

# PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF RURAL TOURISM IN BAKRESHWAR AND NEARBY TOURIST SITES IN BIRBHUM, WEST BENGAL, INDIA - WITH REFERENCE TO THE TYPOLOGY OF TOURISTS IN THE REGION

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## Abstract

*Birbhum, the 'land of red soil', consists numerous sites like that of the Tagore's abode 'Santiniketan' which is known for their "Vasant Utsav" and "Pous Mela"; and Jaidev Kenduli renowned for their fairs and festivals. The religious domestic tourists visit Tarapith, Fullara near Lavpur; and Patharchapri famous for their Sufi Saints. The district also consists of their traditional Baul singers. Sonibarar Haat of Santiniketan produces unique handicraft products like Kantha Stitched materials prepared by rural people. The district has many significant Shaktipeethas. The present study covers a religious and a natural site named as 'Bakreshwar'. The research focuses on rural prospects of the region through major religious and natural resources; and highlights the problems that act as a barrier in development at a wide level. The data has been collected from the tourists using the questionnaire and by observing the site. The demographic profiles of the tourists, their preferences, opinion and their behavior describes the main output which is the rural religious tourism prospects of Bakreshwar, surrounding Kankalitala, Fullara and Tarapith region which were further observed. Discussion have also been made regarding the typology of tourists found in the region through rural tourism perspectives. To analyze the data; correlation, linear and multiple regression techniques were used which investigates the impact of tourist's preferences. Further investigation made on problems of rural religious tourism in Bakreshwar as its connected circuit. This study helps identifying various stakeholders, the values and assets involved to promote as a tourist generating region.*

**Keywords:** Rural Religious Tourism, Rural typology, Mythology, Geo-thermal features

## Introduction

Tourism is a service industry, just like hospitality industry, this industry is also among the top ten sectors in India. Rural Tourism is a travel for recreation, leisure, relaxation and peace of mind, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, somewhere in the landscape amidst the greenery and close to nature, somewhere in the villages where one can exchange talks with the local people, trying to know about a particular tradition, lifestyle, believes, religion, practices and culture. Rural tourism industry is new for a country like India but the concept of rurality is quite old over here. It

consists of more than sixty-four thousand villages all of them covering a unique identity in itself. Each and every individual living in this country has been belonging to some or the other village. So, they have an emotional attachment with their homelands or countryside. In the recent years, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has been taking steps to promote the rural lands through different indigenous projects. There have been thirty-six rural sites where United Nation Development Programme has been supporting capacity building programme under the leadership of Government of India. The diversity existing here in India has led to the growth of inbound tourism. About 10.04 Million tourists arrived in India in the year 2017. (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2018-19) In the year 2018 it was around 10.56 million tourists. (India tourism statistics, 2019) The foreign exchange earnings in India during the month of October 2018 were INR 14,561 crores. State like Gujarat, Kerela, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have already started renovating their few villages as per the needs and requirement of an inbound tourist. Some examples are Hodka village, Poovar Village, Yana village and Valparai Village. There are other villages also like Spiti, Malana and Kasoti in Himanchal Pradesh, Khimsar in Rajasthan and many others which are also too good in providing all the facility to stay and enjoy to the fullest at their destination. West Bengal, the sweetest part of India is no less in rural tourism prospects. West Bengal is such a state in India that has varieties of resources whether it's a natural or cultural, a hill station of Darjeeling, a sandy beach of Digha and Mandarmoni, a dense forest of Sundarban or a metro life of Kolkata, city of joy; everywhere diversity and authenticity exists. The land of Bengal covers almost 75% villages of the total area. And in most corners of Bengal there is diversity in regional language, they have their own stories to tell, their own heritages, paintings to showcase, art and crafts, numerous tribes and regional people, cultural life, archaeological monuments, religious sites, natural sights including different types of floras and fauna which are existing here. From Sundarban to Darjeeling and from Alipore to Medinipore there are varieties of climatic features existing in those rural lands that fall in between these regions with different topographical features.

In terms of ecological aspect there have been examples like Samsing village of Jalpaiguri district, Rimbick and Poobing village of Darjeeling, Junput village in Purba Medinipur, Bakkhali of 24 Parganas which have many ecological features to attract and accommodate such eco-tourists in their nature's abode.

Bakreshwar situated in Dubrajpur in Suri subdivision of Birbhum district of West Bengal. It is regarded as one of the pilgrimage centers as is related to an ancient history of *Sati* (the female goddess) and so is called as the *Shaktipeetha*. This particular temple lies on the bank of Bakreshwar or

Paaphara river. Bakreshwar river which is said to be the tributary of Mayurakshi river originates in Santhal Parganas division of Jharkhand. Moreover, the area of Bakreshwar is famous for its natural hot springs. The locations around Dubrajpur are basically remote in nature in terms of amenities, accessibilities, infrastructural development with a slightly higher rate of poverty level, while the literacy rate of Dubrajpur has been risen approx 68.26 % in 2011. (Registrar General & Census Commissioner: 2011) Here in Bakreshwar, the literacy rate has raised up to 80.08 % because of the arrival of tourists and exposure of the area. Though the arrival of tourists is not the same throughout the year. In times of off season, it faces the scarcity. But when the local tourist arrivals are occurring more and more in the region, it is benefiting the local resources and the local suppliers including few hoteliers, local transporters, stakeholders and local entrepreneurs.

