# CHAPTER VIII
## SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

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8.1. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF WEST BENGAL

West Bengal is having huge potential for tourism activities but there are certain factors which is creating a backlog. One of such factors is the lack of infrastructural developments in the state. Though the growth of tourism is steady but it is slow when compared to other states of India. Lack of standard infrastructure, lack of promotional activities and the laidback attitude of the local people have created the main backlog. There are certain advantages in tourism that West Bengal possesses some of them being:

- Varied forms of natural beauty.
- Low cost (cost effective).
- Enriched with natural and rural tourism resources.
- Huge scope of exploring new places and hidden rural tourism potentiality.
- Enormous possibility of discovering nature in a creative way.

If infrastructure is developed and proper marketing and promotional focus are initiated, West Bengal can turn to be one of the most attractive destinations for rural tourists. There are some initiatives taken by private tour operators and NGO’s with respect to this matter, but until and unless the state government takes initiatives it will not be possible to carry on developments in rural tourism infrastructure in a symmetric and overall manner. The fact that West Bengal has varied structure of natural beauty cannot be denied. However the main problem of West Bengal Tourism is that there is lack of proper developmental and sustainable actions for tourism marketing. Many private players are arranging rural tourism with their own initiatives; however they are not getting proper guidelines regarding this matter due to the neglect of the tourism department of the state government. The State Government should take proper initiatives that will attract both domestic and international tourists. Proper training
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should be provided to the private players who are engaged with the purpose of promoting rural tourism.

The tourism resource of West Bengal is so enriched that can attract every segment of tourism. Places like Dakshineswar, Kalighat, and Bakreshwar can be well suited for spiritual tourism. Bishnupur is developing its own form of historical tourism those tourism destinations are becoming kind of age old and saturated it is unable to fulfil the need of the modern tourist specially the young generations and different minded people. It can be very well observed that Indians have a different affinity towards tourism activities. But in order to focus on overall development of the tourism perspective of West Bengal it has to depend on other new age tourists along with the mainstream tourism. Though there are few tourists who are interested for tourism in West Bengal, but foreign tourists are considerably low. The state should focus on this issue. Based on the findings and analysis of Chapter-VII, it can be said that 8% of the tourists in West Bengal demand for rural tourism. There is no particular target segment for this form of tourism activity but the lifestyle definitely matters.

- There is need of development of new rural and nature based tourism circuits across the state of West Bengal. The segmentation approach is required in tourism planning and marketing. Most of the tourists who prefer rural and nature based tourism prefer a comfortable stay at the end of the day.
- The current research has discovered that there are several areas or places which can be developed to give a proper shape to rural tourism facility in West Bengal to boost the rural tourism of West Bengal.
- The promotion of West Bengal is lacking behind as compared to other states of India. West Bengal does not consider the seriousness of tourism activity as a component to enhance GDP. As other states are continuously emphasizing in their core competencies and are developing advanced marketing strategies, West Bengal is lagging behind in this sense. The websites like the ‘Incredible India’ (maintained by the Government of India) contains information about the tourism potential of West Bengal but the information is very less and is even incomplete which may mislead the potential tourists. West Bengal should thrive on proper branding initiatives coupled with organized marketing communication initiatives
to make the information about such vast tourist resources to percolate properly among tourists.

- Government should promote it properly and through proper channels. Proper information should be made available to tourists about the prospective places in West Bengal. Undoubtedly the promotional strategy of West Bengal tourism can accelerate the tourism growth. The private tour operators are taking more initiatives in popularizing the rural tourism of their own interest for generating revenues they are using one to one marketing with their own prospective consumer database in this aspect Government of West Bengal is not directly benefited in terms of revenue generation, so the better control over the private players is required, where the state can also get the meaningful contribution in tourism GDP.

- Government can consult with international experts over the development of tourism activities.

- It should focus on infrastructural development.

- It should focus on proper promotional activities along with the identification of new tourism destinations across the states because in West Bengal there are several places which are still unexplored which need to be promoted.

- It should appreciate, compliment and provide support to the private tour operators who are doing good job in promoting West Bengal tourism.

- It should take serious steps to ensure and retain the natural beauty of West Bengal.

- It should provide proper security to the tourists and stop issues like Maoism and disturbances like Darjeeling.

- It should promote and undertake the PPP model (Public Private Partnership) in tourism to accelerate the tourism growth.

