



Scope And Prospect Of Tourism In Rural India: A Case Study On Purulia District Of West Bengal

Abstract

Most of the places of rural India possess a treasure of natural beauty and some or the other untold historic events and stories attached to it, which are less known to the world. The paper makes an in depth analysis of Purulia district of West Bengal and analyzes its potential as a tourist destination. An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the area has been done in order to analyze the prospect of tourism in the district. Further, suggestions on strategies for developing tourism have been provided so that the place can soon be turned into one of the most famous and attractive tourist destinations of the world while maintaining the social, ecological and cultural sustainability of the place.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Purulia, SWOT Analysis, Sustainable Tourism, Rural India, West Bengal

Introduction

Most of the places of rural India possess a treasure of natural beauty and some or the other untold historic events and stories attached to it, which are less known to the world. The natural scenic beauty, pollution free environment, lush green surrounding, traditional customs and rituals followed and preserved by the inhabitants of most of the rural parts of the country are something which interests tourists worldwide. That is why rural tourism has gained lots of importance both in India and abroad.

Rural tourism is a way to rediscover a place based on a set of images framed by history, geography and culture of that place and it must be communicated to the tourists to be 'sold' to them. It is on the basis of these collective images that even a neutral place gets transformed into a tourist destination (Cánoves et al. 2004). This study, therefore, makes an in depth analysis of the Purulia district and tries to bring forth the beautiful image of the place to the world and its prospect to be 'sold' to the tourists.

Not only known for its natural beauty, Purulia is very well identified with the tribal communities of the state, which forms 18.45 percent of the population of the region (as per 2011 census data). The famous wetland of Saheb Bandh, Deer Park and tourist cottages developed by the forest department, the woody hill of Ayodhya Pahar with a tableland above and numerous small streams and beautiful waterfalls, Panchyet hill with its thick forest and vegetal cover with a huge bio diversified flora, various dams like Panchyet, Khairabera, Pardi and many others surrounded by hillocks, the hymn of various migratory birds visiting these places, are undoubtedly, a treat to the eyes. However, the place faces a number of challenges, the most important of which is lack of proper economic development and extreme poverty, especially among the tribals, along with too much dependence on agricultural activities or animal husbandry, which are not carried on in a scientific way. Economic development has also been proved to be an important factor for environmental sustainability and low per capita incomes leads to environmental degradation and unsustainability as is evident from the inverted-U-shaped 'Environmental Kuznets Curve' (EKC) (Hettige et al. 1992; Selden and Song, 1994; Grossman and Krueger 1995; Stern, Common, & Barbier, 1996). Hence, there is a need to study the prospect of rural tourism, as an alternative economic activity and a measure to develop economic standard and per capita income of the people, in the district where 87.3 percent (Census, 2011) of the population is rural. The importance of rural tourism in rural development is not only measured in terms of money, but also the jobs it generates and how far it removes social isolation of the rural people from the rest of the world (Dimitrovski et al., 2012).

However, the development of tourism must also be done in a sustainable manner as 'sustainable tourism' is the only type of tourism which can provide the real pleasure of being in nature's lap, which can be preserved by both the inhabitants and the hosts, is a result of responsible tourism and is far better than the artificial tourism theatre created for the exploitation of nature (Sanagustín Fons et al., 2011). The importance of tourism in the development of rural economy and the need to ensure sustainable tourism proves to be indispensable as these rural areas, which, though act as repositories of natural and historical heritages, are quite vulnerable to various external factors (Basu, 2019). Hence, there always remains a need to maintain a balance between the three key elements of tourism, namely the people residing in the tourist destination or the host area, the holiday makers or the tourists themselves and the tourism industry, which forms the triangular relationship to maintain sustainability in the tourism industry (Lane, 1994).

