

RURAL TOURISM AND IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION: EVIDENCE FROM WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores rural tourism in West Bengal, India. Rural tourism promotes the local economy, socio-cultural changes and life style of the people residing around the tourist locations. This study explores the reasons foreign and domestic tourists visit this location for religious or recreational purposes. This tourism has created tremendous impact on the local economy, life style and socio-cultural changes among the rural people in and around this tourist destination. A pilot survey shows that rural tourism at this location improved civic amenities like communication, sanitations, transport facilities and standard of living for the people in general. This study assesses the impact of India's National Tourist Policy 2002 as promoted by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, on this rural tourist location. Specifically in terms of economic growth, employment potential, livelihood and changes in life style of the local people.

JEL: R11, E27

KEY WORDS: Rural Tourism, Non-urban livelihood, Socio-cultural pattern of life, income generation, Implementation of resources, ARMA Model, Economic Migrants.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is likely to be a growing industry in India for some time. It has tremendous potential due to peoples' interest in travel and desire to explore nature and religious sites. Tourism in India is expected to play a key role in the country's economic growth, human resource, culture, wealth of the country in terms of foreign exchange earnings, etc. Simultaneously, it has a direct bearing on local culture, socio-economic patterns of life, traditions, food habits, language, values and ethics of the local people due to frequent visits of national and international tourists to attractive tourist destinations. People visit tourist locations to have a flavor of pilgrimage, cultural heritage, and nature. Sometimes they simply wish to get away from the monotony of routine life. People not only rejuvenate from these visits but also directly contribute for the growth of the local economy through the hospitality industry, handicraft industry and secondary occupations including tourists guide, carriers, etc.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), estimates in 2002 travel, tourism and related activities contributed about 11% to world's GDP. This industry is currently generates 7.8% of the total workforce. This percentage is expected to increase to 8.6% by 2012. As per WTTC report of 2002, Tourism is expected to create more than 255 million jobs, almost 10.7% of the total global workforce. Much of this employment potential will be concerned with rural tourism where unemployment and lack of occupation are key issues for the local people and a large number of people live below the poverty level. Rural tourism has been neglected in India for a variety of factors including lack of infrastructure, civic amenities, lack of publicity, and peoples' awareness and accessibility to tourist locations. As a result, tourists from the home country and overseas countries prefer to visit urban tourist sites. This results in

tourist congestion in urban, religious and historical sites. Simultaneously innumerable tourist sites remain unknown and unnoticed in the rural belts of the country.

This paper observes that a tourist site, once located in an extreme rural location has come to the limelight due to its historical importance or publicity by the local government and they have developed it into a tourist village with variety of improvements in civic amenities, road and rail connections, hospitality and cottage industries. This brings about immense change in the local economy including growth in the handicraft industry, employment, life style of the local population, etc. Examples of rural tourism converting a rural belt into urban area are Ajanta, Ellora, Goa, etc. in India. The paper is organized in the following manner: Literature Review, Data and Methodology, Results and concluding Comments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lewis, James B. (1998) et.al one of the most popular issues is rural community development is the use of tourism as a tool for development. There is a good deal of information about rural tourism including economic analysis of tourism, its impacts, and its effect on people. R.N. Kaul (1985) points out that “one of the reasons for travel has been the desire to widen one’s knowledge and understanding about other peoples, place, and countries and study their culture, customs, ways of life and heritage and satisfies ones curiosity about them.

Rajeev Kumar (2008) rural tourism is a subset of tourism that consists of ranging aspect such as farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. Any form of tourism that displays the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity that takes place in the countryside. Rural tourism is essentially an activity that takes place in the countryside. Rural tourism creates experiences for tourist who enjoys locations that are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, and it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. Rural tourism has become quite admired since the last few years.

