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A Study on Geo-Branding of Bishnupur Through Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: ***Geo-branding is a marketing tool, which can drive visibility and mileage with the advancement of technology. Technology integrated marketing enables connectivity across the globe creating awareness and influence. Destinations can be a strategic tool for positioning brands. This study focuses on Geo-branding as a marketing tool to position the brand Bishnupur in tourists' minds. The purpose of the study is to reinforce local identities to broaden market share. The methodology adopted for the study includes explorative research. A simple random sampling technique was adopted. Our analysis focuses on the differentiating factors about Bishnupur and the possible perception gaps. Statistical analysis includes correlation and regression techniques. The recommendations are based on the research findings.***
Keywords: Geo-branding, Destination marketing, Bishnupur, Cultural heritage, Terracotta Temples, Baluchari, Swarnachari, musical Gharana, West Bengal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every city has its uniqueness. People recognize it and market it through word of mouth (WOM) and sometimes it becomes so famous that you don't need to say but a mere reference is enough to identify the city with the product or service. We identified there are many tier 2 and tier 3 cities that are on the cusp of playing important role in transforming the Indian economy.

The phenomenon of people migrating to tier 1 cities for work and livelihood faces struggle and hardship. Our article is based on one of the tier 3 cities of West Bengal, Bishnupur- is known to a few but deserves to be known to many because of its rich heritage of terracotta temples, and traditional Baluchari sarees.

The terracotta cottage industry in Bankura is one of the most important sections of Bengal art pottery. The terracotta crafted 'Bankura Horse' has now became a symbol of the artistry of rural handicrafts of Bengal. Bishnupur plays an important role in the field of terracotta cottage industry. All products of the terracotta industry of Bishnupur are bought from panchmura village. 60-70 potter families are living in panchmura village.

Bishnupur is a township in the district of Bankura, which is around 190 km from Kolkata is famous for the Baluchari saree made of tussar silk, temples made of burnt clay of 13th century. Royal patronage also gave rise to Bishnupuri Gharana(school) of Hindustani classical music and Bishnupur school of painting.

So in our article, we are looking forward to the products of Bishnupur on basis of which the temple city- Bishnupur can be marketed to the tourists and also help in developing the city Bishnupur as a brand. This can attract more investment in the temple city.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Muzaffer Uysal, Rich Harrill, and Eunju Woo (2011) in their research article address the concept and scope of the tourist business in general, as well as destination marketing and management in particular, which are thoroughly explained in this book. It emphases on components of geo-branding using an integrated and thorough approach.

Sara Dolnicar and Amata Ring (2014) explains the grid that demonstrates existing research in tourism marketing. It has mainly concentrated on how promises of services are created & kept and have frameworks to enhance the decision-making.

Cathy N Ekonde(2010) in the article discovers the elements that affect site visitors to select a specific vacation spot for a go-to or the attributes site visitors keep in mind as vital to find an area as a capable vacation spot for a go-to. This study is a comparative observation of tourism vacation spot advertising performed in a city in an advanced country; like Gotland Island in Sweden. This study attempts to take a look at the hypothesis, which had been formulated with the aid of using the researcher. Hypothesis I; site visitors keep in mind particular attributes in a vacation spot earlier than they go to it.

Marta Herezniak (2017) examines the function of residents withinside the system of building and dealing with metropolis manufac turers. A multi-disciplinary method is implemented to explain the nature of manufacturers from that territry and involvement of localities.

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Theoretically defined standards from advertising and company branding, people management, are implemented. The writer discus ses loads of techniques and many instruments are used to contain residents. Special interest is given to the significance of modern technology for powerful involvement of citizens.

Irisi Kasapi and Ariana Cela (2017) in their research offer an evaluation of the literature on town branding, with the primary intention of helping tourism vacation spot. This evaluation serves as a roadmap to researchers because it presents an outline of the idea of branding and its origins, an evaluation of the ideas of region and vacation spot branding.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study researchers undertook descriptive research method. A total of 333 respondents took part in this study. The research questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Researchers used qualitative technique, which focuses on interpreting certain behavioural patterns among the population, which will further help in analysing and finding the unique trait(s) that can be marketed to brand the city.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study aimed to find the factors which differentiate or give a competitive edge when positioning Bishnupur as the destination.

