empirical evidence suggests that adoption of explicit, pro-poor approaches can ‘tilt’ tourism, at the margin, to channel industry benefits to the poor (Roe and Khanya, 2001).

### **POLICY CONTEXT FOR PPT IN BANGLADESH**

In poverty context, the most prioritized Millennium Development Goal of Bangladesh is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and experienced a uniform and steady decline in poverty rates between 2000 and 2010 (Gimenez et al, 2013). Hence the concern with poverty is not a new theme and has always been an over-riding felt need of the people at large, but the project-oriented approach followed by successive governments has always in effect been donor-driven supply-led and thus potentially unsustainable.

In tourism context, the Government of Bangladesh has recognized the role of tourism industry in national economic development. To uphold this sector tourism policies have been formulated and different organizations like Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (National Tourism Organization), Bangladesh Tourism Board are in operation. Very recently Kuakata Master Plan has been

formulated with an ambition to develop the area as a global standard tourist attraction. This plan has emphasized on the development of infrastructures and tourist facilities without disturbing the natural beauty and local resources (Ministry of Housing and Public Works, 2014).

The objectives of national tourism policy have emphasized the role of tourism in poverty reduction (National Tourism Policy, 2009). However, this role is limited only within the creation of employment for the poor. No practical strategies have been created yet to alleviate poverty through pro-poor tourism. But within this policy environment of poverty reduction and tourism expansion, any pro-poor tourism initiative should be appreciated in Bangladesh.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is an empirical research while the idea of poverty alleviation in the study area through pro-poor tourism has been developed through a theoretical method. The potentiality of pro-poor tourism in Kuakata to reduce poverty has been examined taking the pro-poor tourism characteristics/strategies mentioned in table 1 as the criteria. The major source of primary information of this research is the poor community who lives in the vicinity of the beach and private sector companies who run tourism businesses in the beach area. This study considers two villages named Kuakata & Panjupara which are situated at proximity of the beach which is the most prominent tourist attraction here. Structured questionnaires in three categories: one for the local poor households; one for hotels, motels and one for the souvenir shops; have been used for data collection. The questionnaire surveys have been conducted on randomly selected 158 households of these two villages (83 households from Kuakata and 75 households from Panjupara) which are around 20% of total households. Though two villages have been taken as the study area they have been considered as a single unit of analysis because of their similar proximity to the beach. Rather the information has been collected in two different period of time to identify the socio economic changes of surveyed households after flourish of tourism. Financial data of the year 2009 have been adjusted using 7% average inflation rate. Seven hotels and motels, five restaurants and sixteen souvenir shops were there nearby the beach in 2012. A census survey was done on these businesses. The questionnaire for the households has been designed to know their socio-economic condition, their involvement in tourism, the economic benefit they get from tourism, availability of education and training facilities that can ensure their skills to be involved in tourism, impacts of tourism on local community from their perspective and the barriers that hinder their access to tourism industry. To compare the economic condition of the households after tourism intervention, 2009 has been taken as base year and 7% annual average inflation rate was considered. After the formulation of National Tourism Policy 2009, Kuakata got focused for tourism development and many tourism businesses initiated since then. Therefore, we have compared households' current incomes, savings and expenditure with the figures were in the year 2009. The questionnaires for hotel, motel and souvenir shop operators include the questions to reveal the deployment ratio of local people and utilization of local products in these tourism businesses. At the end of the research the potentials and barriers of pro-poor tourism in Kuakata has been summarized through a SWOT analysis based on the opinions of the actors in tourism of Kuakata and authors' observations.

## **WHY PRO-POOR TOURISM IN KUAKATA?**

Kuakata is situated at 320 km from Dhaka and 70 km from the Patuakhali district headquarters. Kuakata is a part of the Lata Chapli union of Kalapara upazila. The most important attraction of

the sea beach is that one can see both sunrise and sunset from some of its locations. The beach at Kuakata is 18 km long and 3.5 km wide. The Government of Bangladesh has taken steps to establish, Special Tourist Zones (STZ) at Cox's Bazar, Sundarbans and Kuakata. The Government has taken initiative to exploit the eco-tourism potential of the country for sustainable tourism development. Every tourist center of a country has some specialty & Kuakata is not exceptional from this characteristic. Kuakata is endowed with great tourism potentiality with its natural beauty, tribal culture, special events, religious rituals, historical places, forests and coasting trade etc. It is also a sanctuary for migratory winter birds. Many people visiting Kuakata find interest in Buddhist temples located at nearby places such as Keranipara, Mistiripara, and Kolapara while many others find the place interesting because of the unique customs and traditions of the Rakhain community. Innumerable devotees arrive here at the festival of 'Rush Purnima' and 'Maghi Purnima'. On these two days they take holy bath and traditional fairs are held here (Field survey, 2012). All these additional offers make the beach more attractive to the visitors.

