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Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry In Bangladesh: Narrative Review of The Period March 2020 to March 2021

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji dampak pandemi COVID-19 pada industri pariwisata Bangladesh dan menyarankan beberapa kemungkinan strategi pemulihan untuk meminimalkan dampak COVID-19 pada industri pariwisata Bangladesh. Data sekunder adalah jantung dari penelitian ini dan penelitian telah dilakukan dengan mengikuti tiga langkah pendekatan prosedur penelitian sekunder yang meliputi mengembangkan pertanyaan penelitian, mengidentifikasi database untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian dan mengevaluasi dataset sekunder yang dikumpulkan. Studi ini menemukan bahwa COVID-19 memiliki beberapa dampak negatif pada industri pariwisata termasuk hilangnya pendapatan yang nyata, sejumlah besar pemutusan hubungan kerja dan penutupan operasi bisnis baik secara permanen maupun sementara. Meskipun hampir tidak mungkin untuk mengatasi pandemi ini dengan cepat, tetapi mengambil strategi yang tepat dapat meminimalkan dampak dan memulihkan industri. Studi ini memberikan pemahaman tentang skenario dampak pandemi COVID-19 saat ini dengan pedoman untuk penelitian masa depan bagi akademisi dan kemungkinan strategi pemulihan untuk profesional industri.

Kata kunci: Covid-19, industry pariwisata,

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry of Bangladesh and to suggest some probable recovery strategies for minimizing the effect of COVID-19 in the tourism industry of Bangladesh. Secondary data is the heart of this study and the study has been conducted by following the three steps approaches of secondary research procedures which include developing research questions, identifying the database to answer the research questions and evaluating the collected secondary dataset. The study has found that the COVID-19 has several negative impacts on the tourism industry including the noticeable losses of revenue, a huge number of cuts off of jobs and closing the operation of the business both permanently and temporarily. Though it is near to impossible to get overcome this pandemic quickly but taking proper strategies can minimize the impact and recover the industry. This study provides an understanding of the present scenario of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with a guideline for future research to the academicians and probable recovery strategies for the industry professional.

Keywords: Covid-19, tourism industry, strategy dampak & pemulihan, Bangladesh

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INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is a transmissible disease which is caused by SARS-CoV-2 also known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 and in November 2019 that virus was marked out in the city of Wuhan, China (Sharmaa, Tiwari, Deb, & Marty, 2020). Covid-19 is a very transmittable disease caused by a new-fangled virus that takes a very short time to spread and it is also called novel coronavirus, moreover, that virus can stay alive for 3 days (Cennimo, 2021). The transmission of Covid-19 in the human body mainly happens by coming to the contact of a Covid-19 positive person and it spreads when the Covid-19 positive person sneezes or cough apart from that the virus may spread through touching any surfaces which are having the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes (World Health Organization , 2020).

According to the report of the World health organization till March 2020 the worldwide confirmed number of total Covid-19 cases are 12,94,69,648 and the number of total deaths is 28,29,898 (Worldometer, 2021; Worldometer, 2021a). The first Covid-19 positive case was identified in Bangladesh on 8th March 2020 and till 31st of March, 2020 the total number of confirmed Covid-19 positive cases are 6,05,937 and the number of total deaths is 8,994 (World Health Organization, WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, 2021). The number of infected people is drastically rising. To minimize the transmission of that virus government has taken few steps such as imposing lockdown, banned international travel, restriction on domestic travel which has a direct impact on the country's economy and the economy is going through an overwhelming condition.

Table 1. COVID-19 cases around the world and Bangladesh

Month Reported (Last day of each month)	World Total		Bangladesh Total			
	Cumulative cases	Deaths	Cumulative cases	Deaths	Amount of Cumulative cases in-comparison to the world	Amount of deaths in-comparison to the world
February, 2020	88,731	2,978	0	0	0	0
March, 2020	9,60,671	54,261	49	5	0.0051%	0.009%
April, 2020	34,77,888	2,39,309	7,103	163	0.204%	0.068%
May, 2020	65,10,618	3,86,774	44,608	610	0.685%	0.157%
June, 2020	1,09,17,069	5,27,030	1,41,801	1,783	0.298%	0.338%
July, 2020	1,82,13,617	6,95,023	2,34,889	3,083	0.289%	0.443%
August, 2020	2,62,64,275	8,72,244	3,10,822	4,248	0.183%	0.487%
September, 2020	3,48,87,407	10,27,934	3,62,043	5,219	0.037%	0.507%
October, 2020	47,154,377	12,04,845	4,06,364	5,905	0.861%	0.490%
November, 2020	6,45,11,056	14,80,452	4,62,407	6,609	0.716%	0.446%
December, 2020	83,971,396	18,36,837	5,12,496	7,531	0.610%	0.409%
January, 2021	10,35,35,678	22,49,845	5,34,770	8,111	0.516%	0.360%
February, 2021	11,47,04,440	25,47,297	5,45,831	8,400	0.475%	0.329%
March, 2021	12,94,69,648	28,29,898	6,05,937	8,994	0.468%	0.317%

