

## CHAPTER-9

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The quest for the new lands and the search for unknown, have become the most powerful forces which at all time impelled men to travel. The earlier travel was confined to limited areas but with the progress of civilization it has been expanded much and has taken a new form called **Tourism**. It is a dynamic and most diversified activity, involves in a form of human mobility from one habitual place of residence and stay another location. This movement is temporary and is motivated by a host of factors. Tourism is extremely diverse in nature involving economic, social and physical values; their inter-relationship with each other and with the subsystems within each category. It is dominated by changing ideas and attitudes of its customers and must be prepared to show a much greater degree of sensivity and willingness to adjust to new conditions than it has in the past.

Being a part of Recreational geography, tourism is an integral part of Applied geography because the application of geographical methods like survey, investigation, analysis and representation- all are largely touched by tourism activity. Again based on these criteria the status of tourism of a region can be evaluated and thus a future trend can be determined.

The development of tourism has crossed a long path of evolution . At the dawn of its blossom, tourism was un conscious, indeterminate and snail-slow but with the advancement of civilization it began to expand. The **Renaissance** is an important landmark in the history of tourism. In the Nineteenth century the improved transport system, industrialization,

urbanization, affluence and a new philosophy for holiday making opened the door of '**Modern Tourism**'. In the present study area tourism activity started its journey with the arrival of the British during the Eighteenth century especially in the Darjiling hill region.

Geographers with their integrated approach and pluralistic outlook have substantially contributed to revive the tourism phenomenon. From Western world the name of Sigaux, Robinson, Mitchell, Murphy, Peters, Norvel, McIntosh and Pearce is important in this case. The role of Indian geographers is also noteworthy. The works of Kayastha, Chakraborty P.K, Bharadwaj, Singh T.V, Kaur are a landmark in the field of tourism .From the works of these geographers it has been known that tourism phenomenon is the outcome of a combination of **motivations**. These motivations are extremely diverse in nature. Geographers have also highlighted that tourism phenomenon has some elements or **components** without which tourism cannot survive. Transport, Locale and accommodation are most basic among these. It is also revealed from the works of these tourism scholars that for the growth and development of tourism in a country '**Organization**' plays an important role since it is the framework within which tourism activity is rotated. Organization is vital to co-ordinate the components of tourism, on a scientific way and to have socio economic benefits of tourism. However it is influenced by a host of factors, such as political, economic and historical and the stage of tourism development. **India Tourism Development Corporation** (ITDC) is at present the apex tourist organization in India. Being emerged in 1966, ITDC at present has gained considerable experience and expertise in diverse activities covering the entire gamut of the tourism industry. Unlike national level, in state level also there are several organizations in India. **West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation** (WBTDC) is such an organization that embraces tourism activity of West

Bengal. But the tourism activity of the North Bengal especially of the hills is under the Darjiling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). Although the bulk of responsibility is with the DGHC, the WBTDC still remains a powerful influence of the maintenance of Tourism in Darjiling as well as other parts of North Bengal.

Tourism development in India is a Second World War phenomenon. In spite of having rich natural, cultural and historical diversity, the growth and development of tourism in India was quite slow during the Pre-independent period. It was actually since 1960s that tourism took a significant turn when the ITDC was formed. Today ITDC, with its regular planning and programme implementation activities is guiding the tourism industry. The picture of tourism in West Bengal is dismal due to lack of infrastructural facilities and poor planning policy. Against the country's annual international tourist arrival of 2.4 million in 1999, West Bengal's share is just 1.8 lakh or only 9%. However the development of tourism activity in North Bengal has been confined to three principle regions. These are the *Darjiling Himalayan region*, the *Dooars region* and the *Alluvial region*.