Developing 'rural tourism' for economic, social and environmental well being

Studies across the world have shown how various challenges can be dealt in successfully and how rural tourism can prove to be an important way of economic development in the rural area. Udovč and Perpar (2007) analyzed two different tourist destinations of Slovenia and found that rural tourism proved to be extremely, and perhaps the most important factor for economic development in both these areas. MacDonald & Jolliffe, (2003) pointed out the importance of promoting cultural tourism by blending community-based partnership based on a study in the French Acadian region of Canada

and showed how it can successfully address the issue of economic development in the rural areas, where the primary traditional industries are in the declining phase. Also, the presence of heterogeneity of tourists' demands must drive the operators and destination marketers to develop their products and marketing communications in order to uplift the travel motivation of the travellers (Mody et al., 2014). Sharple (2001) highlighted the need of restoring agro-tourism and found that the local communities opt for agro-tourism as they believe it can help in the re-establishment of the traditional and cultural practices of the region of Cyprus. Study conducted by Nyaupane & Poudel (2011), suggests that the growth of tourism will eventually alter the attitude of the local community towards the natural resources as they will automatically try to conserve biodiversity and protect the natural resources because those resources will act as a primary source for revenue generation. Kariyawasam et al., (2020), highlighted that the value chain of tourism depends on the integration of various factors like human capital, financial capital, social capital together blended with endogenous growth policies which will benefit the local community directly and thereby help them to elevate their attitude towards conservation of the natural resources. The importance of public policies in the development of rural tourism cannot be ignored as without the help of the local government, it would not be possible to improve the infrastructural facilities for promoting tourism in rural areas (Qian et al., 2019). Also, the development of tourism would require a proper blend of financial, human, political and social capitals to effectively bridge the gaps present in the tourism sector. Hjalager, Kwiatkowski & Larsen, (2017), in this context, emphasized the need of innovation and identified five innovation gaps namely change motivation gap, resource interpretation gap, portfolio gap, the policy departmentalization gap and the knowledge gap in the Scandinavian rural tourism sector.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

- conduct a detailed regional analysis of the Purulia district of West Bengal, as a potential tourist destination, which is a region of high cultural heritage and extreme natural beauty;
- highlight various places of significance in the area, which carry a threat of vulnerability and need special attention;
- suggest various strategies for sustainable tourism in the area to ensure an overall socio-economic well being of the people so that Purulia can be converted into one of the most favourite tourist destinations, while maintaining the environmental beauty of the place and preserving the culture and traditions of the people residing there, including that of the tribal community.

Methodology

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approach has been used in our study. Quantitative data has been analysed based on secondary information available from census reports or other published sources available in websites, journals, reports, etc.

Further, focus group methodology wherein focus groups comprising of local leaders and tour guides and have been used to have a better understanding of the area, their culture, the problems faced by the

locals along with their expectations from the government and tourists visiting the area (Goldman and McDonald, 1987; Gordon and Langmaid, 1988; Morgan, 1988; Agar and McDonald 1995).

About Purulia

Purulia is located at the westernmost part of the state of West Bengal and has gained an important position due to its tropical location and its funnel-like function. It funnels the tropical current from the Bay of Bengal and also acts like a gateway between the developed industrial belt of West Bengal and the less developed and remote places of Orissa, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Census report, 2011, shows that rural population comprises 87.3 percent of total population of the district, showing that the entire district comprises, primarily, of rural households. Table 1 shows the change in rural and urban population of Purulia since 1951.

Table 1: Percentage of rural and urban population in Purulia district

Sector/Census Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	1169097	1360016	1602875	1853801	2224577	2536516	2930115
Rural	1090627	1267538	1470508	1687039	2014571	2281090	2556801
Percentage of Rural Population to Total Population	93.3	93.2	91.7	91	90.6	89.9	87.3
Urban	78470	92478	132367	166762	210006	255426	373314
Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population	6.7	6.8	8.3	9	9.4	10.1	12.7

Source: Census report

The table above shows that there has been only a small change of only six percent in the ratio of the rural population to total population since 1951.