According to Negi (1990) attractions in rural areas includes enjoyment of rural scenery, the desire for open space, quiet and peace of mind. Rural sports like hunting, fishing, ethnic attractions like folk life, custom, food, drinks, and festivals. Educational and historical attractions like castles, churches, temples etc. Respondents to an English Tourism Council research project on rural tourism described the concept of rural tourism as ‘peace and quiet’, ‘slower pace of life’, ‘fresh air’, ‘non urbanized’ and ‘lots of space.’ This research also stated that rural tourism could encompass ‘gentle’ countryside (farms, fields, and cows), ‘rugged’ countryside (moors, hills, and mountains), coastal areas and non-urbanized towns and villages. Vanhoe (1980) noticed, “Five most commonly occurring economic variables affecting tourism demand are income level, population, relative prices, and exchange rate and travel costs.”

Briedenhann and Wickens argue the benefit of tourism results from an alternative development strategy for economic and social regeneration of rural areas, as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth, increased viability of underdeveloped regions and improve the standard of living of local communities. Hall and Jenkins (1998) suggest that the expansion of tourist flows in rural areas: To sustain and create local incomes, employment and growth, to contribute to the costs of providing economic and social infrastructure, to encourage the development of other industrial sectors, to contribute to local resident amenities and services. Also important is to contribute to the conservation of environmental and cultural resources.

Lane .B (1994) points out that “rural tourism should be –located at rural areas. Functionally rural i.e. small scale enterprises, open space; natural contact, heritage, traditional, societal practices etc; rural in scale; traditional in character; take different forms representing the complex pattern of rural environment, tourists share in village life, and rural villages gain economic and other benefits from tourist activities. According to the Annual Report of Ramakrishna Mission and Pallimangal Kamarpukur, 2006-2007, tourism is more labor intensive than other sectors. According to Chakraborty (2007), Tourism services can increase employment, but businesses may target skilled labor elsewhere rather than train local labor from amongst the poor. According to Singh (1994), the interest of tourism and heritage conservation is complementary and thus tourism and culture become partners in the developmental process.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Observation and survey methods have also been used in conducting this research study. To fulfill the study objectives, observation method and survey method are the main technical tools. The survey instrument included questions on socio-economic aspects like age, sex, education and occupation. Information about the tourism industry profile includes the tourism units (i.e. hotel, guesthouse, etc.), number of rooms, number of persons employed, number of local workers as well as the profile of tourists. Rural Tourism Appraisal Model (RTAM) Philosophy was employed to evaluate the current situation using a SWOT analysis. The Sample size was restricted to 160 respondents and 60 respondents of four Stakeholders viz The RK Mission, Local Community, local Government, dedicated tourist pilgrims. The collected data is analyzed using different statistical methods like percentage and ARMA Model for future prediction of tourist inflow. Sources of secondary data collected were legal documents, official statistics, reports, articles, publications and other documents, reports of self-government bodies and organizations websites.

Context of Kamarpukur

Lord Sri Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) the great religious clairvoyant was born in Kamarpukur in the district of Hooghly in West Bengal, India. Swami Vivekananda the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna had spread the message of his Master in the country and beyond. He specifically communicated in western countries especially in the international congress religion at Chicago, USA . The site of Ramakrishna Mission Kamarpukur retains the mud house with thatched roof which is the holy birth place of Sri Ramakrishna. The center was affiliated with its Headquarters at Belur Math, Howrah India. This Holy Place turns into a pilgrimage as well as a tourist destination.

Kamarpukur is situated in the extreme West of Arambag Sub-division of Hooghly District, West Bengal in India with Bankura district in the West and Burdwan in the North. It is surrounded by three rivers: the Damodar, the Kansabati and the Darakeswar. Considering its geographical location and historical importance, Kamarpukur has taken a vital position in rural tourism in West Bengal. Although this tourist spot is of religious importance, it is a nature lovers’ paradise. It is as if Garh Mandaran, Jilimili, Susunia and Mukutmanipur are located along the crow’s flight from the tourists’ main destination of Kamarpukur. In other words, the tourists visit Kamarpukur for religious purpose and thereafter cover the neighboring tourists locations in one outing.

