

**HAND OUT**

**FOR**

**UGC NSQF SPONSORED ONE YEAR**

**DIPLOMA IN TRAVEL & TOURISM MANAGEMENT**

**PAPER CODE: DTTM C205**

**TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL**

**SEMESTER: SECOND**

**PREPARED BY**

**MD ABU BARKAT ALI**

## **UNIT-I:**

### **1.TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL: AN OVERVIEW**

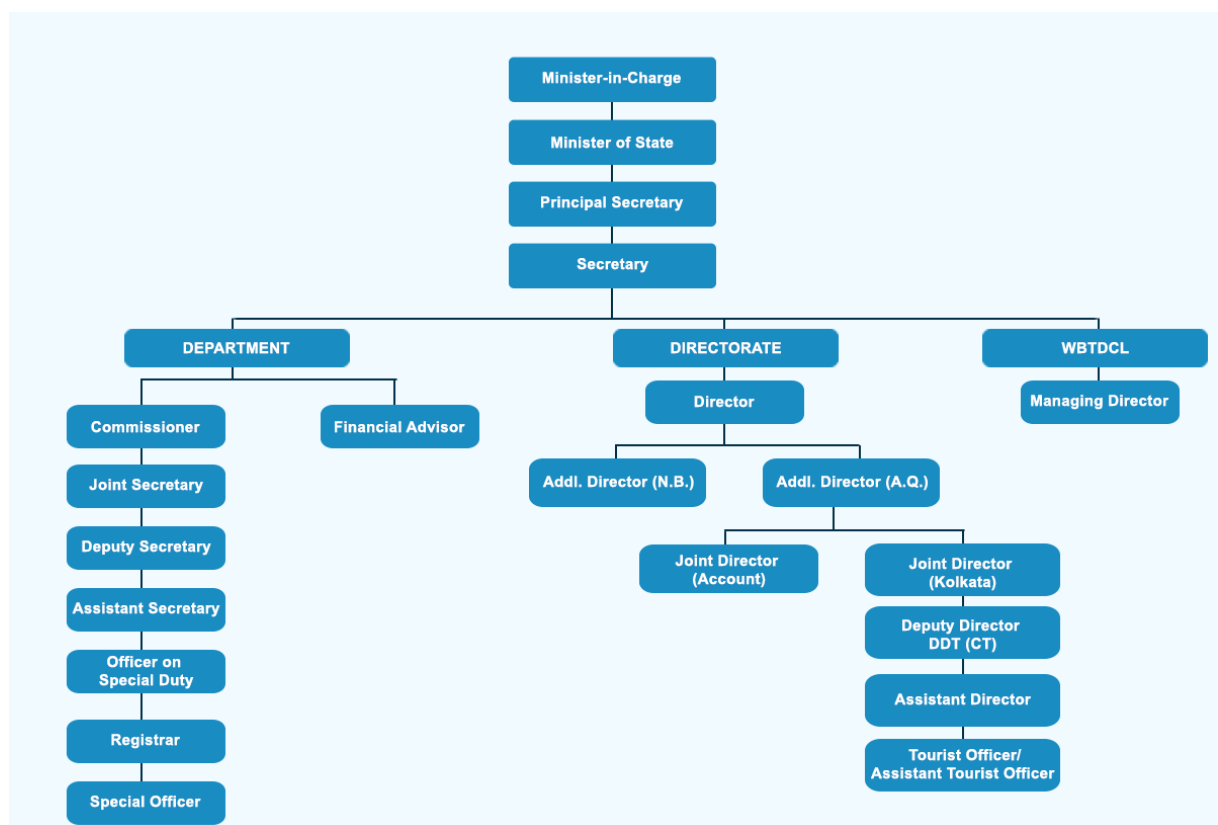
#### **Evolution of Tourism Department**

The Department of Tourism was set up in 1959. The attention to the development of tourist facilities was given from the 3 Plan Period onwards, Early in 1950 the executive part of tourism organization came into being with the appointment of a Tourist Development Officer. He was assisted by some of the existing staff of Home (Transport) Department. In 1960-61 the Assistant Secretary of the Home (Transport) Department was made Director of Tourism ex-officio and a few posts of assistants were created. Subsequently, the Secretary of Home (Transport) Department became the ex-officio Director of Tourism. Two Regional Tourist Offices - one for the five North Bengal districts i.e., Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, West Dinajpur and Maida with headquarters at Darjeeling and the other for the remaining districts of the State with headquarters at Kolkata were also set up. The Regional Office at Kolkata started functioning on 2nd September, 1961. The Regional Office in Darjeeling was started on 1st May, 1962 by taking over the existing Tourist Bureau of the Govt. of India at Darjeeling. The tourism wing of the Home (Transport) Department was transferred to the Development Department on 1st September, 1962. Development. Commissioner then became the ex-officio Director of Tourism. Subsequently, in view of the increasing activities of tourism organization it was transformed into a full-fledged Tourism Department, though the Secretary of the Forest Department functioned as the Secretary, Tourism Department. This Department at present has been functioning as an independent Department under a separate Secretary since 1987.

#### **Organizational set up & functioning**

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL



## Agencies/ Authorities under control of Tourism Department

There are two undertakings, one statutory society and one trust under the control of the Department. They are :

### West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.

West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. is another undertaking under Tourism Department. It runs 25 lodges on its own and 7 lodges through management contract system. The annual turnover is Rs. 7.7 crore approx.

### Food Craft Institute

To provide adequate training in hotel management a Food Craft Institute, a society under the statute, was established at Darjeeling by Govt. of India in 1990. This Institute was transferred to Tourism Department with effect from 11/4/1995. A sum of Rs. 20 lakh p.a. is being provided by Tourism Department to run this Institute.

### Cooch Behar Debuttar Trust

Cooch Behar Debuttar Trust was transferred from L & LR Department to Tourism Department in the year 1990. Properties under this Trust in Cooch Behar, Benaras

and Mathura were transferred to Tourism Department for maintenance and development. Cooch Behar Debuttar Trust has about 130 employees.

### 3.7 Tourism Wing of DGHC

After formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council a separate wing of tourism under the Hill Council was created and the assets under the direct control of Tourism Department were transferred to DGHC along with the staff. There is one Secretary, Tourism under DGHC and one Deputy Director, Tourism (DGHC) along with 130 other staff whose services are supposed to be controlled by this Department. The Department of Tourism has been an integrated administrative set up comprising the Secretariat and the Directorate

### 3.8 West Bengal tourism development corporation ltd.

The West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Limited (WBTDC) was incorporated on 29th April, 1974 under the Companies Act, 1956. The Corporation is owned by Government of West Bengal under the administrative control of Tourism Department and the entire share capital of the Company is contributed by the State Government.

**WBTDC** is a nodal agency of Tourism Department which was incorporated with the objectives to develop and promote tourism in the state of West Bengal and for this purpose to take over, run and manage hotels, lodges, guest houses, motels, restaurants etc as well as to popularize tourist destinations in the state and conduct tour packages to those places.

**WBTDC** is committed to provide its resources and expertise for both domestic and international tourists visiting West Bengal and to rise to their expectation in experiencing the art, culture, heritage and nature of the state.

Sl No	Name	Status
1	<b>Shri Indranil Sen</b> Minister of State, Tourism Department, Govt. of West Bengal	Chairman
2	<b>Smt. Nandini Chakravorty</b> IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. of West Bengal	Director
3	<b>Shri Kaushik Bhattacharya</b> IAS, Managing Director, West Bengal Tourism Development Corpn. Ltd.	Managing Director
4	<b>Shri Somenath Mukherjee</b> Financial Advisor Tourism Department, Govt. of West Bengal	Director
5	<b>Sri Karan Paul</b> Chairperson, The Park Hotel	Director
6	<b>Smt. Sushila,</b>	Director

	Chairperson, Inbound Tour Operators Council	
7	<b>Shri Atul Bhalla</b> Area Manager East-ITC Hotels & Cluster General Manager, ITC Royal Bengal & ITC Sonar	Director

The Board of Directors is appointed by the State Government and in terms of Notification no. 71-TW/IT-162/74, dt. 21.01.2014 issued by Tourism Department, Govt. of WB, the Board of Directors is reconstituted and is comprised of the following

### **3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING OF WEST ENGAL:**

West Bengal, considered by many as the cultural centre of India, is a land of varied charms with snow-capped mountains in Darjeeling in the north followed by vast expanse of forest, tea plantation and wild life in Dooars region in the foothills. There are heritage sites in the middle in Maida, Murshidabad and Nadia districts and forest tracts in the western districts. The largest delta of Sunderbans forms its southern coast. West Bengal, in fact, offers all components of tourism viz., leisure, holidaying, beach, pilgrimage, heritage, mountaineering /adventure and convention tourism. The State of West Bengal is a microcosm of the vast Indian sub-continent with its myriad physical forms. The mighty Himalayas in the north and the Bay of Bengal in the south protect the State. The State presents the full spectrum of Nature's splendour with hills, forests and wild life sanctuaries, beach resorts, rivers, places of historical importance, ethnic culture and varied aspects of adventure tourism. The northern boundary of the State is endowed with nature's great bounty. It consists of outlying hills of the great Himalayas. The panoramic view of snow-capped Kanchenjunga from Darjeeling district is a perennial attraction to all tourists; the verdant tea gardens in the foothills of the Himalayan tracts project a charming scenic beauty. The western part of the State is endowed with beautiful hilly terrain - Ayodhya Hills, Matha Pahar, Panchet Hills, Khatra-Mukutmanipur, Susunia Hills, Jhargram and Kankrajhore. About 11,879 sq. k.m. of the State, which is 13.98 percent of the total geographic area is covered with forests. The unending stretch of virgin forests, criss-crossed by the river Teesta and her innumerable tributaries at the foothills of Himalayas, are called the Dooars Valley. The southern part of the State boasts of world's largest region of mangrove forest called Sunderbans, the largest delta in the globe. It is perhaps a unique place on the earth. The nature has created an abode

of perfect blend of the savage power and the incredible beauty with consummate artistry.

West Bengal offers coastal-marine

ecosystem along the districts of South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur. Bay of Bengal is situated to the South. The districts of Purba Medinipur and South 24-Parganas are having sandy beaches at Digha, Shankarpur-Chandpur, Dadanpatrabarh, Bakkhali, Frasergunj and Sagardwip. These places are noted for their calm seas, wide flat golden beaches hemmed with casuarina groves and seafood delicacies. The indomitable river Ganges flows through the State's rich alluvial plains to reach the Bay of Bengal in the South. Teesta in North Bengal is another perennial river. These two rivers offer potential for river cruise, boat racing, river rafting, kayaking and other water sports. West Bengal witnesses the largest assemblage of habitats for numerous flora and fauna. The State occupies only 2.7% of total area of India but possesses more than 12% of floral diversity. The forests of West Bengal represent, more or less, the animal world in its totality. These include the Royal Bengal Tiger of Sunderbans, elephants of northern districts and the great one-homed rhinos of Jaldapara and Garumara. The largest estuarine crocodile in the world, olive ridley turtle, clouded leopard, the tottering bear, the barking deer, the sneaking snakes and other reptiles constitute a part of the ecosystem of the State. In addition, a few hundred species of birds including seasonal and migratory birds have added flying colours to the forests and eco-system of the State. The heritage assets of the State originate from several centuries of the history of Bengal. In ancient and medieval times the region was ruled by Hindu Kings, Buddhist Kings and later by Sultans / Nawabs. West Bengal served as crucible where Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Vaishnava and Christian cultures melted to produce rich cultural heritage. The periods between 18th and 19th century termed in the history as Bengal Renaissance started promotion of social and cultural activities in undivided India with Bengal Presidency as the epicentre. Fairs and festivals of West Bengal, a reflection of the State's socio-cultural speciality, add a unique flavour to her cultural richness.