A distribution of the working population shows that around 57 percent of the population is unemployed, while 21.71 percent work as marginal labourers, with only 20.93 percent of the population working under the mainstream category of work, depicting the economic plight of the people residing in the district. Also, there is a significant reduction of 9.73 percent in the people working as cultivators, showing that they might have shifted to other working classes, where there is an increase of 6.85 percent. Table 2 details the distribution of the working class and the change since 2001.

Table 2: Composition of Workforce

Category of Workers	2001 Census	Percentage (%)	2011 Census	Percentage (%)
1. Main Worker	644748	25.43	613398	20.93
A. Cultivators	352104	31.24	268800	21.51
B. Agri. Labourers	406835	36.09	492205	39.39
C. H.H. Industry	83633	7.42	87560	7.01
D. Other Workers	284584	25.25	401077	32.10
2. Marginal Workers	482408	19.03	636244	21.71
3. Non Workers	1408077	55.54	1680473	57.35

Source: The official website of Purulia District,

http://purulia.gov.in/aboutDistrict/district_profile.html

Purulia is a district gifted with natural scenic beauty, with various dams, rich forest cover, waterfalls, hills of religious importance and many heritage buildings like of Garh Panchkot. It has a rich traditional and cultural heritage and people observe various festivals like Raasmela celebrated to mark the meeting of Lord Krishna with Shri Radhika, Tushu, celebrated to enjoy the joy of harvest with females singing Tushu songs, Guru Purnima, a festival celebrated to pay reverence to teachers or guru, Rohini Utsav, where people where cultivators sow seeds and celebrate, etc. With a high proportion of tribal communities with fifteen different types of tribes (Konar 2010), almost every cultural event, festivals and fairs organized has a tribal touch in it.

The religious beliefs of the tribals of the area related to the 'Sacred groves', which are the bio diverse ecological zones of the region; and preserving them through various religious practices, sentiments and sanctions, helps in maintaining the biodiversity and green pockets of the place (Konar 2008).

SWOT Analysis of the district of Purulia

An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the district of Purulia has been made in order to analyze the prospect of tourism in the area and ways to promote sustainable tourism in the district.

Strengths:

- **Pristine Beauty:** The district comprises a part of the uneven Chota Nagpur Plateau region with a considerable forest cover surrounded by hills with waterfalls, host to various dams for water conservation and home to various migratory birds. It is a place with a rich biodiversity providing aesthetic beauty to the state of West Bengal. The interior part of the district is a virgin place with very little or no urbanization. The hills of the Chota Nagpur plateau region, the rich biodiversity, historical remains, tribal culture and customs, all taken together will give the feel that it is hand-painted scenery

by an artist.

- **Plateaus and Hills:** Located in the Rarh region of West Bengal, Purulia possesses a part of the Chota Nagpur Plateau region. Ayodhya Hills is the main tourist attraction of the district being the easternmost part of the plateau region and an extension of the Dalma Hills of Jharkhand. This can act as a major strength while promoting tourism in the sense that the Ayodhya Hills provide a great opportunity for trekking and rock climbing enthusiasts and the altitude ranges from 300 meters to 677 meters above sea level (Official Website of Purulia district). The region is densely covered with deep forest and possesses quite a few waterfalls with spectacular beauty, which can definitely be a break for tourists living in the hustle and bustle of city life.
- **Bio diverse forest Resources:** The region is covered mostly with thick forest and the total forest cover being 61696.022 hectare¹. The enriching bio-diversity of the forest land of Purulia proves to be another pillar of strength of the district when the entire world is running after organic and natural products. A raised and increased awareness among people have pushed several small entrepreneurs to launch organic, natural, cruelty free products. A major portion of the district is under forest cover consisting of many healing trees and herbs such as Ashwagandha, Haritaki, Bahera, Amla, Neem, Eucalyptus, Bhringraj, Date and many other non-timber produces. Come spring and the district of Purulia is covered in red Palash flowers (*Butea monosperma*) which gives the district a majestic look and lot of scope for people from far off places to enjoy nature along with the various wellness products offered by the region.
- **Art and Craft:** The district of Purulia is rich in various arts and crafts work made by its rural artisans. The region is famous for lac art. Lac is a kind of natural resin and lac cultivation is one of the most important economic activities of the region. The region is also famous for Tasar silk weaving, wood works, cane knitting and clay masks. The clay masks have a special significance as it is used widely for their famous dance drama of the tribal community which is popularly known as the Chhau dance. Such special handmade works should be promoted in order to generate its demand, as it can be of great value for people coming as tourists who can buy these products at a cheaper rate than elsewhere and also be assured of the authenticity.
- **Rich cultural heritage:** Purulia has a very rich cultural heritage, and has a mixed culture from three different states of Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa. Whether it is the belief of the tribals on their sacred groves which helps preserving the ecology and trees, or their famous Chhau dance, or various festivals celebrated by people, the elegance of their tradition and culture can be felt everywhere and in all occasions. Even the famous martial dance of Bengal has its origin from Purulia district².
- **Historical remains and Heritage sites:** It has many historical and heritage sites like the Deul of Banda, a temple which is now under the protection of Archeological Survey of India, various temples with terracotta panels in Cheliama and Achkoda villages, ruined Panchkot Palace in

