



Sustainable ecotourism in dooars region, a potential and perspective: A study of Garumara National Park, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India

Ujjwal Dutta

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Seacom Skills University, Bolepur, West Bengal, India

Abstract

Ecotourism is a new concept of tourism to minimize negative impact on nature and wild life it's one of the main aims is to increase concern about conservation of nature. In recent time eco-tourism has an immense potential in Dooars region and it is also very helpful to develop economically distress region condition. The study was conducted during Dec, 2016 to July, 2017. The respondents were randomly selected from local people and from the tourist, both domestic and international. The survey was conducted at Dooarse region of Gorumara National Park, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India. In the study, two types of sample were selected one from tourists and another is from local people. Peak season of tourism is middle November to May. The total sample size were 230 among them 180 were tourist and rest 50 were local people. The tourist also came from all over Indian, though maximum tourists are domestic tourist. Ecotourism is very immense value to flourish local creature and create job opportunity. The paper is attempted to investigate opportunity of Sustainable eco-tourism in Dooars region.

Keywords: dooarse, wildlife safari, ethnic tribal, home stay tourism, eco-tourism

Introduction

Luxuriant snow-hills and diverse biodiversity are beautiful and unique. It is a great combination of hills and wild life is also attractive. Animals and plants species are very abandon and diverse. Clam and quite environment and adverse natural beauty attract domestic tourist and some time from abroad. Unique landscape, abandon species on animals, birds create a magistic beauty in Dooars region. Dooars are situated at the foothills of the eastern Himalayas in North-east Indian. Dooars means 'door' and this region act as a gateway to Bhutan from. Hole Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar district and plain of the Darjeeling Himalayas are the politically constitutes the Dooars region. There are various snow-fed river spread over Dooars like Teesta, Jaldhaka, Muri, Torsa, Sankosh, Dyna, karatoya, Raidak and Kaljani etc are flow through these fertile plains. Several National Parks, wild life sanctuary, teagardens are also attract a lot of tourists from all over India and as well as abroad. Total area of the Dooars region is about 4750sqm and near about 1200sqkm area cover with forest. The altitude of this region is ranges between 90mt to 1750 mt.. The Gorumara National park is situated on the flood plains of the Raidak and Murti rivers. Chapramari wild life reserve and Jaldapara National Park is very close to Gorumara National Park. The Gorumara National Park is very enriched by many ethnic villages. More than 10,000 people live in the National Park and their main source of income from employment in forest department activities, ecotourism and soon. From November to March is the best season to visit Gorumara. Every evening in Budhram forest village, a live show of ethnic tribal dance can be seen. One can also visit the adjoining forest villages to see their style and culture.

Literature Review

Bhutia (2014) ^[1] directed a study titled, "Growth & Development of Tourism Sector in West Bengal: Issues & Concerns". The purpose of the study was to investigate the potentiality of tourism in West Bengal. This study shows the huge revenue in term of tourism.

Das (2011) ^[4] conducted a study on "ecotourism, Sustainable Development and the Indian State." The main aims of this study was the sustainable policies and programs of the Indian Government. The main focus of sustainable development was the basis terget of the ecotourism in the study area. The researcher shows in this study that, various natural resource played a vital role to develop eco-tourism in India. At the end the study suggest that without proper planning and program this program might not be fulfil target.

Das, Saha, Basunathe, Sultana, Seth, Singh, Roy, Singh, Borah and kalita (2016) ^[3] did a study on Dooars India: A potential place of farm or Rural Tourism: A Review. In that research they explored the opportunities of farm or rural based tourism in Dooars region. According to the researchers, rural based tourism has a huge potential to develop local area's economic condition and rural tourism growing rapidly in resent time.

Dutta (2015) ^[2] conducted a study on "Sustainability & Tourist-crowding Trade-off at Wildlife Based Tourist Spots in Dooars Region of North Bengal: A Study on Ecotourism Carrying Capacity of Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary in Dooars, Jalpaiguri (W.B.). The main focus of this study was to critically analyze of wildlife base ecotourism in the study. The researcher showed in this study that, the Dooarse region is very suitable for promote ecotourism and develop local area's

economic condition without exploitation natural resource physically.

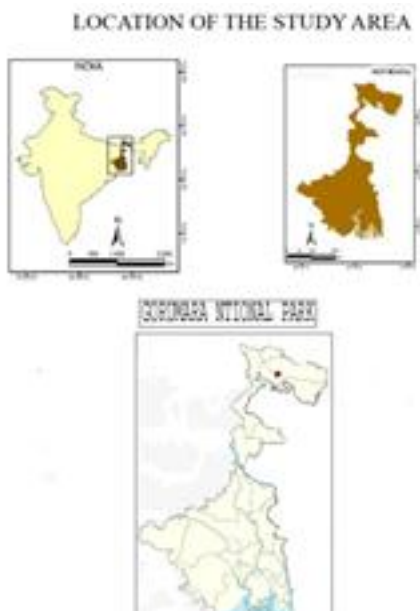


Fig 1

Location map of the study area: Bhutan is the Northern side,

Bangladesh at the Southern side, Nepal at the western side, Assam at the eastern side of the Dooars region. The total area of Gorumara National park is near about 80 Sq. K.M. and the Latitude 26^o 42' N and Longitude 88^o 48' E are the geocoordinate of the Gorumara National Park.

