

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMY: A STUDY ON PART  
OF GANGTOK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AREA, EAST SIKKIM, INDIA

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**Shalmoli Palit<sup>1</sup> and Uttam Kumar Patra<sup>2\*</sup> Sourav Halder; Tourism and Its Impact on Local Economy: A Study on Part of Gangtok Municipal Corporation Area, East Sikkim, and India-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(9). ISSN 1567-214x**  
**Keywords: Tourism industry, Local economy, Infrastructure, East District Sikkim, Tourist culture**

**Abstract:**

Tourism always plays an important role in developing the economy at national, state and local levels. This study focuses on two major aspects of tourism industry i.e. the socio-economic development which helps in creating employment opportunities for the local residents that leads to the improvement of daily living of the local community and secondly on the psychological satisfaction of the tourists who visit this place for various purposes. Only complete satisfaction of the tourists will lead to the progress and growth of the tourism industry in these areas. This paper tries to analyse the impact of tourism on the local resident's economic status based on the tourists' feedback of availing essential and important services of the tourist centres.

The economic impact analysis presented here through investigating the various parameters like gender, age, sex, religion, length of stay, purpose of visit and so on. These parameters by and large, have influenced both tangible (quantitative) and intangible (qualitative) values of life of the people of the East District. The most significant tourist-based determining factor of tangible parameter is income no matter how operationalized. Although the present investigation indicates that a relation between the number of visits and spending levels are much contradictory and

season dependent. Day trippers and overnight tourists especially a business trip contributes more and rapidly than a tourist gang with a long stay. Nevertheless, a long staying tourist although pay less in stay and food, they spend more in transportation for site seeing. We suggest that analysis of the above parameters is not exhaustive and further understanding of economic growth also depends on attributes of supply and satisfaction with it. In the Sikkim region, economy is much dependent on the characteristics of destinations and the findings indicate a significant impact on the spending level that is influenced by season, travel motives and activities.

### **1.1 Introduction:**

Tourism is an activity which is an ancient phenomenon (APEC, 2009; Archer et al, 2005; Blackstock, 2005). Earlier it was a need as people moved in search of livelihood from one place to another. Later, it became a hobby and pleasure for which people began to travel for fun. In olden days there were no high speed vehicles and smooth transport facilities, still people crossed various barriers to earn their living. But now transportation facilities are very fast and comfortable for the tourists. Today when the concept of globalization is taking the real shape, the importance of tourism is also increasing which directly affects the economy and livelihood of the local residents. Tourism can be a vehicle for international understanding of diverse people, race and different nature of human behaviour. Tourism can greatly enrich and promote friendship and goodwill across borders (for state, countries, regions, etc.). Tourism also breaks down the prejudice barriers and suspicion that exist between nations. People of modern India are multi coloured population, having various religion groups, customs, traditions and various ways of life. Therefore there is a lot of tourist potential in India (Chakraborty, 2009; Das and Roy, 2012). The development of the tourism is in progress in our country. India being a large country has different types of tourist centres. Sikkim declared tourism as an industry during the 10th five year plan. It faces various challenges like connectivity and communication, regulation standards, limited employment opportunities etc. (STPG 2018). After becoming 25<sup>th</sup> state of Union, Government of India in the year of 1975 the rapid development activities ushered in a new era of tourism in Sikkim. Increased accessibility by roadways and air transport, rapid socio economic development, competitive development both from the side of the destination and geographical proximity to tourist generating states contributed to the development of tourism in Sikkim (Batabyal and Deyali 2013; Sinha 2015). Tourism should be able to cater a wide range of local economic activities, taking environmental cost benefit into account, but it should not be permitted to become an activity itself which dominates the economy of this area (Das 2019). To understand the relation of tourism and its impact on local economy the essential aspect that needs to be explored is the nature and mentality of the tourists who visit the area. Only on proper analysis it will be easy to evaluate the impact of tourism on the local economy and its benefits to the local residents.

## 1.2 Data Input:

Both primary and secondary data have been used to fulfil the objectives and analyse the impact.

- i. Primary Data: It is collected through the survey from local residents who are a part of the tourism project viz. shopkeeper, car-driver, hotel management staff and owner and the tourists of the specific study area.
- ii. Secondary Data: It has been collected from Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2011 and tourism related data from UDHD.