- From the current study an interesting result has come up that most of the tourists are more interested about rural tourism in West Bengal. So, factors like safety, medical care, information and communication, convenience in terms of transportation, hygiene and cleanliness, access to money with ATM machines
and general comfort, all need to be promoted as the components of rural tourism, for the potential customer.

8.2. BRANDING, POSITIONING AND MARKETING COMMUNICATION FOR RURAL TOURISM OF WEST BENGAL

Branding and positioning of rural tourism in India in general and West Bengal in particular need to be very strong to attract the domestic and international tourist. It is kind of "One size fits all" approach it is going on in case of branding this is not proper marketing. In marketing proper Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning strategy is strongly required, especially while dealing with products like rural tourism.

- Al Ries and Jack Trout has clearly noted in their seminal work Positioning: the battle for the Mind ‘If we stand for everything we stand for nothing’. It is a positioning problem for Indian tourism; it tries to project India tourism is kind of one-stop-shop offering to mass market. But it is choice of customer (tourist) might not be interested in visiting the entire destination.

- Findings and analysis of Chapter VII of this current research has specified that marketing communication of West Bengal tourism is not adequate to promote West Bengal as a rural tourism destination in present market condition. The tourists are interested about rural tourism in West Bengal but they are not getting proper information. The present marketing communication is not functioning well to attract the potential tourist. The promotion aspect for this type of tourism needs specific segment wise approach.

- It has been observed that the most effective communication for rural tourism of West Bengal are word of mouth communication, Tour Operators, information from social gathering, social networking, internet etc. So Public Relation (PR) activities need to be done to promote rural tourism.

- It has been observed that there is a significant correlation between the awareness level of West Bengal tourism and the intention to visit West Bengal. But when the correlation are being calculated between the awareness level of West Bengal
and the marketing communication components it has been observed that only the component like tour operator’s initiatives, tourism fairs and festivals, article in magazine and print media have significant correlation but other component are not having strong impact in increasing the awareness level about West Bengal tourism in general and rural tourism in particular.

- From the analysis of the data from the respondents’ analysis it has been noticed that rural tourism is suffering from lack of proper infrastructure and organized setup. The proper infrastructure and organized setup development requires huge investment. The government of West Bengal should take initiative or pay attention in that aspect.
- The private tour operators are taking more initiatives in popularizing the rural tourism for their own interest to generate revenues. They are using one to one marketing with their own prospective consumers’ database. But from interview data we have found that there is less government support.
- West Bengal with a new tag line ‘Bengal Leads’ it is doing the right job in promoting various economical aspect as well as culture of Bengal. In long run the positive result will also come in the field of tourism. But with the overall political situation of Darjeeling, Jangalmahal etc. and political disturbance, Maoist activities and other related things, and news related to this is spreading a bad word of mouth communication to the prospective tourists.
- The study has also found that the tourists are becoming more interested in unexplored or new destinations in different parts of West Bengal which are not so popular. Thus creating more opportunities for future growth.

Based on the study findings the following suggestions or recommendations are offered for betterment in quality of tourism services for marketing and development of West Bengal tourism especially rural tourism as follows:

- **Purpose or Attraction of Visit**

  The heritage, flora and fauna, nature, pleasure and leisure are the main attractions to visit by tourists in West Bengal. Both the state and the central government of India have to take the remedial actions to improve the
infrastructural facilities in order to increase the rate of tourist arrivals to the rural destinations.

- **Hotel Services**

  It is too essential to concentrate on the development of certain basic infrastructural facilities at the hotels of West Bengal such as accessibility of hotels, adequate and continuous supply of water (hot and cold), and uninterrupted power supply, proper ventilation of rooms and clean comfortable beds and blankets. Standardized tariffs at all the lodges and resorts may be supervised by the hotel related associations and the local authorities which may pave way for the satisfaction of the rural tourists.

- **Communication Services**

  Steps may be taken for the establishment of better communication services with a vigorous speed in connectivity. The number of internet centres in the town and at the site seeing spots can be established. More websites related to West Bengal tourism like, travelguru.com and tripadvisor.com can be created to provide reliable and prompt information or knowledge about West Bengal to the tourists. The periodical updating of tourism websites of Central and State Governments and spreading of up to date information about West Bengal with user and access-friendly with attractive tourists information on accessible rural tourism destinations and products in West Bengal can be collected and published in English as well as major Indian languages. For its wider dissemination, respective government agencies, tourism networks and organizations and so on can be considered. Depending on foreign visitor-profile at major attractions, additional foreign languages can also be considered for display.

