Chapter 7
Summary of Findings, Limitations of the Study, Avenues of Further Research and Conclusions

7.1 Summary of Findings

- The tourism potentiality of The Sunderbans is largely unexploited.
- The current tourist facilities are inadequate and do not conform to international standards.
- The tourism of The Sunderbans needs to be diversified from the conventional jungle safaris to hitherto unexplored avenues of tourism such as cultural tourism, health tourism, historical tourism and religious tourism because the prospects of such diversification are bright.
- Effective implementation of eco-tourism concept in The Sunderbans may be one of the long-term solutions to the problems of sustainable development of the region.
- A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment should be conducted by a cross-functional team of experts, to ascertain baseline ecological resources and to explore potentialities and vulnerabilities of proposed tourism projects.
- A multi-faceted master plan should be prepared for tourism development of the region.
- It is important to formulate effective promotional and marketing strategies at policy-making level as well as at operational level to promote ecotourism in The Sunderbans. In this respect, strategies may be implemented through public-private partnership model.
- The Sunderbans has already been declared a natural world heritage site by the UNESCO. Side by side it can claim to be a cultural world heritage site due to its rich historical, archaeological and cultural attributes.
7.2 Limitations of the Study

The work has been done under certain constraints.

- There is a general absence of organised database with respect to tourism activities in The Sunderbans. Except in the entry point of Sajnekhali sanctuary, in other part of The Sunderbans there is no system of record keeping of tourist arrival or inflow.
- Considering the critical need of the study, this researcher has created primary database on various aspects based upon unofficial and official sources. There may be statistical errors and deviations from the actual situation.
- This researcher has made an attempt to draw an outline of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for developing eco-tourism in The Sunderbans. This is a preliminary effort as actual EIA involves teamwork and technical expertise and enormous funds as a major prerequisite.
- The researcher has attempted to prescribe certain specific guidelines for the development of ecotourism in the region. Some suggestions regarding diversification of existing tourism scenario, improvement of tourism infrastructure, involving expert groups in tourism planning etc. are given. But it has not been possible to prepare a comprehensive master plan with the help of profitability analysis, social cost-benefit analysis, specific project viability reports and a comprehensive EIA report. Such analytical frameworks could have added value to this research effort.

7.3 Avenues of further research

- A comprehensive project should be taken to study the socio-economic-cultural-environmental aspects of The Sunderbans and to bring all research work on The Sunderbans under one umbrella for better management of tourism research aimed at sustainable development.
- Efforts need to be taken for creating a scientific database of tourist information with area-wise segment reporting on revenue earnings, new tourist spots, tourist inflow, new development initiatives and comparative analysis. Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, for example, is publishing this type of information, which also creates an impression on potential tourists.
• A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be undertaken by a cross-functional team of experts on a project-specific basis, to explore future tourism potentialities and vulnerabilities of proposed tourism projects.

• Further extensive research should be made on cross border tourism concentrating on collaborative endeavours between India and Bangladesh to protect the entire The Sunderbans. Guidelines and strategies to attract international tourists by both the countries for visiting The Sunderbans may be framed through this type of research along with profit sharing, revenue earnings, tourist exchange, international relations framework is possible either by
  a) Collaborative Research-recommendations of which to be sent to the governments of both the countries for future actions.
  b) Recommendation about collaboration of Individual research findings and data collection analysis of both the countries may be made in order to create an integrated future action plan.

• Tourism is possible if the area survives. This region is vulnerable to natural calamities and global warming is at present causing threats to its existence. Extensive and detailed scientific research should be made to save The Sunderbans from extinction.

**Conclusion**

'The future for ecotourism worldwide is bright. The validity of developing countries as quality tourist destinations may largely depend upon the extent to which these destinations are able to implement sustainable development practices and attract a share of the international ecotourism market. If all of the players understand and accept their responsibilities and are environmentally motivated, policies should eventually emerge that reflect the needs and interests of all concerned’ - Tiwari and Tiwari (2005) in *Tourism Management, The Socio-economic and ecological perspective*, pp35. In this respect, it can be stated that the ecotourism of The Sunderbans will be a successful phenomenon if the policymakers effectively follow sustainable development strategies and practices.