The purpose of the study is to locate various places of religious and mythological importance in the rural lands of Birbhum, West Bengal. Apart of these activities, leisure is also a priority for every tourist, so Bakreshwar being one such example covers rural, religious and mythological aspect and thus is discussed in this study. Kankalitala, Phullara and Tarapith are the connected sites of religious importance that has eminent prospects for rural religious tourism and for the years to come.

### Literature Review

The general and broad definition of rural tourism is a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and local people to attract tourist to their area in order to gain extra income for their businesses. (Gannon 1994) Rural area that is influenced by some religious activities is categorized under rural religious tourism. It has been found that religious tourists at the same time are strongly influenced in rural areas and the social aspect of rural tourists has the largest impact on the rural households. (Purtaheri, Rahmani and Ahmadi, 2012). In order to promote the local religious tourism resources in West Bengal, the West Bengal tourism, Government of India has introduced various religious destination like that of the *Shaktipeethas*. Some examples are like Vibhash *Shaktipeethas* of Purba Mednipur, Bahula Temple of Burdwan, Bakreshwar of Birbhum, Kankhaleshwari Temple of Birbhum, Kiriteshwar of Murshidabad, Nalateswari of Howrah-Sahebgunj Loopline, Nandikeshwari temple of Birbhum district, Ratnavali Temple of Hoogly district, Sarbamangla temple of Burdwan, Kalighat of Kolkata, Maa Juhari Kali Temple of Malda, Tarapith of Birbhum and Attahas *Shaktipeetha* (West Bengal Tourism, 2018)- Maa Fullara temple of Birbhum. A total of five *shaktipeethas* exist here in Birbhum district of West Bengal. Among them Bakreshwar also have been the centre of attraction since decades due to its historical legend

associated with it and its geothermal features in the area. Birbhum attracts devotees for in situ *Shaktipeethas* among its population of 35 lakhs (2011 census). The site has a great significance in Hindu mythology and is associated with several events in history.

Today this particular place of Bakreshwar is regarded as a pilgrimage site and is dedicated to Lord Bakranath (Lord Shiva) and goddess Kali. Also considered as one of the *Shaktipeethas* of India.

Its geographical feature is associated with their hot springs which comes out of the underground area that has some unique chemical richness. Bakreshwar (West Bengal) and Tantalo (Jharkhand) are regarded as the main hot springs areas amongst the group of all hot springs located on the eastern continuity of Son-Narmada lineament. (Mukhopadhyay and Sarlokar, 2012) This particular place consisting hot springs of Bakreshwar is situated in eastern India. The hot springs located in Bakreshwar in the Birbhum district of West Bengal are important as because of its geothermal features which is a part of nature and also a prospect of rural tourism.

Bakreshwar has said to have played a significant role in the history, both in the ancient and medieval ages. It has a great location to visit, a place for those who want to relish the charm of rich cultural heritage and beauty of Birbhum. (Barman 2013)

The three main *Shaktipeethas* connected to Bakreshwar i.e., Kankalitala Fullora and Tarapith are associated to the history of Sati. At Tarapith, *Sati's* third eye fell to the earth. (Kalibhakti 2011)

## **Method**

### **Aims**

The study aims to showcase the major problems and prospects of rural religious tourism in Bakreshwar and its connected sites of Kankalitala, Fullora and Tarapith which can further help in creating new heights in rural tourism in West Bengal Tourism map.

### **Objectives**

1. To find out the major problems prevailing at Bakreshwar, in developing as a prominent religious site in Birbhum district.
2. To know the reason behind the willingness of the tourist travel to the *Shaktipeethas* of Bakreshwar.
3. To know the behavioral pattern of the tourist visiting Bakreshwar.
4. To find out the scope for development of the major religious circuits in and around Bakreshwar.
5. To find different typology of tourists coming into the region

The method of the study is both qualitative and quantitative. Data collected mainly are primary; and secondary which were used to fulfill the

requirements of literature review and few facts and figures. The total population of the village Bakreshwar is approx 1,741 (2011 census, source-Gov. of India). The primary data collected was mainly from the tourists coming from various locations to Bakreshwar. The tool used was mainly through observation and questionnaires. The questionnaires that were used were open and closed ended questionnaire covering the demographic characteristics of the tourist in Bakreshwar, their preferences as a tourist and their opinion which was observed. Sampling technique used was simple random sampling. A total of 100 respondents were targeted, out of which 50 were asked to fill up the questionnaire in a particular timeframe. The rest 50 target respondents were basically the ones who were observed throughout the year by the researcher at the destination of Bakreshwar, Tarapith, Kankalitala and Fullara (religious circuit); focusing on the rest tourism related activities. The questions that were asked by the respondents were mainly through likert scale questionnaires, as shown in the appendix section of this study.

