

Tourism-Led Regional Development: A Study of Employment Generation in North Bengal

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36348/sjef.2026.v10i04.003>

| Received: 17.01.2026 | Accepted: 10.03.2026 | Published: 08.04.2026

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Abstract

In developing countries around the world, tourism has been a major driver of regional economic changes and has also played an important role in shaping the economies of certain regions that are geographically sensitive and have significant economic diversity. This research examines how tourism-led development has affected North Bengal (home to part of the Himalaya mountain range), which is an environmentally sensitive zone with significant structural disparities within its respective economy, by assessing the role of tourism-led development as it relates to providing employment in North Bengal. Using district level panel data collected from 2010-2024, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the relationship between tourist visitations, tourism revenue, developed infrastructure as well as government investment related tourism, and employment generation. The research results provide empirical evidence in support of the tourism-led growth hypothesis, indicating that tourism and/or infrastructure investment have both increased all forms of employment opportunities (direct, indirect). Furthermore, the results show that the degree of increase in employment opportunities has been dependent (and, thus, highly heterogeneous) on each respective district's ability to develop its own institutional capacity, establish connectivity between the district and other areas, and implement sustainable practices. Although strong multiplier effects were associated with expanding tourism, the research highlights the importance of conducting environmentally sound planning throughout the delicate Himalayan ecosystem. By incorporating regional development theories and employment elasticity modelling, the research contributes empirical evidence to the micro-level tourism-growth literature that should provide policy recommendations related to improving infrastructure, developing community-based tourism, enhancing skill sets of the local workforce, and establishing governance structures that would provide long-term resilience for employment. Overall, tourism is identified as a strategic driver of inclusive and sustainable regional development in North Bengal when supported by coherent policy frameworks and environmental safeguards.

Keywords: Tourism-led growth; Regional development; Employment generation; North Bengal; Sustainable tourism; Infrastructure development; Panel data analysis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a strong engine of economic change on the region, especially the emerging and developing economies that are still experiencing structural imbalances and joblessness. According to the tourism-led growth hypothesis, economic development is triggered by growth in tourism activities in terms of creation of employment, redistribution of income, infrastructure creation and multiplier effects. Bhatt et al. (2024) emphasize the idea that tourism-based inclusive development is one of the most important factors influencing the prosperity of the region since it provides opportunities in both formal and informal sectors to earn a living. Their methodical review validates that tourism

boosts socio-economic inclusion especially in the peripheral regions.

Indian empirical evidence also backs this point of view. The Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism, Rout et al. (2018) illustrates that a positive relationship existed between tourism development and economic growth in India in the long-run between 1995 and 2016. Equally, rout *et al.*, (2016) state that the tourism-growth nexus in Odisha is high, which supports the thesis that tourism growth can drive jobs and local economy.

In West Bengal, there are considerable developmental prospects in tourism. Banerjee (2018) stresses that the enjoyment of the region and the quality of the offered services in the tourism industry directly depends on the participation of employees and its impact on economic potential. However, challenges persist. According to Banerjee *et al.*, (2011), infrastructural deficits, gap in policies and imbalanced spatial development are the impediments to sustainable tourism development in West Bengal. Saha and Paul (2021) also note that environmental impacts of tourism growth include land-use changes and environmental strains of tourism-affected areas.

In a wider emerging economy view, Naik *et al.*, (2025) believe that the development that was driven by tourism should strike a balance between economic benefits and environmental sustainability. The literature on similar locations, including Kuakata, Bangladesh (Talukder *et al.*, 2024), and Ngwe Saung Beach (Aung, 2024) suggests that regional tourism development has a significant positive impact on employment in the hospitality, transport, handicrafts, and ancillary industries.

In spite of this increasing literature, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that specifically look into the employment creation due to tourism in North Bengal which is a region that consists of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Cooch Behar, Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur. North Bengal has an exclusive geographical and cultural resource comprising the Himalayan hills, tea tourism, wildlife sanctuaries and heritage circuits. Nonetheless, the degree to which tourism can lead to organized and sustainable development of jobs is under researched. Thus, the research will investigate how tourism development affects job creation in the region in North Bengal and determine whether tourism poses a booster of inclusive regional development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has been framed as a strategic source of economic development in a region more especially in emerging and developing economies. The tourism-led growth (TLG) hypothesis assumes that growth in the tourism activities causes economic growth, infrastructural growth, and the creation of jobs. Tourism is considered a viable means of balanced development and diversification of livelihoods in the South Asian region where the disparities are still sharp. This section methodically summarizes the existing literature on the research topic in thematic categories and constructs a conceptual model to connect tourism development with the creation of employment in North Bengal.