### **Nature & Eco-Tourism / Hill Tourism / Beach Tourism**

Among famous destinations are Darjeeling - the Queen of the Hills, Kurseong~Kalimpong, Mirik, Lava, Lolaygaon, Munsong and Mongpu in the East Himalayas; the Dooars at the foot of the East Himalayas where nature has kept her doors wide

open; the Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forests; the western forest and hill tracts of Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia; Digha, Shankarpur, Bakkhali and Sagar Island - some of the most famous beaches on the Eastern coast of India.

### **Forest & Wild Life Tourism**

The East Himalayan region of Darjeeling and the nearby hills mentioned above abound in a variety of flora and fauna - from the alpine to the tropical, the dense natural forests and the sanctuaries of the Dooars region provide home to a variety of wild animals and birds; the Sunderbans are world famous for the mangrove forests, the Royal Bengal Tigers, crocodiles and birds; the western forest and hill tracts also abound in wild life.

### **Adventure Tourism**

Darjeeling and the nearby hills offer immense opportunities for trekking, rock-climbing, mountain-biking, hang-gliding etc. and River Teesta attracts the young and the brave for white-Water rafting, canoeing and kayaking.

### **Pilgrim Tourism**

West Bengal is a unique place of religious harmony providing a large number of pilgrim destinations for almost all religious communities.

### **Fairs & Festivals**

West Bengal is a land of splendid fairs and festivals, the most well-known being the Durgapuja, Kalipuja, Gangasagar Mela, Kenduli Mela, Rash Mela, Poush Mela, Vasanta Utsav or Holi, Rathajatra, Christmas, Id & Muharram. Besides these religious festivals, there are cultural and tourism festivals, the most famous of them being Kolkata Book Fair, the Kolkata Film Festival, National Theatre Festival, Vishnupur Festival and Teesta-Ganga Festival.

### **Heritage Tourism**

The State has a rich history and heritage reminiscent of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Vaishnava and tribal cultures. Among the most famous heritage sites are Kochbihar, Gosainmari and Jalpeshwar in the Dooars; Gaur, Adina and Pandua in Maldah district; Lalbagh in Murshidabad district; Palashi,

Krishnagar, Nabadwip and Mayapur in Nadia district; Bardhaman and Kalna in Bardhaman district; Bandel, Chandannagore, Chinsurah, Srirampur and Kamarpukur in Hooghly district; the temple town of Vishnupur in Bakura district and a large number of heritage sites in and around Kolkata.

### **Cultural Tourism**

The State has ever played a dominant role in the field of art and culture, giving birth to a large number of movements in literature, painting, sculpture, theatre, cinema as also in politics, science and industry. Tagore's Shantiniketan is an epitome of art and culture and Kolkata is rightly regarded as the cultural capital of India. West Bengal also offers exquisite opportunities for conferences and conventions with city life, shopping, multiple cuisines and amusement all over the State. West Bengal is also the gateway to the Eastern Himalayas, the Northeast and the South-East Asia including Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Bangladesh. West Bengal has thus inevitably become a multipurpose and a complete tourist destination. With the recent declaration of tourism as industry and great emphasis on industrial rejuvenation and extension of facilities therefor, the State has been a perfect destination for investors too. Of late so many multi-plex and shopping malls have come up in Kolkata, the City of Joy, to show that the city is a shoppers paradise. Forum & Salt Lake City Centre are such two multiplexes which have come up recently.

### **Tourism scenario**

Tourism plays a pivotal role in socio-economic development of many countries in the world. While tourism service ranges from transport, accommodation, IT enabled services, catering, tourist guide, tour operators to various tourist products including handicraft items, it is the largest employment provider and also used for promotion of culture and heritage and preservation of eco-system. Over the years, there has been a paradigm shift in the role-play of public and private sectors in tourism development. Today the Government has assumed primarily the role of facilitator leaving the private



sectors to be the basic service providers. In the wake of globalization and fast growing transport and communication network, expectation of tourists have gone up

where value for money and time are measured in terms of satisfaction, comfort and hassle-free tour. With change in global relations and societal structures in the new millennium, technological innovations with better networking and concern for environment have assumed a significant importance in sustainable development of tourism.

Tourism, being a multi-faceted activity, leads to diverse economic benefits - direct and indirect for the host community. Tourism promotion is the end product of a balanced and harmonious growth of all sectors of the economy with thrust on hospitality, participation of local people, development of better transport network, infrastructure and the tourism products. Hence, sustainable development of tourism calls for a planned and co-coordinated approach.

Tourism is the industry of industries and has a great multiplier effect on other industries. Tourism serves as an effective medium/conduit for transfer of wealth because here income earned in places of 'residence' is spent in places 'visited'. It is the highest generator of employment. A total of 212 million persons are now being employed globally through direct and indirect opportunities generated by this industry. This means that one out of every nine persons now earns a living from tourism. Tourism is also highly employment-intensive. For every million rupees of investment 13 jobs are created in manufacturing industries, 45 jobs in agriculture and 89 jobs in hotels and restaurants.

The Government of India has identified tourism as one of the major foreign exchange earners and contributing sectors for enhancement of national income on a sustainable basis. Accordingly, tourism was given the status of industry in the 7th Five-Year Plan.

### **3. TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN WEST BENGAL**

Historical Places to Visit in West Bengal: Eastern India is rich in culture & diversity, the state of West Bengali should definitely be your list when planning a trip to East India. You will be enthralled to see the places, stretching from the great

Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. West Bengal has a great cultural heritage, including folk traditions & literature.

#### 1. Kolkata:

[Kolkata](#) is the famous city in West Bengal and is one of the finest places that should be visited. It is also known as the cultural capital of India and is famous for giving birth to many poets, writers & film producers.

The city has remnants of Victorian style architecture & modern amusement houses. It has many places that can be explored that includes the Indian Museum, Eden Gardens, Aurobindo Ashram, Birla Planetarium, Marble Palace, Howrah Bridge, Nicco Park and much more.

#### 2. Bishnupur:

[Bishnupur](#) has great historical significance and is famous for Terracotta Temples & Balucheri Saree industry. Other temples like Shyam Ray Temple, Jor Bangla & Rasmancha are also picturesque temples. You can enjoy the Bengali food served in the eateries near the temples.

#### 3. Mandarmani:

It is the drivable beach in India and gives you a break from routine life. One can watch the sunrise on the Mandarmani beach and indulge in water sports such as jet skiing, banana boat rides, ATV bikes & bungee trampoline.

#### 4. Sunderbans National Park

[Sunderbans](#), the largest delta in Kolkata boasts of mangrove forests & snakes, crocodiles & Royal Bengal Tiger. Also recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Site, Sunderbans National Park is famous for its orange black striped Royal Bengal Tigers.

You will find crocodile farms, turtle farms, wildlife museums in the park. Sunderbans has a network of channels & mangroves, you will get to cruise along the rivers & island amidst the forest.

#### 5. Darjeeling:

Darjeeling offers stunning views of the Himalayas with snow-capped mountains & greenery. You will find tea plantations & different species of birds. The major attractions in Darjeeling include Batasia Loop, Everest Museum, Neora National Park, Tiger Park, Champramari wildlife sanctuary & Peace Pagoda.

#### 6. Bankura:

Bankura is famous for its rich history, Bankura attracts a lot of tourists. There are tourist attractions such as Susunia Hills, Garh Darwaja, Ganesh and Nandi statues, Rasmancha, Mukutmonipur dam and others.

#### 7. Siliguri:

Famous for its tea gardens & spectacular Himalayan view, Siliguri is a small hill station with thick forest cover. Tourist attractions here include Chilapta Forest, Iskon Temple, Fulbari barrage, Surya Sen Park, Sevoke, Kanchenjunga Stadium, Jaldapara Wildlife sanctuary.

#### 8. Hooghly:

A pilgrim spot in West Bengal, [Hooghly](#) gives a glimpse of European style. It is recognized as the place where Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa & Sarada Devi.

Top tourist destinations are Chandannagar Museum, Serampore, Bhadreswar, Tarakeshwar Temple, Imambara, Hangseshwari Temple, Deer Park, Sri Ramakrishna Math & Garh Mandarin.

#### 9. Kalimpong:

A beautiful hill station in the lower Himalayas, Kalimpong has Teesta river on the sides. It offers great views, clean air & a serene atmosphere. You will find a variety of orchids & handicrafts here in the market.

#### 10. Jalpaiguri:

Easily accessible from Sikkim & Darjeeling, it's a heavenly place. There are many places to visit, including Dooars, National Park, Buxa Tiger Reserve, Mendabari Fort, The Baptist Church & Panjhora River.

#### 11. Malda:

Located at the meeting point of river Mahananda & Kalindi, Malda has great historical significance. There are a lot of places that need to be visited in Malda, some are Bara Sona Mosque, Dakhil Darwaza, Lattan Mosque, Adina Mosque, Firoz Minar Tomb, Maa Johura Temple, Baisgazi Wall, Eklakhi Mausoleum & Malda Museum.

#### 12. Kurseong:

The hill station is less discovered and is 30 km from Darjeeling. The place is magnificent and is magical that attracts a lot of tourists.

Top tourist attractions are Makaibari Tea Estate, Eagle's Crag, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Museum, Tea Estate, Gidhapahar Mandir Temple, Deer Park, Shiva Mandir Temple, Bhangzang Salamander Lake, Sitong & Kettle Valley.

#### 13. Barrackpore:

Famous for its natural beauty & ancient history, it is recognized as the origin place of the Sepoy Mutiny. The places that can be visited are Mangal Pandey Park, Gandhi Museum, Jawahar Kunj Garden, Gandhi Ghat, Bartholomew Cathedral, Kali Temple, Indira Gandhi Water Treatment Plant & Tarkeswar Temple.

#### 14. Cooch Behar:

Famous for its Mughal influenced monuments, Cooch Behar has the remnant of royal heritage. It houses the beautiful Cooch Behar Palace, designed in Classical Western / Italian Renaissance. Architectural style. Other attractions include Madan Mohan Bari, Bangar Aye Temple & Chilapara forest.

#### 15. Birbhum:

Famous for Shantiniketan, the abode of poet Rabindranath Tagore & red soil houses, Birbhum holds great historical importance. Also, you can visit Hetampur, Dubrajpur, Fullara & Ballabhpur Wildlife Sanctuary.

### CULTURE OF BENGAL

The culture of West Bengal is considered to be one of the richest cultures in India. The Capitol Kolkata (Calcutta) is called the Cultural capital of India. The state also takes the credit for being the pioneer of cosmopolitan culture in the country. Over the years, the culture of West Bengal has emerged as the perfect blend of modernity & traditions. The sanctity of the Ganges Hooghly, the beauty

of Eastern Himalayas, the diversity of Sunderbans and the freshness of the Tea Gardens, the beaches, the historical monuments, all blend together to constitute what we call the unique culture of West Bengal. Bengali culture also has its root in Bengali music, Bengali cinema and Bengali literature. The delicious Bengali cuisine also forms an important constituent of the state's cultural heritage. The colours and participation of people of religions, categories in the festivals along with wide range of Creative Arts and crafts now being adored all over as “Biswa Bangla”.

