

Handicraft Promotion Vis-A-Vis Tourism Development: A Study on Bankura District, West Bengal



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Abstract

Bankura district has great potential for expansion of activity in medium small scale & cottage industry. The cottage and village industries are of considerable importance in improving the economic condition of the rural population, as they play an important role in the rural economy and its reconstruction. The district is famous for some unique traditional crafts; terracotta (pottery) work of Panchmura, Baluchari Silk Saree of Bhishnupur, Dokra work of Bikna, Patrasayer and Gopalpur, stone craft of Susunia are unique in the state. Handicraft promotion in this district will have a positive impact on tourism development which may lead to development of destination as well as socio-economic development of the area.

This study is primarily concerned with the role of handicrafts in tourism promotion in Bankura district. Attempt is also made to correlate the relationship between handicraft development and tourism promotion by studying the socio-economic condition of the artisan and craftsmen who are involved in handicraft business in the state.

Keywords: Handicrafts, Handicraft Development, Rural Tourism, NSDC, SME

Introduction

Tourism has come up as one of the prominent emerging industries and a fastest growing sector of the economy. Tourism is viewed as generator of employment, earning and cultural cross fertilization. Tourism is considered as an important means of promoting culture and international relations. Within India the state of West Bengal is a universe in itself. West Bengal the state in eastern India is endowed with uniqueness in its diversity.

West Bengal, now proposed to be renamed as Paschim-Banga is located in the Eastern part of India and is the nation's fourth most populous state. The State lies between 27°13'15" and 21°25'24" North latitudes and 85°48'20" and 89°53'04" East longitudes. It is bounded on the North by Sikkim and Bhutan, on the East by Assam and Bangladesh, on the South by the Bay of Bengal and on the West by Orissa, Bihar and Nepal. The State stretches from the Himalayas in the North to the Bay of Bengal in the South. West Bengal adjoins three international borders viz. Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

The state is endowed with all the diversities of nature and is to that extent a tourist's dream. The snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas, Darjeeling, referred by many as the Queen of Hill Stations, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway declared as a World Heritage Site, the vast tea estates of the Dooars, the famed Royal Bengal Tiger of Sunderban, the innumerable historical landmarks of India's and Bengal's glorious history are all wonders for the prospective tourists. West Bengal offers the tourists an opportunity to experience long unending beaches with gentle rolling sea lined with Casuarina forests. A number of sea resorts viz Digha, Shankarpur, Junput, Bakkhali, Sagardwip have sprung up on the East coast of Bengal.

Given the variance of the tourism sites in the State, West Bengal has something to offer throughout the year.

The state of West Bengal is well known for the superb arts and crafts made of silk, shola, conchshell, dhokra, and beautiful clay models. Also worth mentioning are Baluchari saris and katha stich, blanket as well knitted garments. Bishnupur of Bankura district is famous for conch shell products as well as for Baluchari sarees. Malda and Murshidabad take

pride in silk materials while the latter can also boast of famous in Bengal. The hilly areas of the state specialize in blankets and woolen knitted garments and "Tanka" paintings (Scrolls), decorative kukris and copper plates studded with stones with engraving of replica of deities.

Objectives

The major objectives of the present study are

1. To examine the interrelation between handicraft promotion and tourism development
2. To study the Tourism potential of Bankura district in particular and West Bengal in general.
3. To find out the availability of different handicrafts and their uniqueness of Bankura district.
4. To recommends some measures to promote handicrafts vis-à-vis tourism in Bankura in particular and West Bengal in General.

Data Set and Methodology

The data for this study is mainly collected from secondary source. A comparative analysis based on secondary data has been carried out for this research.

Review of Literature

In view of the importance of the handicrafts in our economy and society, various aspects of handicrafts, such as, sociological, economic, technical, cultural, artistic and aesthetic aspects have been studied by a number of scholars.

