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**Sustainable Rural Tourism: A Social Transformation of  
Rural Area**

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**Abstract**

*The study focuses on presenting social transformation through quality of life led by sustainable rural tourism. Social transformation is a tenacious and erratic process pointing towards the society's changes from ascribed status to achieved status. It is not brought in frontline of the research field of tourism, especially, of sustainable rural tourism and quality of life. This paper has selected three rural areas of Bangladesh as a study area where structured questionnaire survey has piloted among local communities who live there for more than three years. One hypothesis was developed regarding the effects of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life demographically in selected study areas. This study paper has designed to find how sustainable tourism changes a society in rural area from sociocultural, economical, and environmental aspects. The revolution of sustainability of these three dimensions reflects a quality of life of a society. The result has revealed that rural society has experienced economic growth, infrastructural development, social empowerment, cultural preservation, environmental preservation and conservation, and social awareness. It also shows*

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*that sustainable rural tourism and social transformation is sharing a favorable relationship in terms of the three pillars of sustainability. It is evident for certain, sustainable tourism development in rural area improves the quality of life and advances the spatial development.*

### **Introduction**

Tourism has been and continues to be a powerful tool in driving many of the world's underdeveloped areas towards development. An increasing number of scholars (Jørgensen et al., 2021; Aquino et al., 2018; Dredge, 2017) have highlighted that in order to increase the chances of success in such fields, quality of life should be complemented with the aim of creating social value and positive social transformation. Unquestionably, tourism acts as a fundamental socio-economic factor of a tourists' destination by advancing the socio-economic condition of community. In order for tourism to be classified as rural tourism, also known as non-urban tourism, it must include local activities, small settlements, natural attractions, low population densities, facilities, transportation, agriculture-based economies, amenities, marketing, information systems, and traditional societies outside cities. (Daniloska, & Naumova-Mihajlovska, 2015; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). Visitors to rural areas get more authentic experience when they interact with locals and learn about their way of life, art, food, and culture. One of the good things about rural tourism is that it helps to protect the local art and culture as well as gives local artists a chance to show off their skills and make money (Ramakumar & Rajashree, 2008). Tourism especially rural tourism offers an ideal platform to use sustainable transformation principles as well as social transformation (Fennell & Bowyer, 2019; Force et al., 2017) due to its widespread, multi-level, and multifaceted nature across social, economic, environmental, and technical aspects.

Tourism in rural areas has the potential to significantly influence the quality of life and social change in the communities. Research conducted by Kunjuraman & Hussin (2017) highlights the need for further studies on this subject, especially with regard to ecotourism, which is part of rural tourism. Economic advantage, socio-cultural uplifts, and environmental sustainability positively affect the quality of resident's life (Yu, 2011), which comes from the active participation of residents in sustainable rural tourism (Fong, 2015). Rural development through tourism and sustainable rural tourism development lead to social transformation through the quality of life of local communities where it becomes a key concept for developing countries like Bangladesh. This study addresses several important research gaps on sustainable rural tourism in rural areas in the current social science literature. First, rural people in developing countries like Bangladesh migrate from rural areas to urban areas for a better life (Samantaray, 2016). Second, the quality of life in rural areas is generally lower than urban one. The third research gap by introducing new economic and commercial activities (Neumeier & Pollermann, 2014; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011) in rural areas. The final research gap focuses on safeguarding the natural environment and preserving local culture and customs (Giampiccoli & Kalis, 2012; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011), which serves as a means to attract tourists.

Sustainable rural tourism can be one of the ways to fill the above research gaps, through which social transformation can be brought by improving the quality of rural life. So, the aim of this paper is to present how sustainable rural tourism development (expressed through economic, socio-cultural, and environmental evolution of sustainability) can lead to social transformation in local communities in developing countries like Bangladesh. This paper has selected three existing tourism destinations which are also in rural areas to evaluate the dimensional social transformation through sustainable rural tourism. Based on the prior researches, one hypothesis has also been proposed to find out the difference of social changes created by sustainable rural tourism among the tourist destinations in Bangladesh (Shreemangal, Sajek and Kuakata) demographically, in terms of gender, age, level of Education, occupations, monthly family income. Thus, this social renovation of rural areas through rural tourism can only occur if the quality of life of local communities are improved in the long term and economic, environmental, social and cultural values are achieved. Furthermore, the impact of rural tourism on rural areas may be better recognized with the active participation of local people, tourists and tourism planners in its development. Both tourists' and communities' engagement results in a good connectivity where one person have the opportunity to learn, accept, adopt, and change their own things according to the good ones of others. Though, rural society can face negative impact due to the benefits of rural tourism such as cultural exchange, economic development, environmental conservation, and socio-cultural preservation. Hence, sustainable development through rural tourism is needed to transform society in a positive form and to make the quality of life high in a rural area.