Means of communication: The distance between Kolkata to Dooars near about 600 KM and various mode of communication are also very available to reach at Dooars. Various Government and private bus services are also available and very frequent to easily reach at Dooars from Kolkata. Train services are very available from Kolkata and others parts of India. Nearest airport of Dooars region is at Bagdogra.

Biodiversity of Gorumara National Park: The Gorumara National Park is famous for its flora and fauna variety. There is a huge variety of faunal like, 50 species of mammals, 194 species of birds, 22 species of reptiles, 7 species of turtles, 27 species of fish and micro, macro fauna. This region is very famous for animal's variety likes clouded leopard, wild dog, Chinese pangolin and elephant, spotted deer, leopard, bison etc. Dooars region is the paradise to the student, they will able to collect various data and information about flora and fauna. Gorumara National Park is home of numerous rare topical orchids.

Table 1: Flora and fauna variety of Gorumara National Park

Important Flora / Fauna	Variety
Important Floras	Sal (Shorea robusta), Bahera(Terminalia bellerica), Chikrasi (Chukrassia tabularis), Teak (Tectona grandis), Shimul (Bombax ceiba), Shisu (Dalbergia sissoo), Gamar (Gmelina arborea), etc.
Important Faunas	Leopard, Elephant, One Horned Rhinoceros, Hog Deer, Spotted Deer, Gaur, Barking Deer, Deer, Sambar, Sloth Bear, Snakes, Wild Dog, Butterflies, porcupine, etc.

Source: Ghosh, A. (2006)^[5]: "Mohamoyee Duars".

Methodology

This paper mainly based on primary data and various secondary data on Dooars collected from various government site, West Bengal Forest Department, related Journal, Various govt. and non govt. website. Use Arc GIS software to create various maps and use Microsoft office to present this topic. To collect primary data use questionnaire survey methods.

Objectives

Objectives of the study are

1. To identify the potentiality of eco-tourism in Dooars region.
2. To identify the impact of ecotourism on local economy.
3. To identify the impact of ecotourism on job creation at local level.
4. To identify the knowledge of the tourist about ecotourism.
5. To identify the role of ecotourism to flourish local culture and heritage.

Result and Discussion

Main objective of their tour

Randomly selected 180 tourist to collect primary data. The primary data shows that 57 persons come here to view famous

wild life during jangle safari, 53 persons come here to spend their leisure time, 28 persons come here to education tour purpose and collect various data and information for their excursion, 10 persons come here to other purpose. Most of the person come here to see wild life mainly elephant, leopard, bison etc. Though, this national park also famous for its natural beauty.

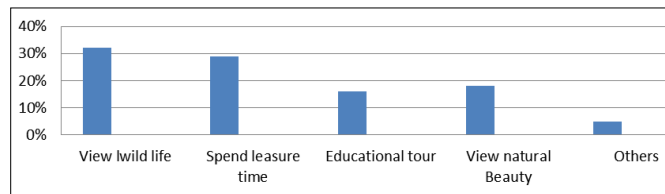


Fig 2: The main aims of the tourist to visit in Dooars

Sound idea about ecotourism: Maximum visitor have no sound idea about eco-system they want to spend their time in nature and enjoy. Only 24% tourists have sound knowledge about eco-tourism and much concern about nature and natural resource. More than 26% tourists have no idea about eco-tourism and conservation of nature they just spend their leisure time in nature

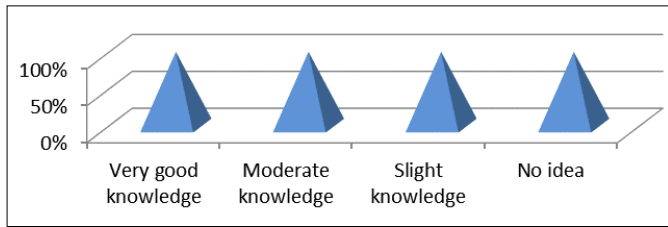


Fig 3: Tourist knowledge about eco-tourism

Lodging: More than 59% tourist stay in hotel, 7% tourist stay in cottage, 11% tourist stay in home stay, 16% tourist stay in guest house and rest 7% tourist spend their night other places. This survey clearly show that maximum tourist interested to spend night in hotel cause of safety. Cottage and Home stay tourism spot is most beautiful, though hotel is most safety place.

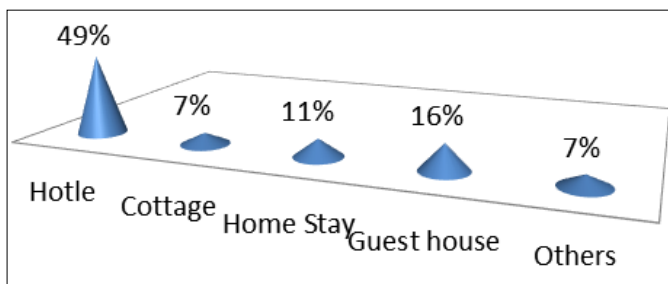


Fig 4: Various lodging facilities in Dooars region

Peak time of tourism: November to March is the peak season of tourism in Gorumara National Park. March to May is moderate season for the tourist, June to September is the lean season for the tourist. Almost 70% tourist visit in Garumara National Park in peak season, 20% tourist visit at moderate season and rest 10% tourist visit in low season. During 15th June to 15th September jangle safari is closed every year.

