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Abstract

This thesis paper conducted a case study analysis of a tourism destination of Bangladesh namely Cox's Bazar. The study focuses on one of the vital stakeholder groups which are local residents and their view on tourism development in the destination. To do so the study uses Social Exchange Theories (SET), Tourism Area Life Cycle, and Doxey's Irridex model for a better understanding of residents' perceived tourism impact and the rationale of their perceptions.

As there has been no research found focusing on residents' understanding of the tourism industry at Cox's Bazar, thus, the current study aims to understand this phenomenon and try bringing productive outcomes of the studied topics.

Overall, the study found positive views of the community members regarding the tourism activities and the respondents highlighted the economical outcomes, employment opportunities throughout the interviews. These findings are influenced by one important factor as the destination tourism centered and the majority of the population livelihood depends on tourism industry directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, to some extent, the negative impact of mass tourism was also mentioned by a minority of the study participant. By taking into account the community's opinions, the conclusions drawn can assist the tourism planners in shaping the city's tourism development.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Tourism has become one of the most significant economic growth industries over the last few decades (Hasani et al., 2016). The tourism industry is regarded as a factor in improving the host community's economy, quality of life, infrastructure, and transportation development (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; Biagi et al., 2020; Liang & Bao, 2015). Understanding the negative impact of tourism on the local community is an important issue for tourism development and it has been getting attention from various literature (Almeida-García et al., 2020; Alrwajfah et al., 2019; Bichler, 2021; Nejati et al., n.d.; Okulicz-Kozaryn & Adam, 2017). Although tourism development can improve various sectors of a destination, however, it can also cause changes in social aspects such as breaking of social ties (Szromek et al., 2019), change of lifestyle of a traditional community (Dai et al., 2017), as well as the commodification of culture (Mbaiwa, 2011). Many tourist destinations overlook the importance of sustainable tourism management during the development stage (Kuščer & Mihalič, 2019), and fail to recognize the harmful effect of mass tourism on local communities, which includes effects on the physical environment (traffic, crowdedness, land acquisition) as well as social and cultural life (frustration, quality of life, living cost, crime) (Jafari, n.d.; Kuščer & Mihalič, 2019). Rapid growth in visitors can jeopardize a destination's sustainability and create a negative impression among the host community; as a result, tourism development will not receive favorable support from various stakeholders in the future (Koens et al., 2018; Kuščer & Mihalič, 2019).

Locals' dissatisfaction with tourism may discourage tourists from visiting, and it may also influence a destination's tourism success or failure (Suntikul & Dorji, 2016). Locals play an essential role in the development of a destination, and the study of residents' perspectives should be acknowledged in tourists management (Almeida-García et al., 2020; Nicolaidis, 2015). Tourism organizations must assess local citizens' views on the destination's tourism activities, as this will benefit them in understanding key problems and implementing feasible strategies (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Acknowledging locals' perception can assist destination planners to alleviate the negative impact of tourism along with maximizing the positive outcome of tourism as well as creating a sense of relationship at the community level (Cordero, n.d.; Nejati et al., n.d.). Thus, it is necessary to consider the perception of locals about the impact of tourism in a community (Ansar & Md. Khaled, 2021).

To identify the issue of tourism activities and the potential impact based on the perceptions of locals this study focuses on the case of Cox's Bazar. Cox's Bazar is famous for being the longest sand beach along with some natural tourists spots (Inani beach, Himchhari, St. Martin island) (Hassan, 2021; Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Although various pieces of literature have investigated different aspects of Cox's Bazar, tourists responsible behavior and satisfaction (Sahabuddin et al., 2021), Cox's Bazar as a spiritual destination (Saxena et al., 2020), visitors perspectives of Cox's Bazar as a destination (Abul, 2016) the problem and prospect of sustainable tourism (Kalam & Hossen, 2018), marine tourism (Bhuiyan et al., n.d.), however, study on locals perceptions of tourism activities at the destination hasn't been thoroughly researched. Thus, the current study is structured to identify the view of residents at Cox's Bazar and the rationale for their different opinions regarding the tourism impacts.

1.1 Case Description: Cox's Bazar

Kôksho Bajar, also known as Kôks Bazar, is well-known for having one of Bangladesh's largest fishing ports as well as the district headquarters. Captain Hiram Cox, an official of the British East India

Company, was the inspiration for the name Cox's Bazar. A market named after him was constructed to honor his contribution to refugee rehabilitation activities (Parveen & Rajon, 2008; Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh's tourist capital, consists of miles of sandy beach, towering cliffs, surfing waves, rare conch shells, colorful temples, Buddhist Pagodas, tribes, and delicious seafood. Kolatoli, Suganda, Laboni, Inani, Himchori, Teknaf, Mohaskhali, Ramu, Saint, and Martin Island are a few of the points on the Sea Beach (Patwary et al., 2019). The shark-free beach is ideal for swimming, sunbathing, and bathing. Ramu, Moheshkhali, Sonadia, Teknaf, and St. Martin's Island, Cheradip (island) are among the attractions near Cox's Bazar. The experience of hospitality and cultural touch from the locals enriches the tourist destination (Patwary et al., 2019). Cox's Bazar is listed as a top destination in the bucket list of both international and domestic tourists. Seeing sunrise and sunset in a beautiful setting is a one-of-a-kind experience that visitors to Cox's Bazaar find fascinating (Parveen & Rajon, 2008). Cox's Bazar offers various range of tourism activities such as marine tourism (Bhuiyan et al., n.d.), adventure tourism, food tourism, nature-based tourism (Hassan, 2021). Outdoor activities such as jet skiing, surfing, and paragliding are also becoming famous activities in Cox's Bazar and could be potential attractions for getting more tourists to the destination (Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Bangladesh still struggles to attract international tourists due to inadequate transportation, accommodation, and other tourism facilities (Patwary et al., 2019; Sofique & Parvenn, 2009). However, the government is constantly developing strategic projects to improve the service and facilities to facilitate better tourist activities (Ananya et al., 2020; Hassan, 2021; M. S.-U.- Rahman & Hassan, 2020). To improve the air transportation at Cox's Bazar, the government has decided to expand the current domestic airport to an international airport for alleviating mobility hassle for tourists (Bangladesh National Portal, n.d.).

1.2 Tourists' attractions sites of Cox's Bazar:

Cox's Bazar is known as a tourists hub of Bangladesh because of its wide range of tourists spots and has been attracting all types of visitors to the destination (Hassan, 2021; Parveen & Rajon, 2008; Patwary et al., 2019; Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Saint Martin is the only coral beach of Bangladesh located in Cox's Bazar district. The island is small in areawise with a length of 8km and wide of 1km (Clammer & Mahapatra, 2016) Surrounded by a long sandy sea beach, and lots of coconut trees have become popular among domestic tourists (Hassan, 2021). The island is also known as a "coconut island" (Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Fishing is the main occupation of the residents of this island (Hassan, 2021), however, tourism has also become a source of income for some of the locals as the tourists travel the island almost all year round, and tourism facilities such as hotels, restaurants businesses are being built which is also responsible for biodiversity loss due to uncontrolled management (Clammer & Mahapatra, 2016; Kalam & Hossen, 2018). Maheshkhali Island known as the 'Vhati Anchol Dwip' of the Cox's Bazar district, the only hill island of Bangladesh, also famous for salt production (Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Along with the coast tourists also get to enjoy mangrove trees, hills forest.

Cox's Bazar has about 63 private and 5 government-controlled accommodation providers (Bangladesh national portal, n.d.). However, overall, 500 lodging facilities are available for tourism purposes. Cox's Bazar remains a top destination in the bucket list of both international and domestic tourists. The

influx of tourists numbers is enormous at Cox's Bazar approximately 15 million tourists visit Cox's Bazar every year, significantly 85,000 visitors per day during the high season (Hassan, 2021).

Tourism plays a vital role in economic improvement at Cox's Bazar (Parveen & Rajon, 2008), however, the negative impacts of tourism activities are also considered at the destination (Hassan, 2021; Kalam & Hossen, 2018; Patwary et al., 2019). To meet the needs of visitors and to build new hotels, motels, and resorts, a large amount of agricultural land is being picked from local farmers as a result some farmers are losing their source of permanent income (Hassan, 2021). Inadequate waste management and unplanned sewerage processes from the hotels endanger the local community (Kalam & Hossen, 2018) as well as marine life (Bhuiyan et al., n.d.). Furthermore, a lack of awareness among tourists about waste control issues such as plastic, food waste, and other waste products is keeping the beach area dirty (Hassan, 2021; Sahabuddin et al., 2021). Deforestation and a massive amount of hill cutting for tourism infrastructures have been immense at Cox's Bazar in recent times (Hassan, 2021).

1.3 Problem formulation

The rationale for conducting this research on residents' perspectives came from my initial ideas about the attractiveness of Cox's Bazar to the visitors of Bangladesh domestic tourists. As the destination remain full of the influx of massive tourists throughout the years, it is important to understand the impact of tourism activities in the destination on the view of its residents. The tourism sector has an impact on the economy through numerous mediums such as export revenues and import expenditures, in addition to creating jobs and contributing to GDP. Tourism operations in Cox's Bazar have a substantial impact on the local community, including creating jobs, improving facilities, transportation, improving quality of life, and health care. Although tourism is promoted as a means of increasing economic prosperity and improving the host destination, it is also critical that the effects of tourism on the host community be not disregarded by responsible authorities.

The following section explains the main choices for conducting this study on residents' perception of tourism development in Cox's Bazar. First, it highlights the importance of locals' views on tourism and the positive impact of their feedback on tourism development, particularly in the case of a mass tourism destination in a developing country like Bangladesh. This chapter also provides a perspective for the destination choice and concludes with the introduction of the research question that this study relies on.

1.4 Tourism Development and its impact on residents

Consideration of locals' views on tourism activities is essential for tourism representatives and differs depending on the life cycle of the destination (Gursoy et al., 2010). Even though tourism is accountable for the creation of employment opportunities and bringing economic prosperity to a destination, however, the negative impacts of tourism on the local community are also considerable (Biagi et al., 2020; Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017; Látková & Vogt, 2012). Although tourism development brings enormous economic, socio-cultural, environmental advancement for a community, however, residents are the ones who also suffer the adverse impact of mass tourism (Vareiro et al., 2013), such as increase in cost of living (Stylidis et al., 2014), traffic problem (Almeida-García et al., 2020). Analysis of residents' concerns and views regarding tourist activities and their consequences could also provide

useful information to governments and tourism developers (Vareiro et al., 2013). Unfortunately, acknowledgment of tourism's impacts on host communities is still avoided by tourism planners and responsible authorities (Bichler, 2021). However, unplanned and uncontrolled tourists numbers can result in over-tourism, a significant phenomenon that has been the center of attention in various tourism studies (Cheung & Li, 2019; Koens et al., 2018; Kuščer & Mihalic, 2019; Milano et al., 2019; Phi, 2020). An example of over-tourism occurs when massive amounts of tourists visit a famous destination at the same time of the year (Phi, 2020). This may lead to a disruption in tourism as some destinations have limited resources to cope with large influxes of tourists. An overcrowded tourism destination can have severe negative impacts on the local community such as excessive traffic, noise problem, congested public transportation, and places (Cheung & Li, 2019; Kuščer & Mihalic, 2019; Milano et al., 2019; Phi, 2020). Since the number of tourists in Cox's Bazar has been growing rapidly, tourism services and facilities, such as hotels and resorts, have been introduced, resulting in businesses filling up public spaces and hills (Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Although positive impacts of tourism are enormous for a destination, however, it is also vital to understand the negative consequences of tourism in mass destinations as local communities might acknowledge the negative impact over the positive ones (González et al., 2019; Martínez-García et al., 2017).