### **Conceptual background and hypothesis**

#### Social transformation and quality of life

From the Early age to 21st Century, changes in the economy, technology, society, politics, culture, the way of life, people's perception along with environment have been seen continuously. People have experienced their life as a hunter-gatherer and a tribal one, an agricultural man and an industrial man also. These changes have taken places due to the emergence of people's thoughts, consciousness and action to fulfill their current need, wants and demand. Development or it can be said as globalization is one of the main reasons to keep changing the life patterns of the world (Castles, 2001). People all over the world are seeking for better and better life from their current or past. Innovation, adventure, education, employment, family status, cultural exchange, tourism etc. have boost up the acceptance of people for variations in their society (Rabie, 2023). Joy (2002, p. 7) stated, "Change must be developmental-it must result in new behaviors accompanied by a new, higher, level of values that support sustainability; and changes in the individual's relationship to themselves and to others must be observable." These actions transform the society.

Social transformation is not a matter of one incident or action or time or thoughts. It is a continuous process. It restructures a society with the reflective and fundamental changes,

affecting its values, norms, institutions, and structures (Jenkins & Form, 2003). These changes can be quantitative and qualitative changes of all aspects of life in a society and can occur at various levels, including individual, community, national, and global. Alterations arise from a blend of internal and external influences, such as technological breakthroughs, cultural transformations, economic developments, political upheavals, and environmental issues (Haider et al., 2022). So, social transformation can be said as a collaborative process where individuals work together to uphold equity, access and opportunity as well as to revitalize environment and foster self-sufficiency within society (UCSC Institute for Social Transformation, n.d.). One crucial determinant of social transformation is the quality of life experienced by individuals within a society (Yang et al., 2023). When individuals have an improved standard of living, including access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, and clean water; they are more inclined to possess the ability to make constructive contributions to their communities and society as a whole (López-Ruiz et al., 2021). Economic stability, social cohesiveness, and environmental sustainability are some factors that evince the multidimensional impact of quality of life on social transformation (Gweshengwe et al., 2020). It also brings more productive workforce, a sense of belonging and connection to community.

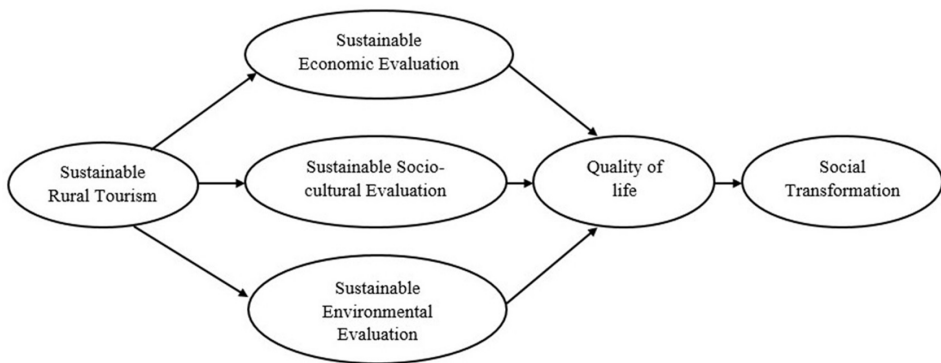
#### **Influences of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of resident's life and social transformation**

This research paper is mainly conducted to find out how sustainable rural tourism influences the quality of life of a rural community and how the changed life-structure transforms a rural society. Rural tourism is completely an alternative form of healthy tourism (Radhika, 2020) as the aim of rural tourism is poverty alleviation. It also concentrates on tourist's involvement in nature-based activities (sightseeing, nature hikes and strolls, horse riding, angling, wildlife observation, mountain biking, and cycling), agriculture, eco-friendly activities (environmental preservation and conservation), rural culture, lifestyle (*Rural Tourism | UN Tourism*, n.d.). The footstep of tourists has result in development of rural area as it improves income level of rural people at the very beginning (Liu et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2021; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). It also helps people to be proud of their own culture, lifestyle and customs, culinary, dress, festivals, and professions (Christou, 2020). On one hand, rural tourism contributes to the overall economic and social development of a rural society. On the other hand, the presence of tourism in rural areas can lead to environmental and social degradation, including environmental damages, pollution, disturbance to biodiversity, and loss of natural habitats (Chang, 2018). Additionally, it can lead to "political and social destabilization, host culture destruction, changes in hosts' way of life and traditional values, commodification, and commercialization" (Guo & Jordan, 2021, p. 43), robbery, excessive tourist movement on private property, and tourist harassment.

