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# Nature of Crime Victimization Among Tourists in Bangladesh: An Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

*Tourism has become an amazing catalyst for the monetary development of a state in 21st century. At the same time as the tourism sector expands the chances of crime victimization among tourists are also increasing. Theories of criminology, for instance opportunity theory, and routine activity theory along with Butler's model on tourism area life cycle (TALC) offer logical grounds for the crime victimization among tourists in diverse tourist places. This study mainly focuses on exploring the nature and extent of tourist victimization in Bangladesh and the contributing factors to it alongside efficacious preventive measures. For the purpose of conducting this study, data was gathered from secondary sources, including various statistics, articles, books, newspapers, and so on. The discoveries demonstrated that most of the tourists were victimized by criminal activities such as theft, sexual assault, prostitution, organized crime and gang activity, terrorism, mass-transit crimes, robbery, murder, hijacking, kidnapping, police assault, political violence, burglary, and so on. Regarding the increased volume of crime, factors like lower-income and unemployment, the lucrateness of tourists, the vulnerability of tourists, lower rate of reported crimes, lack of security, inappropriate tourism policy, and insufficient information about the tourist spots are mostly responsible for this. All other government agencies, including the police require to play an effective role in ensuring the security of tourists by resolving these issues as early as could be expected. And with this, by improving this highly dynamic sector like tourism industry, it will be possible to introduce Bangladesh as a country with the brightest potential on the world stage.*

**Keywords:** *Crime, Environment, Tourism, Tourist rights, Victimization.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, tourism is deemed an essential aspect due to its substantial allocation to the world economy (Majumder, 2015). Alongside, the tourism industry provides criminals with an extended mark of probable targets as well as lofty returns from crimes against tourists and a

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lower chance of getting caught and condemned (Brunt et al., 2000; Mathieson and Wall, 1982). A study indicates that while there may be divergences according to the features of the tourist spot and for diverse crimes, crime rates are frequently higher in tourist areas (Rob Mawby, 2014). Another study by Prideaux (1996) recognized certain components which seem to be crucial in defining levels of crime in destinations. By resembling three distinct beach resorts in Australia, it was recommended that locations offering a hedonistic lifestyle had increased crime rates. Brunt and Hambly (1999) consider a spectrum of case related to the more elevated threats of criminal victimization encountered by tourists. In expansion, empirical analysis has revealed the connection between being a tourist and an aggravated susceptibility to criminal victimization. (Mawby et al., 1999; Brunt et al., 2000). However, the global tourism revenue escalated by roughly 10% in 2021 over the prior year, following a surprising downhill in 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Nonetheless, the tourism industry contributed around 10.3% of global GDP in 2019 (WTTC, 2022).

According to the tourism statistics of Bangladesh, the revenue from this industry in 2019 was \$391,000,000, a 9.52% expansion from 2018 covering 4.4% of the national GDP (Bangladesh Tourism Statistics, 2022). However, this industry with immense potential has not been able to soar its wings in the sky of the world economy with due respect to several obstacles. (Hasan and Chowdhury, 2013). Crime victimization of the tourists is one of them. Records from distinct statistics and studies instruct that tourists are in danger of getting victimized of property and violent crimes in the widespread tourist spots (Muzib and Banarjee, 2016).

But the nature of tourist crime victimization in Bangladesh and how it works as an impediment to tourist sectors' expansion has not been adequately covered. An overview of the literature in criminology disclosed that tourism had not been examined as a tally to crime (Pizam, 1982). On the other hand, Glensor and Peak (2004) discovered that "the most vital provision for the flourishing tourism sector is standing for upholding crime beneath the authority and assuring tourists' protection. Mathieson and Wall (1982) briefed that there are likewise those effects that might appear evident, for instance, boosted crime rates, drug misuse, and prostitution; nonetheless, they are oppugning to attribute to tourism somewhat than other facets cogencies such as media encroachment and development (Rahman et al., 2019).