As per the 2001 Census Report, Kamarpukur is spread over of 190.30 sq. kilometers with total population of 1,43,359 of which 54,380 people are from the backward community. Density of total population is 754 per sq. kilometers. Out of a 190.30-kilometer area 14.84 hectares are cultivable land. Therefore, the local population cannot solely depend upon agriculture as the primary source of income. Therefore, a large number of populations depend upon secondary sources of income through local tourism and handicraft industry catering to needs of the tourists.

The local population lives in a religious atmosphere and in cultural heritage of Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Local people largely depend upon two festivals viz. Ramakrishna's birthday, Durga festival celebrations when domestic tourists visit this site. In order to conserve rich cultural and spiritual heritage, Ramakrishna math undertakes activities like:

- i) The cultural performance by village folk viz. folk dance, amateur theater, musical performance – these cultural performances not only entertains the local population but the domestic tourists who are interested to observe traditional village culture.
- ii) Lectures and discussions are organized in nearby villages regarding harmony of religion and for promotion of international brotherhood and elevation of spirituality in the community.
- iii) Fair at Kamarpukur establishes variety of temporary shops, which are run by the people from neighboring villages who display and sale local handicrafts.

Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda influence much of the cultural life of the local population during traditional Hindu festivals. The local population and international tourists visit Kamarpukur on these occasions not only to enjoy the religious activities in rural environment but also to have a taste of Cultural heritage of this tourist destination. This provides an opportunity to local people to display and sell their handiwork to the tourists to earning their livelihood. In order to accommodate the tourists for their stay at Kamarpukur, Ramakrishna Mission runs two guesthouses. There are private hotels and restaurants at Kamarpukur who take care of large number of tourists.

Because of seasonal tourism, local people earn more through supply of food, providing transport facility and selling their handiwork to the tourists. The villagers of Kamarpukur, opine the tourism industry is a lucrative source of income. During the festival of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday fair and during different festivals local individuals earn significant amounts of cash. Ramakrishna Math takes initiatives every year during those celebrations. Tourism can also support the local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites. In addition, tourism, generally considered a relatively clean industry, may foster local conservation.

RamaKrishna Mission possess two relatively big two guesthouses for Pilgrims who wishes to extend their spiritual holidays for a few days. For accommodations, individuals must contact the Math Authority for booking and reservations. There are three, four and five bedded rooms with or without attached baths. Some private lodge, hotels and restaurant are built nearby the math and around Kamarpukur. Wwhen overcrowd at the time of celebrations occurs, tourist stay such lodge cum hotels. One observable impact of tourism is the tea stall, fast-food center, rickshaw puller, STD shops, sweet shop owners benefit due to tourist inflow. As a result they are able to earn significant cash from tourists. At the time of Prayer Kamarpukur Mission authorities provide tourist police for maintaining discipline. Van Rickshaw, Rickshaw and rental cars are available for sightseeing. Medical facilities are available for emergencies.

There are other facilities like Medical aid, medicine shops, laundry facility, banking services and Travel agents available to fulfill tourists' needs. With regard to tourism, Kamarpukur faces two-fold problems. On one hand tourists visiting the area during two popular occasions do not get adequate accommodations. On the other hand, during the rest of the year due to lack of tourists, neither the Government, nor RK Mission nor private investors are interested in developing boarding, lodging and other infra-structural facilities at Kamarpukur. This tourist location, despite having high potential, remains neglected for most of the year. Second, compared to availability of limited agricultural land and high density of population at Kamarpukur, as enumerated earlier, the population cannot depend on agriculture alone. They need to explore their potential for handiwork, which has tremendous potential for growth if tourism is promoted and it becomes perennial in nature in this tourist location.

