

RASIKBIL (BIRD SANCTUARY) - A CASE STUDY ON TOURISM & IT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

Rasikbil is situated one-and-a-half hours from a town in Cooch Behar district called Tufanganj. The nearest railway station is New Cooch Behar, 40 km away. Rasikbil is a small lake situated in the Cooch Behar district, INDIA. This lake attracts a lot of birds which make nests in the trees around the lake. The bird species which live in and around the lake includes cormorants.

Different varieties of storks, ibis, spoonbill, kingfisher, parrots, and many others. There is a deer park and a crocodile rehabilitation center by the side of the lake. There is also a leopard house, a python house, Aviary & a Tortoise rescue center. It is becoming more and more popular among tourists. Currently it has become a tourism site. It is changing the life style of people in the surrounding areas. The subject of my paper is to know socio-economic structure of Rasikbil forest village.

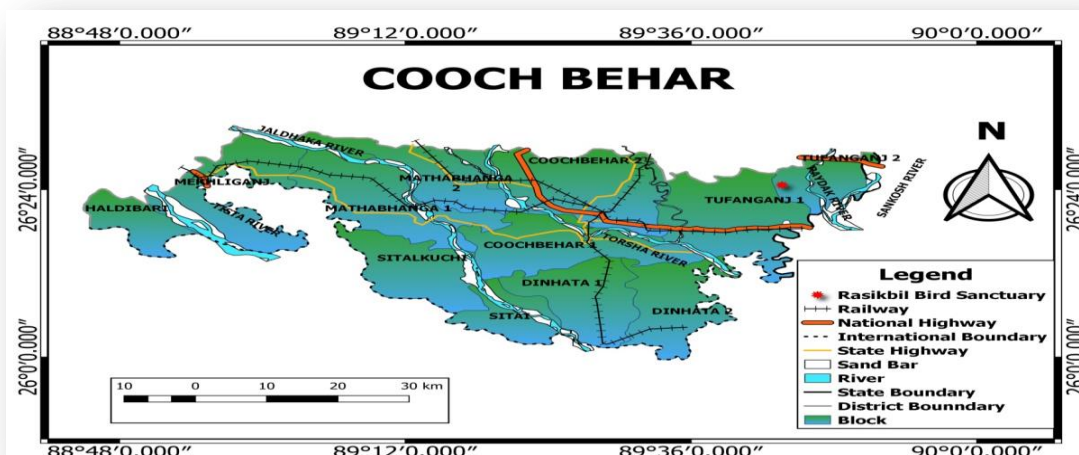
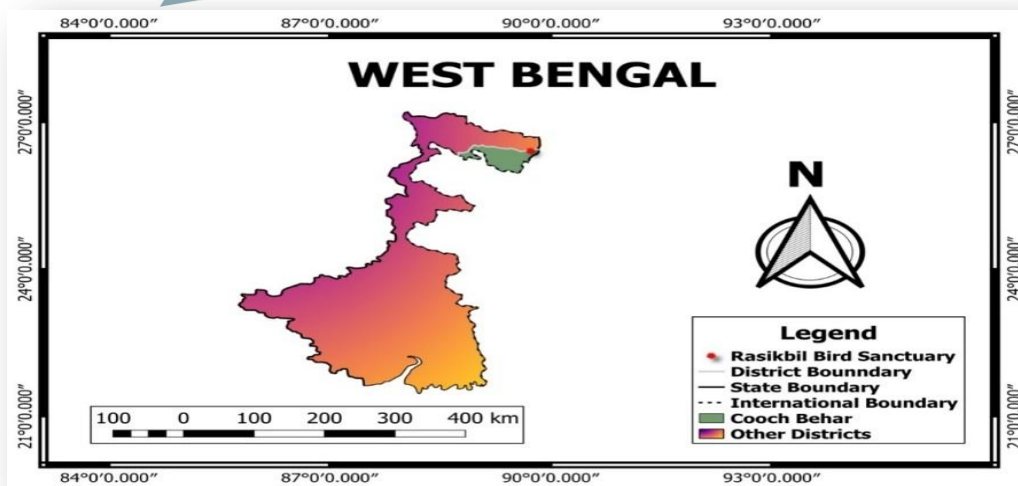
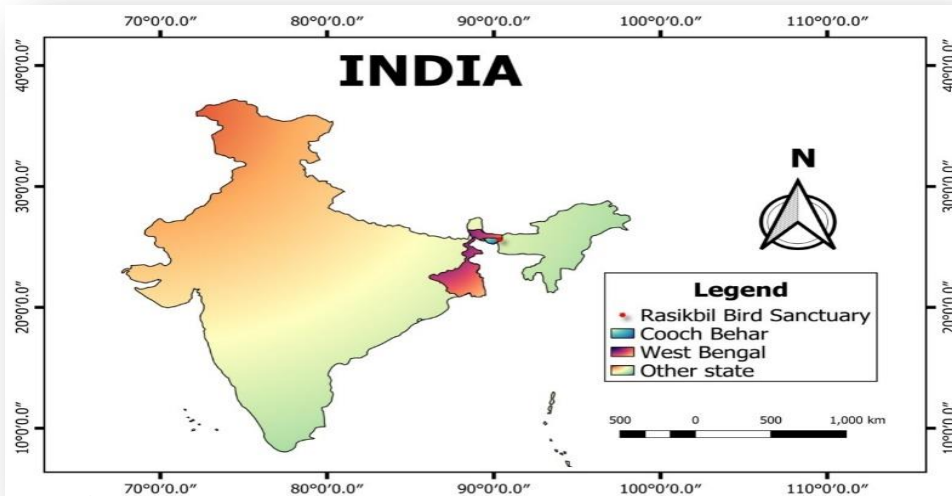
Keywords: Tourism, Types Of Tourism, Age Wise Distribution Of Population, School Dropout Etc.

