

The Impact of New Media on Tourism: A Study on West Bengal

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Abstract

This research report consists of informative data on tourism and the approach of new media in the tourism industry. The adaptation to new changes towards technology is a dynamic change. In this research proposal, there is a brief discussion on West Bengal tourism and some of the offbeat places in North Bengal. In the tourism industry, social media plays a significant role in communicating with tourists and guides. This research paper talks about tourism in West Bengal. This research paper initiated to discuss all the repercussions and growths of social media referred to tourism. Therefore, the role of social media platforms has a great impact on the tourism industry.

Keywords— Communication, Offbeat place, New Media, Social Media, Tourism Industry, West Bengal.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is a widely used technology to bring a revolution in the tourism industry. As tourism is an informative-based industry the use of the internet is very fundamental to it. It shows us the impact of the internet in various positive ways. To give a thorough research a proposal is presented in a brief, the internet has a significant position in it. Therefore, the tourism industry has its maximum followers on the internet. In the traditional media, there are three factors that influence the tourism industry: economic factor, social factor, and environmental factor. Each factor has its own negative and positive points and impact on the tourism industry. In this new era digital media also had a crucial role to play in the tourism industry. Social media sites on the internet are booming with lots of virtual entertainment. The physical presence of an individual went into correspondence. With this social media factor, the range of high internet speed and quality of pictures and sound also matters to the respective target audience.

Some major digital communication that are used in digital advertisement like E-mail, it is inter-personal communication and also a very silent mode of promotion. It is the most less interactive tool in advertising used only on a low-cost budget. Blogs are maintained regularly with proper graphics, video, and communication with the audience. Website, every company should design its

website to promote their products and services. Mobile Marketing, with every day there is an increasing demand for smartphones or android phones. This boosts the working condition which results less paperwork and saves time. Social Media, business tycoons are utilizing social platforms to promote their business. Display AD is presented in a large place with vibrant colours. It is one of the most costly advertisements in the media industry. Search AD means pay-per-click also known as PPC. It is an online advertising model where advertisers pay a publisher every time an advertisement is clicked. Internet Specific AD and Video platform where any consumer or advertiser shares their content for personal or public profit. Just, for example, we can see YouTube and Google. In online Communities, many companies sponsor online activities like online groups, free coupons, and cashback offers to promote their brand and product in the market.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To study the awareness of the social media approach in tourism
- To examine the function and impact of new media in the tourism industry
- Analysis the significance of social media
- To study the socio-economic and cultural impact on tourism

- To study the challenges of tourism based on new media

III. LITERARY REVIEW

Social media has both positive and negative impacts on the communication system. Electronic word of mouth is a modern and significant tool for marketing. The eWOM can evolve the relationship between the businessman and client and help to provide satisfying results to the customer. A study in the USA says that 46% of people are stuck with their online travel plan, over which they recommend WOM (Word of Mouth) Digital technology has its immense contribution to understanding tourist behaviour in and after vacation plans (Lengkong et al.,2022).

An exclusive study says that in the continent of Europe, the US, and Asian Pacific announced that travellers who are influenced by the internet and social media are traveling across the world on an average of last next 12 months are 4,600 (Lengkong et al.,2022).

An important study on social media influencing travel and tourism shows that:

44% of travelers are encouraged by the internet, travel blogs.

37% of people are influenced by travel forums

27% audience are influenced by Facebook videos and vlogs

24% of the population follows youtube to decide their destination.

22% of them follow Pinterest.

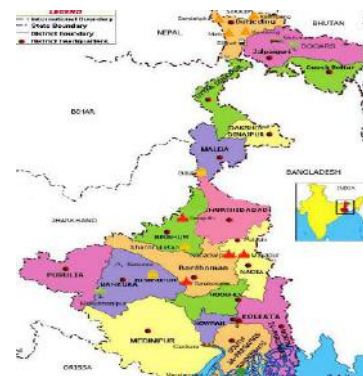
50% of them are application users

The West Bengal government tourism department has signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) with the Federation of Association in India Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH). The major aim of this MoU is to connect the tourist directly or indirectly to the cultural heritage, promote and protect the folk art, and evolve in other aspects of West Bengal. The MoU was conducted at the sixth Bengal Global Business Summit. The main agenda of this MoU was to skill and empower women by establishing many professional courses. A workshop would be organized by the department of FAITH to prepare the preliminary plan for future tourism.

