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From the Desk of the Secretary

Geographical Society of North Bengal is an NGO located in the district of Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India. Initially it was formed for educational development in the under developed Dooars area but its area of operation is not restricted in a single point and rather it is open for all, irrespective of geographical space. Geographical Society of North Bengal has stepped in to eight year of its working. The society is bound by promise to continue its unending efforts in the processes of social development and the first edition of ‘Geo-Analyst’ is one of such endeavours related to that. I thank all the members of the society for their kind co-operation to publish this Journal. I appeal to every Academician, Research Scholars and Social scientist from India and abroad to enrich the idea of social science related themes.

Alipurduar
July, 2011

Hiranmoy Biswas
Secretary



Editorial

In our contemporary life, the study of social sciences arouses great significance as the social landscape has been rapidly changing. In view of multi-faceted and dynamic nature of social sciences each and every micro level study of it highlights distinct importance in multi-disciplinary studies. Recently, there is a sign of growing interest as well as anxiety about the social changes taking place almost every part worldwide and the interest in social studies is growing for this reason. The introducing issue of Geo-Analyst, a bi-annual journal of social sciences of the Geographical Society of North Bengal is out on the stand, which has addressed to complex, changing and challenging issues along with few innovative ideas of development in the courtyard of social sciences.

Alipurduar
July, 2011

Piyal Basu Roy
Editor

An Assessment of Tourism Status as a Means of Micro Development: A Case Study of Birbhum District, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

It is a recognized fact that tourism is one of the sources of job creation, poverty reduction and economic development. It has also been considered world's largest industry which would be an instant source of income of the developing and poor countries of the world, if properly taken into consideration. India, being an emerging legend in the international economy contributes significantly through tourism but still a lot of areas of the country remain unexplored which require proper development to strengthen regional prosperity as well as country's share in world economy. The district of Birbhum, West Bengal, India has enough potential for tourism development hidden in its attractions and resources, the proper and systematic utilization of which can easily bring micro level economic development. In this paper, an attempt has been made to analyze the importance of tourism in micro level development and accordingly some strategies have been suggested.

Keywords: Tourism status, composite index, backwardness, micro development

Introduction

Tourism contributes significant economic assistance to a country. Travelers spending generate income for both public and private sectors, besides affecting wages and employment opportunities (Bhatia, 2009). Tourists, in general, desire peace, relaxation, comfort, quietness for the refreshment of body and mind. It has been increasingly recognized that tourism is an essential part of contemporary life (Ghosh, 1998). So, well-managed tourism development has no alternative if development of an area is considered. Careful planning of tourism can play a pivotal role in changing the obstruction to the development also.

About the Study area

The district of Birbhum lies between the latitudes of 23°23'30"N and 24°35'00"N and occupies the western parts of the state of West Bengal. The eastern most extremity of the district is marked by 88°01'40"E longitude and its western most extremity by 87°05'25"E longitude. The shape of the district is an isosceles triangle, the apex being situated at the northern extremity. Birbhum is bounded on the north and west by Dumka district of Jharkhand, on the east by the districts of Murshidabad and Bardhaman. The river Ajoy forms the southern boundary of the district separating it from Bardhaman district of West Bengal.

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Objectives

1. To highlight status of tourism attractions in the study area.
2. To find out effects of tourism in those areas.
3. To find out existing backwardness of the study area.
4. To suggest strategies for micro development via tourism development.

Methodology

In this study, the importance of the tourist spots has been assessed based on different dimensions like natural, cultural, religious etc. Field survey has been done taking interview of 30 persons from each of the selected twelve tourist places of the district. The statistical analysis has been performed based on co-rrrelation co- efficient and Chi-square test. Study method includes data collected, based on interview and questionnaire also. Based on geographical study of areas of tourism to reduce backwardness, following hypotheses have been made.

1. Is there any relation between cultural factors including education and tourist Attractions in Birbhum district according to population viewpoint?
2. Is there any relation between religious factors and tourist attraction in Birbhum district according to population viewpoint?
3. Is there any relation between tourism industry and rural economy in Birbhum district according to population viewpoint?