Source: Worldometer (2021a); WHO (2021); Worldometer (2021)

Covid-19 has a massive effect on global growth in the economy. The economic crisis has been created worldwide as the numbers of customers as well as the amount of companies' revenue are declining sharply due to the quarantines on a large scale, restriction on travelling and social distancing policies (OECD, 2020). However, in every country government attempt have been made to limit COVID-19 propagation. For example, many countries have applied the movement control lock-down approach (MCO) and because of that the people are staying at home but they have lost the sources of their income which has increased unemployment extremely (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020).

As tourism is considered an extremely vulnerable industry so that industry is used to rebounding in emergencies, crisis, outbreaks and various socio-economic, environmental, political threats (e.g. terrorism, earthquakes, Ebola, SARS, Zika).

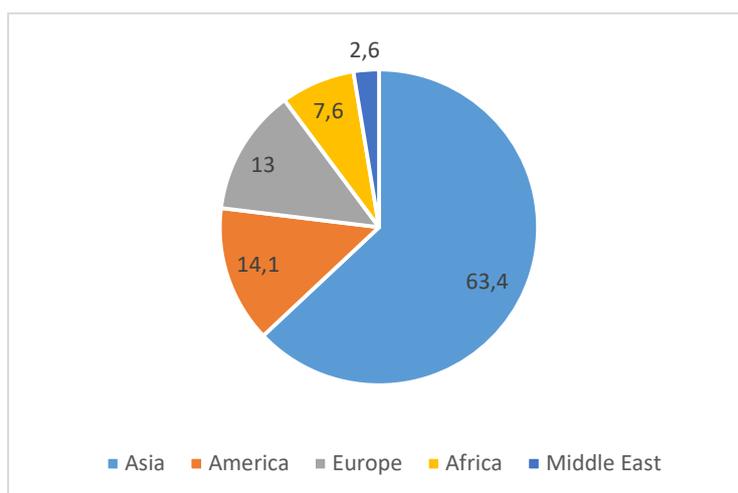
All of these previous crises and outbreaks showed that those had an impact on the tourism industry and due to these the drastically transformational modifications have been seen in the earlier period also (Sigala, 2020). The impact of COVID-19 on tourism in space and time is unpredictable, with a massive international and economic impact apart from the human tool, the arrival of the international tourist has been estimated to fall to 78%, results in the loss of US\$1.2 trillion revenue which will decline the global GDP by 1.5-2.8% and 120 million direct job cuts in tourism which is almost seven times as many as the impact of 9/11 and the biggest drop in terms of tourist revenue (UNWTO, 2021).

Table 2. Impact of COVID-19 on tourism industry of top ten tourist arrival country

Source	Country	Impact of Covid-19
(The Local, 2021)	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019, the net revenue of France tourism was €150 billion but due to the pandemic France tourism has lost almost 41% of its revenue in 2020 which is €61 billion as the revenue has been decreased €150 billion to €89. The most affected area was Île-de-France which has seen a revenue loss of €23.1 billion.
(Ministry of industry, trade and tourism, 2021; Statista, 2021)	Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the COVID-19, the international tourist arrival in Spain has been fall to 77% in 2020 in-comparison to the previous year and the tourism ministry of Spain forecasted that the Spain tourism will lose 30-50 billion USD in the year of 2020.
(U.S Travel Association , 2021)	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The COVID-19 pandemic has led to estimated losses of \$492 billion for the U.S. travel economy, which is amounted to a total daily loss of almost \$1.6 billion in the last 10 months, from early March 2020 to the rest of the year of 2020.
(Ashikul Hoque, 2020)	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinese tourists were banned by many countries to visit and international tourists cancelled their trips to China. Many Chinese airlines were forced to cancel their flight which has a negative impact on the country's total economy.
(Schengen Visa Info, 2020)	Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tourism industry of Italy has seen the loss of €36.7 billion due to the pandemic in 2020 because of the crisis on international travel. A report of Schengen Visa Info forecasted that the expenditure of tourist will be decreased by 82% by the year ending of 2020 which will result in the loss of weekly €700 million and €100 million daily. 2.8 million Jobs based on the tourism industry will be laid off.
(Haticce Ozdemir Tosun, 2020)	Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourist arrival in Turkey has been decreased to 15 million which resulted in a total revenue loss of 11 billion USD in 2020. Due to the COVID-19, the tourism sector will be curtailed by 70%, stated by Turkey's minister of culture and tourism.
(Tanner, 2020; Statista, 2021)	Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total revenue loss of tourism industry of Mexico has been forecasted approximately 11 billion Mexican pesos due to COVID-19 as 19.7 million foreign tourist arrivals has been decreased and the domestic and international passenger of the airline industry has been decreased by 48% and 52%