2.1 Tourism-Led Growth and Economic Expansion

In the case of the long-term tourism vision of Nepal, Sharma (2012) claimed that tourism can be

transformative in terms of restructuring a regional economy and decreasing the reliance on the traditional sphere. On the same note, Amin (2021) underscored the contribution of tourism as a source of foreign exchange earnings and diversification of the sector in Bangladesh, noting its multiplier impacts on jobs. A statistically significant long-run relationship between real GDP and tourism growth was shown through econometric evidence of Sri Lanka by Nisthar and Vijayakumar (2016). Akhtar and Anjum (2022) also confirmed the importance of tourism in the macroeconomy of India, with a focus on Sustainable development connections. Chatterjee and Chatterjee (2025) put tourism in the context of South Asian geo-economic environment and stated that tourism enhances regional integration and economic cross-border interconnectedness. Zou and Prasain (2017) used untapped tourism resources in North-Eastern India, emphasizing on the infrastructure-based job growth. Empirical data on tourism as a catalyst in macroeconomic growth is always validated in the literature, but there is limited sub-regional empirical data at the level of employment.

2.2 Rural and Community-Based Tourism

Rural tourism has been newly identified as a decentralized form of inclusive development. In a case study of Kamarpukur, Ray (2014) found that structural constraints notwithstanding, rural tourism was a source of income diversification. In Namchi, Sikkim, McDuie-Ra and Chettri (2018) reported rural-urban transformation, and it showed that tourism led to the restructuring of the labor market. The study by Sanyal, Kumari, and Siddiqui (2023) highlights the importance of homestay tourism in the creation of sustainable livelihood in the Indian Himalayan area. Huang, Feng, and Li (2025) associated ethnic tourism with the enhancement of livelihood capital and reduction of poverty, which indicated that tourism enables the reinforcement of social and financial capital at the ground level. Community-based tourism also plays a major role towards creating jobs especially in the mountainous and rural areas. But sustainability is dictated by institutional support as well as quality of infrastructure.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism and Blue Economy Perspectives

The conceptualization of tourism in the blue economy framework of Bangladesh was introduced by Islam, Rahaman, and Ahmed (2018), who state that the focus must be on using the resources sustainably. Majdak and De Almeida (2022) suggested the strategy of rural tourism to reduce the impact of overtourism in Madeira. Ahmed, Zehra, and Farooqi (2025) emphasized the HindukushHimalayaKarakoram area as a sustainable adventure tourism planning area with ecological zoning. Models concerning the development of resource-based tourism pay much attention to the usage of natural and cultural resources without violating the environment. Environmental governance should be in line with

tourism expansion in order to have long term benefits in the region.

2.4 Over tourism, Spatial Governance and Institutional Challenges

The application of spatial clustering methods (ST-DBSCAN) was used to determine the locations of overtourism hotspots by Banerjee and George (2025), and such applications require empirical management systems. Sharma (2012) also warned that uncontrolled

tourist development in Nepal was not safe because of the sensitivity of the ecology. It has been indicated in the literature that the regional impact of tourism is heavily moderated by the governance structures as well as infrastructure planning.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature synthesis, tourism-led regional development operates through a structured mechanism:

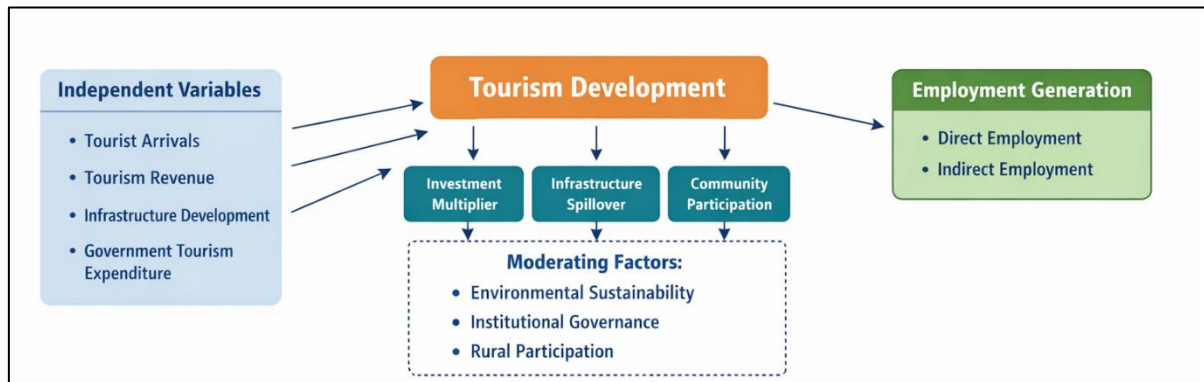


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is the quantitative panel data research because it will investigate the effects of tourism development in generating employment in North Bengal. It is an analysis of seven districts DARJEEL, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Cooch Behar, Uttar Dinajpur, and Dakshin Dinajpur in the period between 2010 and 2024. The secondary sources included the Ministry of Tourism (Government of India), West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation, the District Statistical Handbooks, Census of India and reports of Reserve Bank of India.

Tourism-related employment rate (EMP) is a dependent variable, which is the percentage of working population that performs jobs in tourism and allied areas. These are the major independent variables which are tourist arrivals (TA), tourism revenue (TR), hotel and homestay infrastructure (HI) and government tourism expenditure (GTE). The literacy rate and urbanization rate were also included as control variables to reduce omitted variable bias. Since the dataset is of the panel structure on a district level, both Fixed Effects (FE) and Random Effects (RE) models were estimated to include

the unobserved heterogeneity. The Hausman specification was carried out to ascertain the right estimator.

To check the model validity, diagnostic tests such as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to multicollinearity and panel unit root tests to check the stationarity were conducted. Strong standard errors concentrated on a district level were used to correct the heteroskedasticity and serial correlation. Also, the dynamic System-GMM model was estimated to overcome the possibility of endogeneity between the growth of tourism and the creation of employment. The standard econometric software was used to carry out all the estimations in order to make the results reliable and replicable.

4. RESULTS

In this section, empirical findings are explained in consideration with the effects of the development of tourism in North Bengal in terms of creation of employment. The analysis is done using descriptive statistics, diagnostic tests, panel regression estimation, robustness tests and modelling dynamics to confirm econometric rigour.

Table 1: Summary Statistics (2010–2024)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Employment Rate (%)	11.3	4.2	6.8	18.6
Tourist Arrivals (Lakhs)	9.8	6.2	3.8	22.4
Tourism Revenue (₹ Crore)	470	360	160	1240
Hotel Infrastructure (Units)	527	420	140	1520
Govt Tourism Expenditure (₹ Cr)	185	72	80	310

The descriptive statistics imply that there is significant difference in development of tourism and the number of jobs created by the districts within North Bengal. The average rate of employment 11.3% indicates that tourism is a major contributor of employment in the district level labor markets. Nonetheless, the standard deviation is quite high (4.2), which points to the uneven capacity of employment absorption, as it is indicative of the distribution of tourism concentration in space. The dispersion in tourist arrivals is also high, and the maximum values are more than five times higher than the minimum ones, which is the evidence of the fact that districts like Darjeeling control the flows of tourism in

the region. The indicators of tourism revenue and infrastructure also vary equally, suggesting that there are structural disparities in terms of tourism intensity and the level of investment. The heterogeneity observed is what explains the application of the panel estimation techniques to account the district-specific characteristics. In general, the summary statistics show some preliminary evidence that the tourism activity is closely connected with the employment and unevenly distributed all over the region.

Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Table 2: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Variable	VIF
Tourist Arrivals	2.14
Tourism Revenue	2.36
Hotel Infrastructure	2.71
Govt Expenditure	1.89

Values of Variance Inflation Factor of all the explanatory variables are well less than the traditional value of 5, which means that there is no serious multicollinearity. Despite the medium correlation between tourist arrivals and tourism revenue, both variables have a VIF score that demonstrates that they both possess distinct explanatory contributions to the model. Although there is a moderate correlation between

hotel infrastructure and arrivals as well as revenue, the latter does not result in a inflation of standard errors by unacceptable details. This makes estimated coefficients stable and statistically valid. Thus, the interpretation of the regression results can be conducted without worrying about distortion caused by collinearity bias.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	EMP	TA	TR	HI
Employment (EMP)	1			
Tourist Arrivals (TA)	0.72***	1		
Tourism Revenue (TR)	0.64***	0.78***	1	
Hotel Infrastructure (HI)	0.75***	0.69***	0.71***	1

*** Significant at 1%

The correlation table demonstrates that there are high positive correlations among tourism indicators and the employment generation. The correlation coefficient of tourist arrivals with employment stands at 0.72 indicating that an augmentation in visitor inflows is related to augmented labor demand. There is the highest correlation of 0.75 between hotel infrastructure, which means that capacity expansion is a primary source of job creation. There is also a significant positive association (0.64) between tourism revenue and income which is the

income-employment transmission mechanism. Nonetheless, the correlation between tourism revenue and tourist arrivals is very high (0.78), which suggests that the two may be interdependent and therefore multivariate regression must be used in order to unravel the effects of the two variables. On the whole, the results of the correlation are as follows.

