

# **Representing Bangladesh: A study on contemporary travel writing**

**Homaed Ishaque**

MSS 123053003

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree

Master of Social Science in Media Studies and  
Journalism

University Of Liberal Arts Bangladesh



Year of submission October 2014

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis establishes context for the interrogation of contemporary travel writing on Bangladesh. It focuses on how contemporary travel writings, in different platforms, have been representing Bangladesh. While using Stuart Hall's theory of Representation, this study takes on a qualitative stance in its exploration. It undertakes qualitative content analysis of travel writings appeared over a period of time and comes up with particular themes and ideas those are highlighted in those writings. Based on that, the study argues how different patterns of the representation of Bangladesh have been constructed in travel writings.

# THESIS APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE FORM

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this project paper is the results of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degree at ULAB or other institutions.

I understand that if it has been proven that a portion of my thesis had been plagiarized, the university can withdraw my master's degree in social science.

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**Representing Bangladesh: A study on contemporary travel writing**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Sumon Rahman for his valuable and dedicated support and advice over one year. Many thanks to Bangladesh tourism expansion forum (BTEF) organization to give me their travel books and inspired my thesis. My friend Arafat Hasan is spent time looking through my work at various stages which has been much appreciated. Thanks to glove trotter Ashrafuzzaman Ujjal to give me the support and his edited book Experience Bangladesh. I am grateful for help received from the teachers at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh. I am also grateful to my class mates and friends who inspired me a lot. I am particularly grateful for the support of my family throughout this thesis and for the financial help they have given.

**Homaed Ishaque**

**Dhaka, October 2014**

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- Completed Mountaineering course From **HMI (Himalayan Mountaineering Institute)** in Darjeeling, India (March 2012).
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# Chapter I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

This thesis intends to study the representation of Bangladesh through reviewing contemporary travel writings those are published in travel books over a period of time. It establishes a context for the exploration of contemporary travel narratives about Bangladesh.

Before I discuss what travel writing is, perhaps I should say what it is not. Travel writing is not about writing family vacation experiences. It is not writing about what one liked or disliked during their last trip. And it is definitely is not writing about destinations which you can travel for free.

Instead, I would like to define travel writing as something which is about places, peoples and culture of other places; and also writing about how to travel, when to travel and tips on travelling while keeping the beginner travelers in mind. It's about relaying travel experiences to others so that they may emulate them or at the very least not make the same mistakes like previous travelers did. It is about writing natural gems of given country that are exotic to everyone else- a local farmer's market, historic and architectural site, restaurant, museum etc. Travel itself has a long history. People have always traveled from ancient caravansaries to modern resorts. But travel writing began, more or less; during Elizabethan times. Shakespeare got much of the background material for his plays, such as the "Merchant of Venice" and "Romeo and Juliet" from Elizabethan travel guides to Italy (Brooke, 2009).

Bangladeshi travel writing has also a long history. The first recorded tourist, Fa Xiang arrived in Bangladesh in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. Fa Xiang was a Chinese Buddhist monk whose comprehensive account of his travels has provided us with some insight into the history of this region, and particularly to the enormous activity done there in the development and spread of Buddhism. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Century another Chinese Buddhist Monk followed much the same route as Fa Xiang; and it seems that a few hundred years had done no damage to the great monuments that the Emperor Ashoka built during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE to mark the progress of The Buddha. The greatest travel writer of them all, Ptolemy, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE shows that his informants were very familiar with the lands of Bangladesh, listing cities that are, only now; being identified. Not the least of them, is the possibility that his Ramu is the same Ramu that still exists close to the great tourist destination of modern times, Cox's Bazaar. The first recorded outbound tourist was probably another Buddhist, Atish Dipankar, known within the religion as the 'Second Buddha', the man who restored the religion in Tibet. He is recorded, as a young man, taking his own 'Gap Year', and travelling with a group of Gem Merchants to Java and Sumatra in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century (Unlocked, 2011).

Travel writing celebrates the differences in manners and customs around the world. It helps the reader to understand other communities and places. It is also useful for readers to plan their own trips and avoid costly mistakes while traveling. But; most of all, it lets readers travel to far-off destinations that they may never have heard of.

Defining travel writing can be difficult because it covers a range of vastly different topics and styles. Travel literature can only be subjective because the writer can never fully take themselves out of the picture. The purpose and aim of the travel writing is important, otherwise the writing could become a show piece for the tourism industry. Travel writing should explore a sense of place. Travel writing should capture the sound and smell of a place

where a photo perhaps cannot. Pieces that explore the journey within and the journey without are very engaging for a reader and can offer a more personalized travel experience (Sweeney, 2013).

Travelogue may be explaining facts, cross culture, food habit, people, and livelihood and so on which have been observed by a traveler. Every piece of novelty in a distant land is an attraction to others. Contemporary technology tools are fast drawing the world closer than before. But, to most of potential tourists, a printed image and article still carries a long-lasting charm and appeal for the images and letters speak, over and over again (Ujjal, (Ed.) 2009, p. 9). The definition of travel writing is a form of creative nonfiction in which the narrator's encounters with foreign places serve as the dominant subject (Nordquist, 2014).

### **1.1.1 Types of travel writing**

When we're talking about travel writing, there are a couple of distinctions to be made. There are:

- **Travelogues** (journal/itinerary style, actual reports about someone's trip)
- **Travel stories** (a realistic narration about a journey, meant for a wider audience and usually with a certain literary value to it)
- And **Travel guides** (publication with practical information and tips/advice about a certain destination, meant for people that want to visit that place).

Another form of travel writing, in the form of an online blog, is gaining popularity amongst (aspiring) writers. The first online travel blog was posted by Jeff Greenwald on the 'Global Network Navigator' in 1993. He described his journeys around the world and later turned them into a book.

### **1.1.2 Why people like to write and read about traveling**

In 1336, someone did a bit more than just jotting down facts about his destination. Italian poet and humanist Petrarch described his experiences about climbing mount Ventoux and more importantly- his satisfaction about reaching the top. He also wrote about his travel companions and even related his experience to his own moral development in life, as if it was a pilgrimage. Moroccan world traveler Ibn Battuta wrote in 1355 the work 'Rihla' ('The Journey'), with an original title that translates as: 'A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling'. Halfway through the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Gilles le Bouvier wrote a book explaining his opinion about why people should travel and write about it: 'Because many people of diverse nations and countries have delight and take peace (Krook, 2013).

In all travel writings, the focus lies on accounts of real or imaginary places. It may range from documentary to the evocative, from literary to journalistic and from humorous to serious. You can find it in books, magazines and nowadays in increasing numbers, on the internet. It has been observed that, travel writing encourages traveling and it represents a country where the traveler has visited. There are many places to explore in Bangladesh and the traveler can share his/her experience through travel writing. Bangladesh is a land of natural beauty, people with remarkable hospitality and resilience. She is best known for the longest unbroken natural beach of Cox's Bazaar and the largest mangrove forest of Sundarbans. Bangladesh is a country of Rivers, Fishes, Flat lands, Flora and Fauna, Hilly areas and hard working gentle people.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

In this thesis research, the objectives are:

1. To explore the nature of representation of Bangladesh through travel writings.
2. To verify the nature of travel writing as an activism of traveling.

### **1.3 Research Question**

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following questions are asked in the scope of the present research:

1. What are the representations of Bangladesh in travel writings for the consumption of foreign travelers?
2. What are the representations of Bangladesh in travel writings is promoted for the consumption of local literary readers and travelers?

### **1.4 Significance of the study:**

This study focuses on travel writers, general readers and travelers with a view of the construction of nationhood. Readers of this thesis can get knowledge about Bangladeshi travel writings and meanings produced by these. The publishers are expected to become concerned about travel writings and its value to represent Bangladesh through reading this research paper. The travelers' community can be more passionate to write about the country's beauty and potentiality of tourism. So that commercial and noncommercial travel writing could become popular in Bangladesh. Tourism industry will be able to see travel writing as an integral part of traveling. Therefore, the research findings may provide more attention to travel writings and their publication in different print media. The academic significance of this research is to explore how cultural representation creates meaning into the perception of the readers of travel writing in different media.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study:**

There are plenty of resources on traveling, but for obvious reasons the study does not take them as points of its observation. For example, literature produced by formal bodies like the tourism board has not been considered as the content of the present study. Alongside, no particular interpretive method was undertaken for the analysis but emphasis was given to finding out themes on the basis of its prominence and frequency. For obvious reasons, it was not possible to take the broader horizon of travel writings into account. For example, contemporary newspapers and blogs contain a significant amount of literature which can fall into the scope of present research. But the enormous volume of them was not manageable for a master degree project. At the same time, the nature of travel writing in the newspapers and blogs are not uniform hence demand more serious scrutiny. Considering these, the present research defines its scope by keeping those newspaper and blog writings outside.



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## Chapter II

### Study Framework and Literature Review

#### 2.1 Literature Review:

The general objective of this chapter is to provide a framework for the present study through an engaged review of some selected literature. In doing so, it argues that travel writing can represent nationhood and can attract general readers and travelers. The central focus of this chapter is also to establish how travel writings can be an important component of traveling.

So far observed, there are only few researches done on the issue of travel from the viewpoint of representation. Travel writers are describing their experiences and through the write-ups they also represent the country and inspire traveling. One such book, for example, is “Experience Bangladesh” edited and published by Ashrafuzzaman Ujjal, published in 2009, distributed by Utsho Prokashon. This book holds, travel writings as an activity of traveling. It says:

“Travelers or travel writers, belongings to the same creed, are deserving of wings in imagination, stretches to infinity. The very moment they plan to step into a journey, known or unknown, the excitement of seeing a new land and meeting new people, starts a new thread spinning in their head. Mingling with millions of other humans in ordinary vocations, even, with a unique frame of mind and spirit, they stand out. They inspire us, excite us and lead us into lands beyond their own (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 9)!

First-hand account of travel writing is a very good example of the formation of identity. McArthur (2010) observed that,

“Travel writing is a first-hand experience for an author and it reflects and identified of the themes of Russia”. He says: “Travel writing was the crucial vehicle for this articulation of identity. The travels of scholars, published as travelogues and articles in the press, claimed authority and authenticity thanks to their “first-hand experience” as well as, frequently, the prestigious academic backgrounds of the authors. The themes that the Russians sought to identify with in the South Slav lands, such as religiosity and moral purity, reflected their own struggle to define themselves—not against the people they encountered but against the model of Western Europe” (McArthur, 2010, pp. 6-7).

So in this quotation I observed that, travel writing is an important activity. This research paper also tells how travel writing can represent country. It has clear to arguing that:

“Travel writing is at the forefront of cultural representation and the emergence of postcolonial discourses has had a significant impact on how foreign countries and people may be presented. Nineteenth-century imperialistic versions of Africa, for example, inform twentieth-century representations which in turn deserve closer scrutiny” (Moffat, 2010, p. 4).