To mitigate the negative impacts of rural tourism (Sharpley, 2003), people are seeking interest in sustainable rural tourism. Whereas, awareness, consciousness, high disposal

income, innovation, social welfare, rurality, traditions, nostalgic feelings, nature or biodiversity (Bramwell, 1994) are some determinants that increases the participation in sustainable rural tourism. It is a way of standardization of quality of local's life by encouraging tourism activities sustainably (Liu et al., 2013). However, it tries to ensure economic benefits to local community at first. After contributing in generation of income, employment, new business and interest in agriculture, local livelihood patterns, it focuses on bringing positive impacts on socio-culture and environment of a rural area. It also improves rural housing, infrastructure, traditional business (Wookhyun, & Alarcón, 2020), local economy and financial services such as banking facilities, ATM service and mobile banking. It motivates youngsters to participate in tourism-related work as well as traditional works. It also empowers rural women by creating employment.

**Figure 1: Social transformation through sustainable rural tourism**



Sustainable rural tourism creates a better connectivity between tourists and rural community by promoting cultural exchange such as food, dressing sense, local cultural activities, and traditional festivals. It also upholds social value and makes rural people proud of their own society, culture, habits and their way of life in rural areas (Bajrami et al., 2020). Sustainable rural tourism is developed based on the three pillars: economic, socio-culture and environment. Sustainable tourism activities in rural area result in protecting culture, nature and biodiversity while tourist performs responsible activities toward environment such as avoid over-crowding in one local area, reducing vehicles allowance in remote area, avoid pollution, protect local infrastructure (roads, heritage, farms). It also encourages to use water sustainably, utilize renewable energy, and sustainable material supplies and to preserve rural landscape and to conserve environmental resources (Mcareavey & Mcdonagh, 2011). So, sustainable rural tourism is a maintained development system which can achieve human development goals without damaging the stability of future generations in rural area.

In recent years, tourists show huge interest in sustainable activities in rural destination as an approach to encourage overall growth of community. This type of growth can create

significant influences on the quality of life for local people and can also foster social transformation in rural destination (Li et al., 2024). The researchers have developed a figure (Figure 1) to present how sustainable rural tourism can have social transformation through quality of life. Previous researches have shown the positive influences of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life (Tou et al., 2022; Pokharel & Bhattarai, 2022; Fong & Lo, 2015; Zenelaj & Pifti, 2011). Resident can avail their basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, water, cloths etc. with their improved living standard. Participation in tourism can make local's ability to transform their own living pattern such as high income can motivate one to go to school, to work harder, to improve housing and sanitary, to wear good cloths along with participation in festivals and rural activities (Castillo-Palacio et al., 2017). Changes start from own self. Change for betterment encourages one to other households to adopt and to keep changes for more. This is how one rural community can transform their way of life or society for advancement. Sustainable rural tourism promotes healthy activity such as increases participation in farming, agriculture, local jobs (Widawski et al., 2023). It also encourages women empowerment through promoting culinary art, food business, community-based tourism, traditional cloth making, and rural lifestyle. In addition, local culture (Castillo-Palacio et al., 2017) and tradition is preserved and promoted through tourists' sustainable activities. Besides that, rural people are more aware of their self-worthiness and uniqueness because of embracing and celebrating cultural heritage by tourists. Tourism creates a space where tourists and local residents can share their culture, tradition; can also learn and exchanges different one. This can lead understanding, open-mindedness, and gratitude among tourists and local people in rural area. Furthermore, better social interaction (Kantar & Svržnjak, 2017) and high community engagement (Fong & Lo, 2015) lead to social transformation within the community. Additionally, economic stability, preserved socio-culture and environmental conservation has the potential to progress locals' living standard (Sarkar, 2023). Overall improved quality of life can bring about social transformation in rural communities.

### **Development of hypotheses**

Sustainable rural tourism and local communities' participation in tourism activities enable them to secure their interests and, in turn, contribute to positive social transformation. The locals' acceptance, adoption, or willingness to change their behavior is subject to demographic fluctuations. Sustainable development certainly contributes to better outcomes, but a community's nature or profile may react differently to these developments. As people are different from each other in their decision making, they may respond differently to sustainable rural tourism as a key tool for social transformation. Research has highlighted the involvement of local communities in maintaining the developmental activities of tourism in a specific area. (Thongma et al., 2011; Santana-Medina et al., 2013; Aas et al., 2005; Ertuna & Kirbas, 2012; Roseland, 2012; Li, 2006; Fong & Lo, 2015). If sustainable rural tourism assures social transformation through better life-quality, this paper has also presented one

hypothesis to analyze: “Are there existence of different social transformations among three tourist destinations caused by sustainable rural tourism regarding variance in local people’s demographic profile?” Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H0: There is no significant mean difference in the impact of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life of residents of three rural areas in terms of demographic profiles.

