

IMPACT OF ECO-TOURISM ON BATABARI VILLAGE IN DOOARS REGION: A DETAILED ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

Ecotourism is catering for tourists wishing to experience the natural environment without damaging it or disturbing its habitats. It is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial mass tourism. The Global Ecotourism Network (GEN) defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and creates knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved (visitors, staff and the visited)". Batabari village is situated in Mateli block in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal state, India. In this article specially focused on the issue of how eco tourism concepts are developed in this particular study areas and impacts of it on environment. This research article, a details investigation on eco tourism on Batabari Village.

KEY WORDS:

ECO TOURISM, POLLUTION, SUSTANABILITY.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPT OF ECOTOURISM

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "eco tour" was first recorded in 1073, following by "ecotourism" in 1982. Since 1980,s eco tourism has been considered a critical endeavor by Environmentalists, so that future generations may experience destinations relatively untouched by human intervention. Generally ecotourism deals with the interaction with biotic components of natural environment. Ecotourism focuses on social responsible travel, personal growth and environmental sustainability. The three common concepts within eco tourism are nature based, educational and sustainable, which includes economic and social criteria.

Widely accepted definition of ecotourism is 'travel to fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed and protected natural areas that strives a low impact on small scale. It helps to educate the travelers, provides funds for ecological conservation for directly

benefit the economic developments & political empowerment of local communities or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights.”

According to the definition of IUCN, “Ecotourism is environmentally responsible visiting of relatively unspoiled natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature and accompanying both past and present cultural features that promotes conservation has low negative visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.”

Ecotourism was perhaps the best defined in 1990 by Megan Epler Wood, the cofounder of the International Ecotourism Society and author of six influential books on the subject. She simply described that “Ecotourism is responsible travel to nature areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”

So ecotourism is an effective way for business in a tourism destination to have a positive impact on their host community. It is also true that most tourism in natural areas today is not ecotourism and is not, therefore, sustainable. In recent years, the growth of interest in responsible travel has outpaced that of traditional tourism by an increasingly wide margin. Some experts estimating that ecotourism now represents 11.4% of all consumers spending. More recent ecotourism is also represented as green travel, ethical travel, mindful travel, conscious travel, pro-poor tourism etc.

Truly eco friendly, ecotourism must make a positive impact on both the ecology and economy of a given destination. One mistake many people make is assuming that ecotourism is all about conserving nature and wildlife by any means necessary. But if a destination or business tourism development strategy does not actively provide concrete financial benefits for the local or indigenous people, it's not truly ecotourism.

OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS OF ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism encourage low pollution generating particles, minimize carbon footprint, organize training and other activities are needed to create awareness on ecotourism sustainable and responsible tourism. Ecotourism is essentially all about bringing nature and wildlife conservations, local communities and the responsible travel industry together to ensure development focused on long-term sustainability rather than short-term profits.

The main objectives of ecotourism are.....

1. Tabulate eco-sensitive areas, where tourism will have an impact on the social cultural, natural environment and honor local traditions.
2. Makes strategy efforts to ensure long-term sustainability of the environment.
3. The goal of ecotourism is to develop tourist accommodations, activities and attractions that benefit everyone involved - the local flora & fauna, the local people, travel industry stakeholders & travelers alike.
4. Work with nature and wildlife and allow local communities to benefit from tourism. The idea of using the revenue generated by ecotourism to help the conservation of nature and wildlife.

5. To act as watch dog for excessive consumption of natural resources a negative impact in tourism sector.
6. To support different research works on tourism related environment area.
7. Encourage energy saving practices, water harvesting, use of solar and other natural resources.
8. Encourage low pollution generating practices.
9. The focus is all about sustainability, minimizing the negative carbon footprint travel in the nature.
10. True ecotourism must provide financial benefits to local people, whether through direct or indirect means.
11. Ecotourism initiatives should always strive to support human rights, economic empowerment and democratic movements in a given destination.
12. Ecotourism educate the tourists and encourage for obeying the slogan “reduce, reuse & recycle”.
13. Organized training and other activities to create awareness on ecotourism and sustainable ecotourism, so that tourist becomes more responsible traveler.

METHODOLOGY

Several data on related topic have been collected from two sources.....