¹ <http://purulia.gov.in/distAdmin/departments/forest/forest.html>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purulia_district#Culture

Garpanchkot, which silently preserves the testimony to the Bargi attack in the 18th century, etc. Another place of significant importance is the Sita Kund, which is a small reservoir lying amidst the forest of the Ayodhya Hills, which according to the mythology, was created by Lord Rama by the shot of an arrow during their exile period when his wife Sita was extremely thirsty. These sites of historic importance, if promoted, can contribute significantly to the development of heritage tourism in the district.

Weaknesses:

- **Limited Connectivity:** Though the district is easily accessible with the help of railways, the main tourist attraction destinations are located about 60 kms away from the Purulia Junction. Without proper guidance it is very difficult to explore the important sites of the district and such connection options are very limited which acts as an impediment for tourists to visit these places. Proper connectivity of tourist locations and promotion of tourism must be initiated by the government and well guided tours should be organized to attract tourists even from far off places of India and the world.
- **Lack of proper education, training and awareness among the inhabitants:** Majority of the population is below the poverty line in the district without proper educational qualification due to which they are unaware of various opportunities that are at their disposal which can be utilized to raise their standard of living. The tribal people mostly are engaged in agricultural activities, livestock rearing and craftsmanship, which are carried on in an unscientific way. Proper training and skill development programmes must be initiated by the government and various existing schemes of government must be properly communicated to them.
- **Inadequate access to formal banking facilities:** Most of the people in rural areas, especially the tribal communities have either meager or no access to formal banking systems which acts as an impediment to money circulation in the rural economy. Due to the lack of formal banking system and knowledge regarding that, almost all the tribal families resort to livestock rearing, that too in an unscientific way, which they consider as their savings to meet emergencies (Ray, 2015). Government should take immediate measures to develop a proper financial system and banking infrastructure in the rural area of Purulia and educate people on the use of the banking facilities, so that they can avail credit facilities at a much lesser cost compared to the present system of availing credit from local money lenders, and encourage them to venture into various entrepreneurship activities including those related to tourism.
- **Improper Network Connectivity:** The internet connectivity is very poor in the interior part of the district and as a result, people are simply disconnected with the rest of the world. Also, a majority of the population either lack basic education and technical acumen to operate a smart phone or computer gadgets with internet connectivity or do not have financial capabilities to buy these. Efforts on part of various organizations to provide proper internet access, financial assistance

in acquiring the gadgets along with provision of proper training to use these can go a long way in developing tourism in the area.

