

## **The Role of Tourism for Human Resource Development in Darjeeling District of West Bengal, India**

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### **Abstract**

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Tourism is one of the most important economic activities and smokeless industry in the world today, because it directly generates services, products, foreign currency, employment and investments. It is one of the key global industries which is labour intensive and generates manifold benefits. It helps develop national economies, catalyses development process, highlights and conserves cultural heritage, and acts as a bridge in international harmony and peace. Human Resource Development is central to the sustainability-oriented tourism development initiative. Based on secondary sources, literature search and discussions with key stake holders and interaction with the tourist, the existing tourists' scenario and situation and their role on human resource development were studied. The information collected from different sources has been verified with the field experience. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of tourism for promoting the human resource development in Darjeeling District of West Bengal. Tourism has emerged as an important socio-economic activity of the people of Darjeeling District having its unique geographical advantage with a mountainous topography and is a leading tourist destination in West Bengal. It has created the opportunity for local people to overcome their latent problem of high unemployment. The major conclusion that has emerged from the present study is that it is particularly important to promote tourism as an instrument for human resource development in the region. The tourism industry in Darjeeling is a large & diverse field & it provides challenging & exciting career opportunities for people of this region of the country. It is hoped that these findings will generate strong interest in government agencies, private-sector stakeholders in tourism development, academics, and the media. It is also hoped that the discussion and analyses generated by the observation and findings will contribute to a better-informed policy dialog between government and the private sector in more fully exploiting the potential of tourism in the economy.

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**Keywords:** Tourism Industry, Human Resource Development, Tourist

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important economic activities in the world today, because it directly generates services, products, foreign currency, employment and investments. In countries where tourism has become a flourishing service industry, it has a far-reaching economic and social impact on national development. To make the human resource development through tourism industry, it is necessary to put in place a system of training and professional education with necessary infrastructural support capable of generating manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

West Bengal is a land of splendid destination with rich cultural heritage, historical heritage, flora & fauna, spectacular beaches & mountains & wildlife. There are a few states in India with the variety that West Bengal has offered. Tourism has various dimensions in various aspects like economic, social, demographic, technological, geographical, cultural, natural, and so many fields. The attractions of tourists have been growing up on the above stated types of dimensions. Tourism now has laid down emphasis on the rural areas. In the context of socio-economic objectives it is necessary to take vital steps which are constructive and positive. Tourism is also an employment oriented sector. It is estimated that hotel and catering sector provide more than 10% of the total employment generated by the tourism industry. There is an opportunity which supplies various goods, needed for tourism product may be in the position to open avenues of employment.

The importance of ensuring high standards of quality and efficiency in tourism services to develop international tourism is well-recognized. It is particularly important in the case of Darjeeling District intending to promote tourism as an instrument for economic development. It can, however, be achieved only by initiating specific measures for human resource development in various segments of the tourism industry. Hotels, restaurants, travel agents, tour operators and other providers of tourist services require professionally trained personnel in various trades at all levels. Taxi drivers, coach operators and other grass-roots level workers need to be trained to make them skilled and personable.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The literature review identified a number of gaps and weaknesses in the existing literature on tourism development in destination regions.

The overall aim of this study was to build upon these resources by analyzing the role of tourism and its impact on Human Resource Development in the study region.

The present paper is structured to elucidate with the following main objectives:

- (i) To explore the status and their pattern of Tourism in Darjeeling District
- (ii) To explore the reasons for which the foreign and domestic tourists visit the destination for recreational and leisure purposes and also to gain experience from art, culture, lifestyle etc, which in turn create a tremendous impact on local economy.
- (iii) To impart knowledge and develop skills oriented to the nature and needs of the Tourism Industry for present and future needs.
- (iv) To analyze the role of tourism for Human Resource Development (HRD) in the study area and their importance on the economy of the region.
- (v) To develop an organizational culture in which superiors subordinate relationship, team work, and coordination among different sub-units are strong and contribute to the organizational wealth, dynamism, professional well-being, motivation and pride of the employees in Tourism Industry.
- (vi) To assess the status of HRD in the tourism sector and to prescribe suggestions meant for the development of tourism.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

The study has been based on empirical observation available from different reports, various journals, and e-journal. Collection of available literature, detection of situation in the place of importance was gathered through personal observations and, collection of related information's. Observations were made based on news reports, interaction with some of the local people associated with tourism and tourist, discussions with some of the Officials, NGOs, travel agencies etc. who are actively working on tourism.