If we consider the poverty context of Kuakata, it is a remote area with insufficient infrastructure and necessary utility services, inhabited with local poor communities. Considering World Bank's poverty line-II- less than 2.00\$ per person per day (World Bank, 2000), 74.69% of local people are found poor in Kuakata (Field survey, 2012). Hence on the side there is still a vast untouched potentiality of tourism development in the study area and simultaneously has opportunity to reduce poverty through pro-poor tourism initiatives.

#### **SURVEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section compares the current economic status of the poor with that in the year 2009 since when tourism activities have been initiated here at large scale. It also describes the involvement of local people and utilization of local products in tourism businesses based on the questionnaire survey of poor communities and tourism related businesses. The opinions of poor households regarding the status of tourism at Kuakata in respect of pro-poor tourism strategies and constraints have also been presented in this section.

#### **OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSITY DUE TO TOURISM**

In the study area, agriculture is found as the main occupation of local people. About 22.8% of surveyed people earn their livelihood from agriculture. The second major occupation is fishing. About 20.3 % of surveyed people are fisherman. Currently there is no unemployed person among the surveyed households and it is happened after tourism development. Fig: 01 shows the occupational diversity both before and after tourism development. The figure shows that after tourism development new job opportunities such as beach photographer, tour guide, hotel boy, souvenir seller etc have been created here.

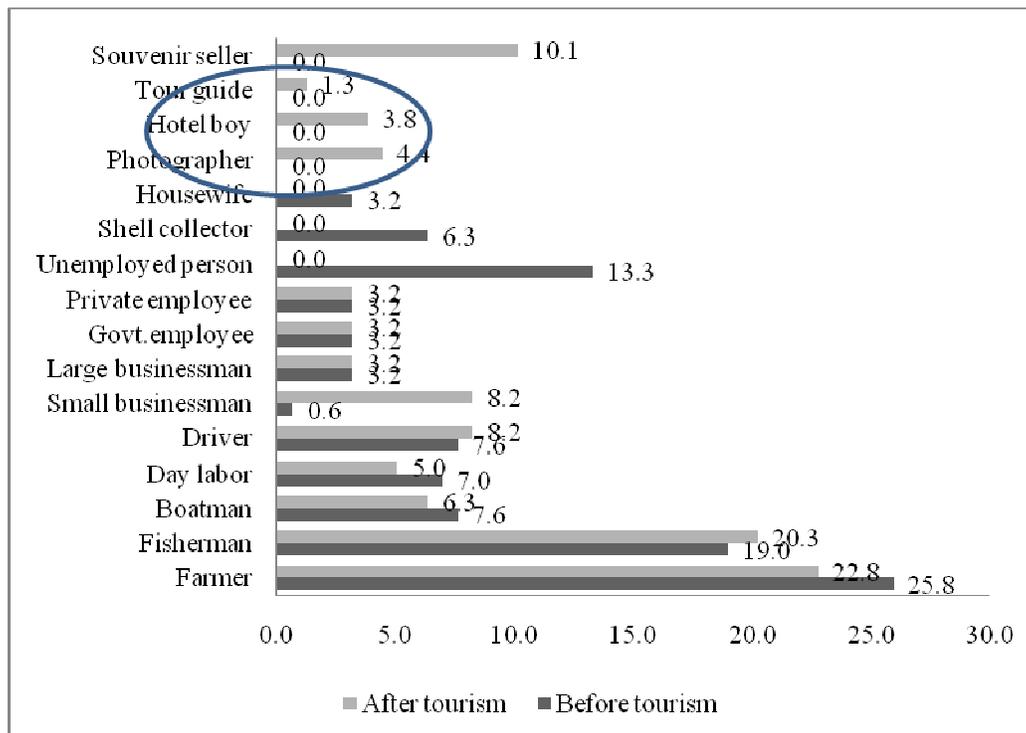


Figure 1: Occupational diversity in the study area (Source: Field Survey, 2012)

#### COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS (BEFORE TOURISM) ECONOMIC STATUS

In this section, all income, expenditure and saving figures of the year 2009 have been adjusted using 7% average inflation rate. Table 2 shows that after tourism development the average income of the respondents has increase. Before tourism, 25% of respondents had income below 2640 BDT and 75% of respondents earned below 4320 BDT. Whereas, currently 25% of the respondents earn below 3000 BDT and 75% have income below 5625 BDT. As all the current income figures are greater than those in 2009, it proves the overall income of the poor of this area has increase due to tourism development.

Table 2: Income before and after tourism development

		Income before tourism development (BDT)	Income after tourism development (BDT)
Mean		4378	5402
Percentiles	25	2640	3000
	50	3450	4200
	75	4320	5625

(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

Expenditure level is also changed in the study area because of tourism development. Figure 2 shows the expenditure status of the study area. Among the responds, the expenditure of 96 people was on 'up to 3000 BDT' cohort but after tourism development the percentages of the respondents whose expenditures belong to higher range has increased.

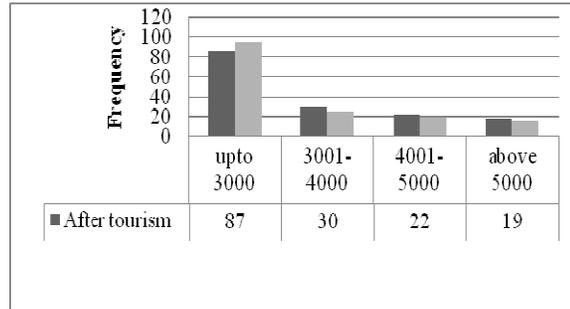


Figure 2: Changes in expenditures  
(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

Saving capacity indicates the economic status of any community. Increased savings reveal the better socio-economic status. Savings can help one to cope in adverse situation like during disasters or off seasons. From figure 3, it is identified that the percentage of respondents who can save 86%) has increased after tourism development. In 2009, it was about 36.7%.

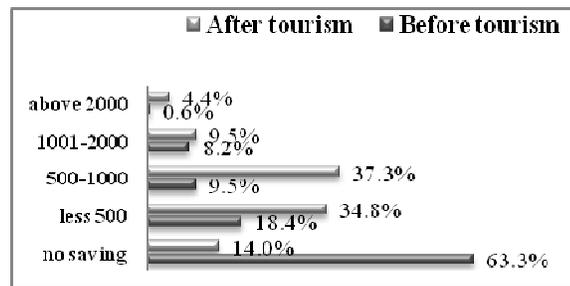


Figure 3: Changes in savings  
(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

According to field survey 2012, it is found that near 57% people were below the poverty line-I (1\$ per day) before tourism development (2009). This percentage has dramatically changed after tourism development (2012) which is near to 30%.

If consider poverty line II (2\$ a day)), 82.7% people were poor before tourism development which is higher compare to present situation. Currently, about 74.68% people are found to be poor considering poverty line II.

**PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR IN TOURISM**

In the study area 74.05% of local people are engaged in tourism related occupation whereas this ratio is 77.12% among the poor. From table 3, it is estimated that poverty is higher in non-tourism based occupation (85.2%) than who are engaged in tourism based occupation (26.4%) if consider poverty line-I. It is also found that the respondents who belong to tourism based occupation earn more than those who are in non-tourism based occupation. So, the participation of poor in tourism industry is significant and their earnings as well are better than non tourism based earners.

**Table 3: Income according to participation in tourism & non-tourism based occupations**

Occupation		Total income in range in BDT			Total
		Up to 3000	3001-4000	4001-5000	
Tourism based	Frequency	24	26	41	91
	Percent	26.4%	28.6%	<b>45.0%</b>	100.0%
Non-tourism based	Frequency	23	4	0	27
	Percent	<b>85.2%</b>	14.8%	.0%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	47	30	41	118
	Percent	39.8%	25.5%	34.7%	100.0%

(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

## PRO-POOR CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT TOURISM INDUSTRY

This section presents the views of the poor regarding the pro-poor features of tourism industry exists in Kuakata and verifies that with the data of employment of local people and utilization of local products in tourism businesses.