The research gap which has been observed going through this literature review is the use of social media. Social media has a great influence on the tourism industry (Lei & Gao 2022). With the use of the Internet, any kind of information is available to us but, social media acts as a tool in this industry. In this research paper, the main focus will be on social media rather than the internet.

IV. WEST BENGAL TOURISM: - AN OVERVIEW

In this present situation West Bengal compared to the other states of India, is quite rich and diverse. It is rich in cultural heritage and also geographical variants. There are a number of major attractions in West Bengal starting from Sundarban to Hooghly Setu. Now at present, there is a new category of tourism Offbeat tourism, it is defined as a typical location that fails to attract mass tourists but some tourists find simplicity and serenity, therefore, promoting offbeat tourism. In North Bengal, there is a major location for offbeat tourism. Some of the popular locations are Jhlimili- Rimili in Bankura, Khirai, Bamni falls in Purulia, Chatakpur Village, Lepchajagat, and Takdah in Darjeeling.



<p>North Bengal:- No debut it is one of the favorite destinations of tourists. We have the opportunity to see mountains, tea gardens, forests, and rivers. It has abandoned natural beauty and a number of offbeat places. Some of the top lists are headed below.</p> <p>Dooars Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rongo ● Lepchakha ● Chilapata ● Dalgaon ● Raimatang ● Paren <p>Darjeeling Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Singtom Tea Estate ● Bunkulung ● Tabakoshi 	<p>South Bengal:- The tourist places in the southern region of Bengal are quite unloved by people. One of the major reasons is the lack of awareness among tourists. On the other hand, this can be the USP because people can genuinely relax and enjoy it differently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Burraghutu ● Nachan ● Khoai ● Agarhati ● Tajpur ● Henry’s Island ● Chandpur ● Garh Panchkot ● Chandraketugarh ● Jayrambati
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singell • Bagora <p>Kalimpong Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidyang • Triveni Camping • Bhalukhop 	
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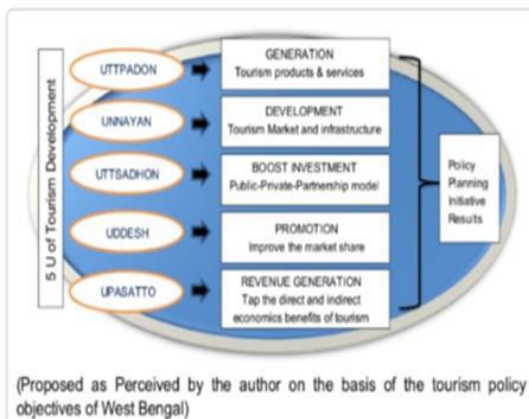
Source- (Bhutia,2014)

Link -<https://www.wbtourism.gov.in/>



Link-<https://www.wbtourism.gov.in/>

This is an official link of West Bengal State Tourism, further, various kind of information could be persuaded from this official website.



Source - (Lim et al., 2018)

The 5 U model of West Bengal tourism consist of five elementary factors such as Utpadon which means generating products or services for the consumers. Unayan refers as development in the tourism infrastructure. Uttsadhon is the resources with the help of Public Private Partnership Model. Uddesh means promotion or advertisement to improve the tourism market. Upasatto refers as revenue generation which integrating the economic of the state with respect to tourism.

4.1 New Media

New media is any media—from newspaper articles and blogs to music and podcasts—that are delivered digitally. From a website or email to mobile phones and streaming apps, any internet-related form of communication can be considered new media.

EXAMPLES

FACEBOOK	
YOUTUBE	
INSTAGRAM	
APPLICATION	
WEBSITE	

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research both secondary and primary data are used equally. This research is conducted with 200 people in West Bengal. The basic research tools like surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data helped us to represent thorough research on tourism. Many travel agencies and travel expertise helped us to bring up some accurate data on this respective topic. As secondary data, we have included government data from Biswa Bangla, an all-around initiative of the West Bengal government. We interviewed many tour guides to understand the psychological behaviour of travellers.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

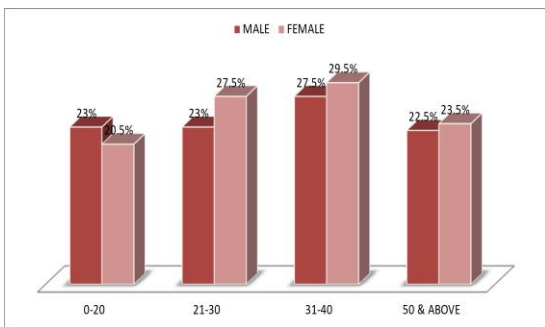
In this research paper both primary and secondary research analysis is conducted to approach an effective result for the mentioned objectives. The primary research is

conducted in two methods that are interviews and survey analysis. The secondary data are taken from authentic sources from internet.