Table 1: Infrastructure at a Glance

Amenities	Kamarpukur (Nos.)
Guest House/Lodge	
a) Run by RK Mission	2
b) Private Entrepreneurs	8
Hotels	4
Food stalls	7
Car rental	20
Rickshaw	45
Van rickshaw	20
Handicraft shops	6
Tourist Police	10
Hospitals/Dispensary	1(Hospital)
Water supply tank	1
Shop outlet under Ram Krishna Mission	2
No. of Tourists	45,000 (approx) during season and 10,000(approx) during off season
Car parking facility	Constructed by RK Mission
Children's Park	1

Source: Field survey method

It will certainly improve socio-economic pattern of life of local people of Kamarpukur. Tourism can offer rural residents business opportunities in activities that cater to the tourist trade. Brown M. Dennis notes such locally operated businesses, which may be seasonal, can provide local residents with valuable opportunities to develop business skills and can give local crafters, farmers, and food processors, among others, outlets to sell their products to local retail establishments. Paralelly we observe that handicraft of Kamarpukur and neighboring villages are very rich. Gradually tourism activities are improving. Some rural development projects of “Ramakrishna Mission Pallimangal” are gathering momentum. The existing small-scale industries, which need to be nurtured through rural tourism, are outlined below.

Jute Handicraft Unit: Since 2001 -02, Jute handicraft units producing about 35 jute items for domestic usages have appeared in Pallimangal centre providing employment to 75 poor and destitute village women who earn in the range of Rs. 1000 – 1800 per month. Although the number of people and earnings are insignificant, they are worth mentioning due to the effort on the part of non-governmental agency i.e. Ramakrishna Mission.

Weaving Project Unit : Women workers at Kamarpukur are doing handloom weaving and stitching of garments. Ramakrishna Mission has opened at Nakunda under the Pallimangal Weaving Project. In 2010 the project provided job opportunities to 33 poor and destitute women who earn in the range of Rs. 1000 – 5000 per head per month.

Incense Stick Unit: In 1980, the Pallimangal centre promoted this cottage industry, which provides self-employment to about 30 persons who earn in the range of Rs. 1000–2300 per month each.

Mini jute Spinning Unit : The Unit was established during the year 1987 as a pilot project in collaboration with Jute Technological Research Laboratories (Now NIRJAFT) Dept of Science and Technology Governmentt of India and Govt of West Bengal. Average earning of a worker is Rs 1267.00. This unit was under taken by pallimangal during its inception in 1980.

Food Processing Unit: Promoting Cottage industries with available resources, minimizing wastage of perishable fruits and vegetables, is important to help the farming community. Pallimangal started the Program in June 2002. Currently 19 products are processed from different fruit and vegetables. The Government of India, Ministry of Food Processing Industries Sponsored 3rd EDP training on food processing during the year.

There are also units like Seed Production Units, Apiculture Unit and Solar Energy Units. The Community of Kamarpukur is well cultured and educated. Educational status in and around Kamarpukur is very rich. There is One Boy's School under R.K.M, One Girls' School, One Co-Ed. School and two Colleges under The University of Burdwan at Kamarpukur. There are also 13 Non-Formal Education Centers (NFEC) (Three Coaching Centers for Primary School Students) for SC, ST and Depressed Classes. Medical Service is rendered by the R.K.M for poor and needy patients of the local and neighboring villages of Bankura, Medinipur and Burdwan districts. Eye Core Unit and National Blindness Control Program, National Tuberculosis Control Program, National Leprosy and Elimination Prom, Child Nutrition Program (Average 36 Children per day were provided with milk powder, Biscuits, Sweets), Regular Mobile, Medical Services are free of cost since 1980 in and around Kamarpukur. More than 196 medicinal plants collected from different regions of the country are cultivated and has been named 'Gadadhar Herbal Resource Garden' established in 2005-2006 to make people aware of the importance of cultivation of medical plants for the use of domestic health remedy.

