

Status and Performance of Tourism and Travel Sectors in Malda district of West Bengal, (India): A Case Study

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Abstract: Travel and tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry across the world and in our country India. Tourism is an incredible way to showcase West Bengal rich and magnificent history, culture and diversity. Tourism, literally speaking, is the act of travelling a new place for your pleasure or business with the motives of experiencing different cultures, cuisines, nature and history. The main objectives of this research paper is to highlight the famous tourist place in Malda district, to examine the positive and negative impacts of tourism, to give valuable suggestion for better development of tourism in the study area. Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as the study area which is popularly known as “City of Mango”. The entire study is based on secondary sources of data. The study reveals that natural beauty, geographic locations, cultural and artistic diversity of Malda district offers enormous opportunities to the local people. Malda district is place of great historical significance. Malda district has great potential for developing heritage tourism. Most of the places of this district are very beautiful with the amalgamation of the mosque, monuments, forts and temples. The future of tourism in West Bengal state is very bright and the state has the potential to become a national tourist hub.

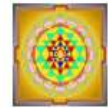
Keywords: Tourism, Gour, Forests, Livelihood, Culture, Cuisines, Mosque, Englishbazar

Introduction:

“Experience Bengal-The Sweetest Part of India”

Travel and tourism sector has emerged as the India's largest and fastest growing industry, generating wealth and employment. Now a day's tourism sector in India is substantial and vibrant and the country very fast growing industry. Tourism sector is significantly supported to grow horticultures, handicrafts, agriculture, hotelling and logistic services etc. Tourism in India is now become a “**Sunrise Industry**”. Tourism gives the opportunity for people to understand the culture. India is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia continent and International tourists. In the year 2019 it attracted 10.93 million international tourist and this contributed 4.7 percent of India's GDP.

Currently Bollywood super star Shah Rukh Khan is the brand ambassador of West Bengal tourism. The tourism in West Bengal state is maintained by West Bengal Tourism Development and Corporation Limited (WBTDCL), a state government owned enterprise. West Bengal has three World heritage sites and ranks as the eight-most visited tourist destination in India and



third-most visited state of India globally. West Bengal is famous for being a county with rich diversity.

Malda also spelt as “**Maldah**” or “**Maldaha**” is a important and famous district in West Bengal. Malda word is derived its name from the native language where “**Mal**” stands for “**Riches in Resources**” and “**Daha**” for “**Lakes**”. Malda district is known as “**Gateway of North Bengal**” or “**City of Mango**” or “**Hub of Raw Silk industry**” and this place is very rich in history, stunning architecture, varying cultures, religions and heritage. This place is located at the confluence of Mahananda and Kalindi rivers is one of the famous tourist destinations of West Bengal state. This district is located 350 km from Kolkata. This place is previously also known as “**English Bazaar**” because of the English factory was established in 1771. The folk culture of Malda comprising of “**Gombhira**” **Alkap**, and “**Kaviyal**” is another major attraction of the region. The lush green mango orchards and mulberry plantations farms occupy a large area of this district. The special variety of mango, named Fazli produced in this region, also got Geographical Indication (G.I.). Being one of the historical significant districts of West Bengal, Malda attracts historians and archeologist, tourists, travelers involved in chronological studies and surveys.

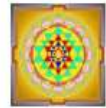
Table 1. 1 : Top 10 Foreign and Domestic Tourist Visited States of India, 2022

Sl. No.	Name of the States	Visitors (In Millions)
1.	Tamil Nadu	115.33
2.	Uttar Pradesh	109.70
3.	Andhra Pradesh	93.70
4.	Karnataka	81.33
5.	Maharashtra	43.66
6.	Goa	38.57
7.	West Bengal	31.77
8.	Delhi	26.88
9.	Rajasthan	21.45
10.	Kerala	19.97

Source: Ministry of Tourism Report, Government of India, 2022

Review of Literature: The review highlights the distinction areas covered by the many researchers and academicians which may be helpful to understand the issues relating to the present study and it also helps to find out the research gap. The basic sources of literature review of my study areas are- published research papers, articles in the journal of national and international repute, books, Government reports, Research agencies reports etc.

Mahalakshmi Venkateah and Josphe Michej Raj (2016) insisted that travelling and tourism has been an integral part of Indian culture and tradition. Their study reveals that tourism industry plays a major role in any economic development of the country. Tourism sector play a vital role in the way of helping poor countries to provide employment opportunities in an increasing rate.