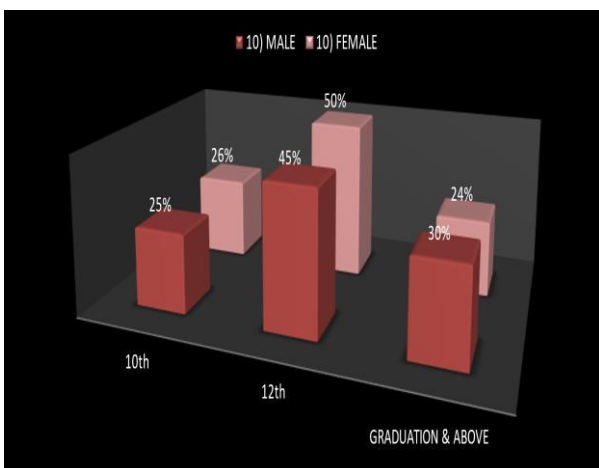
6.1 Primary Data

In this research paper, 200 candidates were selected for the sampling for the primary data research 100 were male and 100 were female. Further, their age, occupation, income, and education were classified in a graphical representation. In this primary data analysis survey method has been conducted with the accidental sampling method. The first graph discusses about the age of all the samples.

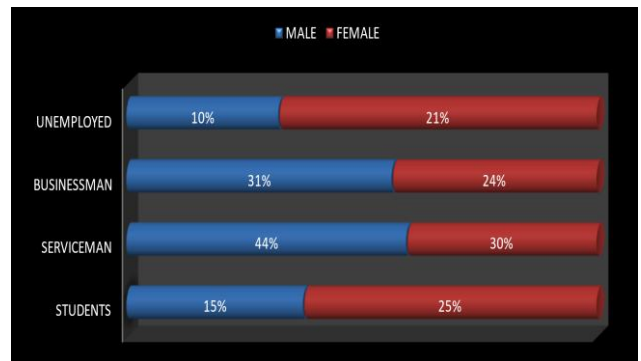
• **Survey Details**



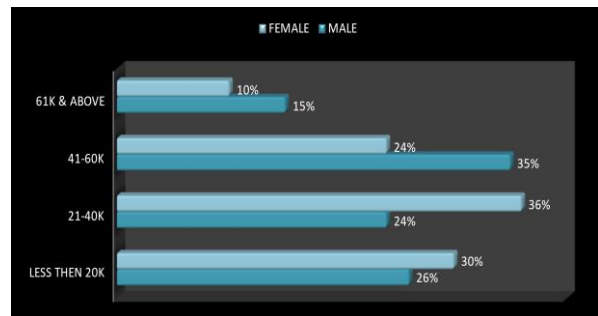
AGE	MALE	FEMALE
0-20	23%	20.5%
21-30	23%	27.5%
31-40	27.5%	29.5%
50 & ABOVE	22.5%	23.5%



EDUCATION	MALE	FEMALE
SECONDERY	25%	26%
HIGHER SECONDERY	45%	50%
GRADUATION & ABOVE	30%	24%



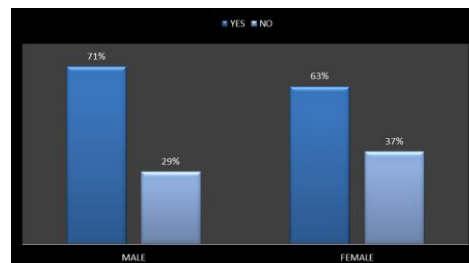
OCCUPATION	MALE	FEMALE
STUDENT	15%	25%
SERVICE MAN	44%	30%
BUSINESSMAN	31%	24%
UNEMPLOYED	10%	21%