The present study area- North Bengal lies in the northern part of West Bengal, comprising six districts- Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur. The physiography of the area is full of diversity. The Northern part of it has lofty hilly country, belongs to Sub-Himalayan range while to the immediate foot hills there is a wavy rugged topography called Terai and Dooars. Again in the South, a monotonous plain exists. The area is well drained by several rivers and streams. The Teesta, The Torsha, The Jaldhaka, The Raidak, The Sankosh etc. rivers flow in parallel succession from north to south direction. There is a climatic

diversity too in the area. The climate of the plains is characterized by hot, humidity and heavy rainfall while cold winter (November-February) comes with dispersed mists at places. Unlike other places of Indian Sub-continent this area experiences six distinct seasons. Abundant in distinctive species of flora and fauna the area provides a unique place for tourists. Marked by intense rurality and traditional agrarian economy the region as whole suffers from want of proper infrastructural facilities in the secondary and tertiary sectors. An appropriate development plan can transform the existing socio economic scenario of the region. Promotion of tourism activity can certainly act as catalytic agent of such change.

The present study is being contemplated keeping in view some objectives. The realization of importance of tourism industry at the regional level and its relevance for the rejuvenation of socio-economic scenario of the North Bengal is a prime purpose of the present study. The area holds immense potentialities and promise for the promotion of tourism. The diversity of landscapes and its aesthetic beauty, exotic flora and fauna, heritage resources, murmuring water bodies and traditional folk cultures are the wealth of tourism in the area. Harnessing these rich resources this economically backward region can be developed. Again the study area being a unique regional and cultural identity, has failed to attract the attention and research community. There are much to search, research, explore and to investigate the study area since tourism in the region is a blooming industry.

For a scientific resource analysis of North Bengal's present tourism landscape and its potentials a systematic methodology has been adopted. Due to lack of factual and reliable information on tourism in North Bengal much attention has been given on field survey. In this case tourist surveys of different places within the study area have been conducted through

interviews, questionnaire surveys for obtaining adequate information. However emphasis is given on the proper published works, research based data, census reports, district gazetteers, travelogues, government reports, articles available on the region. Later, the available data obtained through field surveys and secondary sources has been collated, analyzed and represented by different cartographic techniques. A number of maps of scenic and religious-cultural spots have been inserted to illustrate the basic traits of tourism in the region.

Remembering the methodology in mind the present work has been carried out in two broad units. **Unit- 'A'** reflects some basic concepts of tourism with study area and its geographic personality. This part also deals with the present status of tourism. **Unit- 'B'** explores the influences and problems of tourism of the study area highlighting some planning measures and potentialities of tourism.

Considering the above backgrounds the basic theme of the present study has been focused. An elaborate description of tourism scenario of different district of North Bengal has been highlighted. From the present study it is clear that Darjiling is the richest tourist destination of North Bengal. Darjiling has an unrivalled and unique natural allurements. It has also beautiful institutions, museums, botanical and zoological gardens. These beckon a number of tourists. In 1990, the total number of **international tourists** arrived in Darjiling was 4768 persons (7.46%) while it has reached to 10632 persons (16.64%) in 1998. Again from the **monthly distribution of international tourists** in 1998 it is clear that April constitutes the peak period when the maximum number of tourists (16.59%) arrive in Darjiling. The arrival of tourists during June, July, August and September is low

(2.96%) due to onset of monsoon in the area. However, the estimated number of domestic tourists is about 1.5 lakh per year.

A detailed survey has been carried out to have a clear idea about tourism characteristics of Darjiling. The survey revealed that 66% of the tourists were Bengalee. They occupied the lion's share of the total tourists. The study also showed that about 60% tourists came to Darjiling for sightseeing. The excellent natural scenario of the surroundings and the soothing climate of Darjiling have changed this tourist destination as the "*Queen of Hill Stations*". The other places of tourist attractions of Darjiling hill area are Kurseong, Mirik and Kalimpong.

The second richest destination of tourist activity lies in the Jalpaiguri district. Here the *Jaldapara wild life sanctuary* takes an important position in tourism scenario of the district. The thick unravaged forests decorated with violet and red flowers, grasslands and the **One horned Rhinos** are the chief attractions of Jaldapara. In 1995-96, 7369 domestic tourists visited the sanctuary. On the same year the number of foreign tourists was 432 persons. After the Jaldapara, the *Buxa Tiger Reserve* also draws a number of tourists for its rich biodiversity and historical-pilgrimage importance. Rajabhatkhawa, Buxa Fort and Jainty thus beckon tourists from different parts of India as well as overseas. However, the other places of tourist attractions of Jalpaiguri district are the *Garumara sanctuary*, *Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary*, *Malbazar*, *Jalpesh* and *Jaldhaka*.

