

DIAGNOSIS OF PROSPECTS AND POTENTIALITY OF URBAN TOURISM IN ALIPURDUAR DISTRICT, INDIA

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Abstract:

The study aims to diagnosis the different prospects of urban tourism along with identification of its future potentiality of Alipurduar district. Alipurduar has some of the best potential sites for development of urban tourism. With the passage of time due to deterioration of tea garden, people of this region are depending on economic activities related to various modes of tourism. This urban tourism deal with the ability to attract tourists as well as offering various services related to tourism. Incorporation of natural landscape with the city environment forms the main linkage for the success of this type of tourism. In this paper an attempt has been made to find out the present scenario of various aspects of urban tourism in Alipurduar with statistical manner and incorporating possible measures to overcome the limitations. The present work also reveals that the tourism infrastructure and periodic influx of tourists in Alipurduar is the main source of economic development. The study is also to sculpt the probabilistic travel model by surveying perception of attitude of tourists which will support the tourism sector for the further financial progress of the area restoring vital natural environment by implementing the rules and regulations of Eco-tourism.

Keywords:Urban Tourism, Prospects,Potentiality, Probabilistic Travel Model, Likert Scale

1.INTRODUCTION:

The tourism represents one of the most dynamic economic sectors in developed and developing worlds. The tourism is considered first of all a recreation form besides other activities and formulas of spending the leisure time (Holloway, 1994); it implies the temporary move of people through destinations situated outside the regular residence and activities deployed during the time spent at those destinations (Witt, Brooke and Buckley, 1991). In ancient times to acquire knowledge about unknown place ultimately started the concept of travel and tourism. In recent days increased leisure time and changes in lifestyle in worldwide responsible for the rapid growing tourism industries in the world economy and generate different types of employment opportunities for the society. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) reported that about 11% of total global employment is accounted in tourism

industry. Urban Tourism is an essential correlation between natural or built landscape, amenities, and infrastructure with the satisfaction of domestic and international visitors in urban areas. Many urban centers are now focusing tourism and exploring the possibilities of developing tourism to promote its urban economic base as well as restore its cultural and natural diversities. From the ancient time to the present decade tourism plays a vital role in the economic prosperity of developed and developing countries. It can be considered as the economic growth engine of a country. Thousands of research works have been conducted to explore the diversity of tourism aspects and its future potentialities throughout the world. Keeping this view in mind an attempt has been made to explore the multidimensional nature of the tourism potentiality of Alipurduar district of West Bengal, with some suggestive measure.

Alipurduar is the 20th district of West Bengal created on 25th June 2014 known as Queen of Dooars. Hadayet Ali Khan, the late colonel, was the first assistant commissioner of Alipurduar and it was named after him 'ALIPUR' and 'DUAR' came from the word 'DOOR' (door to Bhutan). The district headquarter town Alipurduar is located in the south central part of the district on the east bank of Kaljani river (figure 1). It is located in a central part of the Eastern Dooars region. In this paper 60 km buffer zone has been delineated from the Alipurduar Town within Alipurduar and Koch Bihar district.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The research work is based on reviewing of various literatures related to tourism development processes. There are diversified views and concepts about the processes of tourism development and its prospects in national and international scales. Witt, Brooke et al. (1991) were clearly defined urban tourism in the book entitled "The Management of International Tourism" where they mentioned the impact of environmental issues to tourism management, tourism forecasting and methods of operations in tourism industries. C.M Law (1993) published a book on Urban Tourism entitled "Attracting Visitors to Large Cities (Tourism, Leisure, and Recreation)" where he addressed declining trend of traditional economy and rising of tourism as the important economic