INCOME	MALE	FEMALE
LESS THAN 20K	26%	30%
21K-40K	24%	36%
41K-60K	35%	24%
61K&ABOVE	15%	10%

• **Primary data analysis**

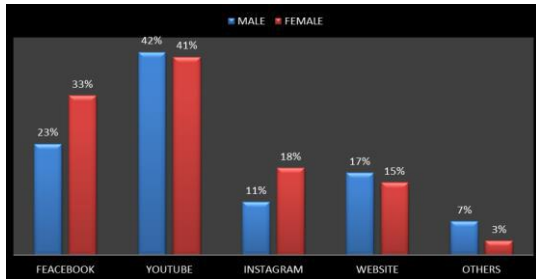
1. New media create awareness in tourism



This statics state that male and female are 71% and 63% respectively aware about new media. The major reason is the content such as post and reels that goes viral. Therefore, by watching those content people get more aware about the tourism.

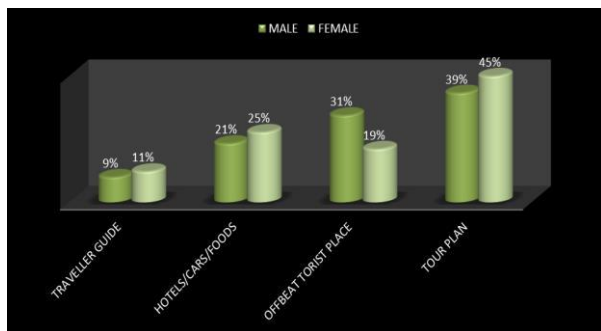
2. Effectiveness of new media in tourism

YouTube is most preferred social media platform in tourism because the content creator gets the facility to create short and long video which provide more information and details about the location. After YouTube, Facebook is considered because it has similar facilities to.



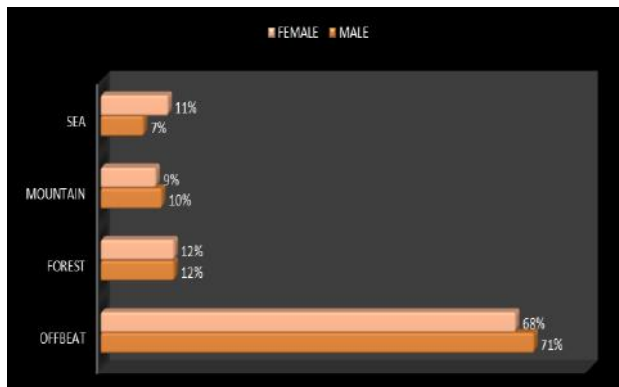
3. Different kinds of data collection for tourism in new media

This statistic result state that both male and female prefer tour plan compare to other options because, it does not require any extra expenses of guid or agent. The second preference is offbeat tourist place due to the rise of new media offbeat places has good frequent visitors.



4. With the help of new media, place has increased visitors

With this bar-graph it can be stated that both the gender prefers offbeat location as a holiday. The major reason for this attraction is new media, media promote these places by the help of bloggers. Some popular offbeat places are Sillery Gaon, Gongani and many more.



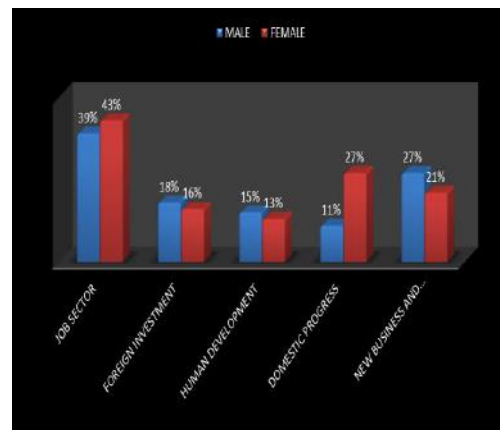
5. New media worked as a catalyst on offbeat tourism

Both male and female agrees that offbeat places are today's trend because of new media. Nowadays travellers love to spend some alone time with nature which increases the visit to offbeat places. Another major reason is after the pandemic situation people likes avoid crowd therefore, offbeat places are in trend.