There have been 108854 official records of crimes in Bangladesh's tourist hotspots in 2004 (Muzib and Banarjee, 2016). The Sadar Model Police Station stated that merely 8 cases of snatching were registered in Cox's Bazar in 2019 whereas 33 cases of snatching have been registered in 2020. As such, corresponded to 2019, snatching has raised by 312.5% (Alarming Rise in Snatching in Cox's Bazar, 2021). A couple of female visitors were killed in Cox's Bazar

in 24 hours on May 19, 2022 (Visitors murdered, 2022). In December 2021, a 22-year-old woman was gang-raped in front of her husband and child (The Daily Star, 2021). Back in 2015, Two tourists and both their local guides were abducted by armed men in Bandarban (Tourists and local guides, 2022). Like this, tourists are getting victimized almost every now and then.

The discoveries of the study demonstrated that a lot of tourists were victimized by criminal offenses including theft, drug abuse, sexual assault, prostitution, organized crime and gang activity, terrorism against tourists, mass-transit crimes, robbery, murder, hijacking, kidnapping, police assault, political violence, burglary, etc (Crimes Against Tourists, 2004a). This study tries to shed light on the prevalence of crime victimization in the tourism industry and the regulators indebted to it.

### **(A) Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study is to identify the nature of crime victimization among tourists in Bangladesh.

The additional purposes are:

1. To find out the types of crime victimization among tourists.
2. To assess the key factors contributing to crime victimization among tourists.
3. To analyze the consequences of crime victimization among tourists.
4. To identify effective preventive measures for reducing crime victimization among tourists.

### **(B) Methodology**

The decision of a suitable research design for the nature of tourist crime victimization is quite challenging in the outset of Bangladesh considering numerous methodological limits in the field of co-occurring events.. Firstly, the perpetuating data is insufficient, and it has validity and trustworthiness issues. Secondly, the formerly dependable records regarding tourism related copies are inadequate to possess subsidies for constructing policy-making. The study is an explanatory study based on secondary data such as diverse statistics, reports, books, newspapers, articles and so on. The study assists to locate the issues, devising the solution, and uncovering policy making. While the coastal (Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin) and hill track zones (Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban) of Bangladesh was preferred as the study area. Excel, power point and the SPSS statistical software were used to display the connection between the variables and their effectiveness in order to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the findings.

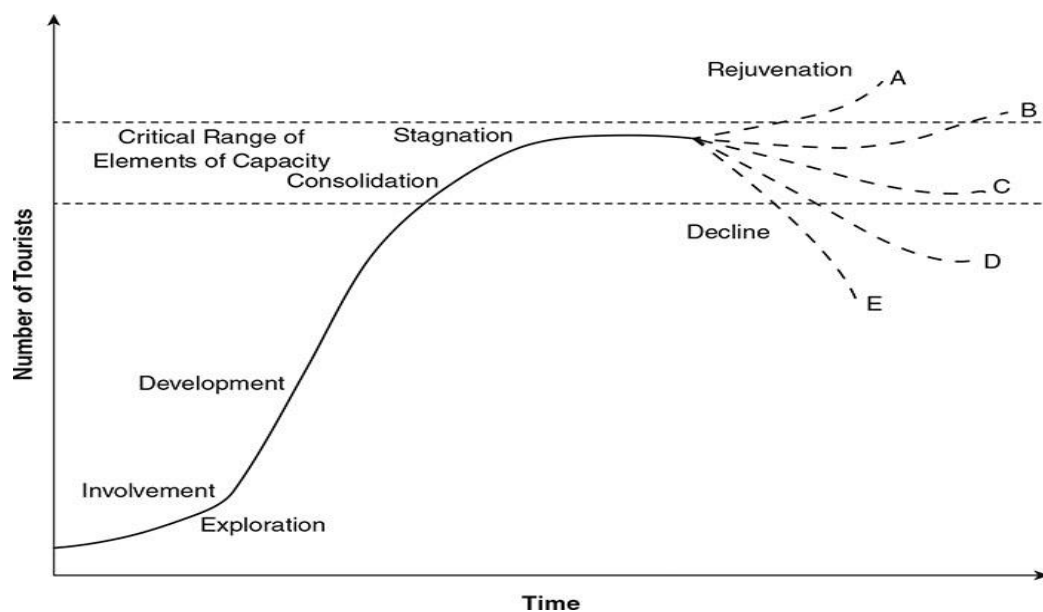
## II. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION ABOUT CRIME VICTIMIZATION AMONG TOURISTS