Comparative importance analysis in tourism

To understand the tourism status of Birbhum district, West Bengal, six indices, namely natural beauty, accessibility, fooding and lodging, marketing, administrative facilities, culture and religion have been considered to arrive at the final composite index. Tourist status of various places have been computed on the basis of relative importance given on the scale of 0-5 depending upon the facilities available assumed that higher the value of composite index , higher will be the tourism status of that place. The analysis may vary person to person based on individual's preference, choice and interest.

Table: 1 Composite Index of Tourism status of selected places of Birbhum District

Sl No.	Tourist spots	Natural Beauty	Access ibility	Fooding & Lodging	Marketing	Adminis trative facilities	Culture and Religion	Composite index	Rank
1	Nandekeswari	.2	3.5	2.5	.5	.1	3.5	10.3	3
2	Tarapith	.5	4.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	16.5	2
3	Santiniketan	2.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	2.5	3.0	19.0	1
4	Bakreswar	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	.5	8.5	5
5	Joydev Kenduli	.5	3.0	.1	.1	.1	3.5	7.3	6
6	Kankalitala	1.0	1.0	.1	.1	.1	3.5	5.8	8
7	Fullara	.5	2.0	.1	.1	.1	1.5	4.3	10
8	Dubrajpur	2.5	3.0	2.0	.2	1.0	.5	9.2	4
9	Hetampur	.5	2.0	.1	.1	.1	.5	3.3	11
10	Patharchapuri	.5	.1	.1	.1	.1	2.0	2.9	12
11	Labpur	1.0	2.0	.1	.2	.1	1.0	4.4	9
12	Ballavpur	2.0	3.0	.5	.2	.1	.1	5.9	7

It is seen from the table:1 that the composite index for almost all mentioned centers are varied in character, some of which have higher value and some with lesser. The high index is the function of the chosen attributes, despite the fact that these spots receive very sporadic and seasonal tourists. The district has immense potential as to the uniqueness of the places and other facilities are concerned. Among all the tourist places, Santiniketan, Tarapith, Nandikeswari rank in the first, second and third position respectively.

Table: 2 Effect of cultural factors including education to attract tourism

Effect of social and cultural attraction	Observed frequency distribution	Percentage (%)	Expected frequency distribution	Remaining
Very low	17	4.72	72	-55
Low	11	3.06	72	-61
Medium	36	10	72	-36
High	206	57.22	72	134
Very high	90	25	72	18
Total	360	100	72	

Source: Computed by Authors

The Role of Social and Cultural Attractions including education to Attract Tourists

The glory and prestige of every country depends upon its cultural edifice and the remains of Forts, Art galleries, Music, Academics, Libraries and the standing testimonials of culture (Babu, 2008). Table 2 shows that 3.06 % and 4.72 % people selected the low

and very low choices and 10 %, 57.22 % and 25 % medium, high and very high which highlights higher impact of cultural factors which pull tourists in this area. In addition, Visva-Bharati, a central university has been playing distinctive role in pulling visitors worldwide due to its educational excellence.

Table: 3 Effect of Religious factors to attract tourists

Effect of historical and Ancient factors	Observed frequency distribution	Percentage (%)	Expected frequency distribution	Remaining
Very low	31	51.67	72	-41
Low	55	15.28	72	-17
Medium	51	14.17	72	-21
High	137	38.06	72	65
Very high	86	23.89	72	14
Total	360	100		

Source: Computed by Authors

The Role of Religious Factors to Attract Tourist

According to Table-3, 51.67 % of population believed that religious factors have very low effect on tourist pull, but 38.06 % and 23.89% of surveyed people opined for high and very high role of the same in the area under study.

Table: 4 Effect of tourism industry on rural economy

Effect of tourism on rural Economics	Observed frequency distribution	Percentage (%)	Expected frequency distribution	Remaining
Very low	21	5.83	72	-51
Low	40	11.11	72	-32
Medium	56	15.56	72	-16
High	127	35.28	72	55
Very high	116	32.22	72	44
Total	360	100	72	

Source: Computed by Authors

Effect of Tourism on Rural economy

According to data obtained from Table-4, it is noticed that 35.28 % and 32.22 % of population in these areas opined high and very high choices showing the great impact of tourism on economy in the areas of study. In agreement with results in Table 4, it has to be mentioned that tourism has both positive and negative impact on areas. On the positive side, tourism development helps to diversify the local economy and it generates

economic growth. It stimulates the local economy through capital inflow but the greatest concern is that tourism oriented development very often creates environmental problems. Tourism is often masked down for its adverse impact on nature but one must also look at the more positive and enduring benefits (Franklin, 2003).