Tourism activity has also been flourished in Koch Bihar district . The rich cultural heritage of by-gone days, luxuriant forest growth, charming songs of sweet-voiced birds, fresh air with breeze etc. are the tourism bases of this district. The Koch Bihar Maharaja Palace, Sagar Dighi, Holy Madan

Mohan Temple, Devi Bari etc. lure tourists. But recently the *Rasik Beel Bird Sanctuary* – a crescent-shaped swampy land with forests, has been emerging as a famous tourist spot in this district. There is a progressive rise in the number of tourists coming at Rasik Beel Bird Sanctuary. In 1998, 1000 (12.82%) tourists visited the sanctuary while in 2001 the figure has reached to 3000 (38.46%).

In Uttar Dinajpur, the richest tourist destination is the *Kulik Bird Sanctuary*. It is the temporary home of migratory birds that land here every year from different parts of Asia as well as other parts of the World. During the period of 1995-96 the number of tourists came to this ‘paradise of birds’ was 990 persons. Again the places of historical importance that beckon tourists in the district are *Karandighi, Asurgarh and Chakulia*. The adjoining Dakshin Dinajpur district abounds in heritage resources. *Bangarh* of this district is famous for its historical importance. This destination is not only famous for its historical ‘Great King’, it is also a place where different dynasties were flourished at different times. So for its historical and mythological curiosity many people visit Bangarh. Apart from this, *Tapan Dighi, Kardaha, Mahipal Dighi, Vaiyor and Vikahar, Mausoleum of Bura pir, Jagadalla of Banshihari, Hili* (an Indo- Bangladesh border Pass) and the Aranyak of Khanpur also draw tourists in this district.

The southern most district of North Bengal- the Malda, has also a number of traces of ancient civilization. The monuments, ancient ruins and the cultural expressions of this district have silently given impetus to grow tourism. The *Gour* the *Pandua* echo the sounds of clanging swords of warriors. Here a step forward takes one back more than a thousand years to Sasanka in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, through the Golden Age of the Buddhist Palas and Hindu Senas, down the ladder of time to the mighty Muslims in the 12<sup>th</sup>

century. So tourists often visit these places.

Based on the above mentioned tourist destinations a classification has been made in accordance with their personality. Such a classification aims essentially at laying down norms and standards for future infrastructural development in and around these destinations for the provision of basic facilities. The most rich **Natural Tourism Belt** lies in Darjiling Himalayan hills and in Jalpaiguri covering Darjiling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, Mirik, Jaldapara, Garumara and Chalsa. The **Historical Tourism Belt** is whispering in Koch Bihar, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur districts. The Gour, the Pandua, the Bangarh the Jagjivanpur, the Koch Bihar town, are carrying out their ancient tradition and glory. The third belt is the **Religion/Pilgrimage Tourism Belt** which is scatterly distributed throughout the entire North Bengal. Baneswar, Jamaladaha, Jalpesh, Jainti Mahakal, Chakulia, Ramkeli, Jaharatala and Gambhira are such important destinations.

Recently some parts of the study area provide vital potential for **Eco-Tourism**, an environmentally sustainable travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature .The merit of this new type of tourism is that it prevents the environment degradation caused by uncontrolled tourism activity. Its most avowed objective is to attain a balance between nature and human beings and ensure the co-existence of both. However this 'Alternate tourism' helps people economically. Such new tourism activity has been blossomed in Jaldapara, Murti, Kalimpong, Mahananda Sanctuary, KunjNagar, Garumara, ChunaBhati Monastery, Dukpa dominated village, Rupam valley, Rover's Point, Tapsa, Tasi gaon and in Lataguri areas of North Bengal.