Criminological theories, for instance, opportunity theory, routine activity theory, victim precipitation theory, and crime hot spot theory along with tourism area life cycle (TALC) model offer valid grounds towards crime victimization of tourists in diverse tourist places.

### (A) Tourism Area Life Cycle Model (TALC)

TALC model is a widely used model for studying the growth of a certain tourism location. It was developed by Canadian geographer Richard Butler in 1980. TALC was designed following the idea of the product life cycle (PLC).

This model points out that a tourist spot matures following six distinct stages, namely, exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation. In every phase of this cycle, the terminus experiences a string of transformations (Sahli, 2020).



**Figure 1: Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC)** (Schuckert et al., 2007)

The exploration stage commences with the arrival of a few tourists who are daring and intrigued by the spots extraordinary or vastly unusual basic and aesthetic components. During the involvement phase, when the influx of visitors increases, more local inhabitants start to provide amenities for the guests, leading to extra profit for themselves.

Tourism forms an important aspect of the regional industry during the expansion and consolidation stages. Tourists, as well as the local resident's experiences, start to get bitter at this phase (Doxey, 1976; Dogan, 1989). This can be stated as the primary stage of crime victimization among tourists in a recognized tourist place.

At the stagnation stage, the optimum visitor count will have been attained, with the majority of them returning. Several monuments and services will have reached their limit, bringing in environmental, social, and economic concerns compelling problems for the vulnerable tourists (Butler, 2004).

With this, the declination stage will start and the place will start losing its tourists. However, Butler said that this problem can be solved by creating new attractions and this stage is stated as Rejuvenation (Schuckert et al., 2007).

### **(B) Opportunity Theory**

This theory states that offenders commit more crimes when there is a reasonable opportunity. According to Felson and Clarke (1998), the opportunity is considered a cause of crime in situational crime prevention (SCP). The theory declares that possibilities for crimes are confined in specific locations and times. In this case, places like tourist spots can be considered the crime hotspot as tourists are especially susceptible since they are acquainted well with surroundings and may not know the ways of reaching the responsible authorities. According to research, during high tourism periods, criminal activity rises when the amount of possible victims surges. The most common sorts of opportunity crimes are petty property crimes. (Perry, 2013)

### **(C) Routine Activity Theory**

In 1979, Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson first proposed the idea of this theory. The compass of routine activity is the study of a crime occurrence and how space and time have communed to that event. The main idea of the theory is when an offender becomes uplifted in the lack of a sufficient guard, raised by a potential target, he must perpetrate a crime. Regarding a tourist spot, if an offender conveys these prospects and gets admiringly encouraged by the target, he must commit a crime. As an instance we can consider a rape crime; when a criminal notices a girl wandering around alone and the place is vacant, the offender will surely get motivated. As a consequence, the girl may evolve into a rape victim.

### **(D) Crime Hotspot Theory**

The Hot Spot theory clarifies why particular places in tourist destinations reveal tourists to the occurrence of victimization. This theory is based on the idea of "criminology of place," which predicts that only a small number of locations will have a disproportionately elevated rate of crime (Ryan and Kinder, 1996). In addition, the simplicity of committing the crime and the minimal likelihood that an official complaint would be filed make tourists a special target (Brass, 2015).