Table: 5 Chi square tests to study significance between variables

	Religious factors	Cultural attraction	Rural economy
Chi square	94.89	365.58	122.81
Degree of Freedom	4	4	4
Table value at the significant level of 0.05	9.49	9.49	9.49
Remarks	Null hypothesis rejected	Null hypothesis rejected	Null hypothesis rejected

Therefore, from the obtained value of chi square, it is clear that there are strong impact of Cultural and Religious factors on the development of tourism of the district. In addition, it has significant impact on rural economy of the study area too. However, not all tourism attractions have equal demand generation potential (Mckercher & Du Cros , 2002). That is why at the significant level of 0.05 and degree of freedom level 4, null hypothesis has been rejected and alternative hypothesis has been accepted. This result clearly indicates that the entire area is influenced by certain tourism parameters which pull tourists but cultural factor plays leading part in this regard.

Under development in Birbhum District

While measuring the backwardness of the district, following aspects have been studied to interpret underdevelopment in the study area.

a. Alarming Population Growth

b Lower literacy rate

c. Human Development Index

a. Alarming Population Growth

Increasing population growth is one of major causes of underdevelopment in the district. Positive growth of population as indicated in the table-6 has enhanced unemployment, per capita consumption of resource crisis which ultimately leads to below standard of living to a significant extent. Interestingly, it is noticed that in 1921, the urban and rural population of the district respectively were 17355 and 834370 where as in 2001,

these become 258420 and 2757002. Therefore, a tremendous growth of population in the district particularly in the rural areas is identified.

Table 6: Population Growth In Birbhum District

Year	Total population	Urban population	Rural population
1901	906891	-	906891
1911	940162	-	940162
1921	851725	17355	834370
1931	947554	45191	902363
1941	1048317	60339	987978
1951	1066889	68993	997896
1961	1446158	100769	1345389
1971	1775909	124772	1651137
1981	2095829	173533	1922296
1991	2555664	229563	2326101
2001	3015422	258420	2757002

Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2006

a. Lower literacy rate

Education is considered as the one of the fundamental indicators of well being of people for which nationwide several initiatives have been taken and implemented and it cannot be denied that literacy rates have been progressing spatially in the country, but it cannot also be denied that a significant portion of people are still away from the holy touch of education despite the nation-wide educational strategies like “Education for all”. The study area is not exception from it. Here, the general literacy rate is 61.48 % among which male literacy rate is 70.89 % and female literacy rate is 51.55 % (Table-7) .Therefore, Women participation rate in case of acquiring education in the district is lower as compared to men which directly influences the socio-economic status and unemployment of them. In addition, the district ranks below the state average in total, rural and urban literacy.

Table 7: Status of Literacy In Birbhum District (2001)

WEST BENGAL	Category	Person	Male	Female
	Total	68.64	77.02	59.61
BIRBHUM	Rural	63.42	73.13	53.16
	Urban	81.25	86.13	75.74
	Total	61.48	70.89	51.55
BIRBHUM	Rural	59.88	69.51	49.7
	Urban	77.65	84.73	70.2

Source: Birbhum district Human Development Report

a. Human Development Index

Human Development Report of West Bengal also presents a picture of disparity (Table - 8). The district of Birbhum rank in 14th position as per HDI index in 2004 whereas its adjoining district, Burdwan ranks 5th position. In the context, it is noticed from the table that the study area i.e. Birbhum ranks in lower order in case of Health, Income and educational sphere.

Table 8: Human Index of Districts of West Bengal

District	Health Index	Income Index	Education Index	HDI	HDI Rank
Darjeeling	0.73	0.49	0.72	0.65	4
Jalpaiguri	0.61	0.38	0.6	0.53	10
Cooch Behar	0.5	0.41	0.65	0.52	11
Dinajpur	0.62	0.39	0.53	0.51	13
Malda	0.49	0.36	0.48	0.44	17
Murshidabad	0.57	0.29	0.52	0.46	15
Birbhum	0.53	0.27	0.61	0.47	14
Bardhaman	0.74	0.47	0.71	0.64	5
Nadia	0.65	0.41	0.66	0.57	9
North 24 Parganas	0.72	0.49	0.76	0.66	3
Hugli	0.77	0.46	0.67	0.63	6
Bankura	0.67	0.26	0.62	0.52	11
Purulia	0.61	0.18	0.55	0.45	16
Medinipur	0.68	0.45	0.74	0.62	7
Haora	0.77	0.53	0.75	0.68	2
Kolkata	0.82	0.73	0.8	0.78	1
South 24 Parganas	0.71	0.4	0.68	0.6	8
West Bengal	0.7	0.43	0.69	0.61	