## 1.3 Study Area:

Sikkim is a small state of the Indian Union, situated on the lap of the mighty Himalaya, having lush green forests, crystal clear rivers and lakes, snow clad peaks, an assorted physiography and biodiversity (Fig. 1a, b). It also hosts the world's third highest mountain, Mt. Khangchendzonga. Sikkim shares its boundary with Tibetan Plateau in the North, Chumbi Valley of Tibet and the kingdom of Bhutan in the East, Darjeeling district of West Bengal towards the South and Nepal towards its West. Most of the population of Sikkim is predominantly rural, and urban population accounts merely 25% of the total population. Sikkim has four districts with nine urban centres. The East district is the most developed and urbanized and hosts maximum of the total urban population. Rapid urbanization of the East district is due to the presence of National Highway-10 (NH-10) which runs through Gangtok, the state capital and connects the country to Nathula La pass. The NH10 is one of the major trade routes and an area of touristic interest for the country.

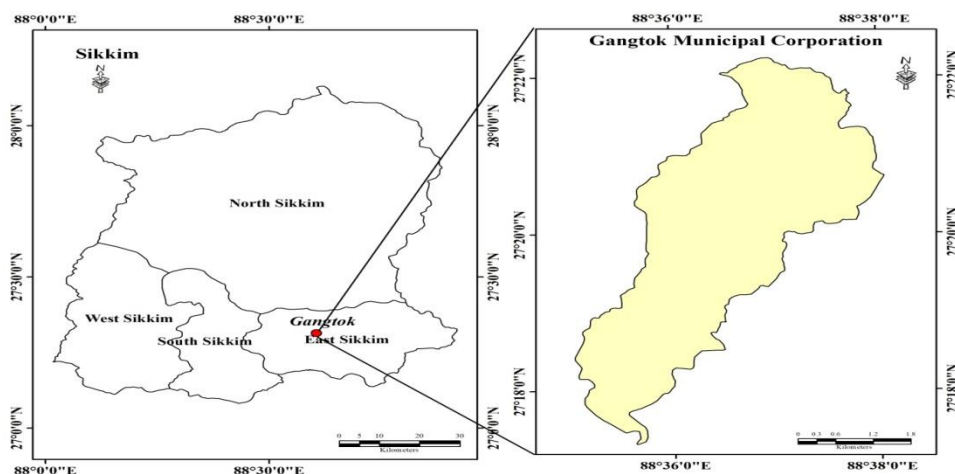


Fig. 1. a (left) and b (right). Map showing the boundaries of the State of Sikkim and the location of the study area. b. Map of the study area blown up showing the Gangtok Municipal Corporation.

## 1.4 Sampling:

In this paper sample analysis is done through the design, by which includes the dual process of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The study is done with the help of total 206 samples taken for the purpose of study. Among the total sample 100 are of the local residents and 106 samples are from the tourists, which is taken to analyse the local impact of tourism industry of Gangtok.

**1.4.1 Sampling Design:** The study is done with the help of simple random sampling. A flow diagram of the study to be conducted is depicted in Figure 2.

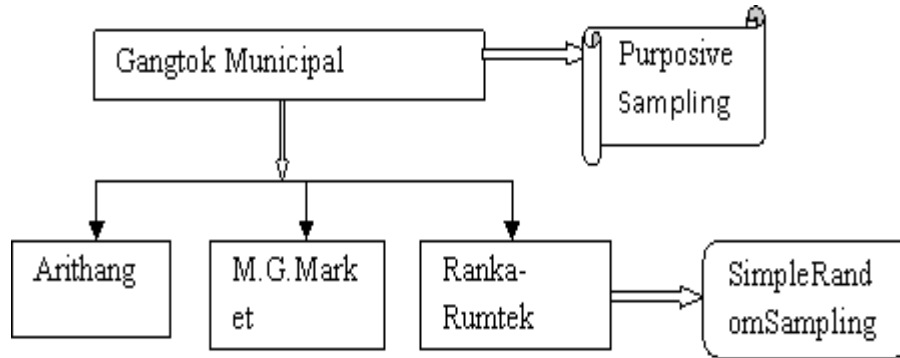


Fig. 2. Flow diagram showing the steps that will be followed during sampling of the present study.

#### 1.4.2 Sample Size:

The survey has been conducted into two levels

- a) Local Residents: 100 samples have been collected.
- b) Tourists: 106 samples have been collected.