In its GSTC Destination Criteria v2 standards, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) identifies resident feedback and inclusion in the above tourism processes as one of the important criteria for destinations to become sustainable (GSTC,2019). The perspectives of local populations regarding tourism growth are significant to tourism's long-term sustainability as it helps destinations planners to produce strategic development plans which will alleviate the negative impacts on the community (Dai et al., 2017; Garau-Vadell et al., 2014; Gursoy et al., 2010; Okulicz-Kozaryn & Strzelecka, 2017). It is also ideal to identify the residents' view of tourism practices as a successful tourism destination also depends on the collaboration and support from the community (Nejati et al., n.d.).

1.5 Focus Site: Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Cox's Bazar is one of the most visited destinations in Bangladesh for both international and domestic visitors. Cox's Bazar is undoubtedly one of the country's most popular tourist destinations, with the world's longest sandy sea coastline (120 km). Tourism is considered the main source of economic activity in Cox's Bazar, as it is the most often visited tourist attraction. The life of the local communities is, directly and indirectly, reliant on tourism. Tourism activities in this area support the local community as well as other participants such as tour companies, businessmen, hoteliers, and entrepreneurs (Bhuiyan et al., n.d.), however, the negative aspects of tourism are also considered at Cox's Bazar including damage of environmental resources (Kalam & Hossen, 2018). During the tourist season, November to March, around 2 million people visit Cox's Bazar. Bangladeshi domestic tourists account for the majority of visitors, who come from throughout the country (Kalam & Hossen, 2018). Due to having tourists almost all year round it is important to understand residents' and stakeholders' views on the impact of tourism activities in the host community (Bhuiyan et al., n.d.). Cox's Bazar is known as the tourism hub of Bangladesh and the destination offers a wide range of tourism activities such as adventure tourism, eco-tourism, marine tourism, volunteer tourism, indigenous tourism (Hassan, 2021; Sakib-Bin-Amin, 2021). Hence, it is important to analyze how residents are affected and their opinions on overall tourism activities in their surrounding areas.

1.6 Choice of destination for the case study

As mentioned in previous chapters Cox's Bazar has been a subject of tourism research for various literature, however, no study has been conducted on understanding local residents' opinions on the tourism industry of the destination. This is surprising for me as residents are the key resource as well as important actors of tourism destinations and tourism literature considered residents' participation necessary for sustainable tourism development. As I have a connection to some residents as well as businesspersons thus, I found the motivation to carry out this study on locals' views of tourism in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

As a student of the Master in Tourism, I understand the significance of sustainable tourism practices. As a result, I believe there is a growing concern to understand residents' perceptions of tourism in the community and this specifically selected destination.

1.7 Research Question

The current study will focus on the following overarching question based on previous empirical studies in residents' perceptions of tourism and its impact on the community (Bichler, 2021; Eyisi et al., 2021; Vareiro et al., 2013). The research question is phrased as follows:

What are residents' perceptions of tourism activities in Cox's Bazar, and what factors contribute to those perceptions?

To begin, to address the multiple sub-question that this overarching question sets up, the project will consider: how do residents feel about tourism? What are the consequences of tourism practices in the destination? How have local residents been largely left out of the planning and future ambitions of the tourism sector in Cox's Bazar? And further, what are their thoughts on potential suggestions for developing sustainable tourism practices in the destination?

These inter-related questions will be posed through interviews with local residents, to investigate their feelings and attitudes, changing perceptions to the explanation of tourism.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

This study aims to investigate residents' perceptions of how tourism impacts Cox's Bazar and the rationale for these opinions. Therefore, this literature review will survey the existing body of literature on residents' perceptions of tourism and its effects, to gain a better understanding of previous theoretical considerations within the same topic of concern, as well as to assess possible gaps and limitations.

The current chapter will discuss the study of the above-mentioned topic in various academic literature and the use of different theoretical approaches. The chapter also includes the importance of locals' perception and involvement of tourism development of a destination. Furthermore, this chapter also touched upon the use of social exchange theory (SET) and the importance of stakeholders' collaboration. Finally, Butler's tourism area life cycle (TALC) and Doxey's irritation index model are also analyzed for a deeper understanding of residents' attitudes and perceptions of a tourism destination.

2.1. Tourism impacts and residents' perception

Numerous studies have examined host communities' perceptions of tourism development as well as impacts of the tourism industry (Bichler, 2021; Cordero, 2008; Eyisi et al., 2021; Garau-Vadell et al., 2014; González et al., 2019; Gursoy et al., 2010, 2019; Nejati et al., n.d.; Stylidis et al., 2014). Several reasons have led researchers to study the perceptions of residents, such as investigating how tourism impacts the quality of life of the host community or assisting tourism policymakers and developers as well as helping to identify how welcoming the host community is (Eyisi et al., 2021; Nejati et al., n.d.; Sdrali et al., 2015; Tovar & Lockwood, 2008). Studies have shown that residents' perceptions of tourism are dependent on the amount of economic benefit that the destination receives; however, perceived negative impacts of tourism can also cause unhappiness among the locals, and thus, the destination may lose its appeal (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2014; Almeida-García et al., 2020; Biagi et al., 2020; Garau-Vadell et al., 2014). Authorities must acknowledge that communities are not homogeneous and residents may not always view tourism development as a positive change, perhaps it's necessary to identify the underlying factors that could hamper the development of tourism. (Dizdarević et al., 2019; Ritchie & Inkari, 2006). Researchers recognize that residents' perception of tourism impacts is a multifaceted concept derived from various variables such as economic outcome (Garau-Vadell et al., 2014), personal and community benefits (Schofield, 2011), quality of life (Biagi et al., 2020; Woo et al., 2018), residents' place image (Stylidis et al., 2014), social carrying capacity (Muler Gonzalez et al., 2018).

According to Gursoy et al., (2010), the perceptions of the locals about tourism development are mixed as they see it from both favorable and unfavorable perspectives. Previous literature on residents' perspectives on tourism impacts identifies various issues, including overcrowding in public areas, traffic, increase in goods and property value, environmental loss as the adverse effect of tourism whereas development in public services, increase in outdoor activities, economic prosperity as the contributing attributes of tourism (Biagi et al., 2020; Schofield, 2011; Tovar & Lockwood, 2008). Tourism development is a continuous process that consists of both positive and negative outcomes for a community (Zhang et al., 2006a). However, unplanned and inadequate development strategies could weaken the support of residents for tourism growth (Stylidis et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to gather direct information and opinions of residents before any developing plan is set (González et al., 2019). However, it is also crucial for locals to have a medium or platform for conveying their thoughts (Bichler, 2021; Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017), and consideration of communities' perception is achievable in the form of a productive collaboration process (Aas et al., 2005; Bornhorst et al., 2010; Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020).

2.2. Stakeholders' collaboration and local involvement

Látková & Vogt (2012) explain that locals who benefit from tourism services and are aware of its favorable impact are more likely to acknowledge its advantages than those who are not familiar with it, who note the adverse effects. Community members with connections with tourism businesses as well as dependency on the tourism industry tend to support tourism development at a personal level (Látková & Vogt, 2012). The authors further described that tourism development helps a community in various positive ways such as infrastructure development, quality of life as well as creating a strong

sense of community and thus tourism perceived positive impacts are more likely supported by some of the locals in a destination (Látková & Vogt, 2012).

The findings of research conducted by (Bichler, 2021) identified the gap in management view on the inclusion of residents and stakeholders, recommending tourism planners and authorities seek a proper medium to enable more tourism actors. As opinions and perceptions of development differ among individuals, the development process might not be the same for all populations, but giving priority to the locals can alleviate the tourism process and prove to be beneficial in tourism planning as well (Gursoy et al., 2010; Jamal & Getz, 1995). The involvement of residents and addressing concerns community could facilitate understanding the impacts of tourism and can help ensure tourism sustainability (Sdrali et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2006b). Participation in tourism development is voluntary, usually administered by responsible tourism organizations, and community-based approaches are regarded as crucial forms of participation (Pascoli, 2021). However, it leads us to the study of tourism governance and collaboration (Baggio et al., 2010; Bichler, 2021). Governance is about the way numerous stakeholders interact with one another and how their relationships are maintained (Baggio et al., 2010). It is considered to be a conceptualized system that enables interaction between government agencies and the general public, thereby fostering policy implementation for the overall community and addressing its various issues (de Bruyn & Fernández Alonso, 2012). The collaborative governance process allows multiple stakeholders to share their perspectives on a destination's policymaking process based upon mutually acknowledged objectives (Barandiarán et al., 2019). In tourism, collaboration is considered as a key factor for the development of a destination (Barandiarán et al., 2019), by incorporation various actors and shareholders to facilitate better decision-making for the tourism governance (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Findings from research conducted by (Bichler, 2021), described the gap from the management point of view on the inclusion of residents and stakeholders, also suggest tourism planners and authorities find a proper medium for enabling more tourism actors. It also suggests that destinations remain competitive and developed centered in policymaking, therefore ignoring community participation, as well as limiting local stakeholders' involvement (Bichler, 2021). Nevertheless, the authorities must assure stakeholders of showing consideration for the public interest (Hall, 1999). Collaborative governance requires regular meetings and dialogue between agencies as well as direct participation of stakeholders in policymaking (Ansell & Gash, 2007). According to Hall (1999), an effective form of collaboration requires an open platform and communication between community members as well tourism authorities, and a public collaboration approach is more suitable as it provides a sense of positivity among various stakeholders for representing and discussing various issues of destinations.

2.3. Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET) has been used in various social research for studying residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development as it allows to study various perspectives based on experiment and psychological understandings (Garau-Vadell et al., 2014; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2014; Zerva et al., 2019). The applicability of SET was first introduced by Ap in 1992 (Nunkoo et al., 2013; Stylidis, 2018), suggesting that residents support development as long as the costs don't exceed the benefits (Látková & Vogt, 2012). SET considers three important

components: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural, which each play an important part in understanding residents' opinions regarding tourism development (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). As a foundation to promote sustainable tourism, Ap (1992) stresses a need for exchanges and participation from community stakeholders. An interactive process between community and tourism developers could facilitate the process of addressing the effect of tourism, which also represents the SET theory and maintains the balance of cost-benefit impacts (Eyisi et al., 2021). Ap, (1992) argues for focusing on tourism development that is equal to both costs and benefits that serve the needs of locals as well as relevant tourism participants. A community consisting of different groups of individuals and perceptions about tourism impact varies depending on personnel's interests and needs (Ritchie & Inkari, 2006; Schofield, 2011). Communities are not homogenous, therefore, some residents show a supportive attitude to tourism development if they enjoy the beneficial outcome of tourism and vice versa (Garau-Vadell et al., 2014). Tourism brings developments in various aspects of society (e.g. infrastructure, communication, transportation, entertainment, and recreational activities) which may not be available in the community without the progress of tourism (Ritchie & Inkari, 2006), which are accessible for both locals and visitors (Tovar & Lockwood, 2008).

