

**THE SCOPE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE ISLANDS
OF THE SUNDARBANS; THE ACTIVE DELTAIC AREA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO SAGAR ISLAND**

Bikash Mondal*

ABSTRACTS: -

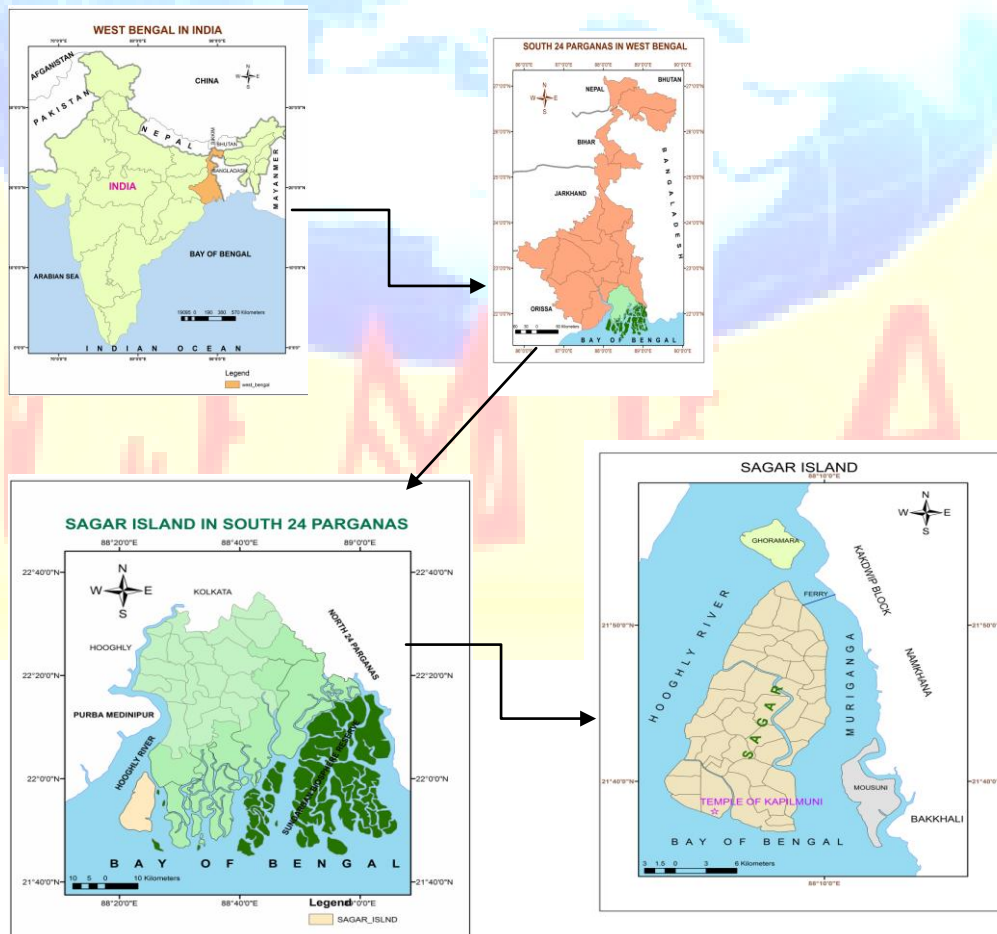
Indian Sundarbans, a bunch of islands, is situated at the southern part of 24 Parganas (including South and North 24 Parganas). These areas, built up on the active deltaic regions, are made up of the transported or sedimentary soil of the different distributaries of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and other rivers. Settlement history is not more than 100 year old here; most of these settlers have flocked from either East Pakistan (Bangladesh) at the eastern part of Sundarban or Midnapur and adjacent areas of Orissa in the western part of the Sundarbans. Economically this area is less developed than the main land. These active deltaic islands may be identified as a region tourism development. But there are several problems for developing tourism in this area. The Sagar Island, a largest island in the sundarban deltaic area, situated along the western part of Sundarbans active deltaic islands and also south western part of the South 24 Parganas, attract the Hindu pilgrims and the tourists for the temple of kapil muni and the unique beauty of the Coast of the Bay of Bengal. This paper deals attempts identify the different types of problems and suggests the prospect of tourism in this area.