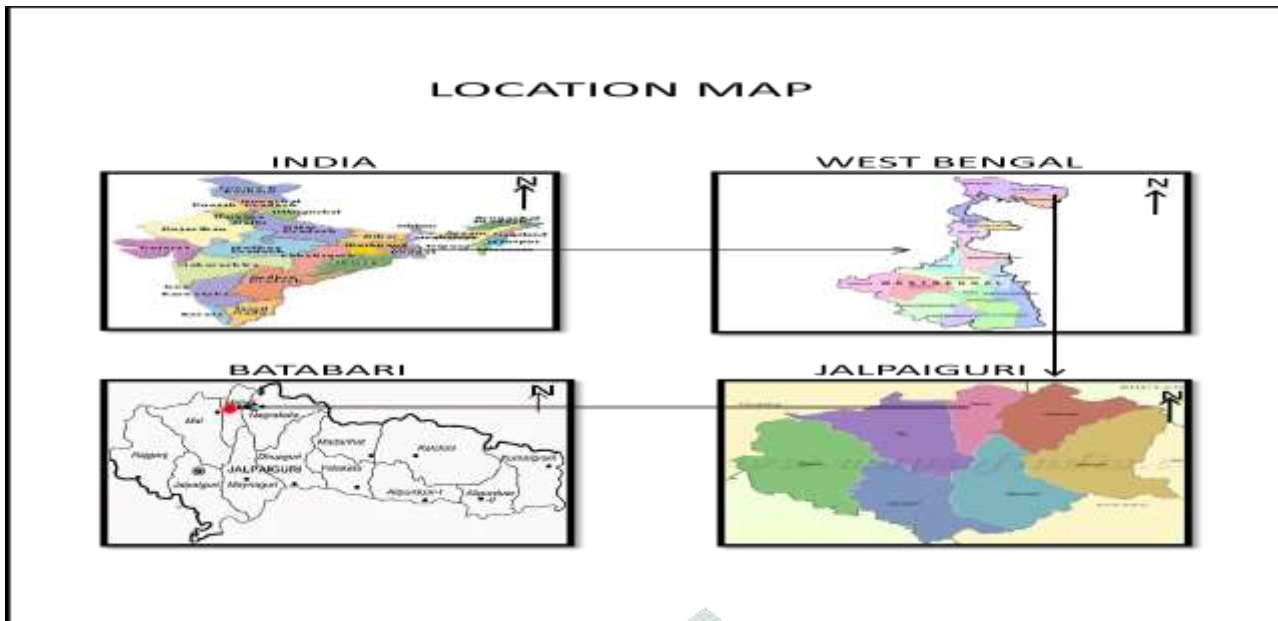
1. From secondary sources i.e. different public articles, census hand book, journals and relevant books.
2. From primary data i.e. door to door survey including local inhabitants, school teacher, social worker, govt. officers, panchayet pradhan.
3. Necessary mouza map has also been collected from BLRO office through which a suitable cartographic representation of data is prepared with the help of Microsoft excels.

ABOUT THE STUDY REGION

Batabari village is situated in Mateli block in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal state, India. It belongs to the Jalpaiguri division in the border of Jalpaiguri district and Darjeeling district; located 53km towards north from district headquarter of Jalpaiguri and 570 km from the state capital of Kolkata. Batabari got its name from the popular Batabari tea state, which is located in this region. It's a small village with little population located near Khunia more and it's also a part of Gorumara national part, Chalsa junction railway station is nearer to Batabari village. The area is famous for tea garden, moist deciduous forest and its beautiful topography.

LOCATION

Batabari of Dooars region politically constituted the placed of Darjeeling district. Latitudinal and longitudinal extension of Batabari is 26°50'1" N: & 92°13'26" E. The village is located just beside the national highway no 34.



PHYSIOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE

The altitude of Batabari region ranges from 800 ft to 830 ft. Innumerable streams and rivers flow through these fertile plains, from the mountain of Bhutan. The major river of this region is Murti.

FOREST AND ANIMALS

The beauty of the region lies not only in its tea garden but also in the dense jungle that make up this region attractive. Many wildlife sanctuaries and national park like Gorumara National Park, Chapramari Wildlife Reserve and the Mahananda Wildlife sanctuary are located just the surrounded parts of the village Batabari.