Categorically, travel writing was thought as a distinct literary form. With time this idea has changed a lot. From a literary form, travel writing has become a form of self exploration, sharing and a tool for promotion. Moffat (2010) says:

“Faced with the necessity of bringing a new outlook to travel accounts, the style of travel writing, and the traveler’s approach to the journey, has developed so that, as Helen Carr observes, the genre was dominated by the literary travel book ‘after 1930. A number of celebrated authors, such as D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930), Waugh and Graham Greene (1904–1991), produced travel narratives whose unique character rested not on scientific discovery but on the outlook of the individual traveler and the skill with which the journey was reconstructed. Such texts have succeeded in maintaining the popularity of travel writing. Of course, there is a precedent for a more personal style of travel writing in earlier works by Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) and Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), among others, but now this type of narrative has come to represent mainstream travel writing” (Moffat, 2010, p. 6).

According to Moffat (2010):

“The focus of new ways of reading and understanding has been fiction, as the impact of texts such as *Jane Eyre* (1847) or *Heart of Darkness* has been greater than accounts by Livingstone, Speke or Mary Kingsley (1862–1900). But Western travel writing is fundamentally impacted by a greater awareness of the Other’s perspective. Travel writers must now show their awareness of the issues relevant to these new discourses, behaving respectfully towards local people and representing other cultures with tolerance and humility. Writers do not always explicitly acknowledge that they must address this shift in cultural perception, but this new understanding is usually evident in the self-consciousness of their presentation” (Moffat, 2010, p. 6).

In this quotation my observation is that, travel writing is representing culture and people's behavior. So in my research it is observed that, Bangladesh is highlighted in people, culture and hospitality, through travel writings.

Moffat (2010) makes a distinction between travel writings by the Western and non-Western people. According to him,

“Travel writing depends on the balance of notions of home and abroad. Western writers have used travel to interrogate their relationship to their own countries and continents; only a few Africans have carried out similar interrogations. As this questioning develops it will inevitably change the ways in which the West thinks about Africa and Africa thinks about itself. At the same time, they must be aware of the process and impact of cultural mediation, as their constructions of others are filtered through the influences of Western culture. As Africans become increasingly self-conscious about their land and culture it seems likely that local impressions will increasingly challenge and complicate Western perceptions” (Moffat, 2010, pp. 21-22).

Travel writings focus on representations of the others along with people, place and culture. It also indicates that the travel writing pattern has changed to highlight self-representation unlike early stages of travel writings. In this study I found a relation with my study that indicates Bangladeshi travel writing is representing the country, its people, place and culture.

Moffat (2010) says:

“The subtext of representation in travel writing is relevant on various levels. Travel writing apparently focuses on representations of the Other, but such constructions are

inextricable from the travel writer's self-presentation, as the central figure through whom people, places and cultures are viewed. Modern travel writers are acutely aware of how conventions for representing the self have changed since the nineteenth century" (Moffat, 2010, p. 50).

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework:**

In my study the theoretical framework is based on representation theory. Hall (1997) explains that, representation connects meaning and language to culture. So, my intention was to see how Bangladesh places, geography, culture and lifestyle were *represented* with the words of travel writers who write for different purposes and activities. I am trying to emphasize upon the meaning of the texts and language in my research. The textual representation is very important for finding out the cultural representation and for this purpose I chose Hall's (1997) theory in my research. Representation is about the using language to create something meaningful with a purpose to represent the word vividly to other people. This theory is quite useful as it involves the use of language, signs and images to symbolize things. I am using Hall's (1997) approach as my theoretical framework because my study is investigating the representation of Bangladesh. There are three different approaches in this theory. They are – The reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches (Hall, (Ed.). 1997, p. 15). In the present study, I have taken the reflective approach.

As I understand, Hall (1997) says that, reality of something does not matter; rather it is important to observe how it has been represented in the text. As I can say that, recent days the Ratargul swam forest situated in Sylhet is much highlighted in travel writings but before that travelers were not aware of this place. Ratargul was explained her beauty by travel writers text, and it became more attractive to the readers and travelers. So it can add a value to the text and also those places are getting importance towards the readers which are far more

influential and purposive than the real meaning of that place. That is the reason why I chose the representation theory in my research.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework:**

With the outcome of the literature review, the research now focuses on conceptual framework of representation. The following framework indicates how different concentration in the present study would contribute in the central focus of this study.

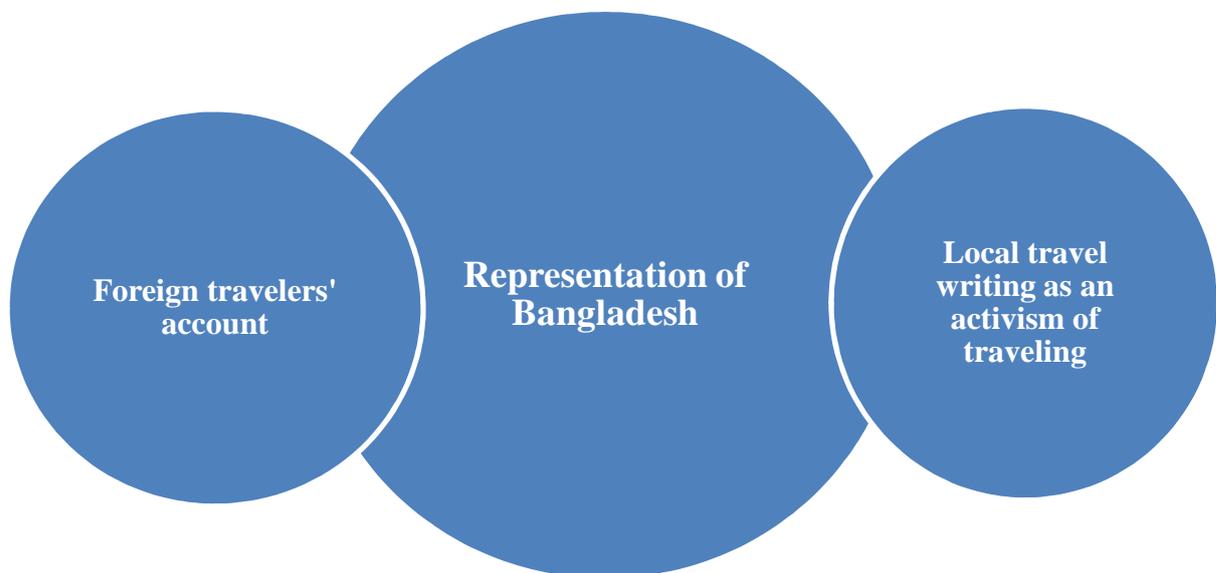


Figure1 Two prime modes for representation of Bangladesh

To get answers of the research questions formulated for this study, it takes two prime modes of travel writing in its conceptual framework. There is an important account made by foreign travelers. They have a particular ways of portraying Bangladesh; what are the things they pickup, what particularly they like about Bangladesh, is it rivers, hills, hospitality or adventure? So this is an important source that makes a representation of Bangladesh.

Secondly, there are local traveler groups. They have a particular ideology and ways of promoting the locality. They are mostly non-commercial, driven by a sense of aesthetics and adventure. They basically take traveling as a citizen activism taking Bangladesh to its people and to the world, which is a lifestyle statement for them. This part of the conceptual framework is basically a group of travelers who consider this an activism from a local perspective. So all together I get a complex picture of representation of Bangladesh contributed by a local and an international source. This is the base of my conceptual framework.



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## **Chapter III**

### **Research Design and Method**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Method**

As this is a qualitative and exploratory research, the main focus is on content analysis of travel writings. I got a number of books on travel writings but I picked up only four books for my study. One book portrays Bangladesh from the view points of a number of foreign travelers and the other three books are views of local travelers. Actually, for textual analysis, fewer samples are better. In the qualitative research for textual analysis the number of population does not matter. The books that I selected for my study, thematically very organized and it was easy for me to codify from the text. In addition, the selected books also reflect the same themes, so that's why I have chosen those four travel books.

Based on content analysis this study takes an interpretive approach where I am looking and interpreting contents of travel books to find how the nationhood and its locality has been represented in the writings, what are the issues being picked up by writers, what sort of beauty are sought for and what kind of activities for a prospective tourist are on offer. Therefore, the central design of this study is devoted in finding themes and ordering them in a manner so that they can meaningfully answers the research questions asked. So, the design is qualitative where finding themes are the main concern.

#### **3.2 Variables of the study:**

In this research paper my variables are travel writings and the representation of Bangladesh. This study scrutinizes travel writings which are portraying Bangladesh. Travel writing has been defined earlier in a way which is distinct from travelogue and tourism related writings. So this is a variable which conveys some literary value in this study and that is what I actually want to write in my thesis about travel writings.

As a variable, travel writings and the representation are an important part of this thesis. It forms the base of my study how travel writings can represent Bangladesh. In many ways Bangladesh has been represented but in my study through the travel writings I am looking at geographic and cultural representation of different tourist destinations of Bangladesh.

### **3.3 Population and sampling:**

In my research, population of the study is contemporary travel writings those are representing Bangladesh. Among the vast resources of travel writing across the platform that constructs the population of this study; one English book and three Bengali anthologies of travel books contents were chosen for content analysis. After doing some systematic study of travel books I sorted out some mostly mentioned themes in those books and I coded that accordingly. So based on the themes I found that most of the books are maintaining same themes. As per fulfilling my requirements I went to the analysis of representation. I have coded the textual analysis based on frequency of the mostly mentioned themes and activities.

### **3.4 Research Instrument:**

For the study, the selected books are 'Experience Bangladesh' edited and published by Ashrafuzzaman Ujjal and the other three books are "Deshe Berao Desher Manush- vol: 1, 2 and 3" published by Bangladesh Tourism Expansion Forum (BTEF). I selected the books by using purposive sampling. Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. Methodology or a data-gathering process for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live (Mckee, 2003).

The purpose of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts. The important considerations in textual analysis include selecting the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate texts, and determining which particular approach to employ in analyzing them (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 1999).

So in my research textual analysis is applicable for finding out my research objectives which is representation Bangladesh through the travel writings. The research approach is qualitative such as content analysis of travel books.