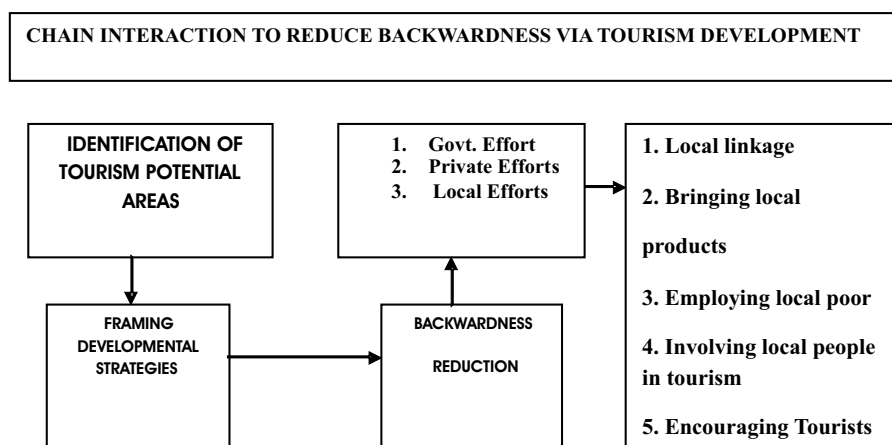
Source: West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004

The above table of HDI indicates that the district of Birbhum ranks 14th in case of Human Development out of 17 districts in the state in 2004. In case of Rural Employment, the district has been suffering a lot since partition as population growth has been steadily rising in the district. Poor sections of the rural society with indigenous tribal people are basically involved in agriculture and labour based work. As per WBHDR 2004, it has been found that there is spatial disparity in the field of development over the state. Even, within the district, the picture is not uniform one. Inter-village disparities, low level economic progress and human development have resulted increasing number of deprived residents of a few district and Birbhum is one of them. Analyzing the entire

dimension of human development through increasing population growth with retreating HDI of the district, it is clear and evident that the people particularly who are residing in the rural areas need development. This sort of community development may lead to the reduction in the intra district regional imbalance (Basu Roy,. Basu Roy, & Das. 2010). But what should be the strategy to achieve this? Already NREGA and several rural developmental activities are going on but the ultimate and real development is hardly possible. Therefore, an innovative idea through tourism development by identifying potential areas for its development with participation of rural people only in this sector has been highlighted. This concept of tourism does not only emphasize the participation of rural people, but also provide income opportunities by building their individual capacity via a few efforts.

Micro Level Development Strategies Thought Tourism Development

The following diagram analyses how can a chain interaction from national to village level helps to mobilize local people in tourism activity by building their capacity in this work providing financial assistance both from Government and Private sector and also seeks for its implementation.



Conclusion

Government can play essential role by establishing a chain of strong communication from village to national level through financial support to develop tourism to strengthen local economy in the district. Ministry of tourism may encourage and engage poor people in self help programmes related to this industry in the form of cottage industrial development and put up the products for sale. Community's cultural programs, tour

operators for educated poor, hoteliers etc. are the other parts of opportunities of tourism development. In this regard micro level strategies through pro poor tourism development can be implemented on priority basis in the potential tourism areas by state and central ministries in the said district. Apart from Government role, to prosper the tourism industry, native people may be responsible to keep the local environments attractive to the tourists. Participation of local people irrespective of socio political banner in order to ensure work force, good transport and communications, hygienic food and water and overall security to the tourists is important attribute to bring micro level development. Private developers and Investors may play important role by maximizing employment of local poor as much as possible by investing capital and engaging local poor people. These will not only help to reduce underdevelopment but also local agitations will be surpassed and communication gap will be decreased. This interaction with local poor people will ensure supplies of food and non food items, handicrafts, entertainment at a fair and cheaper price which may easily upgrade local linkages and economy of the district.

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