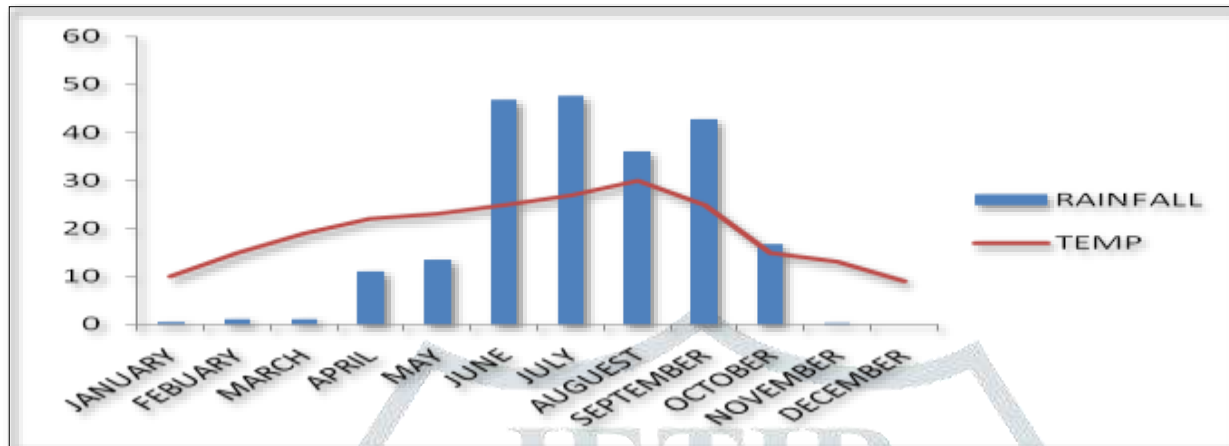
A number of rare & endangered species of animals like tiger, rhinoceros, elephant, bison, deer, monkey, birds etc make their habitat in forest.

TYPES	NAME
Important Floras	Sal (<i>Shorea robusta</i>), Chikrasi (<i>Chukrassia tabularis</i>), Bahera (<i>Terminalia belerica</i>), Teak (<i>Tectona grandis</i>), Shimul (<i>Bombax ceiba</i>), Shisu (<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i>), Gamar (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), etc.
Important Faunas	Tiger, Leopard, Elephant, One Homed Rhinoceros, Hog Deer, Spotted Deer, Gaur, Barking Deer, Sambar, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, Porcupine, Wild Boar, Various Types of Birds, Snakes, Butterflies, etc.

Source: Ghosh, A. (2006): "Mohamoyee Duars".

CLIMATE

The average rainfall of the study area 3500mm. Monsoon generally starts from the middle of May and continues still end of September. Winters are very cold with foggy morning and nights. Summer is mild constitutes a very short period of the year.



DETAIL ANALYSIS

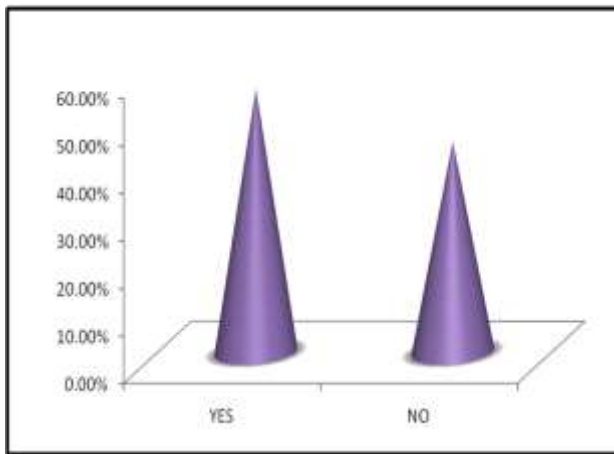
To know the concept of Eco tourism and its importance in the Batabari village of Dooars region to types of primary duty have been collected from door to door survey .First survey was done among the dwellers of the Batabari village to know their awareness about ecotourism of their area. Not only that how much they are

aware and what types of precautions they have taken at their locality to preserve the nature. Another survey was done in the hotels those who are directly involved to manifest the slogan of ecotourism. The main economic activity of the ecotourism region is Hotel business, those who are directly related with this concept. To know the real scenario of the eco-tourism of Batabari village of Dooars region Hotel survey was also arranged with few selected questioners.

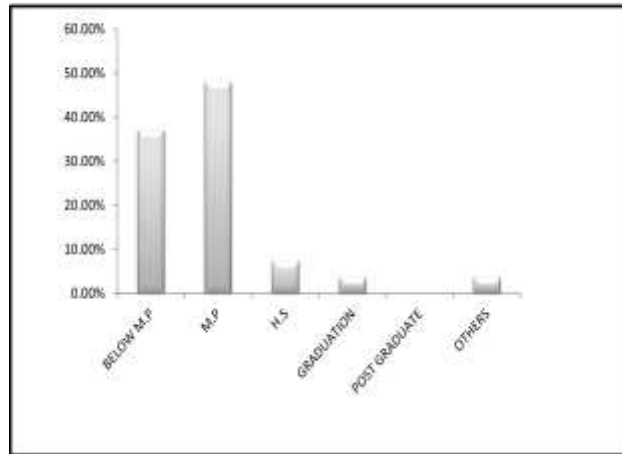
To know the view of villagers about the concept of eco-tourism door to door survey was done with the help of the few selected question and the following interesting facts have emerged that –

1. It is astonishingly found that 66.67% villagers have no clear concept about eco-tourism and only 33.33% people know about this.