Crotts (1996) stated,

*"Areas, where visitors are at the highest danger towards getting victimized, congregate in a few distinct sorts of locales called Hot Spots."*

And his findings reveal that, shady and empty spots can be the hot spots for offenders to perpetrate a crime against a tourist. Because the perpetrator views the tourists as a viable target since they believe that tourism represent global capitalism, it is ok to conduct offences towards them (Gandarra, 2004).

### **III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **(A) Types of Crime Victimization among Tourists**

Bangladesh's tourism business is mostly based on the coastal (Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin) and hill track zones (Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban). Therefore, crime victimization among tourists has been a common form of offences in these regions. There seem to be two kinds of crimes that directly affect tourists. First, there are premeditated offenses (for instance, terrorist attacks); second, there are predatory crime, regardless of the level of aggression, against an unidentified target, and through which the perpetrator derives a sort of gratification, whether pecuniary, psychic, or sensual (Maria Bras, 2021).

Another study (Holcomb, 2004) showed the classification of crime victimization among tourists because of the character of the illegal conduct, i.e.: rationale, target, zone, rigor, frequency, and type. The rationale diverged into four classifications: economic, social, political, and personal. Economic crimes like as larceny, robbery, and burglary were formerly regarded petty illegal offenses. Atrocities committed with a societal rationale, such as stealing, burglaries, vandalism, or burning, are generally related with terrorist actions, and finally, the interpersonal purpose is propelled by the fact that the target and the perpetrator are acquainted with one another and have some intimate affinity.

Tourists are getting victimized in these tourist places by various criminal activities such as theft, sexual assault, prostitution, organized crime and gang activity, terrorism, mass-transit crimes, robbery, murder, hijacking, kidnapping, police assault, political violence, burglary, and so on (Muzib and Banarjee, 2016).

A criminal investigation begins with a First Information Report (FIR). The table beneath delivers data regarding FIRs registered by police in 2016 in Cox's Bazar, including volume, type of crime, and rate per 100,000 with national average comparison.

Table 1: Comparison between Cox's Bazar and National Crime average

<b>Types of Crime</b>	<b>Cox's Bazar (Famous Tourist area of Bangladesh) (per 100,000)</b>	<b>National Average (Bangladesh) (per 100,00)</b>
<b>Drugs</b>	29.21	42.54
<b>Violence against Women</b>	14.06	8.98
<b>Murder</b>	4.24	2.48
<b>Violence against Children</b>	3.36	1.08
<b>Rape</b>	8.12	2.59
<b>Kidnapping</b>	0.57	0.47
<b>Robbery</b>	0.26	0.5
<b>Smuggling</b>	1.27	3.17
<b>Dacoity</b>	0.13	0.29
<b>Speedy Trial Act</b>	0.96	0.71
<b>Other</b>	87.34	62.06

**SOURCE: JUSTICE AUDIT BANGLADESH 2018**

Table-1 states that the rate of rape, murder, violence against women, and violence against children in Cox's Bazar is significantly higher than the national average. Though it is believed that, tourist places are the promotional zones for drug-related crime, we can see that perception is not right in the case of Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar, to be exact. The rate of drug-related crime and smuggling is comparatively very lower than that of the national average. And other criminal activities took place almost at around an equal rate compared to the national average.

### **(B) Key Factors Contributing to Crime Victimization among Tourists**

Several studies demonstrate substantial proof of a flattering connection between victimization and tourism industry (e.g. Ajagunna, 2006; Biagi and Detotto, 2014; Boakye, 2010; Holcomb