### **Methodology**

The research paper attempts to investigate the social transformation in the presence of sustainable rural tourism, specially focusing on the quality of life. Quantitative research was used as a research method to achieve the objectives in this study. Quantitative research is a statistical method of numeric data analysis where data is collected from questionnaire surveys, interviews or observation involving counts or from secondary sources (Veal, 2018; Kc, 2013). The design used for this study was descriptive design. There might also be uses of explanatory design as descriptive design can show conclusion based on introduction without explaining the factors but explanatory design gives answers of how and why. To gather information, the study proposed three tourist places (Map 1) of Bangladesh as the study population that are rural areas of Bangladesh.

**Shreemangal**- well-known as the tea capital of Bangladesh, is situated at 190 km from Dhaka and 83 km from Sylhet. The village is bounded by nearly 40 tea gardens, lakes, steep hills, dense jungles, lemon and pineapple gardens and rubber plantations. The greenery of tea gardens and beautiful trees are the main attractions of tourists and also is the main source of income generation at this village. The Tea Gardens, Lawachara National Park, Madhabkunda Waterfall, Madhabpur Lake, and Sitesh Babur Zoo are the most highlighted attraction of Shreemangal.

**Sajek Valley** - the Queen of Hills and Roof of Rangamati (Islam, 2017), is one of the highly sought-after tourist spots in Bangladesh, situated among the hills of the Kasalong range of mountains inside Sajek union parishad of Baghaichhari Upazila in the Rangamati District. The valley is located at a peak 450 metres (1,480 ft) above sea level. It has a diverse array of natural attractions together with mountains, dense forest, and grassland hill tracks as well as several small rivers flow through the mountains. There has been seen several ethnic minority groups, including the Chakma, Marma, Tripuri, Pankho, Lushai, and other indigenous populations. Before tourism, the main economic activities in Sajek were jhum cultivation in hill tracts along with and fruit and vegetable picking from forests.

**Kuakata** (a habitation of pilgrimage for Hindu and Buddhist communities) Kuakata is located in Kalapara Upazila, Patuakhali District. An attractive feature of this beach is the rare chance to see dawn and dusk from the same spot (Sarker,2023; Aouwal, 2016). It is 18 km long and 3 km wide. ‘Rush Purnima’ and ‘Maghi Purnima’ act as a major festival to pull a huge people’s movement as the pilgrims take holy baths at the bay and take part in the traditional funfairs on those occasions (Tourist’s Attraction in Bangladesh, 2011).

These three rural areas were selected to collect information from rural people who live there for 3-5 years. This study selected simple random sample method as a sampling technique. It is a technique of probability sampling (Cochran, 1977) which was taken to represent the population of rural villages. All of rural people of these three rural areas (especially where tourism usually takes a place) were included in sample size. About 91 participants from each place, total 275 participants were approached to collect data. A customized structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data in this study. The questions and the Likert Scale statements were measured dependent variable which is the transformation level of society through quality of life. For measuring the respondents, a Seven level Likert Scale was used (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

**Map 1: Geographical location of three studies areas**



(Source: <https://reliefweb.int/map/bangladesh/bangladesh-national-reference-map-24-jan-2019>)

There were two sections in questionnaires: the first included socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, educational level, occupations; occupations directly or indirectly dependent on tourism; monthly family income. In the second section, 29 statements were taken related to the rural people's perceptions on sustainable rural tourism development



and social transformation in rural area from economic, socio-cultural, and environmental standpoint. Secondary data was produced by others researches such as literature, books, journals, articles, e-books online papers, press release, conference, newspapers etc.

Primary data was analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 software. Descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive overview of the summary data that was used to measure the effect of rural tourism on social transformation through quality of life in three rural areas. The frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were used in this study to make the results clearer. Researchers used the Independent Sample T-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the assumptions. A significance level of 5% (= 0.05) was used to define statistical significance. The research also included a factor analysis. It was used to analyze the data to evaluate the connection between sustainable rural tourism and social transformation. It is recommended that the minimum number of observations in research should be at least five times the number of variables (Hair et al. 2006). Exploratory factor analysis was deemed suitable in light of these criteria. At least 0.3 correlations between loaded variables are recommended (Pallant, 2007). Due to this caution, the researcher removed any components with loadings below 0.30 and eigenvalues below 1.0. This should make the results of this study more statistically significant. Here, this study used principal component analysis with the Varimax technique for orthogonal rotation as the component extraction method to find the fewest factors that can explain the most variables.