		respectively. 40% job based on tourism industry has been laid off as well.
(Thaiger, 2021)	Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand is the 4th largest affected country in terms of revenue loss in the tourism industry and due to the COVID-19, the tourism industry of Thailand has lost \$37,504 million in 2020.
(WTTC, 2021)	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The spending of international tourist in Germany has been declined to 82% which results in a revenue loss of €38 billion in the year 2020 which is €104.2 and weekly €729 due to the pandemic.
(Office for National Statistics, 2021)	UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The international tourist arrival and their expenditure have been dropped down to respectively 96% and 97% in comparison of quarter 2, 2019 to quarter 2, 2020

World Travel and Tourism Council (2021) reported that globally Travel and Tourism industry will face losses of 4.5 trillion USD which is 49.1% less than the previous year and the global GDP will be decreased by 3.7%. 62 million jobs were laid off in 2020 which is 18.5% more than the previous year (Anadolu Agency, 2021) and the majority number of job loss is from the Asia region (Figure: 1). Visitors spending of domestic and international have been decreased respectively 45% and 69.45%.



Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2021)

Figure 1. Estimated job loss in the tourism industry

Tourism is highly connected with the human movement which is largely affected due to the travel ban. With a huge domestic market of tourism, the tourism industry of Bangladesh has been expanding bit by bit but all forms of travel and tourism operations, as well as activities, have been closed from the middle of March 2020 because of the travel ban. Moreover, a noticeable change has been seen in the consumers' lifestyle and the economy of Bangladesh because of COVID-19 as all forms of commercial operations had been kept close according to the order of the Bangladesh government. The COVID-19 pandemic had a massive impact on many industries in Bangladesh such as the e-commerce business, infrastructure business and travel business (Hossain, 2020) but the first of the industries impacted by COVID-19 is tourism and that industry is one of the big industries which would look more deplorable because of the outbreak of COVID-19 as the tourist destinations have been restricted on travel. Because of imposing the lockdown country-wide, the operations of hotels, motels, restaurants and the transport sector were allowed to operate in a limited range but people are afraid of going outside and travelling as the number of COVID-19

cases are upward. The aviation industry of Bangladesh has been affected highly due to a large number of the cancellation of domestic and international flights from and to Bangladesh. Currently, the prospect of the tourism industry of Bangladesh is very uncertain. The objective of conducting this study is to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry of Bangladesh and to suggest some possible recovery strategies to minimize the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak.

METHOD

The secondary data has been used to carry out this study. For conducting this study three steps of secondary research procedures have been adopted by following Johnston (2014), where developing the research question was the first step and the research question are ' what is the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry of Bangladesh and what are the probable strategies to recover that?', identifying the dataset which will assist the author to find out the answer of the research question was the second step and the secondary data have been collected from a large-scale desk study that looked at diverse viewpoints and reviewed the numerous number of international journals, working articles, published articles, newspapers, national and international reports of The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism as well as other related online content. The final phase was to evaluate the collected secondary dataset. According to the suggestion of Johnston (2014), to check and ensure the compatibility, accuracy, perfect match of the collected secondary dataset with the research question, the six following procedures have been considered.

What was the motive of this research? The motive of this study was to collect enough data to get the answer to the research question and for that, the data related impact of COVID-19 in the tourism industry and the recovery strategies from this pandemic was adopted.

Who was responsible for accumulating the information? The author has adopted the data from some famous and well-known organizations related to the tourism industry such as UNWTO, WTTC, WTO, PATA, TOAB and many more.

What kind of data has been obtained? Both quantitative and qualitative data related to the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry has been obtained.

When the data has been collected? The aim was to collect as much recent data as possible and data related to the study was collected between the times December 2020 to March 2021.

What kind of method has been used for obtaining data? The author has considered the methodology of the tourism-based organizations for collecting data as Johnston (2014) suggested that researchers need to be aware of the methods adopted by data providers while working with secondary data.