**Bengali Literature**  
 Bengali literature is regarded as one of the richest in the world. Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Dinabandhu Mitra, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay and Ishwar Chandra Bandyopadhyay are some of the classic names in Bengali literature. The first evidence of Bengali literature is formed by a collection of 8th-12th century CE Buddhist mystic poems from Eastern India, named Charyapada or Charyageeti.

**Bengali Cinema**  
 The tryst of Bengal with cinema began in 1890s, when the first "bioscopes" became popular in Kolkata theatres. By 1900, the first production company in Bengal was set up, by Hiralal Sen, named the Royal Bioscope Company. The first Bengali movie, Bilwamangal, was released on 8th November 1919, only six years after the first full-length Indian feature film, Raja Harish Chandra. In contemporary phase, the immense contribution of great Bengali director Satyajit Ray cannot be ignored. Other prominent film makers in the Bengali film industry are Bimal Roy, Ritwik Ghatak, Rituparno Ghosh, Goutam Ghosh and Aparna Sen.

**Religions in West Bengal**  
 People belonging to almost all the religions practiced in India can be seen in West Bengal. However, Hindu and Muslim domination still prevails. The minority communities in the state include Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains. Fairs and festivals form an important part of all the religions of Bengal.

**Bengali Theatre**  
 The theatre in Bengal dates back to 18th century. Reflecting the rich art and cultural lineage of the state, it gained prominence during the freedom struggle of India, when it was used as a tool of expression. Apart from the religion folk dramas prevalent in many parts of Bengal, Bengali plays with nationwide popularity are also churned out on a regular basis.

**Bengali Music**  
 Bangla Music forms an important part of Bengali cultural heritage. In fact, the music of West Bengal compliments and adorns its culture. There is a lot of variety within Bengali music, from Bangla classic to Banga folk and even rock. Apart from the vocal and

## FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Attraction(s)	Location
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<a href="#">Darjeeling</a>	<a href="#">Darjeeling</a>
<a href="#">Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (Toy Train)</a>	New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling
<a href="#">Morgan House</a>	<a href="#">Kalimpong</a>
<a href="#">Cooch Behar Palace</a>	<a href="#">Cooch Behar</a>
<a href="#">Dooars</a>	<a href="#">Dooars</a>
<a href="#">Jaldapara National Park</a>	<a href="#">Alipurduar district</a>
<a href="#">Gorumara National Park</a>	<a href="#">Jalpaiguri district</a>
<a href="#">Hazarduari Palace</a>	Murshidabad district (Murshidabad)
<a href="#">Nizamat Imambara</a>	<a href="#">Murshidabad district</a>
<a href="#">Katra Mosque</a>	<a href="#">Murshidabad district</a>
<a href="#">Adina Deer Park</a>	<a href="#">Maldah district</a>
<a href="#">Adina Mosque</a>	<a href="#">Maldah district</a>
<a href="#">Gaur</a>	<a href="#">Maldah</a>
<a href="#">Bangarh</a>	<a href="#">Gangarampur</a>
<a href="#">Shantiniketan</a>	<a href="#">Birbhum</a>
<a href="#">Bishnupur Terracotta Temples</a>	<a href="#">Bankura</a>
<a href="#">Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden</a>	Howrah (Shibpur)
<a href="#">The Great Banyan Tree</a>	Howrah (Shibpur)
<a href="#">Howrah Bridge</a>	Howrah to Kolkata
<a href="#">B. B. D. Bagh</a>	<a href="#">Kolkata</a>
<a href="#">Dakshineswar Kali Temple</a>	North 24 Parganas district (Dakshineswar)
<a href="#">Second Hooghly Bridge</a>	Kolkata to Howrah
<a href="#">Belur Math</a>	Howrah (Belur Math)
<a href="#">Victoria Memorial</a>	<a href="#">Kolkata</a>
<a href="#">Sunderbans delta of India</a>	<a href="#">Southern 24 Parganas District</a>
<a href="#">Digha</a>	<a href="#">Purba Medinipur</a>
<a href="#">Mandarmani</a>	<a href="#">Purba Medinipur</a>
<a href="#">St. Paul's Cathedral</a>	<a href="#">Kolkata</a>
<a href="#">Sundarbans National Park</a>	<a href="#">Sunderbans delta of India</a>
<a href="#">Mayapur</a>	<a href="#">Nabadwip</a>
<a href="#">Kumortuli</a>	<a href="#">North Kolkata</a>
<a href="#">Salt Lake Stadium</a>	<a href="#">Bidhannagar</a>
<a href="#">Howrah station</a>	<a href="#">Howrah</a>
<a href="#">Eden Gardens</a>	<a href="#">Kolkata</a>

Surrounded by Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh internationally, and by the Indian states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam, West Bengal has an area of 88,752 km. The state capital is Kolkata ,formerly known as Calcutta.

West Bengal boasts of artisanal excellence with its extraordinary terracotta work, handloom weaves, heritage sarees and various other unique handicrafts. Geographical indication tags like Nakshi Kantha(Handicraft), Terracotta, Darjeeling tea (Agricultural), Santipore Saree (Handicraft), Shantiniketan Leather Goods (Handicraft), Fazli Mango (Agricultural), Khirsapati or Himsagar Mango (Agricultural), Laxman Bhog Mango

(Agricultural), Baluchari Saree (Handicraft), and Dhaniakhali Saree (Handicraft) are some of the examples of the unique array of attractions that West Bengal has to offer. It is also a center of educational excellence as well as a technologically advanced state in India.

West Bengal has always been at harmony amidst numerous religious practices. The state offers an astounding variety of religious places such as the most number of Shaktipeeths in the likes of Kalighat Temple and Tarapith; magnificent Hindu temples like Belur Math, Mayapur ISKCON Temple, Hangseshwari Temple and Tarakeshwar Temple; opulent mosques like the Nizamat Imambara and Katra Mosque in Murshidabad, Furfura Sharif and Tipu Sultan Shahi Mosque in Kolkata; Gurdwaras for Sikhs and majestic churches like the The Basilica of the Holy Rosary in Bandel, St. John's Church, St. Jame's Church (Jora Girja), St. Paul's Cathedral and Church of the Lord Jesus and spectacular Buddhist monasteries of Ghoom, Bhutia Busty, Mag-Dhog Yolmowa ,Tharpa Choling, Zang Dhok Palri Phodang among others.

If you are an adventure enthusiast, the state has no dearth of attractions for you. Visit the dense mangroves of Sunderbans for waterway rides to spot a staggering variety of flora and fauna including the famed Royal Bengal Tiger; trek the Himalayan Mountains with their breathtaking beauty or the green Puruliya Hillocks; or enjoy a safari in the misty forests of Jaldapara, Chilapata. Even a visit to the colourful tribal villages of the Santhals or other ethnicities is sure to be a thrilling experience of a lifetime.

Celebrate myriad of festivals with us like the Durga Puja, Poila Baishakh (the Bengali New Year), Rathayatra, Dolyatra or Basanta-Utsab. From Christmas carnivals to Eid ul-Fitr and Muharram; from Buddha Purnima to the legendary Ganga Sagar Yatra, all celebrated with great zeal.

History in West Bengal co-exists with modernity. From the Last Independent Nawab's Havelis to the superfast AC rides of the Metro Rail - West Bengal has it all. Here the culinary diversity merges, from haute cuisine to street foods to mouthwatering local specialities...

Come to West Bengal - The sweetest Part of India

Facts at a glance:

Capital	Kolkata
Districts	23
Area	88,752 Sq Km
Official Language	Bengali
Other Languages	Hindi, English and other Indian Languages
Temperature	Summer – 26 °C - 43 °C/ Winter 10 °C- 19 °C
Rainfall	175 cms
Best Season to Visit	September End to March
Currency	Indian Rupee

Major Cities

Kolkata, Siliguri, Asansol, Burdwan, Malda

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**Geographical Area:** 88,752 sq km **Location:** Located in the eastern part of India shares its border with 4 Indian states( Jharkhand, Bihar ,Odisha, Sikkim & Assam) and 3 countries( Bangladesh, Bhutan & Nepal)

**State Capital: Kolkata**

**District: 20**

**Major Cities: Kolkata, Asansol, Durgapur, Howrah, Burdwan, Siliguri, Kharagpur, Haldia**

**Climate:** The climate of West Bengal from tropical savannah in the southern Jharkhand, portions to humid sub tropical in the north 3 countries

**State Income ( NSDP):** INR 728,974 crore

**Budget Allocation:** INR 57,905 crore (2016-17)

**Population:** 91.3 million (Male: 46.9 million & Female: 44.4 million)

**Literacy Ratio:** 77.1%

**Urban-Rural**

**Ratio:** Rural: 68.13% & Urban: 31.87%

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• [An Overview](#)

• [Himalayas](#)

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• [Darjeeling](#)

• [Kurseong](#)

• [Kalimpong](#)

• [Rishop Rimbik](#)

• [Lava](#)

• [Lolegaon](#)

• [Mirik](#)

• [Sandakphu](#)

• [Dooars](#)

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• [Dooars](#)

• [Jaldapara](#)

• [Gorumara](#)

• [Kulik Bird Sanctuary](#)

• [Sanctuaries](#)

• [Adventure](#)

• [Heritage](#)

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• [Sutanuti Trails](#)

• [Colonial Heritage](#)

• [Ramakrishna Vivekananda Trail](#)

• [Culture](#)

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• [Shantiniketan](#)

• [Legends of Bengal](#)

• [Siliguri](#)

• [Kolkata](#)

• [Coastal](#)

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• [Digha](#)

• [Mandarmani](#)

- [Shankarpur](#)
- [Tazpur](#)
- [Bakkhali](#)
- [Sundarbans](#)

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- [Sundarbans](#)
  - [Pilgrimage](#)

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- [Gangasagar](#)
  - [Belur Math](#)
  - [Dakshineswar](#)
  - [Kalighat](#)
  - [Tarapith](#)
  - [Tarakeshwar](#)
  - [ISKCON](#)
  - [Nakhoda Masjid](#)
  - [Furfura Sharif](#)
  - [Imambara](#)
  - [St. Paul's Cathedral](#)
  - [St. James' Church](#)
  - [Bolla Kali Temple](#)
  - [Shakti Peeth](#)
  - [Jain Pilgrimage](#)
  - [Buddhist Monasteries](#)
  - [St. Teresa Circuit](#)
  - [Jewish in Kolkata](#)
  - [Historical Places](#)

- 
- [Murshidabad](#)
  - [Birbhum](#)
  - [Bankura](#)
  - [Bishnupur](#)
  - [Malda](#)
  - [Hooghly](#)
  - [Burdwan](#)
  - [Paschim Medinipur](#)
  - [Cooch Behar](#)
  - [Weekend Gateways](#)

- 
- [Purulia](#)
  - [Howrah](#)
  - [Jhargram](#)
  - [Special Attractions](#)

- 
- [Salt Lake Stadium](#)
  - [New Town Rajarhat](#)
  - [Museum of West Bengal](#)
  - [Convention Centre of New Town](#)
  - [Chinese in Kolkata](#)
  - [Crafts](#)
  - [Bengal Festivals](#)
  - [Bengal Foods](#)
  - [Eco tourism](#)
  - [River Side Kolkata](#)
  - [Little Europe](#)
  -
-



## Tourist attractions in West Bengal

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[Jump to navigation](#)[Jump to search](#)

Tourist attractions in West Bengal refers to the tourist attractions in the [Indian](#) state of [West Bengal](#). West Bengal is a [state](#) in the [eastern](#) region of India and is the nation's [fourth-most populous](#).<sup>[1]</sup> It is also the [seventh-most populous](#) sub-national entity in the world, with over 91 million inhabitants.<sup>[1]</sup> It is bordered by the countries of [Nepal](#), [Bhutan](#), and [Bangladesh](#), and the Indian states of [Orissa](#), [Jharkhand](#), [Bihar](#), [Sikkim](#), and [Assam](#). The state capital is [Kolkata](#) (formerly *Calcutta*). West Bengal encompasses two broad [natural regions](#): the [Gangetic Plain](#) in the south and the sub-Himalayan and [Himalayan](#) area in the north. With these there are two major natural regions i.e., the Western plateau and the great Sundarban delta.