## **Results**

### **Analysis of respondents' demographic background**

Travel and tourism, as a human dynamic transforms a tourist destination into an activity hub, which takes place with the contact between the visitors and the local residents. Tourism has an influence on the quality of life through prompting changes in the value system, family affairs, behavioral patterns, and expressive rituals for individuals along with the culture of the local people (Maryetti et al., 2016). One may learn a lot about the respondents' individual traits just looking at their demographic profiles. Table 1 show the descriptive summary of the respondents. Around 71 percent respondents from the local resident were male and about 29 percent were female. This gender breakdown happened when the majority of female local residents did not wish to complete the questionnaire and passed through to their husbands to complete. About 45% of the respondent under the age group 31–40 and around 38% of the respondents complete high school education. In terms of occupations about 31percent were doing agriculture-related job and 27% were involved tourism-related jobs. Most of the people who answered (77.6%) that tourism was either directly or loosely linked to their economic well-being. Regarding monthly income, around 38% of the participants earn between BDT 25001 to 40000, while 30.4% earn BDT 40001 to 50000.

**Table 1: Descriptive summary of the respondents**

Issues	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Gender</b>	Male (70.9%)	Female (29.1%)			
<b>Age</b>	18-30 (27.2%)	31-40 (45.3%)	41-50 (22.7%)	51-60 (3.8%)	61< (1%)
<b>Level of Education</b>	No Literate (1.2%)	Primary School (35.2%)	High School (37.7%)	College (18.4%)	Graduate or above (7.5%)
<b>Occupations</b>	Farmer/ Agri related job (31.3%)	Tourism related job (27.3%)	Business (30.7%)	Government/ private job (8.5%)	Others (2.2%)
<b>Occupations Directly or Indirectly Dependent on Tourism</b>	Yes (77.6%)	No (22.4%)			
<b>Monthly Family Income (BDT)</b>	below 15000 (1.2%)	15001-25000 (21.3%)	25001-40000 (37.8%)	40001-50000 (30.4%)	50001 or above (9.3%)

Rural tourism evolution (means and standard deviation) at the social transformation of residents’ quality of life

Table 2 displays the findings of the survey about respondents’ perceptions of rural tourism evolution on three rural areas. Based on the mean value, people who answered the survey gave the economic evolution of rural tourism the most points. This was followed by the effects on the environment and socio-cultural evolution. Eleven variables in the first section, “Economic Evolution,” describe the economic development of rural tourism in three rural areas of Bangladesh, and these changes influence the social transformation by improving the quality of life. Based on the mean values of economic evolution it has ranked from 1 to 11. The first rank of the variable is “Tourism has created jobs for many people in my village” and the mean value is 6.56. The second high mean value of 6.55 in terms of increased income from tourism-related activities. In addition, respondents positively agreed that rural tourism has improved their way of life (mean = 6.47), which indicates social changes in positive way.

The “Socio-Cultural Evolution” consists of eleven variables, the highest mean value (5.99) was observed for the statement “Residents’ interest and satisfaction towards tourism industry gets importance”. It indicates that the voice of the local people gets importance and it positively effects the standard of life. The second mean value under socio-cultural evolution

is “Rural tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities by the local residents (e.g., crafts, arts, music)” (Mean = 5.82). Every rural area has its own culture, and it is underprivileged. Rural tourism has flourished that culture. Internet has transformed the society and it reflects the third mean value of the statement “Awareness created by tourism improves Villagers’ participation in Internet access” (Mean = 5.78).

There were seven variables in the “Environmental Evolution” section. With a mean score of 6.32, the statement “It has made villages to adopt renewable and energy saving technology” received the highest mean rank follow by “Community’s diversity of nature is valued and protected by rural tourism” (Mean = 6.31) and “Rural visitors are drawn to nature; therefore, locals are conserving it.” (Mean = 6.02). The statement “The preservation and restoration of the environment have also been made possible by tourism expenditures” has the lowest mean (5.82) score. These results show that the rural community have adopted renewable and energy-saving technology, while nature and biodiversity are protected by local residents through the activities of rural tourism.