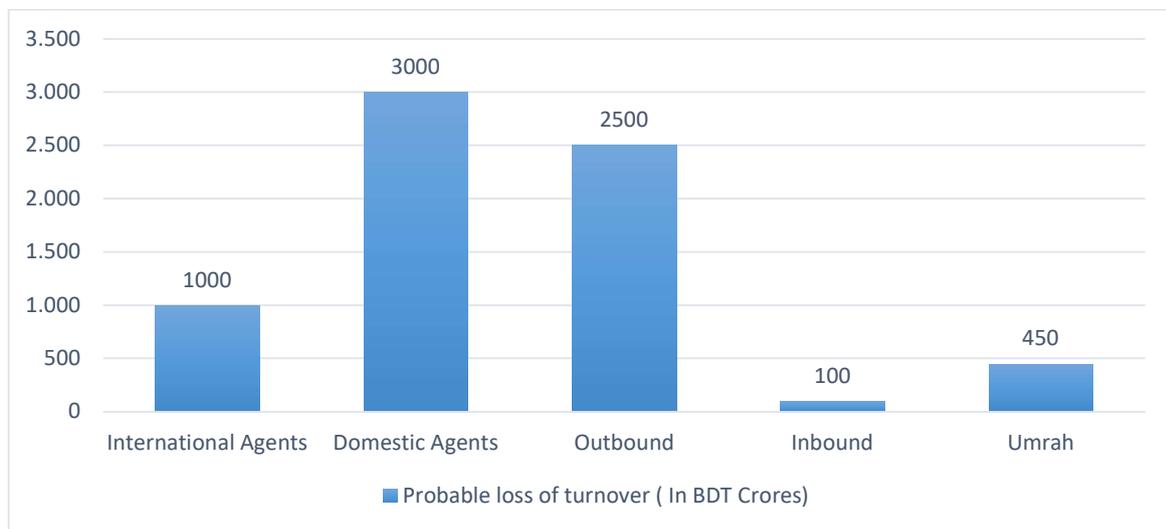
Was the collected data compatible with the other sources? The author has compared the findings of the study with others study as Granderson (2018) suggested that while working with secondary data it is important to cross-check the research outcomes with others' research for identifying the inconsistencies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism in Bangladesh: The small traders who mainly depend on the tourism industry have lost the source of earning. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism said that the tourism sector of Bangladesh has seen the loss of 14,000 crore BDT due to the outbreak of COVID-19. According to the report of the Bangladesh Tourism Board, approximately 4 million people have lost their job who were engaged with the tourism sector and 1.5 crore people who depend on them are in deep trouble. Even though there are many tourist seasons since April 2020 but people are not able to visit those places due to the government restrictions on travelling and due to the shortage of consumer many tourism service providers were driven to shut their

businesses down in that circumstance which resulted in around 70% worker of the tourism sector were extremely unsure about livelihoods. The director of the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh-TOAB stated that, for so many months, all the activities related to tourism were either closed or operated in the limited range. But the cost of operation did not end, bank interest, loan, and wages for employees, utility bills and gas bills are continued. In that situation, many closed down and fled to the villages or changed their occupations (Chowdhury, 2020).

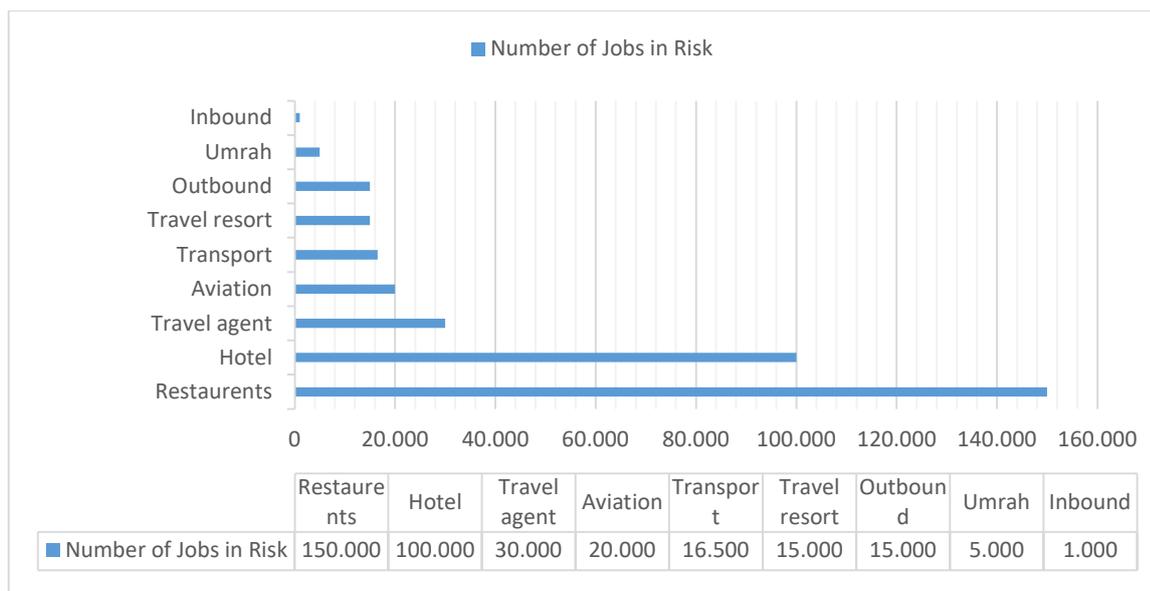
Impact on Tourism Industry: The government of Bangladesh has stopped issuing on-arrival visas for all nationalities and it has been very tough for the tour operators of Bangladesh to sustain and exist in the industry as they are receiving a high number of cancellation of the tour packages from abroad, moreover, the domestic tourist was ordered to maintain the lockdown and these issues will effect on domestic, inbound and outbound tourism of Bangladesh which will lead the country's economic losses and jobs laid off as shown in the Figure:2. UNWTO has predicted that the tourism industry of Bangladesh is likely to face a loss of USD 470 million in 2020. From January 2020 to June 2020, the tourism sector has faced the loss of 10,000 crore BDT according to the report of the Pacific Asia Travel Association where the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh claimed that amount to 14,000 crore BDT (Chowdhury, 2020; The Financial Express, 2020).