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## **Chapter IV**

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

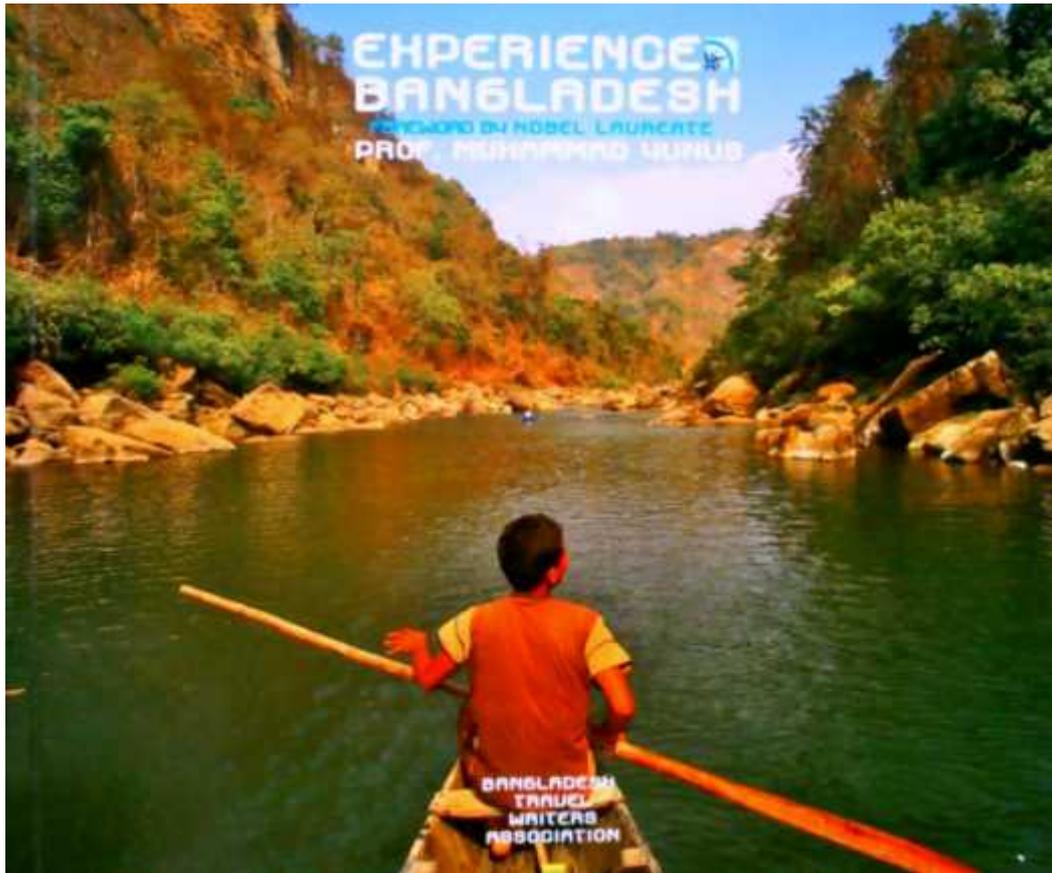
#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I will discuss about findings of my study. I have divided this chapter into two segments to effectively address the answers that I got for my research questions. In first part I will discuss on how contemporary travel books brings the issue of representation of Bangladesh, particularly for the foreign travelers. In the second part I am exploring the nature of travel activism where local travelers are the writers to represent their home country.

#### **4.1 Representing Bangladesh for foreign travelers**

In this segment I have tried to look at how Bangladesh is represented to attract the foreign travelers. For this purpose, I have studied travelogues and other informative writings on Bangladeshi tourism to get a state-of-art knowledge on this representation.

One of the principal objectives of travel writing is to attract others to travel. In most cases it has been done to welcome foreign travelers.



Picture 1 Travel book Experience Bangladesh

After going through the book “Experience Bangladesh”, I have sorted out some central themes with which the authors try to define Bangladesh. They are:

- Forest
- Island
- Tourist Places
- Ocean
- Beach
- Capital city

These are the common themes of travel writing I found which encourages foreign travelers and its indicating different locations of Bangladesh. All these places have refreshing natural beauty, green landscape, beautiful rivers and so on.

Apart from these themes there are some travel activities and knowledge described in travel writings which are to promote Bangladesh and catch the attention of foreign travelers. They are:

- Adventure
- Bicycling
- Hospitality
- Archeology
- People & Culture

These themes are most common in travel writings of Bangladesh. In what follows, This thesis discusses on these themes and activities of travel writings.



Picture 2 Bangladesh Map

#### 4.1.1. Center of attraction

The center of attraction means the places which could grab the attention of foreign travelers. These places are mainly the assets of the tourism industry of Bangladesh. These books offer a variety of places and natural settings to attract foreign tourists. Detailed discussion on the portrayal of these places is given below:

#### **4.1.1.1 Forest**

Most of the texts have their prime emphasis on the greenery of Bangladesh. Most of the authors of these books and booklets focus highly on the landscape. Bangladesh is best known for the largest mangrove forest of Sundarbans. In this natural mangrove forest the world famous Royal Bengal Tiger has been seen. A forest of “golpata” (one kind of plant) and “theshmuul” also known as breathing root. There are many small parts of the forest enriched with different varieties of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and plants. There is also Rain forest in Bangladesh. The Lawachhara Rainforest is a lap of nature which would be the perfect destination for the foreign travelers. The forest is a space which can provide freshest air for refreshing our mind among the tall trees of rain forest that houses thousands of species of flora and fauna will freshen up both anyone’s body and soul. Rainforests are called the ‘Jewels of the Earth’, as well as ‘world’s lung’. Our Lawachhara is one of those immaculate wildlife areas in Bangladesh that carefully preserves local plants and animal (Hazra, 2011. p. 39).

In the travel book ‘Experience Bangladesh’ one of the authors says,

“Srimangal is a pleasure to see in daylight, but it may be equally exotic to explore late night by rickshaw. The intend sound of insects, frogs and some foxes blended with the scent of raw tea and the sporadic twinkling light of a firefly. If you keep exploring the

rural areas of Bangladesh late evening, you may also be as lucky as me to observe one blinking tree in a dark forest, blinking not due to an ongoing wedding but due to the assembly of thousands of fireflies blinking in full sync” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 107).

In this quote the author explaining the beauty of Srimangal which is the area of rainforest. Lawachchara, Shatchari, Remakalenga, Chunuti all these reserve forest areas are the main attraction of foreign travelers. The supreme attraction is Sundarban. All the foreign travelers who write mostly visited this place and in the travel books under the forest category Sundarbans is always highlighted. Authors are describing all the natural beauties and landscape of Sundarbans.

In the travel book ‘Experience Bangladesh’ the authors explain their experience about Sundarbans,

“Impressions from Sundarbans, and the great mangrove forest in the Gangetic delta. Most tourists enter the Sundarbans in Bangladesh either for a kind of amusing trip, or in the hope of gaining the ultimate kick by sighting a Royal Bengal tiger inside the largest chunk of mangrove forest in the world. Finally they come for enjoying themselves, while for me the primary is to experience the unique forest to win knowledge and to forget myself” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 24, 26).

In this article the author tried to explain about the world most famous animal of Sundarbans. The Royal Bengal Tiger is a central attraction for the foreign travelers. In travel writing the Sundarbans and Royal Bengal Tigers are significant for representing Bangladesh to attract foreign travelers. Another review under the title ‘A whistle-stop tour of the Sundarbans’ published in Gulf News, Dubai. The writer says,

“Most visitors who stay for half a day won’t spot a tiger, but if one does spot you and you appear to threaten its territory, you had better have a gun and an experienced forest guard with you. As we began our day, I understood that getting through the forest, which has been deemed a wildlife sanctuary by the Bangladesh government, also means one has to use a large boat or a ferry. This is because the Sundarbans have no pathways running through them and are completely wild and unless one is a complete adventure buff who prefers to walk through brambles and bushes in swampy mud, this is the only way to see the jungle” (Zaman, 2011).

Sundarbans are the most highlighted part of travel writings. This forest has variation of natural beauty, landscape, animals, flora and fauna, and Royal Bengal Tigers. Representations of Sundarbans are attracted foreign travelers through travel writings.



Picture 3 Exploring the Sundarbans

#### 4.1.1.2 Island

Bangladesh is a land of Rivers. Bangladesh has three mighty rivers, the Padma (Ganges), the Jamuna (Bramaputra) and the Megna. They carry a huge amount of water and silt that spreads all over the country and finally ends up in the Bay of Bengal. There have also some islands in this green country. In the Bay of Bengal under the territory of Bangladesh the St. Martin's island is the best known place. Flaunting the ethereal beauty of a beach with thousands of seashell, the island is bathed with turquoise colored water. A visit to the island can turn someone's ordinary weekend into a heavenly gateway to enjoyment that relaxes and offers visual feasts of a life time. Basking under the sun will seem like a blessing (Hazra, 2011. p. 15).

In the adventure magazine "Trino" under the title "Treasure Island St. Martin's" the editor said,

“It was a wonderful world down there! It was almost like a treasure island. It was sunny day which was and added advantages as fishes were looking like glittering gems and colonies of corals were looking like blooming buds! We had seen many brain corals in nonbearing routes. These corals are called “Sea Flowers” and are found in almost all the oceans with warm water. In a favorable condition, they live for at least 200 years. These corals get their name from the grooves and channels on their surface that look like the folds of the human brain. Another type of coral that caught our attention looked more like hives. These are commonly known as honey comb. Adjacent cells are joined by small pores. Their distinguished feature is their well-developed horizontal internal partitions within each cell, but reduced or absent vertical internal partitions. There were many fishes with bright colors and beautiful shapes in different lagoons of north eastern part of St. Martin’s Island. It was easy to get very close to them. We saw many bead corals in the shallow water. The reason was anchorage system of local boats. And the habit of collection corals of tourist is another danger that has been destroying the underwater beauty” (Mamun, 2009).

There are also Haor, Bill and Chor areas in this flat land known as extensive marsh or fen, the different type of water body in Bangladesh. This country crisscrossed by six to eight hundred rivers and their numerous tributaries, such as Tanguahaor, Hakalukihaor, Hail haor, Shanirhaor, Kalnarhaor and many more. Among these wetlands the Tanguahaor, a black swamp, is enriched with one of the most unique wetland ecosystems in Bangladesh hosting around a hundred and fifty different species of fishes, more than hundreds of resident birds and around two hundred different types of flora. Besides, the haor fronts forty-six villages populated with around forty thousand people, all of whom are dependent on it for their

livelihood. Every year in the monsoon session this haor gets replenished with rain water and looks like a sea. The spectacular grain and tone of the sky amidst minimal composition of nature is sure to enchant anyone. The rain drops falling on the silvery surface of the haor would make the waves look even more appealing. The haor is a home to around two hundred different species of migratory birds during winter. The natural beauty of the haor is undoubtedly amazing (Hazra, 2011. p. 75).

In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author expressed his perception in his writing,

“A soft afternoon glowed on Nijumdwpip as we silently rowed through a canal. We all sat without making any noise, our eyes and ears intent on hearing every rustle of the nature. It's a surreal situation, our boats had to go under thickets hunched over the canal, and all we could hear was birds chirping and the thicket brushing against the boat. On the boat sides of the canal are forests of kewra. Our eyes and ears strained. The sky seen through the bush looked too blue to be true” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 66, 68).

Here the travel writers shared their feelings about the natural beauty of the islands of Bangladesh. So under the category - center of attractions, island is one of them. Foreign travelers are coming here to visit the beautiful green Bangladesh. They are attracted by the scenic beauty and landscape of islands in Bangladesh. In travel writings I analyzed that, descriptions of islands are common theme for representing Bangladesh to attract foreign travelers.

#### **4.1.1.3 Tourist Places**

Bangladesh is a land of mind refreshing natural beauty and people with remarkable hospitality and resilience. It's a country of rich history and culture. People live with it and preserved it for a long time. In travel story writers are describe the history of Bengal, cultural aspects of local areas and indigenous people. In pre-colonial times, rice from the Bengal Delta fed populations as far apart as the Moluccas in eastern Indonesia and Goa in western India, and its silk fabrics traveled even farther. Regional diversity has been a feature of Bangladeshi history as much as the mobility of its population (Guhathakurta, & Scheldel, (Eds.). 2013, p. 2).

So during travel and travel writing in the literature, the history of Bangladesh generally comes out along with the description of the journey. When foreign travelers visit a historical place like Paharpur in Naogaon, they gather information about history and culture thus they would know why this place is remarkable.