Keywords:-Sundarbans, Active deltaic region, coast, Hindu pilgrim tourism,

* Assistant Professor and Head of the Department, Department Of Geography, Sagar Mahavidyalaya, University Of Calcutta, Harinbari, Sagar South 24 Parganas, Pin No 743373

Introduction:-Sagar, a largest Island, in the Sundarbans Deltaic area, is situated at the southern part of the west Bengal and isolated by the different types of saline water bodies i.e. rivers and the Bay of Bengal .This island is a holy place of the Hindu pilgrims who come here round the year due to attraction the temple of the Kapil Muni, a historical figure of the South 24 Parganas. More over tourists come here from different part of the India and world round the year due to lure of the unique and beautiful coast of this island. But there are several problems which hinder tourism industries. This paper deals with identifying of different types of problems and attempts to offer remedial suggestions. After analysing the data, this paper suggests the different type of management strategy with sustainable use of resources in this area which helps to build up a proper tourism centre in this area.

LOCATION OF SAGAR ISLAND



Designed by- Bikash Mondal(Asst. Professor Sagar Mahavidyalaya)

A Monthly Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International e-Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory @ U.S.A, Open J-Gate, India as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A

Location:-Sagar Island, famous for the Makar Sankranti Mela or Sagar Mela is situated at the western part of the Sundarbans and south western part of the South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India. This island is isolated by the different saline water bodies which dissect this land from the mainland. This land is surrounded by the river Hooghly in the western part, and Muriganga in northern and eastern parts. The Bay of Bengal is located at the southern part of this Island. It is said that the Sagar Island is located at the confluence of river Hooghly or Hooghly river mouth. Latitudinal and longitudinal extensions are from 20⁰36'N to 21⁰56'N and 88⁰02'E to 88⁰11'E. Total area of this land covers 214.8sq.km. Sagar Mela, The pride of Sagar Island, is held at the south-western part of this island.

Aim and objectives of the study: - Many islands of the Sundarbans Deltaic region are economically backward than main land. But this area has a huge prospect of development possible tourist spot, different types of Mela, and fishing also. So I want to try to frame out “**The scope of Tourism industry In the Islands of the Sundarbans; the active deltaic area with Special References to Sagar Island.**”

The main objectives of this study are:-

- i. To identify the different type of problem and crises in this area.
- ii. Identify the scope of development of tourism industries in this area.
- iii. To find out different type of scope to development.
- iv. Analyses the data and giving suggestions to overcome different type of problem and prospect.

Methodology:-Standard methodology is used to collect data (primary and secondary) from different parts of Sagar Island and other. Getting data analysed and prepared different type of diagram and map with the help of different of software.

Back Ground of This area:-Sagar Island is remote island which is isolated by different saline water bodies. More than 95% of the settlers have flocked from the eastern part of the Hooghly River, the Midnapur district and the adjacent area of Orissa. Human habitation was built up in this area during the end of the 17th century. Though, the name Ganga sagar and also the existence of the ashram of the Kapil Muni find mention in the Ramayana and Mahavarata. This area is covered dense forests that have been the habitat of wild animals i.e. the royal Bengal

Tiger, deer, wild pig, Crocodiles, snakes, arthropods, different type of birds, fish, and other biodiversity.

The sundarban deltaic area, like sagar islands, is built up of transported soil mixed with sediments, sands and clay, which are transported by the Ganga, Brahmaputra, their distributaries and other rivers i.e. the Ajoy, the Damodar, the Mayurakshi river etc. During the formation of the island was created the saline water fed river between islands i.e. the Muriganga, the Hatania-donia, the Matla, the Raimangal, the gosaba, the Durgaduania, etc.