The art of pottery, the cotton woven fabrics, stonework, basket weaving etc are the main art forms of ancient India. These handicrafts reached the almost height of perfection and glory during the Mogul period. But with the advent of the British period, the growth of the factory system of mass production was the direct, immediate and most important cause for the decline of Indian handicrafts. In the post-independence era, the role and importance of handicrafts in the economic, social and political scene were strongly felt and the industry started to revive again. The famous book of

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya (1996)

"Indian handicrafts" is a famous landmark in the Indian cultural field. She, in her study emphasized that Indian handicrafts thrived through ages stimulated by a vigorous folk tradition, a benign culture, and in an age when individualism was cherished and precision valued.

Rao, (1990)

In his book "Marketing of Handicrafts" mentioned that "Handicrafts offer solution to India, which is characterized by unemployment and foreign exchange crunch".

Chattopadhyaya, (1996)

In her book "The glory of Indian Handicrafts" has vividly described, about handicraft of different states of India. National Institute for Social Development and Applied Research, Bhubaneswar has done a research work on technology, firm size and performance of three popular crafts of Orissa.

Kannungo, (1964)

In "Utkalana Chitrakara" (the art and craft of Orissa) has briefly described the patta painting as one of the old paintings is typical in its style where the theme basically depicts the religious tradition of India. It is closely associated with the culture of Jagannath.

producing exquisite ivory items. For clay model items Krishna nagar of Nadia district is

Mohapatra, (1987)

In his book has given a clear picture about Orissa and focuses on the Orissa handicrafts elaborately.

Samal, (1994)

Has done her research work in "Appliqué craft tradition of Orissa and change". She has describes about position of appliqué in Orissa and its development according to time.

Upadhyaya

In the book "Economics of handicraft industry" feels that without design development, technology advancement and quality improvement, we cannot think of healthy growth of such industry. It has been agreed in responsible quarters that even in the field of handicrafts a certain amount of mechanization ought to be introduced in order to obtain the two-fold objective of better finish and rationalization.

Bharati, (1973)

In an article "Eastern India Handicrafts : A Preliminary Survey" published in Floklone a journal of anthropology states I just from lines that the tailor artists of pipili have become specialized in giving gorgeous look to their appliqué works.

Ahmed, (1980)

In his book entitled "Problem and Management of Small Scale and Cottage Industries" expresses that the satisfactory performance in marketing of handicrafts could be possible due to the special interest taken by central as well as state governments to boost up the export of handicraft articles.

Panda, (1984)

In "Textiles" of Arts and Crafts of Ganjam Districts, Orissa says that the appliqué craft is of 500 years old. The history of appliqué is commensurable with operas, festivals and processions. Handicrafts being a specific category of the broad group of rural industries, very few in-depth research works have been done on this. However, some references to handicrafts have been made in the context of rural industrialization.

Papolain, (1984)

In his book "Rural Industrialization" had made an extensive study of 14 rural industries. Most rural industries especially traditional in nature have a limited capacity to generate even the subsistence income to the members engaged in it. But some other industries even run on traditional lines have a promising future such as handlooms. But other industries, which run in modern lines, seem to break the caste industry nexus and reduce the rigidities of social stratification in rural areas. These industries yield higher income to the entrepreneurs.

Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen (2005)

Pointed out of the positive and negative impacts of tourism, including economic, political, socio-cultural, environmental and ecological dimensions of the issues.

In their research article titled "Economic impact of Souvenir sales in Peripheral Areas: a Case

Study from Northern Thailand” by Lacher. Geoffrey, R. and Nepal, Sanjay. K (2011) TRR- Vol. 36(1): 27-37, the authors describe various economic of impacts of souvenir sales by using case study of a remote **Interrelation between Handicrafts and Tourism**

Producing and selling handicraft articles are one of the key sub-chains in tourism, when it comes to the question of where and how poor people can benefit from tourism. Handicraft production and sales to tourists are one of the main pro-poor income earners of the tourism sector in developing countries. Handicraft production is an important area of job creation in the informal sector like tourism. Subsistence artisan and craftsmen gain additional income from household-related handicraft production and for the urban poor; the production of handicrafts is an alternative in an environment where employment opportunities are few.