It is important to mention about many other historical places to travel such as 'Puthia', situated in Rajshahi. The palace at Puthiya is one of the finest examples of ancient royal architectural splendor. It has a number of temples that used to be the center of worship by the local Hindu community. The terracotta designs on the outside walls of these temples depict stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana as well as many abstract motifs common to Muslim architecture of that time. Another historical place of Bangladesh is Dinajpur which is prominent for Kantajeu Temple. It's an eighteenth century brick temple. The temple known as "Kantaji's Mandir" (Kantajeu's Temple) is one such place where one gets to meet fascinating past, where the intricately done panels have a life and vitality of their own and are deeply imbued with history. The vast array of subject matter includes stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana the activities of lord Krishna, and a series of extremely

intriguing contemporary social scenes illustrating the favorite pastimes of the landed aristocracy (Hazra, 2011. pp. 63, 81).

The historical places are highlighted in the travel writings to represent Bangladesh and its attracted foreign travelers. One of the most famous tourist places in Dhaka is Ahsan Manzil which is the attraction areas for the foreign travelers. Travel books also focus on this place to visit more. In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author says,

“A short walk west of Sadarghat is Ahsan Manzil the pink palace dating from 1872 and restored in the late 1980's. This is one of the must see building in Dhaka with its rooms furnished in the style of the era in which it was built, and its garden and view over the river. Lalbag Fort in the old city is also worth a visit, dating from 1677 its walls providing a quite escape from the street” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 50, 53).

Here Dhaka is focused in this travel writing which is the capital city of Bangladesh and foreign travelers are mostly interested in visiting this four hundred year old city. Chittagong is the second largest city in Bangladesh which is known as the industrial capital. The thousand years old division has many tourist places which attract foreign travelers. And travel books also highlighted these travel spots. In Chittagong division the tourist places are Cox's Bazar, St. Martin's Island, Kaptai, Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari.

There have another tourist place named 'Kuakata' in the coastal area of Bangladesh. In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author says,

“Our final destination was the coastal resort of Kuakata- on the Bay of Bengal. The area was recently affected by a cyclone that recently affected by a cyclone that caused widespread destruction and loss of life. There was plenty of evidence of the recent catastrophe with people still living in makeshift huts just off the beach. This isolated beach is much less developed and quieter than the Cox’s Bazar. Although the road from Dhaka is not good, it’s a fascinating drive to see rural Bangladesh” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 54-55).

Travel writings portray the situation of the places. Sometimes foreign travelers are interested to see those places which are quite remote and people are being troubled by the natural calamities. So along with the beauty natural disasters are also highlighted to represent Bangladesh and that also attracts foreign travelers to visit that places. There are so many tourist places which are at the center of attraction for the foreign travelers. They are Sundatbans, St. Martin’s Island, Rangamati, Paharpur, Kuakata, Lawachhara, Bandarban, Sylhet, Birishiri, puthia, Khagrachhari, Sunamganj, Kantaji Temple, Sonargaon, Mainamati, Cox’s Bazaar, and Old Dhaka. So in the travel books these areas are focused as tourist points in Bangladesh for the foreign travelers.

#### **4.1.1.4 Ocean**

More than two third of earth’s surface is covered by ocean. The ocean is the engine that drives our climate and provides much of the food we eat, the oxygen we breathe, and a home for 97 percent of all life. We all depend on the ocean in some way. Ocean is also a center of attraction for the foreign travelers in Bangladesh. It is Bay of Bengal which is the most attractive destination to the local and foreign travelers. Travel writers explained in their write-ups about Bay of Bengal, ocean dependent people, their livelihood and the scenic beauty of the sea.

In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author says,

“Now, there we were, this early morning on the vessel and we did for sure feel ready for adventure. The destination of the trip was to be found approximately 50 Km from the coastal line of Sundarbans, into the Bay of Bengal in an area called Swatch of no ground. At this point the excitement reached a new peak, as the possibilities for seeing one of the dolphin species was increasing. This species through turned out to be too shy to display for us, but it just intensified our search. On turn we searched surrounding waters through binoculars throwing in the best possible effort to ensure nothing passed by unattended. Yet another couple of hours later we reached the Swatch of No Ground (SONG). The amazing underwater canyon is providing the best possible living conditions for cetaceans- and therefore a so called “hot spot” for research of these creatures. The SONG is said to be the only place on earth with all three species of cetaceans. Our high expectations were soon satisfied when the first bottle-nose dolphins started surfacing. They were right there underneath the surface of the clear and clean blue/greenish water of the Bay. When the dolphins were close I got this strange feeling rushing through me; like a hunter before his first shot or the feeling of a great portrait that you’ll never forget. Within short time the search paid off, in the far distance a magnificently large curve shape surfaced; a bryde’s whale” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 84, 87, 89).

In Bay of Bengal there are so many things to explore. In this writing the writer explain his most amazing experience to see dolphin and whale in the Bay of Bengal. The travel writers are focused on their writings about ocean and it attracts foreign travelers.

#### **4.1.1.5 Beach**

In Bangladesh Cox's Bazaar is known for its wide and longest unbroken sandy beach, which is considered by many as the world's longest natural sandy sea beach. The beach in Cox's Bazaar is an unbroken 125 kilometers sandy sea beach with a gentle slope. It is located 152 kilometers south of the industrial port of Chittagong. It is one of the nicest places in Bangladesh, a heaven on earth. Cox's Bazaar has been acclaimed as one of the natural wonders and the longest unbroken sandy beach in the world, which attracts droves of local and foreign tourist even in off seasons. Moreover the growing reach of modernization in this area has lead to numerous beachside activities including surfing, speedboat riding, water sports and much more (Hazra, 2011. p. 105)!

For foreign travelers Beach is a center of abreaction and travel books also focus on this area to portray Bangladesh. In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author says,

“There are few words, when combined, have such strong effect on an Australian looking for a holiday, like the words ‘sun, sand, surf’. One of the many up-sides of Cox's Bazaar, I soon learnt, is that the length of the beach is in itself quite a blessing: there is plenty of room for everyone. For half the world's populations, this is one seaside destination where packing your best Speedos, togs, bikini, swimmers, whatever you call it, won't be necessary. Being a predominantly Muslim country, it is customary for women to wear their salwarkameez or sari swimming. As a western ‘bideshi’, or ‘foreigner’ whose idea of beach-wear is closely associated with lycra, I initially found this hard to picture. It was that kind of holiday for me- one where I intended to do as little moving as possible. And that is the beauty of Cox's as far as I am concerned; there really is little excuse to do much more than sit back, relax and

enjoy the restorative powers of the ocean and all its glory” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 74, 79, 80).

Travel writers are reflected the places and situations to portray a country like Bangladesh. Here the author as a foreign traveler described the beach environment of Cox’s bazaar which is completely different from any other country’s beach. So foreigners are also attracts the different environment in a different country.



Picture 4 Cox’s Bazaar Sea Beach

#### 4.1.1.6 Capital City

Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh. The age of this city is near about 400 years. So Dhaka is significant for many things with the ancient and glorious history. It's a center of attraction for the foreign travelers.

At Dhaka all those winding lanes have something in common: they all exude an intimacy that big cities normally don't foster. The bedraggled buildings, criss-crossing electric and internet wires that hang over the lanes like spider webs and threatening to collide with anyone. In Dhaka some places, the crowd is unbelievably thick, yet a trip to old Dhaka is nothing but exciting! The reasons are aplenty. The carefree nature of the folks, the tiny stores showcasing crafts and jewelries of amazing craftsmanship, the signature cuisine of the famous local chefs of old Dhaka is our inner courtyard where everyone can have a happy time. Unlike any other city, the 400 year old Dhaka caters to everyone's five senses. The fascinating Chawkbazar is one of the largest wholesale markets of the country where people might get every kind of products. Drop in at the shops that sell fabrics. The old town also heralds another monumental fort called 'LalbagKilla' or the fort of Lalbag an excellent example of Mughal architecture. It has been made for protecting the capital from the Mog and Arakani Pirates. Then there is HoseniDalan, a place which has religious importance for the followers of Shia Islam. The white building with the small lake in front is also a retreat from bustling cityscape. The monument is very near to the river Buriganga. It has been face to face with a majestic villa on the waterfront which will stun travelers. Ahsan Manzil, also known as the pink Palace used to be the official residence of the Nawab family of Dhaka, has now been transformed into a national museum. A mixture of Mughal and gothic architecture, this is the most significant palace in Bangladesh and has been a witness to many historical events. A tour inside the palace would introduce you to the lavish lifestyle the Nawabs (Rulers of Dhaka) enjoyed. Buriganga is one of the most crowded rivers anywhere which hosts a spectacular selection of country and ferry boats, motor launches, and other assorted

watercrafts. There are steamers waiting for their night safari. Bahadur Shah Park, once known as Victory Park preserves the memory of people killed during the 1857 uprising against the British. From there, just a few step towards the east to the Armenian Church, one of the oldest in the region. The peace and tranquility inside the church are over powering. Visitors also visit Jagannat University nearby or take a rickshaw ride to Ram Krishna Mission, a spiritual retreat for the Hindu community. Old Dhaka proudly hosts people and places of worship of every major religion. Near old Dhaka is situated Karjon Hall, another striking example of eye-catching architecture, which was built as a library of Dhaka Collage and later opened its door to the student of Dhaka University and still standing as the Faculty of Science of the same. But above everything, city crowds are busy to keep pace that opens its door to everyone. The people, no matter whether they are poor, middle class or rich, bring along with them a rich sense of culture and tradition. Old Dhaka is a transport driver's nightmare, but that doesn't stop all kinds of vehicles from plying the narrow roads and lanes day and night. From buses to auto rickshaws to rickshaws, even horse drawn hackney coaches old Dhaka has an endless array of commuter transports. But the most eco-friendly ones are the rickshaws. They are cheap and above everything, they are colorful, with painted panels and bodies (Hazra, 2011. p. 111).

Dhaka city is the most crowded city and foreign travelers enjoy that crowd. In Travel writings old Dhaka and new Dhaka are highlighted for attracting foreign travelers. In the Travel Book 'Experience Bangladesh' author says,

“I was particularly interested to see Sadarghat, the boat terminal on the Buriganga River. The car journey through the crowded streets was an experience in itself. Many thousands of Rickshaws clogged up the routs, along with taxis, Lorries and private

cars, not to mention the pedestrians who appeared from all directions, all the time. Parking the car near the river, we walked the last few streets to the boat terminal passed streets market, fruit stall and countless individuals all involved in the daily straggle to make a living. The terminal was heaving with activity- large boats were going in all directions, small wooden canoes being paddled back and forth across the river, talking passengers and goods from one side to the other. The river at this point is about 500m wide, and despite the amount of traffic on the water, there were no collisions. I was surprised at the contrasts in the city, and never so much as my visit to a huge multistory-shopping complex, one of the largest in Asia. Its hundreds of shops sold everything one could imagine e.g. electronics, CDs, films, clothes, jewelry. A whole floor was devoted to saris alone, in every color imaginable. Out-side, on the street, life went on. For many, it's clearly a difficult one, with half the population still living in poverty" (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 53).

Dhaka city is as like as the author mention in his writings. Travel writings are portrays the real situations. This city is also focus of travel writings to attract foreign travelers. They like to move around the city to see people, eat foods and get some knowledge about history.