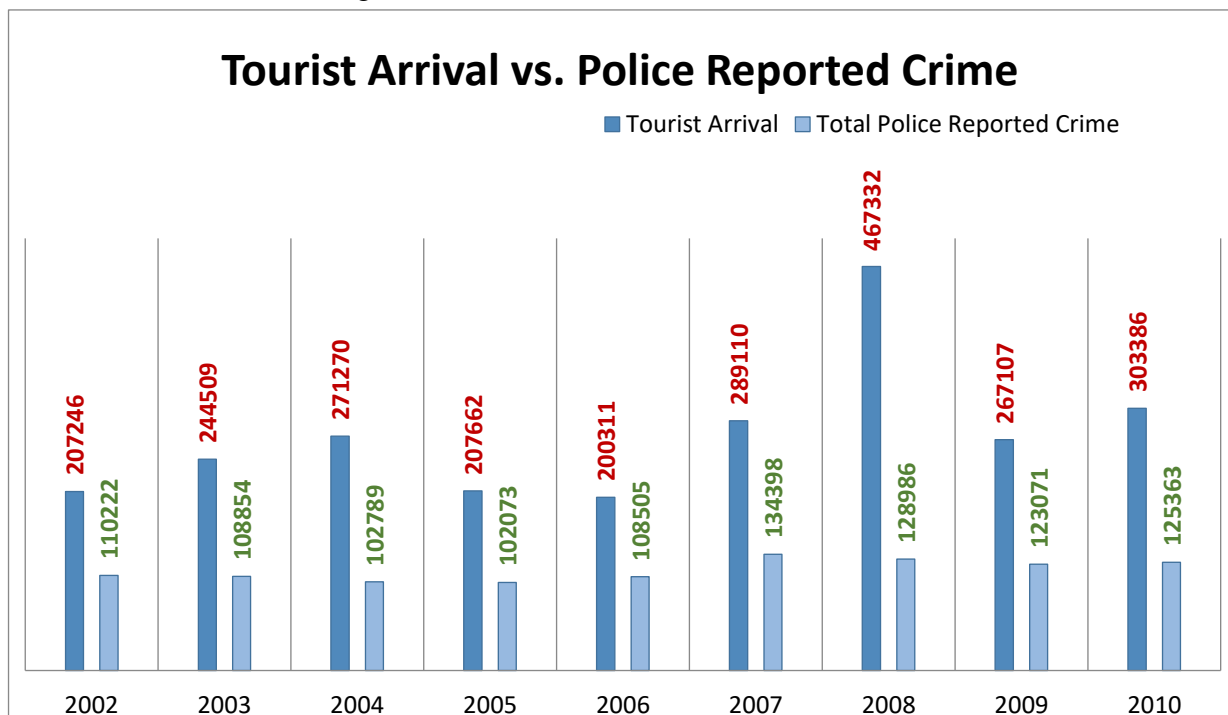


and Pizam, 2006), of its occasional nature (Kelly, 1993; King, 1988; Mawby, 2010; Walmsley et al., 1983) and of its connection with this industries expansion (Ajagunna, 2006; Biagi and Detotto, 2014; Brown, 1998), most notably in terms of a tourist spot's character and presented vision, as well as its relationship to the type of visitor enticed (Mawby, 2011; Prideaux, 1996). (Fujii and Mak, 1979) indicates that diverse types of tourists may have distinct influences on crime.

As a widespread tradition, at least one of the subsequent scenarios is present in the point of crime victimization among tourists (Crimes Against Tourists, 2004b): (a)The traveller is an inadvertent victim who really is "in an incorrect location at a very unusual time" and so a convenient object; (b) The kind of spots visited by the traveler frequently causes a higher likelihood of criminality, for example, crowded nighttime areas with lax law enforcement; (c) Travelers are quite often the desired subjects of certain parties, such as terrorists, due to what they convey sociologically and artistically in their home region.

According to the statistics provided by Bangladesh Tourism Board, In 2002, the absolute amount of tourist arrival was 207246, with 11022 filed crimes. Later in 2010, with the increase of inbound tourists, we can see an increase of reported crime as well.

**Source:** Bangladesh Tourism Board, National Tourism Organization and Comparative Crime Statistics:2002 –2010, Bangladesh Police.