Source: Light Castle Partners (2020)

Figure 2. Forecasted total loss of turnover by tour operators

National Intelligence for Skill, Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship (a project of the Bangladesh government) (2020) published a report where they have mentioned that from February 2020 to June 2020 the entire tourism and hospitality industry of Bangladesh is going to lose 97.5 billion BDT revenue which has been predicted by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) and that amount was counted by estimating all the sectors of tourism and hospitality which contains hotels, travel agents, motels, airlines, tour operators and transports. It was also predicted in the study that almost 3, 00,000 workers may lose their job as illustrated in **Figure: 3** but by doing a study among 700 tour operators TOAB (Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh) has claimed that their estimated losses were almost 1500 crore BDT and 5000 manpower were laid off.

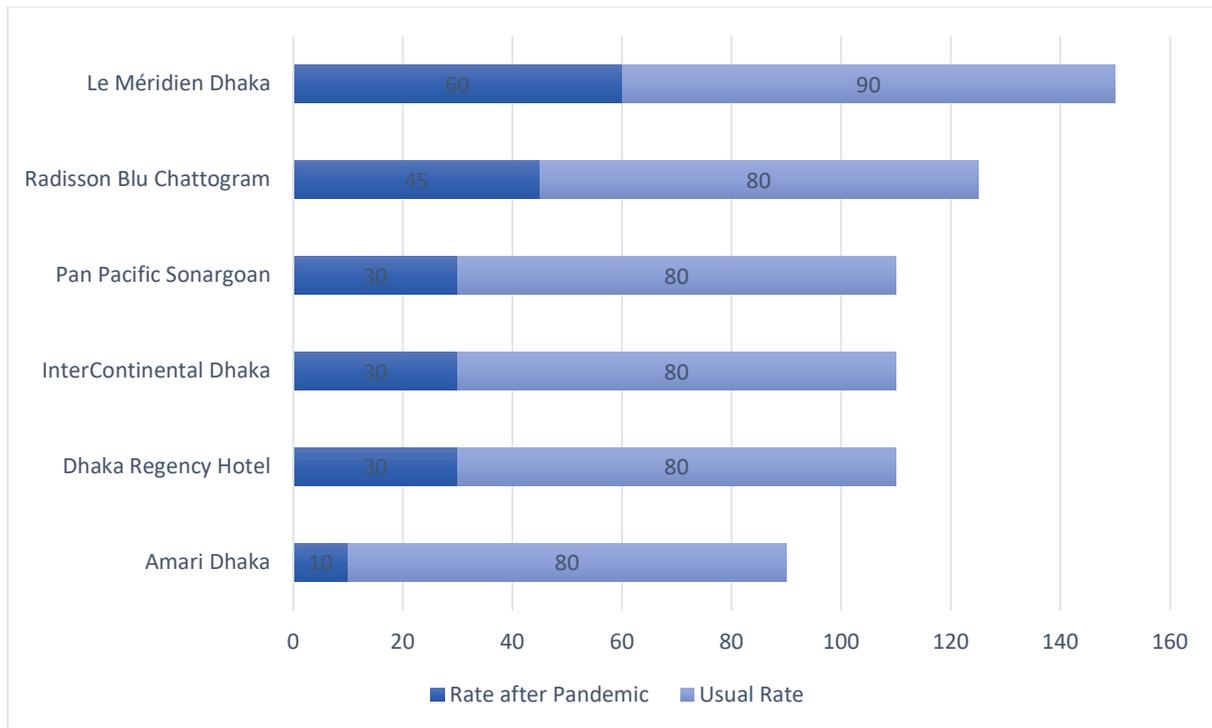


Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association (2020)