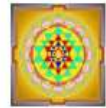
Subhash T. (2015) expressed that travel and tourism industry has emerged as one of the largest and fastest growing economic sector. Their study reveals that tourism in India is a sunrise industry, an employment generation, a significant source of foreign exchange of the country. This emerging sector is facing various challenges such as lack of good quality of tourism infrastructure, health and safety of tourists, high toll tax etc. **Naveen Kumar and Binoy (2017)** examined that tourism is the integral part of Indian culture and tradition. Their study reveals that tourism sector has significantly helping to generate foreign exchange, infrastructure development, increasing revenue, FDI etc. Play a key factor role for the development of the nation. **Rajender, Durafshan and Azatullah (2020)** observed that tourism and travel industry is the biggest and most diverse industry in India. Their study reveals that tourism play a significant impact on increasing employment and foreign exchange of the country, boom in domestic industries etc. Tourism sector is considered a dynamic industry with a bright future. **Areful Hoque (2024)** examined the problems and prospects of tourism sector in Latehar district of Jharkhand. Their study reveals that there are a near about 20 beautiful places of tourism in Latehar district. But due to lack of good transport facilities, safety and security of tourist, lack of good hotels, and sanitation problems tourism in Latehar district of Jharkhand are not much more developed.

Statement of Problems:

West Bengal is one of the beautiful state for its mesmerizing natural scenery, landscapes, plateaus, lofty hills, sparkling waterfalls, rich and vibrant tradition, diverse cultures, holy places, dams, lakes, wildlife sanctuary, national park, archeological sites and heritage and lush green forest covered. Travel and tourism in West Bengal state has grown in leaps and bounds over the years, most of the regions of this state something to splendour and exuberance. Majority of tourist in Malda district of West Bengal state are facing many infrastructure related problem like inadequate roads, clean and safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, hotels, telecommunication and mobile network problems, safety and security of tourist, first aid and medicines, cafeteria etc. On the other hands, there is various hidden natural beauty places are found in Malda district of West Bengal. So researcher are very much keen interested to taken up this study particularly. The outcomes or findings from this study will be very helpful for administrators, policymakers, economists, sociologists, Researchers, Academicians, Journalists, NGO workers, and the Ministry of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, West Bengal Tourism Development and Corporation Limited (WBTDC), Tour and Travel agent Association of West Bengal (TTAWB), India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) as well as the Central Government of India for their various policy making.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To highlight the famous tourist places at Malda district of West Bengal.



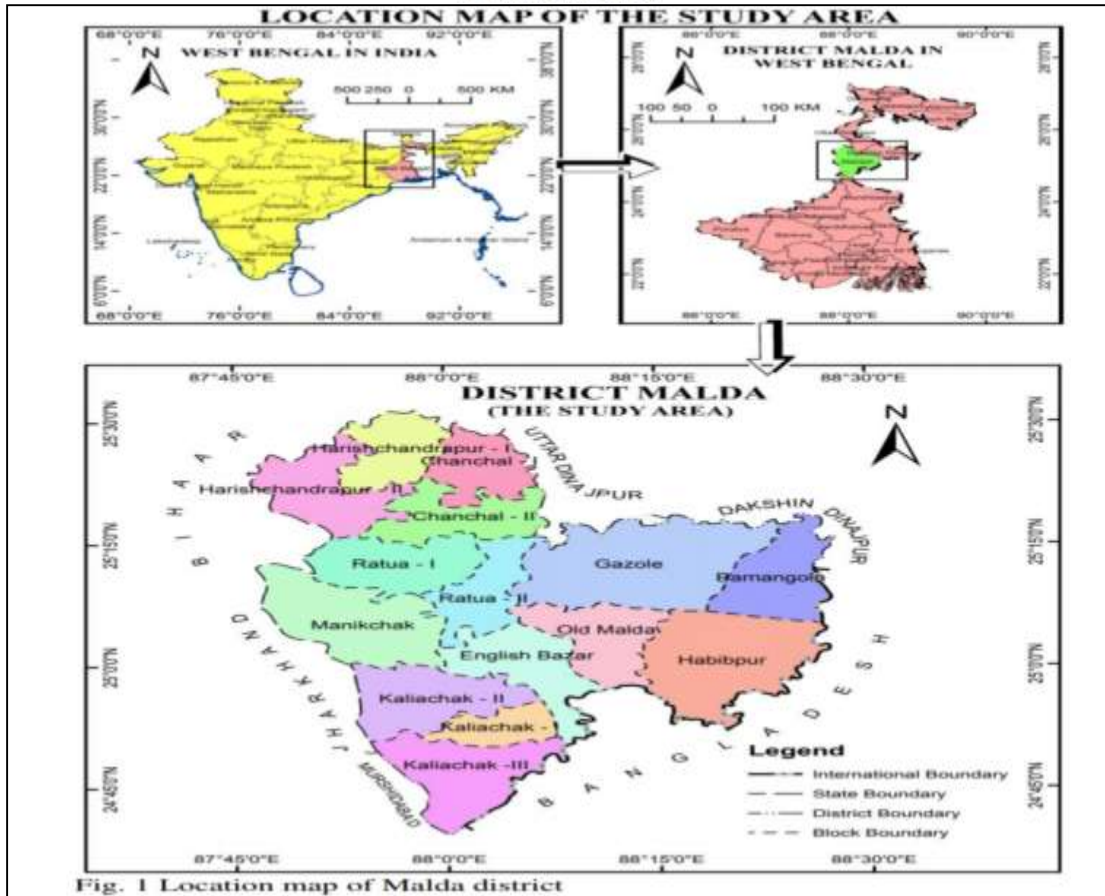
2. To examine the positive and negative impacts of tourism in the study area.
3. To offer suggestion for the better development and upliftment of tourism in Malda district of West Bengal.

