



A study on the prospect of developing river tourism in Kolkata

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Abstract

The growth of river tourism is dependent on the quality of the river, its physical attributes and landscape, its marginal landscape, the safety and financial security of visitors, the construction of roads and other leisure-time amenities, and the availability of beach walking options. As a form of value-added and unique revenue for river communities, river tourism is among the most significant subcategories of nature tourism. It is time to expand tourism on large rivers because a holiday along the rivers promises a calming and soothing for those who are looking for solitude. River tourism in India is only beginning to pick up in West Bengal, and businesses are investing money in it because families are the top group of travelers who choose river vacations. A riverbank vacation guarantees travelers an unforgettable holiday experience with exhilarating water activities, camping, yoga, and meditation. But what a paradox that no river in India is pollution-free. Among the most contaminated rivers in the nation is the Ganga. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reports that contaminants are accumulating in the river water at an alarming rate. Kolkata makes up over 76% of the river's pollution load although covering just 2% of its total length. 22 or more drains discharge into the river. Serious water-borne illnesses and health issues impacting both the human population and other wildlife, fish, and birds in the environment have been brought on by river pollution. We need to protect and maintain our rivers in order to portray India as a destination with a variety of tourism-related products and provide tourists with an enjoyable vacation. Backpackers, lone travelers, nature enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and vacation seekers would all do well to choose a riverbank location. Therefore, the goal of the research paper is to change the river and offer suggestions for how to do so by making the public aware of them, while also preserving Kolkata's lifeline Ganga and promoting river-oriented tourism in Kolkata.

Keywords: Kolkata, river tourism, prospects, problems

Introduction

India is blessed with a range of natural landscapes, which presents a significant benefit for the growth of adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and water tourism. In India, tourism is a growing sector of the service economy that offers job possibilities, foreign exchange revenue, and infrastructure improvement chances. By contributing 9.2% of India's GDP to travel and tourism GDP, the country moves up to the eighth-largest position. 42.7 million jobs were created by tourism in 2018. The Hooghly River's splendor adorns Kolkata. The tranquil environment and beautiful vegetation that surround the river are undoubtedly alluring. In fact, a lot of tourist attractions, including Millennium Park, have grown up around the river. It was officially launched on December 26, 1999, and it is a relatively new park in the city. On January 1, 2000, it was made public. The Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA/CMDA) constructed this park to beautify the area around the river. (West Bengal Tourism, Experience Bengal, Dept. Of Tourism, Govt. Of W. B., n.d.).

The Mamata Banerjee administration intends to invest more than Rs 100 crore over a three-year period in developing tourism around the Hooghly river. Approximately 60 ghats and 24 jetties have been designated by the authorities for rehabilitation and development. Additionally, new jetties will be built along the riverfront in the remaining 36 ghats with a focus on passenger safety, as it has previously been noted that several of the ghats and jetties lack passenger safety amenities. Most of the ghats leading to South 24 Parganas have ferry services, according to officials, and these ghats would get more amenities for passenger safety.

(Like in UP, Mamata Banerjee Wants Ganga Aarti in Kolkata along Hooghly River, 2022) ^[2]. According to officials, the goal is to draw tourists by creating a 232-kilometer river trip from Nabadwip to Gangasagar. Additional historical and religious tourist attractions can be found in a number of locations away from the river, including Nabadwip, Gangasagar, Dakshineswar, Bandel, Chandannagar, Barrackpore, and other locations that could be effectively exploited as river tourism hotspots. These initiatives to increase river tourism and the development of tourist destinations will be worked on by the state transport department and the state tourism department ("Kolkata to Develop River Tourism," 2014) ^[3].

Background

Kolkata With so many attractions in Kolkata, the City of Joy in West Bengal is the best location for tourists. There is a lot to offer in this vibrant city with all of its wonders. It is one of the most sought-after travel destinations for people around the world. Architectural treasures from the British Raj, expansive gardens, ancient colleges, universities, the National Library, auditoriums, theatre halls, art galleries, markets, festivals, and Gangarghats are all popular tourist destinations. It has a lot of important pilgrimage sites. Kolkata, the so-called "culture capital of India," has produced numerous Nobel Prize winners as well as generations of poets, novelists, and film producers. If you can only visit one or two of India's major cities during your vacation, Kolkata should undoubtedly be on your agenda. A boat or launch journey on the Hooghly is undoubtedly entertaining, and the city on it is something you won't soon