### Scope of the Study

The study helps to locate places of tourist's interest in Bakreshwar and its nearby region which is one of the prospects of Rural Tourism. This religious tourism circuit proposed in this study can help provide a better framework to the government in planning projects in the name of rural religious sites. Also, the study is useful in highlighting the real life problems of the tourists in the area particularly.

### Findings

#### Rural Tourism in Bakreshwar as Per the Yearly Observation:

Bakreshwar is situated in Gohaliara gram panchayat. The total geographical area of village is 66.54 hectares. There are about 450 houses at present in Bakreshwar village. Dubrajpur is nearest town to Bakreshwar which is approximately 10 kms away from the village.

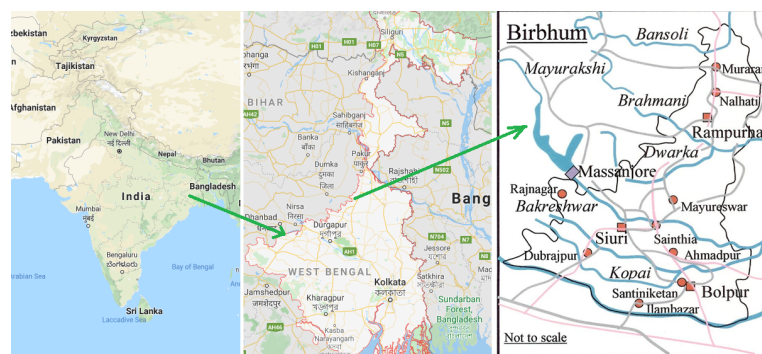


Figure 1- Map of India describing West Bengal and Birbhum district  
Source-( Wikipedia)



Figure 2- Map depicting the sites in Bakreshwar  
Source: (Google Maps)

**Prospects of Rural Tourism in Bakreshwar and the Areas Around as Per the Findings and Survey (in reference to typology of tourists as per the observation):**

**Religious Tourist** visiting the region: Most of the religious tourists prefers to visit the regions like:

**a. Mahishamardini Temple** is an ancient temple in Bakreshwar and a great historical resource location wise, for the region. The depiction of the goddess Durga is in the carved images inside the temple. Goddess *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, Lord *Ganesh*, and *Kartik* are separately depicted in each of the upper four sections inside this temple. Below these, the tripartite assemblage of coconut and palm tree in a water pot, broadly connoting “good luck,” is rendered as a matching pair.” Mythologically the temple is important as it is associated with the believes of the local people residing there, also the people of Bengal have great faith in the deity of this temple. It is believed that the forehead and eyebrows of Sati fell during her immolation at the hands of Lord Vishnu’s weapon. So, the local people believe this place to be very pure as is associated with Sati.

**b. Bakranath Shiva Temple** of Bakreshwar is a major religious resource in the area. It is itself the reason for Bakreshwar being called as one of the *ShaktiPithas* of India. This particular temple is designed in Odiya (related to Odisha state) style of architecture which is quite famous in Eastern India. The other name for this temple is Bakreshwar temple. According to Hindu mythology this is the place where Sati's eyebrow fell. This place is famous for ancient old Bakranath Shiva Temple and many other temples surrounding this place. Hence many religious tourists gather over here. Hundreds of tourists visit this place every year to offer their prayers to Lord

Shiva in Bakranath Temple. There are approx. 200 small Shiva temples surrounding this particular Bakranath Temple.

**c. Tarapith-**This *Shaktipeetha* is dedicated to Maa (Goddess) Tara, which is another name of Maa Kali is located in Tarapith. The place is known for its *Tantric* temple, dedicated to *tantric* activities and adjoining the temple the cremation ground is situated where *sāadhanā* (tantric rituals) are performed. The three most famous places to visit here are: Thousands of devotees' everyday come here to offer their prayers to the goddess Tara. Mainly people from Bengal and the neighboring state are seen here in the temple of Tarapith. One of the daily norms here is the blood sacrifice of goats. There is a big water tank situated beside the temple. The water of the tank is said to have the healing power by restoring life to the dead. Thus, most of the people are seen taking a holy bath there, before and sometimes after offering prayers in the temple. The Bamakhepa at Tarapith was a saint and a great devotee of Goddess Tara (1837-1911). He has been performing *saadhnas* and *yogas* in those cremation ground from the very young age under the guidance of Kailsahpathi Baba. His particular shrine is also located in the vicinity of Maa Tara temple. He is also considered as a contemporary of a Bengali saint Ramakrishna. Most religious tourists visit here in his devotion.