- **Past Political Disturbances:** The region had long been known for the tremendous political disturbances as it was under an active Maoist belt during the last decade. The dense forest of the district acted as a safe haven for the Maoist team and frequent blasts, murders were very common in the region. Due to such unrest in the region, common people hesitated to choose the district of Purulia as a travel destination. The situation has now been improved as the Maoists have been tamed by the Governments of West Bengal and Jharkhand successfully but the long existing fear still needs to be removed from the minds of the people.
- **Lack of proper infrastructure:** The region is appropriate for natural and rural tourism but there is a lack of proper accommodation facilities in the region. Though there are few government holiday homes and guest houses in certain specific parts of the district, they are not properly promoted and it is sometimes complicated to proceed with the booking process. The region is a drought prone area and the availability of proper drinking water is a major problem in Purulia. In order to reap benefits out of tourism in this region, the government needs to play an active role and come forward with infrastructural development, to address these basic issues.
- **Lack of maintenance of the heritage sites and local tourist spots:** The various heritage sites like the Panchkot Palace, several small ancient temples, etc. lack maintenance, despite having such vital historical significance. Government should come forward with investments towards maintenance of these historically significant sites. Locals should be made to understand the importance of maintaining these sites as ignorance among them might lead to unintentional damage to these preserved properties.

Opportunities:

- **Promotion of Folk Tourism:** Folk refer to the traditional culture and practices of a particular region (Ganai, 2017). Each and every region has its own set of inherent customs which set it apart from the other regions. The traditional art, dance, music, handicrafts and other entertainment activities of a particular region can be gathered together and can be given the shape of a festival form or an amusement forum which can attract potential tourists to obtain the authentic flavour of the region all at one place in a compact manner. For Puruliya, it is famous for Chhau dance, the Chhau mask, hunting festival of the Santhals, Tushu Songs that can be blended together in a festival forum platform to be presented to the tourists thereby providing them a comprehensive feel of their traditions and customs.

- **Embracing community based tourism:** The lifestyle of the tribals and the traditional Bengali culture of the local inhabitants can be of great interest to people coming from industrialized places. Community tourism can act as a boon for the rural community if they come forward and give the travellers a direct insight into their daily lives and activities (Mishra, 2019). They can work towards providing accommodation in a hut, arrange for farm visits, local and heritage sight-seeing, providing the opportunity to take part in their cultural festivals, arts and crafts, various activities like jaggery making, by organizing village tours, etc.
- **Wellness Tourism:** The increased stress of daily lives has pushed a large number of people to take time off from their busy work schedule and opt for a trip to the countryside. With the availability of such rich bio diverse resources, a wide variety of healing herbs and trees added with the majestic natural beauty of the region, the concept of wellness tourism can help the district attract potential tourists. Various services, like ayurvedic message using pure herbal products of the village, refreshing drinks made with herbs, aroma therapy, etc. can attract travellers from different corners who prefer to indulge themselves in healing and wellness activities.
- **Product Promotion:** The concept of wellness tourism has brought along the demand for health and wellness products and herbal concoctions, and Purulia has ample scope of developing such healing products due to the availability of medicinal herbs and trees in its wide forest cover. These products and services can further be customized for tourists based on their spending powers. Entrepreneurs must not restrict their offerings to the “one size fits all” approach (Farmaki, 2014), and the importance of sophisticated segmentation tactics and integrated marketing strategies must be kept in mind. For instance, the palash flowers can be used to make herbal colours, the date trees can be used to produce organic fresh jiggery, etc. Once the initial steps are taken, the products would automatically get advertised through the word of mouth of tourists when they get satisfied.
- **Development of Industries for lac production and Sericulture:** Purulia presently accounts for 90 percent of the lac production of West Bengal³. Being famous for Tassar silk, which is already in high demand as a dress material such as sari for women, the sericulture industry is another area which has immense potential of growth in this region.

Threats:

- **Drought prone area:** The sub-normal, inconsistent rainfall in the district makes the region a drought-prone area, which leads to creation of a complex set of problems in a vicious circle. Scanty rainfall will cast an immediate adverse effect on agricultural produce and in order to sustain agricultural production, the harvested water will be used which in turn leads to drinking water

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purulia_district retrieved on 10 Sept 2020

scarcity in the region. The scarcity of drinking water can prove to be a great threat to the tourism industry. Rain water harvesting, re-use of water, conservation of water by the inhabitants along with the tourists should be practiced intensively.