- **Food Services**

  Good quality, less expensive and tasty food services may be made affordable to the tourists visiting West Bengal especially during the time of season. Frequent
inspection of the quality and hygiene of food served in restaurants and hotels is highly essential.

- **Transportation Services**
  Roads of the rural sides are very narrow and quality and conditions are very poor. So steps may be taken to facilitate the transportation services like widening and developing of roads so as to systemize the traffic which is the major problem faced by the rural tourists.

- **Shopping Services**
  Shopping is one of the important parts to most of the tourists. But there is a prominent gap between shopping demand and shopping facilities in the rural destinations in West Bengal. So governments should think about the shopping matters by establishing shopping market or mal with reasonable price at the rural tourist destinations or nearby towns where they are staying.

- **Travel Agency Services**
  Value for money plays a vital role in the tourism sector. Tourist expectations are higher and their value for money needs to be satisfied by the services provided by the travel agency. Factors in the order of importance are provision of safety and support, proper information about availability of site seeing, package tours, cost, availability of accessible vehicle at destination, personal touch and care and the like, makes tourists feel confident about the services provided by services providers. Tourist guides should be educated and systematized to avoid misguidance of tourist. They should also provide quality service with more benefits to tourists such as special discount, tour packages with food, accommodation, ease of accessibility, information centres, and good travel desk facility. The tour operators shall use effective marketing strategies for products and services in the West Bengal tourism market, for a better understanding of rural tourists who visits West Bengal. Tour operators can be motivated to design inclusive tourism products or packages and the promotion of those. Some
special incentives, awards etc. can be considered to reward the tour operators by the government.

- **Local Services**

An adequate arrangement has to be made for the ensuring a pollution free environment at various spots of the tourist importance as well as at the public places. Drinking water facilities at the tourism spots or site seeing spots has to be arranged. Positive attitude of local people, their personal care and support makes the visitors feel secure and visit West Bengal repeatedly. Tour guides and taxi do not have necessary educational qualification and multi-lingual ability to communicate with the tourists.

- **Apex Bodies**

The apex bodies in the tourism sector, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation (WBTDC), Market Research Division, Ministry of Tourism, Department of Tourism Art and Culture has to work with understanding for the infrastructural Development of Tourism in West Bengal. Local bodies like Lions club, Rotary club, Local Government Administration, Revenue Department and Tourism Information Office may work together for the development of Tourism in West Bengal.

Regular research on the problems and prospects of local rural tourism has to be encouraged on the tourism behaviour and the tourism policies may be formulated accordingly. Periodical audit of major tourist attractions, transport service, hotel service, and accommodation and so on should be undertaken in collaboration with state government and other research institutes to improve quality of tourism in West Bengal. Toilet facility is absolutely essential in sight-seeing spots. Adequate facilities like common toilets and cleanliness should be improved. More protection should be provided in all areas to prevent illegal or indecent activities. Proper police booths may be maintained in all sight -seeing spots. Quality of foods served in restaurants should be
inspected frequently. Information Service should be improved. It is a collective responsibility of the Government, local authorities and tourism related service providers. Hence the success of rural tourism in West Bengal is a key to amplify and bring new tourist to West Bengal.

Besides these the following measures and steps may also come into positive effects for the rural tourism marketing and developments:

- Eco friendly measures must be introduced in tourist places for the protection of the environment which will inspire and attract the tourists.
- Artificial theme parks, self containing in nature can be created in tourist places like the study area. Such parks will provide entertainments, shopping malls, cafeteria, sports and games, fun and the like.
- Primary health centres working for 24 hours with ready availability of medical persons and medicine should be available.
- Cumbersome formalities for the foreign tourists by the custom offices may be relaxed but not at the cost of the interests of the country.
- For easy and urgent communication, towers must be installed in the tourist areas where communication facilities are poor.
- Adequate attention needs to be given for upgrading road transportation facilities in important rural tourist centres.
- Retiring room facilities on hourly basis, cloak room facility, learned guides proficient in many languages may be made available at the tourist centres.
- Hygiene and sanitation must be ensured at the tourist centres.
- The use of plastic or tine containers are to be avoided in the places they visit.
- Every individual must respect nature. There is a need for individuals and social groups to secure awareness and knowledge to develop attitudes, skills and abilities for developing a healthy environment.
- The State and Central Governments should give more emphasis to quality tourism by providing financial assistance to the mega project like Rural Tourism, Eco Tourism in the ecologically sensitive places in a sustainable
manner to protect and conserve the nature along with the employment to local people.