On data collections, the driving factors which compel a person to visit Bishnupur were the crafts, handloom saree, and the temples but when it was studied deeper it was found that the rich culture of the terracotta is the most contributing factor to the visit. 81% of tourists stated temples, 13% stated saree and 5% stated crafts as their reason for a visit as shown in Figure 1.

From this, we can see that the tourists are traveling to experience the culture-rich temples and to know the history of the temples and how th ese cultures were formed.



Figure 1: Major attraction of tourists

From Figure 2, we can conclude that the Baluchari saree needs more marketing as the saree seems to lose its value over some time. These sarees are believed to be unique and very culture oriented but have lost their demand over time, with efforts in the right direction these can be easily rectified.

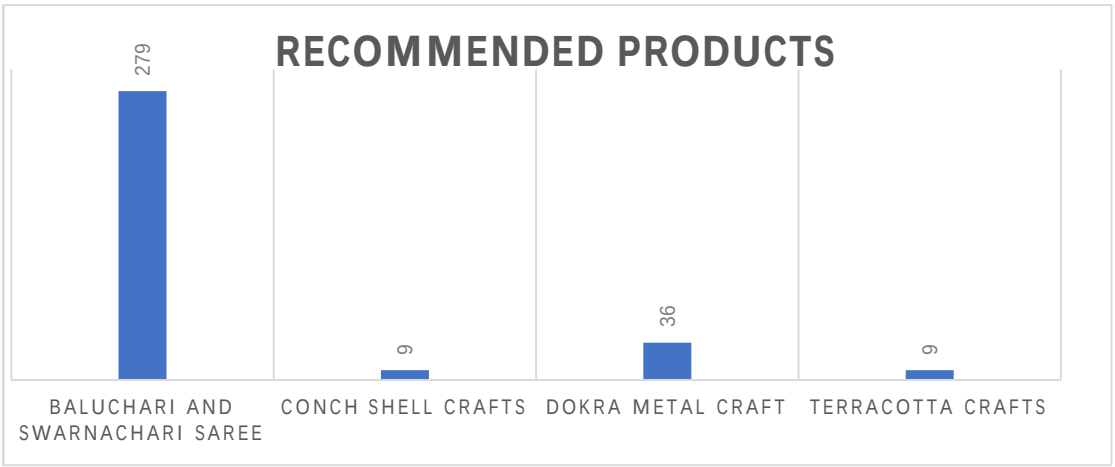


Figure 2: Recommended Products of Bishnupur

When studying the buying behaviour of the customers who have bought something from Bishnupur the product recommendation can be cut down to 4 possible alternatives, on a deeper study it was found there was an obvious favourite which was the most preferred product i.e. Baluchari saree. The breakdown of the most preferred product is as follows- 83% for Baluchari saree, 2% for shell crafts, 10.8% for dokra metal crafts, and 2% for terracotta crafts.

From this, we can infer that even though the product seems to have high demand in Bishnupur the demand outside Bishnupur is exponentially low. There seems to be latent demand for the product consumers have a strong need for products for sarees such as Baluchari saree. The task would be to measure the size of the market and cater to the need by making Baluchari saree more available. The need for the saree has to stimulate the saree by raising awareness.

Every tourist destination has proper management to attract tourists and enhance the tourism experience of the tourists. There are a few required improvements that can help in attracting more tourists and having a better experience in Bishnupur.

The parameters were the cleanliness of the city, temple management, tourist management, and travel and accommodation. As per our study, from Figure 3, 32% of respondents appealed to maintain the cleanliness of the city, 24% of respondents appealed to have better temple management as most of the tourists visit Bishnupur because of its culturally rich terracotta temples, 43% of the respondents wanted responsible tourist management.