Based on secondary sources and discussions with key stake holders and interaction with the tourist, the existing tourists' scenario and situation and their role on human resource development were studied. The information collected from different sources has been verified with the field experience.

#### **4. Background of the Study Area**

Darjeeling is northern district of West Bengal state in eastern India and famous for its beautiful Himalayas hill station & and Darjeeling tea. Geographically the district can be divided into two broad divisions, the hills and the plains. Darjeeling the northern district of the Jalpaiguri Division, roughly resembles an inverted wedge with its base resting on Sikkim, its sides touching Nepal, Bhutan and the Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal. Darjeeling is second least populated district with a population of 18.4 lakhs as per 2011 Census. Around 61 percent of total district population is rural. Population density of Darjeeling at 585 persons per sq. km is significantly lower than the state average due to high proportion of inhabitable hilly regions in district geographic area. Adult gender ratio of Darjeeling has increased from 937 females per 1000 males in 2001 to 971 females per 1000 males in 2011, while child gender ratio has decreased from 962 females per 1000 males to 943 females per 1000 males during the same period.

Darjeeling is a flavorful district, internationally known and famous for its tea industry. This hill town is on a lower range of altitude in comparison to the others in the Himalaya, which allows the residents and visitors to escape the immense summer heat of the plains. This placement allows all of Darjeeling's occupants to experience the area to its fullest, getting the best mixture of soothing temperatures possible. The immense history of Darjeeling is intertwined around the tea plantations, leading to the development of several tea estates around town.

#### **5. Pattern of Tourism and its Importance in Darjeeling District of west Bengal**

The success of tourism in Darjeeling district owes to several factors like its location, climate, accessibility and the series of tour packages available. Nestled among the undulating mountains with the shimmering Kanchenjunga towering over the sapphire sky, Darjeeling district is fondly called "Queen of the Hills" and is a perfect gateway for those seeking to be in harmony with nature. Darjeeling District has a unique geographical advantage with a mountainous topography and is a leading tourist destination in West Bengal. Tiger Hill is a well known tourist spot in this district.

Hill stations like Kalimpong, Sandakphu, Lava-Lolaygaon and Kurseong attract domestic and foreign tourists during the summer months. Other tourist attractions in the district are Mirik lake resort, Botanical Garden, Nightingale Park, Senchal Lake, Dhirdham Temple, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Tibetan Refugee Self-Help centre, Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary, Ghoom Monastery, Tea Gardens etc.

The strategic location of Darjeeling district is significant. Lying in the northernmost region of the state of West Bengal, the altitude of the district rises to a height of approximately 7500 feet or 2134 m above the mean sea level. It is an integral part of the Lower Himalaya. Pleasant climate of the district makes it an ideal place for holidaying. Nature enthusiasts will find Darjeeling reaches all their requirements, with a variety of trek and trail options, allowing the enticing breeze to release feelings of peacefulness. Those looking for a relaxing getaway from the hot plains will also be more than satisfied, taking in the cultural diversity and beautiful sights around them.

### 5.1 Pilgrimage Tourism in Darjeeling District

Pilgrimage tours in Darjeeling district occupy a special place in tourism. The Japanese Peace Pagoda in Darjeeling was established by Nipponzan Myohoji which is the highest free structure in the town. It also showcases the four avatars of the Buddha. Dhirdham temple is designed on the conception of the famous Pashupatinath temple of Kathmandu and was built in 1939. Darjeeling is a place of many revered monasteries. Dali Monastery is situated about 4 kms away from Darjeeling town and is one of the most famous monasteries belonging to the Kargyupa sect. Lama Sherab Gyatso built the famed Ghoom Monastery in 1875. The renowned Tomo Geshe Rimpoche of Tibet blessed this ancient monastery. The specialty of this monastery is that it contains the statue of the `Future Coming Buddha` known as Maitreya Buddha. The Monastery has also preserved some of the priceless handwritten Buddhist manuscripts. The Zong Dog Palri Fo-Brang Gumpa was consecrated by His Highness the Dalai Lama. This monastery is famous for its traditional Tibetan wall paintings.