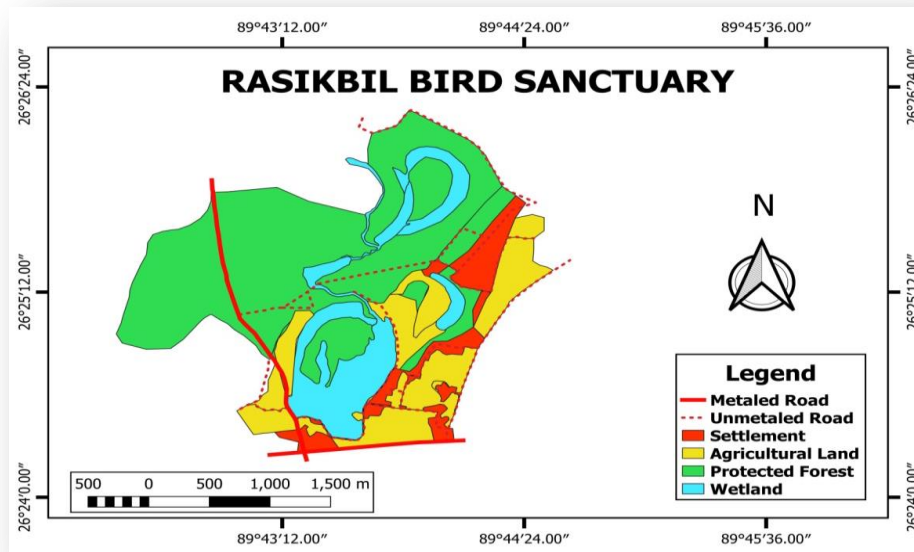
I. INTRODUCTION

Rasikbil is a small lake situated in the Cooch Behar District of West Bengal. This lake attracts a lot of birds which make nests in the trees around the lake. Tourism refers to travelling from one place to another or from one country to another for leisure, entertainment or business purpose. At present tourism recognized as an economic activity or industry in many countries. Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary is one of the most attractive places in this area. Here are lots of resources available for tourism. The subject of my paper is to know socio-economic structure of Rasikbil forest village.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA: The study area Rasikbil is a small lake situated in Cooch Behar District of West Bengal. This lake attracts a lot of birds which make nests in the trees around the lake. Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary lies in Cooch Behar Social Forestry Division, on the bank of river Raydak. It situated in the outer foothills of Himalaya. Kamakhyaguri situated on the northern part, Bara Salbari situated on the southern part, Bochamari situated on the western site and Mahishkuchi and Raydak river situated on eastern site of the Rasikbil. The area of Rasikbil is around 500 hectares. Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary opened in 1997. The lake attracts a lot of birds which nests in trees around the lake. The bird species which live in and around the lake includes cormorants, different varieties of storks, ibis, spoonbill, kingfisher, parrots, owl, and many others. Deer park and a crocodile park rehabilitation center situated in this bird sanctuary. There is also a leopard house, a python house, aviary and tortoise rescue center. Birds species include lesser whistling teal, common teal, ferruginous duck, red-crested, pochard, northern shoveler, northern pintail, Eurasian wigeon, grey-headed lapwing, northern lapwing, pied kingfisher, stork-billed kingfisher, great cormorant and gadwall etc. (source; Wikipedia). During Winter time, These birds came to the Rasikbil in search of food and water. The area of Rasikbil forest village which lies deep inside in the Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary. There were 50 families in the Rasikbil forest, who granted permission by Government to reside in the village. In this area Rava and Orao tribes are situated. They have been staying here since 1960-61.

LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA: -





OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

1. To know the economic structure of the Rasik Bill Forest Bill forest Village.
2. To know the social of the Rasik Bill Forest Bill forest Village.
3. To know the resources available for tourism development at this area.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper made by primary data collected by me by a field investigation. At first, I prepared a set of questionnaires to collect primary data from the residents of the Rasikbil Forest Village. Next, I went to every family and collect information through an interview. Finally, I analyze the data which are collected from this survey. Study area map has been created by using Qgis software and figures are created by using Microsoft excel.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Piyali Sinha in his research paper “Scenario of Rasikbill Wetland, Cooch Behar District: A Geographical Perspective” describes the geographical view of Rasikbil wetland as like quality of water of this wetland, amount of flora and fauna of this wetland.

Mrs.Mahalakshmi Venkatesh and Dr.P. Stanley Joseph Michal Raj in their research paper “Impact of Tourism in India” describe the tourism impact on Indian region. This paper based on SWOT analysis method.

Julian Clifton and Angela Benson in their research paper “Planning for Sustainable Ecotourism: The Case for Research Ecotourism in Developing Country Destinations” describes Sustainable Ecotourism, ecotourism industry in Indonesia.

Madhusudan Karmakar in his research paper “Ecotourism and Its Impact on The Regional Economy – A Study of North Bengal (India)” describes employment opportunities in tourism, revenue earn from tourism, popular tourism destination.

Doronkina, I. G.; Borisova, O. N.; Malyutin, G. V.; Gazilov, M. G. in their research paper “Ecotourism In Community Environment” describes how modern world ecotourism plays a significant role in the global industry of tourism and hospitality.

TOURISM:

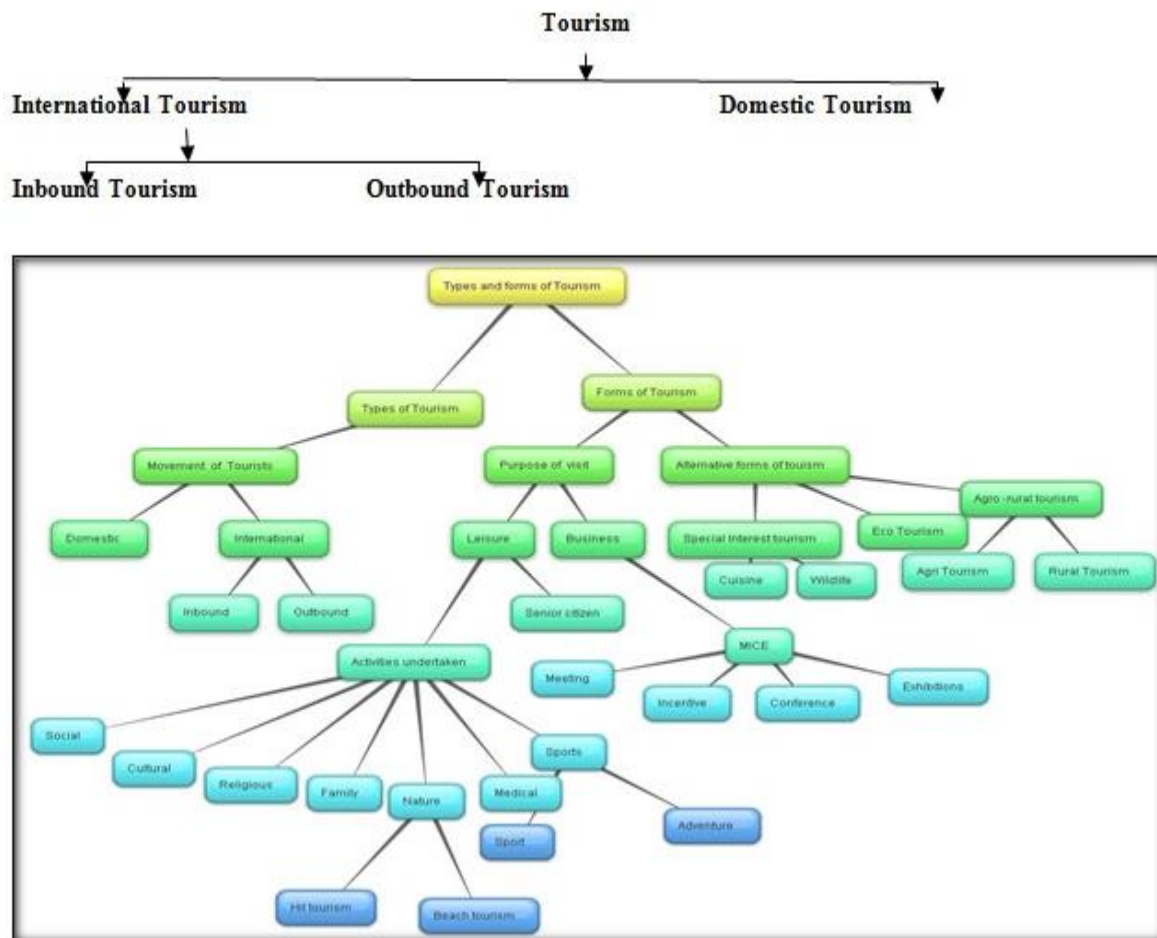
Tourism refers to travelling from one place to another or from one country to another for leisure, entertainment and business purpose. The world ‘tour’ is derived from the Latin word ‘tornus’, meaning ‘a tool for making a circle’. Tourism may be defined as the movement of the people from their normal place of residence to another place for a minimum period of 24 hours to a maximum of six months for the sole purpose of leisure and pleasure. At present tourism recognized as an economic activity or industry in many countries.

According to WTO (1993) "Tourism encompasses the activities of persons traveling and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes."

The Rome conference on tourism in 1963 defined tourism as 'a visit to a country other than one's own or where one usually resides and works.'

TYPES OF TOURISM

Tourism has two types and many forms on the bases of the purpose of visit and alternative forms of tourism. Tourism can be categorized as **international** and **domestic tourism**.