- By providing detailed information in the websites about the tourist spots, as most tourist seen to access the web to identify the ideal destinations for their visits.
- Public awareness programmes regarding the economic and social importance of tourism should be conducted regularly.
- Creating awareness about promotion of rural and eco-tourism and preservation of rural environment and heritage.
- In order to encourage small scale entrepreneurs, tourism industry can announce training programmes, considerable concessions and incentives.
- Tourism especially Rural Tourism will be made a subject of study in schools, colleges and Universities.
- Suggestions and complaint boxes will be set up at all hotels. An active Public Relations Cell will be set up in the department of tourism to handle these complaints and take immediate follow up action.
- A training programme for people from various walks of life like car drivers, customs and immigration officers, policemen and bus conductors whom tourists encounter face to face will be organised.
8.3. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A comparative study on marketing of tourism in different rural tourism destinations can be undertaken and case study research on tourist behaviour in different aspects of rural tourism. The researcher also hopes very strongly that there is still ample scope for further research on rural tourism industry. Based on the experiences of the researcher the following issues have been identified for further research. There is scope for conducting a research on the effectiveness of rural tourism policies in promotion of rural tourism between the states. A study on cultural tourism, medical tourism, spiritual tourism, heritage tourism can be motivated. Research on problems and prospects of rural tourism industry at state level can be studied every now and then for knowing the strengths and weaknesses in tourism. Study on rural tourism products can be individually encouraged. Further study may be done on:

- Role of Rural Tourism in the development of socio economic conditions of the concerned people of the rural tourism industry in West Bengal and even the whole country.
- And a study on the Rural Tourism Prospects in West Bengal.
- Improve on rural tourism market in West Bengal.
- Enhancing tourism destination brand with the proper promotion of rural tourism of West Bengal.
- Designing the better rural tourism products marching the tourist expectation.
- Gap analysis of the rural tourism market.
- Sustainability aspect rural tourism industry.

The researcher will feel amply rewarded if the above studies have paved the way for further exploration and research in future which will contribute a lot to improve the well being of the rural tourists and tourism beneficiaries to a great extent.
CONCLUSION

8.4. THE PROGRESS OF RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA AND ITS MARKETING ASPECT

India as a whole is still far behind in terms of other countries across the globe in connection with tourism sector growth. The awareness is needed that India is having huge resources to promote tourism in every field. If we consider the rural tourism specifically, in India we can find huge range of forest and wild life, deserts, mountain and valleys, the combination of beach and forests, mountain and forest. There are so many known and unknown hill destinations huge range of beaches, diverse culture, mangrove forest, rivers everywhere the rural and adventure activity is possible. In India there is a trend in promoting the known places rather than the unexplored tourism destinations. The different countries all over the world are trying to identify new place for tourism especially rural tourism. Here we will found less effort in finding the new places and promotion of those new places. Till today rural tourism is considered as unorganized sector in India. It requires lot of care in structuring this industry. This will create a huge competitive advantage compare to other nations and it is having huge potential in attracting the national and international tourist. The price inequality in between the different states is creating the barriers in developing the rural tourism destinations. The balance growth is not possible. Most of the states in India are well off with their natural resources and can create a new destination for rural activities. India is still focusing in age old tourism activities rather than the modern needs; the tourist mentality is changing so fast. The government is not putting any effort in understanding the changes. The government should recognize the potential for rural tourism and should do needful things in popularizing this type of tourism in India. The well planned communication is required which can communicate with the specific segment of rural tourism at international and national both the levels. It has been observed that there are so many tour operators are already existing they can cater the rural tourism demands but faces several problems in arranging the tours and licensing. So, financial support and guideline is important for the growth of this sector.
8.5. THE PROGRESS OF RURAL TOURISM MARKET AND THE PROSPECT OF WEST BENGAL