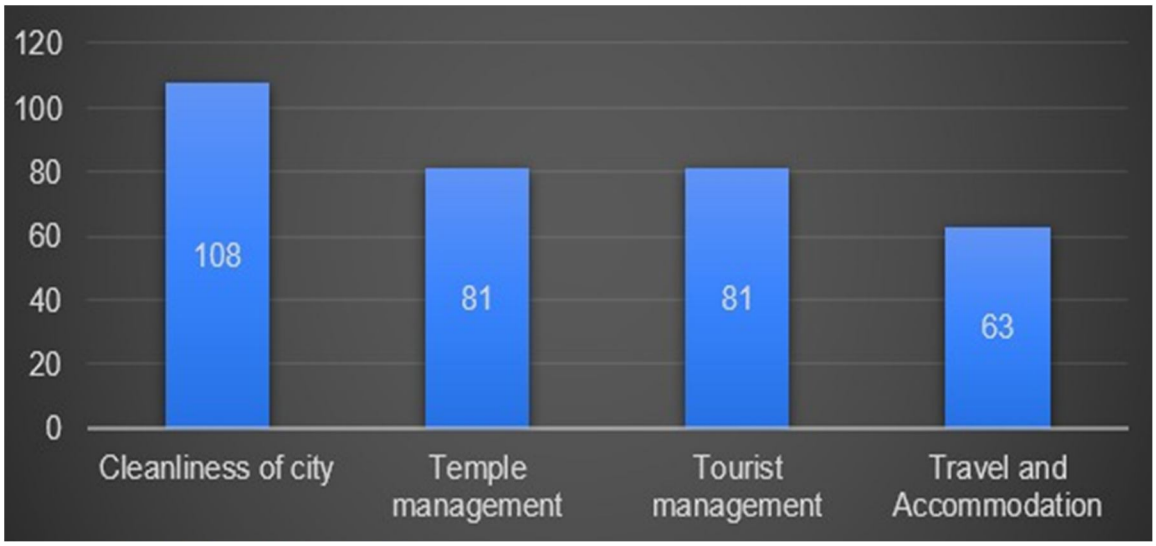


Figure 3: Focus areas of sustainability

India is one of the countries that sustained its ancient culture and heritage with its unparallel artistry in motifs, monuments, and buildings. Bishnupur also has its own culture, historical terracotta temples, and motifs. To spread the culture among tourists- temples, Baluchari sarees, and musical Gharana ought to play a significant role. The Bishnupur Gharana is the only classical musical Gharana of West Bengal. From Figure 4, according to the citizens of Bishnupur, we found that the cultural heritage of Bishnupur is driven mostly by its terracotta temples(42%) followed by Baluchari and Swarnachuri sarees(38%) and then by the musical Gharana(20%).

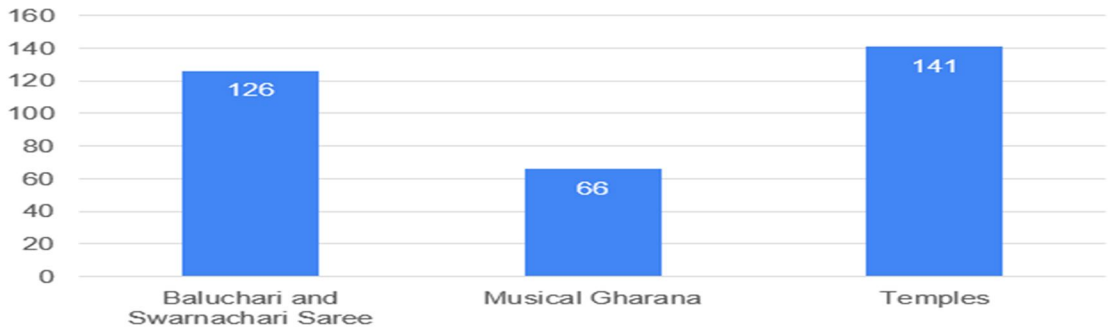


Figure 4: Drivers of Cultural Heritage

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Studying some of the variables that affect tourism, such as seasonality, revealed that seasonality exists. The majority of tourists prefer to visit Bishnupur during the six months of October to march. In a further study, from Figure 5, the reason for the seasonality was found as festive seasons which amplified the cultural effects a lot. During this duration, you can witness the only musical Gharana of west Bengal live, which enhances the tourist experience. Some of the major Indian festivals such as Diwali, Makar Sankranti, Durga pooja, and Poush Mela make this period busy resulting in a lot of footfalls.

