

Women Entrepreneurship In Tourism Industry; A Study On Women Entrepreneurial Opportunities In Tourism Industry Of West Bengal

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Abstract: *Tourism Industry has been recognised as one of the fastest growing industries with immense potentiality in economic development and economic reformation especially in developing countries. Tourism directly contributes in the economy not only by earning foreign exchange, but also through multiplier effect. Apart from that it also contributes in socio-cultural and environmental development. Tourism development in any country encourages both employment opportunities and entrepreneurial practices. Entrepreneurship is always recognised practice in tourism industry as it encourages in creative freedom and accepting challenges. Women plays very important role especially in hospitality and tourism industry. Their contributions are not only restricted as employees, but also equally in business and entrepreneurship. Multi-dimensional approach of tourism invites new innovations and practices to cater versatile demand of tourists from both domestic and international market. West Bengal is a land, where tourism creates opportunities for both tourists and the entrepreneurs. It offers variety of destinations covering almost all type of tourist attractions and explores opportunities to earn from tourism too. The state carries immense potentials in women entrepreneurial practices like other industry.*

The research had been conducted to understand the opportunities of women entrepreneurship in tourism industry in west Bengal. It is also to understand its application area and the limitations.

Key Words: *Entrepreneurship, Tourism Industry, Entrepreneurship Strategy.*

I. Introduction

Tourism Industry has been recognised as one of the potential areas for economic development and economic transformation in the world. Service Industry like tourism opens immense opportunities for employment generation and entrepreneurial practices specially for developing and under developed countries. It has been recognised as one of the fastest growing industry in India and the world, where the scope of employment and entrepreneurship both are unlimited. Following the characteristics of service industry, Tourism is little different from other commodities. It is highly dependable on seasonal factors and customers satisfaction criteria.

Like the other industry, tourism also welcome and encourage women participation not only as trained and untrained manpower, but also as a business leaders and entrepreneurs. As a parent industry, tourism supports and encourages other allied areas to contribute more and create employment and business opportunities. The number of women entrepreneurs are increasing day by day and their contributions are also recognised and appreciated globally.

West Bengal is called as “Mini India” because of the versatile tourism products and tourism business opportunity. Government initiatives have already been taken to promote and practice tourism all over the state. Potential areas have been identified and tourism action plan have been formulated to achieve the target. The master plan also includes women entrepreneurial practices and support system to make Bengal proud.

II. Objective Of The Study

Research programme is always associated with certain objectives, which give a direction towards the conclusion of research, analysis and findings. Followings are the main objectives of this research programme:

- i) Understanding the Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism Industry.
- ii) Focusing on women empowerment in tourism industry through entrepreneurial practices.
- iii) Understanding the need and benefits of women empowerment and their entrepreneurial practices in Tourism Industry.
- iv) Highlighting on the threatened areas of related practices.
- v) Contributing in the field of Women Development, Economic development and Tourism Research.

III. Data And Methodology

Data Source: Both Primary and Secondary sources of data have been used for the study.

Primary Data Source: 27 respondents from tourism and other industry.

Secondary Data Sources: Books, Journals, Annual Report etc.

Methodology:

1. Qualitative
2. Quantitative

IV. Literature Review

Tourism Industry an Overview:

The word “Tourism” doesn’t mean only crossing the border internationally or merely visiting a place. It possesses the broader approach of experiencing and witnessing the charm and beauty of natural attractions and manmade creations. One of the early definition of tourism sited in the year 1937 by League of Nations, ‘The term tourist shall in principle be interpreted to mean any person travelling for a period of 24 hours or more in a country other than in which he usually resides’. In 1977, Jafari described tourism, ‘The study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs, and of the impacts that both he and the industry have on the host’s socio-cultural, economic and physical environments’.

Considering one of the fastest growing and largest industry, tourism is also called “The Smokeless Industry” and a tool for peace, harmony and international brotherly hood. The basic components of tourism also known as “Five A” denotes, Attractions, Accommodation, Accessibilities, Activities, Amenities. Tourism and its dimensions are rising in such a way that it has attracted almost all type of tourist irrespective of their pattern of movement and affordability. With the increasing amount of disposable time and income, tourism now, is not a status symbol, but a necessity. The benefits of tourism are not limited with recreation and pleasure, it has directly contribution on economic and socio cultural progress of the society. The destination enjoys the economic development through Multiplier Effect, and the socio-cultural interaction and exchange helps both tourists and host community to be enriched. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism generates more than 230 million jobs directly and indirectly, and contributes to more than 10 per cent of the world gross domestic products (GDP) (RodayBiwal Joshi 2009). According to United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) it was 842 million international tourist arrivals in the year 2006, and in 2020 it is expected 1.6 billion.