During the [British colonial era](#) from 1700–1912, [Kolkata](#) (then known as *Calcutta*) enjoyed the privilege of being the capital of [British India](#) and witnessed a spate of frenzied construction of buildings,<sup>[2]</sup> largely influenced by the conscious intermingling of Neo-Gothic, Baroque, Neo-Classical, Oriental and Islamic schools of design. Unlike many north Indian cities, whose construction stresses minimalism, the layout of much of the architectural variety in Kolkata owes its origins to [European](#) styles and tastes imported by the British and, to a much lesser extent, by the Portuguese and French.

[Kolkata](#) - now the state capital, is considered to be an ideal hub to cover all the destinations in West Bengal.<sup>[3]</sup> It is the largest urban center in [Eastern India](#) and is well connected by road, rail and air.

[Siliguri](#) - the largest city of [North Bengal](#) will be another ideal hub to cover all destinations in Northern Bengal and an alternative to [Kolkata](#). This city is the second largest urban center in West Bengal and is also well connected by road, rail and air.

West Bengal stretches to the [Bay of Bengal](#) in the south.<sup>[4]</sup> The coastal strip of West Bengal, extending from the [Gangetic Delta](#) to the border of [Orissa](#) has some beautiful coastal settlements namely [Digha](#), [Shankarpur](#), [Mandarmani](#), [Bakkhali](#), Gangasagara, [Tajpur](#) and more others.<sup>[5]</sup>

Tourist attractions also include some more [geographical indications](#) like [Nakshi Kantha](#) (Handicraft), [Darjeeling tea](#) (Agricultural), [Santipore Saree](#) (Handicraft), [Shantiniketan Leather Goods](#) (Handicraft), Fazli Mango (Agricultural), Khirsapati or *Himsagar* Mango (Agricultural), *Laxman Bhog Mango* (Agricultural), *Baluchari Saree* (Handicraft), and *Dhaniakhali Saree* (Handicraft).

Other attractions include the culture of West Bengal. It attracts tourists for pilgrimages to the holy places of different religions. People from different sections of the world come to West Bengal for holy pilgrimage as Kolkata is one of the [four adi Shaktipeethas](#). Among the [other 52 shaktipeethas](#) some are located in West Bengal. The notable Hindu temples include [Kalighat Kali Temple](#), [Tarapith](#), [Belur Math](#), [Mayapur ISKCON Temple](#), [Hangseshwari Temple](#), [Tarakeshwar Temple](#), Thakurnagar Thakur Bari Temple and [Dakshineswar Kali Temple](#).

West Bengal also has countless mosques like the [Nizamat Imambara](#) and [Katra Mosque](#) in Murshidabad, [Furfura Sharif](#) and [Tipu Sultan Shahi Mosque](#) in Kolkata.

Other pilgrim destinations include [Gurdwaras](#) for [Sikhs](#) and churches like the [Basilica of the Holy Rosary](#) in [Bandel](#), [St. John's Church](#), [St. Jame's Church](#) (*Jora Girja*), [St. Paul's Cathedral](#) and [Church of the Lord Jesus](#).

Buddhist Monasteries in West Bengal are especially located in the hilly regions like the [Ghoom Monastery](#), [Bhutia Busty Monastery](#), [Mag-Dhog Yolmowa Monastery](#), [Tharpa Choling Monastery](#), [Zang Dhok Palri Phodang](#) and more others.

Notable festivals include the [Durga Puja](#) in October, the most popular festival in the West Bengal,<sup>[7]</sup> the [Poila Baishakh](#) (the Bengali New Year), the [Rathayatra](#), the [Dolyatra](#) or [Basanta-Utsab](#), the [Nobanno](#), the *Poush Parbon* (festival of [Poush](#)), the [Kali Puja](#), the [Saraswati Puja](#), the [Laxmi Puja](#), Christmas, the [Eid ul-Fitr](#), the [Eid ul-Adha](#) and the [Muharram](#). [Buddha Purnima](#), which marks the birth of [Gautama Buddha](#), is one of the most important Hindu/Buddhist festivals while Christmas, called *Bôrocin* (Great day) in Bengali is celebrated by the minority Christian population. [Poush Mela](#) is a popular festival of [Shantiniketan](#), taking place in winter.

Being home to notable people like [Rabindranath Tagore](#), Asia's first [Nobel laureate](#) and composer of [India's national anthem](#) and [Swami Vivekananda](#), a key figure in introducing [Vedanta](#) and [Yoga](#) in [Europe](#) and [USA](#)<sup>[8]</sup> there houses and residencies like [Shantiniketan](#) and [Jorasanko Thakur Bari](#) are world famous and attract many tourists.

West Bengal also has a long tradition of popular literature, music and drama largely based on Bengali folklore and [Hindu epics](#) and [Puranas](#).

Kolkata, the state capital city, was also the workplace of several social reformers, like Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Swami Vivekananda. These social reforms have eventually led to a cultural atmosphere where practices like sati, dowry, and caste-based discrimination or untouchability, the evils that crept into the Hindu society, were abolished.

West Bengal is also known to make distinctive [sweetmeats](#) from milk products, including [Rôshogolla](#), [Chômchôm](#), [Kalojam](#) and several kinds of [sondesh](#). [Pitha](#), a kind of sweet cake, bread or dimsum are specialties of winter season. Sweets like coconut-naru, til-naru, moa, payesh, etc. are prepared during the festival of Lakshmi puja. Popular [street food](#) includes [Aloor Chop](#), [Beguni](#), [Kati roll](#), and [phuchka](#).

The variety of fruits and vegetables that Bengal has to offer is incredible. West Bengal is also famous for its costumes.

Seven wonders of West Bengal

[NDTV](#) along with the [Ministry of Tourism, Government of India](#) conducted a nationwide campaign for searching the "*Seven Wonders of India*" in 2008-09. The campaign started with shortlisting 200 places from all of the Indian states and then inviting public to cast their vote for their favorite places. It also included seven wonders of particular states. In West Bengal a total 13 were selected of which the "*Seven Wonders of West Bengal*" were shortlisted. The list of the 30 selected places are as follows:

- [Cooch Behar Palace](#)
- [Darjeeling Himalayan Railway](#) ("Toy Train")
- [Hazarduari Palace](#)
- [Adina Mosque](#)

- [Gaur, West Bengal](#)
- [Shantiniketan](#)
- [Bishnupur Terracotta Temples](#)
- [Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden](#) with the [Great Banyan Tree](#)
- [Howrah Bridge](#)
- [B. B. D. Bagh](#) (formerly called Dalhousie Square)
- [Dakshineswar Kali Temple](#)
- [Second Hooghly Bridge](#)
- [Victoria Memorial](#)
- [Sunderbans](#)
- [St. Paul's Cathedral](#)

The shortlisted list, compiling of the "*Seven Wonders of West Bengal*" as per the votings is as follows:

- [Sunderbans](#)
  - [Victoria Memorial](#)
  - [Darjeeling Himalayan Railway](#) ("Toy Train")
  - [Bishnupur Terracotta Temples](#)
  - [Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden](#) with the [Great Banyan Tree](#)
  - [Howrah Bridge](#)
- [B. B. D. Bagh](#) (Formerly called, the Dalhousie Square) Mk.

## **5.PROBLEM & PROSPECTS OF TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL**

Challenges The major challenges are need to preserve the environment and natural resources, the need for education, proper understanding for both tourists and local people, and the need to generate a democratic movement which helps people at all levels to participate in tourism development. The Tourism Industry faces with various challenges in the field of human resources; one of the crucial issues in this regard is the quality of manpower. The industry is vitally faced with the demand for qualified quality personnel. One of the key areas in terms of tourism development in West Bengal is creation of a more appropriate form of tourism to replace "Mass Tourism". Appropriate Tourism is a kind of tourism that is more favorable and beneficial to the local community and the challenge ahead for West Bengal's tourism industry is to implement and establish Appropriate Tourism at the ground level. Hotel are mushrooming in India of different shapes and sizes without any proper care of the fragile environment or even basic security for the property and life of tourists. This is very dangerous to countries like India where tourism is going to be the mainstay for employment generation, social up-liftment and source for foreign exchange earnings. Now many state tourism corporations are also running hotels. No doubt, for booming domestic tourism, these establishments are rendering a very good service but equally these establishments are lacking required facilities. All the more they lack trained manpower. The conservation and sustainable use of natural, social and cultural resources is crucial. Therefore, tourism should be planned and

managed within environmental limits and with due regard for the long term appropriate use of natural and human resources. Tourism should support a wide range of local economic activities, taking environmental costs and benefits into account, but it should not be permitted to become an activity which dominates the economic base of an area. Local communities should be encouraged and expected to participate in the planning, development and control of tourism with the support of government and the industry. Particular attention should be paid to involving indigenous people, women and minority groups to ensure the equitable distribution of the benefits of tourism. Tourism being a highly labour intensive industry, there should be an integrated HRD system with both public and private sector participation to develop human resources to meet the requirements of the industry. Tourists are also irritated on account of unwanted paper work, time wasting compliance of rules and regulations and redtapism in India. In addition to customs and immigration formalities, language barriers are also the major problems faced by the foreign visitors. The success of future tourism is intrinsically connected with the way in which the industry and the tourism system understand and incorporate the emerging critical trends that support its expansion. The most imperative

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4 6 8 1 0 1 2 1 4 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009  
2010 2011 2012

Tourists in Percentage % Share of Domestic & Foreign  
Tourists in West Bengal to Total India Domestic Tourists Foreign Tourists

Index factors for successful tourism development include product enhancement, marketing, regulations and human resource development. The role of the State is pivotal because a large number of tourism resources like foreshore lands on the coast, heritage monuments, forest and wild life, inland water bodies and major infrastructure like airports, roads, ports vest with it.