**Table 2: Respondents perceptions of rural tourism evolution**

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Mean**	Std. Deviation	Rank
<b>Economic Evolution</b>				
1	Rural tourism activities have increased my income	6.55	.735	2
2	Tourism improves employment situation of rural women	6.31	.757	5
3	Tourism has created jobs for many people in my village	6.56	.554	1
4	Tourism has attracted more business to our locality	6.32	.627	4
5	Tourism improves new, engineered residential buildings and improving the condition of commercial uses such as shops in the village	5.23	1.340	11
6	Rural tourism has motivated the youth to involve in tourism related jobs and activities.	5.94	1.007	10
7	Demand for Local products, handicrafts & agricultural products by tourists have benefitted the traditional businesses and the local economy	6.22	.607	6
8	Tourism improves rural housing	6.04	.713	7

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Mean**	Std. Deviation	Rank
9	Tourism has improved financial services such as banking facilities, ATM service and mobile banking	6.01	.824	9
10	It has upgraded the way of living	6.47	.528	3
11	It has contributed to overall development of local people	6.02	.804	8
	<b>Socio-Cultural Evolution</b>			
12	Rural tourism activities create cultural exchanges between tourists and residents	5.72	.903	4
13	Rural tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities by the local residents (e.g., crafts, arts, music)	5.82	1.009	2
14	Residents' interest and satisfaction towards tourism industry gets importance	5.99	.848	1
15	There are some tourism impacts on dress, food habits and behavior of local people	4.62	1.830	6
16	Rural tourism upgrades the social value of local people	5.37	1.488	5
17	Tourism improves rural social security (such as reduction of theft, addiction, corruption)	3.57	1.405	10
18	Rural tourism progresses development activities and social and economic decisions of the village	4.42	1.860	8
19	It improves people's health and upgrade the necessary capacity to perform local duties and responsibilities of the village	4.00	1.348	9
20	It helps to develop the status of educational uses such as rural schools	3.12	1.566	11
21	Awareness created by tourism improves Villagers' participation in Internet access	5.78	1.017	3
22	It increases the access of rural households to the services of rural health centers and dentistry services, specialists, general practitioners, and specialists, nurses, midwives, health workers in the village	4.61	1.520	7

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Mean**	Std. Deviation	Rank
	<b>Environmental Evolution</b>			
23	Rural tourism has made the water supply, sewer system, and lights on the roads better.	5.94	1.007	5
24	It has made villages to adopt renewable and energy saving technology	6.32	.627	1
25	Rural tourism helps to maintain proper disposable system for waste management.	5.99	.848	4
26	Community's diversity of nature is valued and protected by rural tourism	6.31	.757	2
27	Rural tourism development protects community's natural environment now and for the future	5.89	.932	6
28	Rural visitors are drawn to nature; therefore, locals are conserving it.	6.02	.804	3
29	The preservation and restoration of the environment have also been made possible by tourism expenditures.	5.82	1.009	7

Factor analysis for local residents towards rural tourism for social transformation through quality of life

Factor analysis is a way to find similar factors or features in a group of variables and used to summarize and reduce the amount of data that is collected. This study used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) together with a rotated component matrix of Factor Analysis. In this research, a collection of 29 variables was employed to capture the effect of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of local residents' life in three villages of Bangladesh. Prior to conducting a Factor Analysis, it is required to conduct Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) testing to ensure that the analysis is feasible with sufficient data. A KMO value higher than 0.5 is generally considered acceptable (Malhotra & Dash, 2016). Based on this study, the KMO value of 29 variables is 0.82, which is more than 0.5 and the result of Bartlett's Sphericity test is 0.000 (.0005). This indicates that Factor Analysis is suitable for this inquiry. There are six components that have Eigen values which are greater than one, and these components explain 53.79 percent of the variation. There was a strong connection between the variables, as shown by the reliability coefficient alpha of 0.753 for all of them.

Six factors were labeled as follows: factor 1 = structural development; factor 2 = earning capability; factor 3 = eco-friendly Management; factor 4 = Welfare development; factor 5 = women empowerment; factor 6 = community interest. These factors and under their variables are summarized in Table 3 according to their factor loadings.

#### Factor 1: Structural development

The first factor explained 21.65% of the total variation carried out by 3 variables with 0.731 alpha. This factor focuses on structural development through sustainable rural tourism, which leads to an advancement in people's quality of life. However, it strongly implies that sustainable rural tourism activities have built residential and commercial buildings, in addition, have and contributed to the overall development of local residents.

#### Factor 2: Earning Capability

Earnings capability is the second factor; it explained 15.74 percent of the total variance (Eigenvalue=9.57) and has three variables with loadings between .623 and .858. This factor included items regarding increasing residents' income, demand for local products, handicrafts, and agricultural products by tourists, and upgrading the way of life.