In countries attracting a large number of international visitors, the tourism sector offers many opportunities for poor people to sell handicrafts, as tourists spend significant amounts of money on souvenirs and other craft products. Tourism is growing, increasing from a mere 25 million international tourists in 1950 to 925 million in 2008. Forecasts predict that this figure will reach 1.4 billion tourists by 2020. Worldwide, travel and tourism is expected to grow at a level of 4.0 percent per year over the next ten years, creating an opportunity for every country in the world to be part of this process and to share the benefits (WTTC, 2009).

Strengthening the handicraft sector ensures that Tourists choose to buy more locally produced handicraft items rather than imported products. Handicraft production can help diversify the tourism product to include home-stays, cultural experiences and facilitate the promotion of responsible tourism principles. Handicraft production is one of the key pro-poor income earners in the tourism value chain. The average tourist spends \$20-80 on handicraft purchases in developing countries. For many producers, tourism-related handicraft production can be a step out of poverty and particularly offers chances for women, ethnic minorities and raw material producers.

West Bengal heritage of handicrafts is legendary. The fascinating handloom textiles of the same regions as mentioned above are now attracting world-wide attention. Besides the garment materials, jute products, wood and cane products, conch-shell products, brass wares and folk dolls and handicrafts belonging to different schools of art as Dokra art etc. Now embellish a large many drawing rooms. The handicrafts items are widely marketed by Manjusha, a state Government owned emporia and other establishments as well.

Tourism and Development

Development is often considered as a multidimensional, and multi sectoral process involving social, economical and other changes aimed at improving the holistic conditions of the people inhabited and their surroundings. Development process tries to use and manage natural resource to satisfy human needs and improve people's quality of life. (Alikire and Deneulin-2009)

tourist destination in Northern Thailand. The case study indicates that imported souvenir make up a majority of souvenir sold and have much greater leakage than local souvenir. They also raise questions

The ultimate objective of development planning is human development or increased social welfare and well-being of the people. Increased social welfare of the people requires a more equitable distribution of development benefits along with better living environment. Development process therefore needs to continuously strive for broad-based improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of the people through an inclusive development strategy that focuses on both income and nonincomedimensions. (Economic Survey 2010-11)

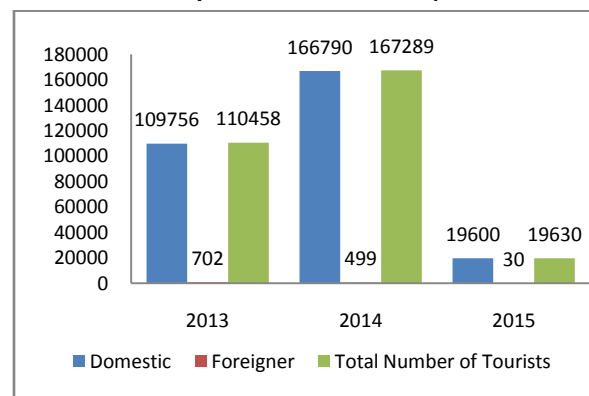
Tourism has received increasing attention in the context of development studies also. It has a tremendous capacity for generating growth in destination areas. Tourism is one of the largest service industries in term of improving the quality of life. It also helps to generate foreign exchange earnings. Its roll and importance in fostering economic development of a country is well recognized.

Tourism creates employment opportunities. It is an important vehicle of widening, socio-economic and cultural contacts. Entertainments, sports, religions, cultures, adventure, education, health and business all drives tourism as a vibrant force towards development. With the world becoming more and more integrated, importance of tourism has become more prominent. (Kunal and Zameer, 2008)

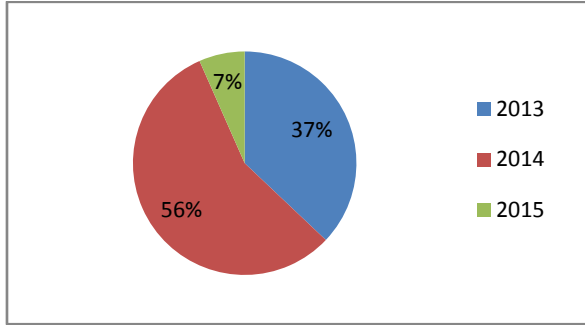
Table-1
Tourist Visiting Bankura District in Last Three Years

Years	Domestic	Foreigner	Total Number of Tourist
2013	1,09,756	702	1,10,458
2014	1,66,790	499	16,72,89
2015	19,600	30	19,630 Up to June 2015

(Source: West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Office, 2016)



have come up but there lies much greater scope, especially for cottage and small-scale industries.