Figure 3. Estimated forecasted number of jobs at risk in the tourism sector

Impact on Hotel and Restaurant Industry: Due to the restrictions on travelling, consumers started cancelling their booking of flights and accommodation which had a massive effect on the economic fallout of the luxury hotels. The month of March is considered as the peak season for the business time for the hospitality industry of Bangladesh according to the market analyst. But the occupancy and reservation rate has been fallen in every hotel in Bangladesh due to the pandemic. The assistant communication manager of InterContinental Dhaka stated that the pandemic has impacted the country's MICE industry also, hotels are not getting any bookings for the meeting, conferences, seminars and event as well as all the previously booked events have been postponed too (Shovon, 2020). Figure 4 shows that there is a drastic change in the occupancy rate of luxury hotels. Usually, in the pre-pandemic period, hotels receive the occupancy rate of 80%-90% but once the pandemic has started the occupancy rate has been fallen to 10%-60%. As the hotels were receiving a very a smaller number of guest so they reduce the room tariff but still they could not upgrade the occupancy rate even in April 2020. A report said that more than hundreds of restaurants have been permanently closed for not being able to maintain their operational cost and over one thousand restaurants are in danger due to the very low turnover of the customers and the rate of receiving orders have been decreased as well as restaurant owners have been forced to cut off 80% of their employees. One of the restaurant owners stated that after the starting of the pandemic they are receiving 90% fewer orders than the pre-pandemic situation (The Daily Star, 2020).

Impact on Airlines Industry: The unstable situation of the Bangladesh aviation industry is interlinked with the others sectors also such as the job market, labour market, tourism sector and readymade garments. The airlines' companies are struggling to pay the costs of management, aviation charges and payment instalment of the aircraft because apart from the special cargo flights all the domestic and international flights have been suspended (The Business Standard, 2020). The airlines' industry of Bangladesh has suffered the losses of BDT 1,361 crore within the first couple of months of the starting of the pandemic as the government of Bangladesh banned all commercial flight to diminish the transmission of the virus and the losses of another BDT 1,001 crore was predicted by the experts in the month of May and July if the condition remains same.

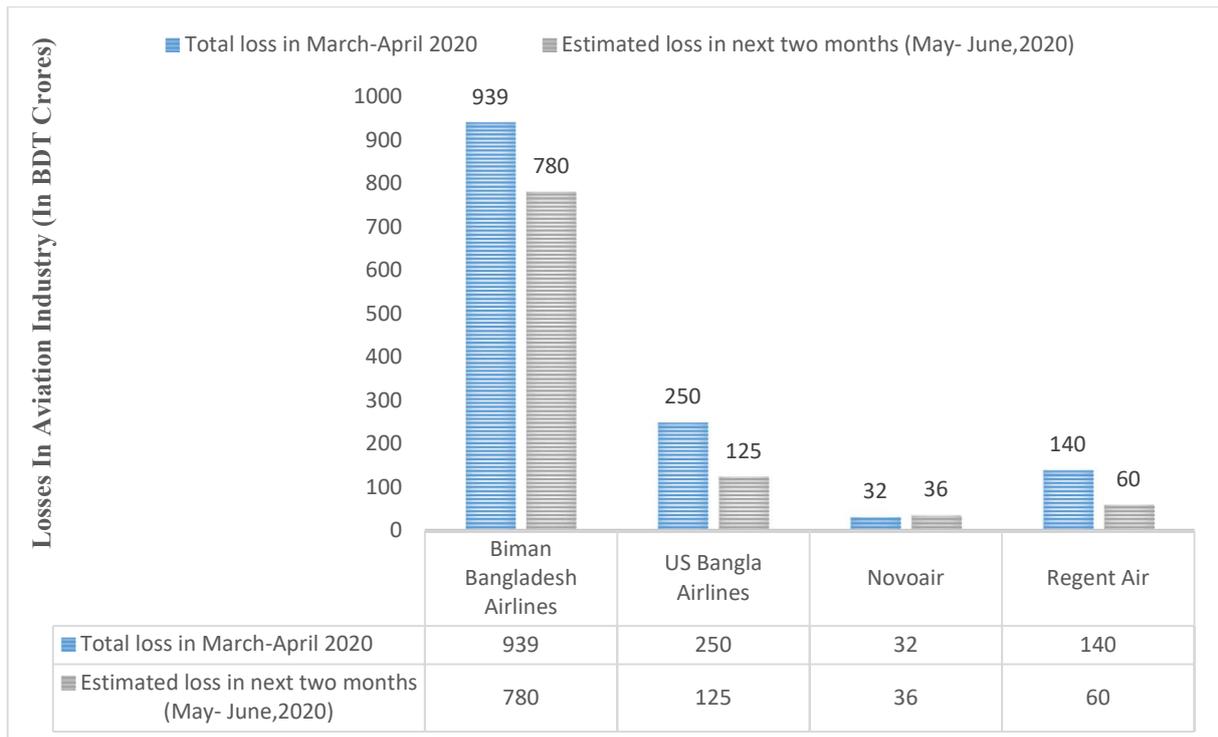


Source: The Daily Star (2020)