activity in the large cities of Europe and North America. Another attempt has been done by Ashworth (1989) on Urban Tourism where he explained four approaches like facility approach, ecological approach, marketing approach and policy approach for urban tourism development. Then Blank (1994) published his research on Urban Tourism Destinations. The study was focusing on the various issues of urban tourism development and functional attributes of urban tourism. In 1995 Dietvorst and Ashworth developed a general model of transformation of space by tourism and recreational. Ahmed (1996) examined the need for the identification of the constituents of a destination's tourist image for the state of Utah and mentioned that promotion of tourist destination was possible by developing focused marketing strategies in well segmented markets. The European Commission (2000) has mentioned the integrated quality management approach for the development of tourism in a positive way. B. Bhattacharya (1992) discussed the tourism scenario of India with special emphasis on Darjeeling and Sikkim. He has mentioned problems of tourism development in the area as well as stated that proper management will be needed for the future development. Edwards, D., Griffin, T., Hayllar, B. and Dickson, T. (2008) discussed about the various phenomena of urban tourism and mentioned that urban tourists precinct should be given importance for tourism development. Mamun, A and Mitra, S., (2012) explained about the financial involvement of historical sites in constrain economic situation. It also analysed the quantification of tourism potential through multi criteria decision making approach. Paul, S., (2013) discussed the probabilistic travel model with reference to tourism development in Gangtok hill station. Bhutia, S., (2014) Discussed how tourism stimulates improvements to local transportation, communication and other allied community infrastructures. It also deals with constructive formation of tourism development and its associated issues. Datta, D. and Banerji, S., (2015) discussed about newly emerge unexplored tourism destinations of eastern Himalaya. They critically analyse about different aspects of sustainable ecotourism in this fragile region. Saha, S and Debnath, G.C., (2015) discussed about the present status of tourism and potential sites of tourism in Sikkim. They clearly indicate a relationship between movement of people and potential sites for development. R.E.S & P.N.B (2016) gave an idea about huge prospect and advantage of North Bengal, with the benefits of location, physiography and etc. al this region may generate a huge amount of capital which ultimately generate employment and overall economic boosting of this region. Mondal, S., (2016) discussed with several advantage of Himalaya, Bay of Bengal, pilgrim destination West Bengal still backbencher in tourism sector. He also explained the details structure of tourism destination promotional framework in a sequence manner.

Dila Ram Bhandari (2018) analyzed the demand of tourism in Nepal by applying probabilistic travel model on the basis of tourist surveying. The study shows that infrastructural facility

development will motivate the tourist to visit the place and will increase the foreign exchange. So number of studies have been done on the urban tourism development, problems and their impact on environment as well. Some studies also shows the future potentializes of urban tourism development. Here we also focuses on the prospect and future potentiality of urban tourism of Alipurduar district of West Bengal, India on the basis of the literature reviews and by doing intensive surveying.

3. OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives of this research work are as follows:

- a) To assess the status of tourism infrastructure of Alipurduar Town.
- b) To develop the probabilistic travel model through surveying tourist perception.
- c) To identify the problems related to tourism development and diagnosis of probable prospects and potentiality of tourism sector through the opinion of tourists visiting in Alipurduar.

4. METHODOLOGY:

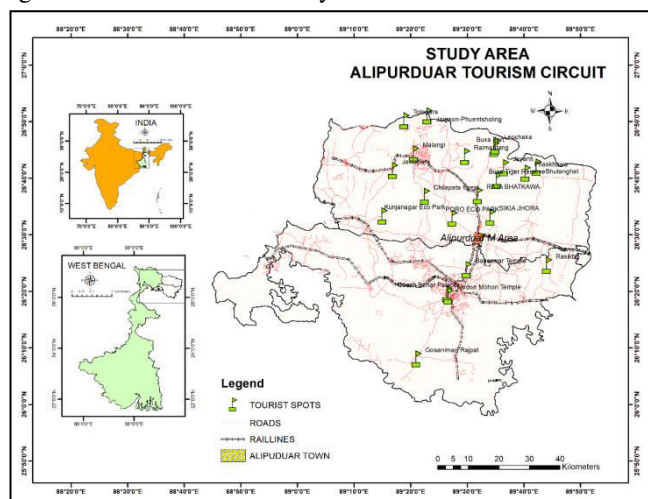
4a. Collection of data

Both primary and secondary data were used for the entire study. Primary data has been assembled by interviewing local peoples, participant observations of various Indian as well as foreigner tourist. Random sampling techniques were used to collect data about potential elements of tourism. Sample size was selected about 200 and secondary data has been collected from government publications, newspapers, periodicals, research works, and journals. Primary Information merged with secondary data whenever needed.