Adventure tourism is also beckoning tourist in the study area. This tourism includes travel off the beaten track with a component of physically exerting and risk taking activity. The rugged hilly tracts, wilderness of some sanctuaries and the turbulent mountainous river courses have been the bases of adventure tourism in North Bengal. The most popular form of such tourism is **Trekking**. Darjiling Himalayan region is the richest area of such activity. Singalila Range provides a unique destination for trekkers. Apart from Darjiling Himalayan region, some sanctuaries also provide trekking activity, such as Buxa National Park. Here it is popular known as '*Jungle Safari*'.

**Rock climbing** and **mountaineering** also attract a number of adventure lover tourists. In Darjiling, Rock climbing is practiced on Tenzing Rock situated at Lebong Cart Road. The study area has also immense potentiality of **Canoeing and Rafting**. The WBTDC and DGHC have emphasized on these two forms of adventure sports in the upper courses of the Teesta and Rangeet to lure more foreign tourists. Of late steps are being taken to introduce **paragliding** in some selected areas of Darjiling region.

The expansion of tourism activity in North Bengal has brought a multidimensional effect. These effects are far-reaching. The major economic benefit in promoting the tourism industry in the study area is the earning of foreign exchange in the form of tourist expenditures. There has been a progressive rise in the number of tourists coming to the most rich tourist destination – the Darjiling Hill region. The foreign exchange earnings are knocking the economy of the region especially in the accommodation sector, transport sector, employment sector, and in Souvenir industry. However tourist development directly or indirectly in the study area acts as an effective means for revival of infrastructure and regional development.

Besides the economic impact, tourism has brought a number of positive and negative social and cultural changes in the present study area. Change in demographic pattern, linguistic changes, effect on moral behaviour are some examples of social impacts. The population of the Darjiling hilly region is increasing day by day. This is only due to advent of tourism in the region. Again the region has become a multi linguistic area. Here different tourists gather from different edges of the world. Naturally their languages will be different. Moreover due to contact with the tourists, the local residents are inclining towards drinking, gambling, drug addiction, crime, prostitution etc.

The development of tourism in the study area not only influences on its social life but brings some cultural impacts. The local residents are gradually imitating the manners, dress, food habits and merry making of tourists. Westernization is slowly grasping the entire hilly region. Apart from these negative impacts, tourism has also brought cultural renovation of North Bengal. It has resulted in the restoration of archaeological monuments, buildings and preservation of important landscapes, traditional art, handicrafts and folk dances. For instance, the recent preservation step of heritage resources of Koch Bihar district by Archaeological Survey of India for the promotion of tourism is a living example of it.

Some tourist destinations have been the victim of environmental degradation too. Darjiling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, and Mirik are now plagued with evils of pollution, of air, water and noise, perhaps beyond redemption and repair. However the green belt, green pastures have been replacing by concrete jungle of buildings and hotels. Even the destruction of existing of fauna and flora is very prominent in these areas. Again the generation of waste residuals both by local residents and tourists affecting

the virgin nature. Thus with the advent of tourism, environment is adversely affecting the biomass of the region.

Although there is a high potentiality of tourism activity in the area it yields low results. Several problems play a dominant role for the poor scenario of tourism industry. Tourism nuclei have developed helter-skelter. Physical isolation and inaccessibility are responsible for it. Again insufficient infrastructural and supra-structural facilities also hindering this industry. However the region is also facing the lack of diversification and proper organizational set up. Environmental degradation in some richest spots have been prominent. Rapid deforestation is gradually snatching away the natural beauty and fascination views of the region. Besides these, the lack of co-ordination between Forest Department and Tourism Department discourages tourists to land here. Again the most historical and the best scenic destinations of the region are least advertised or publicized. The scenic beauty of Dooars and potential areas as yet have not been exposed fully.

To remove the abovementioned draw backs **an integrated tourism planning programme** has to be adopted in the North Bengal. The tourism planning should be an integrated development of tourism resources and tourist activities to derive the optimum benefits in terms of social, economic and ecological objectives. A number of measures can be taken up to boost the tourism scenario of the study area in a planned and coherent way. First of all a detailed survey of the area based on micro research and survey needs to be introduced. Here priority should be given to study the attractions of the region i.e. physical, cultural and historical aspects. The next step is the assessment of tourist demand and supply. This would certainly pave the way

for all future development of tourism trade and industry of this region. Promotion of basic services like infrastructure and supra-structure needs also to be groomed.