Kurseong is a notable place in Darjeeling district to venture as a pilgrim. The Ambhotia Shiva Temple is set amongst brilliant scenic beauty. Jagdish Mandir on Bank Road is a very old temple (almost 300 years old) of Lord Jagannath. St. Paul's Church on Hill Cart Road, Giddapahar Durga Mata Mandir, Buddhist Gompha in Monteviot and the Buddhist Gompha in Dowhill Road are some more religious sites in Kurseong.

## 5.2 Nature Tourism in Darjeeling District

Darjeeling district is probably the best retreat to enjoy the Indian scenic beauty at its best. Darjeeling is dotted with several places of natural beauty. Ghoom, which rises approximately 7407 ft above the sea level, is the highest railway station on Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The other places of nature tours in Darjeeling are Tiger Hill, Museum of Natural History, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Llyod Botanic Garden, Tea gardens and Observatory Hill and so on. The zoo happens to be the only center in India for the breeding of the rare snow leopard. The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute is another place of interest in Darjeeling. Rock Garden and Ganga Maya Park have added to the beauty of Darjeeling. Garg World Amusement Park is another place of significance in Darjeeling and is an amusement park with lots of attractions stored for its tourists.

For the botanists, animal and nature lover, Darjeeling offers several nature spots of interest. The Tiger Hill is located around 11 km from the main town. The Tiger Hill has earned international fame for the superb view of sunrise over the Kanchenjunga and other great Eastern Himalayan peaks. The golden glow of the rising sun changes the colour of the snow-capped peaks to crimson, pink, and shining gold making it a breathtaking view.

Then there is the striking Kurseong at an altitude of 1,458 meters. Many tourists halt at Kurseong on their way to Siliguri from Darjeeling. The serene landscape with undulating hills and mountains, rivers and gorges make a wonderful view. Mid-way between Siliguri and Darjeeling lies another hill resort, Mirik. At 1,767 meters Mirik is famous for its lake, boating facilities and plantations of pine, cardamom, and oranges. Eagle's Craig is the highest viewpoint here, offering a panoramic view of the surroundings.

Kalimpong is a nature's paradise with countless varieties of flowers and plants. It is also an important flower-producing center and it produces 80% of the total gladioli produced in India. There are numerous nurseries in Kalimpong, which excel in production of orchids. Places to visit in Kalimpong include the Sericulture Research Institute, and the Nature Interpretation Center (located on Rinkingpong Road).

Siliguri is a tourist attraction spot and the ample natural landscapes attract tourists of all age groups. Gajoldoba on Tista Barrage is an ideal place for bird watchers. The reservoir is surrounded by dense forests of Baikunthapur and invites a large collection of water birds from Ladakh and Central Asia. The Brahmini ducks, Poachards, Pintails, mallards, Shovlers, black Ibis, and many species of storks, cormorants and ducks are seen here. Fulbari barrage is situated 15 km from Siliguri on Siliguri-Jalpaiguri highway and forms a huge marshy land which provides ideal nestling place for migratory water fowls like Rudy shell, Mallard, open bull stork and much more. Shorea Forest Recreation Center is a recently established eco-tourism center and is situated amidst the dense high sal forests of Baikunthapur division of Mahananda Wild Life Sanctuary. Sevok, Kalijhora and Mongpong are surrounded by forested hills and vast river basin. Nature tourism in Darjeeling district provides a much-desired break from the chaotic urban life.