CONCERN ABOUT ECOTOURISM



EDUCATION STATUS

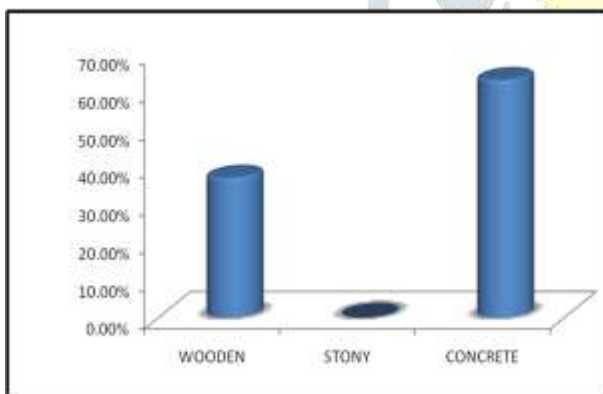


2. Most of the people of the study region are educationally backward.

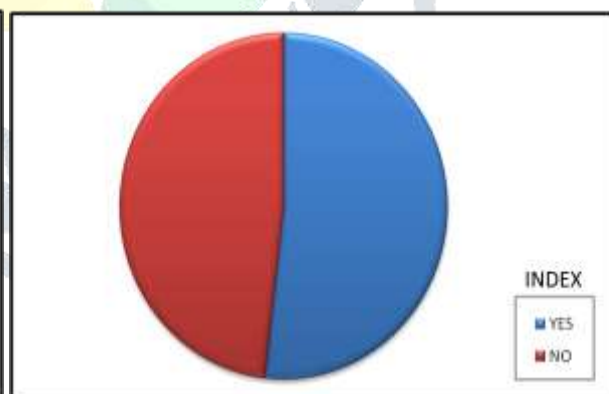
3. Mainly three types of building material they use at the time of construction of their houses, But it is also found that 60.96% people still today are using concrete as a building material, 37.04% people are using wooden materials and rest of the people that is very negligible are using stone as a building material. They are frequently constructing pucca concrete wall around their houses for demarcation of the boundaries, which are obstructing the free movement of elephants. Elephants are also demolishing these walls each & every day to maintain their easy corridor.

4. 51.85% people are still facing the external disturbances by different ways and rest of the villagers i.e. 48.15% are disagreed about the fact.