**d. Kankalitala-**This rural area is 7 kms away from Santiniketan. Goddess *Parvati* is the actual deity of this Kankalitala Temple. Sati's-waist-landed-at-Kankalitala.-It-created-a-depression-in the-earth-which-later-filled-up-with-water-and-formed-the-sacred-*kund*. It is believed now that the actual body part now lies underneath this water. Mainly the tourist prefers to stay in Santiniketan and visit this temple while on a day trip.

**e. Fullara-** Approx 30 kms from Santiniketan. Situated in Labhpur, the main attraction of the place is the beautiful temple of Fullara Goddess. A ten-day fair is held every year at the Fullara temple in during *Magh Purnima*. A huge pond is also situated nearby the temple. According to myth, the ancient sage Durbasa's ashram stood just three km from the place, at Gopalpur. Hence the place is mythologically important among the locals. The very old temple has been destroyed here and a new temple has been built which is now called as Fullara devi temple. Only some broken pillars of the old temple remain today. According to believes, Lord Hanuman collected 108 blue lotuses from the pond when Lord Rama required them for the worship of goddess Durga. It is again considered to be one of the *Shaktipeethas* in India. The below map shown in Figure 5 clearly highlights all the four religious sites and their distances.

#### **Geologists/Scientists:**

Recently most tourists in recent years came here for the scientific testing of the water and soil in Bakreshwar. Their main objective was to

find the geothermal potential of the natural elements in Bakreshwar. Some researchers and scientists founded out that there was some iron element in the hot springs of Bakreshwar.

**a. Hot Springs in Bakreshwar** are important resource in the area of Bakreshwar and is the centre of attraction among the tourists especially geologists. Their ponds have geothermal features. There are almost six *kunds* (man-made pond surrounded by the sides) located. namely *Agni Kund*, *Khar Kund*, *Bhoirob Kund*, *Shoubhaga (Dudh) Kund*, *Shurjo Kund*, *Shwet Ganga*, *Papohora Ganga* and *Jibotsha (Amrita) Kund*. There is a water bath area for the common tourists. Among these *Kund*, is *Agnikund* which is the hottest hot spring with the temperature of 93.33 degree Celsius. The devotees come here for a particular medication as it is believed that water of these springs has healing capabilities. Hence apart from scientist, people with health issues (health tourism) prefers to visit these locations.

**b. Nir Nirjan Lake-** Another important resource in the region is the Nir Nirjan lake. It is a reservoir formed by erecting a dam in Bakreshwar River named as *Neel Nirjan*). It basically provides water to the thermal power plant situated at Bakreshwar, and today this spot is gaining in popularity as a tourist attraction. Most of the scientists are seen visiting this place to make further improvement in the procedures of thermal power production. This thermal power plant is helpful in facilitating the area through electricity supply.

### ***Spiritual Tourist-***

**a. The cremation ground** at Tarapith, also called as *Mahasamshan*. This burning ground is a highly active one. Dead bodies routinely arrive, not just from the local community, but also from various locations throughout West Bengal as this place is regarded to be very holy, and even as far away as the neighboring states of Bihar and Jharkhand.

Though Bakreshwar have been important since years still the percentage of tourist arrival over here is lesser in amount as compared to other famous tourist attraction in West Bengal. Mostly Bengali people of neighboring places or residents of neighboring states of Jharkhand and Bihar come to visit this place for spiritual purposes or in memory of someone or if they have a strong belief related to this place. Most of the tourist arrivals are around November to January. Majority of people in India itself is unfamiliar with the place may be because of lack of marketing initiatives or lack of coverage of the media in the region, which is utmost important in the world of today.

At the same time there are some positive aspects to know about the place. The area around Bakreshwar is rich in coal mining as it comes in the regions of Eastern Coalfields Limited, a subsidiary of an organization named Coal India Limited. The nearest coalfield is Gourandi colliery. The

coal is the important resource has provided huge benefits through exports and industrial production in past years. However at present situation most of the other coalfields in the region are about to be evacuated and government is planning to fill them manually with other natural material and already it has started working in some areas to prevent the land to get steepen down.

**b.** The cremation ground of Tarapith also called as *Maha-samsaan* is amidst-the dark forest surroundings, which is located-on-the-river-side-at-the end of town. In Bengal, the cremation ground of Tarapith is also considered as an integral part of the *Shaktipitha*. It is a human belief since decades that the goddess Tara-can be seen in shadows drinking blood of goats which are sacrificed every day at her altar to satiate her anger and seek favors, but there isn't any evidence proving such belief. *Tantric-practitioners-believe-that Tara-is-attracted-to bones-and- skeletons-and the cremation-ground is her preferred-residence.*



Figure 3- Local souvenirs near the Bakreshwar temple



Figure 4- Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project across agricultural fields

#### ***AGI/AGRO Tourist-***

**Agro-based Industry at Bakreshwar** is famous here. Paddy is the main source of agriculture product over here. Research has proven that the ashes that are emitted from the factories can be well used in agriculture in Bakreshwar region which gives nearly 50% more production of paddy than the conventional agricultural practice. The major agricultural activities performed over here are mainly conservation of water harvesting structure, land development viz. Contour bundling, land leveling, reclamation of sand laden areas including drainage course and water bodies/agronomic and vegetative measures viz. Agro-forestry, conservation forming, alley cropping etc.

