

**THE ROLE OF RAJBARI TURNED HOTELS FOR PROMOTION OF HERITAGE  
TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON 8 RAJBARI TURNED  
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**ABSTRACT**

Tourism is a social and economic phenomenon and has evolved into one of the largest and fastest growing industries of the world. The benefits of tourism in terms of employment generation, development of ancillary businesses and income re-distribution are one of its kind. Moreover, its extensive backward and forward linkages make it particularly potent as an instrument of economic growth. Tourism to a great extent depends on the range and type of hotels, home-stays, palace hotels, available at the destination. Palace Hotels play a distinctive role in the development of the tourism industry. Palace is being called as Rajbari in West Bengal. There are around 51 Rajbaris in West Bengal which can be designed into Palace Hotels or Rajbari-cum Hotels, but unfortunately only 8 of them provide accommodation to tourists and exhibit their heritage. In a state like West Bengal where potentials for tourism industrialisation could not be exploited and realised till date, heritage tourism can become a favoured means of mitigating the socio-economic problems. Concerned efforts have been taken up in the recent past to promote heritage tourism of West Bengal. This paper attempts to examine the nature & characteristics of 8 selected Rajbari turned hotels operating within West Bengal. It attemptsto evaluate to what extent these Rajbaris' are capable enough to meet the needs of both foreign and domestic tourists who are visiting the place for its Heritage value and the products offered, marketing tools used and services rendered to the tourists. The key importance of the study is the assessment of the existing deficiencies in the Rajbaris' undertaken in the study and to suggest measures so that supply meets the potential demand. The value added of the paper lies in adopting a framework of strategies to be adopted for overcoming deficiencies, treading the unexplored potential and pointing to certain service conditions so that the Rajbaris' can play a pro-active role in development of heritage tourism industry in West Bengal.

**Keywords:**

Tourism Competitiveness, Heritage Tourism, Local Community, Palace Hotels, Rajbaris

### INTRODUCTION

One of the main basic component of tourism is accommodation or hotel. It provides accommodation, meals, refreshments, cab facility and other ancillary services for those who may reserve their accommodation either in advance or on the premises. In broad terms, hotel provides facilities to meet the needs of the modern day tourists. The concept of hotel has transformed itself as hospitality Industry on account of its utility in tourism and life away from home. A hotel has been focused around the relationship between the tourists as customers and the destination as service provider.

Tourism is to a great extent depend on the range and type of hotels available at the destination. Hotel is a core area of the tourism industry and pays a distinctive role in the development of this ever-expanding industry. An hotel is an establishment which supplies board and lodging, not engaged in interstate commerce' or in any interstate commerce, competitive with or affecting interstate commerce (or so related thereto that the regulation of the one involves the control of the other), but is a quasi-domestic institution retaining from its ancient origin certain traditional, and acquiring, in its modern development, certain statutory rights and obligations to the public, where all persons, not disqualified by condition or conduct, prepared to pay for their accommodation, are to be received and furnished with a room or place to sleep or occupy if such accommodations are available, and with such services and attention as are incident to their use of the hotel as a home, and food at stipulated prices and without or with contract as to duration of visit, and which conducts, within the confines of its physical locations, this business of supplying personal services of individuals for profit. The hotel may furnish quarters and facilities for the assemblage of people for social, business or entertainment purposes, and may engage in renting portions of its premises for shops and business whose contiguity is deemed appropriate to a hotel

### OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research paper is aimed at evaluating the role of Rajbari turned Hotels in promotion of heritage tourism in West Bengal. To case archive the main objective, some specific objectives are considered as follows:

1. To find out the nature and characteristic of the Rajbari turned hotels selected for the study.
2. To analyse different types of services offered by the Rajbari turned hotels selected for the study.
3. To find out to which extent the Rajbari turned palaces are showcasing their Heritage and Culture to the tourists
4. To find out the total number employees and quality of employees in the Rajbari turned hotels selected for the study.
5. To study the marketing mix applied for promotion by the Rajbari turned hotels selected for the study.
6. To analyses the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats of the Rajbari turned hotels selected for the study

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology which was followed, for conducting the study, is discussed under the following heads:

1. **Topic:** "The Role of Rajbari turned Hotels for Promotion of Heritage Tourism in West Bengal – An Empirical Study on 8 Rajbari turned Hotels in West Bengal"
2. **Operational area of the study:** The study was conducted in 8 Rajbari turned Hotels in West Bengal.
3. **Type of research:** The study is mainly exploratory and descriptive in nature
4. **Type of Universe:** The units of the study are those 8 Rajbari turned hotels in West Bengal as provided by the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation (WBTDC).
5. **Size of the Units:** 8 Rajbari turned hotels were selected as sample size of the study
6. **Type of sampling used:** Stratified random sampling was conducted for the hotels under study.
7. **Type of data used:** Both primary and secondary data were used for the study.
8. **Method of data collection:** Questionnaire cum interview method was used to collect primary data. The questions have been structured and undisguised consisting of both open ended and close ended.

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9. **Data presentation & analysis:** Data collected are presented in tables & graphs and mainly descriptive analysis were made.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. All 8 Rajbari cum hotels are providing lodging facilities and 70% provided fooding and 50% provided Tour operators.
2. 90% of existing hotels were non-category hotels with only Classic Hotel was a 3-star category hotel. None except.
3. The Classic hotel possessed ISO: 22000:2000 Certification. Only 20% were affiliated to FHRAI.
4. 80% of hotels were privately owned by sole proprietors while two were joint ventures with the state govt.
5. Products offered were quite limited. They were confined to mainly conventional and traditional consisting mainly of roomservice, restaurants, Travel desk.
6. Doctors conference hall, other addl. essential products of modern tourism needs were negligible if not locally missing onlythe Classic Hotel & Hotel Imphal by Classic were found to be providing some additional products.
7. Customers occupying hotels were mainly found to be a) Business, b) Official c) Visitors visiting family and friends.
8. Only the Classic Hotel was found to have struck partnership with Govt., Travel agents and NGOs, none were found partnering at community level.
9. 70% of the hotels possessed a separate marketing department while 30% did not possess so.
10. 70% used conventional method of promoting through newspaper. 30% used magazines, television and through internet.Only 20% had hosted websites, Hoarding was practiced by only 20%.
11. None of the mangers/proprietors possessed any formal training.
12. 80% of hotels lacked vision and motivation.
13. Almost all hotels lacked co-ordination with State Tourism department.
14. State owned or unity owned ventures were poorly managed than privately owned hotels.

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### CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the accommodation and fooding, product offered strategic and planning management and facilities are presently implemented to promote heritage tourism in West Bengal are very weak and there is an urgent need to develop appropriate and workable role for promoting heritage tourism in West Bengal. In this research, the findings and suggestions that are made in the study could help in promoting the heritage tourism industry. Due to the high frequency of changing opportunities and trends, surveys are to be conducted now and then to enable to implement appropriate role of Rajbaris’.

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