#### **4.1.2 Center of Activities**

The center of the activity is what amuses travelers during travelling. When foreign travelers come to visit Bangladesh, they want to do some activities along with the journey such as a wild adventure, water surfing, hiking etc. Different kinds of travel activity opportunities also encourage traveling. In travel books authors also write about such travel activities in Bangladesh to attract the foreign travelers. Detailed analysis on the portrayal of these activities is given below:

##### **4.1.2.1 Adventure**

Adventure is an exciting and unusual activity during traveling. In Bangladesh there are so many activities for adventure traveling. In travel writing the write-ups encourage the foreign travelers for various adventures. Exploring the largest mangrove forest Sundarbans and the Royal Bengal Tiger is such an adventurous for every traveler as the tiger known as one of the most furious animal on earth. When any one treks in the deep jungle of Sundarbans, the tigers are everywhere to look around you. The thrill of the Sundarbans jungle trekking is really exciting and adventurous. The other animals are also adding excitement and bunch of amusement during trekking in the jungle.

In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the authors explained their experience about Sundarbans,

“Among the various fascinating observations of deer, wild boars, macaques, otters, tigers, crocodiles, monitor lizards and snakes. I should mention here some of the noteworthy events wildness: Mistaking them as aerial roots, a mudskipper climbed my legs to escape the rising tide-water. While searching nectar in a kulshi flower a Giant honey bee was caught and sucked out by a crab spider. A Masked fin foot, the elusive bird, walked up the slanting stem of the newly hatched chicks with a tiny fish. Roosting in a keora tree a flying fox was grabbed by a White-bellied sea eagle and taken away in flight. When a Monocled cobra winded up a tree and entered a hollow branch, a rat managed to flee the tubular thing through the other end. It was a remarkable moment to identify a Buffy fish owl in the Sundarbans, not seen on the Indian subcontinent since almost hundred years” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 28).

Among the adventure activities in Bandarban areas Kayaking is also an interesting activity for the travelers. In the travel book 'Experience Bangladesh' the author says,

“At the end of the road, nothing but Thanchi awaits you. Padding across this landscape is unforgettable: the empty space, the fragrance of fresh earth, the chiming birds and the chilling sight of green pit vipers; this is the place to embrace a quintessential tropical forest along with a beautiful river. The point of kayaking in Sangu isn’t to paddle over it, but to paddle into the region itself. We choose to head upstream towards the river’s source in Burma, a decision that required more energy and time, especially with our soft shell inflatable kayaks. Many times the river gave out on us, and we had to walk our boats over the terrain. Rocky River beds, twist and turns, dead trees and every element of nature made our journey more challenging and adventurous we started our journey from Thanchi, which borders Burma and India. We inflated our kayaks and hired another country boat to support us in kicking off this new adventure in Bangladesh. We launched near Headman Para, several kilometers away from Thanchi and kept on going against the Sangu’s meager flow. After a few hours of paddling, our first pit stop was at Thindo, a place full of rocks. We prepared our lunch under a banyan tree with our self-contained food though Thindo Bazar was there just to cross the river. We hadn’t anticipated the beauty we found at Thindo. Full of rock boulders, tall trees and birds, it was so enjoyable we couldn’t resist making a stop-over to swim. Here, the Sangu was not so vigorous in the dry season, having gentle depth all through. Between cliff jumps into the cool water, we ate some red watery water melon under a sizzling sun” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 36, 44).

Author explained his adventure activity during traveling. So when travel writers focus the adventure activities of traveling, foreign travelers get interest to come and do such activities.



Picture 5 Adventure in Bandarban

#### **4.1.2.2 Bicycling**

Nowadays, bicycling is an interesting travelling activity in Bangladesh. Foreign travelers are interested to make this adventure as well as local travelers. From Dhaka to long distance they make cycling trip with traveling gears such as Tent, pannier, cycle tools, and other necessary items. Touring on a bike is fun and moreover, it gives a traveler a scope to explore more. And for a country like Bangladesh which is getting popularity as flat country. It's easy too. Certainly foreign traveler will like this place for many reasons, one is people, place and economic diversity but for us, locals, it will give us a scope to revisit same place again and again as every ride is not same as previous one by that one can never run out of new place to ride next (Mamun. 2012).

In the travel book “Experience Bangladesh” the author say,

“It was a new route for adventure influence community, Kewkradong Bangladesh; from Feni to hill town Khagrachori. We left Dhaka obscurely as it was 3am and most of the roads were empty. Diffusing street lamps and mist covered road got charged by our two four wheelers carrying eight riders and their bicycles. After breakfast we started riding at 9 am though it was foggy and less visible. While setting down bikes and others, we found a small crowd surrounding us. We followed a road to Chagolnaiya, metalloid road and mostly claimed it is not a national high way. Starting was difficult as lady rider Slama and Francois, an expatriate working in International School Dhaka was with us for the first time as they drew mass public attraction. But after some time we got back to our flow and kept peddling” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 116).

In Bangladesh the activity of bicycling is highlighted in the travel writings and it's become more popular. Foreign travelers are interested to go for this kind of activity. So, this book encourages and attracts the foreign travelers. The foreign riders experience in their write-ups, are also inspired other foreigners to do these activity.

In the magazine “Trino” the author says,

“Bangladesh is a fascinating country, beautiful for cycling, and far of the regular tourist radar. We dropped into the northwestern corner of Bangladesh at the end of October, into a flat land of rice paddies and bicycles and people everywhere. I know that bicycles can carry just about anything a gasoline vehicle can, but is still amazing

to see idea in practice. We saw cargo bikes carrying long loads of cut bamboo, woven baskets of ducks and chickens, towering heaps of hay or banana bunches. Bicycle rickshaws have become an art form here. Every town has a street full of bicycle shops full of parts and mechanics. I have a lot of respect for the guys here who make their daily living with a bicycle. We rode alongside hundreds of other cyclists every day and most of them were pulling heavier loads than mine. The land in Bangladesh is almost completely flat, making it perfect for cycling” (Mamun, (Ed.). 2012, p. 24).

This is the perception of a foreign traveler about Bangladesh. The focus of travel activity in travel writings can create more interest for the foreign travelers. So why not touring on a bicycle in Bangladesh? In these travel writings the center of activity attracts foreign travelers towards bicycling in Bangladesh.

#### **4.1.2.3 Hospitality**

Bangladesh is a country of hospitality. Foreigners are coming here to visit beautiful green Bangladesh. Their expectations are always positive. They like Bangladeshi culture, natural resources, hospitality, scenic beauty, historical sites, weather, indigenous community, village and their livelihood. A Travel writer has a different perspective and that portrays in his writings. Foreign travelers are getting more interested and encouraged for traveling in this country and making positive aspects on their own writings. As an activity of tourism, cordial-warm hospitality is there make people of other countries remember Bangladesh.

In the travel book “Experience Bangladesh” the authors says,

“On my first trip to Jessore I was kidnapped by young school girls. As they dragged me off the road into their village, the course of my life was forever altered. I fell in

love with the community and the countryside, and my girl's dream of building a place of beauty and inspiration became a women's mission to build a sustainable resort that would support their community and help these girls to realize their own dreams. One year later, I am building an eco-resort a few kilometers from their home, nestled between two rivers in the heart of beautiful Jessor" (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 122, 124).

In this quotation the writer mentioned a word "kidnap" which usually carries a negative connotation for us, but in the text the writer's perception was completely different. We know the meaning of kidnapping and as a Bangladeshi or foreigner we have a concept that this is occurring here. But in this travel writing the author explained her feelings positively "kidnapping". She was *kidnapped* by the hospitality of the young village girls of Bangladesh. I can see how trickily the meaning of this word has changed and this is a cultural representation. This is how representation theory is helping in my research paper.

In the same article the author says,

"It was a hot day and I was thirsty, so we stopped at a little roadside store for some 'cold drinks'. A few young girls saw me and excitedly came over to my rickshaw and started asking me questions. Then, they grabbed my wrist and told me that I had to come visit their school. They were quite insistent so I was hauled away to the laughter of the men who were watching the scene. The school building was quite charming. The girls interrupted the class to introduce me. Several children practiced their English: 'How are you?' 'What is your name?' I took a few pictures and everyone gathered around to see the images on my camera. The girls saw that the younger children were monopolized their prize, however, so they dragged me away again out into a rice field. They took me to a small, nearby village where I met several women

doing embroidery in charming mud house. One group of women invited me into their home and gave me fresh coconut milk and some fruit from their trees. I needed to continue on my journey. They are very disappointed that I was going, and I was sad to leave them behind. I was charmed by their youth, energy and excitement and touched by the genuine hospitality and kindness of the people that I met in the village. Reluctantly, they took me back to Torikun and I continued down the road” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 122-127).

This is the scenario of the people in Bangladesh. They are warm, cordial and hospitable. So when a travel writer traveling around Bangladesh he/she can get this kind of hospitality and this is also the part of tourism in Bangladesh. For this welcoming character of this region foreign travelers come to visit this country. In the travel writing there have also a segment for hospitable activity to attract the foreign travelers.

#### **4.1.2.4 Archeology**

Bangladesh is a country of rich history and culture. People live with it and preserved it for a long time. Travel writers describe the history and culture of Bengal. The delta was a major stronghold of Buddhist learning and has many remains to show for it before Hindu and Muslim identities came to dominate the cultural scene.

There are so many historical places in Bangladesh. In travel books the history is portrayed by the travel writers. So writers are sharing history for getting knowledge and inspire readers to visit the places. In the travel book “Experience Bangladesh” the writers explain her experience with the history of archeological site Moinamoti. Author says,

“A rough date between 7-13<sup>th</sup> AD is assigned to the ancient ruins of Mainamoti-Lalmai hills in Comilla. Interestingly this archeological marvel even contains traces of pre-historic life with a number of fossils found in the Lalmai region. This area during the making of the Mainamoti monasteries, was known as Samatata, or eastern Bengal, and the capital was Devaparvata., also referred to as Pattikera. Mainamoti was the name of the queen Maynamati (Madanavati), wife of Manikchandra, ruler of the Chandra. She was a famous yogic scholar and many famous Bengali ballads are sung in her honor. The ruins lie about 8 km from the main city, the hills sloping up and down a region that is now interspersed with the BARD and cantonment area, along with markets and the general hullabaloo of a bustling town. This area was home to intense Buddhist activities, visited by scholar and traveler Hiuen Tsang in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD who found 70 monasteries, about 2000 Buddhist monks and an Ashokastupa from the second century BC. The likes of such an establishment are unparalleled, even in India’s Nalanda ruins. However, an additive to its mysterious past is the fact that no Tibetan text acknowledges its presence! Or we just never found them” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 94-97).

Travel writers want to know new things about the new places. So they are traveling and writing to share that knowledge to the others. Bangladeshi history is focused in travel writings that motivate foreign travelers to come and visit those places.



Picture 6 Darashbari Mosque, Chapai Nawabganj

#### **4.1.2.5 People & Culture**

Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world. Besides history Bangladesh has a rich diverse cultural. Its deeply rooted heritage is thoroughly reflected in its architecture, dance, literature, music, painting and clothing. The three main religions of Bangladesh (Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism) have had a great influence on its culture and history. The people of Bangladesh have a rich fictional legacy, with the first available form of literature being over a thousand years old. Bengali literature developed considerably during the medieval period with the rise of popular poets such as Chandi Das, DaulatKazi an Alaol. The traditional music of Bangladesh is an influential part the culture of Indian sub-continent. The music in Bangladesh can be divided into three main categories: classical, modern and folk. Tribal dances are very popular among the locals. The countryside girls are in the habit of dancing to popular folk music. Their dances require no regulations as such, just a small amount of courage and a big amount of rhythm. Popular songs like Shari and Jari are

presented with the accompanying dance of both male and female performers. Drama and theatre is an old tradition that is very popular in Bangladesh. Another important aspect of the culture of Bangladesh is clothing. Bangladeshi woman usually wear Saris, made of the world famous and expensive, finely embroidered quilted patchwork cloth produced by the village woman. Woman will traditionally wear their hair in a twisted bun, which is called the “Beni style”. Hindus will traditionally wear Dhutys old religious value. These days most men of Bangladesh wear shirts and pants (Bangladesh, n.d.).