### 5.3 Leisure Tourism in Darjeeling District

Leisure Tourism in Darjeeling is probably the best option for tourist. The entire journey from Siliguri to Mirik (1767M, 50Kms) through the winding roads cutting across the tea gardens on the rolling slopes offers magnificent views. The quiet evening at Lake Sumendu encircled by forested hills, followed with a leisure walk on the forest trails around the lake, provides a memorable day in Mirik. Early morning trip to Tiger Hill for a breathtaking view of sunrise over the Kanchenjunga, then a visit to the Ghoom Monastery and Batasia Loop makes a perfect day in Darjeeling. The world famous `Toy train` that gushes through the winding mountains is an experience that no one should miss. The unforgettable ropeway ride over the Takvar Valley Tea garden, Rock Garden and Gangamaya Park in the evening makes a memorable stay at Darjeeling. Drive to Loleyaon (1620M, 24Kms from Kalimpong) unfolds another hidden picturesque hamlet in Kalimpong hills.

Sunrise from Jhandidara over the Kanchenjunga is a never to forget experience. On a clear day Mt. Everest is also visible from the watch tower of Jhandidara.

Trekking in Darjeeling is organized through both high and low altitude areas. The most popular of treks is the one through the Singalila range in Darjeeling. The trek starts at Maneybhanjang (2134 m), goes to Meghma (2900 m), Toughu (3070 m), Gairibas (2621 m), Sandakphu (3636 m), and Phalut (3600m). The best time of the year to undertake trek in Darjeeling in India is April-May and October-November.

#### 5.4 Tea Tourism in Darjeeling District

Tea Tourism is a relatively new concept in the world and Darjeeling is a taking a lead in this area. Darjeeling is after all the Mecca of tea and sprawling estates producing what we know as the "Champagne of Teas" to the delight of the world. There are 80 odd operational tea gardens in Darjeeling that span across thousands of acres of land area on open hill slopes. High on the hills with cool breeze and misty weather, planters and workers come together to form a wonderland where tea grows in the finest form like nowhere else in the world.

Tea tourism is a fast growing travel concept in the Eastern Himalayas, mainly in the Darjeeling hills and Dooars foothills. A retreat in tea gardens set amidst serene landscape is perhaps the most exotic and innovative way to enjoy nature. The undulating beauty of the Tea Gardens is the primary attraction of Tea Tourism. A well maintained tea garden with its tea bushes and shade trees can be a real feast for the eyes.

Most of the Tea Tourism projects allow guests to stay inside the Tea Garden in Tea Bungalows. These are mostly the managers Bungalows constructed during the British era and influenced by the Victorian and Gothic architecture. Many of these Tea Bungalows are more than a century old and staying in these places itself can be an enticing experience. The gardens provide excellent view of the mountains including view of Kanchenjunga range of mountains. Some of the gardens are set close to the forests and nature based tourism.

## 6. Results and Discussion

### 6.1 Tourism & Human Resource Development

The Darjeeling District ranks second among 18 Districts of West Bengal just after Kolkata, in per capita GDP as well as in GDI; and the fourth in HDI with Kolkata, Haora and North 24 Parganas in the lead. It has received the Second Highest Plan outlay in the mid 1990s of 321.38 in terms of per capita income. In 2011, Darjeeling District had population of 1,846,823 of which male and female were 937,259 and 909,564 respectively. The district has had 2.4% of annual population growth 2001-2011, against State figure of 1.3%. The district has higher literacy rate standing at 79.92 percent as per 2011 census in comparison to state average of 70.6 percent. More than half of the population in the District is engaged in non-agricultural activity because of the unsuitability of the rugged and inaccessible terrain for agriculture purpose. Tertiary sector, driven by the growth of tourism in the district contributes highest share of state income. The District has around 35.3 percent of degraded non-forest land. The land conditions vary across different agro-ecological zones within the Northern Bengal. Around 20%, i.e., more than 57 hectares, of severe soil erosion in West Bengal takes place in parts of Darjeeling, Purulia, Birbhum, Bankura and Medinipur. In Darjeeling, the hills suffer the most due to top soil erosion during landslides.