- **Extreme weather conditions:** The place has a hot sub tropical climate with erratic rainfall. The summers are extremely hot and dry with the temperature rising up to around 45 degrees making summers extremely unsuitable time for visit, though winters are pleasant ones.
- **Risk of wildlife entering villages:** A huge portion of the region is under forest cover and it is filled with various species of migratory birds, wild animals such as Leopards, Elephants and many others. Due to human inhabitation amidst the forest land, wild elephants frequently enter the village areas destroying crops and huts of the local residents. Proper planning of the control over the wildlife is required to prevent potential damage to properties of the villagers.
- **Natural calamities:** Purulia has been identified as a place having relatively higher probability of seismic hazard.⁴ Earthquakes result in huge destruction of heritage sites, and hence is a great threat to heritage tourism.
- **Fast declining tribal population:** The tribal population across the world is not only declining rapidly but is also on the verge of extinction, and Purulia is no exception to this. The tribals of Purulia district are worst hit by extreme poverty, malnutrition, poor housing, illiteracy, and starvation. Most of the people displaced under various 'National Development Projects' are tribals, while their resettlement is almost disregarded owing to the corruption of government officials (Konar, 2010). Tribals become victims to most of the development projects in India, including big dams, industrialization, construction of natural parks, etc. but they are deprived of the actual fruits of development (Kothari, 1996; Mohanty, 2005). The tribal population of Purulia can truly be called 'primitive' based on their backwardness, timidity and lack of proper insight of a welfare society and economic development (Ray, 2016). If the district has to preserve its tradition and culture, protection and sustenance of the tribal groups is a must. Government should take utmost priority in finding out why the various projects undertaken for the upliftment of the tribals are not working and should take immediate steps in curbing all sorts of corruption and biases of government officials.

⁴ Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Assessment of West Bengal with special emphasis on Kolkata, Chapter 4, pg 148, available at <http://www.wbdmd.gov.in/writereaddata/Chapter-4.pdf>

SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Pristine Beauty *Plateaus and Hills *Bio diverse forest Resources *Art and Craft * Rich cultural heritage *Historical remains and heritage sites 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Limited Connectivity *Lack of proper awareness * Inadequate access to formal banking facilities *Improper network connectivity *Past Political disturbances *Lack of proper infrastructure *Lack of maintenance of the heritage sites and local tourist spots
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Promotion of folk tourism *Embracing community based tourism *Wellness tourism *Product promotion *Development of Industries for Lac production and Sericulture 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Drought prone area *Extreme weather conditions *Forest and wildlife * Natural calamities * Fast declining tribal population

Strategies for developing Sustainable Tourism in Purulia

Our study reveals that Purulia has an immense potential to attract tourists from not only within the state and the country but also from abroad not only because of its majestic natural beauty but also for the historical and heritage remains, the biodiversity of the region, the traditions and customs of the tribal community, which definitely acts as a base of sustainable tourism. The key features must be highlighted and its beautiful image must be brought out in front of the whole world. However, defining the quality of rural tourism with the help of appropriate parameters is a big challenge and therefore, a strategy can be implemented to frame the quality of service to be offered after a thorough investigation of the visitors' norms (Partalidou and Iakovidou, 2008). Hence, expectation of the tourists should also be understood very clearly before while framing strategies for sustainable tourism. Following suggestions for developing sustainable tourism in Purulia should be considered:

- Due to the lack of proper connectivity in terms of technology, this region remains alienated from the rest of the world. The internet connectivity needs to be penetrated to every nook and corner of the region to promote the area and bring it forth to the tourists.
- Government must take all necessary steps to develop financial infrastructure and a strong banking system. Various facilities provided by banks must be properly communicated, so that money is circulated in their economy and people can avail credits to start their own business.