XII. Future Prospect West Bengal aims to become a preferred tourism and tourism-related investment destination by leveraging its unique geographical setting along with its various tourism-related assets. It will develop necessary infrastructure and promote tourism in an integrated manner which will not only bring in more investment and further the socio-economic goals of the Government, but also ensure that all these are in conformity with the relevant acts, rules and regulations relating to environmental protection. The overall aim of the Tourism Department is to see that the tourism sector contributes towards improving the quality of life of people in general. The West Bengal tourism development presently follows the Tourism Policy of 2008, which aims:

- To develop a portfolio of tourism products by utilizing its unique ecological, historical, cultural, religious, wildlife, sports, shopping, health care, educational and human assets.
- To facilitate tourism by all segments, particularly the middle and lower income tourists, by making the tourist spots in the State more easily accessible through single-window facility at the State capital and at the district headquarters and on the internet. The West Bengal government is currently preparing to unveil a comprehensive 'Tourism Policy', "with a major thrust on creating a separate brand for West Bengal". The state has begun its Beautiful Bengal campaign to sensitize tourists about the many attractions of the state, namely Hill Tourism in Darjeeling and Dooars, Ecotourism in Sunderbans, River Tourism, Kolkata Heritage Tourism, Beach Tourism along the coastline, etc. The state tourism department also hosts Tagore Literary Festival, Kolkata; Urban Heritage Conservation Festival, Kolkata; Tea Tourism Festival, Darjeeling; Hazarduall Utsav, Murshidabad; Digha Festival; Bishnupur Festival; and Music Festival, Darjeeling. The State

has taken the Kolkata/Hooghly Riverfront Development as a priority for development as a major tourist attraction, which is being readied for implementation. In addition to existing tourist destinations, the state is taking special care to develop tourism in North Bengal, Digha and Sundarbans in a customised way. The State government is also finalizing plans to further develop a 'Buddhist Trail' so as to attract more foreign tourists in the state; among other things the proposal included a 10-day trip to cover this circuit by a state-of-the-art train like 'Palace on Wheels' twice a month. The Central and State Government must come up with more inclusive tourism policies and programmes to take the momentum forward and derive better synergy of tourism and development. There is no dearth of attractions, resources or manpower; rather the State has all of that in plenty and in huge diversity. Leveraging these vast resource bases of the state for building a qualitatively better and stronger tourism industry should provide a winning proposition for all stakeholders, especially the common man.

XIII. Conclusions The success of an organization depends on its ability to affect continuous improvement and provide quality products and services to its customer. This will require every personnel in the organization to possess the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude. Proper identification of tourist segments and focused marketing efforts, with the help of professionals, should be undertaken. Only overall growth can help in improving revenue generation, which needs to grow in line with the additional capacity being set up by the hospitality industry. Tourism activities depend upon nature and natural heritage, it is essential to ensure that tourism development is ecologically sustainable –ecological process must not be neglected. Similarly tourism offers real experience of unique culture of the country and the State. Hence the development should ensure that social and cultural sustainable tourism development compatible with the culture and values of the local people. The agenda for action should concentrate around community participation in tourism development and planning, training of the personnel associated with tourism development so that they can provide quality services without devaluing the same. In the framework of action it is necessary to ensure that the benefits to the community are so spread out that the people perceive the benefits flowing to them. Similarly, there is need for a legal and procedural frame work that deals adequately with social evils like exploitation, child use, sex tourism, interference with heritage products etc. In conclusion, the path for department of accessible tourism is tough and one has to negotiate with many culpable challenges and bottlenecks. Perhaps, some of those are not difficult to deal with or manage. What would be needed is certain degree of commitment, earnest efforts and coordination on the part of direct stakeholders. When it comes to more complex problems involving considerable financial commitment and coordination, it would be necessary to institute suitable policy mechanisms and higher level of inter-department coordination mechanisms.

XIV. Suggestions – Proper planning of master plans needs to be prepared with specific objectives be integrated with Assam's overall economic and social development objective. Proper development of infrastructure, tourist facilities, enhancement of communication networks etc. – All the information, instructions, suggestions should be made available in Braille and large print.

Large print material should be placed at eye level. → All travel and tourism organisations should be advised to document the Factsheets on access enabling facilities in their premises and publicise them. → Tourism communication strategy should be such that accessible tourism information would be integral to all campaigns. → Realise and respect the value of environment, flora and fauna, monuments and cultural heritage. → Practice conservation of nature and culture as a way of life. → Research should be undertaken throughout all stages of tourism development and operation to monitor impacts, to solve problems and to allow local people and others to respond to changes and to take advantages of opportunities. → Zonal manpower resource centre should be formed to recognize tourism as a factor for regional development. These manpower resource development centres should conduct studies on the availability of skilled and semi-skilled human resources in their respective regions. → The quality of services given by hotels, tourist resorts and facilities en route must be supervised by experienced and knowledgeable managers.

#### **4. Tourism policy of west Bengal**

Objectives of Tourism Policy: The basic objectives are

- (i) To promote wholesome tourism, in keeping with the established value systems and based on local art, traditions and culture and at the same time, strictly adhering to the existing acts, rules and regulations relating to environmental protection.
- (ii) To promote West Bengal as a desirable tourism destination as well as investment destination.
- (iii) To create adequate employment opportunities for the people of the state and augment the general revenue earnings.
- (iv) To improve the quality of life in general.
- (v) To increase foreign exchange earnings of the country.
- (vi) To create infrastructure in the form of hotels, resorts etc. essentially to serve as a base for promoting tourism in a planned manner and to support industries that will come up in the state in near future.



## 1. Preamble

The State of West Bengal has all the prerequisites for a successful tourism sector. It has a rich history, cultural heritage and a diverse socio-ethnic tradition along with nature's bounties. There are fine beaches in South Bengal, serene hill stations along the Himalayas, and a myriad eco-tourism opportunities with great bio-diversity and the State's diverse native flora and fauna.

Over the last few decades, West Bengal has seen an exponential growth in domestic and international tourist arrivals in the State, and has emerged as one of the major tourist destinations in India.

Between 2001 and 2017, the total tourist footfall in the State has increased from 5.2 million to a staggering 81.2 million at a CAGR of 18.74%. During the same period, the number of foreign tourists in the State has grown from 2.8 lacs to 15.7 lacs at a CAGR of 11.37%. In 2016, the State attracted 6.2% of foreign tourist arrivals in the country, fifth largest among the States and Union Territories of the country. With the recent tourism infrastructure developments, the State has emerged as an 'all-season tourist destination', welcoming tourists on business, social, and leisure trips throughout the year.

Today, tourism is gradually evolving as one of the most important drivers of the State's economy. The travel and tourism sector's total contribution to West Bengal's GSDP, including spill overs to other sectors, is around 11% against a national average of 9.6%<sup>1</sup>

The sector is also one of the main pillars of employment generation in the State, offering wide range of employment opportunities across hotels and hospitality value chain. Industry estimates suggest that an investment of US \$ 1 million creates 78 jobs in the tourism sector while the same generates just 18 jobs in the manufacturing and 45 jobs in the agriculture sector<sup>2</sup>. As in FY 2017, the tourism sector of the State created around 5.5 lac employment, where each man-year of direct employment has the potential to impact more than seven man-years of indirect employment.

The major growth drivers of the sector are:

- i. The natural benefits of the mountains in the North, the Gangetic plains, the **world's largest mangrove forests** in the Sunderbans, and the rich coastline along the Bay of Bengal in the South. The State is also home to **two UNESCO world heritage sites viz. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Sunderbans National Park**.
- ii. A major destination for those from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan seeking to avail of high-end speciality and super-specialty medical facilities in Eastern India, West Bengal is also a hub for quality education with the presence of IIT, IIM, ISI, NUJS, and Presidency University etc.
- iii. The State's traditional carnivals such as Kolkata Christmas Festival, Poush Mela, and Ganga Sagar Mela etc. draw several domestic and foreign tourists. Chief among them is Durga Pujo, which the State seeks to promote as the greatest public festival in the world.
- iv. Access to diverse portfolio of niche tourism products cruises, adventure, wellness, medical and education, homestay, eco-tourism, sports, MICH, film, rural, and religious tourism.
- v. Impressive connectivity via International airports in Kolkata and Bagdogra, the country's first private sector Greenfield airport at Andal and ports in Kolkata and Haldia. The State also has the third largest road coverage and largest rail density among the Indian States,
- vi. Presence of major hotel and hospitality chains, health resorts, and restaurants, with multiplying investments in hotel infrastructure. Kolkata, the capital of the State, has more than 3,600 upscale hotel rooms with 67% occupancy rate, the third best in the country in FY 2017<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

<sup>2</sup> Source: Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, KPMG Analysis

<sup>3</sup> Spource: Planning Commission, Govt. of India



The State of West Bengal is on the cusp of evolving as the most preferred tourist destination in the country. Accordingly, the West Bengal Tourism Policy seeks to further develop and strengthen tourism infrastructure, support theme based tourism products, encourage tourism activities in perfect harmony with the eco-system balance, promote sector-oriented skill development, and maximise private sector participation. At the same time, this policy strongly emphasizes consistent standards of infrastructure and service quality through appropriate standardization, certification and, regulation.

## 2. Visions, Missions and Objectives

### 2.1. Visions – ‘Earning through Quality’

To develop West Bengal as one of the most preferred tourist destinations of choice, while generating gainful employment, enhancing economic opportunities, and providing best-in-class tourism facilities, services and enriched tourist experience.

### 2.2. Mission

- i. To promote sustainable, eco-friendly and responsible tourism in the State as an enabler of employment generation, local livelihood and economic growth.
- ii To achieve and maintain best in-class quality of services by tourism service providers through appropriate mapping of standardization, certification and, regulation.
- iii. To offer world-class experience to visitors while offering unique and diverse tourism products and services.
- iv. To maximise board-based employment opportunities in the tourism sector by creating modern skills and capabilities and connecting the tourism sector to other sectors of the State.

### 2.3. Objectives

- i. To be positioned among the leading tourist destinations in the country in terms of number of tourist footfalls, as well as quality of tourism services provided by FY 2021.
- ii. To ensure standardized tourism services by grading and accreditation of hotels, resorts, wayside amenities, homestays, tour and travel operators and other tourism services in the State.
- iii. To Promote theme-based tourism projects under eco-tourism, religious, cultural and heritage, MICE, rural and homestay, and medical tourism.
- iv. To develop diverse tourism packages and products to augment tourist stay and encourage repeat visits.
- v. To enhance the use of ICT in improving the quality of services, and also create a credible database of tourism information.
- vi. To develop and strengthen tourism infrastructure in terms of road connectivity, wayside amenities, power connectivity till last mile, waste disposal systems, TRC/ TFCs etc.
- vii. To focus on developing new tourism circuits through a ‘Hub and Spoke’ model involving well-known tourist hotspots.
- viii. To create enabling framework for the promotion of public-private partnerships (PPP) in developing new’ tourism projects, products, and services.

### 2.4. Coverage of tourism ‘infrastructure’ and tourism ‘services’

A project within the meaning of a tourism unit 5 and within the physical limits of the State shall be eligible under the Tourism Policy and shall include but not necessarily be limited to, those mentioned below and as recognised by the Government in the Tourism Department:

<sup>4</sup> Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of West Bengal



## **WEST BENGAL TOURISM INCENTIVES SCHEME**

### **2. Commencement and Duration:**

Unless specially mentioned against the respective items of incentives sanctioned under the 2015 Scheme, it shall come into effect on and from the 7th day of January, 2015 in the whole of West Bengal and shall remain valid upto 31st December, 2020.

### **4. Applicability of the 2015 Scheme:**

The 2015 Scheme shall be generally applicable to all eligible tourism projects/units and also to expansion projects of existing units set up on or after the effective date of this incentive scheme. The units may be in the private sector, co-operative sector, joint sector as also companies/undertakings owned or managed by the State Government.