*Initiation of a separate Organization, a Territorial and Financial planning and an intelligent environment- sound planning can play a positive role in revitalizing, rejuvenating and reconstructing the poor tourism scenario of the region.* Proper attention has to be given to tourist marketing with stressing on **Tourism Consciousness Programme** for successful tourism management. The active efforts of these measures would give impetus to overall regional development of the North Bengal.

The Tourism policy adopted by the West Bengal government in 1996 has emphasized on investment in the public sector to create tourist infrastructure and other facilities essentially for the tourists. To achieve this WBTDG has decided to extend a package of incentives, benefits and concessions to attract investment from private sector for tourism projects in West Bengal as well as in North Bengal under the West Bengal Incentive Scheme, 1993. Of late (1999) the centre has sanctioned a record of Rs.2 crore to the DGHC for undertaking tourism related ten projects in the Darjiling hill region. Proper planning measures are being considered to preserve the ancient relics and monuments of Koch Bihar town, Gossanimari, Bangarh, Gour and Pandua with the provision of adequate infrastructural and supra-structural facilities.

**The New Tourism policy (2001)** of the state government is an important landmark to boost the tourism in West Bengal as well as North Bengal. This recent policy to divide the tourism scene into six regions is a part of the 20 year perspective plan. Among these six regions the North

Bengal comprises the Himalayan region, the Sub-Himalayan region and the some parts of the Central region. According to the New Policy tourist spots are to be provided necessary infrastructure with emphasis on the effective coordination mechanisms at various levels. Attempts are also being considered to develop the tourism through the **Panchayati Raj Institution**.

There are a host of destinations except the existing tourism nuclei of the study area. These destinations have all the possibilities of emerging as a promising spot for inland and overseas tourists. Tapping the abundant resources of these areas tourism activity can be accelerated. It will help tourism activity not to confining to location only, it will encourage to promote tourism on a regional basis. The destinations include Lava, Lolay gaon, Mongpong, Mahananda Wild life Sanctuary, Chalsa, Lataguri, Teesta Barrage, Toto Para, Kunjnagar, Bhutanghat, Koch Bihar town, Gossanimari (Rajpat) and Jagjivanpur. The scenic beauty of Lava, Lolay gaon, Chalsa provides panoramic view while Mahananda Wild life Sanctuary, Kunjnagar offer an excellent scene of forests. Teesta Barrage is the abode of migratory birds. Again Gossanimari and Koch Bihar town are attracting tourists for their heritage resources. Toto para is famous for its Toto aboriginals – the rare species of mankind of the World. Their physical appearances, dress, food, manner and other lifestyles are luring a number of social scientists, anthropologists and medical personnel who visit this place from time to time to learn about this tribe. It could be developed as an ideal '**Ethnic Tourism**' destination. The scope for Eco-city tourism and the village tourism is also being adopted in the region. Apart from these potential tourism destinations, the State Govt. has planned to utilize tea lands for tourism promotion. These tea lands are the ideal place for creating game facilities like tennis, golf or for setting up of tourist camp in tents or log huts. This typical activity is known as '**Plantation Tourism**'.

These potential tourism destinations should be developed progressively throughout the entire study area so that tourism is flourished as widely as possible and in this way the benefits which accrue from the industry are also widely spread in most parts of the region. In this case priority should be given to those places which can be most easily and most successfully developed. Such development should be equated with both the potential volume of tourist traffic and the probable expenditures by tourists.

The potential tourism nuclei and the existing places of attractions can be wrapped up on the basis of '**Tourist Circuit**' concept. It will enable intensive development of selected destinations, remove the tendency to concentrate in a few mountainous tourist centres and encourage to diversify these places, particularly in opening up economically backward areas. The Hill, Heritage and Forest added attractions can be brought under this package.