Database and Research Methodology:

The current research work is analytical, descriptive and empirical type of research work. The present study is based on entirely secondary sources of data. The data has collected from newspapers, various research journals, books, District Statistical Handbook, Malda and various websites.

A Geographical Outline of the study Area:

Malda district of West Bengal has been selected as research study area. Malda district is entirely located in North Bengal, it is also known as “**Gateway of North Bengal**”. It lies in North Bengal on lower Indo-Gangetic plain. The latitudinal range of Malda lies between 24°40'20" North and 25°32'08" North, and the longitudinal range is 87°45'50" East and 88°28'10" East. For administrative purpose the district has been divided into 15 Community Development Block and two sub-division namely Malda Sadar and Chanchal Sadar. The district is very much famous for Mango Production, Litchi production, Jute Production and Sericulture activity (Raw Silk production), school educational sectors. Majority of the male population of this district are migrants labour, agricultural labour and Hawkers due none availability of any large scale, medium scale industries, majority of female population in rural are engaged in bidi making household industries. According to 2011 Census of India still 86.14 per cent population are belong to rural area.

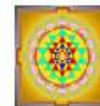


Result and Analysis:

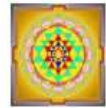
In Malda district of West Bengal there are mainly historical and heritage tourism, Eco tourism, Heritage tourism, Dams and Lakes, religious tourism, spiritual tourism, Art and Culture, Rural Tourism, Folk music and tribal dance are available for the tourist. The best time to visits these place is during the months of October to February month.



1. **Gour:** Gour is located along the banks of lower Indo-Gangetic Ganga river and rich and diverse history of Bengal, situated right on the India-Bangladesh border. This is one of the famous tourist spots in West Bengal with all the remnant of monuments which has great historic significant. The best time to visits Gour is winter season.



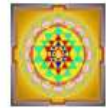
2. **Dakhil Darwaza:** Dakhil Darwaza is located in Gour which is a remnant of an old castle from the 15th century. This gate itself is a gateway to the fort. This gateway is also famous as the “Salaami Darwaza”
3. **Firoz Minar:** This is known as Qutub Minar of Malda district because of its design and structure. The architectural design of this Minar is based on Tughlaqi style with five-storied tower.
4. **Temple of Maa Jauhra Kali:** The temple of Jauhra Kali is the only famous temple amongst the plethora of muslim relics. The three faces of Goddess Kali are very beautiful and the trees surrounding the temple enhance the beauty of this place. A large number of devotees from far places visits this place and they believe that praying here gives miraculous result.
5. **Adina Eco Tourism and Deer Park:** Adina deer park is 20 km away from Malda town. This park offers you a beautiful view of a number of deer grazing and having fun in their natural habitat. The two most famous species are Cheetals or spotted deer and Nilgai. This park shelters a number of migratory birds during the winter which is worth watching and beauty.
6. **Adina Mosque:** Adina mosque is very famous because of its bricks designed with stone. This mosque was built in 14th century by Sikander Shah, who was second Sultan of the Ilyas dynasty. Although with the time the design and structure of the mosque are damaged still this place holds its glory.
7. **Malda Museum:** Malda museum is an archeological museum under the West Bengal Directorate of archeology located at Malda town. This museum is known for preserving the anthropological samples and the architectural of fine specimens of sculptures.
8. **Baroduari Mosque / Boro Sona Mosque:** This mosque is very unique and was the best examples of Arabic –style architecture. It is considered to be the largest mosque in Malda. The name of the Mosque means 12 doors but the mosque has only 11 doors.
9. **Jagjibanpur:** Jagjibanpur is located at Habibpur block a distance of 35 km from Malda town. This place is one of the important archeological sites because of the discovery of the copper-plate inscription of the Pala emperor. This site comprises a numbers of mounds.
10. **Cham Chika Mosque:** Cham Chika mosque was built by Sultan Yusuf Shah. The name of originated from the fact that it used to shelter a large numbers of Chikas, or bats. It is a single-domed edifice, almost in ruins now.
11. **Luko Churi Gate:** This Luko Churi gate is was built by Shah Shuja. The royal prince, princess play the game of hide and seek here. Moreover Sultan used to lay with his begums here.
12. **Lattan Mosque:** Lattan mosque is one of the best preserved monuments within the walled city of ancient Gour. This famous mosque was built by Hussian Shahi Sultans. The entire mosque was built by gaur burn brick.