#### 1.5 Methodology

In order to study the topic of tourism and its impact on local economy, three steps are used: pre-field work, field work and post field data processing.

Table 1. A three tier system of data collection and processing followed in the present study.

Steps	Characteristics
<b>Pre- Field</b>	Collection of some information
	Collection of data from Census of India
	Selection of study area
	Determination of the objectives
	Designing the survey schedule or questionnaire
<b>Field</b>	Collection of location map of GMC
	Conduction of resident survey
	Conduction of tourist survey
<b>Post-Field</b>	Tabulation of collected Data
	Statistical representation of data
	Analysis of data

## 2.0 Profile of Tourist and their Perception about Tourism Infrastructure

It is an important thing to identify the pattern of arrival of the tourists, profile of tourist, their level of consumption and expenditure on goods and services to analyse the impacts of tourism on the local economy in the selected part of Gangtok Municipal Corporation. Tourist consumption-expenditure and the act of tourism hold the economic significance of the local areas, as generation of income, employment, different types of tax collection and earning of foreign currency takes place. Thus the destination area must be well equipped to be able to provide the best tourism infrastructure. Other aspects of tourism include the purpose of visit, category of accommodation, occupation and gender of tourists who come to visit. These are also important factors which determine the nature of tourist expenditure that would take place and create local benefits.

### 2.1 Profile of Tourists:

Different aspects of tourists are described in this portion which includes social, economical and other specific preferences. The next section deals with the factors that help in analysing the nature of tourists that makes an impact on the financial aspect of the local residents.

#### 2.1.1 Sex:

From the survey conducted of 106 tourists, most of them are male i.e. 72.65% (Table 2), while a quite less number i.e. 27.35% tourists are female. So the tendency of touring is high among the male population in this study area.

Table 3.1: Gender division of tourists visiting the study area in the East District

Sex	Number of Tourist	Tourist (%)
Male	77	72.64
Female	29	27.35

Source: Field survey, Gangtok, Sikkim, September 2018.

### 2.1.2 Age:

Table 3. depicts that from 107 respondents of which ~50% are from middle age cohorts i.e. of age group 30 to 60, ~40% from young age cohort i.e. up to 30 years age group while only 10% is from old age cohort i.e. above 60 years age group. Hence middle age group in the study area is high in terms of touring.

Table 3: Distribution of tourists by age group where maximum visitors are of middle age group.

Age	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Upto 30	44	41
30 to 60	53	49
Above 60	10	10

### 2.1.3 Religion:

It is evident from Table 4 that from the sample 65% of total tourists visiting east Sikkim is Hindu, while 20% is Muslim tourist and 8% belongs to Buddhist, Sikh and Christian tourists.

Table 4. Tourist of East District based on religious ethnicity showing dominant Hindu visitors.

Religious Group	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Hindu	69	65.04
Muslim	21	20.32
Buddhist	9	8.13
Sikh	4	4.06
Christian	3	2.43
Total	106	100

**Source: Field survey, Gangtok, Sikkim, September 2018.**

### 2.1.4 Marital Status:

Table 5 indicates that among the surveyed 106 tourist 24.52% of the total tourists are unmarried while rest are married. The survey findings suggest that maximum domestic visitors were married, with a high percentage of overnight visitors compared to same day visitors.

Table 5. Most of the tourists visiting East Sikkim are married group especially the newly married ones.

Marital Status	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Unmarried	26	24.52
Married	80	75.47

### 2.1.5 Education:

Table 6 depicts that among the surveyed 106 tourists, the educational status of most of the tourists is quite less 22.34% and 25.47% tourists visiting east Sikkim are qualified upto secondary and higher secondary level respectively while the number of graduate and post graduate level is quite less as 16.98% and 5.66% respectively. Even some tourists are qualified upto primary and upper primary level i.e. 11% and 10% respectively while only 7.54% did professional courses.

Table 6. Education status of visitors of East Sikkim, dominantly qualified to higher secondary level.

Educational Status	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Primary	12	11
Upper Primary	10	9.43
Secondary	24	22.34
Higher Secondary	27	25.47
U.G.	18	16.98
P.G.	7	5.66
Others	8	7.54

### 2.1.6 Occupation:

Tourism in Sikkim has emerged as the new profession of the State, exploiting its vast natural potential for economic growth. The economic flowage on the other hand is strictly influenced by the occupational status of the visitor. Table 7 depicts the various occupational statuses of 106 tourists. Only 21.69% tourist belongs to different types of the Govt. services while 22.64% is from private job while 38% of the total tourists are engaged in different types of businesses and 8% are housewives. They visit the place with their family whereas 9% students are found from several states for educational purpose. They go for field survey, seminar or group outing. Even 2% retired persons are there who visit the place for leisure and relaxation.