It is found that the rural regions of Darjeeling are in fact the sub-urban extension of the Siliguri city. The increase in literacy rates is also attributed to the development of educational institutes around Siliguri. The rapid growth of the urban conglomeration of Siliguri as well as the presence tea estates have been the real cause for the hike in per capita income of the District. But the District Domestic Product is not strongly correlated with the per capita consumption. This is because most of the production or income generated actually gets siphoned off to the hearth and home from where the people, mostly migrants, belong. Although most of them are males, but the females migrate at large for short duration jobs like mid-wife, house-maid, mason, vegetable vendors, nursing, education and much more. This also indicates that the region provides good health, housing and employment opportunities, but, alas, it is concentrated around the only sub-division of Darjeeling District.

The rapid growth rates in the industry have a direct impact on tourism employment and human resources development in terms of demand for professionals, specific skills and related training and education facilities. The need to develop and train the required human resources in various segments of the tourism industry has been widely recognized in Asia and the Pacific. Human resource role is essentially an enabling role to provide the right context in which human performance occurs & the industry reaches its stated objectives. The demand for manpower in the hotels and restaurants sector has been far exceeding supply. This industry needs professionally qualified and trained personnel at all levels, whether managerial, supervisory or subordinate, to maintain facilities and services of international standards.

Tourism helps to grow sustainable income in an area. When local people engaged in tourism, new sources of income are generated for the community as a whole as well as through individual employment opportunities. This income could be produced through collecting fees for access to trails, providing the accommodation or guiding services, preparing and selling food and handicrafts and so on. However the expenditures of tourists are normally expressed in terms of various sectors of tourism industry regarding accommodation, cuisine, transportation and entertainments etc. The money spent by the tourists goes to the local business in a number of ways. This money in turn is spent on salaries and on meeting the demands of tourists such as food, drink, entertainment etc. Each time a tourist makes expenditure, a ripple of additional spending is sent through the economy. Thus the expenditure incurred by the tourists supports not only the tourist industry directly but indirectly also supports a number of other activities which produce goods and services for the tourist industry. In this way money spent by tourists flows several times and spread in to various sectors of economy of the study area.

Tourism generates employment in various sectors of the economy. Tourism destinations require new guides, guards, researchers or managers to meet increased tourists' demands. Local people may be employed as taxi drivers, tour guides, lodge owners or handicraft makers, or they may participate in other tourism enterprises. Moreover many other employment sources are enhanced as tourism grows. The hospitality industry makes good business between March and December. Around 4.5 lakh tourists visited the area in 2008-09 and the number fell because of political movement in 2009-10. During 2010-11, the tourism industry flourished and people started visiting the area again. So the development of tourism is very much depended on the uncertainties of the region.

Today private and public tourist sectors aim at establishing fundamental transportation systems, creating tourist attractions, purposeful promotions, economic development, investing in the standard tourist products, earning exchange currency incomes, and planned dynamic regional and worldwide marketing. To accomplish all these goals, human resources in public and private sectors must be empowered. In order to win customers' satisfaction, good services must be provided. This will attract more tourists and lead to earning more income and, as a result, the increase in revenues will, in turn, help to develop economic activity in the region and create more productive jobs.

## 6.2 Tourism and Human Resource Capacity Building

According to a study conducted by Ministry of Tourism on Manpower Requirement in Hotel industry, Tour operators and Travel sector the demand for manpower in Hotels & Restaurant sector far exceeds the supply. The study suggests that the supply of trained manpower is not even touching 40% of the demand. The first direct impact of this demand-supply mismatch is that the hospitality industry has to do with an unacceptable percentage of untrained manpower that affects the quality of service offered to the tourists. This industry needs professionally qualified and trained personnel at all levels, whether managerial, supervisory or subordinate, to maintain facilities and services of international standards. There are several institutions in West Bengal which are offering tourism-related courses. These include two run by the Government, namely, the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition (IHM) in Kolkata (3-year Degree course with intake of 220 students each year) and the Food Crafts Institute at Darjeeling (one year diploma course with intake of 90 students per year). Separately, the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (IISWBM), Kolkata has been offering a one-year Diploma course for 60 students in Tourism and Hospitality Management. Since the turnout from these institutes has not been enough, and as the entire tourism sector has been witnessing a massive expansion with new tourism products/destinations being developed in the State, there is a need for augmentation of the capacity building facilities for the human resource in areas related to tourism.

Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling is world renowned and trained the people to climb in high altitude. Mountaineering is an art and science and not merely a physical activity.

The training imparted at the institute does not aim to produce athletes and gladiators; rather it enables a student to shake off his/her differences of mind and narrowness of outlook. Apart from technical training, emphasis is also laid on discipline, character building and leadership. The self discipline imposed by students in difficult condition to ensure safety at the cost of comfort is of lasting value. In addition to mountaineering HMI also aims to instill in its students certain values of environmental protection, love for nature, protection of flora & fauna and also cultural diversity.

Manpower development has been a major concern for the Department of Tourism. Thus, the HRD professionals have to undergo a complete change in attitude, working system, human relation skills, etc. There will be more concern for innovations and strategies. There will be no place for the ill prepared the indolent and subservient stiffer. But there will be more opportunities for the well trained, imaginative, innovative, up-to-date and aggressive professionals with broader and all comprehensive view of things.

### 6.3 Challenges of Tourism

The tourism industry faced with various challenges in the field of human resources, one of the crucial issues in this regard is the quality of manpower. The industry is vitally faced with the demand for qualified quality personnel. The role of HR manager is very crucial in selecting and recruiting the right kind of people who can be an asset for the tourism sector. The Development of Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on destinations. Sustainable tourism development attempts to find a balance between these impacts to create an improved quality of life for the host community and the destination. The major attraction of the Queen of the Hill Station for the foreign tourists is the existing trekking route to Sandakphu and Phalut. But the existing facilities offered to trekkers are extremely limited and scheme had been undertaken under the Hill Development Programme in order to improve existing accommodation facilities at Tanglu, Sandakphu and Phalut.

Tourist flows in Darjeeling has been increased in recent years due to the various developmental schemes which are undertaken under the Hill Development Programme. Generally the tourists are of two types: (i) Foreign Tourists and (ii) Domestic Tourists. A large proportion of foreign tourists comes from Germany, Canada, U.K., U.S.A., Japan and Australia. Besides these foreign tourists, a large number of domestic tourists visit Darjeeling every year.

Excessive development of tourism in Darjeeling Hills especially in town areas has begun to destroy those attributes which attract the visitors. In order to alter this situation it is required to divert a portion of tourist inflow to different other areas of Darjeeling District by promoting successful tourism in those areas. Most of the tourists flock to Darjeeling during the months of April, May, June and October. During these four months Darjeeling gets 60 to 70 percent of its total tourist inflow. It is during these periods, Darjeeling has to bear enormous pressure of tourists and has to face number of problems like shortage of drinking water, sanitation problem, increase in transportation cost, increase in hotel tariff etc.

Tourism in Darjeeling District offers the greatest scope for development. It is roughly estimated by the Tourist Bureau of Darjeeling that approximately at present, more than four lakhs tourists from different parts of the world as well as the country visit Darjeeling every year and the Tourist Business occupies a prominent place from the view point of scenic beauty. In spite of so many adverse effects of tourism in this tiny hill tract, there is no denying the fact that the economy still rests on its occupancy. The tourism potential, if properly planned can become a source of further income and regional development. Further expansions of tourist trade are immense if conceived on long-term perspective.

## **7. Conclusions**

Tourism is a human experience, a social experience, a geographical phenomenon, a resource value, and a business industry. Tourism is widely recognized as the world's largest industry which plays an important role for human resource development. Yet tourism is also highly dynamic and is strongly influenced by economic, political, social, environmental and technological change. The success of an organization depends on its ability to affect continuous improvement and provide quality products and services to its customer. This will require every personnel in the organization to possess the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude.

Tourism in Darjeeling District have seen no lapse in the previous decades and the growth of many more tourist zones, resorts and adventure sports opportunities have contributed largely to its extended tourism industry. Thus, HRD has a major role to play for the development of this sector.