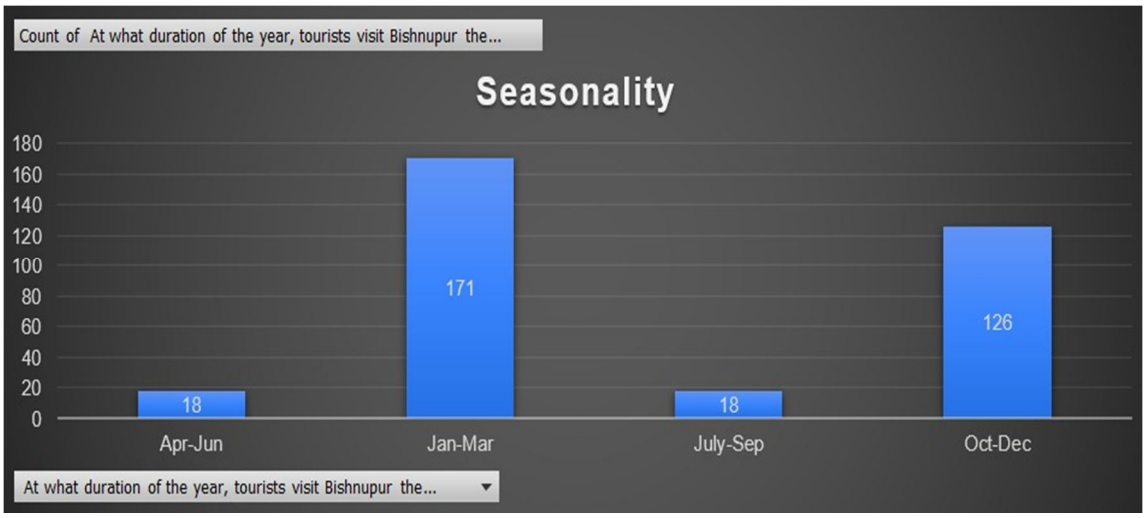


Figure 5: Seasonal statistics of tourism flow

For any place to be a favourite tourist destination, the seasonality element has to minimize for the local business to have consistent income. To minimize the seasonality elements such as musical Gharana, Folk dances, Trade fares, etc could be positioned as a primary cultural attraction rather than these being the supplement elements to the festivals. Adding these factors to the core attractions could drastically reduce the seasonality

TABLE 1:
Variables Impacting Cultural Heritage

Parameters	P-value
Recommended products	4.44E-06
Sustainable factors	3.11E-05
Major attractions of tourism	0.000108
The seasonal flow of tourism	5.95E-05

According to our study, we used regression as the analytical technique to interpret how the cultural heritage is dependent upon the factors i.e. on products, management of city and tourism, major attractions of Bishnupur, and peak seasons for tourism. From the Figure below, we found that the motif products especially Baluchari sarees which are now sold to various states and in various exhibitions help the most in spreading the cultural heritage of Bishnupur. The season of Durga puja, Diwali, and New year is the peak season when tourists visit experience and enjoy the local folk dance, Poush-mela, and different culturally infused functions.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our studies tourists are attracted to Bishnupur predominantly because of the terracotta motif temples. Since the temple is the favourite destination to visit, the annual classical music performance by various Indian classical maestros is picked as the venue, where the Tourism Ministry of West Bengal can showcase in the exhibition the traditional hand-woven Baluchari sarees and Swarnachari sarees. Baluchari saree is a garment especially worn by women of Bangladesh and in some parts of India. It is known for its mythological stories woven on the sarees. Since Bishnupur is famous for tussar silk, this gives an advantage to the place and people to use the tussar silk to produce traditional sarees. It takes over one week to weave one saree. Temple guides need to be appointed by the Tourism Ministry of the state to give tourists a better experience which thereby creates new jobs in the place.