#### ***Cultural Tourist-***

**a. Local Handicraft at Tarapith-** Most of the cultural tourists could be seen in the location of Tarapith. Though there are not much handicraft work found in Bakreshwar; only the ones near Bakreshwar temple like idols of goddess, small souvenirs like show pieces to decorate, some metal items of workshop and *sankhas*, some ornaments like necklaces, earrings, ladies

handbags, wall hangings made of wood, small *shivlingas*, etc. Still the products are centre of attraction at times. They are in demand and are available at affordable rates.

**b. Fairs and Festivals-** Koushiki Amabasya Festival is quite important in Tarapith. Special offerings are made in the temple for the goddess Durga at the time of Amabasya (when the moon is hidden in the darkest night).



Figure 5- Road Distances of the religious circuit  
Source: (Google Maps)

### Other Typology of Tourists in the Region:

**1. Eco Tourist-** Most tourists from urban area come here for spending time and enjoying nature here. Mainly the lush green paddy fields covering these areas of Bakreshwar and the religious circuit and those around the Ajay river in the region are eco-friendly areas.

**2. Rural Tourists-** The overall state of West Bengal is famous for Rural tourism because more than 75% of the state is covered with villages and rural landscape. The region of Bakreshwar covering the religious triangle of Kankalitala, Fullara and Tarapith are mostly the rural sites which does not have much modern infrastructure, activities and people.

**3. Excursionist-** Mostly the people from Kolkata and other cities in West Bengal or nearby states like Jharkhand, visit for one day outing to these location of religious tourism mainly for picnic, meeting friends and relatives, visiting temples of Tarapith, Fullara or Kankalitala or taking a bath in the hot springs of Bakreshwar in Winter. Likewise, people usually visit Masaljhol Dam near Tarapith for an outing with family. So, there are plenty of attractions in and around the religious triangle of Birbhum which attracts the one-day travellers.

**4. Leisure Tourists-** Most of those 75% tourists who come from other states in Bengal and specially to these locations are leisure tourists who need to free up their couple of days to visit these locations in the Birbhum district

because their main moto is not only to visit a specific site but to cover most of the attractions in the location including religious triangle within a stipulated timeframe.

	Marital Status	Employment status	Annual Income	Budget	Expenditure	Season/Time of visit	Accompanying person	Purpose of visit	
10-20 yrs	0	Unmarried-3	Emp-24	Upto-1 Lakh-19	Upto-1 Lakh-20	Upto-1 Lakh-22	Festival-8	Spouse-14	VFR(Visiting Friends and Relatives)-
20-40 yrs	26	Married-45	Unemp-13	1 Lakh-3	1 Lakh-5	1 Lakh-24	Peak season-33	With child/children-32	0
40-60 yrs	20	Divorced-1	Part time-4	3 Lakh to 5 lakh-11	5 Lakh & above-1	10 Lakh & above-0	Off season-7	Parents-4	32
60 & above	4	Living-1	Self emp-9	5 lakh & above-4	No prior plan-0		Normal days-2	Others/in addition-0	-18
									Others-0

**Table. 1-** Demographic figures of the tourists in Bakreshwar.

Demographic profile of tourists as on Dec 2018 collected from 50 tourists in Bakreshwar (through questionnaires).

### 7. Mass Tourists

This particular religious circuit of Tarapith, Fullara, Kankalitala and Bakreshwar is best known for Mass tourist but in a particular season when the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold either at the time of March or October one can find large number of mass tourists to these location and in winter most tourists are seen visiting Bakreshwar and most of them are religious tourists.

**Correlation Analysis Result-** Following are the coding for the associated terminologies in the analysis.

**PLA-** places were the tourists first heard about Bakreshwar village

**NVIS-** number of the visit of the tourists

**RFV-** reasons of visits

**MOT-** mode of transport

**DOS-** duration of stay

These data related to several independent variables were analyzed. And one dependent variable was kept i.e., duration of stay (DOS). This was chosen as a dependent variable because stay of the tourists ultimately matters at the destination. These were asked from 50 respondents and were

tested through correlation analysis using SPSS version 23. The data provided following results:

**Table 2. Correlations Between Variables**

		NVIS	DOSO	MOT	RFV
PLA	Pearson Correlation	-.041	-.125	-.078	.172
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.779	.387	.591	.233
	N	50	50	50	50
NVIS	Pearson Correlation		.718**	-.040	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.781	.264
	N		50	50	50
DOSO	Pearson Correlation			-.086	.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.552	.473
	N			50	50
MOT	Pearson Correlation				-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.958
	N				50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### ***Tourists***

**.718\*\***

.000

50

\*\* is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This means when there is facilitation for better duration of stay of the tourist there is the greater number of visit by the tourist to Bakreshwar, duration of stay being the dependent variable.