Table 2: Stakeholders

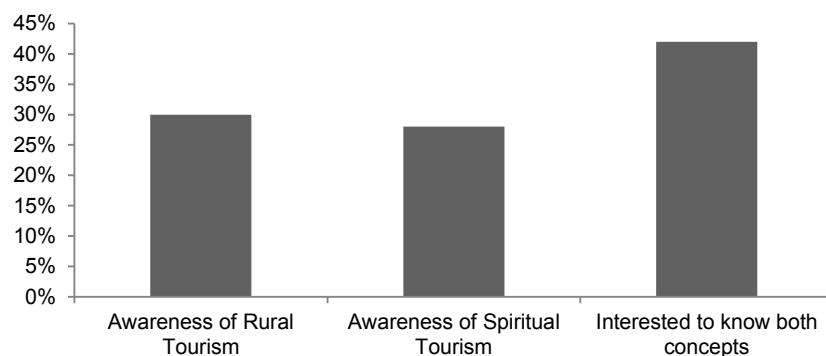
Classification of Stakeholders	What we can expect them to offer	Potential Influence	Description
The RK Mission	Human recourse, Organizing of funds Overseeing Activities	60 / 60	Their overall vision will drive the project
Local Community	Initial 'help' may be Minimal	37/60	Critical stakeholder - they stand to gain the maximum even if they cannot 'help', they have their ability to hinder
Local Government	They can play a crucial role in government sanctions	25/60	Their cooperation needed for safety and security; they can create issues if training programme not sustained long term
Tourist Pilgrims Dedicated tourists.	Regular , committed	48/60	Can be future source of sale of products; and encouraged to participate in community initiatives to create a 'corpus' of funds- for basic food and clothing.

The above table reveals about the Stakeholders operations at Kamarpukur for the upliftment of the socioeconomic development for the local people. 60 respondents considered from each segments of stakeholders and their participations in community development .

RESULTS

From the above data, the following results clearly emerge. A survey conducted on 160 respondents ascertains the contribution of tourism to the economic growth of Kamarpukur. Some 160 respondents revealed their awareness of rural tourism and spiritual tourism showing that 30% were familiar with the concept of rural tourism, 28% with spiritual tourism and the remaining 42% showed a keen interest to learn about both. (Figure 1)

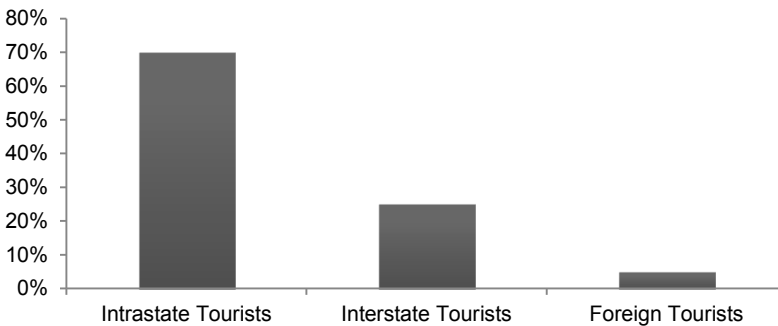
Figure 1: Awareness of Rural Tourism and Spiritual Tourism



This figure shows that Awareness of Rural Tourism and Spiritual Tourism Concept .Respondents those who are interested to know about rural tourism they agree that this kind of tourism may develop any rural or under develop region.

Figure 2 reveals that out of 160 respondents considered, 70% were intra state tourists, 25% were interstate tourists, and 5% foreign tourists. Majority of the 70% intra state tourists were from Kolkata, Howrah, Burdwan, Bankura, Midnapore, and 24 Parganas. With regard to the 25%, interstate tourists' majority came from Mumbai, Kerela, Chennai and Orissa.

Figure 2: Inflow of Tourists from Different Regions



This figure represents that Inflow of tourists from different regions in West Bengal as well as different parts of India and abroad.