Table 7. Table depicting the various occupational statuses of tourists of the East District of Sikkim.

Occupation	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Govt. Service	24	22.64
Private Job	25	23.58
Retired	3	2.8
Housewife	9	8.4
Students	10	9.4
Others	35	33.01

### 2.1.7 Citizenship:

Table 8a depicts that out of 106 tourists surveyed, 94 are Indians and 12 are foreigners. Among the foreigners 10 (90.9%) tourists are from Bangladesh and 2(9.1%) tourist is from Nepal (Table 8b).

Table 8a and b. Tabulation of nationality (a-above) of the tourists visiting the Sikkim State and breakup of their foreign nationality (b-below).

Nationality	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Indian	94	88.67
Foreigner	12	11.33

Foreign	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Bangladesh	10	90.9
Nepal	2	9.1

Table 8c describes that most of the tourists are from the northern region of India i.e. 74.2% while only 22.4% and 3.4% tourists are from southern and north-eastern region. Most of the tourists (34.8%) are from West Bengal as Sikkim is the most attractive tourist spot for them. In the southern India most of the tourists are from Maharashtra i.e. 13.5% while very few tourists are from Karnataka (3.4%), Telengana (2.2%), Andhra Pradesh (1.1%), Odisha (1.1%) and Madhya Pradesh (1.1%). In northern India 11.2% tourists are from Uttar Pradesh, 9% from Bihar, 7.9% from Delhi and few tourists are from Jharkhand (3.4%), Rajasthan (3.4%), Gujarat (2.2%), Punjab (2.2%). Within state the share of tourist is very less i.e. 2.2% only.

Table 8c. Tabulation of the percentage of tourists visiting the Gangtok Municipal area from different regions of India.

Region	State	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Northern		<b>67</b>	<b>75.3</b>
	West Bengal	31	34.8
	Delhi	7	7.9
	Jharkhand	3	3.4
	Rajasthan	3	3.4
	Bihar	8	9.0
	U.P.	10	11.2
	Gujarat	2	2.2
	Punjab	2	2.2
North-Eastern		<b>3</b>	<b>2.3</b>
	Sikkim	2	2.2
	Assam	1	1.1
Southern		<b>19</b>	<b>21.3</b>
	Telengana	2	2.2
	Andhra Pradesh	1	1.1
	Madhya Pradesh	1	1.1
	Maharashtra	12	13.5
	Karnataka	3	3.4
	Odisha	1	1.1



Source: Field survey, Gangtok, Sikkim, September 2018.

Table 8 and Fig. 3 depicts that from the surveyed tourists of West Bengal maximum are from North 24 Pargana and Darjeeling districts i.e. 19.4% from each of the district. Then Burdwan and Siliguri districts have the share of 12.9 % each. Uttar Dinajpur, Kolkata, Birbhum and Jalpaiguri have equal share of tourist i.e. 6.5% approximately. Lowest share of tourist are found from Howrah, Maldah and Hooghly districts i.e. 3.2% only.

Table 8d. Tabulation of the percentage of tourists visiting the East District of Sikkim from different regions of West Bengal.