4b. Analysis of data

The data has been analyzed using different statistical techniques. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques have been adopted here for the assessment of prospect and potentiality of tourism infrastructure. Probabilistic Travel Attitude of tourists of Alipurduar is based on the methodology used by Paul, applied here with few modifications. Though Probabilistic Travel Attitude model was first formulated by Luce (1959), was applied to describe a consumer choice to recreational travel by many researches.

Figure 1: Location of the Study area



Source: Prepared by authors

Primarily utility of tourism product has been calculated with the help of following formula:

$$U_j = S_j / D_{ij}[1]$$

Where, U_j is utility of tourism product measure, S_j is some measures of attractiveness of destination J and D_{ij} is distance between starting point and tourist destination.

After having the tourism product measure, probabilistic travel attitude of tourists has been analyzed with the help of following formula:

$$P_{ij} = U_j / \sum U_j[2]$$

Where P_{ij} is measures of probabilistic travel attitude of tourists.

Problem and future prospect of tourism development potentiality have been done by assessing tourist perception using 5 point Likert Scale regarding various aspects of tourism in the area.

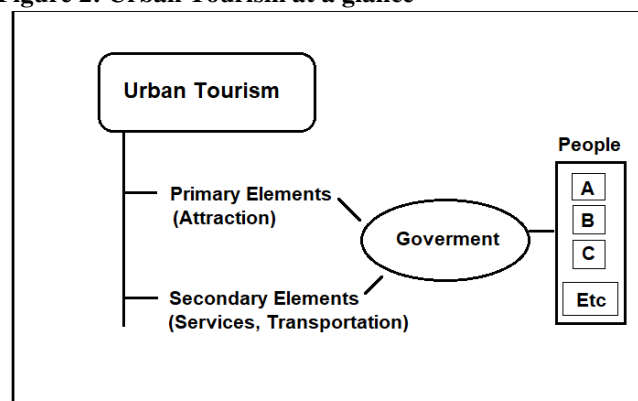
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Linkage between natural and manmade landscape with city environment is simply called Urban Tourism or simply we can say the tourism which takes place in urban areas. The primary elements such as attractions of various place and secondary elements such as transportation and services are very important for this type of tourism (figure 2). The employment generation in new way like website generation specialist, e-booking specialist, app based promotion specialist, increased tourism meet is a result of this new era tourism. This vibrant tourism industry with its variety, accessibility and flexibility created a paradigm change in tourism sector. Alipurduar is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations of West Bengal. Due to suitability of climate in Alipurduar, people visit here throughout the year and it is very hard to delineate the lean and peak season of tourist. There were several causes of emergence of Alipurduar Town, like Second Anglo-Bhutan war of 1865, Starting of River Kaljani based on military settlement, Starting of tea gardening on this Doorga Region, Extraction of Dolomite from Buxa and Jayanti hill

, 'Bongalkheda' movement refers to cleaning of 'Bengalis' from the North East mainly from Assam etc.

The impetus for the urban growth is provided by locational advantage and Transport connectivity. Over a period of time, Alipurduar has emerged as a centre of multidimensional tourist potential. Due to its location in the Central part of north south extension of west Bengal (which we may call Eastern Doorga), it carries as well as cover historical blends of Koch Dynasty in south and various natural variety in the north. Therefore tourist with varied profile and motivation visit Alipurduar for various reasons which ultimately results a cluster of urban tourism.