Figure 4. Changes in occupancy rates of luxury hotels in Bangladesh due to pandemic

The secretary of Civil Aviation Bangladesh has stated that the total losses of four airlines named Biman Bangladesh Airlines, US-Bangla Airline, Novoair and Regent Airways were respectively 939 crore BDT, 250 crore BDT, 32 crore BDT and 140 crore BDT during the month of March and April 2020 and he also stated that if there are no changes of the situation then estimated loss of these four airlines in next two months would be 780 crore BDT, 125 crore BDT, 36 crore BDT and 60 crores BDT as illustrated in Figure 5 and to cope up with that situation 10% to 50% salary of the employees have been cut off by the authorities.

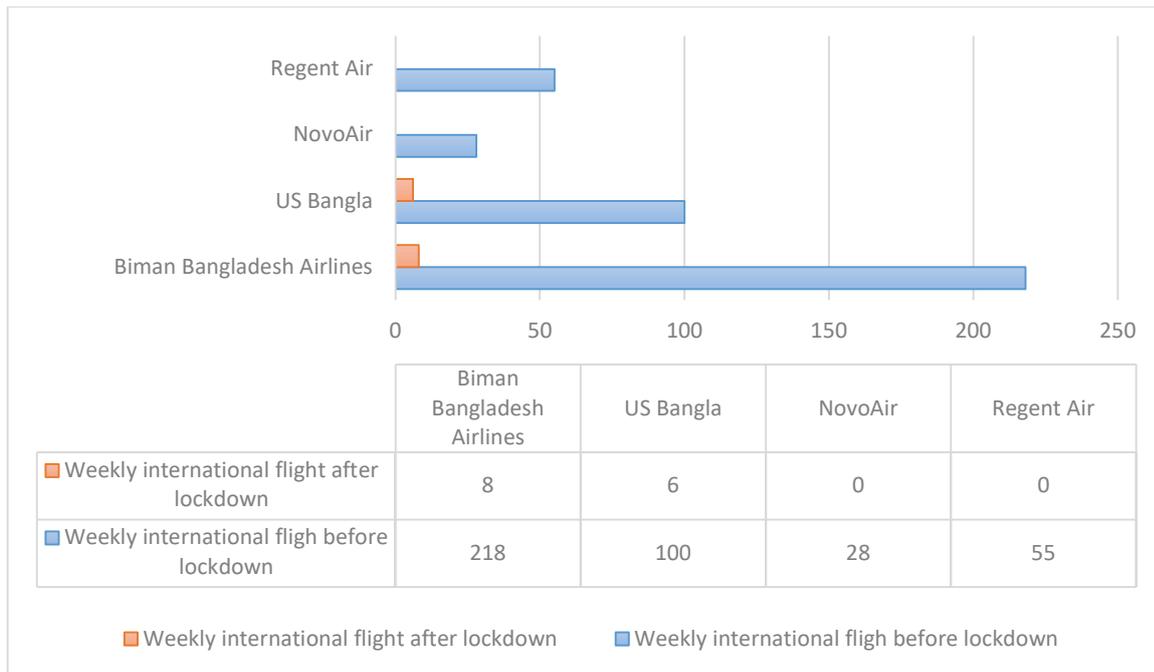
Biman Bangladesh Airlines took the loan of BDT 1500 crore from the Bangladesh Bank and they were said to pay the loan within the next one year with 4% of interest (Bangla Tribune, 2020a) but due to the movement control people were not allowed to travel which resulted in the losses of revenue of airlines and to lessen that loss airlines company were operating chartered and goods-laden aircraft. Biman also faced the trouble to pay the wages of their six hundred employees and the Board of Directors decided to cut off a percentage of their salary and the authority of Regent airways decided to close their flight operation both domestic and international for three months. As shown in Figure 6 due to the pandemic Biman Bangladesh Airlines was forced to decrease their international flights from 218 to 8, US Bangla lessen their international flight from 100 to 6 and Novoair had 28 weekly international flights which they have suspended, whereas Regent Airways has closed down their operation for the next three months from the starting of pandemic (Hasan, 2020).