The different state like Kerala Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu etc. are doing very well in rural tourism but West Bengal as a state was not serious about overall tourism for last decades. But now a day the new Government under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal is taking initiatives seriously in promoting the West Bengal tourism rigorously. When tourism was neglected then how one can expect that rural tourism will grow. After 2012 the number of tourism fare, events and festivals has been increased. It is creating the huge level of awareness that West Bengal is a state having huge tourism potential. The hill area in North-Bengal, Sundarbans, and Dooars has been recognized by the state as the revenue generating points. Government is also looking for introducing the new form of tourism in West Bengal which is very much optimistic. The West Bengal Government should give emphasis to those places which are not explored so much till date like Jungalmahal, Purulia and other remote places in north Bengal. All over the state there are so many rural destinations which are suffering because of the connectivity and infrastructures. In West Bengal a special tourism map has to be developed and an rural tourism circuit should indicate the destinations in a structural way. It is obvious that if any one talk about West Bengal then the first picture will come to the mind of that person is Kolkata after that Dooars, Darjeeling Sundarban etc, those are already popular destinations. The new area is to be developed so that it can attract the whole India as well as the international tourist. In terms of rural tourism West Bengal is having huge potential. The next important point for tourism prospect and growth in West Bengal is not so costly compare to other state in India. West Bengal can enjoy and implement the cost leadership strategy. The attitude of the local people is also positive which is favourable for tourism growth and sustainability. West Bengal is blessed with natural resources and that indicates that West Bengal is already well off with tourism capitals. The different types of rural tourism can be possible in West Bengal. It will be very much significant associated with the overall tourism growth of West Bengal. There are some weaknesses in terms of growth and prosperity of West Bengal tourism as a whole
and rural tourism in particular. Towards tourism they believe it’s a good source of earning and employability but there is some fragmented incident creates negative feeling about the West Bengal as a whole.

There should be the complete support from the local people in tourism growth. The government should take the initiative in making them understand regarding the positive things involved in tourism. The Maoist activities and its huge media coverage bounds as well as political disturbance should be controlled. It is actually conveying wrong message against brand Bengal, that’s why tourism is also affected. The state administration should be much stronger so that the tourist can get the favourable condition in visiting the different parts of Bengal without any fear. The connectivity among the tourism circuits must be much stronger. The Government initiative is required in developing the basic minimum infrastructure and transportation facilities. If we go through the tourism website of Bengal it is not having proper clarity that’s why it is facing problem in providing proper information to the prospect. So, government should take care to make those websites for strong sources of information regarding West Bengal tourism.

Different states like Gujarat, Assam, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala are promoting the state as well as the tourism brand in a very effective way. Here West Bengal is lacking behind in terms of promotion by the digital media. The prospect from different part of country as well as world is not becoming aware about different destinations of Bengal but now a day it is very much important for the same. If we see the different projects and their implementation in the field of tourism, West Bengal is not holding significant position compare to the national tourism statistics. The more projects for tourism are required. In this case consultation with the National or Central Government is important it will be very much optimistic if the Government of West Bengal give priorities in long term objectives and planning rather than the short term goals. The clarity of that long term planning should be there. If we talk about the recent initiatives in promoting West Bengal with a tag line Bengal leads, it is doing the right job in promoting various economical aspect as well as culture of Bengal. In long run the
positive result also will come in the field of tourism. The department should do needful things in processing the tourism data on time and the smart presentation of those data will be route map for the tour operators and the stakeholders involved in tourism. It will be very much helpful for capacity building and long term planning. The Government of West Bengal can take the support from the different well recognized agencies like IMRB, KPMG, AC Nielsen can be haired for market research, and on the other hand help can be asked from IIMs as well as IITs in conducting the tourism research for finding the better path in achieving the long run tourism objectives towards growth and sustainability. To promote rural tourism proper promotional plan is required which can integrate both the general tourism and the rural tourism simultaneously.