Figure 2: Urban Tourism at a glance



Source: Prepared by authors

Tourist attractions in Alipurduar can be categorized as i. Natural Sightseeing Attraction, ii. Forest Attraction, iii. Physical Features Attraction, iv. Cultural and Historical Attractions (table 1). Here only consider fifty – sixty kilometer tourist attraction places within the town premises.

Table 1: Different Tourist Spot within premises of Alipurduar

Natural Sightseeing Attraction	Forest Attraction	Physical Features Attraction	Cultural and Historical Attraction.
1.Poro Basti 2.Sikia Jhora 3.Raja-Bhatkawa 4.Jaigaon 5.Totopara	1.Buxa Tiger Reserve 2. Jaldapara 3.Chilapata Forest 4. Kunjanagar 5. Rasikbil 6.Malangi	1. Jayanti 2. Bhutanghat 3. Faskawa 4. Lepchaka 5. Raimatang	1. Cooch behar Palace and ModonMohon Temple. 2. Baneswar Temple. 3. Gosanimari 4.Buxa Fort

5a. Assessment of Infrastructural Facility:

Tourism infrastructure mainly deals with quality hotels, well-connected tourist spots, manageable tariff rate on food and hotel, marketing etc.

Figure 3: Types of Hotels

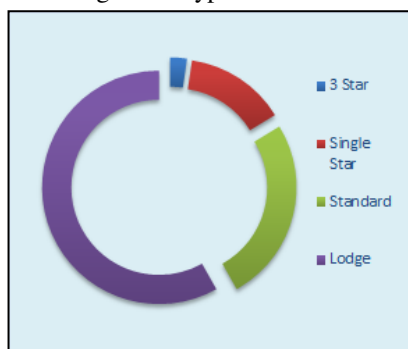


Figure 4: Tariff of hotels (Rs.)

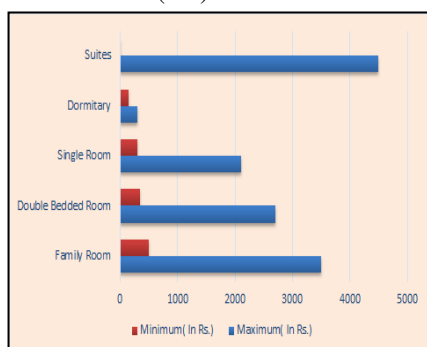


Figure 4: Percentage of tourist flow

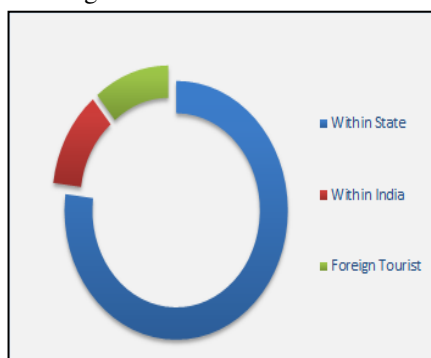
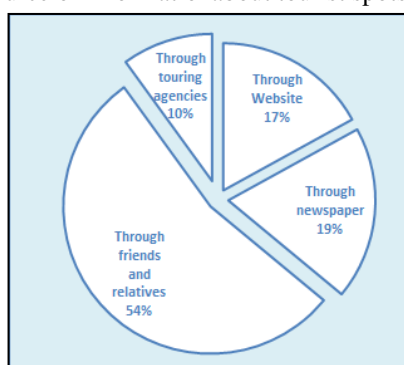