Source: from tourism notes

Available Resources for Tourism at Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary:

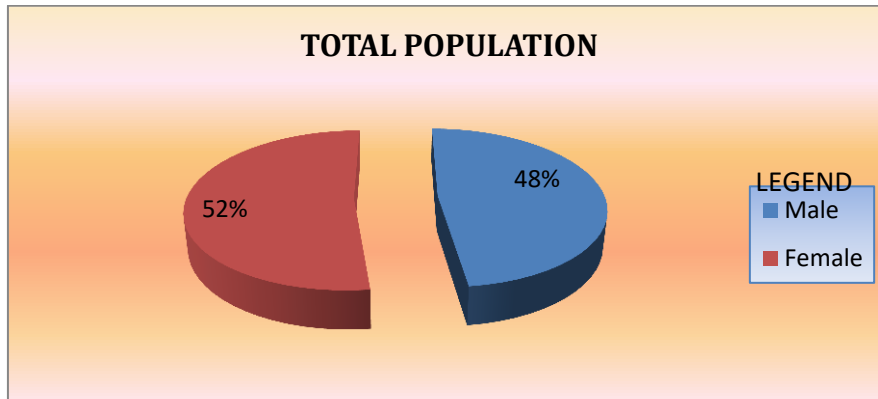
1. **Pleasing Weather:** Fine weather with sunshine is one of the most important attractions of tourist place. In this Sanctuary, the weather is very pleasant and comfortable.
2. **Scenic Attractions:** Scenic Attractions are most valuable factors in tourism development. In this sanctuary, Crocodile, Deer, and Leopard Park situated and these are things makes that place more beautiful. The Birds came from far land make this more attractive. And also, natural forest makes this place more pleasant.
3. **Transportation:** The State Highway has gone through the middle of this place. Nearest away of this place is Kamakhyaguri; it's about 7.5km away. New Cooch Behar Railstation is located 35km from this place.
4. **Accommodations:** It is a place where tourists can find food and shelter. Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary has two main forest lodges. First one maintained by forest department of Tufanganj 2 block. It includes 20 beds, 2 dormitories capable for 16 persons and 2 collage capable of housing 4 persons each. And second one maintained by Panchayat Samiti of Tufanganj 2 block is capable of housing 26 persons.
5. **Safety and Security:** Safety and security play a vital role to providing quality in tourism. Security of this place maintained by the forest department and police department.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Total Population

Gender	Percentage of individuals
Male	48.07
Female	51.93

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

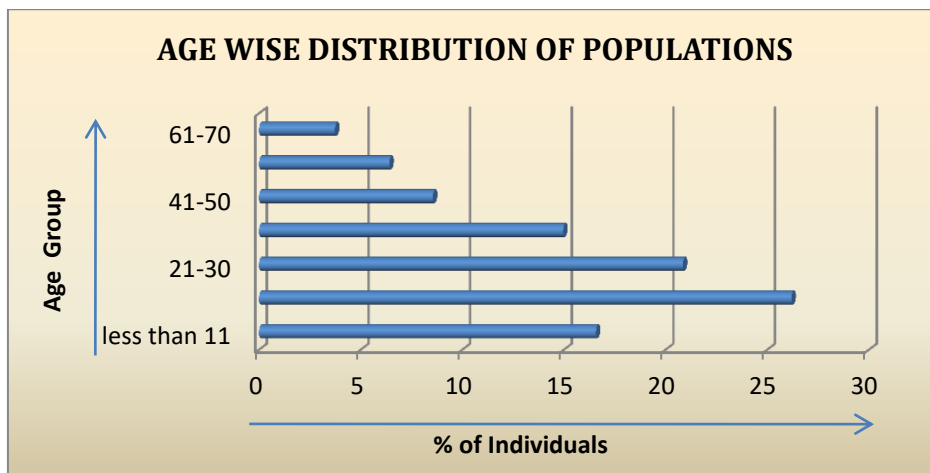


It turns out from this image that the number of females here are comparatively more than males. It's understood that the girls are given importance here.