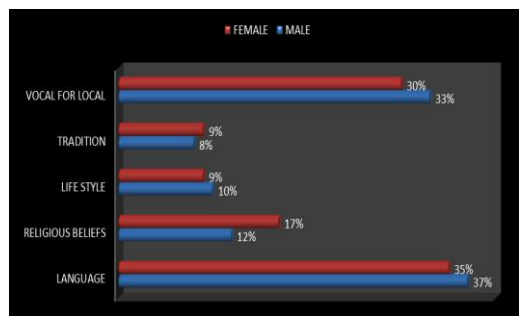
6. Socio-Economic development is pursued in tourism with the help of new media

According to our samples (candidate), they believe that tourism can provide better job opportunity by providing employment to the youth section. As per our national population there is a huge scarcity of jobs. The next preference is business such as hotels, restaurant, travelling vehicles etc. This business can help in economic development in the nation and state. Moreover, foreign investment are also a part of economic development On the other side government earn a good revenue from various tourist sport like museum, heritage, architecture and government holidays.



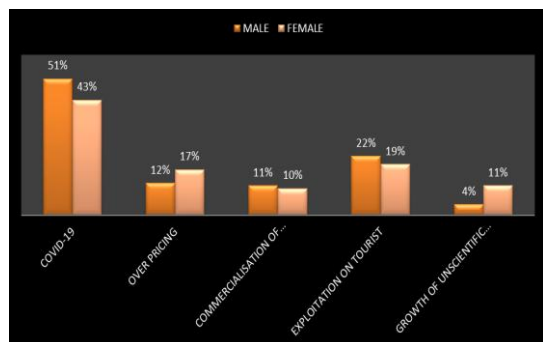
7. The factors influence the cultural impact on tourism through social media

In terms of cultural impact language has the major cultural impact because it provide an opportunity to learn different languages. Another major impact is using the media for presenting local products it is refer as vocal for local. Others tradition, lifestyle and religiousness are also considered in cultural impact.



8. The challenges of tourism in West Bengal

According to the study on West Bengal the major challenge for integrating tourism is COVID-19. This pandemic has shut all the national and international business of tourism. This temporary shutdown has created a huge challenge for the business tycoon to overcome their loses. Exploitation is another issue faced in the tourism people do have trust issues and wants to make some bargaining for themselves.



• Interview:- Travel Agent

A personal interview has been conducted with Anup Majumdar, owner of Dishari tourism from Belghoria. Mr. Majumdar is a renowned travel agent in the local area of Belghoria. Some basic questions related to his profession have been asked for this research process.

1. How has social media helped in the growth of tourism?

Social media is an interesting place for every one of us. If I see it as an agent, I get my maximum customers from my Facebook page. They only come after checking my reviews, comparing the package, and sometimes promotion of mouth.

2. In which part of the West Bengal travel opportunity is the most?

It sometimes depends on the weather and sometimes on the trend going on the market. Suppose, generally people prefer hill station on summer but, as per the trend now tourist are visiting hill station on winter season also to enjoy the chilled winter and snowfalls.

3. What are the different kinds of barriers the travelers and guides face regularly?

As a tour agent, we face various difficulties daily, like the bad mood of customers and sometimes extra liabilities of customers. I have also observed some people who like to travel alone just with the help of smartphones and Google Maps. Unfortunately, at the end of the day they get hackled or harassed by some kind of issue. It is very important to know and learn the local culture and psychological behaviour to survive in that particular area. Therefore, we always prefer a local guide to travel the respective area.

• Interview:- Tour Guide

Johnny Bhutiya is a tour guide from Darjeeling. He is in active profession from 2005 till now. He shows a sound knowledge about North Bengal therefore, a personal telephonic interview was conducted for this research paper.

1. Do you think social media helps you to spread your contact and reach?

Yes, precisely Facebook, YouTube videos, and post help me to spread my message and contacts. Sometimes it also gives negative impact on the industry by using AI technology instead of human guide.

2. What comparison do you find in the pre- covid and post- covid periods?

In the pre-covid days there was a trend for popular destination, in the post-covid times there is sudden hike in the commodities therefore people show less interest in travelling. However, some people only approach for offbeat places

3. What is your future perspective on tourism with advance social media

As the digital media is getting advanced day by day with the advanced AI technology there is less demand of man force in this sector, therefore learning the technical skills is utmost necessary skills for us to represent our heritage and beauty.