13. **Kadam Rasul Mosque:** Kadam Rasul Mosque in Gour stands as one of the brilliant evidence of architectural wonder built during the epoch of gaur kings. This is a terracotta mosque where Prophets right foot imprint can be see inside the mosque.
14. **Ramkeli Temple:** Ramkeli is located at Englishbazar of Malda district. Ramkeli is a small village at Gour region. It is celebrated Ramkeli Meela. Here Lord Sri Chaitanya stayed for a few days on his way of Vrindavan.
15. **Pirana Pir Dargah:** The Pirana Pir Dargah of Khawaja Akhi Siraj Aaine Hind in Malda district of West Bengal. It is one of the most visisted Dargaha at Malda district. A large numbers of peoples come here every day especially Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
16. **Eklakhi Mosque:** Eklakhi mosque is the most elegant monument in Pandua. It forms a square roofed by a dome with a small turret at each corner. The inside plan of the structure is octagonal.
17. **Baisgazi Wall:** Baisgazi wall is one of the most outstanding evidence of anaicent Gour Kingdoms. The wall depicts the ancient architectural traits of the Sultanate rulers. The height of this massive wall is estimated to be 22 Bengali yards thus it named as Baisgazi wall.
18. **Gumti Darwaza:** This Gumti Darwaza was built by Allauddin Hussein Shah during the year 1512. This is made of brick and terracotta and real gold was used in the decoration. However, this Gumti Darwaza is closed to for the public now.
19. **Qutub Shahi Mosque:** Qutub shahi mosque is situated at Pandua of Malda of Malda district built to honour saint Nur Qutb-ul-Alam. The materials of this mosque are brick in the core and plain stone slabs outside. Locally it is known as Chhoto Sona Masjid.
20. **Tanitipara Mosque:** Tantipara, which means weavers quarters, it is said to have been locally known as a mosque for Gaur's weavers, a community essential to city's economy because of its location in muslin-producing area. The brick mosque is divided into two aisles by four stone pillars. This mosque was probably built by Mirshad Khan in 1480.
21. **Englishbazar Towns:** Englishbazar Town is the Central Business District (CBD) or Heart of the Malda district. During the year 1813 a new type of urbanization was take place in the pre-colonial period by Britishers, so popularly this is known as Englishbazar. It is very much famous for rich in history, culture and commerce.
22. **Farakka Barrage:** The Farakka barrage is located at the border of Malda and Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The Farakka barrage was setup to serve the need for preservation, Maintaince and flush out the silt of Bhagirathi river to ensure smooth operationalization of the Kolkata port, established in the year of 1975. This barrage comprises of 109 numbers of water gates. This barrage has great importance include hydroelectricity, cultivation, transportation, flood controls, fishing etc.

Major Challenges faced by Tourist in Malda district of West Bengal:

- Inhospitable climate and weather condition during winter and summer season.



- Poor quality of accommodation provides by hotels, cafeteria and lodges.
- Non availability of all types' healthy and good food for tourist at destination place.
- Poor sanitation condition (public toilets and washrooms) at tourists places.
- Inadequate and non- availability of tourist guides services at tourists places.
- Problems of personnel safety and security of tourist.
- There is lack of shopping mall and shops facility nearby tourist places.
- Lack of safe and clean drinking water facility.
- Lack of vehicles parking facilities at the tourist places.
- Lack of good hospital in case of emergency related to health issues.

