PREFACE

Tourism is one of the largest global industries which ranks 5th in the field of international trade. Despite the worldwide economic recession, global warming and terrorist threats, the international tourism is increasing sharply year by year and according to the forecast of United Nations World Tourism Organization 1.6 billion arrivals will be recorded by 2020 representing an exponential growth in this sector from 25 million in 1950 and 800 million in 2005. According to World Travel and Tourism Council, by 2020 the number of people employed in travel and tourism worldwide will be 275 million. Under such circumstance tourism will provide 1 in every 12 jobs. Thus global tourism industry is providing millions of jobs and billions of enjoyable days for the hosts and guests respectively and under such circumstances the backward economies of the world having tourism resources are increasingly depending on tourism for their survival with little concern about the impacts of tourism on environment.

Tourism is a both blessing and a curse if we consider its impact on economy and environment. The present study is an attempt to analyze the development of tourism in two adjoining districts of West Bengal which was an undivided entity till 2002. The development of tourism in West Bengal actually got its momentum after the announcement of its tourism policy in 2008. The number of new plans and programmes came up for the development of tourism and a number of new destinations are also explored. The present study incorporates them in order to evaluate the tourism scenario of Purba and Paschim Medinipur from the standpoint of sustainability.

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