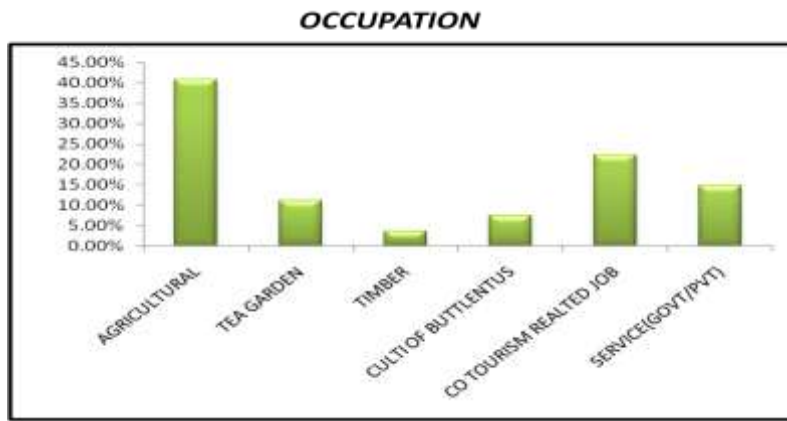
BUILDING MATERIALS



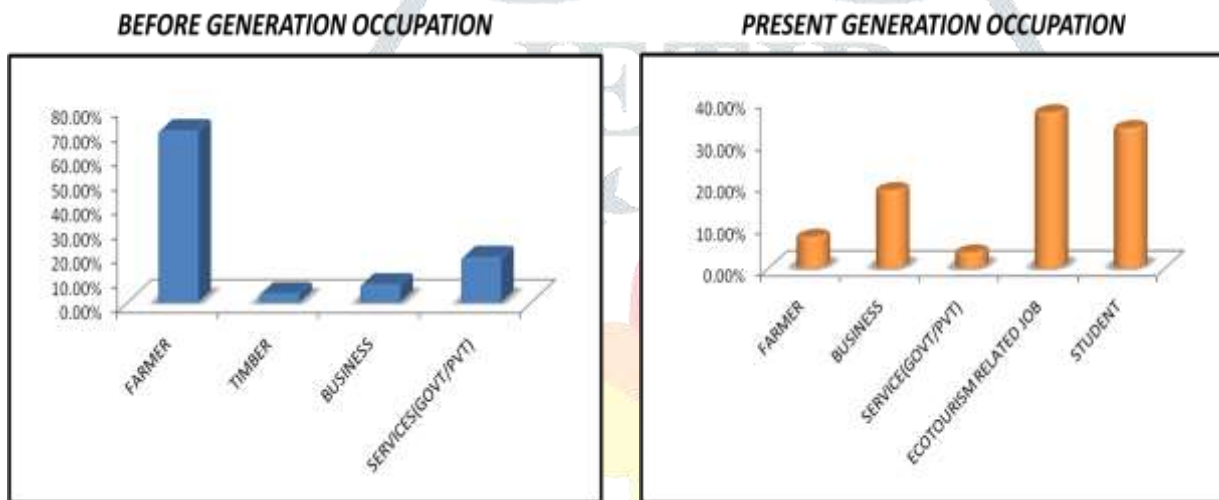
EXTERNAL DISTURBANCES



5. Six types of occupations are found in the study region. Maximum people (40.74%) are engaged in primary activity i.e. agriculture followed by tertiary activity (22.22%), i.e. eco-tourism related jobs and 11.41% people are service holders, 11.11% people are now engaged in ten garden as a labour and 3.70% people are wood collector & 7.41% people are beetle nut cultivators.



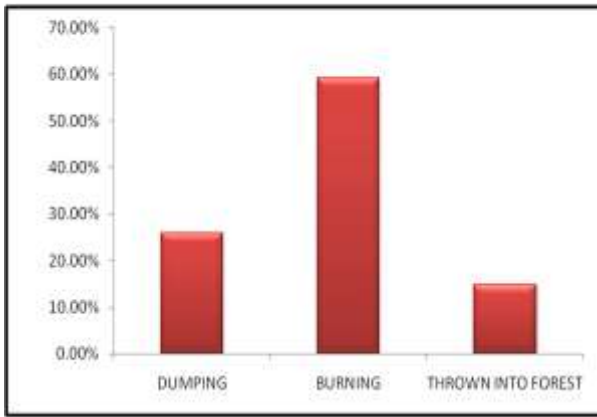
6. People those who live in this study region have shifted their occupation in most of the cases. From the field survey the fact is coming out that once the farming was main occupation of about 70.37% people of this region, now it has come down about 7.41%. In case of govt. service is has come down from 7.41% to 3.70%.



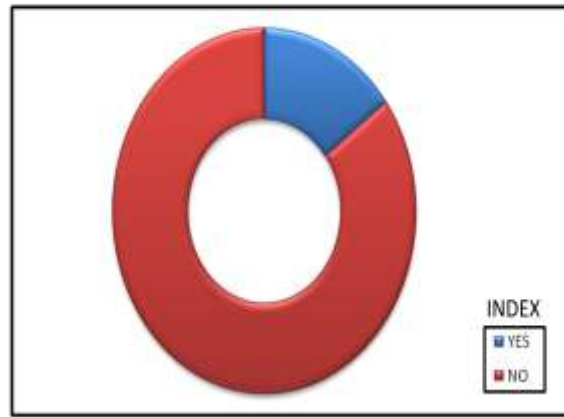
Once Timbering was a main occupation of 3.70% people of this region, but now it is no longer exist. Only one of the main occupations, i.e. business, the figure remain the same that is 18.52%. Two interesting facts are coming out from the discussion that job related to ecotourism is now playing a vital role in the economy of the Batabari village of Dooars region. Not only are that people of this region now felling interest in education. That is why 33.33% of occupational figure is occupied by the students.

7. One important parameter was taken to know the concept of eco-tourism of the general people of the study regions. What is the way of garbage disposal of local people of the study region Interesting fact is coming out that maximum people, i.e. 59.25% dispose their garbage through burning which is not eco-friendly behavior with the environment. 25.93% people pay their attention only by dumping of the garbage and rest 14.81% people through their garages in the forest directly which is just opposite behavior of eco-tourism.