Age wise distribution of population

Age -Group	Percentage of individuals
less than equal o 10	16.58
11-20.	26.2
21-30	20.86
31-40	14.97
41-50	8.56
51-60	6.42
61-70	3.74

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

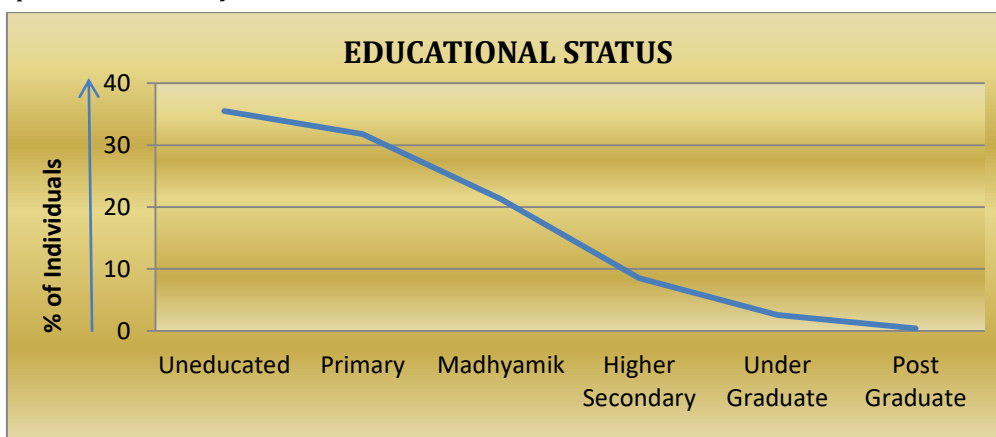


It turns out from this image that almost 50% people lying between 11 to 30 age group. Here are more of the numbers of youth. In this Rasikbil forest village many resources available for ecotourism and tourism purpose. The younger generation can play a vital role for tourism development in this area. They understand the importance of environment and will play an important role in preserving the environment.

Educational status

Education status	Percentage of Individuals
Uneducated	35.5
Primary	31.77
Madhyamik	21.31
Higher Secondary	8.49
Under Graduate	2.54
Post Graduate	0.39

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

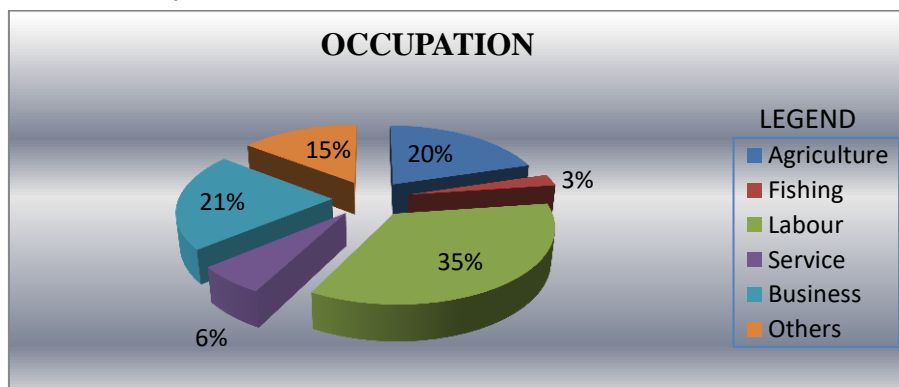


The image shows the educational status of population in the Rasikbil forest village. Still light of education could not reach in this village. Almost 35% people are illiterate. Only 2% people have graduate degree. Here the problem of SCHOOL DROPOUT has occurred at higher rate. Most of the students not completing their school education.