Then same set of data were tested through Linear Regression analysis using SPSS version 23. Here the set of independent and dependent variables were the same as above.

To understand the strength of those independent variables and Duration of stay (DOS), the simple regression analysis was performed in order to predict the dependent variable from the independent variable i.e., places where the tourists first heard about Bakreshwar village (PLA), number of the visit of the tourists (NVIS), reasons of visits (RFV) and mode of transport (MOT) (predictor).

**Simple Regression Analysis Results** are given below in the following tables:

**Table 3. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.727 <sup>a</sup>	.529	.487	.50450

a. Predictors: (Constant), MOT, RFV, NVIS, PLA

Above table depicts that the model summary. Critical value of R- square should be between 0 and 1. A higher value is better. From the above table R- square is .529.

**Table 4. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.867	4	3.217	12.638	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	11.453	45	.255		
	Total	24.320	49			

a. Dependent Variable: DOS

b. Predictors: (Constant), MOT, RFV, NVIS, PLA

From the above table ANOVA result depicts that  $F = 12.638$  and  $P = .000$  established the significance of the relationship between the rest independent variables (places where the tourists first heard about Bakreshwar village, number of the visit of the tourists, reasons of visits and mode of transport) and duration of stay being dependent variable.

**Table 5. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.141	.399		2.859	.006
	PLA	-.074	.076	-.102	-.978	.333
	NVIS	.571	.084	.710	6.828	.000
	RFV	.007	.113	.006	.060	.953
	MOT	-.057	.090	-.065	-.635	.528

a. Dependent Variable: DOS

Lastly, above table depicts that standardized coefficient Beta and t value of product of No. of visit are Beta .710,  $t = 6.828$ ,  $P = .000$  which also

proved that there is a strong evidence of a relation between the independent variable of Number of visit of the tourist and Duration of stay.

### Multiple Regression Analysis:

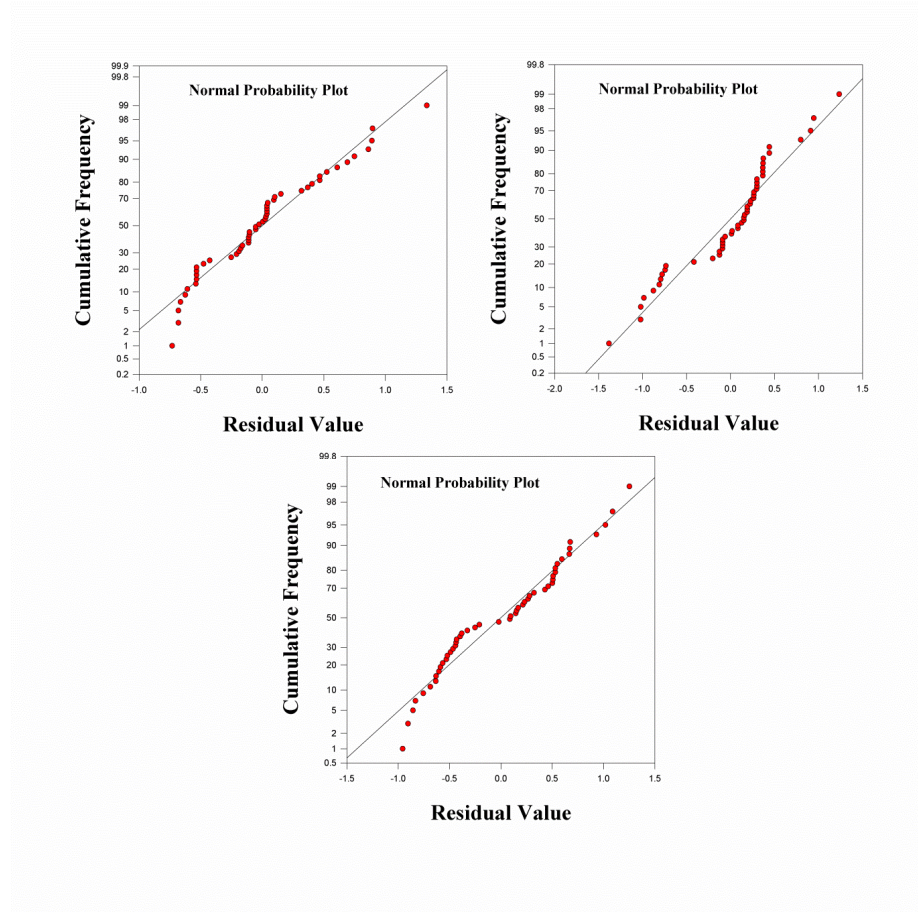


Figure 6-Multiple regression graph

The first graph of Tourist questionnaire as in appendix:

$N = 50$ ,  $R = 0.727$ ,  $Rsqr = 0.529$ ,  $Adj Rsqr = 0.487$

The dependent variable duration of stay of the tourist can be predicted from a linear combination of the independent variables: medium through which they know about the place, number of visit, reason for visit and mode of transport

Not all of the independent variables appear necessary (or the multiple linear model may be underspecified).