8.6. MARKETING AND PROMOTION ASPECT OF RURAL TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL

The government has to take initiatives in creating linkages in terms of tourism logistic. The communication and information must be properly shared with the target group through the desirable media preferred by the target group. Another point is that the brand West Bengal is not properly projected in connection with rural tourism. The different states like Jammu and Kashmir (Leh - Ladakh Area), Rajasthan, Assam, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, etc. are using dual promotion strategy one side they are promoting state tourism as a hole and also sectorial promotion of rural tourism is taking place as a core attraction of state tourism. When the different States of India are adopting aggressive strategy in promoting tourism activities and destinations, hear West Bengal is having relaxed approach. If we go through the website of ‘West Bengal Tourism’ it can be seen that the website is not as good as other state in India it is not that much attractive and informative. The private players like Chalojaai, Bhraman etc. are having better website compare to tourism websites of the Government of West Bengal. The concept ‘Incredible India’ is trying to integrate all the tourism destination across India it is also trying to project the different states and there tourism resources in an efficient way.
which can attract both domestic as well as international tourist, but if we go through that specific web site incredible india.com where we can find West Bengal is holing less priority compared to other states. The government should take initiative in creating a better relationship where West Bengal can represent as like other states in terms of tourism growth and prosperity. The Government of West Bengal should also involve the NGO’s which are working in tourism sector.

West Bengal is enriched with its natural tourism resources. But the main part is lacking that is communication and promotion like other states it should promote natural environmental and rural attractions as rural tourism. Way of communication with the target group may follow by adventure stories and experiences by the traveller in travel magazine, word of mouth communication from the tour operators and travel organization or NGOs, trouble show as television programme news feature in print media. Tour and travel fare the picture representation with Indian railway (as it is followed by the north-east India) in film promotion, promotion with television daily soap, social networking sites etc.

8.7. FACTORS CONSIDERED BY TOURISTS FOR SELECTING WEST BENGAL AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

Tourist are very much interested in visiting West Bengal because of several motivational factors such as cost effectiveness, transportation, natural resources and natural beauty. Every segment is potential segment for West Bengal tourism because West Bengal can offer variety of tourism such as rural tourism, historical heritage tourism, religious tourism, cultural events tourism, urban areas and shopping tourism, sightseeing tourism, eco tourism, mountain and hill stations tourism, beach tourism, national parks/reserve forest tourism, explorers and adventurers tourism. Because of different tourism circuits if considered Tarapith, Klighat, Dakhineswar, Bakreswar that will fall under spiritual tourism. Bishnupur is promoting the historical tourism. Kolkata
is having its own attractiveness. In West Bengal rural tourism is mostly attracting to the
domestic people because they are having better information about West Bengal rather
than the people from foreign tourist. Tourist is much more influenced by word of mouth
communication, information from the friend circle, and they also visiting the tourism
fare. But somehow West Bengal rural tourism is not attracting the international tourist.
Few people definitely come from other states. The tourist are much more quality
conscious, they are not that much cost sensitive. It has been seen that if they are getting
the proper information about the tourist spots they are somehow influenced with that. 8
% of the total tourists in West Bengal are looking for rural tourism specifically. Demand
is not that much huge but the demand is increasing day by day. There is no age group
specification in connection with rural tourism but definitely the life style of the tourist is
somehow related to selection of this kind of tourism interests.

8.8. PROMOTION ASPECT OF WEST BENGAL GENERAL TOURISM IN
GENERAL AND THE RURAL TOURISM IN PARTICULAR

The tourism sector of West Bengal is not much seriously considered as a good
source of GDP by the government. In West Bengal tourism is somewhat neglected.
Whatever tourists are visiting West Bengal because of its attractiveness and word of
mouth communication and because of the true efforts of the tour operators. The
government of West Bengal is not serious like other state in considering promotion of
the tourism sector in West Bengal. It can be seen each and every state in India are
projecting and promoting their core competencies whereas West Bengal is a bit relaxed
in doing so. If going through the ‘incredible India’ website it is only providing few or
limited information about West Bengal that may provide negative message to the
potential tourist. If considering the tourism is an organized set up, the government will
get significant revenue from the tourist but in case of West Bengal it is not creating the
opportunity in greater GDP earning because it is somewhat unorganized. North-East is
the good example of tourism management whenever a tourist visiting to that place all that documentation is done and tour operators are bound to pay tax on the basis of their individual revenues. In West Bengal the State Government is trying to develop that kind of mechanism up to that level. The poor promotion of West Bengal tourism is restricting the scope for the growth of the West Bengal tourism. That rural tourism of West Bengal is also suffering with the poor promotions. To overcome this situation the proper branding strategy has to be adapted. The proper marketing communication strategy should be designed like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa, Assam etc. by which West Bengal can come up with tourism brand with the blend of nature base tourism and adventure tourism. The different media such as television campaigning, print media should be strategically used for the promotion of West Bengal tourism. Looking at the West Bengal tourism internet site, it is not projecting the entire tourism sector of West Bengal, it is not providing the right information and it is not following the global standards also. Undoubtedly the promotional strategy of West Bengal tourism can accelerate the tourism growth.