**Figure 2: Tourist Arrival vs. Number of Police Reported Crime**

Regarding the enormous growth of crime, factors like lower income and unemployment, the

lucrative nature of tourists, the vulnerability of tourists, lower rate of reported crimes, lack of security, inappropriate tourism policy, and insufficient information about the tourist spots are mostly responsible for this.

Tourism launches an interactive association among distinct components: the location, the visitor, the residents of the area, the tourist industry business, and overall services. Its rise leads to a significant increase in safety occurrences in practically all terms, because it opens up greater possibilities for criminality, mainly monetary offenses (e.g., robbery, fraud), and moreover crimes concerning either sexual or physical invasion, toward others (Holcomb, 2010).

Bras (2015) states that tourist crime victimization occurs mostly due to six central factors:

- (1) Tourists bear big amounts of cash or other precious things and usually carry them publicly;
- (2) Tourists are exposed to a material and social places that do not belong to them, and thus frequently exhibit obvious signs of being tourists (e.g. hiring cars, repeated use of camera, dependance on maps, and so on);
- (3) There can be seen unbelievably lower rate of reported crimes to the local police by the visitors;
- (4) Tourists don't follow typical safety precautions;
- (5) Tourists face problem recognizing offender;
- (6) Tourists infrequently comes back to testify in the criminal case.

### **(C) Consequences of Crime Victimization among Tourists**

According to Pizam and Mansfeld (1996), because of being a matter of pleasure, people usually try to avoid a place where their security and well-being may be a hazard. According to a poll conducted by Brunt, Mawby, and Hambly (2000), 42% of participants said they had eliminated away travelling at least one place owing to dangers such as crime, terrorism, or frightening behavior.

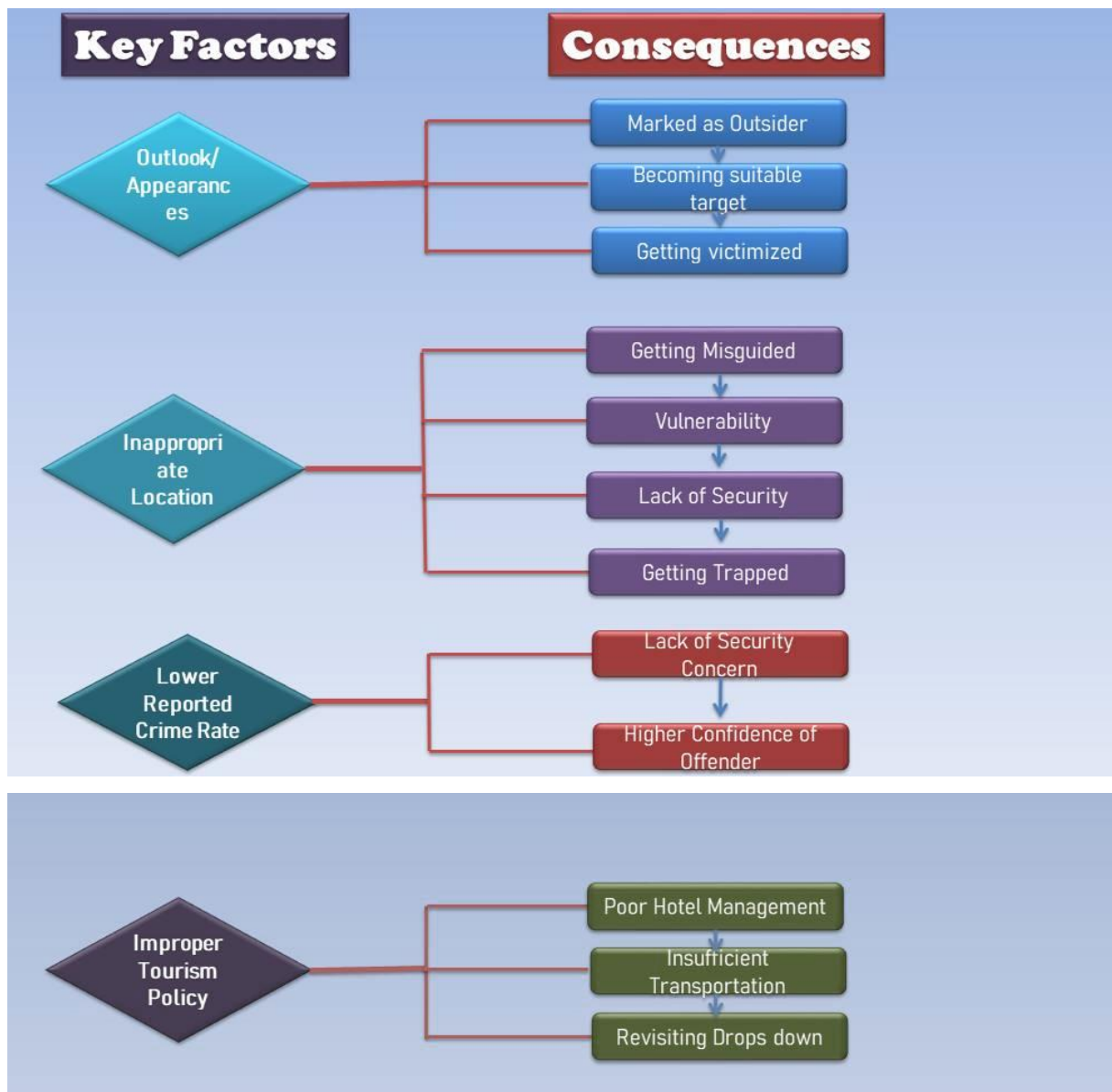
The majority of the revenue from the tourism industry goes to lodging and restaurant proprietors, in particular the elites. It was observed that indirect casualties are over two times as expensive as direct casualties (Lejarraja and Walkenhorst, 2007).