Figure 6: Source of information about tourist spots

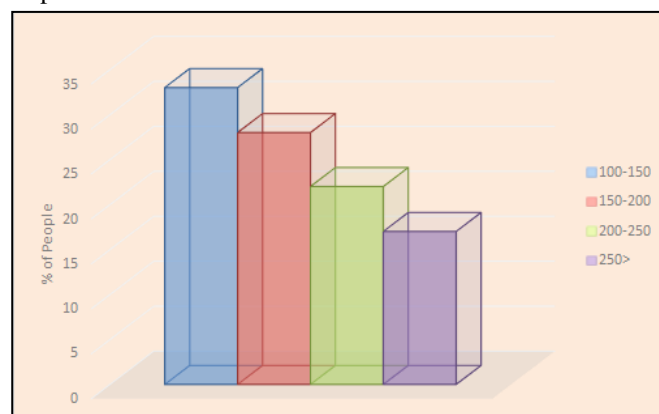


Source: Collected and Compiled by authors

Figures 3 to 7 are represents the tourism infrastructural facilities in the area. Mainly four types of hotels are available in Alipurduar. Only lodging facility is mostly available in the area. Expenditure for booking a room for lodging only in those hotels is ranges from Rs. 500 to Rs.4500 per day and for

food is Rs.100-500 per head which are quite permissible for middle class tourists. Tourists visiting here are mainly coming from different parts of the state West Bengal. Tourist attractions for foreigners and other parts of India is quite low.

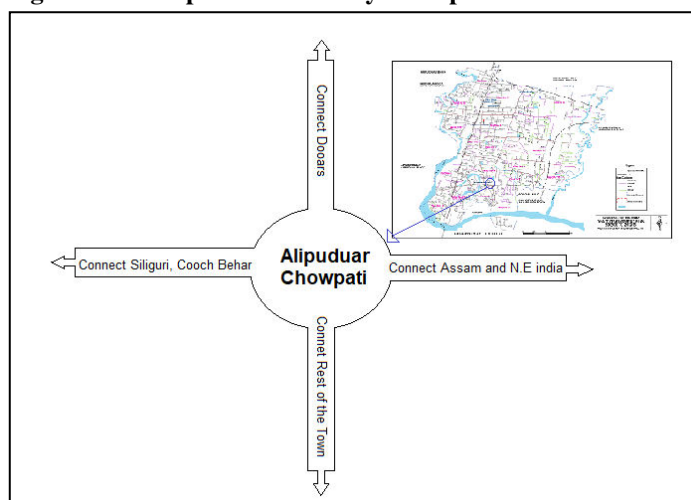
Figure 7: Daily expenditure (Rs.) on food by Tourist in Alipurduar



Source: Collected and Compiled by authors

From the above part of discussion it is clear that there is a moderate infrastructural facility. But transports network accessibility is very good here with consisting 4 railway station (Alipurduar Junction, New Alipurduar, Alipurduar and Alipurduar Court), one Government and two private bus-stands, and three taxi stands. It has been perceived during recent decades that the private as well as government vehicles and engine vehicles, particularly bikes and products bearers enrolled a high development rate within this area in comparing other parts of state. From the nearby field overview it has been assumed that tourism of this area has a huge potentiality caring of hotel business, transports, banking, booking centers of air ways, railways and distant bus trips, medical facilities, road side business and several organizational amenities that are extended to the tourists.

Figure 8: Transport connectivity of Alipurduar Town



Source: Collected and Compiled by authors

It has been observed that numerous travel agents/ tour operators in Alipurduar organize and offered package tours to travelers in the following circuits;

- i. Alipurduar-Raja Bhatkawa-Buxa Tiger Reserve-Jayanti-Lepchaka-Buxa Fort Circuit.
- ii. Alipurduar Jaldapara - Chilapata Forest-Kunjanagar Circuit.
- iii. Baneswar Temple-Coochbehar Palace and ModonMohon Temple- Gosanimari circuit.

Some other local trips like ParoBasti, SikiaJhora one day trip for sightseeing people also enjoy here.

5.b Probabilistic Travel Model:

Probabilistic travel model is expressed to focus the nature and inclinations to various places of interest of the local and outside sightseers. From the perception study among local and distant tourist it has been revealed that, the choice to different tourist spots are different. Therefore, this model helps to determine the structural forecasting method to delineate the factors affecting the interest of tourists. This study analyzing the different variables to visitors of Alipurduar and its nearby areas and this will exposed a new vision to the exploration in this field.