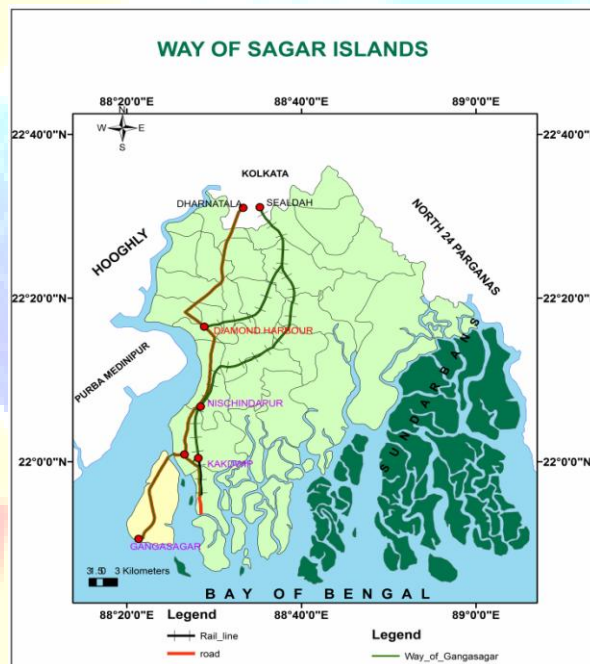
But there are two reasons of these people flocking from different places to the two different parts of the Sundarbans area. When Bangladesh was declared a Muslim country, the people of the eastern part of the sundarbans area migrated from the Bangladesh because of partition of the India. The settlers of the western part of the Sundarbans migrated from Midnapur and adjoining areas of Orissa due to natural hazards, cyclone. More over this land is reclaimed from the sea and interventions of man on the sundarbans biosphere reserve, which transferred at last a habitation of human settlement.

Problems for building up Tourism in Sagar Island

Sagar Island may be built up as a tourism centre in India because this area has been attracting the Hindu pilgrims and tourists. But the different types of problems thwarting tourism are:-

- i. **Lack of sufficient Guest house:-** This area is place of the temple of Kapil Muni, which attracts the Hindu pilgrims from the different parts of the world and the natural beauty of this area attracts the tourists. But the lack of sufficient guest house, private or public is a severe problem to enjoy the tour. There are no private guest houses here. There are some government guest houses and a few ashram guest houses, but these are not sufficient. The coast of Sagar has been identified as the coastal regulatory zone. So the private guest houses have not been building up along the coast line.
- ii. **Lack of Uninterrupted transport:-** This Island is isolated by the different type of water bodies and its distance from the Calcutta metropolitan city is about

135k.m. But the communication system is problematic through there are several types of communication like. Train bus, auto, van rickshaw, vessel in river. The communication problem is mainly due to the siltation of the river. The vessel is the only major communication medium in this river but the river is silted by the sediment deposits. During the low tide point bars crop up from the water and vessel movement is stopped. The vessel service between Sagar and mainland remains non available daily 3 to 5 hours. For this reason Sagar Island has been unsuccessful in developing the tourism industry. For this reason it is said that “SabTirtha Barbar Gagasagar Ekbar” in Bengali.



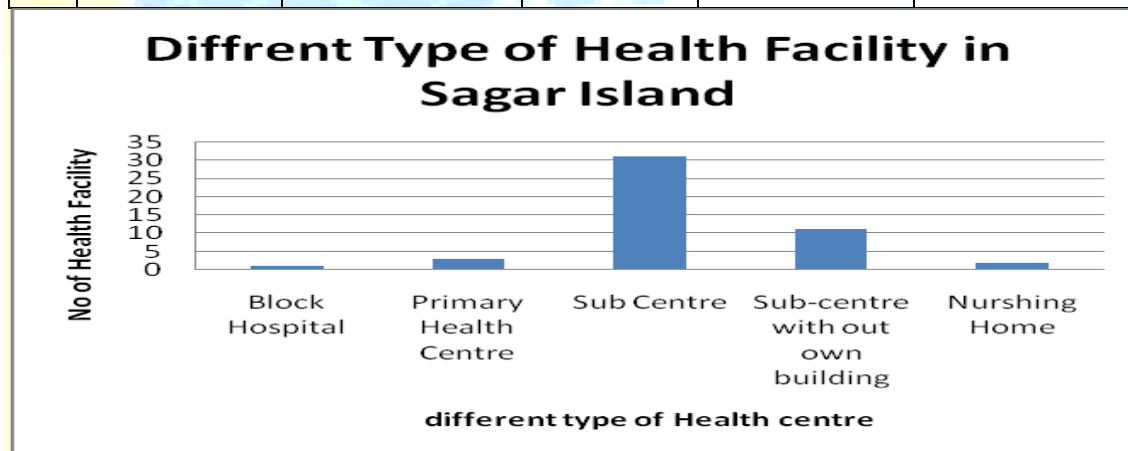
Designed by Bikash Mondal

(Asst. Professor in Geography, Sagar Mahavidyalaya)