Figure 3: Frequency of Visits

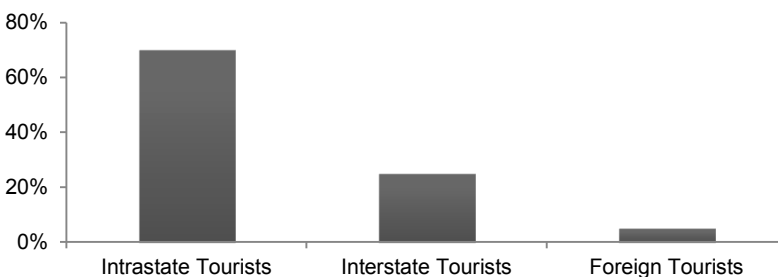


Figure 3 shows the frequency of visits at Kamarpukur. From 160 respondents in the study we find that 48% had visited Kamarpukur for the first time, 22% had visited twice in a year, while the remaining 30% visited only in the festive seasons such as Durga festival, Ramakrishna's birthday, and Kalpataru festival. The 160 respondents segmented on the criteria of the purpose of visit showed that 62% of retired persons visited for devotional purposes and for a pollution free environment; 26% to enjoy the rural environment and because such visits improved the economy and the remaining 12% indulged in casual visit.

Study on Stakeholders

A survey on possible community development with a sample size of 60 was conducted on four stakeholders, namely, Ramakrishna Mission, Local Community, Local Government, and Tourist Pilgrims. All 60 respondents surveyed at Ramakrishna Mission were involved in the effective utilization of rural human resource and organizing the available funds. Some 37 of 60 respondents in the local community showed a keen interest for direct involvement in community development. Out of the 60 respondents in the local government, 25 agreed to offer their full support to the safety and security of the community subject to government sanction of the requisite fund. Some 48 of 60 respondents of the tourist pilgrims were found to be regular dedicated visitors who directly participated in community building by rendering various services. For example, a doctor offered treatment to the sick while the teacher tutored. The community also economically benefits from the visits of these tourist pilgrims as the pilgrims indulge in lavish local purchases of the indigenous handicrafts.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Using five years of tourist's inflow data, we analyze the future trend of tourist inflows in Kamarpukur. We apply a general time series regression model, which describes as:

$$Y_t = X_1\beta + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

Where Y_t = tourist inflow, X_t = Year, ε_t = White noise, with zero mean and constant variance. We estimate the time series regression equations as follows:

Tourist Inflow

$$y_t = 4140.79 + 85.54x_t \quad (2)$$

Based on the above time series regression equation we predict the future trend of tourist inflow. This is a basic time series regression model. In order to avoid the problem of autoregressive and moving average we consider the ARMA (Autoregressive Moving Average) model for prediction of tourist inflow in Kamarpukur.

AR-model: $y_t = \rho y_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$. It can be shown that :

$$E(y_t) = 0; \quad V(y_t) = \frac{\sigma^2}{(1 - \rho^2)}; \quad \text{corr}(y_t, y_{t-k}) = \rho^k. \quad (3)$$

ARMA Model

$$y_t = \rho_1 y_{t-1} + \dots + \rho_p y_{t-p} + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

We estimate the ARMA model for tourist inflow, where we apply $p = 1$ and $q = 0$ based on partial autocorrelation functions. Here X_t is the value of time. The estimate ARMA equation as follows:

Tourist Inflow

$$y = 3140.79 + 82.54x_t + 0.43y_{t-1} \quad (5)$$

Based on the Akaike Information criteria and all t values for different regression parameters we conclude the model is accepted and is useful for predicting the future trend based on past data. Table 3 shows ARMA estimation of tourist inflow in Kamarpukur. Table 4 shows parameters of the ARMA estimation of tourist inflow in Kamarpukur.