Although tourism literature highlights potential economic benefits to influence residents' positive perceptions (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; Liang & Bao, 2015), residents also perceive views on tourism impacts influenced by their cultural and environmental experiences (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Residents' attitudes and opinions of tourism impact also can be dependent on the geographical position of the destination, community lifestyle, economical positioning. In a mass-developed tourism destination, local residents may feel annoyed for tourism development (Martínez-García et al., 2017), whereas the scenario could be opposite in a less developed destination where tourism is considered as a potential earning source of the community (Eyisi et al., 2021). Thus, SET helps to evaluate the complexity of understanding the residents' perception based on exchanges of various resources (Stylidis, 2018). In other words, *"Social exchange theory is originally a relationship maintenance theory that looks at how people arrive at their decisions in relationships"* (Zhang et al., 2006b, p.185). However, SET considers residents' perception as a linear process and it lacks the understanding of the community's perception over the change of the destination's development (Nunkoo & So, 2016). Hence, it is also necessary to identify residents' perceptions over the changing phases of destination and how tourism is perceived in the various timeframe, and TALC, as well as Doxey's irritation model, has been the most used framework in tourism studies in the understanding of community's attitude (Látková & Vogt, 2012; Szromek et al., 2019; Zerva et al., 2019), which will be discussed in the following chapters of the literature review.

2.4. Community Attachment

Community attachment is another important factor that influences residents perception of tourism (Látková & Vogt, 2012), also it is a contributor factor that determines locals support as well as involvement in tourism development and how they react to socio-cultural and environmental changes (Eyisi et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2006b). In tourism research, community attachment has been exemplified in various literature, as it is a sense of connection for residents to feel affection and

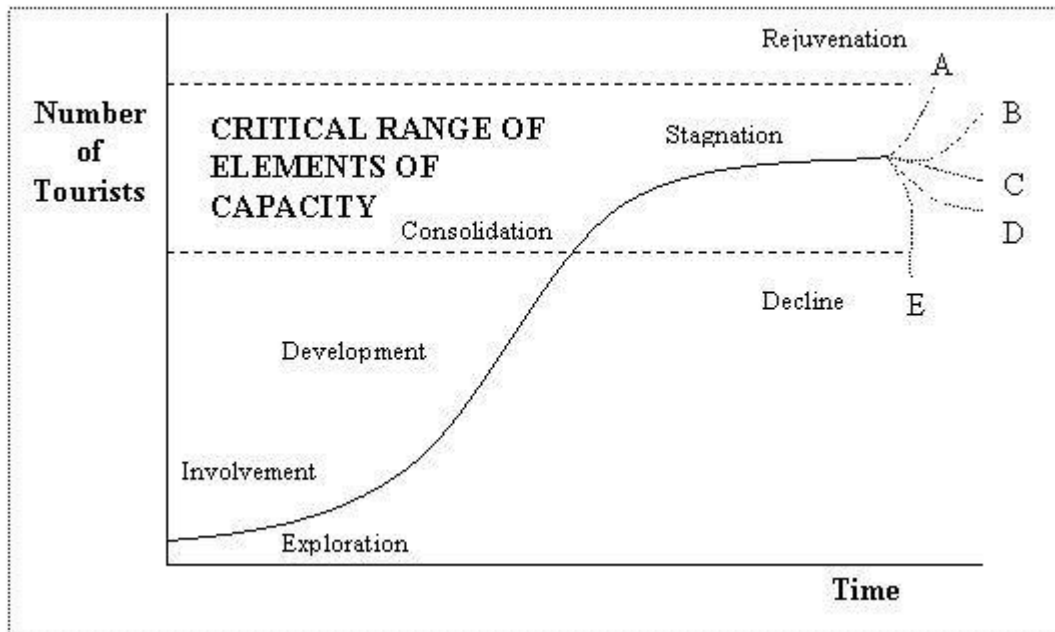
rootedness towards a community (Eslami et al., 2019; Guo et al., 2018; Gursoy et al., 2010; Park et al., 2017).

The study by Gursoy et al. (2010) suggests that residents' support of tourism is dependent on their understanding of the needs of the community and willingness to participate in the exchange benefits is significant. Tourism and community attachment have an inverse relationship when it comes to perceived positive economic and environmental impacts, and also the reverse relationship when it comes to perceived negative economic impacts (Alrwajfah et al., 2019). However, mixed results are noticeable in studies where economic benefits from tourism have influenced community lifestyle (Jeon et al., 2016), this statement was opposed by (Yu et al., 2011) who believe that it has no particular impact on residents' quality of life. Also, community attachment depends on individuals' interest and perception, hence, tourism development can be observed as positive and negative impacts depending on the community (Eslami et al., 2019; Gursoy et al., 2010). Community attachment builds resiliency among residents and inspires participation, protest, and improvement of society (Guo et al., 2018).

2.5. Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC)

Tourism area lifecycle (TALC) provides economical and territorial analysis of a destination and uses tourists' numbers and infrastructure. The tourism area lifecycle (TALC) provides an economical and territorial analysis of a destination (Garay & Cànoves, 2011), based on tourism numbers and infrastructure development (Uysal et al., 2012). The Butler TALC model has been an excellent framework for tourism studies over time, and some literature considers this model in determining tourism progress as well as in support of destinations (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Eyisi et al., 2021; Garay & Cànoves, 2011; Látková & Vogt, 2012; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2006b). The model reviews changing phase of a destination over the life span and how the destination development occurs over the changes in tourists number, and the consequent expansion of infrastructure, accommodation, and transportation (Garay & Cànoves, 2011).

To analyze the position of a tourist destination Butler divided the TALC model into six steps: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation (Butler, 1980).



Source: Richard W. BUTLER, (1980). "The concept of a Tourism Area Life Cycle of Evolution" Canadian Geographer. No 24, p.5-12

| Stages | Destination's Profile |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Exploration</i> | Known as an initial stage of the life cycle. Very few tourists are aware of the destination, less interaction between locals and tourists, no adverse reaction towards tourists from residents as the community does not feel affected by tourism activities. |
| <i>Involvement</i> | Tourism is being considered as a medium for economic stability, thus it attracts residents to involve in the industry, tourists' numbers increase but at a control level. The destinations start to develop the tourism facilities and it requires more space and lands which creates mix reaction among the locals. |
| <i>Development</i> | At this stage, the visitors' numbers increase rapidly due to mass promotion and marketing destination is overwhelmed with tourists and to some extent, the number goes up more than the actual inhabitants of the destination. The destination reaches its maximum capacity of visitor numbers. Local traditional markets and businesses are required to adapt with the satisfaction of tourists; therefore, the destination experienced the arrival of various foreign businesses and human power, and it can result by creating a negative image to the host community. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>Consolidation</i> | The contribution of tourism activities is immense for the host economy. However, the negative impacts are also noticeable as the destination gets overpopulated thus it affects the local life. |
| <i>Stagnation</i> | A slight decline is noticeable for the tourism industry at this stage. Besides, the destination could not bring new attractions or facilities for the tourists. |
| <i>Decline</i> | A downward is noticeable for the tourist market. Due to the competitiveness of the market, the destination will lose its attractiveness to travelers. |
| <i>Rejuvenation</i> | Seen as an opportunity for the destination to shift towards a new market. |

Source: The author's own understanding is based on (Butler, 1980; Szromek et al., 2019)

TALC model is prominent since its credibility in analyzing certain extrinsic variables (e.g. type of tourist, seasonality, stage of host destination's growth) that work as influencers in community's attitude as well as a destination's development phase (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). The model indicates that a rapid increase in visitors numbers could create irritation and infuriate the host community if tourism activities result in high-volume mass tourism (Zhang et al., 2006b). Residents are supportive of tourism at the early stages in a destination according to the TALC model; however, their attitude changes as tourism advances as they consider the long-term impact of tourism (Wortman et al., 2016).

2.6. Doxey's Irridex Model

To understand the negative impacts of tourism in the socio-cultural aspects of a destination, Doxey's irritation model is a useful framework in studying the changing attitudes of residents towards tourism (Cheung & Li, 2019; Zerva et al., 2019). Doxey's irritation model is considered a useful framework for assessing the relationship between the development of tourism and residents' happiness (Alvarez-Sousa, 2018; Doxey, 1975; Okulicz-Kozaryn & Adam, 2017).

The commonality between Between TALC and Doxy's Irritation index model is both frameworks stated that the negative impact of mass tourism leads to discomfort among the residents thus tourism loses its appeal in the host community (Zhang et al., 2006b). Doxey's irritation index model highlights the disadvantages of tourism and how it creates frustration among residents (Cheung & Li, 2019). The irritation behind residents towards tourism resulted from the excessive amount of tourists' arrival and the mismanagement from the responsible authority (Szromek et al., 2019). As an example of how this thesis is using Doxy's Irritation index in the context of local residents' attitudes to tourism, the following table outlines the various 'stages of irritation' applied from the model:

| Stages of Irritation | Residents' Attitudes |
|----------------------|--|
| Euphoria | Residents are welcoming to tourists at the destination, The primary stage of the development process, Locals see tourism as an opportunity for the development of the community. |
| Apathy | Visitors numbers increase slightly, A formal relationship is established between the community and tourists, residents are involved in tourism businesses and activities. Positive impacts of tourism are perceived, still, no focus on negative impacts are given or found by locals. |
| Irritation | With a rapid increase in visitors numbers, the destination becomes too dependent on tourism, the establishment of foreign businesses, public places are overcrowded, Locals starts to criticize tourism activities and concentrate on negative impacts of tourism in various aspects (socio-cultural, environmental, economic) |
| Antagonism | Residents are annoyed by tourism and tourism is no longer seen as a positive influence instead seen as a threat to the community, destination losses its appeal, tourists feel unwelcomed. |

Source: The author's own understanding is based on (Pavlić & Portolan, 2016; Szromek et al., 2019).

Even though Doxey's model has been used as a substantial framework for various tourism study, however, questioned regarding the applicability is also mentioned by some researchers (Cheung & Li, 2019; Cordero, 2008; Zerva et al., 2019). Doxey's model identifies the community as homogeneous and overlooks the instinctive factors which are important factors that contribute to the community's perception (Cordero, 2008). Therefore, it is a one-directional model that studies the community as a whole and disregards different opinions of members of the same community (Zhang et al., 2006b). Doxey's model considers tourism destinations as a linear process and it is challenging to understand the applicability of this study in understandings of local residents' perceptions of tourism development of Cox's Bazar where local life is significantly tourism-centered.

Nevertheless, Doxey's model is a potential framework in the study of the destination's developing stages and community members' attitudes (Linderová et al., 2021), hence, the model should be subjected to empirical tests and could be modified based on locations, problems, and the purpose of the study (Pavlić & Portolan, 2016).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This section of the paper discusses the methods used for this study and the methodological considerations that led to its design. Starting off the chapter are philosophical reflections such as hermeneutics and interpretivism were included in this paper and the rationale for using these philosophical orientations are explained in detail. As the study aimed to identify local residents' opinions regarding tourism development in Cox's Bazar the considerations of hermeneutics and interpretivism are justified as the residents' opinions are derived from their different social background, their connections to the tourism industry. Also, Since the study uses interviews as the main data collection process hence it is important to analyze thoroughly all the transcribed interviews as well as documents for better analysis of the subject therefore, the study acknowledges hermeneutics as another philosophical approach to understand how the perceptions of tourism impacts are and the rationale of such opinions among the local community.