Occupation

Main Occupations	Percentage
Agriculture	20.25
Fishing	2.59
Labour	34.87
Service	6.23
Business	21.47
Others	14.59

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

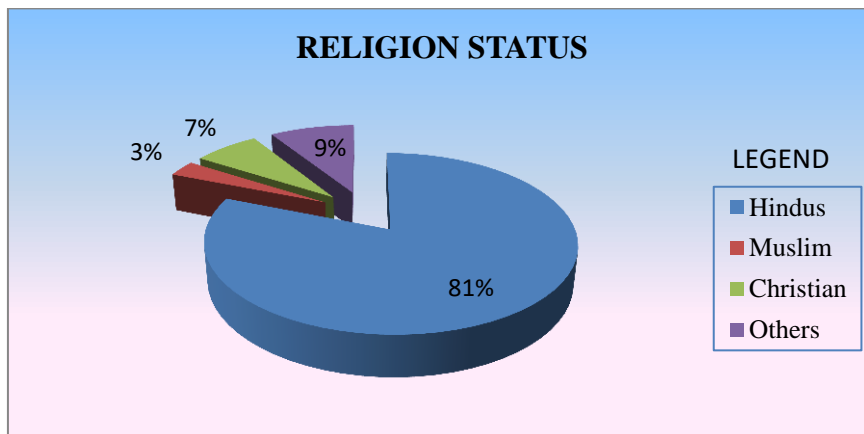


It turns out from this figure that 35% people are associated with labour profession. In this village, most of the people are lying in below poverty level and they have no regular income. Almost 205 people are engaged with agriculture. In this Village 6% people associated with service profession. Some people go the nearest cities (as like Cooch Behar, Tufanganj) for work.

Religion

Religion	Percentage
Hindus	81
Muslim	3
Christian	7
Others	9

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

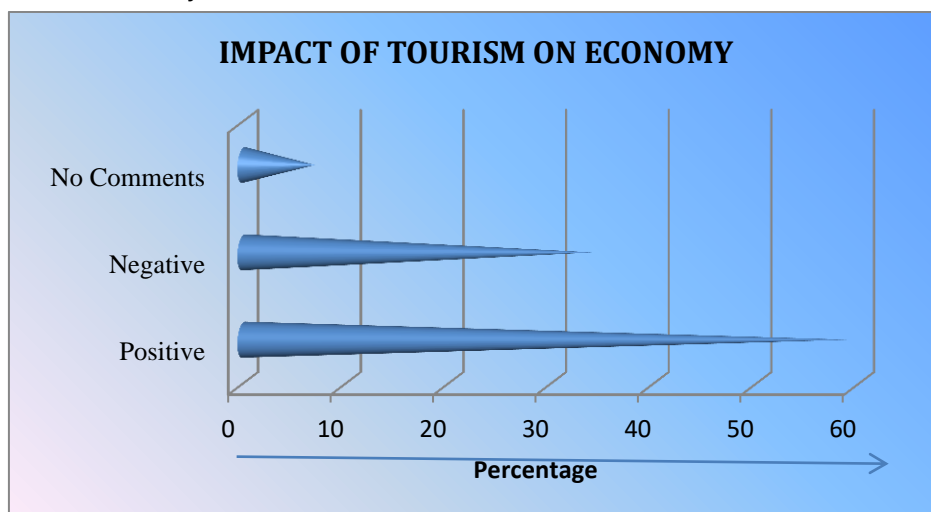


It turns out from the figure that most of the people here observe Hindu religion. Some people observe Islam, Christian and others religion. There are people in different religion, but the truth was that the bond of brotherhood was strong between them.