6.2 Secondary Data Analysis: -

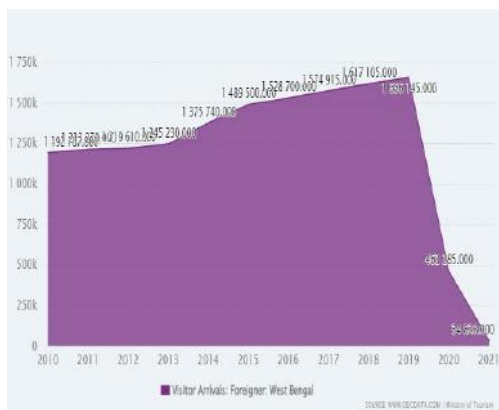
This secondary research article focuses on participation of candidate with and without social media influence. There were 39 total participants of destination decision maker. Four out of thirty-nine stated that they were not influenced by social media while choosing their destination (Tham et al.,2020).

Table 2. Participants' context for destination choice.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age group	Occupation	Marital status	Destination choice	First/Repeat visit	Travelling companions
Joseph	Male	31-40	Sales manager	Married	Phuket (Thailand)	First	Family
Iris	Female	41-50	Music teacher	Married	Warrambool (Australia)	First	Family
Eric	Male	61-70	Self employed	Married	New Zealand	First	Family
Gordon	Male	31-40	Software engineer	Married	Gold Coast (Australia)	First	Family
Andy	Male	41-50	Project manager	Married	Singapore	First	Family
Linda	Female	31-40	Housewife	Married	Lorne (Australia)	First	Family
Peter	Male	41-50	Research analyst	Married	Ballarat (Australia)	First	Family
Kylie	Female	31-40	Self employed	Separated	Cambodia and Vietnam	First	Friend
Melissa	Female	51-60	Senior manager in telecommunications	Married	Vietnam	First	Friend
Mark	Male	21-30	IT consultant	Not married	Morocco and Tanzania	First	Family
Eliza	Female	21-30	Actress	Not married	Canberra and Queensland (Australia)	First	Friends
Martha	Female	41-50	Waste management supervisor	Married	New Zealand	First	Friends but occasionally alone
Priscilla	Female	51-60	Housewife	Married	Bright (Australia)	First	Husband
Dorothy	Female	21-30	Unemployed	Married	New South Wales (Australia)	First	Husband
Grace	Female	61-70	Housewife	Married	Adelaide (Australia)	First	Husband
Colleen	Female	31-40	Finance Officer	Married	Eastern Europe	First	Husband
Evangelina	Female	21-30	Social media analyst	Married	Israel	First	Husband
Alastair	Male	21-30	Food consultant	Not married	USA	First	Husband
Donna	Female	51-60	Healthcare professional	Not married	Apollo Bay (Australia)	First	None
Keith	Male	51-60	IT professional	Not married	Tanzania	First	None
Margaret	Female	61-70	Retired	Married	Balearic Islands (Spain)	First	None
Eddie	Male	21-30	Dental assistant	Not married	USA	First	None
Esther	Female	21-30	Administrative officer	Not married	Ballarat (Australia)	First	Partner
Gary	Male	51-60	Self employed	Married	Botswana, Namibia, Qatar, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia	First	Partner
Norman	Male	31-40	Unemployed	Married	Norfolk Island (Australia)	First	Wife
Phil	Male	31-40	Self-employed	Married	New Zealand	First	Wife
Kristie	Female	31-40	Social media analyst	Not married	Round the world trip	First	Wife
Anthony	Male	51-60	Market consultant	Not married	Hobart (Australia)	Repeat	Friend
Suzie	Female	51-60	Housewife	Widowed	Jervis Bay (Australia)	First	Partner
Thomas	Male	51-60	Retiree	Married	England	Repeat	None
Moses	Male	41-50	IT programmer	Married	Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and Turkey	First	None
Terry	Male	41-50	Engineer	Married	Cambodia and Vietnam	Repeat	Friends, but occasionally alone
Lionel	Male	41-50	Unemployed	Married	Fiji	Repeat	Daughter
Jonah	Male	31-40	Self-employed	Married	Singapore	Repeat	Family
Claudia	Female	41-50	Educator	Married	Sri Lanka and Singapore	Repeat	Family
Lynn	Female	31-40	Housewife	Married	Kota Kinabalu (Malaysia)	Repeat	Family
Jemima	Female	21-30	Researcher	Not married	Gold Coast (Australia) and Taiwan	Repeat	Family
George	Male	51-60	Self-employed	Not married	Sydney (Australia)	Repeat	Family
Jacob	Male	41-50	Unemployed	Married	South Africa	Repeat	Family
				Not married	Fiji	Repeat	Family
				Married	Adelaide (Australia)	Repeat	Family
				Not married	South Korea	Repeat	Friend
				Married	Netherlands	Repeat	Wife

Source- (Tham et al.,2020).