WAY OF GARBAGE DISPOSAL

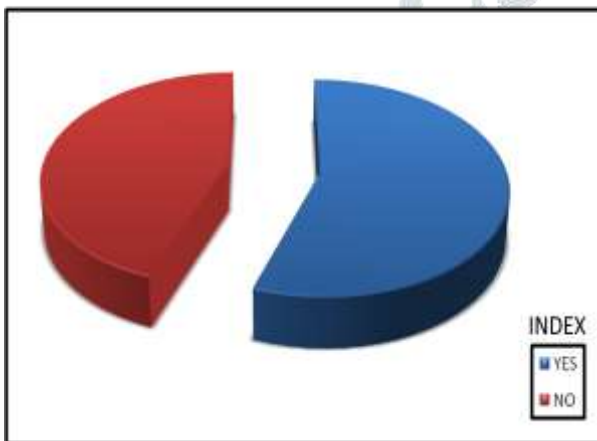


ECONOMICALLY BENEFITED THIS AREA THROUGH ECOTOURISM

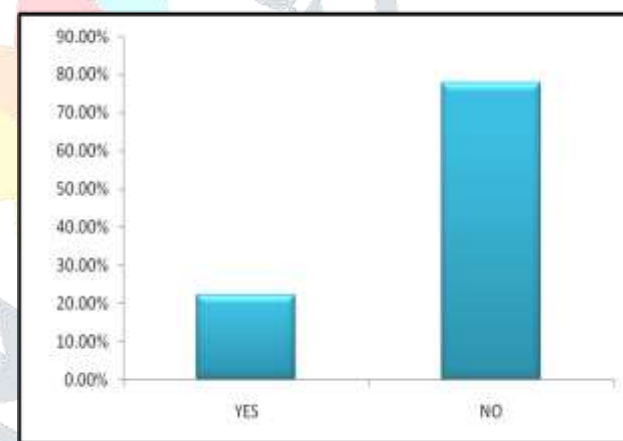


- In spite of different problems of ecotourism of this area still 85.97% people believe that the study region is not benefitted through eco-tourism. Only 14.03% people believe that region is getting some benefit through eco-tourism.
- More than 55% people have their experience of animal attract. In most of the cases attract was done by the elephants, followed by tiger, bison etc.

EXPERINCES OF ANIMAL ATTACK



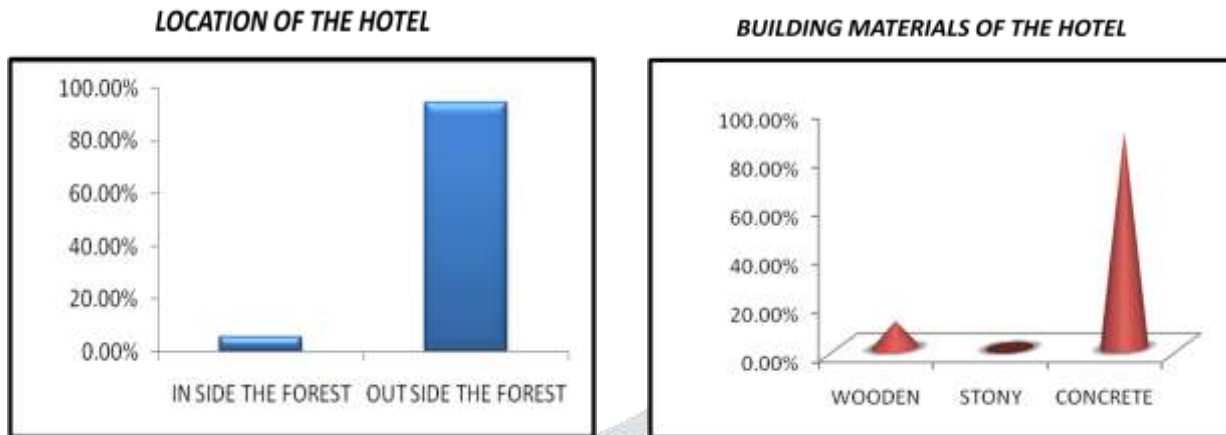
HELP FROM GOVERNMENT



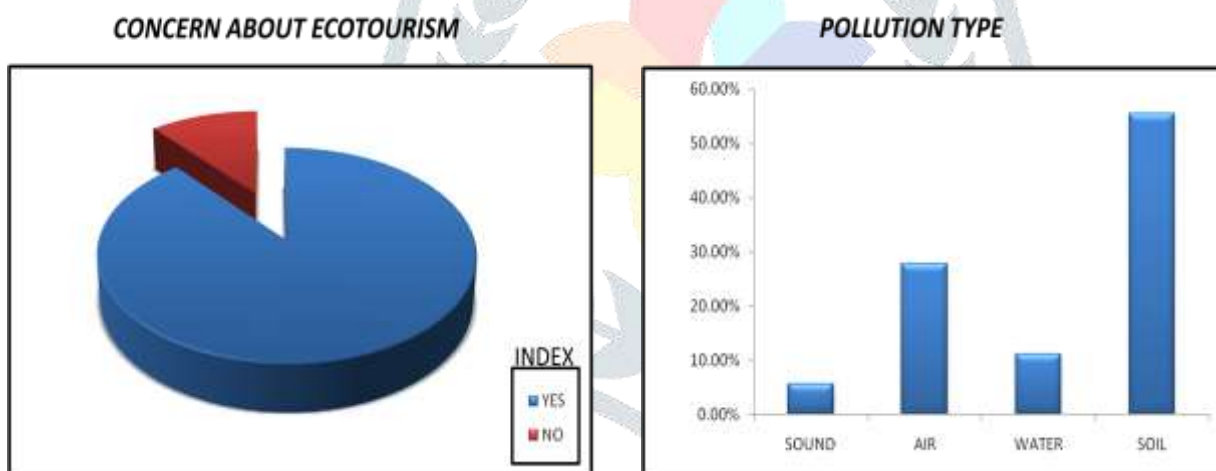
- It is also revealed through field-survey that in any case, i.e. either for the development of eco-tourism or for the treatment or compensation of animal attack govt. in very few cases extends their helping hand for the people. Only 22.22% people are satisfied by the govt. help, but major people are not aware about the govt. help of this region.