This is followed by an explanation of the research design and methods, which includes the use of interviews with participants, secondary data sources as well as how the results were evaluated. Finally, the section concludes by discussing the use of thematic analysis for the analysis of all the primary data. Thematic analysis was implied to create new themes from the interview transcripts and to help the process coding process was used to identify patterns, similar and various interesting inputs provided by the study's respondents. Furthermore, the reliability, validity, and ethics of research are also discussed

3.1 Epistemology

Epistemology is known as knowledge philosophy concerns assumptions about what constitutes acceptable, valid, and legitimate knowledge, as well as how knowledge may be communicated (Saunders et al., 2015). In other words, epistemology offers a wide spectrum of nuanced formulations that provide a rich vocabulary for picking from and working with, and for probing and developing knowledge or ideas (Wagenknecht, 2016). In social research, positivism and interpretivism are the most applied epistemological approaches (Saunders et al., 2015). Since qualitative research methods were chosen for the purpose of collecting data, this study takes up another epistemological position: interpretivism. The current study acknowledges interpretivism as an epistemological approach. Human beings are different based on their cultural and traditional background and thus required the study of distinctive nature and logical experimentation of human study rather than conducting traditional physical phenomena (Bryman, 2012). Interpretivism allows researchers to understand a phenomenon or subject in eyes of the respondents and what is meaningful for them. Interpretation is a subjective process, but researchers' own values are incredibly useful for understanding research participants' views of social reality since they come from diverse backgrounds and are influenced by different ideas (Saunders et al., 2015). The interpretivism paradigm is concerned with understanding how people understand human phenomena, acknowledging that these phenomena can be viewed at many different levels (Paterson & Higgs, 2015). The use of interpretivism is prominent as the current research undertakes interviews with research participants and tried to understand the studied topic from their perspectives. The objectives of the current thesis paper are to understand the tourism developments and impacts at Cox's Bazar from the perspectives of the local residents thus the author identifies interpretivism as an ideal philosophical approach since it allows to understand social phenomena in the eyes of its respondents (Bryman, 2012). Perceptions of tourism development can

differ as well as other underlying factors such as locals' participation in the tourism sectors, tourism facilities are also a matter of concern while talking about the development process. Therefore, the author's role also significant in understanding the studied topic, author's familiarity to the destinations as well as local community is important to the research process (Bryman, 2012). As it is stated in the literature review chapter almost no social research has been conducted in understanding the Cox's Bazar's local residents' opinion of tourism development, hence, the interpretive role of the author is also valuable in this research. The author started this thesis paper with initial knowledge about Cox's Bazar as a tourism destination and had the familiarity to some of the study respondents who are also local residents. Thus, it helped author to structure the research process and subjective the research to "local perceptions of tourism development" since the topic has not been thoroughly studied.

3.2. Hermeneutics

Since qualitative research methods were chosen for the purpose of collecting data, this study takes up another epistemological position: interpretivism. A hermeneutic interpretation or understanding is derived from the author's understanding of the text and is an important element of epistemological interpretivism (Bryman, 2012). Also focuses on the understanding of documents, image stories (Saunders et al., 2015). The implication of Hermeneutics in social research is vital since it helps researchers in studying the background of how knowledge is constituted and how people perceive the world (Paterson & Higgs, 2015). An interviewee's perceptions of a research topic can be influenced by various historical and social contexts, which could impact their understanding of a topic from their own professional and personal backgrounds (Bryman, 2012). The present study seeks to understand tourism impacts from the perspectives of local residents who come from various backgrounds and their knowledge is influenced by their social characteristics and personal identity, therefore, the author aims to understand how the perspectives vary among different participants of the study. The author has the knowledge about tourism activities at the destination and initial contact was made with the author's friends who also happen to be the participants of this current study. Since the researcher has knowledge about various aspects of the destination thus it helped to understand the views and opinions of some of the study respondents, also why their rationale for different opinions. Hence, the use of hermeneutics is aligned with the current paper as it helped to identify the studied topic from the local perspectives and their familiarity with tourism in Cox's Bazar.

3.3. Relationship between theory and research

In accordance with the research questions and objectives it is also important to develop relevant theory, therefore, using appropriate theory allows authors to understand how the research results align or relate to the identified research theories (Bryman, 2012). In social research, there are two kinds of approaches to the relationship between theory and findings: deductive and inductive (Bryman, 2012).

The deductive method involves the use of a specific theory that is connected to the subject of the study and will have to be tested employing data collection, the process is also known as a theory-driven method, whereas the inductive approach is data-driven and by allowing meanings to emerge from the data that's being collected, one can identify patterns and relationships to form a theory (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). A deductive approach is more likely to be used in quantitative

research where theories and ideas emerge from identifying various literature to test the primary data of research (Bryman, 2012). Conversely, an inductive approach is more focused on generating theories or principles (Saunders et al., 2015). An inductive approach depends mainly on the primary data of a qualitative study and creates relevant themes to produce a theory. Therefore, this thesis paper finds the inductive approach suitable due to the qualitative nature of the study and the use of interviews for deeper knowledge creation of the discussed subject (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). For this thesis, qualitative interviews were conducted in exploring the perceptions of local residents of Cox's Bazar concerning tourism development and the interview data means to represent how the community perceives the impacts of tourism in the destination and what is their rationale for different opinions. An inductive approach begins with collecting data and, later, identifying themes in order to develop a theory primarily based on qualitative data.

Cox's Bazar is regarded as the most visited and popular destination of Bangladesh, and dependency on tourism is a major part of the local community. However, it is also considering whether to what extent the tourism development is being understood by the locals and how locals feel about the tourists' influx in their localities. Hence, the present study aimed to understand residents' views and try to create new knowledge, and find the in-depth analysis of the residents' attitudes towards the tourism industry and believe an inductive approach will be more useful in understanding the complexity of the community's perceptions. Thus, the present study conducted semi-structured interviews with the local residents, and later themes were created in order to understand the residents' opinions and other underlying issues of tourism influence at the destination. Therefore, the nature of this thesis paper is considered inductive.

This is consistent with the paper's epistemological considerations of interpretivism and hermeneutics, and the study intends to understand the phenomenon from the social view of the participants of this paper. Due to the inductive nature of this study, the knowledge and ideas produced from this study cannot be considered conclusive, rather serves as a foundation for future research (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015).

3.4. Research Design

This study seeks to explore locals' perspectives of tourism development in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Also, the study will try to identify the influences behind the different opinions of various participants of this research. In order to generate new knowledge and improve our understanding of the subject matter, but not necessarily to conclude, this study implies a case study analysis with an inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2015). As the study seeks to explore an in-depth understanding specifically of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh a case study analysis is useful in the understanding of a particular context. Nevertheless, a more detailed description of the methods is presented in this chapter's section on data collection.

3.5. Case study

A case study research allows researchers in understanding in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon in a real-life context (Saunders et al., 2015). A case study analysis examines a particular community,

organization, or place for analyzing a single case in great detail and depth (Bryman, 2012). To find out what is happening and why, and perhaps to understand the consequences and implications of the situation, an in-depth investigation can be conducted and case study research can create an intensive and thorough study of a particular phenomenon (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). A case study approach is suitable for qualitative research because it gives authors full freedom to design unstructured interviews and observe participation processes; therefore, it is more effective in making detailed and productive studies of a case (Bryman, 2012). Case study researchers in social science frequently examine not only the demographic characteristics as well as other facts of a particular instance, including how many people are involved or influenced and how indicators of influences change with time, as well as the participants' beliefs and perceptions (Alasuutari et al., 2008). This thesis paper finds that the case study design is the most useful and productive way to reach a deeper understanding of tourism impacts and consequences on local life.

Cox's Bazar is a popular tourism spot for both international and domestic visitors which offers multiple tourists places including beach, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and volunteer tourism. Therefore, the author considered Cox's Bazar as an ideal location for the current case study. The case study was designed after reading a variety of articles and news stories regarding the tourism aspects of Cox's Bazar in order to understand the tourism activities and issues at the destination.

The phenomenon (residents' perceptions) of the current study was inspired by the author's own experience as a tourist at Cox's Bazar as well as due to having familiarity with some of the local residents of the destination. Thus, issues regarding local life, community wellbeing were initially considered at the primary stage of the study design. Consequently, the study intended to understand "local perceptions of tourism development" by the implementation of a case study analysis on Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Overall, this paper is designed to identify residents' perception (phenomenon) of tourism development (context) with an aim to get in-depth knowledge of the community's thinking of tourism practices at a massive tourism destination as Cox's Bazar. Due to being a popular and busy tourism destination citizens from different parts of the country also reside in Cox's Bazar for work purposes. However, this study was designed to incorporate only the permanent residents of Cox's Bazar in order for a better understanding of the tourism impact over time and how they foresee the future of tourism at the destination.

3.6. Data collection

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected by conducting interviews with local residents of Cox's Bazar who represents various social background including local business owners, tourism employees, service providers as well as volunteers, etc. The study also uses various articles as well as newspapers to gather secondary data. Detailed explanations will be presented in the following chapter as to how the interview participants were selected, what types of interviews were conducted, and the trustworthiness of the study.

3.7. Qualitative research

This thesis paper uses a qualitative method for primary data collection. A qualitative research strategy usually emphasizes words as opposed to numerical measures to collect and analyze data (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research is often used for exploring in-depth knowledge of a study and to establish trust, participation, access to meanings, and in-depth understanding, qualitative research can be termed naturalistic since the researchers operate in a natural setting (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). Qualitative research is also associated with interpretive methodology and matches the

philosophical choice of the current study as it seeks to understand the view of Cox's Bazar's local residents on tourism development in the destination. As for the data collection method, qualitative research offers three different types of process (e.g. interview, participation observation, and focus group) (Bryman, 2012). This thesis paper chooses the interview method as the main medium for collecting primary data. An interview can be a useful method for gathering valid and reliable data that is relevant to the research question(s) (Saunders et al., 2015). In the current study, the qualitative research design was employed as it has the capability of creating theories and in-depth knowledge of a topic through conversation, images, and videos in comparison to quantitative research, which is based on numerical data, hypotheses and is designed to test theories and survey respondents have limited choices when it comes to answering questions. As this topic is new to the applied destination and no studies have been conducted to gain insight into residents' perception of tourist activities in Cox's Bazar, qualitative research is the most effective method to gain insight into participants' opinions and thoughts on the social world as well as interpreting the rationale for their different perceptions (Bryman, 2012). The author believes that using a qualitative interview will allow the discovery of the different views and opinions of different respondents of the study and their rationale for different opinions. Also, it will be an advantage for the author to ask relevant follow-up questions and create a productive conversation to investigate the other significant issues of Cox's Bazar from the local perceptions. On the other hand, using quantitative research wouldn't allow the respondents to freely express themselves whereas they would have only answered to the limited options. Hence, the author acknowledges the benefits of using the qualitative, method in understanding perceived impacts and development of tourism by the local residents of Cox's bazar.

3.8. Sampling

A non-probable sampling is employed in the study to select participants for the interviewing process. The non-probability sampling setting provides alternatives to probability sampling, most of which incorporate subjective judgment (Saunders et al., 2015). The study also uses volunteer snowball sampling to get respondents from various backgrounds of Cox's Bazar. This type of sample consists of initial contacts with a small group of potential respondents who are relevant to the research topic and then using those contacts to reach other potential respondents (Bryman, 2012). The use of snowball sampling is evident as good numbers of respondents were suggested by the initial participants of the study and who were invited later by the author. Saunders et al. (2015) define it as a sample selection procedure in which information from the initial respondents is used to obtain future respondent information. Participants were allocated by using Facebook, LinkedIn as well as a personal connection. Furthermore, respondents were invited to participate voluntarily by posting about the current study on travel pages of Cox's Bazar. Meanwhile, during the first stage of this paper writing author made initial contacts with some of the residents of the Cox's who happen to be in connection with the writer's social network. Who eventually helped to find similar participants via their connections and knowledge.