Impact of tourism on Economy

Impact of Tourism on Economy	Percentage
Positive	59
Negative	34
No Comments	7

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

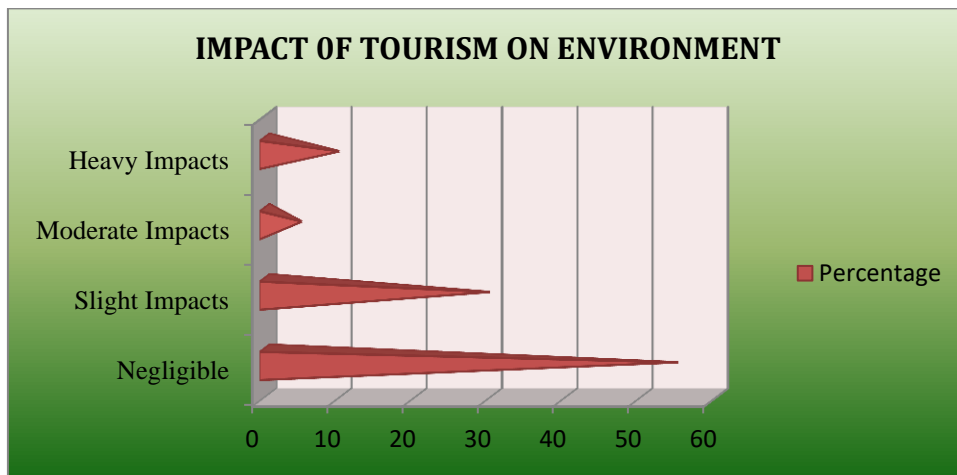


In response of the question about the impacts of economy, 59% respondents say that tourism impact there are in a positive way; 34% of the respondents says that tourism does not impact their economy and 7% respondents do not give their answer. It can be inferred that now days tourism slowly increases the income of the residents of the Rasikbil Forest Village.

Impacts of tourism on environment

Impact of tourism on environment	Percentage
Negligible	55
Slight Impacts	30
Moderate Impacts	5
Heavy Impacts	10

Source: Compiled from Primary Data



This figure shows the response of people regarding question impact tourism on environment. It turns out from this figure that 55% respondents think that there will be negligible impact of tourism on environment. Only 10% respondents think that there will be heavy impact of tourism on environment. 35% people think that there will be slight and moderate impact of tourism on environment.

Available facilities for tourists

Available facilities for tourists	Percentage
Enough	25
Not Enough	30
No comments	45

Source: Compiled from Primary Data



This figure shows the response of people regarding question available facilities for tourist. The Government helping in various ways to improve tourism in the area as like improved roads, providing facilities like lodging, boarding, etc. 45% respondents of Rasikbil Forest Village don't give their answer. Almost 30% respondents do not think that the existing facilities are not enough for tourism development. Only 25% people think that the existing facilities are enough for tourism development.

CHALLENGES OF TOURISM AT RASIKBIL BIRD SANCTUARY

Some challenges are-

- 1. Infrastructure:** Tourism infrastructure in this location is out dated and under development. Government, Tourism Boards, and Destination Organization must work toward improving the current infrastructure with foresight.
- 2. Accommodations:** The quality of accommodation is very low in this area. There is no five- or three-star hotel near this tourist site.
- 3. Transportations:** Transport system in this area is very average. There are no airport facilities. The nearest main railway station is New Cooch Behar Railway Station. It is about almost 40 km away.
- 4. Lack of Hygienic Food:** Food services are also one of the major problems in this tourist site. Food served is either unhygienic or served under unclean condition. Non availability of the regional and continental dishes is also a big problem.
- 5. Lack of Better Communications Facilities:** In this area there are poor telecommunication infrastructure in terms of limited internet accessibility and difficulty of international calling. It creates a sense of isolation among the tourist as they feel being deprived or cut off from their near and dear ones. It forces them to leave their tour without completing it.

V. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there are various problems here but it can become an ideal place to develop a tourist site. Here some suggestion by me on how to improve tourism in the region and make this tourist place more attractive. Suggestions are-

- Eco-friendly sustainable development
- Better road connectivity and transportation facilities
- Training the guides and the local people
- Improving safety especially of woman
- Maintain the control on the prices of goods and the quality of services
- Stop deforestation and protect this place
- Promoting environmental awareness among local peoples
- Improving the quality of services
- Improving accommodations
- Makes this place more beautiful and attractive
- Government should focus on improving the plight of their hotels for better fascination of tourist.

VI. CONCLUSION

Tourism is an emerging industry at present time. Rasikbil Birdsantuary is an important tourism destination site in North Bengal. Although there are many problems here but it is an emerging tourism destination site. It is possible to improve the tourism of this area by applying the right principles. This tourism site will be the basis of the economic structure of the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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