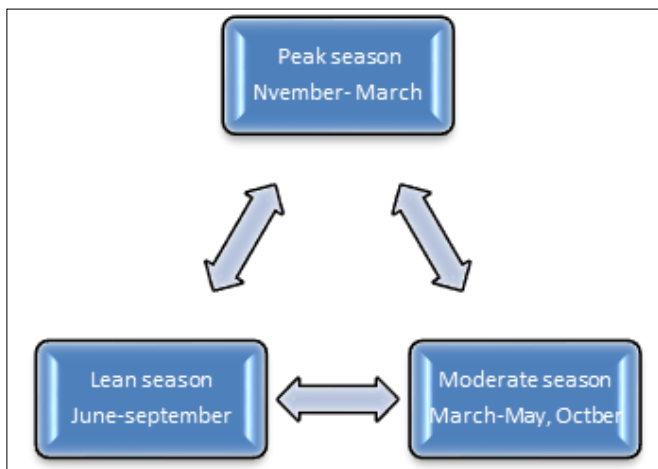


Fig 5: Season wise distribution of tourist

Other visitor attraction without Gorumara National Park: More than 49% people are attracted by teagarden and 26% people are attracted by historical places. Unless teagarden cover the Dooars region just like blanket and attracted many people over all India as well as abroad. Many people come to

Dooars to see Rava tribal, Toto Tribal, Teagarden, Historical place, Tribal dance and very interested on it. Other visitor attractions in Gorumara National Park are- i) Ethnic Forest Village Tourism. ii) Nature Interpretation Centre.

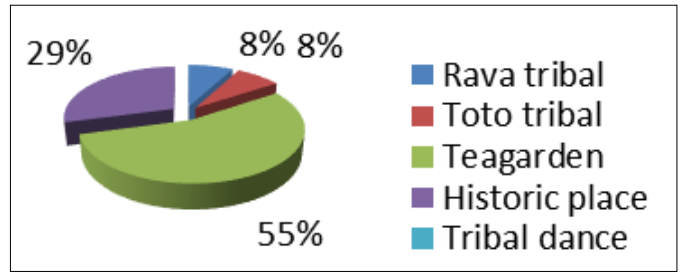


Fig 6: Others tourist attraction in study area

Create huge job opportunity: Ecotourism create huge job opportunity for local people as a guide in National Parks, they operate their shops, restaurant, hotels, home stay tourism, cottage etc. and as well as it also change local economy. The guide of safari vehicles is well trained and has a sound knowledge about National Park and nature. Many local tribal man and woman are engaged with flock dance and perform in front of tourist after forest safari, it also very helpful to increase their income. Eco-tourism is very helpful to flourish local creature and various hand craft industry and create huge job opportunity at local level.

Occupation structure: According to primary data 48% local people are engaged with tourism sector. The interviewer lives in surrounding area of Garumara National Park. So, tourism sector has a great influence in local economy and job creation. Local people operate their one part of house as a home stay tourism and it is their main source of income. A large number of local people are very interested in tourism sector they want to engage with it.

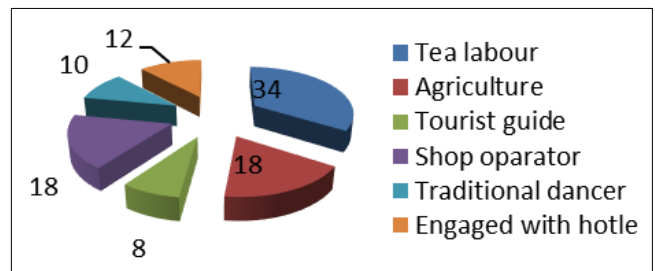


Fig 7: Occupational structure (%) of the people of the study area

Multi utilization of land: Multi land utilization in Dooars region is a key factor to change distress region economic condition. They use their land as a teagarden, some place use as a tourist hotel, home stay tourism. This type many tourist spot also very available near 'Jandi' where teagarden, cottage, hotel, orange garden, at a same pot and many tourist very attracted with it. So, multi utilization of land use is very fruitful at Dooars region.

Conclusion: Dooars region is very suitable for sustainable development and eco-tourism based activities. Picturesque beauty of nature and wild life together with jangle safari

promote eco-tourism and socio-economic upliftment of the adjacent tribal community. The Dooarse region are potential enough to generate more revenue in terms of eco-tourism, conservation of biodiversity, purification of water and air, storage and supply of fresh water but without any physical exploitation. So, it is very important that flourish of eco-tourism in Dooars region needs proper planning and management and protect natural resource excellently. Government and non-government organization both are actively participate in natural tourism or ecotourism.

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