To be pro-poor, tourism should have several characteristics (Ashley, et al, 2001; Cattarinich, 2001; Ashley, 2000; Roe and Khanya, 2001; Goodwin, 2000). Among those, tourism of the study area satisfies a number of characteristics. However, in some respects, current situation lacks significantly the participation of local poor. Participation of poor in local planning is missing and there is no association to amplify the voice of the poor to ensure their opinion in tourism development. The scope of capacity building and training to increase poor's skills to earn through tourism is also insufficient (see table 4).

**Table 4: Multiple responses on pro-poor tourism characteristics**

Characteristics of pro-poor tourism	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Frequency	Percent	
Expansion of business opportunities for the poor	148	19.5%	94.3%
Expansion of employment for the poor	140	18.4%	89.2%
Capacity building & Training	46	6.1%	29.3%
Involvement of poor & women	158	20.7%	100.0%
Increased participation in tourism	158	20.7%	100.0%
Involving poor in local planning	7	.9%	4.5%
Amplifying voice through producer associations	3	.4%	1.9%
Developing linkages between poor & private sector	80	10.5%	51.0%

(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

The survey of hotels, motels and souvenir shops shows that about 69% of total employees engaged there are local people. But according to the business holders, most of these employments are within lower rank of the designations due to lack of education and skills of the local people.

Most of the materials and daily necessities like vegetables, fishes, rice, and poultries for tourists are collected and purchased from the local markets and bazaar. In hotels and restaurants, fish are mainly collected from local market (97%). Not only the local food items are being used by the hotels and restaurants but the souvenir items and handicrafts are also being used by tourists through different shops. A lot of souvenirs are collected from the nature like shells, stones etc. (63%). Almost all dry fishes are collected locally as Kuakata is a coastal area and a major source of dry fishes for the whole country. In surveyed shops 68% handicrafts and 59% garments are found local production. Here the Rakhain ethnic group is engaged in handloom garments production. Most of women are engaged in making handicraft. They made Lunge, Scarf, and Shawl etc. They have a special market in Kuakata, named "Rakhain Mohila Market".

## BARRIERS TO INCREASE POOR'S PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

This section shows the opinions of all respondents including poor households, shop owners, personnel of hotels, motels and restaurants regarding the barriers to increase the participation of the poor in tourism industry of Kuakata. Current tourism activities can be more pro-poor by addressing the barriers they face, and maximizing a wide range of employment, self-employment and informal sector opportunities.

**Table 5: Multiple responses on barriers to increase poor's participation**

Barriers	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Frequency	Percentage	
Lack of human capital(education, skill, training)	205	14.7	100
Lack of financial capital (credit, loan)	205	14.7	100
Lack of social capital (organization)	109	7.8	53
Lack of quality products	192	13.7	94
Inadequate communication system	205	14.7	100
Low capacity to meet tourist expectation	148	10.6	72
Lack of government support	172	12.3	84
Low understanding of tourism	161	11.5	79
Total	1397	100	-

(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

It shows that according to 100% of the respondents, the lack of human capital and financial capital is the most significant barrier to engage local poor in tourism business. Literate population is considered as an asset in any country. The education level of the study area is moderate. The literacy rate of surveyed sample is about 52.5 % and 24.6% population is in primary level. Only 8.2% cross the H.S.C level and about 47.5% people are found illiterate.

Training programs are organized by the government and non-government organizations. These trainings are mostly related with general poverty alleviation initiatives. Yet no special training to increase poor's skills in tourism related employment has been organized here.

## POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

The initiatives to overcome the barriers were narrated by the authors to the respondents and the frequency in table 5 shows the no of respondents who agreed with those initiatives. Some of the initiatives are related with the enhancement of poor's opportunity to engage in tourism industry and some are for the expansion of tourism industry in general in Kuakata. Most of the respondents want better education facilities. They also think they need training opportunities and access to micro-finance and loan to increase their human and financial capitals. The communication system and road condition of the study area are not good. That's why the area cannot attract sufficient tourists. Infrastructure should be improved to expand tourism here. They also expect increased Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) support to get the benefit tourism in their locality.