HRD should be taken on a priority basis and adequate planning measures should be done accordingly because efficient human resources can increase customer satisfaction, and create a competitive edge in this globalize world.

The tourism industry has achieved new dimensions with visitors coming from near & far, to enrich & experience the flavor of Darjeeling tea & natural beauty. Most of the local people are engaged in tourism industry directly and indirectly and their income increases during the tourist season. Tourism is not only an economic activity of importance to Darjeeling's development, but also an important medium of cultural exchange among various nations of the world.

The success of tourism in Darjeeling District owes to several factors like its location, climate, accessibility and the series of tour packages available. Nestled among the undulating mountains with the shimmering Kanchenjunga towering over the sapphire sky, Darjeeling is fondly called "Queen of the Hills" and is a perfect gateway for those seeking to be in harmony with nature. It has been observed that communities located near the major attraction sites such as nature parks, reserves, historical sites, etc should have the opportunity to participate in tourism related activities. Local people are engaged in hotels, restaurants, shop, transportation, guide and escort service and other tourist facilities and services.

It has been observed that over the years, there has been a change in the demand and supply pattern of human resources for the travel industry, with the demand in favour of more educated and specialized personnel. However, the development of human resources in tourism is subject to a number of obstacles, and is severely lagging in terms of professionalism in Darjeeling District. Thus, HRD has a major role to play for the development of this sector. HRD should be taken on a priority basis and adequate planning measures should be done accordingly because efficient human resources can increase customer satisfaction, and create a competitive edge in this globalize world.

Over the past few decades Darjeeling lacked proper developmental support and had seen random & thoughtless constructions and overcrowding which it hardly deserved. Despite that the charming, sincere and friendly people of the place have continued to strive hard and successfully preserved pride of the 'Queen of the Hills' as one of the best places for tourism even today.

## 8. Some Suggestions

- There is need to introduce more courses in hotel management within Darjeeling District.
- Additional Food Crafts Institutes should be set up in selected towns depending on their tourist/hotel infrastructure.
- With the help of the Department of Technical Education and Training, specific tourism-related courses like those for subordinate staff of hotels/resorts/guest house/lodges and tea tourism projects, caterers, guides, tourist coach drivers, and tourist taxi drivers should be introduced in Industrial Training Institutes/Polytechnics located at such places so that the students in these courses can avail of 'hands-on' training in nearby public/private tourism establishments.
- There is also need for refresher training courses for the staff of the tourism industry. Proposals for running such courses by private institutions including non-governmental organizations should be encouraged and supported.
- Private institutions running management courses in the District should also be encouraged to offer Hospitality and Travel Management-related courses.
- With the help of the local administration and the associations of the service providers, various categories of individuals associated with tourism services, viz. taxi drivers, tour operators, tourist guides, etc. should be sensitized and provided with necessary orientation training to make them more responsive to the needs of the tourism industry.
- There is need to create more tourism based opportunities especially to the local people who are trained and completed their course in Hospitality & Travel Management and other Tourism based activities and courses.
- Tourism being a highly labour intensive industry, there should be an integrated HRD system with both public and private sector participation to develop human resources to meet the requirements of the industry.
- Capacity building of the service providers through shorter 3 to 6 month training courses should be taken as integral to the general effort to strengthen/enlarge the manpower required by the hospitality industry.
- Tourists sometimes face harassment from taxi drivers, hotel owners, shop-keepers, vendors and others during their visits to various destinations. In order to ensure safe travel and thereby enhance the attractiveness of the place for tourism, the Government should, with the help of the local authorities, exercise closer supervision over the activities of the service providers at the different gateways and tourist destinations by setting up tourist help desks. A specialized wing of the Police in the form of Tourist Police will be created, if necessary, in due course to provide more effective security to tourists.

- Seminars, Conference and workshops should be conducted to discuss problems and prospects of HRD at the national and international level.
- The importance of Human Resource Development for Tourism Industry is increasingly being realized. There is a need to mobilize the human resource with the purpose to enable them to participate in the task of organizational development and nation building.

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