forget. The best location for interested tourists is Kolkata, the City of Joy of West Bengal because there are several points of interest there. There is a lot to offer in this vibrant city with all of its wonders. It is one of the most sought-after travel destinations for people around the world. Architectural treasures from the British Raj, expansive parks, historical colleges, universities, the National Library, auditoriums, theatres, art galleries, markets, festivals, and Gangarghats are all popular tourist destinations. It has a lot of important pilgrimage sites. Kolkata, the so-called "culture capital of India," has produced numerous Nobel Prize winners as well as generations of poets, novelists, and film producers. If you can only visit one or two of India's major cities during your vacation, Kolkata should undoubtedly be on your agenda. A boat or launch journey on the Hooghly is undoubtedly entertaining, and the city on it is something you won't soon forget. (KOLKATA - West Bengal Tourism, Experience Bengal, Dept. Of Tourism, Govt. Of W. B., n.d.).

Research gaps

To the best of our knowledge, no such study has been done specifically for River Tourism in Kolkata. Thus, evaluating this data specifically focusing on river tourism will give a clear picture to hotel owners in Kolkata. Thus, the research attempts to explore the possibilities and scope of developing river tourism for the city of Kolkata, which is still nonexistent even after three hundred years of its inception. It also forecasts the average revenue that can be generated through the development of such circuits and improvement in the planning and promotion of river tourism currently existing.

Significance of work

The significance of the work is that through this study one can understand the potential of river tourism in Kolkata. Also, it can be made clear as to what destination spots have the potential to be developed further and the hotel owners can analyze the position of river tourism to generate revenue as well as it can help recommend policies for a sustainable river tourism circuit in Kolkata.

Research objectives

Studying the following is the aim of the research project: "Evaluate the possibility of developing River tourism in Kolkata."

- To evaluate Kolkata as the Potential River tourism hotspots in India.
- Positioning Kolkata's river tourism as a significant source of income.
- Making suggestions for sustainable river tourism in Kolkata.

Literature review

Evaluating Kolkata as the potential river tourism hotspot in India

On the banks of the Hooghly River, a 160-mile offshoot of the Ganges, lies Kolkata, a metropolis in West Bengal, India. As per the statement of Mondal *et al.* (2022) ^[13], in India, the river is essential to daily life, and this is also true in Kolkata. Kolkata has a well-known reputation and favourable reviews from past visitors, which are motivating factors for heritage tourists. On the other hand, Planet (2019) opined that in comparison to some of India's other

contemporary metropolises, the city boasts a more laid-back and serene vibe and powerful educational institutions. As a river tourist destination in India, the city has a lot of promise. The history, administration, environmental issues, and marketing of Kolkata as a prospective river tourist hub in India may all be examined in a literature study.

Positioning Kolkata's river tourism as a significant source of income

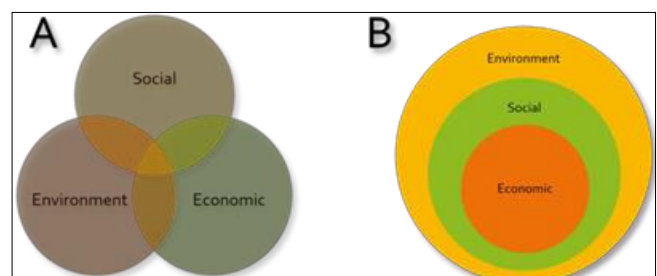
According to the statement of Haque *et al.* (2019) ^[11], River tourism in Kolkata has the potential to contribute significantly to the city's economy. Kolkata is located in the state of West Bengal, where the River Ganga runs through. Luxury tourism developments along the river are anticipated to provide job opportunities and bring in money for the government. On the contrary, Sikari (2019) stated that West Bengal is a state known for its beautiful scenery and rich cultural legacy, which includes places like the Sundarbans National Park and the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which are designated as world heritage sites. The number of visitors visiting the state has increased significantly over time, from 49.35 lakhs in 2000 to a substantially greater level in 2012. The city of Kolkata can bring in more visitors and boost the local economy by increasing river tourism.