### **6. Eligibility Criteria for incentives:**

1. Any project within the meaning of a tourism unit to which this scheme applies, shall be eligible for securing an Eligibility Certificate provided:

a) The project is covered by a detailed feasibility report/project prepared for the purpose

b) The project has been approved and sanctioned by a Central Financial Institution or Commercial Banks or State Financial Institutions, as the case may be. In case of projects with arrangement of finance from own resources, issue of Eligibility Certificate shall be considered provided WBTDC is satisfied about the arrangement of finance within the conditions as laid down in the sub-para.

2. Eligibility Certificate shall be issued by the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Limited on satisfaction of arrangement of the conditions mentioned in sub-para above and on the basis of a Registration Certificate issued by the Directorate of Tourism. All necessary clearances from appropriate authorities have to be obtained before a Registration Certificate is issued by the Directorate of Tourism.

### **9. Interest Subsidy:**

9.1 An approved project of an eligible unit will also be entitled to an interest subsidy to the extent of 50% , 60% & 75% of the annual interest liability on the term loan borrowed from a Commercial Bank/Financial Institution for the implementation of the project in Group-‘A’ & ‘B’ areas, Group-‘C’ and ‘D’ areas & Special area respectively subject to a limit of Rs.25 lakhs per year, for 5 years for units located in Groups A and B areas, and for 7 years for units located in Groups C and D areas, & Rs. 30 Lakhs for 7 years for unit setup in Special Area as the case may be.

9.2 The interest subsidy will be payable annually subject to submission of a statement or certificate by the lending bank/financial institution to prove that the unit has paid the due interest to the institution on the due dates. The subsidy shall, however, not be paid in respect of term loans availed for second-hand plant and machinery or hire-purchase equipment.

### **10. Waiver of Electricity Duty:**

An eligible unit will be entitled to waiver of electricity duty on the electricity consumed in its approved project for a period of 5 years from the date of commercial operation on reimbursement basis.

### **11. Additional Incentive on Generation of Employment :**

An eligible unit will be entitled to an additional incentive for employment generation to the extent of 60% of the expenditure incurred by it for paying its contribution towards Employees State Insurance (ESI) and Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme for a period of 5 years if the unit is located in

Group A, B, C & D areas & for a period of 10 years if it is located in 'Special Areas' on reimbursement basis.

12. Additional Incentives for Adventure Tour Operators:

An eligible unit, which has been qualified for bringing in more than 50 International Tourists or 100 Domestic Inbound Tourists in a financial year supported by payment of Service Tax, shall be entitled to an additional incentive for purchase of tents/dingy/adventure & sports equipments/related accessories by way of reimbursement of 100% VAT in the Special Area, 90% VAT in the districts falling under Group- D, 80% VAT in the districts falling under Group- C, 60% VAT in the districts falling under Group- B and 50% VAT in the districts falling under Group- A, as the case may be.

13. Reimbursement of Stamp Duty and Registration Fee:

An eligible unit shall be entitled to a reimbursement of 50%, 60% & 70% of stamp duty and registration fee paid by it for the purpose of registration of documents within the State relating to new purchase/acquisition of land and buildings/property for setting up the approved project within area under Group - A & B, Group -C & D & Special Area respectively, as the case may be subject to compliance of all statutory procedures.

14. Subsidy for Quality Improvement:

An eligible unit shall be reimbursed 50% of the fixed capital investment expenditure incurred for quality improvement, modernization and installation of pollution control devices and for obtaining ISI/BIS/ISO certification, subject to a maximum of Rs.7.5 lakhs.

15. Mega Projects:

15.1 Notwithstanding anything contained anywhere in the Scheme, or unless otherwise, the State Government may consider granting a special package of incentives under this Scheme to a Mega Project having due regard to the characteristics of the project in respect of the following:

- (i) Size of investment
- (ii) Special nature of the unit including its eco-friendliness
- (iii) Employment potentiality
- (iv) Impact on overall economic activity in the area
- (v) Promoting tourist arrivals in the State as well as tourism within

the State.

15.2 State Capital Investment subsidy for Mega Project:

An eligible unit will be entitled to a State Capital Investment Subsidy @ 7.5%, 10%, 15%, 20% and 25% located in the area under Group A, Group B, Group C, Group D and Special Area respectively depending upon Project profile and fixed capital investment subject to a limit of Rs. 1.50 Crore for Group A or B areas, Rs. 1.75 Crore for Group-C or D areas and Rs. 2.00 crore for Special Area. However, in no case will the amount of this subsidy to an eligible unit in respect of the building component exceed 50% of the total State Capital Investment Subsidy given to the unit.

15.4 Reimbursement on Stamp Duty and Registration Fee:

An eligible unit shall be entitled to a reimbursement of 50%, 60% & 70% of stamp duty and registration fee paid by it for the purpose of registration of documents within the State relating to new purchase/acquisition of land and buildings/property for setting up the approved project within area under Group - A & B, Group -C & D & Special Area respectively, as the case may be subject to compliance of all statutory procedures.

15.5 Waiver of Electricity Duty: An eligible unit will be entitled to waiver of electricity duty on the electricity consumed in its approved project for a period of 5 years from the date of commercial operation, if located in Group A

or B or C or D areas & 7 years if located in Special Areas on reimbursement basis.

15.6 Capacity Utilisation:

An approved mega project of an eligible unit shall be entitled to additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.25 over & above the maximum permissible FAR as may be fixed by the competent authority in Group-‘A’ and ‘B’ areas, an additional FAR of 1(One) over & above the maximum permissible FAR as may be fixed by the competent authority in Group ‘C’ and ‘D’ areas and an additional FAR of 2(Two) over & above the maximum permissible FAR as may be fixed by the competent authority in Special Area.

15.7 Additional Incentives for Adventure Tour Operators:

An eligible unit, which has been qualified for bringing in more than 50 International Tourists or 100 Domestic Inbound Tourists in a financial year supported by payment of Service Tax, shall be entitled to an additional incentive for purchase of tents/dingy/adventure & sports equipments/related accessories by way of reimbursement of 100% VAT in the Special Area, 90% VAT in the districts falling under Group- D, 80% VAT in the districts falling under Group- C, 60% VAT in the districts falling under Group- B and 50% VAT in the districts falling under Group- A, as the case may be.

15.8 Luxury Tax Exemption:

All new Tourism Units shall be given 100% relief on paying Luxury Tax for a period of 3(Three) years from the year of commencing operations if located in ‘Special Areas’ on reimbursement basis. Home Stay Tourism Units coming under the scheme will also be exempted from paying luxury tax for three years on reimbursement basis.

15.9 Tourism Promotion Assistance in lieu of interest subsidy:

An eligible Tourism Unit will be entitled to a Tourism Promotion Assistance at the rate of 75% of VAT for 5 years irrespective of the location of the project, which will be in lieu of interest subsidy.

16. All reliefs granted under this Incentive Scheme to any Tourism Unit, both under normal and Mega Projects, will be on reimbursement basis.

19. Non-applicability of 2008 Scheme:

19.1 The West Bengal Incentive Scheme, 2008 shall stand non-applicable in respect of tourism units from the date of commencement of this 2015 Scheme. It is further provided that any units which may have applied for registration with the Directorate of Tourism under WBIS’2008 before the date of commencement of this 2015 Scheme and whose applications may have not been disposed of prior to the coming into effect of this 2015 Scheme or deemed to have been disposed of shall be entitled to all benefits under WBIS’2008 only.

19.2 The benefits extended to the units under any of the previous Incentive Schemes shall continue to be governed under the respective Scheme.

## **7. Role of government for tourism development in west Bengal**

To make a quantum leap in tourism and to win the great tourism race, the state government will concentrate on the following aspects:

(I) Improvement/standardization/diversification of the existing tourism products and creation of new tourism products by opening up new tourist locations and by adding attractive tourist items.

(II) Efficient marketing and publicity of such product.

(III) Perfecting the delivery systems through world-class human resource development and application of modern information technology in tourism industry.

(IV) Drawing up and implementing tourism plans, policies and incentive schemes to

Facilitate vastly increased flow of investment to tourism projects in the state from private sector, both domestic and foreign.

The department of tourism and the state tourism development corporation will continue to expand their network of tourist facilities and other tourism-related activities all over the state and even outside, primarily for the benefit of the middle class and budget tourists. At the same time, the department will play the role of a facilitator or catalyst in respect of investment by the private sector. The state government will mostly confine its efforts to infrastructure development, publicity, and dissemination of information and coordination of sectoral activities to create conditions conducive to private sector investment in tourism.

### **Tourism industry**

'Tourism industry', as it is understood in the modern sense of the term, means and includes all services and facilities that attract tourists and make their visit and stay as comfortable and meaningful as possible. The fundamentals of tourism as an industry lie in adding value to the existing locations or creating new areas/sources of tourist attraction to encourage people to undertake tours.

Tourism industry, therefore, includes, among others, the following :accommodation

Projects:

(I) Hotels, (ii) resorts, (iii) motels, (iv) apartment hotels, (v) heritage hotels, (vi) yatriniwas, (vii) yatrika, (viii) guest houses (excluding government guest houses and corporate guest houses for use of their own touring officials at nominal charge),

(IX) Paying guest accommodation.

### **Food oriented projects**

(I) Restaurants, (ii) cafeterias, (iii) wayside facilities. Other tourism-related projects:

(I) Amusement/theme parks, (ii) water sports *i* aero sports *i* golf courses, (iii) handicraft village complexes, (iv) fairs and festivals, (v) camps and facilities Encouraging adventure tourism, (vi) railway travel projects such as 'palace-on-wheels', (vii) sea/river/lake cruise projects, (viii) sound and light shows at heritage sites, (ix) museum, (x) natural parks and zoo, (xi) safari projects, (xii) aerial ropeway, (xiii) sports complex/health care complex, (xiv) training institutes for the personnel of hospitality /tourism industry.

## Service-oriented projects

(I) Travel agency, (ii) tour operation, (iii) transport operation, (iv) linkage with international hotel/resort chains (franchise).

### 3.4 tourism and accommodation in west bengal

#### Hotels and resorts

Hotels and resorts should usually have facilities expected of the establishments in 1 to 5 star category or approved non-star category according to the guidelines issued by the department of tourism, govt. Of india or government of west bengal from time to time. Their size should be as per norms prescribed by the department of tourism, govt. Of india and govt. Of west bengal for such units. Tourist resorts' mean those units which have at least any eight of the following activities/facilities : (a) health club facilities e.g. Saunabath, jacuzzi, steambath, gymnasium etc. (b) water-sports e.g. White water rafting. Canoeing, kayaking, water skiing, yachting, windsurfing, rowing, boating etc. (c) swimming pool, (d) aerosports e.g. Power-flying, hang-gliding, para-gliding, para-sailing etc. (e) skiing, (f) ice-skating, (g) roller skating, (h) sports like tennis, table tennis, badminton, billiards, bowling alley, (i) golf, (j) angling, (k) nature cure facilities e.g. Naturopathy, yoga, ayurvedic/herbal cures,

(l) Beauty parlour including barber shops and massage facilities, (m) children's corners including creche, park, indoor game and other recreational facilities, (n) landscaped gardens and orchards, (o) jogging tracks/nature trails, (p)

Convention/conference facilities, (q) shopping arcade, (r) well stocked library including video library, (s) auditorium.