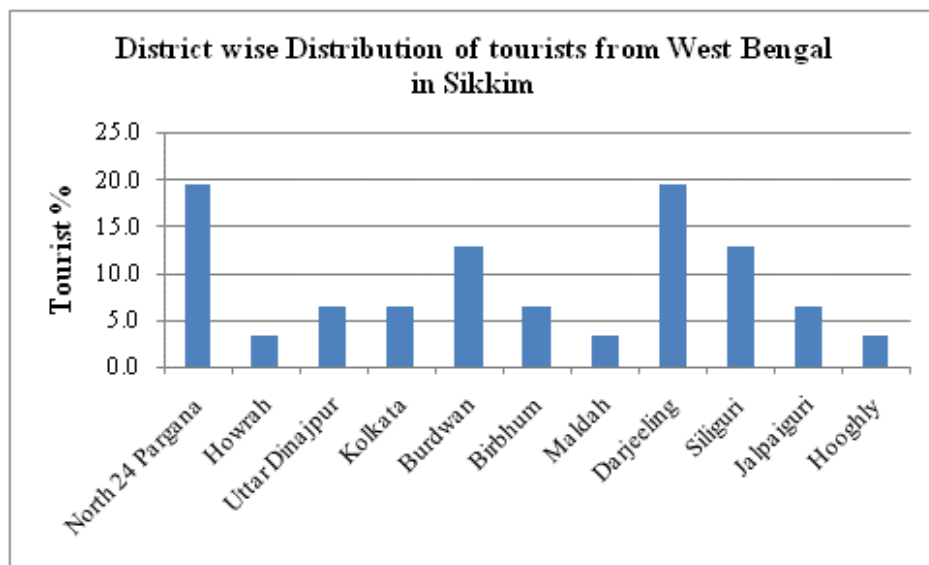


Fig. 3. Bar diagram showing the percentage of tourists visiting the East District of Sikkim from different regions of West Bengal.

### 2.1.8 Income:

Among the surveyed 100 residents, only 79 of them responded about their monthly income. It is evident from table below that concentration of the monthly income of the local people is below Rs 5000/ which is highest in the lean season. As the frequency density of income in lean season is 0.0026 while in peak season it is 0.0012. In case of highest income group, their source of income is not related only to tourism. So there is no change in the income over the peak and lean seasons for this highest income group. The share of residents whose income is in between Rs. 30000 to 80000, is decreasing from peak to lean season as the frequency density is decreasing from 0.00024 to 0.00016. In case of Rs. 20000 to 30000 income group the share is increasing from peak to lean season because higher income group people are lying in this group. Rest income group shows that the share of residents is decreasing from peak season to lean season.

Table 9. Monthly income of the residents earned from the tourists during peak and lean period.

Monthly Income	Number of Residents		Class Width	Frequency Density	
	In Peak Season	In Lean Season		In Peak Season	In Lean Season
Less than 5000	6	13	5000	0.0012	0.0026
5000 - 10000	22	19	5000	0.0044	0.0038
10000 - 20000	24	21	10000	0.0024	0.0021
20000 - 30000	6	9	10000	0.0006	0.0009
30000 - 80000	12	8	50000	0.00024	0.00016
80000 - 460000	9	9	380000	0.000023684	0.000023684
Total	79	79	-	-	-

### 2.1.9 Length of Stay:

It is found from the Table 9. that 40% of tourists have length of stay more than 4 days while 22%, 18% and 15% of tourists have 2, 3 and 4 days of stay respectively. Only 5% of tourist stays for 1 day.

Table 10. Table depicting the percentage of tourists showing the length of stay.

Length of Stay	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
1 day	5	5
2 days	22	22
3 days	18	18
4 days	15	15
More than 4 days	40	40

### 2.1.10 Purpose of Visit:

There are several factors that motivate travelling to tourist spots. Table 10 describes that the 81% tourists visit east Sikkim for adventure and recreation purpose while 6% visits to their friend and relatives place and 3% for educational purpose as excursion, seminar etc. Only 10% visits for other purposes like business, etc.

Table 11. Table describing the purpose of visit of the tourists to the studied region.

Purpose	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Recreation	81	81
Visiting friend and relatives place	6	6
Educational	3	3
Others	10	10

### 2.1.11 Accompanying Person:

Tourists acquire many experiences that people gather during their outing to different places and try to live during the trip like their habitual residence, which includes recreation, leisure, and entertainment. In such situations, tourists like to have a company that is either tuned to their livelihood i.e., family or group of families or someone who is having an experience and will be of help to the unknown place. Among the surveyed tourists, 56% come with their family whereas 30% visit with their friends and 5% with others i.e. colleagues, with any group. 9% have gone for solo trip.

Table 12. Layout of the survey made showing the choice of accompanying persons of the visitors.

Accompanying Person	Number of Tourists	Tourists (%)
Family	56	56
Friends	30	30
Alone	9	9
Others	5	5

### 2.1.12 Staying Place:

Table 3.12 describes that most of the tourists stay in hotels i.e. 51.88% whereas 22.64% and 18.86% tourists prefer to stay in lodges and guest houses respectively. Only 16.07% of tourists stay with their friends stay at homes of relatives.

Table 13. Presentation of the choice of places made by the tourists during their visit to the study area.