#### Factor 3: Eco-friendly Management

Factor three, "eco-friendly management," indicates that rural tourism has a positive effect on environmental management, such as local people adopting renewable and energy-saving technology, maintaining update waste management systems, and protecting the natural environment in study areas. This eco-friendly management transforms social life by improving the quality of life. This factor explained 5.95% of the total variation carried out by 4 variables with 0.79 alpha.

#### Factor 4: Welfare development

Factor 4 pertains to the enhancement of community life and elucidates the residents' perspectives on the extent to which their quality of life has changed due to rural tourist operations. Welfare development factor explained 4.21 percent of the total variance (Eigenvalue=1.47) and has three variables with loadings between 0.602 and 0.757.

#### Factor 5: Women empowerment

Factor five consists of two variables named 'women empowerment'. This factor describes the growth in employment for rural women (factor loading 0.783) and jobs for villagers (factor loading 0.697) resulting from rural tourism operations. When rural women get jobs, this is a chance for them to show their empowerment in social life.

#### Factor 6: Community interest

The sixth factor, community interest, was made up of two variables and explained 2.91% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.27 and an alpha coefficient of 0.62. This factor identified that locals' interest and satisfaction get importance in rural tourism activities in rural areas, and residents' interest is also growing in accessing the internet.

**Table 3: Factors along with respective variables pertaining to sustainable tourism development**

<b>Factor 1 Structural development</b>		
<b>Eigen Values: 11.28</b>	<b>Variance (%): 21.65</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.89</b>
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	
Tourism improves new, engineered residential buildings and improving the condition of commercial uses such as shops in the village	.778	
Tourism improves rural housing	.769	
It has contributed to overall development of local people	.677	
<b>Factor 2 Earning capability</b>		
<b>Eigen Values: 9.57</b>	<b>Variance (%): 15.74</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.81</b>
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	
Rural tourism activities have increased my income	.646	
Demand for Local products, handicrafts & agricultural products by tourists have benefitted the traditional businesses and the local economy	.623	
It has upgraded the way of living	.858	
<b>Factor 3 Eco-friendly Management</b>		
<b>Eigen Values: 2.69</b>	<b>Variance (%): 5.95</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.79</b>
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	
Rural tourism has made the water supply, sewer system, and lights on the roads better.	.826	
It has made villages to adopt renewable and energy saving technology	.716	
Rural tourism helps to maintain proper disposable system for waste management.	.527	
Rural tourism development protects community's natural environment now and for the future	.660	
<b>Factor 4 Welfare development</b>		
<b>Eigen Values: 1.47</b>	<b>Variance (%):4.21</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.75</b>
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	
There are some tourism impacts on dress, food habits and behavior of local people	.797	

Rural tourism upgrades the social value of local people	.640
It increases the access of rural households to the services of rural health centers and dentistry services, specialists, general practitioners, and specialists, nurses, midwives, health workers in the village	.602
<b>Factor 5 Women empowerment</b>	
<b>Eigen Values: 1.74</b>	<b>Variance (%): 3.33</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.65</b>	
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
Tourism improves employment situation of rural women	.783
Tourism has created jobs for many people in my village	.697
<b>Factor 6 Community interest</b>	
<b>Eigen Values: 1.27</b>	<b>Variance (%): 2.91</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.62</b>	
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
Residents' interest and satisfaction towards tourism industry gets importance	.760
Awareness created by tourism improves Villagers' participation in Internet access	.835

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Source: SPSS output

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant mean difference in the impact of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life of residents of three rural areas in terms of demographic profiles.

The results of the Independent Sample 't' test and One-Way ANOVA for the impact of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life of residents of three rural areas in relation to the residents' demographic profiles presented that there is a significant difference between the variables with respect to gender, level of education, occupations, and monthly family income where  $p < 0.05$ .

However, there is no significant mean difference between the impact of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life of residents with regard to age where  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, out of five demographic variables, four variables rejected the null hypothesis. Table 4 presented the test results of Independent Sample 't' test and one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) between the impact of sustainable rural tourism on the quality of life of residents of three rural areas in relation to the residents' demographic profiles.



**Table 4: Results of Independent Sample 't' Test and One-Way ANOVA**

Sl. No	Residents Demographic Variables	Significant Value	Inference of Hypothesis
1.	Gender	.000 (t= 4.363)	Reject null hypothesis
2.	Age	.058 (F= 2.15)	Fail to reject null hypothesis
3.	Level of Education	.001 (F= 3.82)	Reject null hypothesis
4.	Occupations	.001 (F= 3.63)	Reject null hypothesis
5.	Monthly Family income	.000 (F= 6.36)	Reject null hypothesis