Understanding the system of tourism is one of the major issues, because it not only creates the business and employment opportunity, but also contributes in the field of entrepreneurial practices and socio-economic development. Different areas directly and indirectly associated with tourism are equally responsible for individual and overall societal development. Tourism system is a collection of interrelated elements that interact and influence to produce an expected result in tourism. The Tourism System can be described with the following diagram;

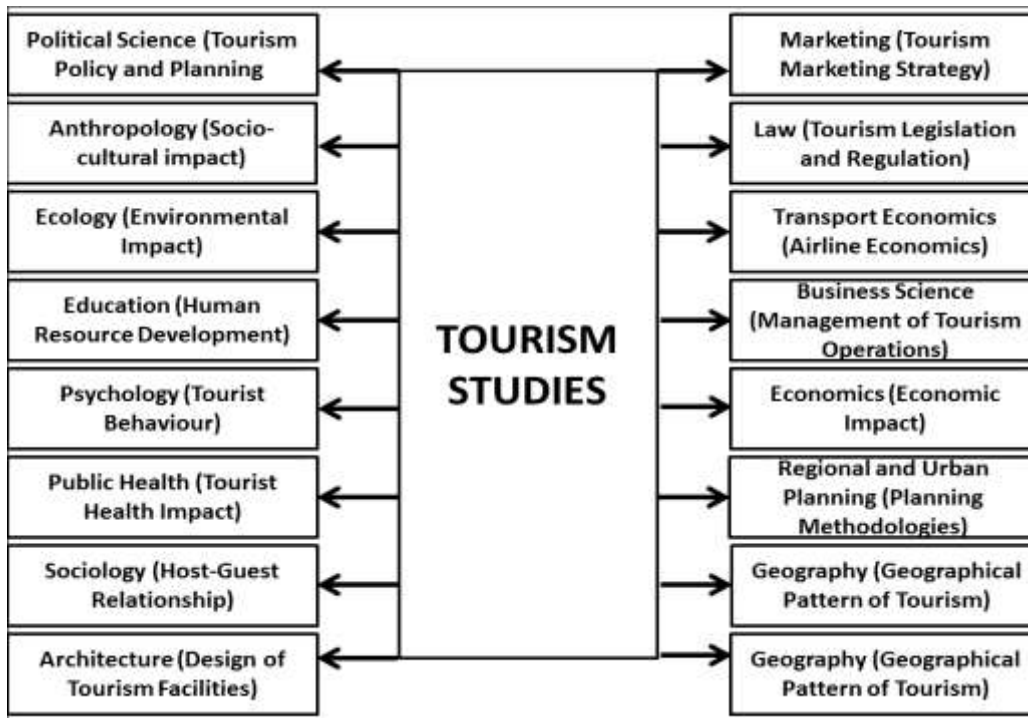


Fig:1 An Inter-disciplinary perspective of Tourism

Source: Keyser (2002)

Entrepreneurship in Tourism Industry:

Like the other industries, tourism has immense potentiality to empower the communities with sustainable economic growth. ‘Understanding tourists and tourism processes’ is the most important factor for employing and empowering the local community. Tourism industry has been identified as one of the potential areas for creating and catering employment, economic sustainability and stability. Building high-quality entrepreneurship in tourism industry, the relationship between all stake holders and their contribution must be understood.



Fig: 2 Tourism Stakeholders

Source: Author

Tourism Industry encourages all the stakeholders to participants directly and indirectly in tourism and allied business. It may be the industry like Airlines, Hotels, Handicrafts and even Entertainment; all are equally important and responsible for their contribution on total GDP of a country. Tourism Industry plays the key role in involving and seeking contribution from all stakeholders. Considering the complexity and competitiveness in both domestic and international market, tourism must follow social responsibilities and environmental norms. As the products are highly dependable on service quality and tourist’s experience, the industry must give due attention and importance to all the stakeholders.

The most important and prime stakeholder of Tourism Industry is a person who is travelling from his place of residence to other places for leisure, pleasure and recreation. It may be a traveller, tourists or excursionist, or even a Free Independent Traveller (FIT) or Group Inclusive Tour (GIT). As they are the key player in Tourism industry, it is most important to understand their requirement and need. Same as, the industry, it is the responsibility of the tourists to practice such activities which leads to sustainable socio-economic development.