Making recommendation for sustainable river tourism in Kolkata

Sustainable river tourism is a crucial component of Kolkata's tourist growth. According to the statement of Scheyvens *et al.* (2021), there are a number of things to take into account to guarantee sustainable river tourism. These include marketing, river usage, cultural legacy, management, and environmental issues. Policies that consider the distinctive features of the area must be suggested in order to foster sustainable historical tourism in Kolkata. In order to create a lasting understanding of the river's current difficulties and available prospects, it is also crucial to explore universal possibilities in river tourism. On the other hand, Hoa (2020) ^[12] opined local communities might create new, sustainable livelihoods through community-based river cruise tourism. By segmenting the state into several geo-ecotourism zones, a spatial analysis may also be utilised to examine the potential of the entire state.

Theoretical framework

Three pillars of sustainable development



Source: Concept taken from Mucharreira *et al.*, 2019

Fig 1: Three Pillars of sustainable development

According to the statement of Mucharreira *et al.* (2019), sustainability is an essential factor to develop overall performance in the competitive world of tourism. Sustainability in the economy, society, and environment are

the three pillars of sustainable development. These pillars promote sustainable goals and are tied to one another. The economic pillar emphasises making sure businesses are successful while abiding by laws and being socially responsible. The social pillar seeks to advance social fairness and empower individuals. On the other hand, Peydayesh and Mezzenga (2021) [14] stated that the world and its resources are protected for future generations under the environmental pillar. These three pillars work together to provide the basis for sustainable development and are necessary to build a sustainable future.

Research hypothesis

Based on the various research paper studies and discussion, we proposed four research hypotheses.

H null: There is no significant potential for developing river tourism in Kolkata.

H1 (positive): Kolkata's river system plays a significant role in the city's cultural heritage, transportation, and economic activities

H2 (negative): Kolkata's rapid urbanization is leading to river degradation and threatens the city's tourist attraction

Research methodology

Research design

This research considers *exploratory research design* in completing the overall study. This research involves in reviewing existing information from different authentic secondary sources and considers key factors to analyse the overall objectives of the research. This research considers the river tourism analysis and development process in Kolkata and involves identifying effective factors that have impacts on the river tourism process. This analysis contributes to developing a new hypothesis by completing the primary research and satisfies objectives of this research.

Research approach

This research considers *an inductive research approach* to complete the overall activity of the research. This research includes primary quantifiable data in the analysis process to develop new hypotheses and conclusive evidence. This approach supports completing practical analysis through including real populations and developing new hypotheses through meeting with objectives of the research.

Sampling and analytical design

Data sources and data types are segmented into two different types each as there are primary and secondary data sources and quantitative and qualitative data types. This research considers primary quantitative data to complete the entire data analysis process of this research (Smith, 2019). This primary quantitative data analysis process involves completing the survey in this research through considering people from a live population. This research considers 50 people as participants to collect their opinion regarding the questionnaire of this research. The questionnaire considers both demographic and info graphic questions in this survey. A total of four demographics and six info graphics questionnaires were in this research. The sampling process in this research considers a *simple random sampling process* to deliver the r equal opportunity to the population to get participants in the survey. The simple random sampling

process considers defining of population and sample size of the data collection process to complete the entire analysis of the research. The collected responses from those participants are analysed to develop outcomes in this research. The data analysis process considers MS Excel through developing tables and bar graphs charts. This graph and chart include people's opinions as per the research question and develop conclusive evidence that meets the objectives of the research.

Analysis, findings and interpretation

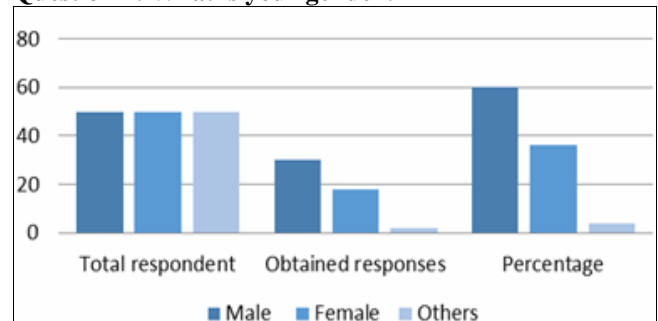
Primary Quantitative Question 1: What is your age?

Table: 1

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
18-25	50	18	36%
26-35	50	12	24%
36-50	50	18	36%
Above 50	50	02	4%

This survey question considers the identification of a total of 50 participants' age and segments four different age groups 18-25, 26-35, 36-50 and above 50 years of age. After collecting people's responses, the data shows that 36% of people are from 18-25 years of age and 24% of participants are from the 26-35 years age group. In addition, 36% of people belong to 36-50 years of age and 4% of people are from above 50 years of age. The availability of different age's people in this survey shows the availability of equal opportunities for people to participate in this survey.