3.9. Semi-structured interviews

To obtain reliable and accurate information from the participants', semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of this qualitative research. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a systematic set of questions that resemble an interview plan but can change their order as needed (Bryman, 2012). A semi-structured interview allows researchers to explore different aspects of a studied topic by conducting in-depth interviews with respondents (Saunders et al., 2015). The utilization of semi-structured interviews allows interviewers to pose questions that are not included in the initial interview guide if he or she picks up on things the participant said (Bryman, 2012). The author also mentions that researchers will most likely conduct semi-structured interviews if they have a specific goal in mind rather than simply researching a broad topic and thus, gives the opportunity to address more concrete issues (Bryman, 2012). As the current study uses exploratory research and an inductive approach, hence it aligns with the use of semi-structured interviews and will help to unfold the discussed topic as well as answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2015). This study employed a semi-structured interview method geared towards keeping the focus on primary research objectives.

3.10 Formulation of interview guideline

To make the interview process productive and fluent an interview guild was created, and questions were prepared in advance. The questions were formulated based on the literature considered for thesis research as well as keeping connections with the research objectives. For instance, to understand the interviewees' background a general question to describe their personal details was asked. Thus, a question like this gives a clear statement from understanding the relationship participants have with the destination as well as if they have any connection to the tourism industry or not. The interviewer also invited participants to describe Cox's Bazar as a tourism destination from their perspectives so that it is easier to understand their achieved knowledge about the destination and surroundings. The author believed asking this sort of formal question helps to make the participants comfortable, ease the interview process, and most importantly allow them to take the lead in the conversation process. Nevertheless, some additional questions were added based on discussions brought by the research's respondents, and to provide clarity to the interview process, several sub-questions were asked by the interviewer. For example, one participant talked about local residents' offerings accommodation for tourists at the hillside locations of Cox's Bazar, and as a follow-up question interviewer asked the respondent about his reflection on locals' residents' participation in other tourism facilities and services. A semi-structured interview needs to be flexible; asking open questions to participants can prevent the interview from turning into a formal one (Bryman, 2012). The current study implied an informal interview guideline also participants were asked open questions throughout the conversations. In addition to recording the interviews, side notes were taken during the interviews in order to record interesting information and to aid in the translation process since most of the interviews were conducted in the participants' preferred language (Bengali). Although the majority of the interviews were conducted online via using Zoom, Microsoft teams, however, some of the interview processes also held on a one-to-one conversation with local residents of Cox's Bazar residing in Copenhagen, Denmark. Two of the physical interviews took place at participants' residences and the other one was at a library.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

In social research ethical consideration is an important segment that needs to be considered by researchers to maintain personal information and knowledge provided by different participants of a study (Bryman, 2012). Ethical consideration is important, whether collecting primary data from humans or gathering secondary data since it must be confidential to prevent harm to respondents (Saunders et al., 2015). Therefore, Bryman (2012) emphasizes the importance of ethical issues in qualitative research, since participants' personal information and social background must be protected (Bryman, 2012). The participants were assured of keeping their information private and keeping the confidentiality of the research. Also, respondents were sent a consent form before the meeting. The consent form was designed following General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As part of informed consent, participants have the option to decide whether they want their names used or not, and whether they want their interview recorded or not (Bryman, 2012). As for the authors' advantage of having a consent form, if any concerns are raised later by participants or others, the researcher can refer to a signed record of consent (Bryman, 2012).

3.12 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important factor in assessing the quality of research (Bryman, 2012). A research project's trustworthiness is important not just in affecting change in the context in which it was conducted, but also in building a body of knowledge that can contribute to social change (Collier-Reed et al., 2009). One way to establish credibility is to make a clear presentation of the research's topic and objectives to ideal participants of the study. Bryman (2012), suggest authors being honest and clarification of research purpose to the initial contact stage of the participant, hence it alleviates difficulties in finding exact participants as well as enhances interest in proper respondents and influences the quality of the research. Establishing the credibility of study results usually involves both assuring that study is undertaken following standard exercise norms and presenting research outcomes to the research's participants to justify the findings presented by the authors, also known as abducting reasoning (Bryman, 2012). The current study also offered respondents the transcription of the interview process and the research results. However, the least number of participants showed interest in reviewing the interview transcription.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This chapter discusses the data analysis process, including translation, transcription, and coding. Thematic analysis is employed to gain a deeper understanding of the subtopics covered by the paper and to categorize the discussion part.

4.1. Transcribing

The majority of the interviews were conducted in the Bengali language and were translated into English. Side notes taken during the interviews were used to help avoid missing any relevant information. Transcription of interviews is time-consuming and requires sufficient time allocation for the researchers (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). However, the benefits of transcription are it

helps authors in the creation of themes for the findings part (Saunders et al., 2015). All transcribed interviews were re-checked by going through the interview recordings by the author, this process is called data cleaning (Saunders et al., 2015). Even though transcription of qualitative interviews can take a considerable amount of time, it helps researchers become familiar with the data and make notes on each interview, which is helpful for the analysis phase (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015).

4.2. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the most widespread methods in analyzing qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). It is also considered the most flexible and adaptable approach compared to other qualitative approaches, allowing researchers to find or create specific themes connected to the research's objectives (Saunders et al., 2015). The act of coding involves labeling data with symbolic symbols or using colors to indicate similar statements; it is a useful strategy for preparing data for analysis (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2015). Coding is essential in the thematic analysis method and required authors to go through all the interview transcripts in order to make specific themes (Saunders et al., 2015). In this current thesis paper, all the interview transcripts were coded to find patterns and connections to assemble similar answers of the respondents. Which further helped in segmenting themes for research findings.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter data gathered via the interview process are presented. For processing the data, three methods (Inductive Approach, Coding, and Thematic Analysis) were used, as they proved useful for identifying themes and patterns.

The findings have been categorized based on five themes that emerged from the coding methods namely, Cox's Bazar in the eyes of its residents, perceived positive impacts, and mixed opinions, negative impacts of tourism, locals' involvement in tourism, future of tourism, and residents' expectations.

5.1. Cox's Bazar in the eyes of its residents

The first theme was found provident as it relates to the first research question. It is necessary to understand how tourism activities in the destination are perceived by the residents and their awareness about the destination's popularity. While asking about their perception of Cox's Bazar as a tourism destination, most of the respondents identified the destination as a famous place in Bangladesh.

Cox's Bazar is one of the most famous tourist places in Bangladesh and has the world's longest sea beach in the world. (Respondent 1, 2021)

Cox's Bazar is a very popular location for tourism. We have the longest sandy sea beach, Himchori, Inani beach, and Cox's Bazar is known for tourism and has a variety of tourist spots. (Respondent 2, 2021)

Cox's Bazar has the World's longest sandy sea beach. We have tourists spots such as Suganda beach, Inani beach, Kolatoli, laboni, Marin drive, teknafe, Moheskali, and Saint Martin, the only coral island of Bangladesh. (Respondent 4, 2021)

Some of the respondents were very thrilled and proud while describing Cox's Bazar as a popular destination.

Cox's Bazar is the number one tourist destination in Bangladesh. You cannot find a location in Bangladesh where you get to see sea and hill views at the same place that is something we have in Cox's Bazar (.....). we got around 15 to 20 flights from Dhaka only every single day so it's booming (.....). So, from my perspective, it is one of the busiest and famous tourist destinations in Bangladesh. (Respondent 3, 2021)

Cox's Bazar is a spectacular destination for tourists. In my experience, I have seen the same tourist repeatedly travel to Cox's Bazar 5 to 6 times. (Respondent 5, 2021)

Cox's Bazar is also perceived differently by some participants as a tourist destination. Few participants expressed concerns over quality service and the development of the destination.

Cox's Bazar is not really that developed as you expect a perfect tourism destination to be. People are not really aware of the development process. It is true that we have some 5- and 4-star hotels but still, we need more development especially in the communication sector (.....). roads, other spots of Cox's Bazar have not been developed yet. Also, the public areas need to be developed. (Respondent 7, 2021)

Participants also questioned the principles and responsibility of the local businesses during the peak season. Local businesses as well as hotels, resorts charge extra money from the tourists and take negative advantage of the situation.

I think it is a beautiful destination. But I would like to mention a recent incident that happened at Cox's Bazar. We had a 3-day government holiday (16th – 18th December 2021) and we had a huge number of tourists at Cox's Bazar (.....). If there is a room that you can find in normal time for 2000 BDT per day, it was sold for around 8,000 BDT during these busy days (.....). You simply cannot charge a normal 50Tk meal as 300Tk because of too many customers. I feel sorry for the tourists that are helpless (Respondent 6, 2021).

This statement was also supported by other participants of the study, and several mentioned the rapid price hiking and unawareness of the responsible authorities about tourists' sufferings in holidays in Cox's Bazar.

We had a straight 3-day holiday from 21st to 23rd February around 20,000 tourists were sent back to Dhaka because of not being able to find accommodation for them. (Respondent 4, 2021)

It is not really accepting what the local businesses did in this holiday season; they almost looted all the money of the tourists by increasing the prices of everything. (Respondent 7, 2021)

For instance, between 16th to 18th December of this year we were so busy and approximately 50,000 tourists remained stranded because they did not book any accommodation for their trip. (Respondent 5, 2021)

Some tourists, as well as the normal public, wrote on social media about the amount of money they spent at Cox's for 2 or 3 days would get them a much better trip to our neighboring country India or Nepal. So, tourists are trying to find an alternative to Cox's Bazar. It is not good for the destination. (Respondent 6,2021)

Opinions differed among the respondents about whether Cox's Bazar is capable of meeting the carrying capacity of the tourists. The current study also interviewed local residents who are involved in the hospitality sector and believe Cox's Bazar has enough capacity for tourists.

I think we have enough capacity to meet the numbers of tourists, so it is not a problem from my thinking. (Respondent 5, 2021).

But I believe we have enough hotels and resorts for meeting and accepting the number of visitors in normal times, so it is not a problem for us (....). I would not say locals face that kind of problem; they enjoy it when there are lots of tourists. Because their livelihood depends on tourists, without tourists it's hard for them to survive. (Respondent 4,2021)

While discussing the carrying capacity of the destination respondents from non-tourism backgrounds expressed their frustration about the crowdedness of the destination due to tourism. Few of the participants also described Cox's Bazar as overcrowded and do not have the ability to host enough visitors.

Always overcrowded not just crowded. I would use the word overcrowded. There is a scarcity of accommodation (Respondent 1, 2021).

Cox's Bazar is not ready to accept 2 to 3 million people every year (.....). It exceeds the carrying capacity. It's not regulated, especially on the occasions like 31st night and all those big occasions you see a lot of people are sleeping in the seashores, they don't get rooms in hotels, and they sleep on the benches at the beach. (Respondent 3, 2021)

If we have the capacity of hosting 2 million tourists but we are getting 5 million then of course everyone will suffer, and it will create room for illegal businesses to produce sudden price hikes. (Respondent 7, 2021)

Considering all of the above it can be concluded that Cox's Bazar is regarded as a major tourist destination of Bangladesh by the local residents, and they believe the destination offers a range of attractions for tourists. Although it is debatable whether Cox's Bazar is developed or underdeveloped from interviewees' points of view. However, they believe the destination will be developed strategically and would eradicate hassle for both tourists and the general citizens.

5.2. Perceived positive impacts and mixed opinion of tourism development

In all cases, the informants reported about tourism development and the advantage of tourism in the local community of Cox's Bazar. Dependency on tourism is evident in the local community starting from a local grocery shop to the accommodation sector. Tourism has been widely praised by respondents for various positive influences, such as creating employment opportunities, improving infrastructure, and improving the well-being of Cox's Bazar's local residents.

In answering the question about the impact of tourism in the local community respondent one expressed the local dependency on tourism and the change in the city's infrastructure.