Travel Agency and Tour Operator are another key area which directly regulates the demand and supply of Tourism Industry. Purchasing different necessary services from the main service providers (Airlines, Hotels, Car rental etc.) making them compiled as per tourist's requirement (Tour Package), Travel agents and Tour Operators are called as "Tourism Intermediaries".

Infrastructural support for destination accessibility, accommodation, attractions and amenities is another area where the stakeholders are duly responsible for total tourism development. Central and state Government must have a clear and goal oriented tourism planning and policy supported by all other departments directly and indirectly contributing in the field of tourism. Transportation (Air, Rail, Road, Water), Accommodation (Govt. Hotels, Guest House, Bungalow etc.), Public Health, Communication are all the major areas where Government agencies are playing key role.

Another important stakeholder of tourism industry is host community or the locals of the tourist destinations. Tourism industry carries both positive and negative impacts in the area of economic, socio-culture and environment. The negative impact on tourists are comparatively less whereas the impact on host are quite permanent and strong. Interaction and exchange between host (locals) and guests (tourists) are important and desirable, but over interaction may cause socio cultural and economic imbalance.

Socio economic development cannot be achieved without the direct contribution of NGO and other parallel organisations. All the above mention stakeholders are also interrelated in their respective areas of work and contribution and continuously create the opportunity for employment and entrepreneurship. May it be large, medium or small scale enterprise, skilled and semiskilled manpower are required everywhere.

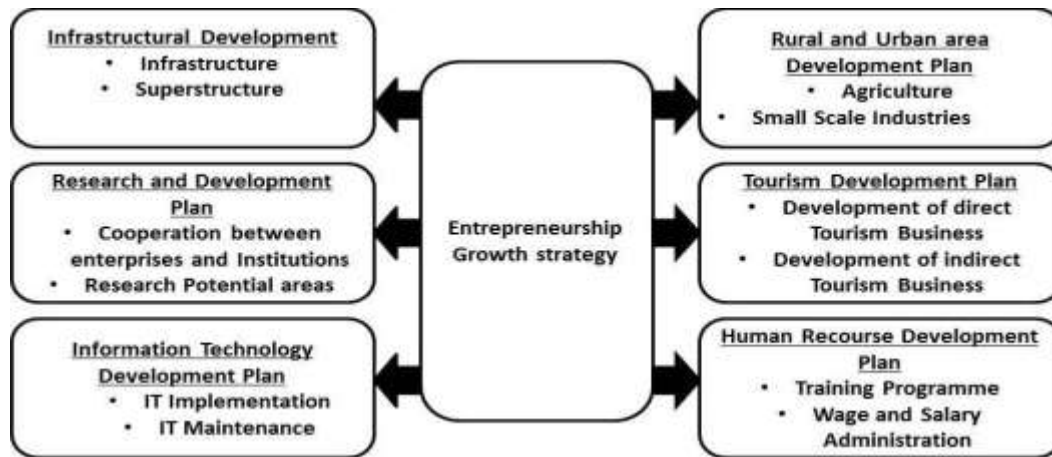
Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism:

Considering the opportunities of entrepreneurship in Tourism Industry, it is one of the major areas where the opportunities are unlimited. Frequent change in travel pattern, highly competitive market and various types of tourist demands opens the arena of business opportunities. Creativity is another dimension which always encourages undertaking and practicing something new. Following are the areas where budding entrepreneurs can enjoy the blossom.

Accommodation Sector:	Hotels (Boutique Hotel, Heritage Houses, Theme Villages), Motels (Highway Amenities), Guest Houses, Bed and Breakfast Accommodation, Farm House, Home Stay
Transportation:	Airlines and Allied business, Car Rental, Specially arranged transportation for tourists
Travel Services:	Travel Agency, Tour Operator, Guide Service, Language Interpreter, Event Management
Allied Industry:	Handicraft / Souvenir, Entertainment like dance, Music, Show, Communication

Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy:

Achieving the optimal benefit of Entrepreneurial practices in Tourism Industry, there must be an "Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy" consisting all the stakeholders and their contribution. Through the following chart, the relationship between Tourism Industry Entrepreneurship and the growth strategy can be established