On the basis of calculated Likert scale the highest value of preferences goes to Jaigaon- Phuntsiling (6.23) and Coochbehar Palace (6.10). The value of Pij becomes very low for Jaigaon- Phuntsiling (3.17), distance is affecting the value of Pij in this regards. With its natural pleasant magnificence both domestic and foreign tourists favoured Buxa, Jayanti, Jaldapara. Coochbehar Palace also has huge demand for its picturesque beauty. There is a huge demand of Phuentshiling- Jaigaon, to realize the international essence among all tourists. Throughout all the year people came here due to enjoy different beautiful session.

Table2: Probabilistic Travel Model

Tourist's Attraction Place	Dij (km.)	Sj	Uj	Pij
1.Poro Basti	14.1	4.21	0.29	9.20
2.Sikia Jhora	13.9	4.59	0.33	10.47
3. Raja Bhatkawa	17	3.89	0.22	6.98
4.Jaigaon- Phuntsiling	59.7	6.23	0.10	3.17
5.Totopara	58.4	4.78	0.08	2.53
6.Buxa Tiger Reserve	21	5.87	0.27	8.57
7. Jaldapara	38.9	5.83	0.14	4.44
8.Chilapata Forest	22	4.32	0.19	6.03
9. Kunjanagar	39.2	2.72	0.19	6.09
10.Rasikbil	31	3.12	0.10	3.17
11.Malangi	45	2.89	0.06	1.90
12. Jayanti	32	3.52	0.11	3.49

13. Bhutanghat	45	2.43	0.05	1.58
14. Phaskhawa	41.3	2.64	0.06	1.90
15. Lepchaka	46	4.35	0.09	2.85
16.Raimatang	36.4	4.19	0.11	3.49
17. Coochbehar Palace and ModonMohon Temple.	25	6.10	0.24	7.61
18. Baneswar Temple.	12	3.92	0.32	10.15
19. Gosanimari-Rajpat	57.9	4.32	0.07	2.22
20.Buxa Fort	43	6.01	0.13	4.12
			Σ Uj=3.15	

Source: Collected and Compiled by authors

Poro Eco Park, Sikia-Jhora, these two amusement spots are situated very near to the town, mostly used by tourist as a daily leisure. Raja Bhatkawa is gateway of Buxa Tiger Reserve having watch tower within dense forest, animal rescue centre and orchidarium. Phuentsholing- Jaigaon twin town of India- Bhutan, people attracted by this place due to monastery, lake, crocodile breeding center and business spot as well. Totopara is located near Madarihat, residential area of primitive tribal group, Toto. Buxa Tiger Reserve (declared in January 1992) having an area of 759 Sq. km. People enjoy its rich biodiversity, prodigious Terai- Bhabar as well as hilly landscape is crossed by numerous rivers. Phipsu wildlife sanctuary Bhutan and Manas tiger reserve subsequently located north and east of this tiger reserve. Jaldapara located in the foothills of eastern Himalaya, river Torsa flows through this forest, it encompasses luxuriant vegetation and a verity of wildlife with thrilling elephant safari. Chilapata located 22 km from Alipurduar town with various flora and fauna. Kunjanagar Eco Park having the facility of elephant safari and deer park to enjoy. Rasikbil is mainly encompasses with three bill Nagurhat, Atasmochar and Bochamari, a great shelter of Ecotourism. Malangi is famous in recent times for its natural beauty and elephant ride for viewing wildlife. Jayanti forest Range attracted tourist by its panoramic view of forest from Jayanti river bank. Bhutanghat located at Indo-Bhutan Border with the scenic beauty of Siwalik Mountain and swift flowing Raidak River. Phaskawa is very to Bhutanghat. Lepchaka is small Dukpa village with the mesmerized view of Dooars. Raimatang located at western Buxa area, a popular place for nature loving people. Buxa fort is special attraction for trekkers located top most part of Buxaduar. Cooch Behar Royal Palace and ModonMohon Temple is an example of classical European style of Italian renaissance. Every year a huge amount of domestic and international tourist came here. Baneswar Temple devoted for Lord Shiva stand in Baneswar, 12 km away from Alipurduar. Main attractions are 'Mohon' which are tortoise and is conserved here. GosanimariRajpat is an important historical and archeological place of Koch Kamata Dynasty.