They make the best out of the situation. For example, they make some cottages for rent over the hilly tracks. Even though they live there besides that they are making some business out of the situation, out of the food, culture, etc. Due to tourism, the infrastructure of the city has changed significantly. (Respondent 1, 2021)

I can give you an example of the marine drive which was built for tourism purposes and we as a local also enjoy it. (Respondent 2, 2021).

The current participants also discussed the positive influence of tourism and also mentioned the creation of new employment such as opportunities for local photographers.

Yes, we are getting economically benefited in many ways. Tourists not only spend money only on hotels and restaurants, but they also visit the local shopping mall and use transportation. Another example, we have local photographers at Cox's Bazar so if tourists also pay them for taking pictures, locals' shops, grocery stores all are being benefited because of tourism. (Respondent 2, 2021)

Locals get the best out of tourism, and they get the huge benefit due to tourism such as employment opportunities, also the transportation sectors get income from tourism, hotels, and motels gets mostly benefited (Respondent, 5, 2021)

Local's life exists because of tourism. The economy of Cox's Bazar is based on the tourism industry. (Respondent 6, 2021).

Overall, all of the interviewees admitted the importance of tourism activities in the daily livelihood of the local residents. Along with the creation of various jobs, tourism has been an influential factor in bringing change in the community as well as the development of the city.

To identify the development process, as well as changes in tourism activities of Cox's Bazar over the recent years, participants were asked to describe noticeable changes in the destination. A good number of participants mentioned the improvement in the hospitality sector in the past years.

Because in the past 10 years the hotels, restaurants were not sophisticated as they are now. So, there is some kind of modification in infrastructure and roads as well. (Respondent 1, 2021)

The tourism industry in Cox's Bazar has boomed. I mean it's at its peak honestly and I mean that there have been a whole lot of constructions of hotels, restaurants, and other developments going on. Tourists are increasing day by day, it's never decreasing (.....) I would say the tourism industry has been at its peak impossible right now. (Respondent 8, 2021)

A similar statement was also expressed by other informants of the study as they explained the progress of Cox's Bazar as a developed tourism destination and the advancement in the tourism services.

There is a huge change in the sense of development and tourism facilities and all those 5-star hotels have been built in the last 10 years. I said we have like right now, four 4 stars hotels and one is Building right now that you know the Paris Hilton Hotel, one of the renowned hotel chains in the world, they are building a hotel. (Respondent 3, 2021)

Cox's Bazar has witnessed a massive change over the years in the tourism sector. We have so many investors in the tourism industry which are very few. For instance, around 10 years ago we had very few five-star hotels at Cox's Bazar but now we have very good numbers of five-star hotels such as Royal Tulip, Cox's Today, Ocean Palace, Sea girl. Cox's Bazar has become so developed in every aspect of tourism especially in the communication sector. (Respondent 4, 2021).

However, it is worth mentioning that the topic of lack of international tourists is also mentioned by some respondents. This issue came into discussion while talking about taking off the number of tourist arrivals at Cox's Bazar.

They are mixed. From my point of view, there are mixed tourists, 30% from overseas tourists I mean international and 70% are domestic tourists. (Respondent 1, 2021)

We do not get a lot of foreign tourists (Respondent 3, 2021)

According to some informants, the facilities and services provided by the businesses in the destination meet the expectations of the domestic tourists, however, it is not up to the standard of satisfying the international tourists. Some respondents believe that Cox's Bazar still lacks quality service in terms of getting international visitors.

It's not only in the case of Cox's Bazar almost everywhere in Bangladesh we lack international tourists because we don't provide quality services to them. (Respondent 4, 2021).

Even though there are so many renowned restaurants, you don't get quality food with the quality amount of money spent. That's another issue. (Respondent 1, 2021)

We have mostly domestic tourists, but the international tourist numbers are very minimal (.....). Even though we have some good and improved hotels and restaurants, tourists do not get enough facilities. If foreigners visit here local people do not give them enough privacy, they always follow them wherever tourists go. Another barrier is the political imbalance of our country. (Respondent 7, 2021).

Nevertheless, Cox's Bazar has been developing and growing as a tourism destination over the years and participants show a great sense of positivity while talking about the impact of tourism.

5.3. Negative impacts of tourism development

Regarding the negative impacts of tourism at Cox's Bazar, for the respondents, environmental pollution and inadequate waste management are the significant effects of tourism development. Participants showed great interest while talking about the negative impacts and questioned the duty

of the authorities in the destination as the community and surroundings well being are being ignored by the hotels and restaurants.

For example, environmental losses are breaking. Hotels are built all over the place, especially on the seashore. It is prohibited to build any kind of infrastructure near the beach. But people are not abiding by the law, they don't care about the law. They are building hotels over the seashores and that's what can hurt nature. (Respondent 1, 2021)

The local environment is being polluted because of tourism such as poor waste management, tourists throwing garbage everywhere. (.....). In my opinion, hotels are responsible for the environmental pollution at Cox's Bazar. For instance, they do not have any proper waste management. Most hotels dump their waste at the sea which is very dangerous for marine life. (Respondent 2, 2021)

If we talk about the negative impact of tourism on the environmental aspect the situation is horrible in Cox's Bazar. (Respondent 6, 2021)

Residents perceive Cox's Bazar as a rapidly growing tourism destination; therefore the city attracts investments from various businesses. Tourism development requires infrastructure development for instance hotels, resorts, restaurants, and expansions; however, there are concerns that the stakeholders are not following the right plans and regulations. Hence, it causes frustration among locals and calls for the attention of tourism planners.

a lot of construction and all the hotel and motel areas are built up without regulation. Deforestation and misuse of natural resources are being done in the city. Actually, because the people are building without following regulations. (Respondent 3, 2021)

There are also some negative impacts of tourism. There are some problems recently happening like people are building resorts, markets, and restaurants near the beaches and seashores which is not good for the environment. (.....). Even though there was a rule from the court to demolish the shops and markets from the beach areas but still have not seen it getting implemented. So, if the Government wills it can be solved. (Respondent 5, 2021)

You're building lots of hotels, restaurants, constructions, and everything I mean and when it goes beyond the capacity of nature it hits back obviously. Since there is no specific you know disposable system or a proper waste management system, (.....). so, it's bad for the environment obviously and you know waste management systems in the sea beach area are not good enough. (Respondent 8, 2021)

The majority of the participants show concern about the negative impact on the environmental aspect of the destination. Surprisingly only one informant discussed the severe influence of mass tourism on the wildlife of the community. The respondent expressed concern about the possible extinction of tortoises at the beaches, which used to be available at the seashore.

Another problem is the survival of marine life. It used to happen that the tortoise used to visit the seashores or the beaches to lay eggs but since the tourists are occupying all the areas nowadays, we do not see any tortoise near the beaches. (Respondent 2, 2021)

While discussing inadequate waste management from the tourism service providers, some respondents mentioned unawareness and irresponsible behavior of tourists, and also believe visitors need to pay attention to the environmental aspect of the destination by following rules.

Tourists have to take the blame if you drink a soft soda, you can't throw the empty can or bottle into the sea, it is not the authority's job to teach you the basic manners. (.....). they are not aware of our roles as a tourist and it's time we think about that. (Respondent 6, 2021).

Of course, tourists should be responsible. There are some dustbins and specific places for waste so they should use it. Recently the authorities had some employees who cleaned the beaches in morning and evening time. (Respondent 7, 2021).

This view was opposed by one interviewee who pointed that authorities must be responsible and implement clear rules and guidelines to ensure better waste management and preserve the beaches rather than simply blaming the tourists.

well, people use a lot of plastic and throw plastic waste at sea which is not good, and we see it comes back to the beach with the waves. (.....). When tourists visit Cox's Bazar, they want to spend a relaxing time and they already spent money on their tour so they will not always follow the guidelines so we should not blame the tourists. So, I think it's the authority that needs to take the step. (Respondent 4, 2021)

Furthermore, interviewees also addressed the crowdedness of the destination and the traffic issues. As a result, it impacts the daily life of the residents also makes it uncomfortable for the tourists roaming in different areas of the destination.

We already have so many tourists at Cox's Bazar that the roads are already crowded, and the bench at the seashores are fully packed there is no space left (.....). . Just to make some extra space for the tourists' authorities have built more new chairs at the seashores for free (Respondent 4, 2021)

We want to keep the beach are free from businesses so people can walk and enjoy freely at the beach. Even though there was a rule from the court to demolish the shops and markets from the beach areas but still have not seen it getting implemented. (Respondent 5, 2021).

It was so crowded that people were stuck in traffic for a long time and even traveling a small distance. (Respondent 7, 2021)

As the findings suggest tourism has been a blessing for most of the community of Cox's Bazar. However, tourism development became a nightmare for many locals as they were forced to hand over their home property as well lands to the government and investors in order to expand the tourism industry. The issue of the loss of lands by some of the locals was mentioned by two respondents of this study.

Due to over-tourism, some locals were forced to leave their homes because of the orders of the government. People used to reside near the seashore or the beaches but government force them to

leave the places and move elsewhere. However, in order to get something, you also have to give up something. (.....). I can give you an example of taking the lands of locals by the government. If the government, asks a land from you have to give it to them no matter what. The government uses the lands for tourism development, and they pay a very minimum price for the lands to locals. (Respondent 2, 2021)

Local people experience negatively. Because a lot of the land is actually being bought by the land mafias and a lot of hotels and motels are building and destroying natural resources and it is not well regulated. So, it's an unplanned development that is going on actually. (Respondent 3, 2021)

Commenting on the discussed issue respondent 4 opposed the claim of forcefully land acquisition by the government and businesses. The participant expressed the existence of strong rules and laws, also believed it is the locals who demand way more money for their properties than the market price.

I don't think the accusation that locals' lands are taken forcefully is a legitimate claim as we have law and rule in our country you cannot take someone's property without their consent, so this claim is not true. On the other hand, as I know locals demand more money than the normal amount for the property (Respondent 4, 2021)

As a whole, this chapter indicates that local residents are aware of the negative effects of tourism as well as expressing great concern about this issue. Participants in the study had mixed opinions about the tourists' unawareness and the role played by the authorities in the development of Cox's Bazar tourism.

5.4. Locals' involvement in tourism

As it was stated at the primary findings of the popularity of Cox's Bazar as a tourism destination and the positive impacts of it in the community as tourism brings economic benefits to the residents throughout various employment and business opportunities. However, a significant number of respondents mention that even though the local economy is benefiting due to tourism, the locals' involvement in tourism businesses is very minimal, more specifically employment in the hospitality sector. As a probable reason, the majority of the respondents described that the hospitality sector is mainly controlled by outsiders (migrant workers) who happen to be from different parts of Bangladesh

Most of the hotel owners are from outside of Cox's Bazar. They are making profits, as well as local people, are also getting benefited. It's a kind of win-win situation. (Respondent 1, 2021)

Let's say 10 to 20% are local people who are involved in the tourism industry. Maybe they have 100,000 people employed in this industry. While we can say nearly 10 to 15,000 people, maybe are benefited or have good jobs and all the other services. (Respondent 3, 2021)

Local's involvement in tourism at Cox's Bazar is very minimal. I think only 10% of locals are in the tourism industry. Because the main professions of the locals of Cox's Bazar are salt production and fishing.

(.....). Noticeably around 20% of employees in hotels or other tourism businesses are local residents and the rest are outside of Cox's Bazar. (Resident 5, 2021)

Local businesses are getting benefited economically but not that much because most of the hotels and restaurants are dominated by outsiders, so locals are not getting that advantage of tourism. (.....). But locals also operate some restaurants, mini shops, and markets but the locals do not have the power to be the leading role in the accommodation sector. (Respondent 7, 2021)

Commenting on this issue respondent 2 mentioned even locals have the skills and ability to contribute to the service industry, however, corruption and favouritism are the main obstacles as a result it is difficult for the local residents to find employment.