Tourist Visiting Bankura District in Last Three Years Figure Number 1

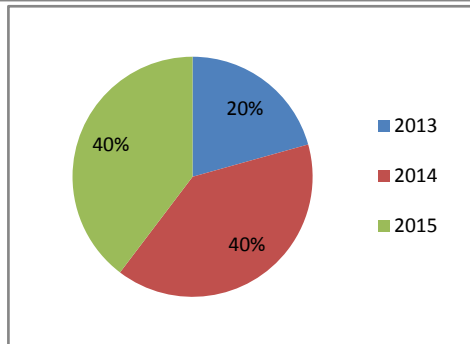
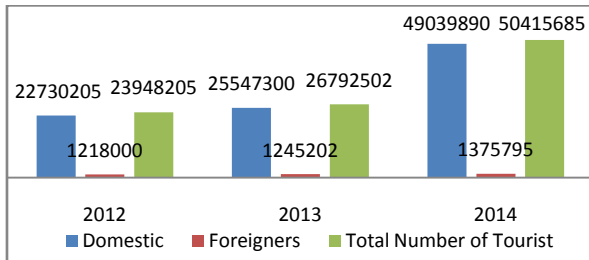
The above table depicts that no doubt the tourist flow to Bankura districts steady increases in case of domestic tourist only. But in terms of foreign tourist arrival is concerned the numbers are very less/dismal.

**Table-2
Tourist Visiting West Bengal in Last Three Years**

Years	Domestic	Foreigner	Total Number of Tourist
2012	22730205	1218000	23948205
2013	25547300	1245202	26792502
2014	49039890	1375795	50415685

Source: West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Office, 2016

Tourist Visiting West Bengal in Last Three Years



Percentage of Tourist Visit in West Bengal: Figure Number 2

The above table reveals that both the foreign tourist and domestic tourist arrivals to the state are increasing but the tourist growth rate is more in case of domestic tourist than foreign tourists.

Uniqueness of Handicrafts in Bankura District

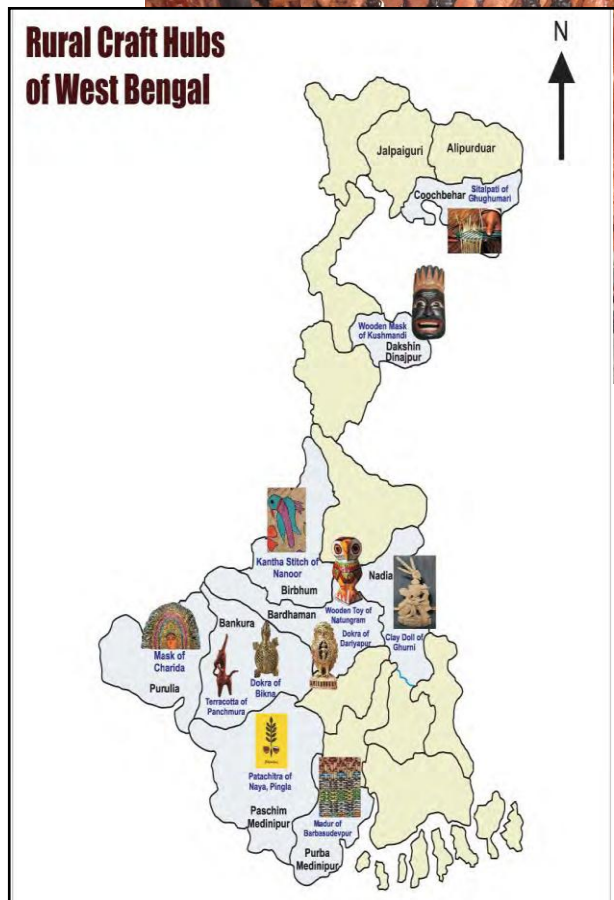
Bankura district has great potential for expansion of activity in medium small scale& cottage industry. The district is rich in minerals like coal, fire clay, china clay, silica etc. and there is a scope to establish industries using the available minerals as the raw material. Already a few medium industries