1. **Rural and Urban area Development Plan:** There should be a specific plan for entrepreneurial development in rural and urban areas where tourism practices are taken place. Physical feature, demographic factors, education and socio-economic structure are taken into consideration at the time of separate rural and urban planning. Following are the areas where we can focus:
 - Agriculture Tourism Practices
 - Eco Tourism Practices
 - Small Scale Industries like Handicrafts of local areas, Handloom, Folk Dance Music etc.
2. **Tourism Development Plan:** There should be a tourism development plan focusing for more entrepreneurial practices. Central and State tourism planning and policy designing and frame work must welcome all direct and indirect practitioners in this regard. The opportunities may focus on
 - Development of direct tourism business like hotels, resorts, car rental, and transportation services etc.
 - Development of indirect tourism business like communication, utility, health services etc.
3. **Human Recourse Development Plan:** One of the major areas in tourism industry is trained human resource requirement to cater both domestic and international tourist. It may include:
 - Various Training Programmes like, Degree, diploma in tourism, Hotel Management, other professional courses like IATA/UFTAA etc.
 - Proper Wage and Salary Administration to prevent employee exploitation and protect human rights.
4. **Infrastructural Development Plan:** Providing basic infrastructure for tourism is one of the major issues where entrepreneurs can set their success path. It may include Infrastructure like Accommodation, Transportation, and Destination Maintenance etc.
5. **Research and Development Plan:** Research and Development plan include enterprise or industry –institute partnership which will focus on future manpower requirement and entrepreneurial opportunities. The potential areas of research can also be identified for further improvement.
6. **Information Technology Development Plan:** Taking the competitive advantage and reaching to maximum clients, information technology is one of those areas where entrepreneurial opportunities are endless. Website, App, Payment Get ways are live examples in this regard.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Bengal Tourism:

West Bengal not only offers variety of tourist destinations, it also offers entrepreneurial opportunities for tourism also. Following are the areas like:

- Variety and versatile tourist destinations catering the interest of both domestic and international tourists.
- Variety of Tourism Product covering all types of interest and motivation of tourists
- National and International Border
- Rich Natural and Cultural Resources
- Tourism Education and awareness
- State Tourism Planning and Policy
- State Government Initiative and Support for Tourism Development

Govt. Initiatives to promote Entrepreneurship in Tourism:

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India implements a number of schemes for Indian Entrepreneurs/Indian Citizens working in the Tourism sector:

- ✓ Capacity Building for Service Providers (Institutes)
- ✓ Hotel Accommodation

- ✓ Hunar-Se-RozgarTak - SenaKeSahyog Se (Creating Employable Skills)
- ✓ Marketing Development Assistance (MDA)
- ✓ Motels Accommodation
- ✓ Publicity and Marketing.
- ✓ Rahul SankrityayanParyatanPuraskarYojna
- ✓ Refresher Courses for Regional Level Guides
- ✓ Stand-alone Restaurants
- ✓ Tented Accommodation
- ✓ Timeshare Resorts
- ✓ Travel Trade

Chief Minister Ms.MamtaBannerjee has taken special initiative to promote tourism in West Bengal by putting emphasis on the areas like:

- ✓ Darjeeling: Satellite Destination, Homestay, Tea Tourism
- ✓ Dooars: Wild life Tourism, Community Based Tourism
- ✓ Jhargram: Heritage Tourism and Jungle Tourism
- ✓ Digha: Beach Tourism and Water Sports Activities
- ✓ Kolkata: Durga Puja Carnival, Handicraft and Handloom Fair, Fish Festival, Mango Festival, Sweets Festival, Sky Walk at Dakshineswar, River Cruise Carnival etc.

Women Entrepreneurship in Tourism Industry:

“Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters connecting them, who are you”

.....Swami Vivekananda

Development of the society depends on the development of women hood. Importance of women education, gender equality, their physical and mental health, social security are major issues recognised worldwide. In India, where women are worshiped as Goddess Durga and Kali, we witness the issues like Nirbhaya. Where GoddessSaraswati is worshiped for education, we fight for girl child marriage. In every house, where we worship Goddess Laxmi, but never protests for dowries.But, the other side is more glorious and acknowledging where we have MatanginiHazra, SarojiniNidu, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Mrs.PrativaPatil, Bachendri Paul....an endless list.

Considering women participation in business and entrepreneurial practices, India is one of the leading countries in the world. There are lots of women engaged into business, may be for survival or for some other reason. Nita Ambani, Ritu Kumar are recognised worldwide for their entrepreneurial challenges and achievements. Scenario in Tourism Industry is also very promising. Women entrepreneur and employee, the number is increasing day by day. Few leading women entrepreneur in Tourism Industry, who changed the regular practices and concept by their extra ordinary creativity and challenges are; Sabine Heller (CEO, Asmallworld), Piya Bose (Founder, Girls on the go club), ChitraGurnaniDaga (CEO, Thrillophilia),JayantiRajagopalan (Founder, Detours India).

Factors influencing women entrepreneurship:

- Financial Support by Bank, Angel Investors, Govt. Financial scheme
- Education and Training by both Govt. and Private Institution
- Changing Social Need
- Women Empowerment
- Motivation (Family, friends, Peer group etc.)