Staying Place	Number of Tourists	Tourist (%)
Hotel	55	51.88
Lodge	24	22.64
Guest House	20	18.86
Others	17	16.07

### 2.1.13 Place of Food:

Maximum tourists prefer to have their food from hotels i.e. 69% whereas 12% use restaurant for their place of food. But 10% have their food from guest house (5%) and lodge (5%), while only 9% have their food anywhere; it might be hotel, restaurants, relatives place etc.

## 2.2 Perception about the Tourist Infrastructure

Tourism enhances economic growth, improves the community infrastructure and the quality of life of the locality. Analysis of the perception of locals and

tourists about the infrastructure is a powerful tool in appreciating its quality and sustainable development (Frînculeasa and Chițescu 2018). It is very important to understand the relationship – local community - benefits - tourist – satisfaction and to bridge the gaps accordingly. Table 14 reflects the satisfaction level of tourism infrastructure in East Sikkim. In response to the availability of the local transport in the study area, 50% of the tourists are highly satisfied and 39% of the respondents are satisfied while 4%, 3% and 2% of respondents are moderately satisfied, dissatisfied and fully dissatisfied respectively.

In regard to quality of road 46% of tourists are satisfied with good quality of road while 29% is highly satisfied. As in the hilly region the roads are narrow. Hence 17% of tourists are moderately satisfied while 4% and 2% are dissatisfied and fully dissatisfied.

In case of cleanliness of the accommodation 50% of the total 106 tourists are highly satisfied while 44% are satisfied. Therefore most of the tourists are in favour of the cleanliness of the accommodation.

Level of hygiene in sanitation is maintained even in public toilets. 40% of tourists are highly satisfied with the hygiene and 34% is satisfied while only 3% is fully dissatisfied with the level of hygiene whereas 11 % does not comment on this important aspect of tourism.

In response to the statement about the quality of food, 44% of tourists are highly satisfied with the good quality of the food and 37% are satisfied with it while only 12% is moderately satisfied. 4% of the tourists do not agree with the fact of availability of good quality food in the study area.

In response to the statement of the price of the food, 47% is satisfied with the price of the food and 23% of tourists are highly satisfied while 15% is moderately satisfied. 6% and 3% of tourists are not satisfied and totally dissatisfied with the price of the food.

In response to the price of local handicrafts, only 20% of tourist is fully satisfied with the charges and 37% are satisfied while 16% are moderately satisfied, but 18% does not answer regarding this matter. 7% and 2% are not satisfied and fully dissatisfied with the price which shopkeepers are charging from the tourists.

In response to the statement of the hospitality from the local in terms of information regarding any tourist spots and availability of the guidance, 39% of the tourists are overwhelmed with their hospitality and 36% are satisfied while 10% of tourists are moderately satisfied and 4% and 2% are not satisfied and fully dissatisfied. Only 9% does not respond to the issue.

Table 14. Satisfaction level of tourists expressing themselves about tourism infrastructure of the State.

Source: Field survey, Gangtok, Sikkim, September 2018.

Attributes	Fully Satisfied	Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Fully Dissatisfied	No Comment
Availability of local Transport	50	39	4	3	2	2
Quality of Road	29	46	17	4	2	2
Cleanliness of accommodation	50	37	9	1	1	2
Level of hygiene in sanitation	40	34	12	0	3	11
Quality of food	37	44	12	3	1	3
Price of food	23	47	15	6	3	6
Price of Local handicrafts	20	37	16	7	2	18
Hospitality of the Local People	39	36	10	4	2	9