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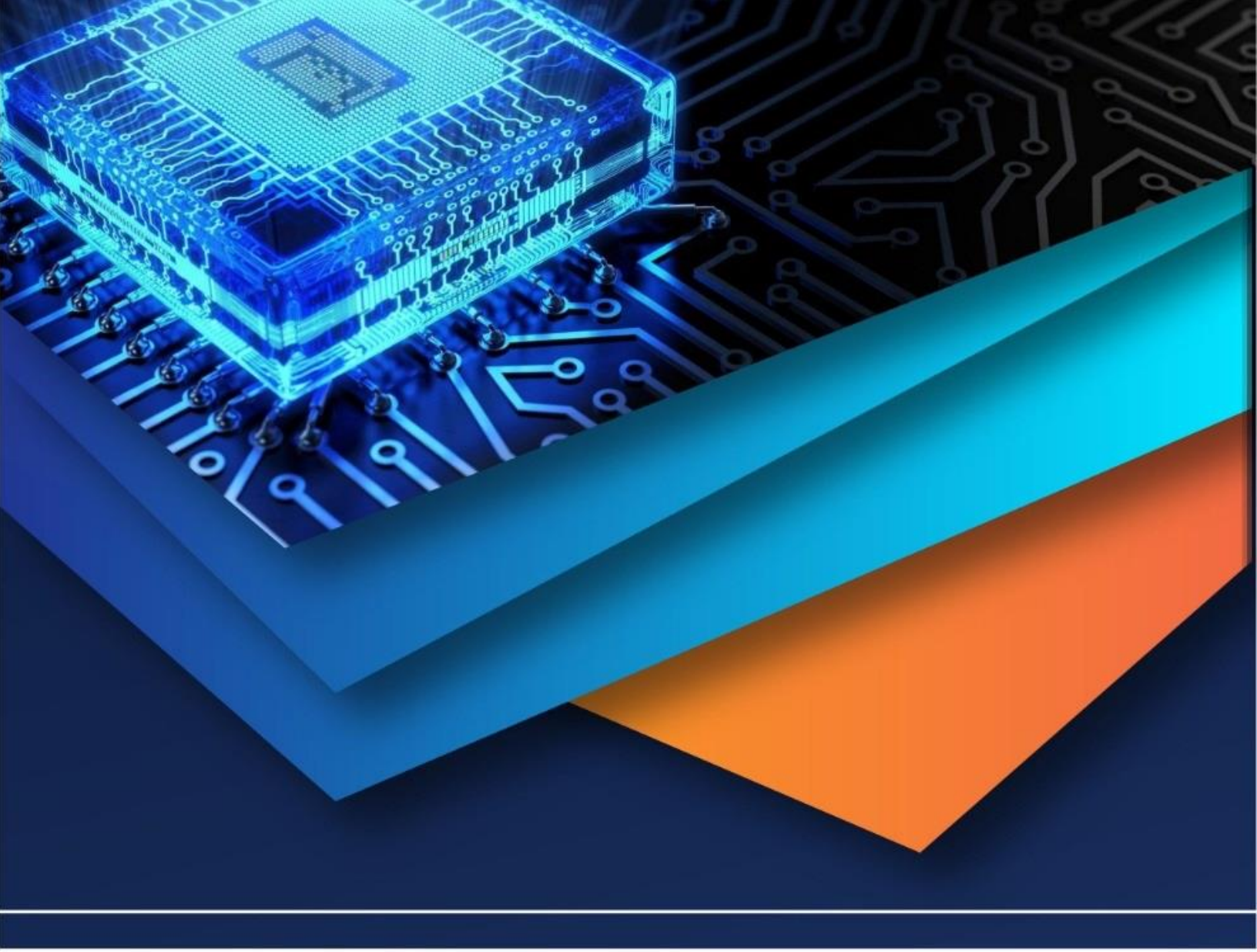
The study showed us there must be regular cleanliness drives and campaigns demanded by the locals, which they think could attract more tourists and enhance the tourism experience of the city. Along with the cleanliness of the city, locals wanted the government to focus on maintaining the temples and their premises.

Because the series of festivals happen from October to February, it becomes the most celebrated period of the year in Bishnupur, whence the locals of Bishnupur celebrate their cultural festivals in all their glory in addition to the fairs and cultural performances that become the centre of attraction for the visitors, apart from visiting temples. During the period from October to February, many exhibitions on indigenous traditional motifs need to be conducted to make the visitor aware of their culture. The concerned committee of the Bishnupur fair can give its local crafts as rewards to the participants. Local TV channels and Entertainment shows can promote the Bishnupur culture and crafts. With the integration of social media platforms, the state needs to encourage the locals of the state to write blogs and make vlogs for interested visitors. And showcase the culture- in terms of tradition, crafts, and people.

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