Research Findings and Analysis:

1. Caste wise percentage of Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Caste	Percentage
General	40.25%
SC	12.18%
ST	6.97%
OBC	40.60%

2. Religion wise percentage of Women Entrepreneurship in India:

Religion	Percentage
Hindus	65.60%
Muslim	12.84%
Christian	5.20%
Others	16.36%

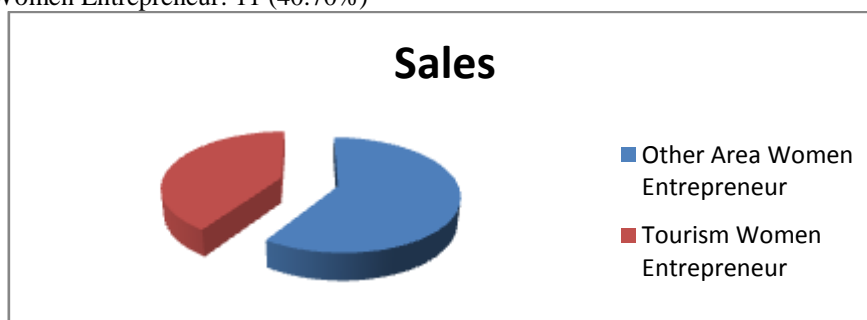
3. Top Five States with its share in women entrepreneurship:

Rank	State	Share Percentage
1.	Tamil Nadu	13.51%
2.	Kerala	11.35%
3.	Andhra Pradesh	10.56%
4.	West Bengal	10.33%
5.	Maharashtra	8.25%

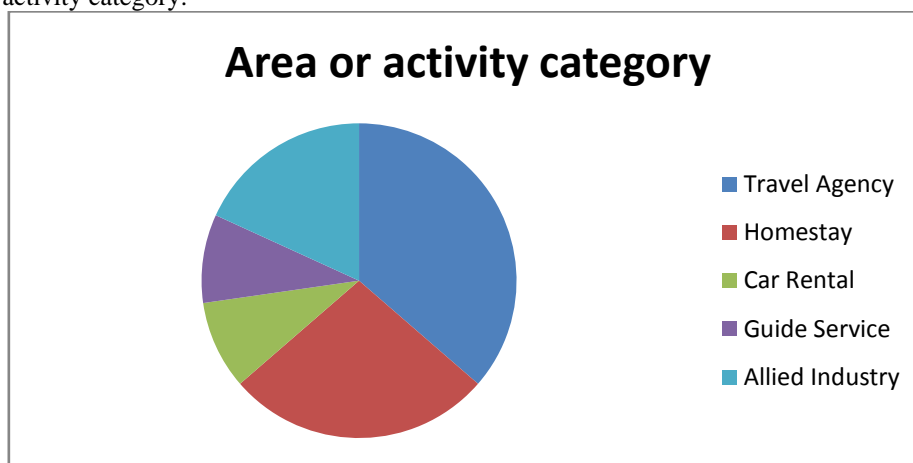
4. Percentage of women entrepreneur in tourism among total respondents:

Total Respondents: 27

Tourism Women Entrepreneur: 11 (40.70%)



5. Area or activity category:



6. Analysis from Interview:

Interviews have been conducted with each respondent individually. The analysis can be listed as follows;

- ✓ Formal education is important for industry but it is not mandatory.
- ✓ Support from family, friends and peer group plays very important role for women entrepreneur.
- ✓ Govt. Scheme, Bank and Financial Institutions plays supportive role to undertake the challenges.
- ✓ Social recognition and awareness is an area, which need to be improved.

Recommendation and Conclusion Remarks:

The research suggests some recommendation for future development of entrepreneurship in tourism industry. This includes: Identification of potential areas which encourages maximum entrepreneurial opportunities.

1. Building separate and goal oriented entrepreneurial action plan focusing tourism and related industries.
2. Putting special emphasis on women's participation in tourism business.
3. Government initiative and support for more women entrepreneurial practices in tourism. Concern departments, must have action plan for this and specialised programme like subsidies, grants must be included to achieve the target.
4. Conducting special and professional training programme related to entrepreneurship and tourism.
5. Creating social awareness for women education, women employment and societal development.
6. Award and recognition by other industries, institution and Government.

The research concludes with the facts and findings that more initiative should be taken to promote and encourage women's participation in any field like medical practices, educational activities, defence and even in business. Women entrepreneurship must not be restricted in a specific class or society, and limited with very less examples.

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