In the Travel Book ‘Experience Bangladesh’ the author says about people of Bangladesh,

“I found everyone I met very friendly. As a European, I found myself at the center of attention everywhere I went! People wanted to take my picture, usually on their mobile phone. They liked to know ‘where I came from’; and knowing this, I had brought with me pictures from home” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, p. 53).

Another author says about Bangladeshi people,

“If you love a real personalized experience, life-touching endeavors, come earliest to Bangladesh without any hesitation. I quite agree with Bangladesh Tourism Board, when they say, Visit Bangladesh before Tourist comes. That’s surely right – be there now, and you experience this endeavor to travel in a quite virgin landscape from massive tourist flood, alone in your journey over the largest delta in the world, much of its still active, isolated but safe in an astonishing world that will soon fulfill your mind with remarkable memories and emotions. As much as I savored it’s a taste that very few other places could fill in you, and far beyond all you might expect out of a travel experience. I was not aware at that time that Bangladesh would represent one of

the most beautiful travel stories one is to experience in my brief backpacker's life. I soon extended my fight for staying much longer in that astonishing land in order not for leaving it yet too early. Most of all, I soon recognized that the most striking feature of Bangladesh life was precisely its 'people' i.e. The Bangladeshis themselves. To my mind, in all its variety, mood, vocations, textures. I am lucky enough, I should say, because in my fear to discover myself alone such wide and culture-rich country, I dug into the internet hopping to find a useful contact in Dhaka before entering this then unknown land. Avoiding rapidly the classic tour operator roadmap offers, neither interesting nor suiting for keeping in my view my photographic ventures and will, rather seeking for authentic contemporary Bangladesh stories. Frankly, I did not dare expect a magical and pleasant experience, discovering Bangladesh through its people” (Ujjal, (Ed.). 2009, pp. 12, 16, 22).

Erwan Layec, French traveler and photographer. He writes his experience positively about Bangladeshi people, its beauty and culture. He expresses his passion, feelings and emotion. Readers can get inspiration and feelings from his writing. Other foreign travelers will attract to visit in Bangladesh by these kinds of travel writings.

In the travel books writers portray cultural activities in different places of Bangladesh. In the travel writing named “Gangatiyay Boishakhi Uthshob” – Pohela Boishak is called 1<sup>st</sup> date of Bangla year, which is a celebration of extensive Bengali culture. In this write up the writer explains his travel experience where he went for a program of local Pohela Boishak Festival. Gangatia is a name of a place situated at Kishorganj. There has an ancient Jaminder house build since 106 years back. A travel group organized a cultural program over there in collaboration with the Jaminder family. The author describes the history of this antique house, the culture they practice, the situation of the village, cultural activities on that day of

Pohela Boishak 1417, the cultural activity of the festival, livelihood of that place and feelings of writers (Shah, (Ed.). 2011, pp. 161-165). People and culture is part of our tourism and it does boost up the travelling enthusiasm to travel in Bangladesh. Foreign travelers want to discover the people of Bangladesh and its culture. And contemporary travel writings make more travelers interested to encourage these activities.

## **4.2 Travel Activism: Travelers as Writers**

### **Introduction**

Travel writing is an active part of traveling. So when a writer wants to write something about his/her own experiences, travel information, travelogue or travel writing he or she has to be a traveler. So travel writing is itself an activity of traveling. In this chapter, writing is discussed as a part of traveling and we can call it “travel activism”. This section mainly focuses an organization that is devoted traveling and tourism. During traveling, travelers try to document his/her journey through photography, writing, blogging and telling the experience.

The name of this organization is Bangladesh Tourism Expansion Forum - BTEF. It's a local travel organization. All the members of this organization are travelers. The main objective of this organization is to promote local travelers, as there have been so many unknown places with positive elements and scenic beauty in Bangladesh. BTEF holds an opinion that local travelers should explore their own country.

The organization BTEF has so far published three travel books to document its members' traveling experience. These travelogues are usually published in book format primarily targeting the prospective travelers as readers, as well as they aspire to attract readers who are

not travelers. The title of the book series is “Deshe Berao Desher Manush” with three volumes.

In the introduction of travel book entitled “Deshe Berao Desher manush, Vol.3” the editor says,

“In the heart of Bangladesh there are so many flowers and rainbows! Why have not we seen all these things in all those days! Why would not people of our country go to travel in our countryside? As we saw the interplay of light and shade, as we saw the sound of a life, we want to spread it to billions of lives. And this book is telling that story. We felt our fingers in the open air; open air touches everyone’s soul” (Shah, (Ed.). 2011, p. 9).

#### **4.2.1 Bangladesh Tourism Expansion forum: *Deshe Berao Desher Manush***

The group BTEF was formed in 2001. It’s a non registered travel organization. The mission of this organization is explore own country and document the experience in different forms. Apart from the book series, BTEF members share their traveling experiences in newspapers, arrange photography exhibitions, publish travel photography books and organize storytelling sessions.

BTEF has some organizational objectives. These are:

- To promote inbound tourism in Bangladesh
- To explore new or unknown but potential tourist destinations of Bangladesh
- To explore the culture and heritage
- To share and archive the travelling experiences through photo exhibition, video documentation, Internet and publications.
- To encourage responsible and environment friendly tourism

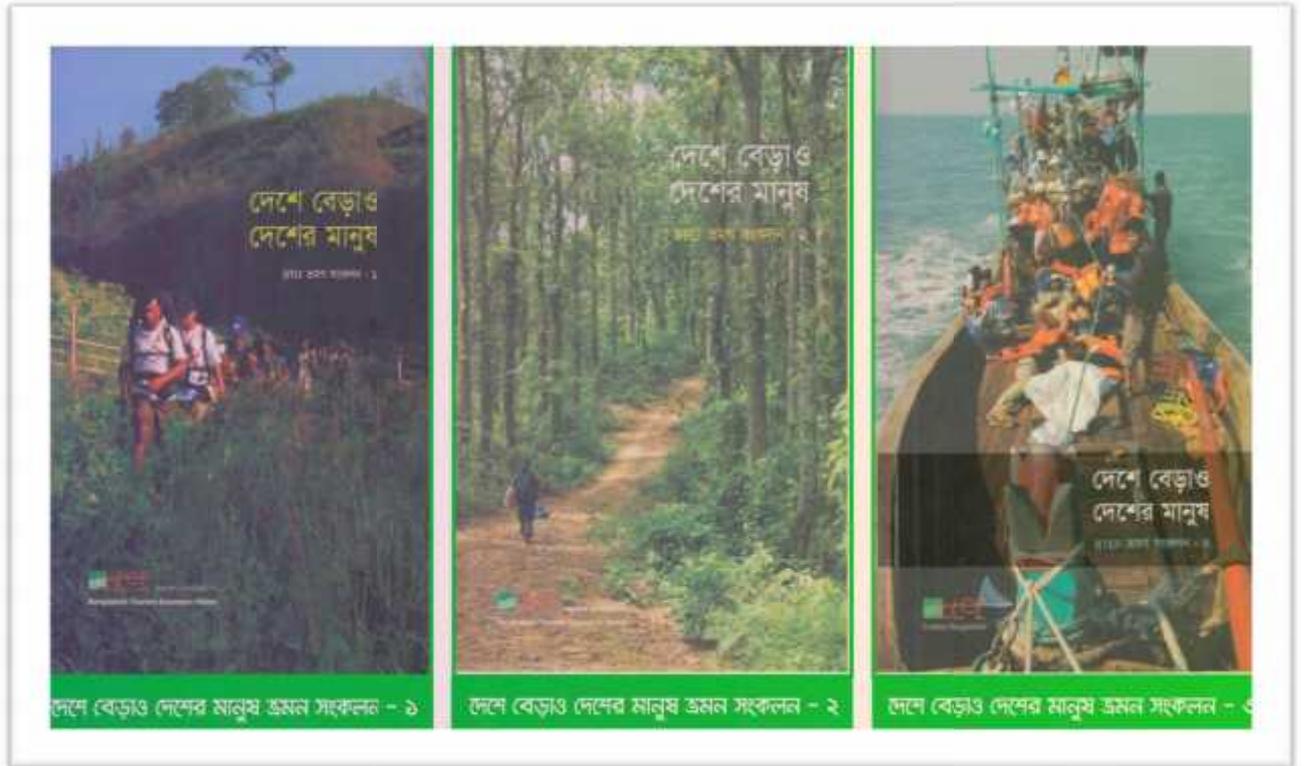
- To build up a responsible travelers community

BTEF members travel almost every month and as soon as they return, they write their experience in daily newspapers, blogs and maintain a personal diary. At the end of one year or two, the organization compiled all these write-ups and publishes it as an anthology with selected important and interesting writings. The popular themes of these articles are description of natural beauty of Bangladesh, people, culture and history, festivals of Bangladesh, adventurous activities, rivers and islands, beach and ocean, jungle and animals, flora and fauna. There is some diverse writing from the other travel publications.

In the BTEF travel book “Deshe Berao Desher manush, Vol. 1” there is a story named “Gayer Nam Birtul” (Village named Birtul). In that write up, the author says,

“The night was cloudy, the moon shines with her full power. We pitched the tent beside the water body of the south side of Birtul. A small village. Took a direct bus from Gulistan and after passing Tongi, get off at Mirer Bazaar. It took one and a half hour journey. By that time the night was gathered nicely. The last votvoti (Local vehicle) was waiting” (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 15).

In this write-up the writer tries to communicate with the readers. This story is about a small village near Dhaka. In this writing, there is information about journey, depiction of the natural beauty, some literature for giving readers delight, the thrills of staying a night in a tent under the full-moon beside a water body so that the readers can get a perception about the journey, information about transportation and representation of the contemporary scenario of a Bangladeshi village.



Picture 7 BTEF Publications “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 & 3”

#### 4.2.2 The BTEF Focus: Representing Bangladesh

BTEF members usually select those places which are not established travel destinations in the country, so that people become aware of those places and get ready to visit. There are reasons why BTEF promotes these unusual spots.

BTEF published travel books “Deshe Berao Desher Manush – vol-1, 2 & 3” are literary travel writing. Among the travel writings of Bangladesh, the BTEF publications are different because they emphasize on theme-wise writing instead of existing commercial approach.

#### 4.2.3 Writing focuses on unusual spots

As said before, Bangladesh Tourism Expansion Forum (BTEF) members explore new or unknown but potential tourist destinations of Bangladesh. Usually people like to go tourist destinations like Cox's Bazaar, St. Martin's Island, selected area of Sundarbans, and other renowned travel spots for recreation and travel around. But apart from these, there are so many beautiful places to explore in this country with different nature, culture, heritage, history, landscape and people. They write about unusual spots through travel writings promote and inspire traveling in the country.

