Fact Sheet - IV

Eco-Tourism in West Bengal

Regulatory Framework

West Bengal Tourism Policy, 2016
West Bengal Incentive Scheme for Tourism Units, 2015
New Tourism Policy, 2002
National Ecotourism Policy and Guidelines, 1998

- **What it says?**
  - State aims to attract tourists from home and abroad
  - State aims at making tourism environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable
  - Encouraging private players into tourism sector
  - Building Bengal as an tourism brand

- **Highlights and Incentives Available**
  - Emphasis on Ecotourism
  - Identification of new tourist destinations
  - Promoting Mega Projects
  - Public Private Partnership (PPP) model is encouraged
  - Available subsidies:
    - Capital Investment Subsidy
    - Interest Subsidy
    - Waiver of Electricity Duty
    - Additional Incentive on generation on Employment
    - Reimbursement of VAT as additional incentive to Adventure Tour Operators
    - Luxury tax exemptions

- **What is Eco-tourism**
  Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the people

- **Key elements of Eco-tourism:**
  - Existence of National Park/Sanctuaries as prime attraction
  - Should be economically, socially, culturally, and economically sustainable
  - Should have participation of the local stakeholders
  - Should be a low profile venture
  - Should be capable of forging partnership with the existing tourism industry

- **Advantages of Eco-tourism**
  - Generates local employment
  - Generates revenue for the state
  - Checks migration to urban areas
  - Better life quality of the locals due infrastructure building like electricity, power etc.

- **Disadvantages of Eco-tourism**
  - Greater influx of people may result in ecological imbalance
  - Tourism infrastructure may be at the cost of forest land
  - Culture and ethnicity of the region may be disturbed
**Challenges**

- Uninterrupted power supply to be ensured to the ecotourism sites located in remote areas
- Availability of adequate land for setting up Off-grid projects
- Solid waste management in the tourism sites is also a challenge
- Involving local population

**State Level Initiatives**

- “**mon chasa**”, a rural based ecotourism model based near Kolaghat is presently operational and uses solar energy
- Sundarbans to be developed as world class ecotourism destination
- National parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries in North Bengal also attracts ecotourists
- Work for mega tourism project in Jagaldoba, Jalpaiguri district has already started
- Tourism Department is developing two new eco-tourism hubs at Sylee(near Malbazar), and Kunjanagar (near Falakata) in the Dooars