- Entrepreneurs engaged in various activities related to tourism must be involved towards investing in the district. Various businesses associated with tourism, directly or indirectly, must come together and help in the provision of various facilities to promote tourism.
- An awareness programme must be initiated in order to educate the local inhabitants about the importance of tourism and how they can help develop it while maintaining the environmental, social, cultural and ecological sustainability. It is important to restructure and re-energize the mindset of the local inhabitants first for no sustainable development can be attained unless people make up their minds to embrace such change (Chatterjee, 2016).
- Local groups can be created by the government authorities providing them proper training on the tourism sector and its significant role in the upliftment of the socio- economic status of a place.
- A community bonding can benefit the region in order to promote community based tourism whereby the local inhabitants can come together and provide various services in terms of food and lodging and organizing tour packages of the various important spots of the region. Support of the local community and attitude of the local workers providing hospitality services in the tourism industry has been widely recognized as a very important factor for success of tourism (Long et al. 1990; Murphy 1985; Perdue, Long, and Kang 1995, Wilson et. al 2001). Hence, a constant engagement with the local inhabitants in terms of an increased community support and local leadership in formulating strategies is required so that a sustainable development process can be undertaken thereby maintaining the rich culture an heritage of the district (Richins, 2008).
- The region has ample scope of manufacturing and promoting wellness products due to the abundance of various healing and herbal trees. Government and various business organizations should come forward to provide formal training to the residents on how to harness the gift of nature in promoting tourism. Further, customized products and services based on the spending capacity of the tourists can also be developed.
- Tourism being a people industry, human resource development occupies a key place in the development of sustainable tourism, which should be developed keeping a focus on industry practices based on sustainability and value systems along with behavioral patterns among all stakeholders (Jithendran and Baum, 2000). Though the government has already taken a number of steps for the upliftment of the place, like 'Utkarsh Bangla' initiative to develop various technical skills of the locals, including computer training, hand embroidery, beautician training, etc., more training programmes and awareness needs to be created.

- Local crafts made of lac art and clay Chhau masks can be presented or sold to the tourists to consider them as a token of memory or souvenir. This would not only generate revenue, but also serve as a fantastic way to preserve, promote and bring forth the local art of the people to the world outside.
- Promotion of the cottage and handloom industry, agricultural activities of the region is also required.
- Preservation, education and upliftment of the tribal communities is the need of the hour for Purulia district. They should be engaged in preserving forests, commonly known as their 'Sacred Groves' and they should be involved in various tourism related activities, which would attract tourists towards their culture and also eradicate extreme poverty among them.

Conclusion

Purulia is a place possessing divine majestic beauty with rich biodiversity, ancient historical remains, deep rooted tribal culture and customs, traditional craftsmanship and handloom, which makes it a place not only worth visiting, but also worth knowing in detail. The detailed SWOT analysis of the place shows that it has enough potential to emerge as one of the most happening travel destinations for the travellers, if the various challenges can be tackled carefully. However, proper initiative from the Government of West Bengal is highly required in order to promote the tourism in the region. Proper development of banking systems and credit facilities is a prerequisite for any economic development and proper education and awareness of the various initiatives already taken by the government to assist them is required.

Government can also think of a Public-Private Partnership Model to tap the rural regions of the state in order to promote tourism. Locals and tribal communities must be involved in promoting tourism, developing various local and wellness products and in providing various services related to it, which would not only make tourists feel associated with them, but also develop interests among the locals to put their heart and soul in tourism development. Government along with private entrepreneurial partnership needs to take care of the infrastructural and technological development of the rural regions of the state. Development of the human resources of the region, especially the tribal communities, which is indispensable for the development of tourism in any region, must be taken care of by various voluntary organizations along with the government. Finally, based on the SWOT analysis, we can say that promoting the strengths, working on the opportunities thereby challenging the weaknesses and threats of the region will definitely help the tourism industry to boom in the 'laal matir desh' (land of red soil) of West Bengal.

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