To know the condition & situation of eco-tourism better, Hotel survey is very essential and important because hotel business is directly related with the concept of eco-tourism. That is why a random hotel survey was done to understand the nature & present scenario of eco-tourism in the Batabari village of dooars region. Few interesting facts are coming out from the field survey that –

- 94.44% hotels of the study region are located outside the forest area and only 5.56% hotels that are very negligible are situated inside the forest area. So it is clear that maximum hotels, though they are situated outside the forest area have less chance to pollute the forest.

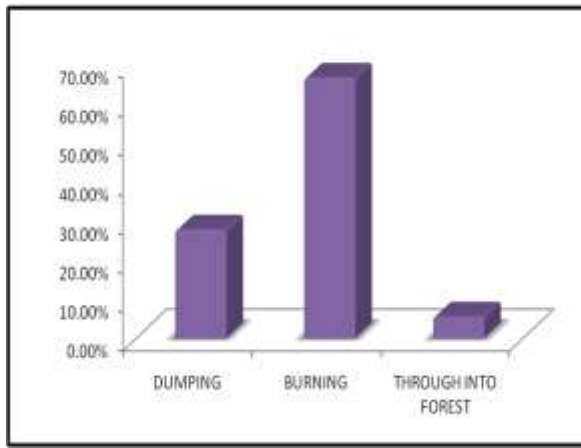


- Another interesting fact is that building g materials which are used for foundation of hotels 88.89% are concrete and rest 11.11% are wooden. Concrete construction in the forest area is not the favorable factor for eco-tourism.
- But 88.89 hotel owners are aware about the concept of eco tourism and only 11.11% are still lacking behind about the concept of eco-tourism.

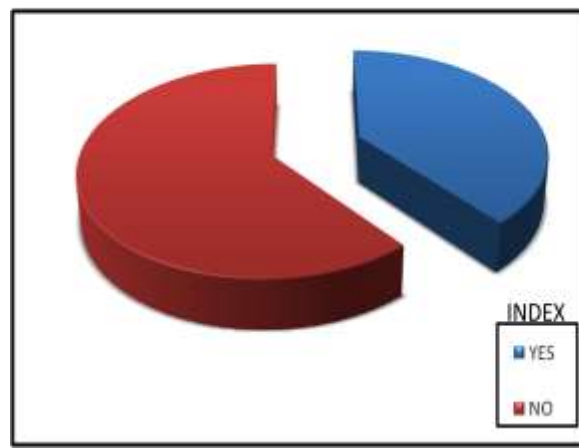


- According to the observations of hotel managers that more than 55% of environmental pollutions are done through soil pollution followed by Air pollution (28%), water pollution (11%) and sound pollution (6%).
- Disposal of Garbage of the hotels is also supporting the nature of pollutions in the Batabari village. Mainly Dumping & Burring of garbage are occupying more than 94% of total disposal and that is why soil & air is becoming polluted in maximum level. Rest 6% is happened due to throwing of garbage in the forest and that is also harmful for the environment.