- iii) **Lack of Sufficient hygienic food:-**This area is a far off place from the metropolitan city. Proper tourist accommodation is not available here and there is also lack of sufficient hygienic food. There are several roadside eateries which are not hygienic enough.

iv) **Health Facility:-**Health facility of the sagar islands revolves around in the Rudranagar Block Hospital at the middle portion in this island. Lack of sufficient doctors, sufficient beds always plaque the people. Total no of sanctioned bed is 60 but all beds are not suitable to admit the patient.

Sl no	Block hospital	Primary health centre Except doctors	Sub-centre except doctors	Sub-centre Without own building	Nursing Home with Temporary doctors
1	1	3	31	11	2



Six doctors provide health service.. But serious patient are referred to the super speciality hospital in Kolkata and other hospitals. Lack of operation theater is another problem.

v) **Lack Of sufficient Force to look after the pilgrims:-** The block police station have no sufficient force to look after the pilgrims mainly during the Ganga sagar Mela. Diffrent types of force i.e. state police, reserve force, paramilitary, rapid action force are engaged ensure safty and security of pilgrims or tourists in this time along with local police force. But due to lack of barracks to house the hired forces. they are put up in different schools, college which hamper the education proceses.

vi) **Insufficient shelter of Pilgrimage:-**Every year about 5laks pilgrim come here for holy dip in the Bay of Bengal and every year tourists come here to enjoy the unique beauty of the Bay of Bengal and stay on the coast of this Bay. But there are no sufficient shelters to house them comfortably during the natural calamities like cyclone, western disturbance. As a result may be died many pilgrims in this moment.

vii) **Climatic Hazard:-**This area is situated at the coast of the Bay of Bengal. So the coast of the Bay of Bengal may be affected by the climatic hazard, like cyclones like Reshmi, Aila, and Hudhud etc. It is said that this the temple Kapil Muni have razed by the cyclone in three time and affected different types of construction or infrastructures in this islands.

viii) **Road Accident:-**The Temple of Kapil Muni distance from the entrance of the Sagar Islands is more than 30 km. the road of this land have found more bend and heavy jam ,rush drive transfer a accident porn zone.

ix) More over lack of proper accommodation, lack of reliable guide, threat of dog and snake bite complicate the tourism prospect of this land.

Why this area may be built up a tourism centre

One an average in a single day about two thousand pilgrim visit the land for the purpose of offering worship to Kapil Muni, the son of the Hindu Sages. During the Makarsankranti (Mid of January) every year nearly 5(Five) lakhs of pilgrims flock together at the southern part of the island for the holy dip in the Bay of Bengal. It becomes a mini India in every sense during that auspicious hour. Apart from religious importance, this island of sundarbans is endowed with wonderful natural setting which may attract secular minded tourist in a big way. So this island may be a big tourism centre in India with the help of following indicators:-

- i. Remoteness of this area is the one of the most attractive parameter to build up the tourist spot.
- ii. This area has found mainly mono crop cultivation, disguised unemployment poses a problem, and seasonal unemployment is a factor to develop a tourist spot. 60% of the

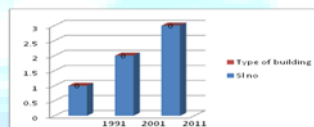
- people are engaged in agriculture. In the dry season several types of vegetables are produced with the help of ground water or inland fresh water bodies.
- iii. A few settlers in this island are engaged in sea fishing in different seasons.
 - iv. Total marginal unemployment and unemployment comprises about 35%. Total main workers are recorded at 22000, which covers about 10.38% of total population.
 - v. Demands of work have been increased with the ever increasing population.