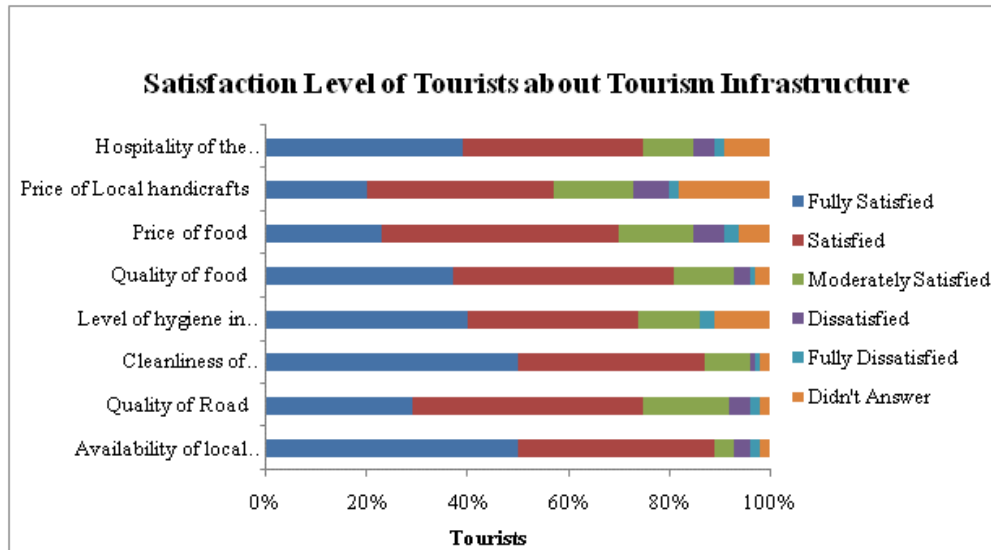


Fig. 4. Graphical representation of the satisfaction level of tourists about tourism infrastructure of the state.

### 3.0 Conclusion:

The tourism industry of Gangtok is one of the important aspects that support a lot for the local economy of the state. It helps to develop the economic status of the people living in and around the tourists' centre. Maximum amount of local people get benefitted by the tourism industry. The north eastern tourist spot of India is Gangtok, which is a famous spot due to its geographical location having scenic landscape, ice-beauty and a very pleasing environment to be a tourist centre. It needs to be developed and improved and also maintained as it is difficult geographically (due to its location and position) to develop any

other sectors in that region. So, various forms of tourism can be organised in this area, including Trekking, Eco-tourism, Wellness and adventure tourism and many other recreational forms of tourism. Mostly the people visiting this place prefer to enjoy the climatic condition and the geographical landscape to relieve from the hurried schedule of life. From the tourist profiles it gets reflects that hindus(80%) are the dominant tourists followed by Muslim(25%),Buddhist(10) and Sikh(5%) who come to visit the place. North western tourists dominate in Sikkim while tourists from southern states (like Telengana, Karnataka, TamilNadu)are comparatively much less to visit this spot.Around 84% of tourists stay in hotel,lodges and guest-houses and 16% stay in other places.Among the staying purpose recreation is the highest 81%, while education and others is respectively 3% and10%.

Tourism contributes maximum to the local economy by creating employment andgenerating some local income to the residents of these tourist centers. The most direct effect that happens with tourism sectors is additional jobs, ranging fromlow-wage entry-level to high-paying professional positions in areas of lodging, restaurants, transportation and amusements that generate income and raise the standards of living of the local residents. Particularly in ruralareas of East Sikkim, the diversification created by tourism helps the community to grow that ismostlydependent on only the industryof tourism. Tourists' visiting this areas with friends and family mostly target on recreational aspect and thereby they contribute maximum to the different aspects of income in the local society. Since, these tourists need fooding, lodging, transportation for sight-seeing, amusements during their stay, whereas comparatively business tourists contribute more to only lodging and fooding only. As tourism grows, additional opportunities arecreated for investment purpose, development and infrastructure maintenance happens simultaneously.To improve tourism sector the local government tries to make improvementsin infrastructures of various public utilities such as water, sanitation, sewage systems, road, electricity and lighting, parking, public restrooms, telephone networks and connectivity,transportation for attracting more of people to visit those areas in a more comfortable ambience. Suchimprovements benefit both tourists and residents alike. The survey conducted on the satisfaction level of tourists visiting this area clearly depict that all the tourists are mostly satisfied with the basic essential facilities of the region , for which their optimistic feedback implies many others to visit this area for recreation and also other purposes helping in growth of the tourism sector. This directly influences the economic status of the local residents and also contributes to their improvement in well-being. So, restoring the profitability of accommodation sector, food supply, etc. and balancing the demand and supply and boosting the existing financial flows will help to create a better impact of tourism industry on the local economy and also enhance the social living standards of the local residents by generating smooth flow of financial assistance.

**Acknowledgements:** The authors are very much thankful to the Principal of Durgapur Govt. College and JK College and Prabhu Jagatbandhu College and the Department of Philosophy and Geography respectively for extending their support for the present piece of work. Thanks are also extended to all those persons who helped us during our field survey, data collection and extended their logistic support.

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