Table 4 shows the ARMA estimation of tourism inflows in Kamarpukur. We accept the alternative hypothesis for each parameter based on t-statistics where the test statistics is described as follows: * t-statistic are significant at 1% level of significance i.e., t-values are more than 2.51 at 45degree of freedom and t-values are more than 2.50 at 45 degree of freedom. ** t- statistic are significant at 5% level of significance i.e., t-values are more than 1.96 at 45 degree of freedom and t-values are more than 1.96 at 45 degree of freedom. Figure 4 shows the partial autocorrelation function.

Table 3: ARMA Estimation of Tourist Inflow

Number of residuals	48		
Standard error	1430. 0396		
Log likelihood	-415. 45199		
AIC	836. 90398		
	Analysis of Variance:		
	DF	Adj. Sum of Squares	Residual Variance
Residuals	45	9,24,38,641. 2	20,45,013. 2

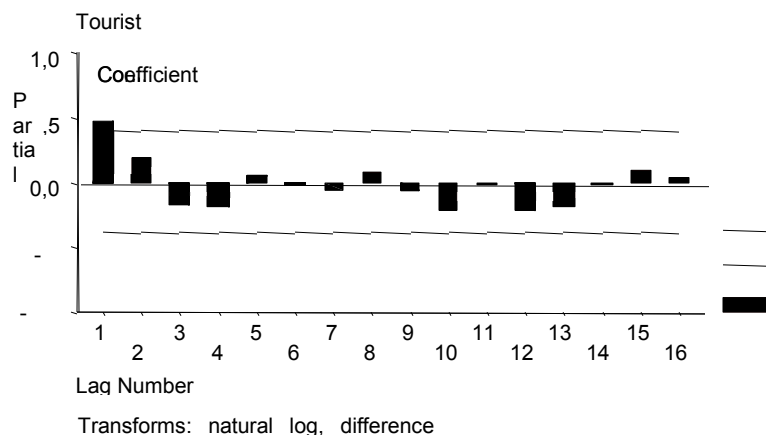
From the above table 3 we observed an Akaike information criterion which recommends accepting an ARMA (1,0) model in our analysis. If we consider the likelihood test statistics, it also suggests accepting ARMA (1,0). The first row shows the number of observations. First column of second row shows the standard error and second column of second row shows the value of standard error. First column of the third row estimates the value Log likelihood statistics and second column of third row show the values of estimated Log likelihood statistics. First column of the fourth row estimates the value AIC statistics and second column of fourth row show the values of estimated AIC statistics. Fifth row shows the value of analysis of variance. Second column of sixth row shows degrees of freedom, third column of sixth row shows adjusted sum of squares and fourth column of sixth row shows residual variance.

Table 4: ARMA Estimation of Tourist Inflow in Kamarpukur

Variables in the Model:				
	B	SEB	T-RATIO*	APPROX. PROB
AR1	0. 43980	0. 14818	2. 9681127	. 00478743
MONTH	82. 54851	25. 34438	3. 2570740	. 00214403
CONSTANT	3,140. 79088	719. 04335	4. 3680132	. 00007284

From table 4 we have a different test statistics for different parameters. Here all t-values are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. We accept the alternative hypothesis that all parameters are explained in our model significantly. The first column shows the variables included in the study. The second column shows parameters and the third column shows the standard error. The fourth column shows t-ratio and the fifth shows p-values.

Figure: 4 : Tourism Inflow



Figures 4 shows that partial autocorrelation functions of tourist inflow, where it has a one coefficient, which is out of the confidence limits that mean we consider one order auto regressive model for our analysis.

Table 5 and 6 show the actual and forecasted tourism arrivals respectively. The tables depict that tourist flow to the destination is increasing every year and is matching the actual number of tourist arrivals with a negligible difference, which we have already seen from the recent compiled tourist statistics of the year 2010. Where the actual tourist arrivals to Kamarpukur is 90,734 and projected tourist arrivals to Kamarpukur is 91,656 with a minimum error of 1.01%. Figure 5 shows the SWOT analysis for rural tourism in the area.