Population growth in sagar island

Table-1

year	population
1991	154202
2001	185630
2011	211993

Population growth of different year in sagar island



Source:- census data in India.

- vi. Mean annual rainfall is recorded at 1358.10mm. Most of the rain fall is recorded in the month of June to September with the help of south-western monsoon wind. Winter season is dry, maximum temperature is recorded at 38⁰c in summer time and minimum temperature recorded at 12⁰c in winter season. The winter season is the best time for the tourists but Tourist can be entertained here round the year. Vulgarism of monsoon, delay the season effect on the agriculture production.
- vii. This area may be a national or international tourist spot with the centre of the temple of the Kapil Muni, which is the situated at the confluences of the Hooghly River and coast of the Bay of Bengal. The Kapil Muni Temple at Sagar is the fourth constructed temple in the island. The first was razed by a tornado and the next two were destroyed by the sea. It was in 1961 that the chief minister of Bengal, BC Roy donated Rs.11, 000 to construct the present temple which was completed in 1973.
- viii. This area may be developed as a tourist spot with the help of natural beauty of coast of the Bay of Bengal and confluences of the Hooghly River.

- ix. Different type of antique collection centre (historical collection) and different types of old temple like jora mandir which is sculpted as well as the Orissa temples may help to attract the tourist.
- x. This area may be a shooting spot with the help of deltaic beauty and also beauty of the Coast area of the Bay of Bengal and total area of this land.
- xi. Different type fishing collection centre can be formed and may be built up a sea aquarium to attract tourist.
- xii. The remote villages can be a tourist attraction for its remoteness.
- xiii. The wetland and backwaters and tidal creeks may be used as a tourist spots.
- xiv. Different types of sea collection are built up a market to attract tourist.

More over the Sundarbans are one of the greatest biosphere reserves in India. This forest may be famous tourism industry in the world.

Conclusion:- So the above mentioned criteria have found bright prospect of tourism hike the Sagar Island all the islands of Sundarban may be built up as different tourist spot without destroying the bio-diversity or environment.

Suggestion:-

This area is the isolated by different type of saline water bodies. This island may be built up as an ecotourism to develop in this area as following:-

- i. To develop the ecotourism in this area transport system should be developed mainly vessel communication between sagar island and Main land
- ii. To develop the ecotourism infrastructure up road and Rail Bridge should be built up to ensure the uninterrupted communication between two dissected lands. Total direct length of the river is near about 4.8k.m.and vessel transport length between the two lands is 5.67 k.m.
- iii. There are several point bars in the river bed in the way of vessel transport. To continue transport between mainland and the sagar islands dredger should be used to remove the sediment on the river bed.

- iv. Accommodation for car with government rate can be developed in this area
- v. Sufficient guest houses, private or public, may be built up except CRZ to accommodate the tourists.
- vi. Sufficient hygienic food and quality food may be supplied with government supervision.
- vii. The unemployed young generation should be engaged in this tourism industry as guide, and other service.
- viii. Sagar Island has also a historical importance for the Hindu pilgrimage. The temple of The Kapil Muni should be kept appropriate to worship in temple.
- ix. Available fresh drinking water may be supplied to develop the tourism industries in this area.
- x. Harvested rain water may be used for drinking, use in toilet, bathing to prevent crisis of water.
- xi. The tourist spot should be cleaned every time.

At last it can be said that above mentioned suggestion may improved this island economically to built up tourism industry.

References

- i. Choudhury,K., (2009), Chabbis Pargana, 2nd edition Deys Publishing,341
- ii. Gopinath,Girish.(2010) environ Monit Asses; Coastal issue of Sagar Island, east coast of India.160-555-561
- iii. Lakshmi,asta, s; Petterson Edward,J.K.(2010) Recent Research in science and technology “Coastal Issues and Management strategy for sagar Island in Bay of Bengal” page-96-101

Author's Detail:



BIKASH MONDAL

Assistant Professor and Head of the Department

Department of Geography

Email:-bikashmondal83@gmail.com

Sagar Mahavidyalaya, Harinbari, Sagar, South 24 parganas,

Pin-743373