#### **Motels**

The motel projects should have highway facilities consisting of a minimum of two lettable rooms, public toilets, a restaurant, a first-aid centre, medicine store, a utility store, handicraft-selling centre and parking space for at least ten vehicles. Facilities like public telephone booth, car repairing shop and fuel-filling stations for vehicles may be included as desirable activities. About a hectare of land will be needed for a standard motel.

#### **Apartment hotel**

Apartment hotel projects should have minimum ten suites - each suite with two fully furnished rooms, a fully equipped kitchen and attached bath. In addition, in the premises there should be at least one restaurant, house-keeping service, utility and provision store and a common lounge.

#### **Water sports**

The water sports project should have minimum ten water sports equipments along with a pontoon/jetty, a boat house, changing rooms, lockers, toilets and

shower facilities. A restaurant and a lounge may be included as desirable activities.

### **Aero sports**

An aero sports centre, besides having paraglide, winch and para plane, ought to have the following minimum infrastructure: (a) operation area- open area measuring about 10 acres without any obstruction, (b) a store room (10 ft. X 10 ft) for paragliding equipment, (c) a garage for winch/para plane having dimension of 20ft x 10ft., (d) training aids: a tv *nep* in case of training being planned/arranged by aero-sports centre.

### **Arts & crafts village**

The arts & crafts village project will consist of (a) minimum of five acres of land on which there should be facilities like space for work by at least ten artisans and for display of different crafts, (b) an exhibition area of not less than one thousand sq.ft.

(C) A multi-purpose hall for folk shows/performing arts and film-screening, a restaurant and toilet block etc.

### **Golf course**

A golf course project will consist of minimum 9 holes golfing facility with an expanse of land measuring 50 acres, space for parking at least ten vehicles, a lounge and toilets.

### **Camping and tent facilities**

The project of camping and tent facilities should have minimum 5 tents located in an area not less than 1 acre of land, at least two toilets and two showers separate for men and women with running water and a restaurant. The camping sites should have specific sewerage disposal points for campers. There should be proper arrangements for disposal of sewage, sewerage and solid garbage.

### **Amusement park**

An amusement park should mean a place wherein various types of amusements including games or rides or both are provided on permanent basis, on payment of fees. The minimum area requirement for an amusement park to be an eligible tourism unit would be 5 hectares.

### **Aerial ropeway**

Aerial ropeway means a system of overhead ropes on which the carriers are used for the purpose of carriage of passengers, animals or goods and includes posts, ropes, carriers, stations, offices, warehouse, workshop, machinery and other equipments used for the purpose of aerial ropeway and the land appurtenant to such aerial ropeway.

### **Heritage hotel**

A heritage hotel project shall include palace/castle/fort/residence of architectural excellence which was built prior to 1950 and which is being converted into a hotel with a minimum of ten rooms. The facilities and the features alongwith the services should be as per classification guideline of the department of tourism, govt. Of india as applicable to heritage hotels from time to time.

### **Convention centre**

A convention centre should provide for a variety of needs such as conferences, conventions, exhibition and information, business get-together and should have the following features : (a) physical parameters : one plenary conference hall with an enclosed ac floor area of at least 4600 sq.ft. (to sit at least 500 persons in auditorium style). The plenary hall should be such that it could be divided into independent units of at least 7 smaller conference rooms and meeting chambers, adequate foyer/pre-function space adjoining the halls for registration, information gathering, circulation etc. Adequate open air area for displaying larger exhibits and for unconstructive loading/ unloading zones, (b) audio-visual facilities : simultaneous interpretation system for at least four languages (wireless), amplification system, acoustic controls, computer controlled lighting system, professional level video projection equipment including 35 mm and 16 mm film projectors, high density overhead projection and wide screen slide projector, (c) other facilities : office, restaurant, toilets, public telephone booth, parking space for at least 40 vehicles, first-aid centre and reception counters.

### **Paying guest accommodation**

It means accommodation set apart by any family in its own residential accommodation for allowing the tourists to stay there as members of the family and must conform to the requirements as laid down by the central/state government from time to time. This will facilitate additional earnings by such families.

### **3.5 tourism as an industry in west bengal**

State government to accord the status of 'industry' to tourism, commerce & industries department issued a notification no. 945-ci/h-4f/26/92 (pt.) Dated 11 september, 1996 and no. 302-ci/h/4f-26/92 (pt) dated march 17, 1997 amending west bengal incentive scheme, 1993 (for medium and large scale industries so as to incorporate a group of tourism units for benefits there under. Similar notification has also been issued by cottage and small scale industries department amending the state scheme of incentives for cottage and small scale industries, 1993.

As a result, the incentives and benefits under the west bengal incentive scheme, 1993 (for medium and large scale industries) as amended up to 2004 is now available to the following tourism units only : (a) hotels, (b) motels, (c) heritage hotels, (d) yatriniwas, (e) yatrika, (f) resorts, (g) railway travel projects on the pattern of "palace-on-wheels", (h) aerial ropeways and (i) camps and facilities encouraging adventure tourism. Similar benefits are also available to small scale tourism units under the amended state scheme of incentive for cottage and small scale units, 1993 as amended up to 2004.

It would be the policy of the state tourism department to actively promote, support and assist all other tourism units, projects and activities and constantly endeavour to remove any bottlenecks and difficulties in their implementation.

### Policies & plans

To promote West Bengal as a desirable tourist destination, the State Government has formulated certain plans & policies.

The major thrust areas of the policy are :

Promote sustainable development of tourism in the State.

Preservation and promotion of local art, tradition , heritage, culture & environment.

Promotion of Sports tourism, Adventure tourism, River tourism, Rural tourism, Eco-tourism,, Forest & wildlife tourism.

Notification of Special Tourism Areas in the State.

Public Private Participation in creation of tourism infrastructure.

West Bengal Government is also taking special steps to encourage & promote Tea-tourism in the State. The state government has already chalked up plans to upgrade accommodation, construct log cabins, renovate heritage bung lows, and undertake landscaping to boost this sector. Tourist can visit the villagers and tea factories and go horse riding and bird watching. They can also take a ride on the famous “Toy Train” of Darjeeling.

### Potential

Why west bengal?

Vast unexplored potential and diversity.

Distinguished Tourist stops internationally know

Gateway to North-Eastern India.

Relative low costs of accommodation and travel.

Wide literacy levels and English speaking population.

Government welcomes Public Private Partnerships in designated areas.

### Products & services (illustrative list)

Promotion and creation of infrastructure for:

Nature Tourism

Tea Tourism

Heritage Tourism

River Tourism

Amusement and Sports Tourism

Hill Tourism



Cultural Tourism  
Historical Tourism  
Forest Tourism

## Darjeeling Tourism & Tour Guide

Darjeeling located in the state of West Bengal is situated at an altitude of 6,710 ft in Lesser Himalaya. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is noted for its Darjeeling Himalayan Railways and its famous tea industry. A large number of inhabitants being Buddhist there are lots of old monasteries are present along its length and breadth. The vivid landscapes, tea plantation, eternal weather and the slopes make it one of the most popular tourist destinations of India. Darjeeling is the highest tea exporter and thus, tea tourism in Darjeeling attracts many visitors during the plucking season. In this season one might observe the women in the fields plucking the leaves. The aroma in the hills surrounds international visitors. Darjeeling spread across the area of 3149 sq Km is one of the important shopping centers where visitors can shop for showpieces, clothes handicrafts and showpieces. The tourists in Darjeeling shop for woolen garments, fashion clothes and shawls.

### 5. TOURISM RESOURCES OF WEST BENGAL (ANY ONE CASE STUDY) Tourist Attractions in Darjeeling

The view of magnificent Kanchenjunga on a clear day is like revealing the treasure of beauty and excitement before a cheerful crowd. There are endless attractions in Darjeeling that place the 'Queen of Hills' at the top of all tourist destinations in the North East of India.

The Himalayan beauty, charming tea plantations, Toy Trains, colorful markets, Monasteries, lovely people; the list of Darjeeling tourist attractions never ends.

From the officials of the British aristocracy to the modern backpackers and family vacationers, Darjeeling is a cherished destination for all. The adventure seekers find no other place as exciting as Darjeeling. Every Himalayan trail that heads to a magical cave allows the hikers to explore some unexplored adventures. The century-old monasteries tell the unknown stories of the legends that help you learn some amazing ways of life. The serene environment and picturesque views invite romantic couples for a wonderful honeymoon in Darjeeling. For your kids, there is nothing more enjoyable than a toy train ride in Darjeeling.

You can explore a plethora of tourist attractions in Darjeeling such as Tibetan markets in the Mall Road, Observatory Hill, Chowrasta, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling Rangeet Valley Traveler Ropeway, etc. You can also visit some popular places near Darjeeling such as Pashupati Nath Temple in Nepal border, Tiger Hill, Mirik, etc.

### *The Mall*

The popular Mall road is commercial street lined by the Tibetans selling hand-Knitted cardigans and is clustered with lot of shops selling souvenirs along with both imitation and real antiques. While exploring the Mall road leads the guest will lead to Chaurasta which is pony riding arena for children.

[Read More +](#)

### *Observatory Hill*

Observatory Hill is locally known as “Makal-Babu-Ko-Thaan” is the oldest site in Darjeeling. The ancient legends reveal that a Red Hat Buddhist Monastery presently called Dorje Ling stood at this spot. The Dorje Ling was destroyed in the 19th Century. In the present time this observatory Hill is perched by both the Shivas and Buddhist believers.

### *Chowrasta*

Chowrasta is the place from where the Mall road originates and finishes. Situated in the heart of Victorian Darjeeling it is a major paradise for the shopping lovers and souvenir collectors. The major shopping items to shop for are tribal ornaments, rosaries, woolen garments, Gorkha daggers and brass statuettes. Local handicrafts are also available for shopping.

### *Himalayan Mountaineering Institute*

The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was created by the Tenzing Norgay after he conquered Mt Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary on 29th May 1953. The museum display and preserves all the equipments that were used to climb one of the highlights. Near this mountaineering institute is a Zoological garden which is home to exotic wildlife like Siberian tigers, Yaks and Red Pandas etc.

### *Darjeeling Rangeet Valley Traveler Ropeway*

The Darjeeling Rangeet Valley Passenger Ropeway is the first traveler ropeway in India. The reservation of ropeway seats must be done prior. Contact the officer in-charge of the ropeway station for prior bookings of the seat. Frequent share taxi service is available from Market Motor and Taxi Stand is to the Ropeway Station.

### *Places to Visit near Darjeeling*

While exploring Darjeeling one may take a drive to explore the nearby interesting tourist destinations. The prime tourist destinations include:

#### *Pashupati*

Take a drive to Pashupati located on the Nepal border where tourist can enjoy shopping for foreign goods at reasonable prices. Also visit the exotic wildlife which includes the rare one-horned Rhino, Gaur, Deer, wild boar etc. Also explore the market area to shop for the Tibetan medicines, musk, wool, silk and spices.

### *Tiger Hill*

Tiger hill situated at an altitude of 2,590m is located at a distance of 13 km from Darjeeling and is very popular amongst the tourist for a magnificent sunrise view over the Kanchenjunga range. Standing atop this high mountain peak one can also enjoy the view of Even Mount Everest, the world's highest peak.