Source: Dhaka Tribune (2020)

Figure 5. Losses in the aviation industry of Bangladesh

Suggested Possible Recovery Strategies: The effect of COVID-19 in tourism industry will sustain for a long period of time and there is no way for the industry to move further by avoiding the impact of this pandemic so the necessary steps should be taken which can diminish the effect of that pandemic on tourism industry (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). The government of Bangladesh has announced that the government will provide the loan at 9% interest to the stakeholders of tourism for boosting the tourism sector where the organizations will pay 4.5% of the interest of the loans and the rest 4.5% interest will be paid by the government (Haque, 2021). The budget for fiscal 2019-20 for the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism was 3,426 crore BDT and for the fiscal year of 2020-21, the government of Bangladesh has proposed a budget of 3,668 crore BDT for the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism which is 262 crore BDT more than the budget of the fiscal year 2019-20 with the provision of establishing a country-wide world quality aviation infrastructure and transforming the tourism sector into a new and integrated economic industry (Abdullah, 2020). On the other hand, Yeh (2020) in his study mentioned that patience is one of the most prime ways to success in tourism crisis and disaster management. Still, the restriction on travel is imposed so the tourism industry is still on suffered. To survive in this slow economic situation then the government should adequately support the organizations or else there is a high chance of the government being bankrupt. The government should sanction only that much amount of money to the organization how much they exactly need to survive otherwise sanctioning much amount of money can be a reason of being the government bankrupt and once the company will survive then it will get back its manpower who will go back to work after the disaster is over. Though the organization will be on the deficiency but that policy may minimize that.



Sources: The Daily Star (2020); Dhaka Tribune (2020)

Figure 6. Frequency of weekly flight in pre and post pandemic situation

Haque (2021) suggested that the tourism and hospitality sector should adopt the digital services of tourism and minimize the number of touch points such as automated door open-close system, automated check-in and check-out system, replacing elevator buttons by the foot pedal, electronic flight boarding without human touch and many more. Highlighting the digitalization services to the consumer will help the marketers to get a positive attitude and behaviour to their products as well as the marketer should focus on the protocols of health and hygiene standard while promoting their products and services as it will stimulate the consumers to purchase those services.

Strielkowski (2020) in his study shared a new idea regarding segregating the healthy and risk-free travellers from the unhealthy traveller by using smart quarantine and tracing kit which is already being used in many countries such as China and Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, tracing bracelets are used by the people and in China, the tracing technology has been installed into two payment apps named Alipay and WeChat Pay and both devices have a colour code system which shows the health status of that person whether he/she is risk-free or not as well as these devices help the authority to trace the movement activity of those people. Though that process is too costly to afford for many countries but adopting these devices may allow the unhealthy person to maintain self-isolation and the risk-free person to travel.

CONCLUSION

This study provides an understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the tourism and hospitality industry with some probable strategies to recover the tourism industry from that pandemic. Due to the movement control and restriction on travel the operations of the tourism industry have been either stopped or operated in a limited range as the consumer has started cancelling their previous reservations and stopped giving new bookings which result in the billions of revenue loss, a huge number of people lost their jobs and many companies have shut down their business as they are not able to bear the maintenance cost. The occupancy rate in the hotel has been decreased a lot, the airlines' companies have lessened the number of flights, tour operators are continuously receiving tour cancellations from inbound, outbound and domestic tourists, tourist transportation providers are about to close their business, overall the entire tourism and hospitality sector is in extreme suffering and millions of people have lost their jobs, some of them

changed their profession already. The tourism industry should adopt the new recovery strategies to make alive their existence such as installing new technologies, adopting new marketing strategies, maintaining hygiene standard, ensuring safety and security of the consumer and many more. All the stakeholders of the tourism industry should work together to survive in this COVID-19 pandemic. Current study provides an understanding of the present scenario of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with a guideline for future research to the academicians and probable recovery strategies for the industry professional to minimize the revenue losses of the industry. Future research on that topic could be conducted in both qualitative and quantitative method by taking data from both primary and secondary sources, the actual impact will be measured with the latest data and future research can be conducted to examine the impact of COVID-19 on tourist behaviour as well. Current study has some limitations first of all the entire study has been carried out by secondary data but there was the insufficiency of the previous data regarding that topic. secondly, it is very complicated to develop proper recovery strategies by measure the actual impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry until the pandemic is over as the impact varies with time to time and many of the data used in that study were predicted data by different organizations so the actual scenario could be different from the predicted scenario. Thirdly, all the suggested recovery strategies are the outcome of reviewing the related articles and many of them are not proven or tested yet.

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