Table: 5: Tourists Arrival to Kamarpukur (Actual)

Year	No of Tourist Arrival	% Change
2006	48,714	-
2007	53,322	9.45
2008	59,454	11.49
2009	82,511	38.78
2010	90,734	9.96

Source: Database from Ramakrishna Mission Authority . Table 5 reveals the actual tourist arrivals to Kamarpukur starting from the year 2006 onwards. The table also reveals that the tourist flow to the destination is increasing every year.

Table: 6: Tourists Arrival to Kamarpukur (Forecasted)

Year	No of Tourist Arrival	% Change
2010	91,656	-
2011	1,03,541	12.96
2012	1,15,427	11.47
2013	1,27,312	10.29
2014	1,39,199	9.33

Table no.6 reveals the expected tourist flow to Kamarpukur starting from the year 2010 onwards with the help of ARMA model and percentage change of tourists inflow at Kamarpukur

Figure 5: Rural Tourism Appraisal Model (RTAM) Philosophy (SWOT)

S= STRENGTHS	W= WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Rich and Spectacular rural physical setting for rural tourism 2.Rich quality of natural environment 3.Rich History, Heritage, Handicraft 4.Rich variety of festive occasion and celebration throughout the year 5.Maximum level of tourist satisfaction 6.Good transportation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kamarpukur is far from main Urban area 2. Most of the cultural ritual demolished 3. Lack of trained guide 4. Lack of promotional strategy 5. Low level of sanitation
O= OPPORTUNITIES	T= THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing tourism allied activities 2.Motivate more alternative employment and income generation 3.Capturing floating tourist and increased number of stay 4. Attracting attention foreign tourists 5.Development of allied tourism direct involvement activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saturation of local cultural heritage expose 2. Political disturbance 3. Migrate / Shift another profession 4. Increase land price

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The social significance of heritage lies in its association with identity. It is fundamental in helping individuals and communities. In and around of Kamarpukur of Hooghly district the custodian of religious heritage sites constitutes a key elements in defining their Socio-cultural identity. Interest in cultural heritage emerged as a tourist attraction during the 1990's and became an important economic asset and a mechanism to preserve ethnicity. History and its tangible markers in the form of buildings, cemeteries, folk music, literature, culture has quietly survived at Kamarpukur for centuries. This study reveals that Kamarpukur has great prospects as a rural tourism destination as well as pilgrimage tourism. The interest of tourism and heritage conservation is complementary and thus tourism and culture become partners in the developmental process. It can be said that with rich traditions of religious tourism, India can emerge to be a promising destination for modern tourism.

In this paper, authors have collected data from different segments of society and gone through different statistical analyses like percentage analysis and general time series regression. For future prediction of tourists inflow, the authors applied an ARMA Model on the basis of actual tourists inflow which was collected from Ramakrishna Mission Authority. The above study signifies that the tourist flow in this destination is increasing each year and matches the actual number of tourist arrivals with a negligible difference. Seasonal tourists, lack of tourism knowledge, different pattern of languages and some individuals unwilling to provide information contribute limited data collection. However, the future research scope of this particular destination always exists in the context of Socio-economic life.

Auxiliary services are becoming more commercialized which will affect tourism. Rural tourism is gaining importance in India with its economic and social benefits. It is estimated that an additional revenue to the extent of Rs. 4, 300 crore can be generated through Rural tourism. Therefore, rural tourism will play a vital role in bridging the gap between Rural and Urban India by balancing urbanization and counter urbanization syndromes.

We argue that rural tourism in this part of West Bengal will pave the way for sustainable development with women empowerment. Rural tourism is expected to emerge as an important factor for sustainable human development including poverty alleviation, employment generation, environmental re-generation and development of remote areas and empowerment of women. This paper recommends that the government as well as private agencies including NGOs intending to promote rural tourism in the state of West Bengal, India can ensure sustainable economic development and positive social change in this particular destination.

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