In this investigation it has been observed that social media is not only tools for destination decision. However, it contributes widely in tourism and marketers and remain a significant tools for micro-level and onsite decision for restaurant, visitor attraction. The potential tourist has high level of engagement of social media when the destination is unknown. In the findings of this secondary research data stated that social media is considered as transformed tourism landscape. The investigation shows a mixed effects on the tourist.



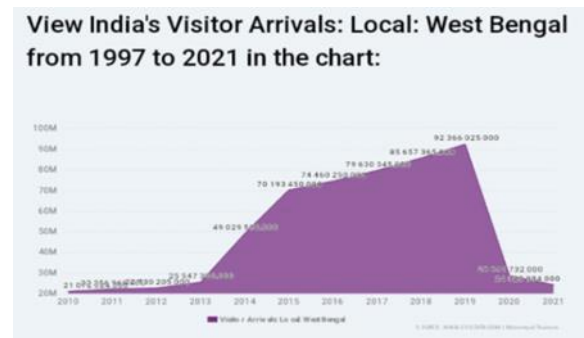
Source <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/india/non-resident-visits-by-states/visitor-arrivals-foreigner-west-bengal>

In the year 2021, there is low visitor arrival due to the after effect of COVID-19. On the opposite side, it has the highest peak in the year 2019. However, West Bengal data remain actively reported by the ministry of tourism

Characteristic	Domestic	Foreign
2021	24.33	0.03
2020	28.84	0.46
2019	92.36	1.66
2018	85.65	1.61
2017	79.68	1.57
2016	74.4	1.52
2015	70.2	1.49
2014	49	1.37
2013	25.4	1.24

Source-<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/india/non-resident-visits-by-states/visitor-arrivals-foreigner-west-bengal>

In this statistics report a drastic downfall has been recorded in the year 2020- 21 in both domestic as well as foreign arrival in West Bengal. Due to the precaution of lockdown, the whole transportation system has been stopped temporarily. However only emergency services are provided for that temporary time period.



Source:-

<https://www.statista.com/register/premiumtest#professiona1>

These statistics are represented from the year 1997 to 2021 the data has reached to its peak in the year 2019. On the opposite side it has the lowest data range in 1997. This report shows a downfall in between 2020-21 due to the international pandemic situation in worldwide. With flexible growth in between the year 2013-19 was possible due to constant digital media growth and the advancement media technology which helped the tourism industry's growth.

VII. FINDINGS

In this research, the secondary data indicate that visitors from domestic and foreign were regular till 2019. In the year 2020, the pandemic has temporarily stopped the tourism business (Kumar et al., 2022). However, there are some other minor reasons which are also considered as the barrier in tourism such as Over Pricing, Growth of unscientific massage parlors, and Exploitation on tourists.

The primary data of this research paper shows that people are interested in tourism and also like to explore different offbeat places nearby. They indicate new media as a tool for tourism which can develop in the future. New media not only helps in finding a suitable holiday but also provides a platform for the tourism business.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research paper by stating that with the help of new media not only West Bengal tourism but also the whole tourism industry can flourish in different dimensions. The skills of new media can evolve different businesses and also provide new ideas for business. Moreover, the West Bengal government has constructed various models and policies based on new media for the further development of the Ministry of Tourism. However, it can't be denied that new media play a significant role in the tourism sector. Still, there are some barriers that can be revised in the future for a holistic purpose.

The mobility of tourism is typically based on the communication process. Marketing communication mostly focuses on evolving the relationship of social media and adapting to the tourist need. In the tourism industry, social media is one of the constructive tools of marketing communication. This industry needs to engage the tourist in multiple works like talking about it and recommending their good experience. Engaging with travel has a great impact on social media. It deliberately influences other tourists to get an adventurous experience. therefore, tourism and social media are connected with each other because they provide business to each other. Social media pictures, videos, and blogs help to promote and advertise tourism, and vice versa tourism posts help to get more number of individual on the social media platform. The government of West Bengal has a specific policy and scheme to develop tourism in the state. The West Bengal government earns a good amount of revenue from the tourism industry. West Bengal government has taken several initiatives to prevent the heritage side and spread the culture of sweets and happiness.

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