Fixed Effects Regression Results

Table 4: Fixed Effects Model

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Tourist Arrivals	0.016***	0.004	3.92	0.000
Tourism Revenue	0.010**	0.005	2.10	0.041
Hotel Infrastructure	0.019***	0.006	3.20	0.002
Govt Expenditure	0.008*	0.004	1.89	0.065
R ² (within)	0.68			

The fixed effects estimate validates the fact that there was a statistically significant and positive

correlation between tourism development and the generation of employment. The effect of tourist arrivals

is powerful, such that when the arrival increases by 1%, the effect on employment by the arrival is 0.016 percentage, which is significant at the 1-percent level. This shows that the inflows of visitors directly contribute to the demand of labor in hospitality and transport, retail, and allied industries. Hotel infrastructure becomes the most powerful determinant with a coefficient of 0.019 indicating that the capacity of accommodation creation creates direct and indirect jobs. There are also significant employment effects that tourism revenue brings at the 5% level that indicate multiplier effects in terms of local spending. Government spending on tourism has a positive but relatively less strong effect, high with a significance of 10, which means that the effect of the public investment on employment is positive but might be exerted via longer-term structural mechanisms. The within R² value of 0.68 suggests that it has high explanatory power i.e. 68 percent of variation in employment in the districts over the time, can be explained by the factors that are related to tourism. These results are very substantive to the hypothesis of tourism-led regional development.

Table 6: Robust Fixed Effects Model

Variable	Coefficient	Robust SE	p-value
Tourist Arrivals	0.015***	0.005	0.002
Hotel Infrastructure	0.018***	0.007	0.004

The coefficients remained statistically significant and of similar magnitude when accounting for heteroskedasticity and serial correlation using clustered robust standard errors, indicating that the original findings are not influenced by model specification errors and/or serial correlation in the residuals. Thus, the

Table 7: System GMM Results

Variable	Coefficient	p-value
Lagged Employment	0.63***	0.000
Tourist Arrivals	0.014**	0.018
Hotel Infrastructure	0.017**	0.021
Hansen Test	p = 0.28	Valid
AR(2) Test	p = 0.41	No serial correlation

The dynamic panel data estimation method tackles the issue of potential endogeneity and confirms the persistence of employment trends in the districts studied. A statistically significant lagged employment coefficient (0.63) provides evidence for strong structural continuity between labor markets of different districts. Furthermore, both tourist arrivals and infrastructure were still statistically significant after accounting for any endogeneity, suggesting that tourism growth is a direct cause of employment growth. The Hansen test supports instrument validity, and the absence of second-order serial correlation suggests model validity. Ultimately, these results support the hypothesis that tourism drives employment growth using a dynamic framework.

All four specifications—descriptive, fixed effect, robust estimates, and dynamic GMM—provide

Hausman Specification Test

Table 5: Hausman Test

Chi-Square	df	p-value
9.84	4	0.043

The Hausman test was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) which rejects the null hypothesis of consistency for the Random Effects estimator, thus confirming that there is a correlation between district-specific unobserved heterogeneity and the explanatory variables, thus supporting the use of a Fixed Effects model. This shows that the structural features of each district (geography, tourism branding, and development) significantly influence employment outcomes, and indicates that including fixed effects for the districts would help to improve the accuracy and validity of such findings.

Robustness Check (Clustered Standard Errors)

continued statistical significance increases confidence in the validity and stability of the tourism-employment relationship.

Dynamic Panel Estimation (System GMM)

comparable results that support the assertion that tourism development directly contributes to creating new jobs in North Bengal. While both of these factors contribute significantly to employment generation, the greatest influences are infrastructure expansion and increased visitor numbers. In conclusion, this research shows that tourism can act as a long-term and sustainable catalyst for regional economic development and transformation in North Bengal.