In a study on South Africa, George (2003) denotes that,

*“If a tourist feels unsafe or threatened at a destination, he or she can develop a negative impression of the destination.”*

Thus, a tourist spot's reputation might be destroyed in three patterns: (1) Recurring visitors may decide to avoid the location due to its reputation towards criminality; (2) Tourists may skip going if they sense danger in a certain area; (3) The rate of revisiting a place by the tourist falls if they do not feel safe during visiting there.

Salahuddin Setu, councilor of Cox’s Bazar municipality, states about a harsh collapse in tourist arrival. He said because of a recent gang-rape incident on the beach has spoiled the impression of the beach town. Abul Kashem Shikder, general secretary of Cox’s Bazar Hotel, Motel, Guest House Owners’ Association, said, even on new year's eve, almost 50% of the hotel rooms are empty (Independent, n.d.). So, it is pretty clear that tourist crime victimization has very serious consequences on the tourist spots regarding their severity.



Source: Prepared by Author

**(D) Preventive Measures Regarding Crime Victimization among Tourists**

For a prepared and congruous growth of tourism, the existing National Tourism Policy was developed in 1992 with an intent to launch the tourism industry as one of the aborning and enduring sectors through developing employment, and socioeconomic growth by concerning

local people with regional governments associations, uphold ecological equilibrium and defend bio-diversity (Independent, 2022).

Some more alternative crime reduction strategies are Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and target hardening. CPTED has turned into a standard component of discussions over further developing security in tourist regions, and the job of the police as counselors has expanded fundamentally (Bach, 1996; Crotts, 1996; Schiebler et al., 1996).

Target hardening is a very significant method in the crime deduction toolbox. This includes modest technological developments such as improved street lamps as well as more polished technologies such as CCTV. Valuable possessions can also be safeguarded with window locking, extra locks or bolts at doorways, property labelling, timer bulbs, burglar alarms, and other security measures (Mawby, 2014).