WAY OF GRABAGE DISPOSAL

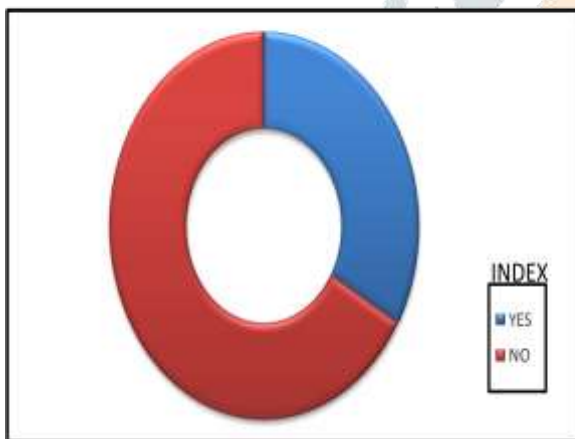


RECYCLING OF WASTE MATERIALS

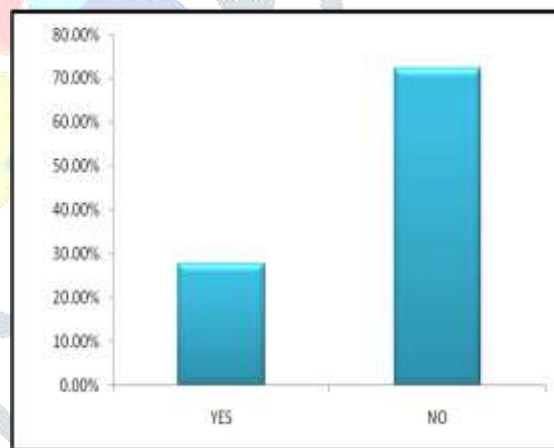


6. One interesting fact is also coming out from the survey report that more than 60% managers are agreed that there is a recycle system of garbage in the study region and this is not friendly attitude with the ecotourism concept.
7. Another important fact is also coming out that tourists those who frequently come to this spot are not will aware about the concept of ecotourism. More that 66% of total tourists have no clear idea about nature based tour.

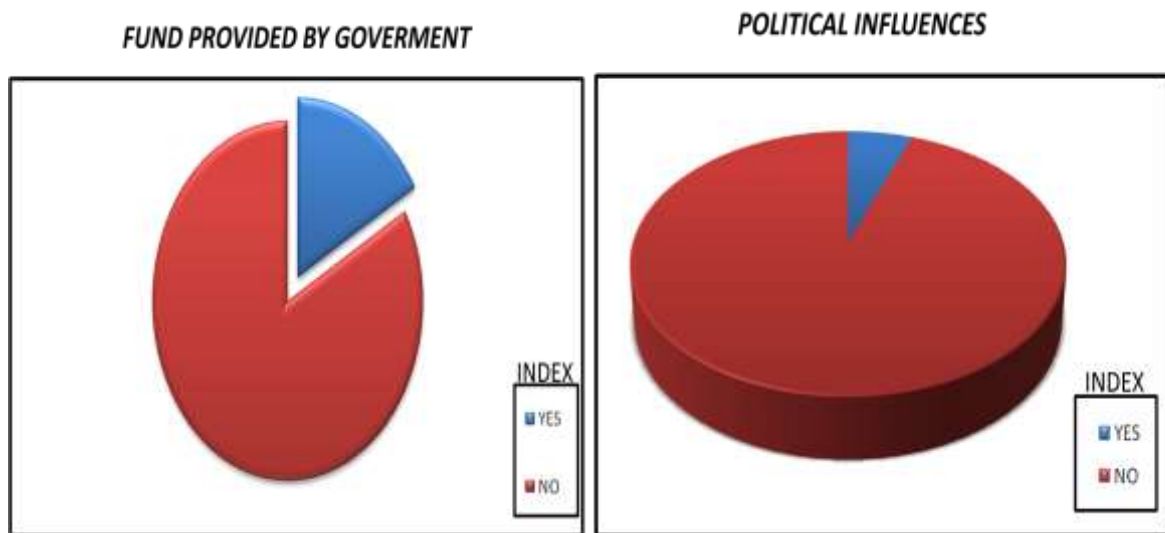
TOURIST CONCERN ABOUT ECOTOURISM



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME ARRANGED BY GOVERNMENT



8. It is also clear from survey that tourists visit in this place are 100% domestic tourist. But very little effort (28%) has been taken from the govt. side to aware them thorough different awareness programs. Actually 72% people have expressed their negative concept about the govt. effort to educate the tourists.
9. 83% people of the hotels are unanimously expressed their opinion that Govt. never pay any fund to organize any awareness camp are to aware tourist about the green travel or mindful travel.



10. People of the hotels also expressed their satisfaction that there is no political influence in the study region (94%). Only 6% people of the region have expressed their different opinion

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

A wonderful & quality environment must be achieved by continuous planning, govt. policies, efforts of the enterprises & public participation. From the above discussion it is clear that the study region, still today, is not well habituated with the system & nature of eco-tourism. In spite of that people of that region, business men especially those who are directly and indirectly involved with tourism business, local authority, govt. are trying to make the region pollution free and green.

Ecotourism is a unique endeavor that altered conservation effects in numerous ways. The idea of fusing conservation and ecotourism aims for benefits for all stakeholders, however, as revealed above, in order for this to be effective concrete values, regulation systems, economic plans are evaluation of Biological effects must be established and maintained. Eco-tourism has an innovative approach to sustainable and profitable conservation and hopefully with further research and refinement ecotourism will grow in success. Actually ecotourism is good way to develop the country and empowering the local residence.

Now there is some urgent needs of specific policies on ecotourism in Batabari village to implement the core principles in its real spirit. People of Batabari village should work together in order to achieve the sustainable development of ecotourism, no doubt it will be an alternative income source for local community.

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