Well, locals do not get enough priority because if you want to get a job at a hotel or restaurant you need to have a good relationship with management. And it is a kind of corruption because they hire people only if they know them as well as you have to bribe them to get a job even though you are highly qualified for the job. (Respondent 2, 2021)

However, according to respondent 4 tourism has brought changes in traditional occupations of the community along with changes in the lifestyle of the inhabitants of Cox's Bazar.

Cox's Bazar and the life of the locals depend on tourism. Locals' life changed a lot and improved. For instance, previously they used to depend on fishing for their livelihood, and now they are also involved in the tourism business, so their lifestyle has changed a lot as well because people from different cultures also come to Cox's Bazar. (Respondent 4, 2021)

To summarize this theme, it can be said that locals participating in the tourism job sector is an interesting issue, and it is also creating unhappiness among the citizens that their involvement in the hotel sector is being limited although they have enough manpower to contribute.

5.5. Covid-19 and Cox's Bazar

To help understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Cox's Bazar tourism industry participants were asked their views on the tourism activities of the destinations. Two of the respondents addressed the sufferings of local residents who are dependant on tourism. It was also mentioned by one interviewee the huge loss in the tourism businesses as the destination had almost no tourists during the pandemic.

Since there were 2 to 3 months so there were almost no tourists at Cox's Bazar and the businesses faced a huge amount of loss during that period which accounts for at least 100 million per day. (Respondent 4, 2021)

Well before lockdown tourism was normal and the tourist's arrival was as usual but during the lockdown, there were not that many tourists. But in recent months we have had so many tourists in Cox's Bazar (Respondent 7, 2021)

Concern regarding the negative impact of Covid-19 was also stated by another respondent of the study. In his statement, the participant talked about the severe sufferings of the residents as well as businesses as there was no financial assistance from the government to the employees during the shutdown period.

it wasn't good for the people out there because the economy was down people had no money because they actually live by you know they don't have any fixed salary. They don't get any wage compensation when everything is closed. Because the hotels and restaurants according to the laws don't require you to pay when you are off. So, it's bad for the economy of the people. (Respondent 8, 2021)

However, the tourism industry experienced a rapid booming as soon as the lockdown was withdrawn by the government. The massive tendency of traveling to Cox's Bazar was noticeable from the conversation with respondent 1 since the domestic tourists plan to travel to the destination on various occasions.

Before Pandemic Cox's Bazar was overcrowded and it remains overcrowded even after the pandemic. Pandemic has no effect on people's minds, people like Cox's Bazar can't keep people home. People rush to Cox's Bazar on different occasions such as vacation, marriage. So before or after the pandemic, the situation remains the same. (Respondent 1, 2021)

This view was also supported by respondent 3 who also mentioned how crowded Cox's Bazar was during the first lockdown and the respondent questioned tourist awareness as the misuse of the lockdown for tourism purposes.

When the first lockdown started fast times and then people got like five weeks holiday in a row and all the people went in Cox's Bazar. It was looking like New Year's Eve or the normal vacation period as there were so many tourists (Respondent 3, 2021)

In further conversation, while talking about the impact of Covid 19, participant 3 positive impacts of lockdown on the local ecosystem. Since during stricter rules by the government the tourist number went to almost zero during the lockdown as result it helped the ecology as well as wildlife of the area.

suddenly the government made it harder for people to visit Cox's Bazar. And there were some environmental and ecological benefits. We saw a lot of lost species coming back. The grass is growing on and a lot of we saw dolphins coming to the seashores of Cox's Bazar. So, because of the pandemic, Cox's Bazar was ecologically benefited (Respondent 3, 2021)

Finally, as experiences relate, the Covid-19 had various impacts on the Cox's Bazar and its participants. However, it is worth noting that mass reliance on tourism was more visible among local residents, who were having a difficult time coping with financial difficulties.

5.6. Tourism development and locals' expectations

A common and noticeable aspect among all interviewees is that as a destination Cox's Bazar has huge opportunities for the local community as well as plays a vital influence in the country's tourism industry. Participants also mentioned that Cox's Bazar has been going through a huge development process such as the betterment of the tourism facilities and a great amount of investment in the other aspects of the destination.

Specially Cox's development authority is trying their best to make the city look as best as possible. (Respondent 1, 2021)

every day 15 to 20 flights fly from Dhaka to Cox's Bazar. (.....). if you consider the number of hotels, motels, small hotels in this industry's also expanding in huge number. Let's say it's a very developing and growing industry right now. (Respondent 3, 2021)

You will never find that amount of tourists or investment like Cox's Bazar. So, I think it's beneficial for both investors and the locals as both parties are making profits because of tourism. (Respondent 4, 2021)

For example, the Government is developing the Cox's Bazar International Airport and we are hoping to get international tourists at Cox's Bazar because of it. (.....), and we will have demand for at least 100 more new hotels. We are already getting some foreign tourists from our neighboring countries like India, Pakistan, and Nepal. As a local, I think we are getting benefited and we will enjoy the blessings of tourism in near future also. (Respondent 5, 2021)

In their perspectives of locals' willingness and contribution to the tourism industry, almost all of the informants showed curiosity about making the destination more organized. Despite lots of complex situations regarding the current obstacles of the destination, there was a sense of hopefulness were noticeable among the participant and believed that Cox's Bazar as a destination will serve as a great experience to the visitors as well as an asset to the local community in future.

but I hope it's in future the number is increasing and a lot of people I hope will be part of this industry. And then I think this will help also in a positive way because local people care more than other people because they are the one who is really living there and then care more (Respondent 3, 2021)

we have the intention to make our city look better not only for tourism but also for us. But is only possible if the authorities are willing to step up such city mayor, tourists' police, government. Only if the responsible authorities take steps otherwise our efforts are just valueless. (Respondent 2, 2021)

Now people believe that a tourist when visits Cox's Bazar most of them has no friends or relatives here, so we are all responsible for keeping them happy and satisfied. Because when tourists spend money, it also helps us to pay the bills of households. So, we try our best to give them a good experience, so they don't have any negative impression about Cox's Bazar, and they visit us again. Also, we hope that they would recommend Cox's Bazar to more tourists. (Respondent 5, 2021)

On the further discussion of locals' roles in the tourism development of Cox's respondents also believe that they have the integrity in shaping their city in a more touristic way and believe their role as a local is vital for the progress of the industry. As a tourism destination, Cox's Bazar is growing rapidly and becoming a hot spot for investment and market expansion. Respondents believe that more and more locals will engage in the tourism business.

But nowadays even the people who used to reside abroad are now coming back to Cox's Bazar and investing in different tourism businesses, opening hotels or resorts. I believe people are aware of the economic boosting of the tourism sector that's why everybody is showing great interest in the tourism industry. (Respondent 5, 2021)

there are a lot of people who are going back from abroad. Maybe. I also think going back and being part of this, and I know a lot of my friends right now who have completed their studies In the tourist business right now. (Respondent 3, 2021)

Moreover, suggestions were made for accessing tourists' points of view on Cox's Bazar by two respondents.

we do not really assess the happiness, satisfaction of tourists or consider getting feedback from their experiences about Cox's Bazar (Respondent 8, 2021)

In his statement, the respondent also mentioned local businesses' tendency of price hiking during the busy season and believes that could prove to be a negative factor for the destination in coming years. Furthermore, the interviewee also calls for attention from the authority to alleviate tourists' suffering and local businesses to realize their duty as a representative of the destination.

Local businesses are targeting the high seasons to make all the money for the rest of the years, so they tend to charge extra for products and services. (.....). I think they should change their minds about only making money from tourism and they should also care about the tourists. (.....) Government should implement a monitoring strategy so that tourists do not face any obstacles or bad experiences. (Respondent 6, 2021).

more tourists more tourism business in cox's Bazar does good to the locals. But it doesn't benefit the tourist because the more the tourists the less the service. (Respondent 8, 2021)

Uncontrolled and rapid price hiking was also brought to attention by the next respondent of this study who quoted as:

obviously, we locals need to be more responsible and change our mentality. For instance, we have to stop increasing the price of hotel rooms and food expenses during the high season. We have to follow the standard pricing (Respondent 7, 2021)

Lack of locals' involvement in tourism development in Cox's Bazar is an existing issue mentioned by participant 8:

the locals never get the chance to participate in the developing process. Because the municipalities or the responsible authorities actually never want to collaborate with the residents

The participant argued that although it would be complex for the authorities to make collaboration among the huge population in Cox's Bazar. However, he believes authorities should identify the ground-level stakeholders and who should be included by the tourism planners in various development of the destination.

I would suggest is you involve the stakeholders involve the hotel owners, involved the restaurant owners, and involve the different tourism start-ups owners, involve the workers who are dealing with a tourist

every day who knows their limitations who how the tourist feels when they arrive at Cox's Bazar. (.....). it would help the municipalities developing Cox's Bazar way better than they are doing now. (Respondent 8, 2021)

As this theme suggests Cox's Bazar is a happening destination of Bangladesh. In the expansion of the tourism industry of Cox's Bazar, to benefit both tourists and the Locals it's required proper planning with participation of locals' residents. Thus, collaboration could be one of the feasible processes and the authority should involve tourism stakeholders to work together.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The initial objective of the project was to identify Cox's Bazar's local residents' view on tourism development and their thinking about the progress of the destination. Although the study was designed on local perceptions, however, respondents highlighted the lack of proper hotel and restaurants services required at the destination. As far as the informants of this paper, Cox's Bazar is going through huge development as a destination such as the new establishment of hotels, resorts, construction of roads, the introduction of an international airport. It can be said that Cox's Bazar is going through the development stage as the TALC model suggests (Butler, 1980). According to Butler (1980), during the development stage, a destination develops its tourism services facilities to meet tourists' demands and the host community becomes tourism-focused as well as involved in the tourism sector. Findings indicate the vast majority of tourists visiting Cox's Bazar are domestic ones whereas international tourist arrivals are minimal. As a reason, it is mentioned by the participants that the destination still needs to develop more to attract international tourists. The necessity of tourism advancement in Cox's Bazar is more immense during the holiday season where the accommodation providers and municipalities fail to provide quality services to all the visitors. As far the concern of the locals, they believe Cox's Bazar still requires improvement in terms of satisfying the needs of general tourists. Cox's Bazar is considered one of the most advanced and resourceful destinations in Bangladesh and the destination offers varieties of tourism experiences as well as tourists locations (Parveen & Rajon, 2008; Sahabuddin et al., 2021). According to the current study respondents the destination host mass numbers of tourists during the high season. Although some participants mentioned the negative impact of over-tourism, however, a great number of respondents believe excess numbers of tourists benefit the destination economically and they support the tourists' influx as creates employment opportunities for the community. Respondents believe though the locals feel overwhelmed by the numbers of tourists, and it is difficult for businesses to adjust to the required service and facilities, but they prioritize the economic outcome of tourism whereas the negative impacts of tourism are hardly evident to them.

Over-tourism has been perceived as something negative to the destinations and residents (Koens et al., 2018; Phi, 2020) but considering Cox's Bazar over-tourism is a positive for the destination and its residents. Rather than considering over tourism as an obstacle in their daily life, residents welcome an increase in tourists as they perceive it as an additional factor to get some extra income. Residents care about the tourists and always look forwarding meeting tourists' expectations however, it is also vital that responsible authorities lack in collaborating with the local community. Nevertheless, a

collaboration or involving the local community should be regarded as an important aspect in terms of the progress of Cox's Bazar in the tourism industry.