Question 2: What is your gender?



Source: Self-developed

Fig 2: Survey on Question 2

This survey shows the gender identification of the participants and includes that out of a total of 50 participants, 30 are male, 18 are female and 02 belong to other categories. The availability of different gender shows the unbiased nature of the study as this deliver equal opportunities for every people and does not consider any gender restriction in the survey.

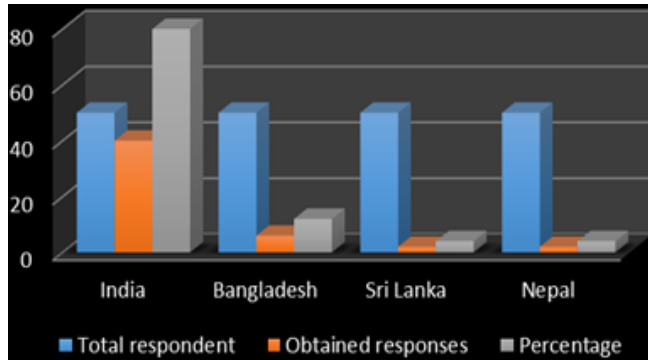
Question 3: How many years you live in or surrounding area of Kolkata?

Table 2

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
1-2 years	50	05	10%
3-6 years	50	06	12%
7-10 years	50	15	30%
Above 10	50	24	48%

This question focuses on the identification of the living status of people in and surrounding area of Kolkata. This survey collects responses from participants and shows that 10% of participants live in the area of this city for 1.2 years, 12% of participants live for 3-6 years, 30% of participants live for 7-10 years and 48% of participants live for more than 10 years in and surrounding areas of Kolkata.

Question 4: What is your Nationality?

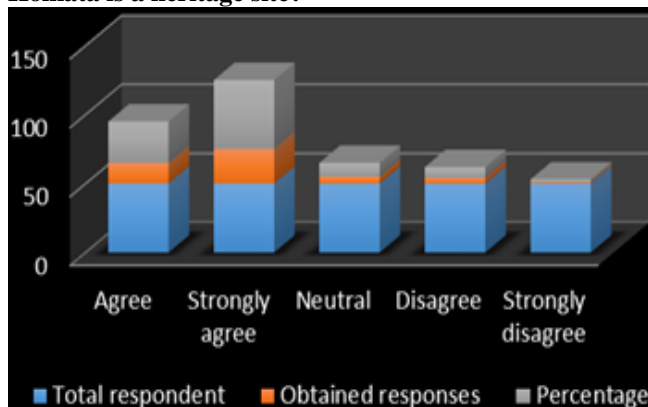


Source: Self-developed

Fig 3: Survey on Question 4

This question includes the identification of participants' nationality and identifies that people belong to four different countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. A total of 80% of the participants are from India, 12% from Bangladesh, 4% from Sri Lanka and 4% from Nepal. Therefore, diversity follows in this survey as the equal opportunity presents for people in participate in this research.

Question 5: Do you agree that the river system in Kolkata is a heritage site?



Source: Self-developed

Fig 4: Survey on Question 5

This question identifies participants' opinion regarding the river system in Kolkata as this ask participants whether the river system in Kolkata is a heritage site. Out of the total of 50 participants, approx 80% of total participants agree with this statement and 4% disagree with this. Therefore, this response suggests that the river in Kolkata attracts people to visit different sites and people also enjoy travelling and roaming the river site.

Question 6: Do people depend on the river in Kolkata to complete transportation and reach their destination?

Table 3

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
Agree	50	22	44%
Strongly agree	50	18	36%
Neutral	50	08	16%
Disagree	50	01	2%
Strongly disagree	50	01	2%