8.9. GOVERNMENT AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT RELATING TO WEST BENGAL TOURISM

Government should take initiatives in organizing the tourism sector for which it can take consultation of the international consultants in the tourism sector like other state of India. The infrastructural support is the most important where government should do needful things in creating the proper platform in tourism growth. The promotion is very much essential for any tourism destination. It should focus on proper promotional activities along with the identification of new tourism destinations across the states because in West Bengal there are several places which are still unexplored which need to be promoted.
The promotional strategy should be developed which can create a better brand image of West Bengal tourism. The government should appreciate and motivate the different tour operators, facilitators, NGOs which are doing good jobs in promoting West Bengal tourism. The financial, technological and training related support should come from the governments end. The protection of natural beauty and managing the resource is very much important. The Government should do needful things for it. The government should promote the PPP model (public private partnership) for the growth of tourism sector.

8.10. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WEST BENGAL AS RURAL TOURISM DESTINATION

States like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, etc. are so much focused and serious about tourism sector and considering tourism as a significant part of State’s economic activity resulting to the GDP and employment generation. To attain the sustainable tourism growth different states are taking various initiatives like infrastructural development, incising the safety measures, ensuring the basic minimum facilities or amenities for the targeted tourist group. State Tourism Corporations are very much active in segmenting the target market. It is being observed the changing need of the modern or new age tourist in the present market people are asking for new products. As a result nature base tourism, cultural tourism, nature or ecotourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife & forest tourism, leisure tourism, special interest tourism, wellness tourism those forms of tourism are coming in the picture. Rural tourism as an important tourism product for the contemporary market condition has been recognised by most of the region or state of India. To market tourism several marketing strategies has been formulated e.g. the
branding exercise has been started with the State Government initiatives backed by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Opening the Adventure Activity training institutes is becoming common for most of the states to motivate and train the perspective customers. Tourism resource utilisation and management are becoming significant part of destination marketing. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is also encouraging the initiatives of the State Governments. It can be seen different National Awards has been instituted for the development of rural tourism. Ministry of Tourism Government of India has also developed ‘Basic Minimum Standards for rural Tourism Related matters’ most of the states are following that guideline. Most of States which are doing well in the tourism sector they are considering rural tourism as an important component, for that reason the different State Governments are trying to discover and develop the core competencies and rural tourism recourses. The new rural tourism circuit development and reviving the existing rural tourism destinations are becoming very important for those States which are involved in rural tourism promotion. Some time is can be seen State Governments are facing some problems in marketing and operation of Tourism due to some obstacles in that case State Governments are promoting PPP model to get a synergistic effect. States like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, etc. are adopting innovative strategies to promote and commercialise rural tourism product. The present tourism success, sustainability and good tourism brand value, are outcome of that true effort.

As the study is a novel one, a humble and a maiden attempt has been made by the researcher to explore the avenues as to fulfil the objectives of the study. The researcher feels that the study has served the purposes for which it was carried out. Sincere efforts have been made by the researcher to study the chosen problem of the rural tourism industry in the study area. Despite the inherent and inevitable limitations of the study, all the specified objectives have been genuinely arrived at. The study gives a vivid picture of the socio-economic conditions of the sample tourist and thereby the services offered by the rural tourism industry. The factors influencing choice of tour were duly and analytically presented in the study. Above all the attitude of the sample tourists and
the problems faced by them have been exhaustively presented. The researcher hopes that the suggestions presented based on the findings of the study would be of immense help to the Governments and non governments’ organizations in making policy decisions for the development of the rural tourism industry in general and rural tourists in particular.

Tourism industry is one of the world’s largest industry and one of the fastest growing, accounting for over one-third of the value of total worldwide services trade. High labour intensive, it is a major source of employment generation, especially in remote and rural areas. There are numerous factors that attract the rural tourists to West Bengal. The present study, aims to understand the preference of tourists for West Bengal as a place for spending their leisure time and to refresh and rejuvenate themselves. This study is carried out to assess if any gap exists between the expectations and the perceptions of the tourists and to arrive at the required changes to be made by the local body, tour operators, and the tourism related service providers to enlarge the tourism potentiality of West Bengal. This will help to attract more tourists and thereby to earn more money from the rural tourists. The study attempts to elicit answers to the following issues:

- The prompts and factors influence the rural tourists to visit West Bengal.
- The socio-economic profile of the rural tourists to visit West Bengal.
- The expectations and perceptions of the rural tourist on tourism related services in West Bengal.
- The gap between the expectations and perceptions to the rural tourist on tourism services.
- The ways and means by which the existing gap in tourism services in West Bengal can be eliminated to improve West Bengal tourism.