The following appear to account for the ability to predict duration of stay ( $P < 0.05$ ): Number of visits

The second graph of tourist questionnaire

$N=50$ ,  $R = 0.337$ ,  $Rsqr = 0.113$ ,  $Adj Rsqr = 0.000$

The dependent variable Total expenses of the tourists can be predicted from a linear combination of the independent variables: behaviour of local people, behaviour of sellers, importance of fairs and festivals, role of government, satisfaction level, total expenses and amenities at the destination.

Not all of the independent variables appear necessary (or the multiple linear model may be underspecified).

The following appear to account for the ability to predict Total expenses of the tourist ( $P < 0.05$ ): [None]

The third graph of Tourist Questionnaires as in appendix:

$N = 50$ ,  $R = 0.362$ ,  $Rsqr = 0.131$ ,  $Adj Rsqr = 0.000$

The dependent variable expenditure of the tourist, can be predicted from a linear combination of the independent variables: Age of the tourist, marital status, religion, employment status, annual income, budget, time of visit, accompanying person, purpose of visit

Not all of the independent variables appear necessary (or the multiple linear models may be underspecified).

The following appear to account for the ability to predict expenditure of the tourist ( $P < 0.05$ ): [None] Thus in the above graph, the red dotted spots that are occurring more closer to the straight line, represent more significant result.

### Conclusion and Discussion

The above analysis of correlation analysis reveals that if more facilities provided to the tourist at Bakreshwar the more shall be the comfortable duration of stay because duration of stay being dependent variable is shown highly significant in the findings. Few hotels have evolved these days like Hotel Bakreshwar Inn, Hotel Tirthashree and a small guest houses in the location but still they are in less numbers as compared to the other *Shaktipeethas*. Most of the long-distance travelers change their mind regarding their duration of stay because they don't find more option to stay there. Though there are hotels in Dubrajpur or Santiniketan. Most of the frequent travelers prefer to cover Bakreshwar and Kankalitala in a day trip. While Fullara and Tarapith being covered in the next day trip. So as per the observation in the research it is seen that one day visitors from nearby places or neighborhood states like BIHAR, Jharkhand and Odisha coming and staying there and returning back for the stay at either Santiniketan or Dubrajpur or Suri. Hence more and more influence must be given on the availability of hotels in the location. Secondly in the second test of linear regression using ANNOVA depicts that all the four factors i.e., places were the tourists first heard about Bakreshwar village, number of the visit of the tourists, reasons of visits and

mode of transport) effects the tourists decision in their duration of stay. Sometimes due to lack of publicity and promotion people are unable to find the historical and religious importance of the place, hence that impacts their frequent visits which is further dominated by the unavailability of amenities at the destination. The purpose of visit of the tourist is also limited among them in the state. Hence more and more tourists should come from other states and other countries, to know the importance of this religious site and the advantage of hot spring in the location. Marketing initiative at the same time is necessary to educate tourists about the importance of the place.

Also, mode of transport matters a lot in making the decision of a tourist to visit the destination. The coefficient table under this linear regression analysis proves that the strongest relationship is between the number of visits of the tourist and their duration of stay at Bakreshwar. This means those tourists who already know about the destination, who visits the destination on a regular interval of time, their duration of stay is more than that of tourists who stays there for a day or so. Hence again more facilitation must be given on the duration of stay. The rest independent variables also provide impact on the duration of stay but relatively less than the number of visits. The multiple correlation analysis shows the figure  $R_{sq} = 0.529$  which is showing a significant relationship between its corresponding variables (dependent variable- duration of stay and independent variable- number of visits). None other result shows the significant relationship. Hence by the first graph the significant level can be easily justified. The dotted mark that is close to the line represents more significance level.

With the help of the observation made from the rest respondents at Bakreshwar, a collective conclusion was drawn. Rural tourism in this location can give rise to several other type of tourism and to various typologies of tourists. For a comfortable stay at Bakreshwar, tourist needs more innovative involvement as a tourist in various activities, for example the hot water spring over here provides bathing facility for the tourist. This can further provide a space for spa rejuvenating centre or some medical therapy centre. Moreover, pollution from Bakreshwar Thermal Power project must be controlled to some extent.

### **Major Problems and Prospects in Bakreshwar**

Firstly, the ash in the river is the major problem. In 2015 the court ordered plant of Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project to remove ash from the riverbed, though measures have been taken but not on a wide basis. Secondly, the carrying capacity of the destination must also be taken care of while promoting the destination. It depends on the accommodating capacity at the destination especially during the peak season. So, more hotels, lodges, guest houses needed to be developed there. Lastly the amenities like sanitation, parking area must be provided to the tourists at

Bakreshwar. Whereas these places fall vacant during off season, so more tourist promotion is needed to be done in that offseason. No proper tourist guides available at the destination. This way we are forgetting the history. No one is available to depict them.