Source: SPSS output

### Discussion

The aim of this paper is to present how sustainable rural tourism development (expressed through economic, socio-cultural, and environmental evolution of sustainability) can lead to social transformation in local communities in Bangladesh through quality of life. The analysis of data from the field study in three rural areas of Bangladesh revealed that rural tourism enhances the quality of life for people in these areas, thereby contributing to social transformation. The results of the mean analysis in this research demonstrate that the impact of rural tourism on the economy, socio-cultural aspects, and environmental aspects has a significant influence on the residents' quality of life. Job creation through rural tourism, thereby increasing the income of the locals, along with employment of rural women, which has a positive impact on their society, indicates social transformation. In social evolution, it can be seen that rural areas give importance to the opinions of local people; as a result, they get encouragement in their cultural activities, stepping into globalization through the use of the internet. These data indicate that the social transformation of rural people is taking place. The mean analysis of environmental evolution shows that villagers have adopted renewable and energy-efficient technologies, helping to develop proper waste management as a result of rural tourism. Along with this, the local people are getting serious about protecting the environment.

According to the factor analysis, residents of three study areas have a positive effect on quality of life for sustainable rural tourism development in general. Rural tourism in rural areas is accelerating infrastructure development. New buildings are being built, commercial activities are taking place, and modernization of local people's houses, which indicates factor 1: "structural development." Factor three, "eco-friendly management," shows that rural tourism helps local people embrace renewable and energy-saving technologies, update waste management systems, and safeguard the natural environment in study areas. By enhancing living quality, eco-friendly management changes social life. It is an opportunity for rural women to demonstrate their social

skills when they are able to find employment. And this is what happened through rural tourism, which is coming up in factor 5: “women empowerment.” Finally, there is no significant mean difference between the impacts of sustainable rural tourism on residents’ quality of life with regard to age. However, demographic variables such as gender, level of education, occupations, and monthly family income have a great impact on the quality of life of residents of three rural areas in Bangladesh.

### **Conclusion**

Sustainable rural tourism is a demand-controlled strategy which is becoming a popular desire of tourists in recent time. Quest for new experience, participation in environment friendly activities and contribution to the overall development of a society and for preserving local culture, tradition and uniqueness of a rural area, people are travelling to rural areas. Though, nature, landscape, wildlife, heritage play as the main attraction here. This type of tourism encourages evaluation on economic, socio-culture, environment, infrastructure, politics etc. The researcher has worked on the main three pillar of sustainability that are discussed before. It can be concluded from the depiction above that the standard of living have been influenced by the emergence of sustainable rural tourism development and this results in social transformation. Social transformation can be viewed both from positive and negative side but sustainable development of rural tourism makes changes in rural society more positively. The research findings shows that tourism gives more stability to rural economy. Growth in income statement, more employment, high demand for local products, handicrafts, and agricultural products, increased local businesses, infrastructural development, women empowerment in rural area are some outcomes of sustainable rural tourism. These changes have showcased the upgrade way of life.

On the other part, increasing participation in cultural activities from both tourist and community sides highlights the positive cultural exchange, upward steps towards globalization, pride of own culture and preservation of culture have been noticed in these three study areas which is completely created by tourism. As sustainable development fosters the level of improvement which is not too close or not too open, it will not discourage adaptation and also will not accept massive intervention of foreign culture into local one. Environmental protection is also carried out actively in those rural area as it is the main attraction of tourist. To cope up with the desire of tourist and to give highest value for tourist expenditures, planners and community focuses on conservation of natural resources, wildlife as well as adaptation of renewable and energy-efficient technologies and proper waste management. However, quality of rural life has been indicated by economic firmness, socio-cultural enrichment and nourished environment of that rural area. On the same side, this high quality of living standards transforms the way of society. It is proven from the research result and discussion that sustainable rural tourism development is one of the potential activities for social transformation as it improves the quality of life. There is also been differences of the level of growth in quality of life in terms of gender, level of education, income and occupations among different destinations. Involvement of locals, their knowledge also their living patterns direct their engagement in tourism as well as it can

be act as demotivation factor if tourism development cannot give equal excess to involve and to bring betterment through tourism in their life-standards.

Every research paper has some limitations and constraints throughout the development and implementation period. At first, the result wouldn't be the same while including a broad sample size and other rural tourist destinations. Though, this paper will assist future discussion with its basic concepts over sustainable rural tourism and social transformation. Second, only the positive outcomes have been found out based on those three destinations. Tourism is at maturity level in those destinations and that can be a reason for positive outcome. It can be different in other rural destinations within Bangladesh or out of Bangladesh where over-tourism has been seen or tourism is at introductory level. To further improve the thoroughness of the study, it can be intriguing to investigate others variables and other rural destinations to see how well both the validity and reliability survive.

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