Delighting rural tourists is a matter of exceeding expectations. In order to satisfy the rural tourists visiting the rural tourism destinations, delivering of high quality service is essential. Implementation of rural tourism with an orientation towards development management will significantly contribute to holistic development of the tourist area. It would improve rural livelihoods and standard of living. The development of
infrastructure will enhance the quality of life of the people and will help them to contribute to the preservation of the ecology and environment. However, in order to ensure development management through rural tourism, local communities must have legal rights over land and other resources and efforts must be made to provide individual and institutional partnerships in developing tourism projects. To raise sufficient funds for rural development necessary forums can be established to link communities with banks or other financial institutions. Rural people must also be trained to empower them so that they make substantial contributions in decision making and implementation of projects. Tourism development is no panacea for all development needs of a place and it has its adverse effects too. The success of tourism and its development is in minimizing the adverse effects while maximising the favourable effects and this is effectively implemented only if institutional mechanisms for collective action of all the stake holders are encouraged, which is fundamental to development management principles.

The rural tourists have expectations from many sources, such as past experiences, word of mouth and advertising. Rural tourists compare the perceived services with the expected services. If perceived service falls below the expected service, tourists are dissatisfied. Successful service providers add benefits to their offerings. This not only satisfies the tourist but also makes them feel surprised and delightful. Delighting rural tourists is a matter of exceeding expectations. In order to satisfy the rural tourists visiting the rural tourism destinations, delivering of high quality service is essential. The rural tourism service providers like hotel, restaurant, travel agency, transport, communication, shops and other local services etc must correctly perceive the customers (tourists) need, set a performance standard in quality life and price flexibility, appointment of trained personnel, avoiding conflicting standards, taking much time to listen to rural tourists and serving them immediately as per as possible, providing exactly the attractions that has been shown to them in websites, brochures, advertisements etc makes the rural tourists highly satisfied and the services quality delivered might be experienced without any misperception by the rural tourists. Hence to satisfy the rural tourists as expected, as the well-managed service companies usually does, shares some common practices: a strategic concept, a history of top management
commitment to quality, high standards, self service technologies, systems for monitoring service performance and customer complaints and an emphasis on rural tourist satisfaction and accessible internet facilities can highly satisfy the rural tourists. Further the rural determinants of service quality in order of importance such as ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately (reliability), the willingness to help rural tourists (customers) and to provide prompt service (responsiveness), the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence (assurance), the caring and individual attention to tourists (empathy) and the provision of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials (tangibles) might make rural tourism marketers successful. The researcher can conclude that, on the whole, marketing of rural tourism and the expectations and perceptions of domestic and foreign tourists in West Bengal was quite positive. The development of more rural tourism service providers to meet the demand of prospective foreign and domestic rural tourists at a competitive price and more "value for money", enjoyable atmosphere, safety and security facilities and good memories of their visit could lead to sustainable rural tourism development and fast marketing promotion will not only make West Bengal as a significant rural tourism destination but also as an important income generating source for the state as well.

8.11. PROBLEMS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RURAL TOURISM PROJECT (RTP)

There are some common problems for implementing the rural tourism projects, such as -

- Rural Tourism Project involves a number of stakeholders namely Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Industry, Panchayats, DistrictAdministrations, NGOs, Community members, Private sector and resource persons. The understanding among these stakeholders may get diluted with transfer of focal personnel.
Due to heavy workload, many District Administrations were not able to give adequate attention to the RTPs.

There were long gaps between the implementation of promotion and Infrastructure development activities. In some sites there is no promotional activities have been undertaken. So the community awareness, understanding, participation and ownership in such sites have been suboptimal.

Some Rural Tourism Project started without marketing and promotion efforts, tour operators were not consulted while selecting RTP sites.

Most of the states do not have any system of collecting and analysing data related to benefits and impacts of real progress and benefit of the project.

Delayed fund flow has been an impediment at some destination.