Participants also stated that as Bangladesh is a developing country and people are really not aware of sustainable tourism and it still has not gotten the attention from the tourists as well as general residents. Thus, people are not really concerned regarding the negative aspects of tourism. As argued by Ap (1992) in SET theory, residents are more likely to support tourism development if the perceived positive impacts are higher than the negative ones. Relating this to the findings of this study, it was found that the majority of the residents described the economic impact of tourism while they were asked about the overall impact of tourism. During the interview process, the interviewer had to ask the participants to discuss the negative impacts of tourism as they were not willingly mentioning it. Whereas, Cox's Bazar is considered a vulnerable coastal region of Bangladesh due to the unplanned and unregulated infrastructure of the city (S. Rahman & Rahman, 2015). The destination has seen the development of 750 accommodation facilities and 250 restaurants over the last decade which did not comply with environmental rules as well as unplanned (Faruque, 2021). This resonates with the findings of this thesis paper as some of the informants mentioned unregulated waste management by the lodging providers that create pollution to the ecology of the destination. The city administration has the ability to manage 20 tonnes of wastage whereas the city produces an estimated 145 tonnes per day and most of the hotels, restaurants use the sea for dumping the biowaste (Faruque, 2021).

As mentioned in the literature review tourism development brings enormous opportunities to the host destination such as economic, social, and infrastructural improvement (Alrwajfah et al., 2019; Biagi et al., 2020). The findings of this thesis paper support the statement as most participants of the current research show positive support for the tourism industry at Cox's Bazar. Tourism has been an influential aspect in changing the nature of Cox's Bazar's economic sector. Participants discussed changes in locals' dependency on traditional jobs (e.g. fishing, salt production) as tourism progress in Cox's Bazar locals investment has been noticeable in the service sector of the Cox's Bazar. Locals' dependency on tourism for their livelihood was more evident during the lockdown of 2020 as stated by some respondents. The industry went through a very hard time during businesses along with the community suffered a lot. It is worth mentioning that during the interviews almost all of the residents supported the development of tourism in their locality. Respondents' views on tourism remain positive because of their mass dependency and the way the destination is designed. To get deep inside of the understandings of the participants the interviewer asked participants to compare the noticeable changes of the destination over the years. To which most of the informants mentioned improvements in various aspects such as an increase in tourist numbers, hotels, and resorts, public transport, and other infrastructure development. Many participants remain optimistic about the tourism development in Cox's Bazar because of the development in the city's infrastructure, transportation, and employment opportunities. It was reported by some respondents that due to tourism development along with tourists locals are also getting benefited as the introduction of new parks, facilities, and better transportation. To this aspect, the findings of the current research resonate with the literature found on the same topic. According to Ritchie & Inkari (2006), tourism brings advancements in a variety of areas of society (e.g. communications, transportation, entertainment, and recreational activities) and which are considered as blessings to an underdeveloped community. Linking this to "community attachment" as described by Gursoy et al. (2010), locals' support for

tourism development is also derived from the needs of the community. As reported by the residents' Cox's Bazar has been developed rapidly over the years (e.g., transportation, residents wellbeing, communication, job opportunities) thus locals perceived the positive impacts more over the negative ones.

However, it is also crucial that the level of tourism development also influences residents' views (Zhang et al., 2006a). Cox's Bazar was fully packed with tourists during the recent holiday period (December 16th to 18th 2021), around 0.3 million tourists gathered in the city on the 16th of December 2021 (Daily Bangladesh, 2021). Cox's Bazar tourism industry had a prolific amount of economic recovery after the pandemic as a huge amount of tourists visited the destination during the recent vacation, almost 95% of hotels were fully occupied and around \$6million revenue was recorded (Alamgir, 2021; Daily Bangladesh, 2021; Dhaka Tribune, 2021). However, almost no significant amount of participants talked about any negative consequences of such a large amount of tourist influx whereas most of them see it as an opportunity for locals to make a profit out of it. These findings were particularly interesting as increased tourists numbers could lead to being problematic to a community such as crowdedness, traffic, and noise pollution (Koens et al., 2018; Pavlić & Portolan, 2016). Whereas in the case of Cox's Bazar even though a minority of the respondent expresses traffic as an obstacle due to tourists' influx but their perspectives remain on the focus of seeing it as a financial improvement for the community. Relating this to Doxey's irridex model, the sudden increase in tourists numbers at a destination creates irritation among the local residents due to their acknowledgment of the negative consequences of tourism (Szromek et al., 2019). A question arises whether local residents are aware of negative impacts or not. And if they are unconscious of the consequences of tourism impact it could be an obstacle for the destination's development process if Cox's Bazar wants to be regarded as a sustainable destination in Bangladesh. Locals' awareness of tourism activities in a community is vital for a destination's progress (Eyisi et al., 2021; Nejati et al., n.d.). Findings suggest locals do not get invited or have any opinions on the tourism development process of Cox's Bazar, and it is essential that authorities take initiatives to participant in the tourism planning of a destination (Almeida-García et al., 2020; Biagi et al., 2020). It was also claimed by the majority of the respondents about locals not getting employed in hotels. To this, they added corruption is one of the reasons applicants do not get employment and the industry is dominated by outsiders. If the perceived positive impacts do not benefit the local community it could create unhappiness among the locals and it will directly affect the tourism development of the destination (Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020). Therefore, it is vital for tourism authorities that locals get their fair part of the benefits of tourism development at the destination (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003).

Community perception and stakeholders' collaboration are considered are strategies that facilitate better communication between a community and destinations planners (Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017; Eslami et al., 2019). Which is something lacking in Cox's Bazar as per the informants of the study. Tourism collaboration helps both tourism planners as well as the community to discuss different aspects of a destination, creation of awareness among locals, motivate participants to contribute to tourism progress (Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017; Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020). The host communities are more exposed and interact with tourists in their daily life thus it is considered that their views and opinions can help authorities in accessing the ground-level impact of tourism and

accessing underlying issues of a destination (Duarte Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017). Findings of the current research found locals' willingness to contribute to the development of the destination. It is suggested that locals should be invited and informed about the tourism planning of the destination. Also, authorities need to take steps such as creating awareness via various campaigns and try making themselves available for open discussions with the community. It is important that locals are informed about the tourism development at their locality and feasible methods of increasing knowledge of the residents are tourism workshops and meetings (Saufi et al., 2014). Hall (1999) believes a successful tourism collaboration requires destination planners for the inclusion of the community's interest. Whereas a destination's development hugely depends on the support of the local residents (Garau-Vadell et al., 2014). Tourism collaboration in developing countries is limited as most of the tourism activities are controlled by the centralized authority of the government (Cole, 2006). Thus, it is necessary that authorities pay attention to the host community and their opinions of tourism practices.

Findings suggest Cox's Bazar is considered as one of the most promising destinations of Bangladesh and it is perceived by the residents that the destination will be more developed, and locals will be more benefited. Though tourism development is considered positive by the residents, however, unplanned and irregulated infrastructure development is considered as a negative influence on the community. Thus, it calls for monitoring of the destination planners. It is worth stating that residents are not concretely familiar with the environmental impact of tourism at Cox's Bazar. To their statements, some participants believe Bangladesh does not have proper waste management for the general residents as the country is densely populated whereas environmental loss is not so concerning subject for the authorities.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis paper aimed to understand the perspectives of local residents in regard to tourism activities and the development of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The study acknowledges host communities' opinions are valuable for destinations planners to give a concrete story of a destination's tourism performance (Garau-Vadell et al., 2014; Park et al., 2017). Throughout this research, it was highly evident that Cox's Bazar has undergone a remarkable development over the last decade. Yet no study has been found in the understanding of the host community's views of the destination's overall tourism development. It was also found that authorities are really not so concerned about the perception of locals as well as engaging them in the tourism development of Cox's Bazar. Although less focus on local residents incorporation in a destination development creates unhappiness among the community, and it directly impacts locals interaction with tourists (Linderová et al., 2021; Okulicz-Kozaryn & Strzelecka, 2017). Surprisingly the study did not find any consistent opposing views of the residents regarding their perception of the destination development not being heard by the authorities. To this, no secondary data have been found opposing over-tourism in Cox's Bazar and not seeing it as a threat to local communities' wellbeing. Whereas Cox's Bazar is being portrayed as an ideal tourism destination and rapid increase in the tourist numbers gets highlighted as a positive aspect for the businesses by authorities and various newspapers (Alamgir, 2021; Dhaka Tribune, 2021). The rapid growth of tourists' arrival creates various problems for local life including traffic, loss of natural resources, invasion of public services (Eslami et al., 2019; González et al., 2019). The tourism destination planners should acknowledge also Cox's Bazar residents' wellbeing and whether tourism is affecting the

surroundings in any negative ways. The tourism dependency of locals is significant in Cox's Bazar therefore, people are not very conscious about the negative impacts of over-tourism which is something that needs to be acknowledged by the responsible authorities. In the case of residents' perspectives, the study suggests that their knowledge regarding adverse impacts of tourism is very limited, and it can be an alarming issue for the community in a long run. The study believes that even though Cox's Bazar is visited by a massive number of domestic tourists, however, to attract international tourists the destination needs to reconsider its development process since waste management and quality activities for tourists are still questionable and authorities needs to acknowledge tourists demands as well.

Though the current study was only designed to understand locals' view of tourism, it came to the author's knowledge about the poor service and accommodation facilities of the destination. The nature of the qualitative semi-structured interview process proved evident to this paper as some participants indicated the sufferings of tourists during the holiday season when Cox's Bazar remains overcrowded. The findings suggest the destination does not have the capacity of providing accommodation to all tourists and tourists were forced to spend the night at open beaches and roads. Also, the authorities do not try to reach out to get tourists to feedback on their visit to Cox's Bazar. Thus, it could be questioned whether authorities are concerned about the safety and security of the tourists. Future research should use the understanding of tourists' perceptions of various issues of Cox's Bazar as a famous destination. However, the current paper found issues of forceful land and personal property invasion by powerful authorities for tourism purposes. Despite the lack of secondary data, this statement does raise concern for tourism developers, since it's a direct negative impact of tourism development in the local community.

Chapter 8: Limitation

This thesis paper has several limitations. The paper considered residents' perceptions as a whole whereas residents also represent the various social position of a community, and their perspectives vary depending on their social background, job sector, religious belief, and economic background. Small numbers of respondents participated in the interview process thus it made it difficult for a deeper understanding of the destination from various residents of different backgrounds. Although invitations were sent to a significant number of residents of Cox's Bazar via LinkedIn, Facebook, and e-mail. But unfortunately, most of them did not respond to the invitations. The limited time frame and the current Covid-19 restrictions made it was difficult for the author to travel to Cox's Bazar and a field trip to the destination could have been more prolific to the study as it would have allowed understanding the destination and its surroundings more efficiently.

Moreover, even the findings were able to allocate a good amount of information of Cox's Bazar, but it was noticeable that not every respondent understood the disadvantages of tourism and the author had to explain the issue by giving examples of some tourists' destinations.

Also, there was no authorized tourism statistics were found on specifically Cox's Bazar thus it was problematic for the author to understand the destination's stage in the TALC model.

Furthermore, even though the chosen qualitative research method helped the author significantly to collect data, however, it is realized by the author survey conduction could be easier to get some

additional input to the research. Another important limitation of the study is that the study could have tried to involve some employees of the tourism authority of the destination thus it would have the research more valid and access the destinations tourism development from both parties (residents and tourism developers).

Finally, it is suggested that future research should try understanding Cox's Bazar from tourists' perspectives as the current study found various issues of tourists' sufferings because of poor service and facilities of the destination.

Chapter 9: References

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