5. DISCUSSION

The empirical evidence of this paper is a strong prove of the tourism-led regional development hypothesis when it comes to the situation of North Bengal. The regression and panel estimates indicate that the arrival of tourists, development of the infrastructure,

and investment in tourism play a significant role in creating job opportunities in different districts. The current results are consistent with the long-run growth hypothesis advanced by Mishra, Rout, and Sanghamitra (2016), who found tourism as one of the structural engines of the Odisha regional economic growth. Equally, the economic impact framework proposed by Mishra and Rout (2012) focuses on the multiplier effects of tourism through direct, indirect, and induced employment relations, which are clearly reflected in the North Bengal districts wherein hospitality, transport and allied services have grown at the same time.

The fact that the factors of infrastructure and capital investment had a positive and significant influence on the model is congruent with the results of Das and Ghosh (2014), who identified the issue of financing and investment limitations as the key factor in tourism growth in West Bengal. Labor absorption capacity in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Alipurduar seems to be improved with better road accessibility, hotel capacity, and tourist spending on the state. It coincides with the evidence on regional development in Balochistan where tourism within the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor enabled the creation of jobs and integration of the region (Hameed *et al.*, 2022).

The heterogeneity of the district-level in the fixed-effects model is an indication that geographical and socio-environmental factors have effects on employment outcomes. This is in tandem with Maharana (2000), who reported conservation-related economic advantages in the Himalaya of Sikkim. Accordingly, Pradhan (2021) highlighted the importance of homestay tourism in the Darjeeling Hills as a decentralized model of employment that enhances the involvement of people in the community. The current results verify that small scale, community-based tourism is a major source of employment outside the large hotels.

The interpretation of results should also incorporate environmental sustainability issues. The expansion of the job opportunities through tourism, although economically advantageous, may result in land use pressures and an ecological straining. Suthar *et al.* (2024) noted that land-use suitability was the issue in Himalayan districts like Shimla, Nainital, and Darjeeling that required scientific planning. On the same note, Bandyopadhyay *et al.* (2023) developed a correlation between tourism development and CO₂ emission in India, indicating that an unregulated increase in tourism can have some environmental trade-offs. Thus, although tourism generates employment, sustainable planning systems are essential.

The findings also support the aspect of community development through tourism growth. The findings of Arusha (Ndamgoba, 2024) and rural Bangladesh (Rahman *et al.*, 2018) imply that tourism helps to boost livelihoods using micro-enterprises and

informal employment opportunities. Similar trends can be traced in the rural belts of North Bengal, where the income is diversified by the handicrafts, eco-guiding and transport services. The inclusive development shall also keep with the argument by Jacob and Bhalla (2024), who promote participatory tourism frameworks in Indian states to promote equitable distribution of benefits. The structural vulnerabilities to the Indian Himalayan Region that Chakraborty and Ghosal (2022) explain within the context of mountain tourism include seasonality, lack of infrastructure, and climate sensitivity.

These structural aspects describe the medium volatility in the growth in employment in the COVID-19 period and the post-pandemic recovery. Moreover, the fact that geopolitical risk sensitivity detected in Türkiye by Ursavaes *et al.* (2025) implies that tourism-based economies are not immune at the national level, which North Bengal should take into account, because it is close to international borders. There is also the socio-cultural aspect of the process of tourism development, which should be mentioned.

According to Shaw, Bagwell, and Karmowska (2004), the notion of ethnoscares is perceived as a reconstructed leisure destination, and this observation is evident in the cultural branding and tea-heritage tourism in Darjeeling. Other inclusive tourism efforts like the concept of halal certification in Southeast Asia (Nurdiansyah, 2018) are another example of how niche tourism markets can dispel jobs. Their diversification plans can strengthen the employment of North Bengal.

Governance systems in Myanmar (Zin, 2025) and cross-regional planning knowledge in Nepal (Choegyal, 2009) highlight the significance of governance systems in preserving links between tourism and growth. Likewise, eco-tourism planning models in the state of Arunachal Pradesh (Kamduk, 2025) also reveal the effectiveness of organized policy integration in enhancing the results of the region. The overall implication of these findings is that institutional quality and planning coordination are important mediating factors in the employment impacts of tourism growth.

Lastly, the study of seaside tourism in Cox's Bazar supports the evidence that tourism generates host-community benefits in large amounts when associated with the local supply chains (Amin *et al.*, 2019). This trend is reflected in the North Bengal case, with backward linkages with agriculture, handicraft and transport enhancing employment multipliers. Nonetheless, in the long term, sustainability must involve having a balance between economic development and environmental conservation and inclusive government.