### *Mirik*

Located at a distance of 52 km from Siliguri is Mirik. This picturesque land is being developed as a new hill station. It is fondly popular amongst the tourist for its orange orchards, Tea estates and cardamom plantations. The mountains surrounding it are mesmerizing and amazing to view and make you close to Mother Nature.

The other nearby attractions to be explored includes Kurseong, Phalut & Sandakphu, the Tibetan Refugee Camp and the Lloyd's Botanical Garden.

[Read More +](#)

### *Best Time To Visit*

The best time to visit Darjeeling is between the months of April to June along with September to December. Darjeeling experiences a moderate climate during most of the year. In the summer the temperatures range between 14°C and 8°C and during winter temperature falls to freezing point of 6°C to as low as 1°C. During the monsoon Darjeeling experiences heavy rain showers which at time lead to frequent landslides. A lot of tourist visit Darjeeling during summers as it is a favorable time for all tourist activities. For sightseeing the best months would be from September to November. Visitors who like chilly climate should visit Darjeeling around December to January, as it is the best period for honeymooners. The adventure avid can visit Darjeeling in the month of February to June which is idyllic for all adventure activities in Darjeeling.

[Read More +](#)

### *Location*

Darjeeling lies in the north of the state of West Bengal and is situated in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas. The district of Darjeeling shares its boundaries with countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. It is one of the scarcely populated districts of the state with the total population being 1,842,034 and the density of population is 413 persons per sq Km. Located at an altitude of 2134 meters above the sea level and is surrounded by various Buddhist monasteries and the mighty peaks of Himalayas.

## How To Reach

**By Air:** Darjeeling is well connected by air from all the major parts of the country by Bagdogra airport. It is the nearest airport and is mere 3 hours drive away from Darjeeling.

**By Train:** Those thinking to travel to Darjeeling by train can board the famous Darjeeling train from Sealdah and various other express trains from all around the country on a daily basis to reach the nearest railhead New Jalpaiguri. On reaching New Jalpaiguri one can board the famous Toy Train which chugs its way up to reaching Darjeeling.

**By Road:** Darjeeling is well connected to Siliguri, the terminal city as a fleet of state and private buses run overnight from Calcutta to Siliguri. After departing at Siliguri, enjoy a 2 hours scenic drive while traversing through the forest and tea gardens either by boarding a luxury bus or private taxi to reach Darjeeling.

## Attractions

Here are the top places to visit in Darjeeling. If you are visiting Darjeeling for a short vacation, then you should target to visit some of these places listed in this section.

### (1) Tiger Hill

Located at the highest point in Darjeeling area, Tiger Hill is best known for the dazzling sunrise view of the Kanchenjunga and the snow covered peaks of the entire eastern Himalayan range. On a clear day you can even see the mount Everest from here. Tiger Hill is located 11kms from the Darjeeling Town and takes about 40 minutes to reach by car.

Kanchenjunga as the sun rises, Tiger Hill Darjeeling

Kanchenjunga From Tiger Hill

Photo: Meenakshi Jha

(2) Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) and the amazing Darjeeling Zoo  
HMI is a destination by itself and is said to be a pilgrimage for all climbing enthusiasts of the world. It was established in honor of Tenzing Norgay after he and Sir Edmund Hillary climbed the Everest in 1953. It has a well stocked museum with mountaineering displays and many expedition artifacts, a boarding school for mountaineering students, houses for the trainers, a restaurant, a souvenir shop and more. HMI is located on Jawahar Road or the Birch Hill that can be accessed from the Mall Road and Lebong Cart Road. One can actually walk down Mall road & then Jawahar road to reach HMI.

The main entrance to Zoo and HMI are the same and both should be covered at the same time. The unique feature of this zoo is, it houses animals of high altitude and mostly from upper Himalayas. You can see some rare animals here like Red Pandas, Snow Leopards, Tibetan Wolf and lot more.

In 2018 the Bengal Natural History Museum has been moved to the compound of HMI and Zoo. It started as a modest effort in 1903 to display butterflies and

birds of Darjeeling district, but had eventually grown to house a large collections of mammals, birds & nests with eggs, reptiles & fishes and even insects of wide varieties. The displays are actually specimens of real creatures that had been captured, stuffed and preserved.

So now you can visit three attractions in one go. It's an excellent museum to know about flora and fauna of Bengal along with animals and birds specific to north-eastern part of the state.

### (3) Batasia Loop

Located 5km from Darjeeling Town and just below Ghoom, Batasia Loop as the name suggests, is a loop or a spiral of a narrow gauge railway track where the Toy Train negotiates a sudden sharp descent from Ghoom. It's a wonderful viewing place with manicured gardens, streams and falls, from where you can get a wide range view of the Darjeeling's landscape, Kanchenjunga snow peaks and the other Eastern Himalayan peaks.

Batasia Loop Darjeeling

Batasia Loop Darjeeling

While you can take a taxi and reach there in 15 minutes from Darjeeling town, one of the popular means is to take the Toy Train Joy Ride which makes a round trip from Darjeeling station to Batasia Loop and Ghum and back, and stops at both Batasia and Ghum.

### (4) Darjeeling Ropeway

This is one way you can be part of special diverse offerings from the nature and all in one place. From the ropeway of Darjeeling which is also known as the Rangeet Valley Passenger Cable Car, you can have mind blowing view of the valley below, see the spread of lush tea gardens, dense forests, mountain streams in their full flow, waterfalls, and the awesome snow peaks at the background. Get off at a lower station and enjoy the tea estates, walk through the tea gardens, or just relax and enjoy the view around. It's hard to find all these together in one place.

Darjeeling Ropeway

Darjeeling Ropeway

### (5) Darjeeling Mall (Chowrasta)

The Chowrasta or the Mall is the town center in Darjeeling. This is a lovely little flat area, a public square where four roads meet. This public place is where you would like to lounge & bake in the sun, sit and watch the wonderful views of the mountain range and see many locals and tourists hanging around. One side of the mall is lined with pine trees through which you get wonderful mountain vistas, the other side is lined with lovely boutique shops of different kinds. And all around the mall, you have benches to sit and relax.

Darjeeling Mall with shops lined up on one side

Darjeeling Mall

### (6) Rock Garden & Ganga Maya Park

These two are scenic parks in wonderful settings located a few miles away from the Darjeeling town. Rock garden is about 10km and Ganga Maya is another

3km from there. Rock Garden is all about terraced gardens at different levels that have been cut through the rocks having a waterfalls with nice seating arrangements. Ganga Maya is more spread out and has a beautiful stream flowing through it on a valley, has flower gardens, fountains and more.

Rock Garden Darjeeling  
Rock Garden Darjeeling

#### (7) Japanese Temple & Peace Pagoda

About 10 minutes by car, you will reach a wonderful area that is symbolic of peace and tranquility. Located in the Jalapahar hill, the Japanese Temple is built in traditional Japanese style where you can join the prayers and feel the spiritual peace amongst humming and chants. Close to it is the Peace Pagoda where there are four large avatars of Lord Buddha. The view from the top is magnificent. You can see the snow peak range from here including the Kanchenjunga.

Peace Pagoda Darjeeling  
Peace Pagoda Darjeeling

#### (8) Happy Valley Tea Estate

This is one of the famous tea estates in Darjeeling that was established by British planters in 1854 and located only 3kms away from the lower town. Due to its proximity, a visit to this tea estate is quite common in the local package tours offered by tour operators or taxi drivers. Many tea bushes here are over 100 years old and it's a treat to the eyes to watch the vast expanses of lush tea gardens on the slopes of the hills. During season (April to October) you can watch tea plucking by local Nepali women. The estate workers also volunteer for a tea factory tour (expecting a good tip though). You can get inside the factory and watch the various stages of tea processing. The best quality tea here is known as Super Fine Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe. The estate produces black, green and white tea.

#### (9) Observatory Hill and Mahakal Temple

Rising from behind the Mall, Observatory Hill is an ideal place to get a 360 degree view of Darjeeling and the peaks surrounding it. The Mahakal Temple, the central temple of Darjeeling of all faiths is located on top of the hill where the original Dorjeling Buddhist Monastery once stood.

The Mahakal Temple, Darjeeling  
Mahakal Temple Darjeeling

#### (10) Tibetan Refugee Self Help Center

This center was established on October 2nd, 1959 for rehabilitation of Tibetans who followed Dalai Lama and escaped their homeland during the period of mayhem. In order to sustain living, they adopted the principle of self help. The center is located on a hill top that can be approached from the Lebong Cart Road. You can see Tibetan men and women making exquisite hand crafted items like woolen carpets, shawls, carved wooden crafts, leather items and more. There is an outlet at the center from where you can buy these items.

Apron Section, Tibetan Refugee Self Help

### (11) Jamuni Tourist Complex

This is a newly developed 13-acre complex amidst nature and scenic beauty. Jamuni is only 45 minutes away from Darjeeling town (about 15kms). So what to see & do here? There is a lovely mountain stream flowing through the place which is surrounded by forested hills and villages, there is a manmade lake for boating, a children's playground, stepped and manicured gardens, nice walkways through the complex with gazebos to relax in, and more... a great place for a family picnic.

Jamuni, River Rangeet and the central round lake  
Jamuni

### More Tourist Places in Darjeeling

Honestly, there are many other tourist attractions and sights in Darjeeling that equally compete to be in our list of top 10. Check out the links below to know about more of our personal favorites. I have grouped them under different heads.

### Darjeeling Monasteries, Temples & Churches

After Hinduism, Buddhism is the next predominant religion in Darjeeling, and then comes Christianity which is practiced by a minority community. We have had the opportunity to get deep insights into the lives of several lamas, priests and clergymen here. For us it has always been a privilege to understand and feel the divine spirituality of the place through those who have dedicated their lives to such cause. You need to visit a monastery, a temple or a church, listen to the head of the shrine, join the prayers and absorb the spirituality to get that feel.

Several religious shrines in Darjeeling have been built by great religious leaders of the past, and some are perched on hills with magnificent views all around. This section will let you know about all our favorite monasteries, temples and churches in Darjeeling, their history, offerings, location and lot more.

### Darjeeling Parks & Gardens

Here is your treasure for the best of gardens and parks in Darjeeling. The section also captures my favorites amongst lakes and water areas, forests and sanctuaries and even confluence or meeting points of great rivers of Darjeeling hill area.

### Museums, Monuments and Memorials

If you like to dwell deep into the history of Darjeeling, understand animal and bird life of the region, know who had sacrificed their lives from this part of the world, and other unique ways Darjeeling has played its role in the world like its unsurpassable mountaineering achievements, then visit some of the great museums and memorials. They vividly capture the life and history of Darjeeling and its unique flora & fauna. You will be immersed with the rich heritage of the place.

### Darjeeling Art & Craft

Darjeeling has its own treasure of artwork and artisans. There are well known artists who have their own studios, galleries and handicraft factories. And there are many skilled local artisans and sculptors whose work can be seen in many of the curio and jewelry stores around the Mall and Nehru Road.

### Places For Kids & Families

If you are travelling to Darjeeling on a vacation with your family and kids, you will need to keep in mind the interest of your children. There are places that kids & children would love to visit and things they would love to do. For example horseback riding with a guide at Mall (Chowrasta) is very popular, children love to ride the Ropeway (cable car) and of course the famous steam engine toy trains, and the Zoo here has many fascinating high altitude Himalayan animals which are seldom seen else where.