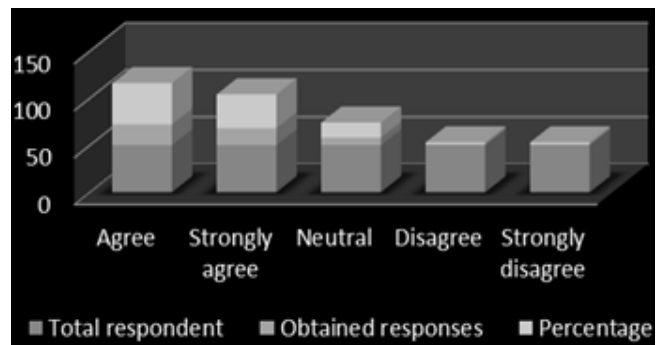


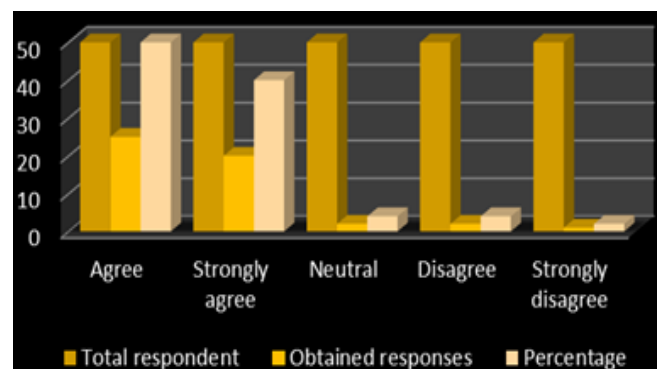
Fig 5: Survey on Question 6

This research question considers identifying participants' opinions regarding the impact of rivers on come plating transportation process of people. The data shows that a total of 80% of participants agreed with this and 4% of the total participants disagreed with this. These opinions of participants show the importance of the river in completing the transportation activity of people through wheel and boat transport process in Kolkata.

Question 7: Do people involve in different activities on the river in Kolkata that delivers financial outcomes and growth?

Table: 4

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
Agree	50	25	50%
Strongly agree	50	20	40%
Neutral	50	02	4%
Disagree	50	02	4%
Strongly disagree	50	01	2%



Source: Self-developed

Fig 6: Survey on Question 7

This survey considers the identification of the impact of the river on continuing people's activity that impact on financial outcomes and development process. Data shows that approx 50% of participants agree, 40% of participants strongly agree and 4% of participants stay neutral in this survey. A total of 6% of participants disagree with the statement and the overall results show that people complete different

activities with the support of rivers and complete financial outcomes to spend their daily life.

Question 8: Does the municipality and local government took initiative to maintain transportation services and quality tourism activity in Kolkata?

Table: 5

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
Agree	50	20	40%
Strongly agree	50	25	50%
Neutral	50	02	4%
Disagree	50	02	4%
Strongly disagree	50	01	2%

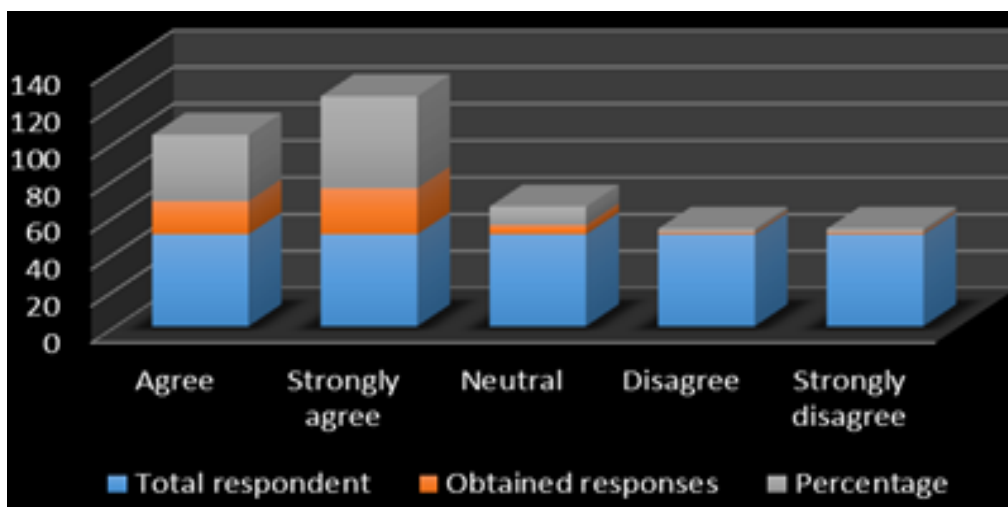
This survey considers the involvement of the municipality and local government in maintaining transportation services and quality tourism activity in Kolkata. Data shows that 40% of participants agree, 50% strongly agree and 4% are neutral in this survey. A total of 6% of participants disagree with the support of the municipality and local government.