Hot spring is best idea to beat winter. With the help of a spa rejuvenating centre one can easily facilitate the tourist with some winter relaxation therapy during winter. The warm water is highly relaxing during the cold temperature and is of medical importance as well. As per the observation several typology of tourists were seen in the region but their arrival is very few in overall year due to this reason when the usual 50 tourist were randomly asked to fill up the questionnaire, their reason for visit were limited.

### **Major Problems and Prospects in and Around Bakreshwar**

During the peak season places like Tarapith, faces many crowds as compared to Fullara and Kankalitala. So, control of such tourists on a daily basis could be an effort for a safe movement of tourists. Crime to some extent is existing in these places. No proper parking area is seen especially in Kankalitala and Fullara. Lack of basic amenities at the destination like in Fullara, hardly one can find a better restaurant there. No proper roads especially to Tarapith and Labhpur. Extreme poverty existing in and around Tarapith. No proper licensed guides are seen in and around the temple regions of the circuit. The Religious circuit of Tarapith, Kankalitala, Fullara along with Bakreshwar could be promoted as a separate itinerary for the tourist.

### **Suggestions**

1. The rural religious tourism is new concept which can be promoted where there is a tie up of local industries with the national bodies
2. The headquarter Suri should provide some sort of assistance in management of services here at Bakreshwar and in nearby sites
3. The government of West Bengal and India all together should develop and highlight the circuit of Bakreshwar alongwith Tarapith, Fullara and Kankalitala by ways of marketing and promotional initiative. Then only the various types of tourism under the umbrella of rural tourism could be promoted in the selected circuit.
4. The Government of West Bengal and India altogether should undertake some Rural Religious tourism or rural tourism projects in the region
5. There is need to involve more stakeholders i.e., hoteliers, transporters, car rentals, retailers who could promote the resources here
6. An integrated model can be developed with the collaboration with local authority by creating motivation, empowerment and involvement of the

host community of sustainable use of both natural and cultural resources at these destinations.

7. More facilities like more number of hotels, restaurants should be developed and amenities like ATMs, drinking water facilities, toilet facility, parking area must be developed at the destination and local government should show active involvement.

8. Continuous survey should be conducted by the local institution for a better communication between local governments, stakeholders, host communities and particularly the tourists. The continuous survey can be conducted from the tourist so as to check the level of improvement of the place and its nearby location.

9. There is a need of a tourist information centre in all the four religious places mentioned in the study.

According to the observation from the rest 50 tourists at Bakreshwar and nearby location it is observed that the Rural religious tourism of Birbhum has a great prospect for an excellent domestic and international inflow of the tourist because of its rich history, culture, habits, spirituality, mythology and practices. The religious circuit of Birbhum (as seen in figure 5) could be promoted by various stakeholders who could also market them as a separate itinerary. The major problem of these regions is poverty to the great extent which is creating a diverse impact on the behavior and choices of the tourists. Until and unless a tourist stays at the destination, he can't spend more and more as could be seen in the case of Bakreshwar. Similarly, shortage of basic facilities and amenities at the destination is changing the mind of the tourist to stay there or make a plan to return back to the origin. Rural tourism assures the tourists to provide a unique experience to them along with the involvement of the tourist in the local activities. And rural religious tourism is based on a particular theme of religion hence people from other religion hesitate to take part in various other activities at the destination. Hence limited tourist travels to the destination during the off season. Sound management and innovative thinking is needed to enrich a destination. As is seen in the case of Bakreshwar, if some spa resort is developed at the site, this could be another pull factor for the religious as well as the leisure tourist. Labhpur is isolated to an extent and hence very limited number of tourist travels to Fullara devi temple. Most of the people from other states don't know about the historical importance, hence local stakeholders could take initiative to promote these sites. Kankalitala is mostly visited by the tourist who visits Santiniketan. If these places are developed through the itinerary as a religious circuit of Birbhum, more and more economic benefit can be made. The role of local government and central government is utmost needed in providing safety and security to the tourist at these sites, until and unless the government doesn't take initiative

to educate their people, innovative ideas can't come up at the destination. Eco resorts or home stays could also be developed at the areas of the circuit to increase the economic level of the destination. Some stakeholders participating at these destinations as is seen in Tarapith; are in loss as the middleman is seen buying their product at much cheaper rates. Indigenous projects at these locations of Bakreshwar, Tarapith, Kankalitala and Labhpur, could open new dimension of rural religious tourism in West Bengal Tourism.

### Limitation

The overall views of a large population cannot be drawn with this. The study is helpful for the readers in getting an idea about a rural religious tourism aspect which is present in the regions of Bakreshwar and its connected circuits in Birbhum district of West Bengal. It is helpful in locating the core areas of rural religious tourism as well as leisure activities involved through geothermal aspects in the regions of Bakreshwar particularly. Various stakeholders start participating once the area gets exposed. Overall, the study is connected with mythological aspect which plays an important role in drawing attention of the tourist towards a particular region.

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