In the introduction of BTEF publication "Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1" BTEF group leader says,

"BTEF is a group of traveler friends. We travel in our motherland. Wish that, people of this country are traveling their own land. In the world map the sign of Bangladesh is a very tiny. And this is the truth. Also truth is that, our culture and history belongs since thousands of years. Here nature is openhanded. People of this country are kind and friendly by any religion. There have enormous diversity surrounding only 56 thousand miles. For this diversification we went away from path to path. We started at 2001. We went whenever ocean, whenever mountain, whenever forest, whenever archaeology or only for people. Watched disturbed, impatience, enlighten nature. Last year of 2005, 2006 whatever we watched and get knowledge from that experiences we share some of them in this travel anthology. All these write-ups were published before at different national newspapers. The way is limitless. Our way to search the beauty of this land is also limitless. On our way we want to discover and knowing this country. Want to say 'deshe berao desher manush' (travel your motherland)" (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 5).

BTEF has their own vision and their activities make travelers. Their write-ups are inspires local travelers and they highlighted unusual places.

#### **4.2.4 Theme wise traveling**

The travel organization BTEF members are traveling theme wise to promote and represent beautiful Bangladesh. Themes and activities of travel writings which are BTEF pursue are as follows.

- Culture and Festivals
- Off track travelling
- Archeology and History
- Travel through river
- Islands
- Beach
- Legends
- Forests

##### **4.2.4.1 Culture and Festivals**

Bangladesh is a country of rich history and culture. There are so many cultural events take place in this country. BTEF organized some cultural events and they traveled to cover some events with the local communities. BTEF travel book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush- vol: 1, 2 &3” published their travel writings under the theme culture.

They covered in their books –

- The culture of indigenous community of Bandarban, the hilly region of Bangladesh.
- Pohela Boishak or Bengali new year festival in different districts which is significant for strong culture and heritage of that particular areas.
- Hindu religious and cultural festivals which is signified for the long past history of Bangladesh.

Under the theme- culture, BTEF members traveled for exploring and getting knowledge about the local culture and festivals.

#### **4.2.4.2 Off track traveling**

Bangladesh is a country of green natural beauty. There are so many places for off tracking in Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachori, Sylhet and Chittagong districts. So, BTEF traveled in these particular areas which are unknown or unusual. BTEF travel book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol: 1, 2 &3” published their travel writing under the theme ‘off track traveling’. They cover in their books –

- Walking about 75 kilometers besides the longest unbroken sea beach
- A simple and small village which can make pleasure to a traveler
- An isolated island for traveling
- Watching wild elephant in a hilly and remote place
- River way of unusual route.
- Exploring Sundarbans to see Royal Bengal Tiger
- Adventure to remote area of Bandarban, Raikhing lake
- Trekking to Reserve forests
- A trip to the ocean to explore whale and dolphin in the Bay of Bengal under the territory of Bangladesh.
- A trip to enjoy bull cart ride at a village which is traditional vehicle of that region.

#### **4.2.4.3 Archeology and History**

In Bangladesh there are so many archeological sites which are quite attractive destinations for both local and foreign travelers. People can get knowledge by visiting those places. Hence, BTEF members traveled to those particular areas which are significant in Bangladesh. Based on those experiences, BTEF members published their travel writings under the theme ‘archeology’ in their travel book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush- vol: 1, 2 &3”. They have covered in their books –

- In Book-1 there is a travelogue named “Gourer pothe” which described the archeological site at Chapai Nawabganj. In this write-up the traveler shared his experience in that journey and described the ancient history of archeological sites. The sites which were mentioned in this travelogue are - ‘Kotowal Darwaza’ ‘Khaniya Dighir Mashjid’ ‘Dhunichak Mashjid’ ‘Dorashbari Masrasha’ ‘Dorashbari Masjid’ ‘Tohakhana’ ‘Shah Neyamot Ulla Mashjid’ ‘Shah Niyamot Ullah Shomadhishoudha’ and ‘Choto Sona Mashjid’.
- In Book-2 there is a travelogue named “Kanto Nagarer Khoje” which is a significant archeological site at Dinajpur district in Bangladesh. In these write-ups the author says about the history of Kantajeu Temple which has a long enchanting history and is a prominent archeological site in this country. BTEF group traveled to this site and the theme was to visit archeological sites in Bangladesh. Another notable write-up in Book-2 is the travelogue entitled “Isha Khar khoje Egaroshindur”. The write-up is about an ancient archaeological site which is comparatively unusual and it is situated Gazipur near Dhaka district. It’s a fort of Egaroshindur which was quite significant during Bengal Leader Isha Kha’s ruling period since the year of 1589. This write-up also includes “Sidi Mosque” built in 1652 and “Shah Muhammad Mosque” built in 1680.
- In The book -3 the travelogue entitled “Ajhodda gramer kodla Moth” which is about the 17<sup>th</sup> century archeological structure at Bagerhat district. The structural details of this structure which was built about 300 years ago.

Through their theme-wise traveling BTEF explored many ancient archeological sites in Bangladesh which are quite unusual as travel destinations. They have written about the history and significance of those archeological sites and provided other information which would be helpful for other travelers to promote and focused to the local people.

#### 4.2.4.4 River Traveling

Bangladesh is a land of river. In the monsoon session Padma, Meghna, Jamuna and the other big and small rivers become full of water which makes journey by boat an exciting travel experience for the travelers. BTEF travel group used to travel under the theme river to explore different river route in Bangladesh. In the travel book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush-vol: 1, 2 &3” they published their travel writings under the theme ‘river’. In their books, they have covered:

- In Book-1, there is a travelogue named “Jadukatar Jadu”. In the write-up author described about an unknown river named ‘Jadukata’ situated in Sunamganj district. It’s a Haor area in north-eastern region of Bangladesh. BTEF members traveled through Jadukata River on a boat. They enjoyed boat ride, fishing, and raindrops.

The author says in this write-up,

“After few walking way it’s just River of Illusion! This is the Jadukata River. Green water. Cristal clear. Can feel a cold weather. We rode a boat for pass the river. Saw a hill after passing the river. The height is not bad, near about hundred meters” (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 20).

Here the writer described the Jadukata River so nicely which would make any reader who does not know about this river or a traveler interested to travel that area.

- In Book-1, there is another travelogue entitled “Citrar Apar Opar” which is about a journey through Chitra River. The river is situated in Norail district. The author started his write-up with the dialogue of renowned film “Chitra Nadir Pare” which is related to “Chitra” river. BTEF tried to explore the beauty of this river and described

the history related to this river as well as the people dependent on it. Such write-ups would make the general reader and local travelers interested to travel this river area.

- In Book-1 there is another travelogue entitled “Chadni rate Padmar Teere”. It’s about the river Padma which is one of our main rivers along with the Meghna and Jamuna. BTEF team traveled through this river to a certain destination. Author described about the river, meeting with a cultural organization members and enjoyed some program. Writer shared his boat journey experience along with the description of food and people. They went to a bird sanctuary area near the river and visited an archeological site named “Teota Jamindar Bari”.
- In Book-2 there have several travelogues related with rivers of Bangladesh. The write-ups are Sari River situated in Sylhet district, Congsho River in Netrokona district, Brammaputra River in Kurigram district.
- Book-3 also includes several travelogue related with rivers of Bangladesh. The write-ups are about Matamuhuri River at Bandarban, Piyaen River in Jaflong- Sylhet, Padma and Jamuna River and so on. *BTEF* group explored several river routes in Bangladesh and represented its beauty, people, livelihood and other related components in their writings.



Picture 8 Jamuna River

#### **4.2.4.5 Islands**

In Bangladesh along with the rivers there are a few islands that are exciting travel destinations and few of them are yet to have any visitor. BTEF team traveled some such islands which are unusual travel routes. Under the theme island BTEF travelers wrote about “Nijum deep”, “Moheshkhali” Island, “Vogobotir chor”, and ‘Sonar char’ in their Book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 &3”.

They have covered the followings in their books:

In Book-2 there is a travelogue entitled “Shishirer shobdher moto shondha name”. The author says,

“In the 1970’s storm the name ‘Nijum Deep’ came out. During that time thousands of people were sank away with the storm. Just a few were safe in that time. After that for few years Nijum Deep was became empty. After that gradually some family from ‘Jahajmara’ ‘Charfashion’ ‘Bandartila’ ‘Ramgati’ ‘Monpura’ were settle down in that island. Destroying river bank is the main cause of all. And also poverty is there. Meghna River is become gigantic to fill his body with the water of Padma and Jamuna. Especially where the main point is centered to the ocean. It’s called ‘Mohona’. Besides this Mohona there have so many small and big islands. The quest fisherman’s are searching for Hilsha fish at day and night into this aggressive Mohona. In that time one day the fisherman’s were noticed a line which was reflected by the sun. The fisherman’s went there and saw green grass in the sandy land and blank in everywhere. They really found a land and named ‘Osman’. After a long period the name changed to ‘Bollar char’. After a long past it named Nijum deep” (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 81).

Here the writer described about an island’s past history and livelihood of its peoples. BTEF collected all the information by traveling these places and shared thorough their books for the feelings to the readers and local travelers.

#### **4.2.4.6 Beach**

Bangladesh has the longest unbroken sandy beach in the world. BTEF traveled under the theme of Beach which is significant for exploring natural beauty. In the book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1” the travelogue entitled “Sagar Pare 75 Kimometer”. The author says,

“Last three days watching that the sea making waves and spread out into the sand along with sea shell, small stones and so on. We have no time to count all these things. Three days long we were just walking beside the largest sea beach in the world. The way is limitless. And watching the sea is making waves in a same way again and again. As like a devoted soldier, or a dammed soldier or a lover! The way of Teknaf to Cox’s Bazar is 75 kilometer. From west to east, it’s strait long. The ocean is at the south side and at the north are mountains. We are ten people on our sandy ways” (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 9).

Cox’s Bazaar is well known to all Bangladeshi but walking along the beach from start to end point is really challenging. BTEF travelers wrote their experience to inspire the readers and local travelers to represent Bangladesh.

#### **4.2.4.7 Legends**

In our country there have a few travel legends that inspire new travelers. BTEF team visited at “Baniachong”, where the travel legend “Ramnath Bishwash” was born. He was the first Bengali globe trotter who travelled around the world on his by-cycle between first and Second World War. The east has many legends on travelling. Another legend ‘Atish Dipankar’ is also inspiration of travelers. If we say the Ganges delta could ever produce a traveler, then certainly Ramnath Bishwash is one of the shining stars of all time. And very surprisingly he travelled the world on his bicycle back in 1931-1940 for long nine years in three phases.