The overall results show that the municipality and local government take initiative to develop the transportation process and quality of the tourism industry in Kolkata.

Question 9: Does the river in Kolkata deliver tourism opportunities and income sources to people?

Table: 6

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
Agree	50	18	36%
Strongly agree	50	25	50%
Neutral	50	05	10%
Disagree	50	01	2%
Strongly disagree	50	01	2%



Source: Self-developed

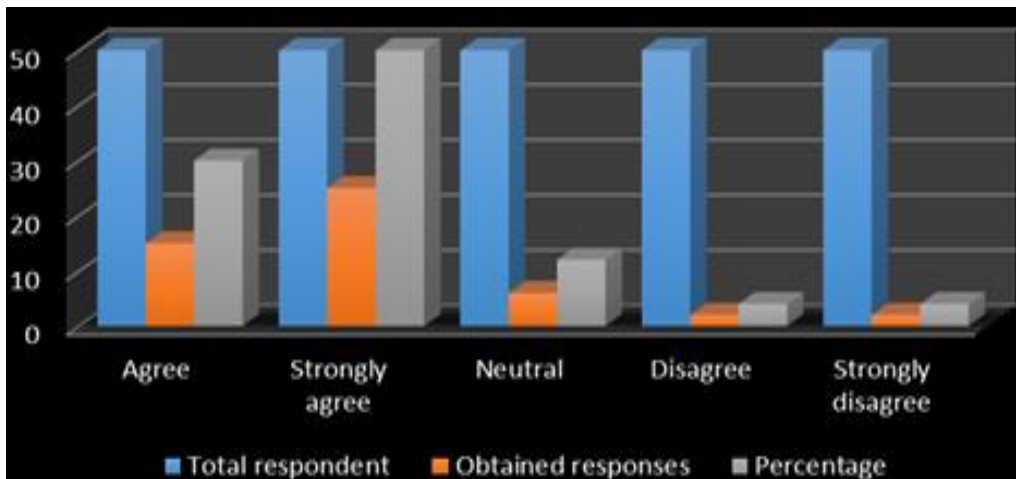
Fig 8: Survey on Question 9

This survey considers the identification of the involvement of rivers in developing tourism opportunities and income sources for people in Kolkata. Data shows that 86% of participants agree and 4% of participants disagree with the importance of rivers in tourism and the financial factor of people. This shows river delivers effective support in developing people's attraction to travelling and local people get benefits through selling products to people that visit the river site.

Question 10: Do the authority and local government involved in developing sustainability in river tourism in Kolkata?

Table: 7

Options	Total respondent	Obtained responses	Percentage
Agree	50	15	30%
Strongly agree	50	25	50%
Neutral	50	06	12%
Disagree	50	02	4%
Strongly disagree	50	02	4%



Source: Self-developed

Fig 9: Survey on Question 10

This survey considers the identification of the involvement of authority and local government in developing sustainability in river tourism in Kolkata. Data shows that 80% of participants agree, 12% are neutral and 8% disagree with this. Therefore, the authority and the local government consider cleaning programs besides the river sites to maintain a green environment. This authority and government also deliver an approach of keeping a clean environment while travelling in the river site in Kolkata.

Conclusion and implementation

This research concludes river tourism is an important factor to develop the social and geographical benefits of the country. This research considers the identification of the development of river tourism in Kolkata. The famous river, Ganga passes its lower current phase in this city and benefits people in transportation and earning options. Many people involve in ferry services and earn money and many people use the river transportation system to reach their destination to complete their daily activities. In addition, the water from this river also uses in both domestic and industrialist processes. However, pollution includes negative factors as different types of waste gather in this river. The municipality in Kolkata and the local government already consider initiatives to clean the garbage and partially continue the cleaning process. The development of river tourism can increase the crowd in this city and develop the financial parameters of people in this city. This city can consider quality cleaning processes and sustainable approaches through awarding people regarding the negative impact of waste and guiding people to use proper bins to dispatch their garbage. The municipality and local government can consider the development of the riverside area by introducing attractive entertainment events and quality seating positions beside the river. The greener environment through planting more trees in the riverside can attract people to spend spare time. The outside people also get attracted through having quality natural and scenic beauty and can develop financial outcomes of people in Kolkata. The municipality and local government can consider the development of another tourism site in Kolkata along with river tourism to attract people more. In addition, this study wants to deliver future scope for further development of this research.

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