**Table 6: Actions to reduce the barriers (multiple responses)**

Actions to overcome barrier	Responses		Percent of Cases
	Frequency	Percentage	
Improved education facilities	205	11	100
Need training opportunities	205	11	100
Access to micro-finance	205	11	100
Supportive planning	205	11	100
Develop transport network	205	11	100
Improved infrastructure	205	9	80
Development of organization	162	8.5	78.8
Increase skillness	149	8	72.7
Building awareness	143	7.7	69.7
SMEs support	205	11	100
Total	1889	100	-

(Source: Field Survey, 2012)

### SWOT ANALYSIS

At the end of the study a SWOT analysis has been done to identify what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats a pro-poor tourism initiative may face in the study area Kuakata. One of the most important strengths of pro-poor tourism in Kuakata is participation of local people in tourism related activities. About 69% of employments are absorbed by local people. In Kuakata tourism industry, involvement of poor is also satisfactory. Here 77.12% poor are employed in tourism sector. Most of the materials and daily necessities like vegetables, fruits, fishes and other materials for tourists are collected and purchased from the local markets and bazaar. In Kuakata, Rakhain ethnic group is engaged in handloom garments. The Rakhain culture is also an important aspect to attract tourists.

Pro-poor tourism also faces some problems in Kuakata, illiterate and unskilled personnel are the major among them. 47.5% people are found illiterate. The local people also suffer from lack of financial support in their business sectors. There is no specific loan on tourism business. Local community's lack of entrepreneurial skill is a major reason for their exclusion from development of tourism. Lack of proper infrastructure is a prominent weakness of Kuakata to develop tourism and make that pro-poor. The way to reach Kuakata is very poor. There is lack of good buses and proper bus stand in Kuakata. To reach Kuakata from any other part of the country is very difficult.

Pro-poor tourism initiative may create great opportunities of new jobs and businesses. In previous sections, it has been shown that poor have already been benefited by tourism. Due to tourism development new field of jobs (see figure 1) such as beach photographer, tour guide, hotel boy, souvenir seller etc. has been created. If pro-poor tourism initiative is taken here such opportunities

would more accessible for the poor. With proper tourism development infrastructure will be developed which will benefit the locality.

There are threats for pro-poor tourism development as well. If proper attention is not given on the improvement of education and skill of the poor, they will be involving only in low paid jobs. Seasonal variation in the number of tourists is very significant here. Tourist season at Kuakata normally starts from October and continues up to April. November, December, January, February and March are the peak season for tourism. On the other hand, May to September is off seasons. If the economy is developed based on tourism and poverty alleviation is planned targeting tourism only, the alternatives source of income for the off season should be planned carefully. Possible price hike is another threat. With tourism development price of all kind of consumer goods and land most commonly goes up which makes the poor more vulnerable. So this issue should also get proper attention. For better job opportunities with development of tourism, people from other locations may migrate here which is also a threat for the local poor.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participation of local people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Involvement of poor in tourism business</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Presence of ethnic community Rakhain with a distinct culture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of traditional and local products</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of human capital (education, skill, training etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of financial capital (credit, loan etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of infrastructure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business opportunity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creation of new fields of jobs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Empowerment of poor and women</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructural development</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Migration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Price hike</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low paid job for local people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal variation</li> </ul>

**Figure 4: SWOT matrix for pro-poor tourism in Kuakata**

## CONCLUSION

This study evaluates the scope and constraints of pro-poor tourism development in vicinity of Kuakata sea beach of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh wants to utilize tourism as an economic development tool to reduce poverty and stimulate socio-economic wellbeing (GoB, 2009). Tourism has profound impact on the local community of the destination as it brings economic and socio-cultural changes. Current status of involvement of local poor in tourism industry has examined. An important finding is that majority of the tourism assets and well-paid jobs are enjoyed by non-locals whereas the local community does not enjoy its rightful share due to lack of education and skills. Owners of luxurious hotels, restaurants, cottages, motels are the rich people of the society. Few lower category jobs of waiters, housekeeping, guards, and hotel boys are opened for the local poor people. The local community is involved in tourism activities but has minimal involvement in the decision making process. This study reveals that the local community is totally excluded from the policy formulation process. Local community is getting economic benefits from tourism development but still significant scope is there to increase their active participation and equitable benefit sharing through the improvement of the skill and capacity. There are also some threats like price hike, seasonal variation lack of infrastructure possibility of in migration which may reduce the positive impact of any pro-poor

initiative. The possible threats should proper attention before the initiation of any pro-poor tourism initiative in Kuakata.

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