In the book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1” the travelogue entitled “Ramnath Bishwash: Desher Prothom Vu-porjotok”, the author says about Ramnath Bishwash,

“July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1931 and it was Tuesday. Ramnath will depart from Queens Street. So in front of Bengali mosque there were hundreds of thousands of local spectators where gather to the voyage. He never thought it will pull such a crowd instead of few of his very close! According to Ramnath, “It was like a humming in the air ‘Allahu-Akbar’ more lauder than ‘Vandemataram’. He enjoyed it and gave him courage to travel hard while his cycle was holding a triangular banner having written ‘Hindu Traveler’. He learnt his lesson from the crowd. Nothing but the person and achievement is important than any other thought like religion! At that time no one ever thought of starting such adventure. There are hundreds of reasons but almost certainly finance was an issue. More-over, from India, visa or travel permits was hard since the visa system indented. So it was not smooth for him either even though his voyage as mentoring one. A book for autograph, a mosquito net and long cloths were in his box fitted on the rear wheel rack. Actually it was a wooden box along with some very pragmatic bike repairing tool. And yes no money either! He believed a philosophy, if he had money, it will be hard to meet more people on the path. He doesn’t have money; he will be bound to meet people for his own survival. On the philosophy he has written a book too- Round the world without money! Out of his travelled countries, he loved China more than anywhere else. In 1931, after crossing over Malaysia and Thailand, he followed Indo-China towards China and then Peking. This city was on his favorite list. From Peking he pedal through Manchu Mukhden and boarding city Antong reroute to Korea then he sailed to Kobe, Japan from there on September 5, 1932” (Pallab, (Ed.). 2007, p. 94).

BTEF group traveled under the theme legend and tried to know the people who were devoted for travel and adventure. This write-up portrays Bangladeshi legend who traveled the world. A simple Bengal man can travel around the world and after visiting this legend’s house the

team of BTEF get inspiration to travel more. They share about the globe trotter Ramnath Bishwash in their publication so that general readers and local travelers can get inspiration to explore his motherland and also the whole world.

#### **4.2.4.8 Forest**

In Bangladesh we have rain forests, mangrove forest, sanctuary and reserved forests for exploring its beauty, trees, animals, birds, flora and fauna. The forest shows her beauty differently in different sessions. The travel group BTEF explores so many forest areas and in their write-ups they portray a green and beautiful Bangladesh in their publications.

In the book “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 &3” the travel writings about forest can be made travelers and readers interested to explore the forest areas. In these three books they write about the places among which some are known and the others are unusual places. BTEF publications covered write-ups about the forest areas of Rangamati, Rema Kalenga reserved forest situated in Sylhet area, Mangrove forest Sundarbans, Teknaf Game reserve forest and Publakhali reserve forest in Rangamati.

In their write-ups they have described their journey experiences, feelings, local people, beauty of forest, deforestations by human, birds, animals, landscape, weather and nice momentums during travel.

BTEF team traveled under the theme forest for exploring our forest areas, searching for beauty and adventure. They inspire the readers and local travelers to travel those forest areas where they have been through their write-ups those portray the green and incredible natural beauty of Bangladesh.

#### **4.2.5 Literary travel writing**

BTEF publications are literary travel writing. Some write-ups have explained the experiences but travel literature is there. Reader can get travel feelings by reading the travelogues and be inspired to visit that places.

Travel literature makes the reading experience more divine and attractive for the readers. In the travel book “Deshe Berao Desher manush, Vol. 3” the author says,

“The door of beautiful nature is released in front of my eyes. What a beautiful world it is! I am just doing meditation. Take a bath into the water. I don’t know what I am doing? I am just lost into this amazing beauty. As time goes long two hours I took the way to Remakry” (Shah, (Ed.). 2011, p. 21).

Here, the author is sharing his experiences with literature about the beautiful nature in Bangladesh. Literature gives more pleasure and feeling to the readers. They visualize the places described by the author. Thus, travel literature can inspire the readers and travelers.

#### **4.2.6 Travel writing and publication**

Bangladesh Tourism Expansion Forum (BTEF) publications include travel anthology books, photography books, newspaper articles and blogging. They have published three travel books named “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 & 3”. The year of publication of these books are: Book-1: 2007, Book-2: 2009 and Book-3: 2011. The book 4 will be published next year. These books are released at the Ekushey Boimela which is international book fair in Bangladesh. The funding of these publications comes from the member’s donations with their own interest. There have no other institutions or organizations to contribute about financing in these publications. The Editors, writers, photographers even the book designers are all the members of BTEF group and they are travelers.

#### **4.3 Discussion: Comparison between foreign and local travel writings**

In this section I intend to make a comparison between these two types of travel writings I have explored in the previous sections. The most common things I have found in my findings are that, the write-ups under the same themes. But, the pattern and way of explanations are different. Foreign travelers are writing their experiences as outsiders with a distinct cultural background. They are observing this country as new explorers from a vantage point which is very close to their experiences. On the other hand local travelers are writing their experiences as Bangladeshis, so they got a certain insiders' view. Instead of looking at the most common views, they opted for rare ones. In my content analysis I have found the write-ups about sea beach in different patterns in foreign and local travel writings. As one of the foreign travelers' accounts about Cox's Bazaar beach is that, he tried to observe how the people of this country are enjoying their holidays at the beach site, what the types of accommodation are and how different this is from his own country's beach site. On the other hand, the local travelers who know all these common activities so, they tried to explore the world famous 120km long sandy beach by walking in three days. They tried to explore how beautiful this sandy beach is; and why people would come here again and again and how local people are living depending on this sea. There are many more things to observe as a local traveler as foreign traveler cannot see those easily. So, in the travel writings obviously portray some hidden beauty with these observations and experiences. The representation of Bangladesh is coming out through the travel writings in different patterns from two different perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I categorized two forms of travel writings which represent Bangladesh in travel books. In the first part I have discussed about contemporary travel books that represent Bangladesh for foreign travelers. After going through the content analysis, I have sorted out some common themes which the authors tried to follow in defining Bangladesh. I identified

two sub-sections in these themes. One is the center of attractions and the other one is the center of activities. There are some important findings in this study which are exhibited for foreign travelers. They are:

- Foreign travelers appreciate our renowned hospitality.
- Sundarbans and Cox's Bazaar are the main attraction for foreign travelers.
- The people, culture and important areas of Bangladesh are focused in the travel writings.
- Bicycling is now highlighted on travel writings as a travel activity to attract foreign travelers.
- To know our past history, archeological sites are focused in the travel writings.
- The pleasant natural landscape of Bangladesh is a top attraction for the foreign travelers.

The section below describes it is shows the different view point of representing Bangladesh on contemporary travel books for the foreign travelers.

In the second part I have discussed about local travelers' groups who are dedicated to traveling. They have a particular ideology and way of promoting tourism. They take traveling as an activism. After analyzing the content of their publications "Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 & 3", I divided them into three sub-sections for discussing about their activities. First finding is regarding the reason, why they chose the unusual sports of traveling? I have found that, they have deep affection for Bangladeshi countryside. There are lots of places which have high potential for traveling but are unknown to the general people and the travelers- both foreign and local. They tried to explore those places and share the experiences to others. They inspired and motivated the young and local travelers to visit those places and feel the countryside. The country has so many places to explore. And, their

perception regarding is ‘why not explore all these?’ In the second sub section I have discussed about the theme of those travel writings. They tried to travel and write theme wise to portray beautiful Bangladesh. The themes are categorized as per their destinations. The main findings are:

- They travel unusual places to discover and promote tourism.
- They documented through travel writings in the form of newspaper articles, blog posts and books to motivate the local travelers to visit those places.

In the third sub section I have discussed about their travel writings. The writers are sharing their thoughts through writing. After my content analysis of these three books “Deshe Berao Desher Manush, Vol. 1, 2 & 3” I have found the write-ups are full of literature. The writers tried to force the readers to think that how beautiful Bangladesh is? What kind of activity travelers can do? How the people live? What are their cultures in those particular areas? So, general readers and local travelers are getting interested to travel more in their own country.

After my content analysis I have made a comparison between these two types of travel writings. I have found that foreign traveler’s perceptions are different from the local travelers. So Bangladesh is represented in a different way by these two groups which are all positive aspects.



Picture 9 Beautiful Bangladesh



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## Chapter V

### Conclusion and Recommendation

#### 5.1 Summary:

In this thesis, I have attempted to provide a content analysis of contemporary travel writings which represent Bangladesh. Travel and tourism in Bangladesh have great prospects. Travel writings are portraying Bangladesh positively to the readers and travelers. In this paper I have tried to find out and present the patterns and different themes of travel writings published in travel books. Alongside I have found travelers are traveling to produce content which represent Bangladesh. Through travel writings local travel community and general readers are getting inspired to travel. From my observation the foreign travelers' write-ups are descriptive portrayals of Bangladesh. Their expectations are being the same as they get from the other countries but the write-ups are saying that they are satisfied with the existing situation. Also they noticed the different cultural aspects, hospitality, family bonding, and happiness which are attractive for foreign travelers and they are writing about all these in their travel writings. Foreign travelers are visiting established destinations of Bangladesh, on the other hand local travel activist are trying to explore unusual places and write about that. All these different perceptions are portrayed in the travel writings.

Travel writings highlighted potential tourism destinations for the foreign travelers. Some writers are writing only for promoting and inspiring tourism in Bangladesh. The writings are of two types. One is 'center of attraction' and the other is 'center of activity'. The findings are making an assessment that, more or less almost all the travel writings are published under these themes.

As a case of travel activists, I took a travel organization. I have analyzed their viewpoint through content analysis of their documents, travel books to be precise. I have found that, Bangladesh has so many places for traveling and through travel writings the potential travel destinations become focused. As the part of their travel activism, local travelers want to see new and unusual places to explore the beauty of Bangladesh; its people and their livelihood, culture and history. They took travel writing as another tool of their activism to represent the country so that local travelers and literary general readers become interested to explore our homeland. And, it can be said that an overall picture of Bangladeshi landscape is portrayed through all these travel writings.

## **5.2 Conclusion:**

Contemporary Travel writings in Bangladesh are encouraging new travelers. Travel writings are documentation of explorers. Bangladesh is represented very positively with her beauty and landscape through these travel writings. There are many themes which interestingly can be presented in a travelogue. In this study I have found that, travel writings provide important knowledge about traveling and surrounding aspects during travel. The write-ups are arranged in such manner so that focused themes attract foreign travelers. Bangladesh is represented through travel writings for the local travelers and readers as well. In this study, in order to find out the answers of my research questions I have observed that for the foreign travelers, representation of Bangladesh is portrayed in a different way such as the popular destinations of Bangladesh, people's life style, culture, etc. Foreign travelers explain in their travel writing that, before coming into this county they totally presumed negativity about Bangladesh because of its monsoon floods cyclones and such. But, after traveling in this country their mindset have been changed completely. They wrote in their travel writing that they were not aware that Bangladesh would represent one of the most beautiful travel stories indeed. So, foreign travelers' representations in travel writings are answering my research questions.

Alongside the local travelers are representing Bangladesh more vividly as they are travel activists and they are writing about the unusual places, cultures and the livelihood which creates a local tourism discourse. Similarly local travelers' representations in travel writings are answering my research questions as well.

### **5.3 Recommendation:**

To represent any country travel writing can play a very important role. In Bangladesh more travel writing is required to represent this beautiful country properly to the world. Travel writings can focus some of the areas which are more potential, attractive and safe. There are not sufficient researches about travel writings to represent Bangladesh so I recommend the academic students to conduct more research on this topic. In particular, the unusual (unknown to the foreign travelers) travel destinations should be brought into light as prime locations in a manner that if somebody does not travel in these places, he/she misses a crucial aspect of Bangladesh! They should be offered places where Bangladesh can be more meaningfully met. Lastly, in this study the academic contribution is how cultural representation can portray a meaning which makes different reflections to the readers and travelers.

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