5c. Problem and Prospect:

After having the discussion of infrastructure and other model, a survey was also done through five point likert Scale regarding various aspects of tourism. Here average value of all aspect has taking consideration (table 3). Here peoples' response about all aspects within Alipurduar town and other aspects of various tourist spots. Out of eleven parameters only four shows the likert scale value equals to 4 or above 4. Transportation facilities which performed by govt. and private agencies, electricity facilities, drinking water supply and behaviour of local peoples are results above 4. But the primary facilities like cleanliness, lodging and food, parking facilities, etc. are showing lower value in likert scale and tourist are very much unsatisfied with these facilities. From this discussion we find that people should more aware about the beneficial value of tourism. Government here provide more or less good infrastructure, but the point of view of people is not satisfactory at all.

Table 3: Status of Problem through Likert Scale

Problems	Response Scale
Shortage of Infrastructure	3.2
Status of transportation facility	4
Status of electrification	4.5
Status of drinking water facility	4.2
Kindness of Local People	4.1
Status of parking facility	2.9
cleanliness of Tourist spot	2.8
Awareness of people	1.9
Promotion of Tourism	2.3
Status of conserving biodiversity	3.1
Status of conserving natural landscape	2.7

Source: Collected and Compiled by authors

(Note: 1= Very Unsatisfied, 2= Unsatisfied, 3= Average, 4= Satisfied, 5= Very Satisfied)

Apart from Likert Scale a basic questionnaire has been set up to reveal the condition of the entire area. This study was conducted mainly in two areas including Railway Stations and Hotels. Through evaluating the statistics of response to the three hundred questionnaires, the following are some conclusions.

Now if we look into the matter of prospect of urban tourism we find that it acts as the key engine for economic progress with harnessing local human resources for tourism promotion with good training in the very developed nation. Local people and travellers are very much unsatisfied with the overall facilities of tourism in the area though there is immense scope for tourism development which will helps to local community for economic prosperity. For the development of the tourism sector, government have to project firstly tourism

development scheme and it should be promoted to global branding of traditional culture and architecture, traditional accommodations, garden houses etc. further by admitting the key role of the private sector as a facilitator and catalyst of the tourism development for promoting various fields of tourism in the area. The Alipurduar district and its surroundings regions consist of rich biodiversity and variety of natural as well as cultural diversity also which creates scope of tourism prospects. Constructing a tourism circuit with special connectivity can boost future of urban tourism in this area.

6. CONCLUSION:

Presently Dooars is one of the important destinations for travelers. The entire study reveals the present scenario of urban tourism in Alipurduar along with identifying the problems and prospects of this sector. It showed that travelers as well as local community were unsatisfied with the infrastructure facilities associated to this economic sector. The unstructured management systems is the key factor for the less developed tourism in the area though there is huge scope of development. Therefore, sustainable management strategies should be implemented to overcome the problems of tourists satisfaction as well as economic prosperity of local community. Govt. should also take development programs for establishing tourist lodges, homestay and resorts with better infrastructural facilities, Tourism Information Centre and other recreational facilities within town premises. Government should take decision to develop a Tourism Circuit with blend of Coochbehar Royal History and Dooars which will create more attractions for traveler to visit. It helps for economic development by generating employment opportunities for the local as well as administrations can also get support from local peoples. So we can say that promotion of urban tourism in Alipurduar can possible by implementing new tourism development policy, establishing more attractions for visitors and enhancing urban economics with restoring environment. Practice of sustaining eco tourism activities should be maintained by hoteliers, travelers and local peoples. So generation of awareness about ecotourism and environmental conservation processes among peoples associated with tourism should be developed. Finally, it should be clear that urban tourism having the capacity of economic regeneration as well as better urban infrastructures.

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