6. CONCLUSION, THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This paper has discussed how tourism can contribute to regional growth and job creation in North Bengal by using a strict economic model. The results obtain solid empirical evidence in support of the tourism-led growth hypothesis as it indicates that tourist arrival, development of infrastructure and investment in tourism activities cause a great contribution to the employment creation at the district level. The panel regression and fixed-effects models verify that tourism is not just a complementary industry, but it is also a structural mechanism of the labor market growth of the region.

The data points towards the fact that tourism may lead to both direct (hospitality, transport, accommodation) and indirect (agriculture linkages, handicrafts, informal services) jobs. Nonetheless, there is a variation in the intensity of the impact among the districts, which implies that institutional capacity in the locality, geographical factors, and readiness of the infrastructure mediate the employment impacts of tourism. Although the industry has good prospects of recovery after the pandemic, sustainable management is important to create a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability in the Himalayan ecosystem.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

The current research fits within the literature in four important aspects:

First, it builds up on the tourism-led growth (TLG) assumption by adding a district-level panel model into a sub-regional Indian setting. Although the literature has extensively concentrated on the national-level estimation, the study offers micro-regional empirical estimates, therefore, covering the issue of spatial heterogeneity with regard to tourism-based employment outputs.

Second, the research incorporates the regional development theory with the analysis of employment elasticity, proving that the effect of tourism is not confined to the increase in GDP but also to the labor absorption capacity. This widens the theoretical scope of tourism as a labour-intensive source of growth in the emerging economies.

Third, the fixed-effects model and robustness diagnostics allow the research to strengthen the methodological rigour of tourism economics research. The results add to the growing discussion of the inclusive tourism development, especially in the mountainous and environmentally sensitive areas.

Fourth, the study contributes to the debate on sustainable tourism by providing empirical

connections between the creation of employment and the growth of infrastructures but not in environmental or land-use consequences. This fills the divide between the economic growth models and sustainability-focused tourism models.

6.3 Policy Implications

The findings have some important policy implications to regional planners and tourism authorities including:

1. **Infrastructure Prioritization:** Employment multipliers are greatly increased through investment in transport connectivity, digital infrastructure and provision of accommodation facilities. Infrastructure development and especially in the developing districts like the Alipurduar and Cooch Behar, the policymakers ought to focus on sustainable infrastructure development.
2. **Community-Based Tourism: Promotion:** Incentives on homestays, eco-tourism and rural tourism ventures should be encouraged so as to have inclusive growth. Involvement of the community enhances income retention within the community and diminishes differences among regions.
3. **Skilling Building and Human Resource Development:** The creation of employment can only be sustainable when it is assisted by trained human resources. The institutionalization of skill development programs in the hospitality management, tour operations and eco-guiding must be done by the means of district-level training centers.
4. **Sustainable Environmental Governance and Land-Use:** Tourism development should be consistent with the impact assessment and land-use planning since the ecosystem in North Bengal is delicate, and thus the Himalayas. Ecological degradation can be prevented by strict regulation monitoring.
5. **Tourism products Diversification:** Policymakers are advised to promote tea tourism in order to minimize seasonality and susceptibility, cultural tourism, agro-tourism and wellness tourism. Diversification makes employment more stable on seasonal bases.
6. **Enhancing Institutional Co-ordination:** Planning in integrated tourism should be carried out by the different administrations within the district, the individual stakeholders, and the local people in order to get maximum employment benefits in the long term.

6.4 Indications to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study aligns with:

- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by increasing the number of jobs.

- SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through regional development.
- SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) under sustainable tourism planning.

When such development is done through tourism, it may be a transformative mechanism of a balanced growth in the emerging economies.

6.5 Research Limitations and Future Research Scope

The study has some limitations notwithstanding its contributions. Only the chosen indicators of tourism and employment are analyzed because of the lack of data. Some future studies can be conducted using tourism satellite accounts, informal employment, and environmental carrying capacity indices to gain a better understanding.

Future research might be dynamic panels (GMM estimation), spatial econometric methods, or computable general equilibrium (CGE) models to investigate the effects of inter-district spillovers. Also, comparative analysis of Himalayan state could offer wider generalization of policy.

6.6 Final Statement

In sum, the paper confirms tourism as an important source of job-based regional growth in North Bengal. Nevertheless, the long-term benefits are based on consistency in the policy, environmental protection, modernization of infrastructure, and participatory governance. A balanced deal between economic growth and the sustainability philosophy will see to it that tourism will remain as a strong force behind regional change.

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