Some major preventive measures to be taken under consideration are-

### **1. Collaboration with the tourist sector to identify and prevent criminal activities:**

Police delegates ought to take part in the tourism industry and work with hotels, and guests' to comprehend the travel industry-related issues and crises, and foster joint crime prevention programs. Tourist police have a very vital part to play here in identifying major crime-related concerns.

Also, the police can take initiatives to train the tourism area community and make sure that they understand the threats and negative impacts of tourist crime victimization.

Effective methods like tourism exchange programs can be arranged so that the local community people get the privilege of taking training from other countries (Raihan, 2014).

### **2. Preparing police and private security personnel to identify tourist-related security crises:**

Notwithstanding the disputed relationship amongst police on the streets and violence prevention (Burrows et al., 1979; Schiebler et al., 1996; Walker, 1992), a greater police presence may be adopted as a weapon for combating crime in tourist areas (Mawby et al., 2014). This may involve tourist police, regular police, and private security forces (Jones, 2010), who are focused primarily on surveillance at resorts, tourist hubs, all-inclusive hotels, and recreational pursuits (Shearing and Stenning, 1996).

**3. Preparing proper tourism guidelines:** The government ought to put together "Regulations" for "International visitors' cognitive actions and practices" and publicize them as a brochure by gathering the thoughts of relevant stakeholders such as the Ministry of Civil

Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Tourism Board, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Government and Nongovernment Travel Agencies, National and International Hotel-Motel & Restaurant Authorities, Tourism Organizations, Local Community Representatives, and Opinion Leaders and so on. Through which tourists will get accustomed to the local, social and religious norms and values. This will help in reducing tourist crime victimization in popular tourist spots (Raihan,2014).

**4. Conducting motivational awareness programs:** Several motivational awareness programs can be conducted in affiliation with different stakeholders in the local community to develop awareness among local people so that they be aware be mindful of the tourists' comfort and protection. Also, it needs to make sure that they have proper knowledge of the National tourism policy.

**5. One-stop service:** The establishment of a one-stop service in several zones of National tourism organizations and other appropriate places may prove very handy in preventing tourist crime victimization. These service centers will help the tourist by providing quick service with different information and insights about a tourist area (National Tourism Policy, 2010).

For certain security standards, additional taxations can be charged in tourist zones (Crimes Against Tourists, 2016) and following measures can be taken:

(1) Inspiring the hotel staff to embrace approaches that will decrease visitor victimization; (2) Providing proper directions and guides to the tourists so that they don't fall into criminal traps; (3) Boosting police patrols as well as citizen patrols in tourist spots; (4) Applying target hardening (surveillance, cc tv, road lights, etc) following the CPTED model at risky destinations; (5) Altering the physical surrounding to lessen the chances of tourist crime victimization.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Crime victimization among tourists is an obstacle that is definitely decreasing the pace of this infinitely promising sector. Facilities in this sector may be shaped by adhering to the values and interests of area inhabitants and aggressively gaining influence over tourist strategic planning (Gill and Reed, 1997; Mowforth and Munt, 2003). Thus, it needs to be ensured that tourists are provided with huge gratitude and awareness of their environment and the associated hazards, and recognize the effects of their activities so that they may act in manners that decrease their chances of being victimized (Agarwal, 2016). Despite the scarcity of sufficient statistics, this paper tried to give a prevailing sight of tourist crime victimization in Bangladesh. And it can be clearly stated that if this problem is not being addressed in the proper manner and at the

appropriate time, it will become a threat not only to the tourism industry but also to the overall law and order system of the country. Orville Durant, a retired Police Commissioner from Barbados, asserted that while the adoption of additional security officers does have a few short-term benefits, community activities that involve the young generation and more prominent provincial neighborhood participation in the tourism industry are essential to grasp even more incredible advantages of tourism (Durant, 1993). Therefore, it is time to take the tourism industry one step further by ensuring maximum security for tourists by investigating the real nature of tourist crime victimization.

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