Positive Impacts of Tourism in Malda district of West Bengal:

- ❖ Generating employment and livelihood opportunities for local peoples near the tourism places areas.
- ❖ Source of earning of money and income to the local peoples.
- ❖ Preservation, Conservation of national heritage and protection of natural environment.
- ❖ Growth and development of basic infrastructure (Roadways, Hotels, banks, Restaurants etc.)
- ❖ Promoting Peace and stability.
- ❖ Regional development and planning.
- ❖ More focus on rural tourism.
- ❖ Promoting local handicrafts products.

Negative Impacts of Tourism in Malda district of West Bengal:

- ❖ Undesirable social and Cultural change.
- ❖ Creating a sense of antipathy.
- ❖ Adverse Effects on Environment and Ecology.
- ❖ Seasonal character of Job.
- ❖ Increase in Prices of the various products.

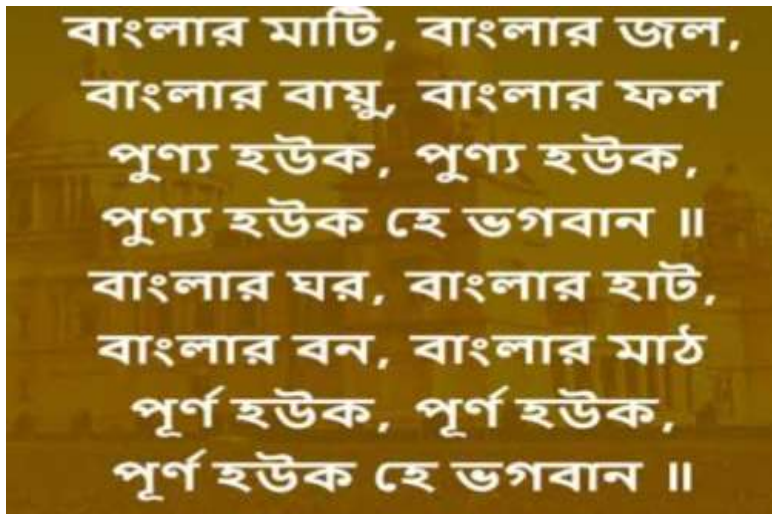
Suggestion and Policy Implication:

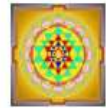
1. Ministry of Tourism, Government of West Bengal should focus on adventure friendly infrastructure such as better roads services connecting, high quality of tourism services, more transport vehicles for promoting of tourism in Malda district.
2. Ministry of Tourism, Government of West Bengal should more emphasis on rural tourism that showcase rural life, art and heritage and its attracts tourist.
3. There should be adequate numbers of tourist guide services, interpreters, police, personnel security and safety at the every tourist places of Malda district of West Bengal state.

4. There should good condition, cleanliness of sanitary facilities at every tourist places of Malda district of West Bengal state.
5. There should be fairly good amenities, availability of good accommodation and good restroom facilities at Gour and Pandua on travels routes in Malda district of West Bengal.

Conclusion:

Malda district is place of great historical signifance. Malda district has great potential for developing heritage tourism. Most of the places of this district are very beautiful with the amalgamation of the mosque, monuments, forts and temples. Tourism has played a very vital role in reviving West Bengal art and culture. Tourism holds immense potential for the growth of economy of the district. Travel and Tourism is not only a growth engine but also an ample employment generating sector. Tourism is one of the best instruments of economics development in all the way. Travel and tourism bringing Malda district of West Bengal on global map of tourism, earning appreciation, recognition and initiates cultural change. The natural beauty, geographic locations, cultural and artistic diversity of Malda district offers enormous opportunities to the local people. Local peoples do not aware about the importance of heritage sites, buildings and monuments. So, they destroyed these monuments in different way like-they made houses by Gour bricks which is collected from heritage sites and damaged these monuments. For searching of royal wealth and gold coins, they are digging up soil in and around of the relics and monuments. Travel and tourism promotes national integration. Tourism has promoted and benefitted small and local cottage -handicrafts industry. As we all know that tourism contributes a lot of revenue of the state West Bengal. Last but not the least tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in West Bengal that has changed the scenario of the state. The tourism in Malda district has grown significantly over the years.



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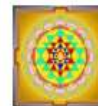
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