Traditional Clay Work of Bankura District



Clay Work in Progress by The Craftsmen



The cottage and village industries are of considerable importance in improving the economic condition of the rural population, as they play an

important role in the rural economy and its reconstruction. The district is famous for some unique traditional crafts; terracotta (pottery) work of Panchmura, Baluchari silk sarees of Bishnupur, Dokra work of Bikna, Patrasayer and Gopalpur, stone craft of Susunia are unique in the state. There are large pockets in the district where the people have endogenous skills in manufacturing fishing hook, fishing net, bamboo craft and manufacturing of Babui rope.

Broadly Bengal clay pottery can be divided into two segments-Bankura Clay Pottery and Krishnanagar Clay Pottery. Bankura's art form is an ancient form than the art form of Krishnanagar. Terracotta of Bishnupur (Bankura) forms began under the Malla dynasty, during the late medieval period. Bankura is famous for its Terracotta Temples of Bishnupur and many other places in the district. For centuries together the artisans of this area have developed this art. The most famous product of this district in terracotta handicrafts is the famous 'Bankura Horse'. It was the Kumbhokars or potters of Panchmura, 16 miles away from Bishnupur, who started to make the famous Bankura horses.

The 'Bankura Horse' has now come to be regarded as a symbol of the artistic excellence of Indian rural handicrafts- a fact which finds confirmation in its use as the official crest-motif of the All India Handicrafts Board. At present above 50000 numbers of persons are employed (primary occupation) in the some important cottage industries in Bankura district.

Major Suggestions and Recommendations

Following suggestions and recommendations may be taken into considerations both to promote and market of handicraft as a tool for development of tourism in West Bengal in general and Bankura district in particular.

1. Financial assistants may be given to the artesian and craftsmen so that the production of handicraft in the district can be more and they can sustain their livelihood without any hassle which they normally face during lean season.
2. Both central government and state government should provide appropriate forum to market and sale the handicrafts both within the state and outside the state in form of assisting the artisans and craftsmen by attending different fairs and festivals related to handicrafts.
3. More focus should be given to the Bishnupur Mela which to held in the month of December 23rd to 27th. So that tourist flow as well as handicraft promotions can be made simultaneously.
4. Better promotion of tourism infrastructure such as good hotels, restaurants, electricity, better roads may be provided to the tourist in different tourists' places of Bankura districts so that tourism promotion and handicraft development can be done in tandem.
5. Provision of better market complex in different tourist destinations in Bankura district may be constructed for better selling and promotion of handicrafts in the districts and state.
6. Better co-ordination and conduct of different programmes which is currently conducted by

Micro and Small Scale Industries, West Bengal Government, as well as National Skill Development Corporation of central Government related to the handicraft promotion and development will resulted in both promotion and development of handicraft and tourism development in the state of West Bengal.

7. Since the foreign tourist arrivals to this district is very poor, so more publicity is required through different print and electronic media to attract maximum foreign tourist to this place.

Conclusion

From above this discussion we may conclude that there is a close interrelation between tourism development and handicraft promotion. The handicraft variety of West Bengal in general and Bankura district in particular are varied and unique and have the potential not only to increase the socio economic condition of the people but also have the capacity to attract maximum number of tourist to the state. The Government as well as private sectors including NGOs should work in tandem so that handicraft products can be produced and marketed properly both within the state and outside the state. It is also evident from the above discussion that promotion and development of handicrafts will not only lead to attracts more tourists to the destination of Bishnupur but also helps in improving the socio economic conditions of the local artisans and craftsmen in a big way.

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