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DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY AND  
WETLAND MANAGEMENT: AN ATTEMPTED  
TO RELATE NATURE, CASE STUDY BLOCK ENGLISHBAZAR,  
DISTRICT MALDA, WEST BENGAL, INDIA.



Sanjoy Dutta

## INTRODUCTION

Development of tourism is a consequence of many factors. One major purpose is to generate economic benefits such as foreign exchange earning (for international tourism), income, employment and government revenues.

Tourism can also justify the measures for environmental and cultural heritage conservation for which resources otherwise might not be available. Socially tourism in its best form provides recreational cultural and commercial facilities and services for the use of both tourists as well as local residents. These facilities and services may not have been developed without tourism. It provides the opportunity for education as

## Abstract

*In India wetland are one the most threatened habitats facing several anthropogenic pressures. Thus the rapidly expanding human populations, large scale changes in land use /land covers, burgeoning development projects and improper use of watersheds have all caused a substantial decline of wetland resources of the country. Significant losses from industrial, agriculture and various urban developments. This has led to hydrological perturbations, pollution and there effects, unsustainable levels of grazing and fishing activities have also resulted in degradation of wetlands. The study area , Malda District, located at 25° 32' 08"N to 24° 40' 20"N by latitude and 88° 28' 10" E to 87° 45' 50" E by longitude and cover a total area (in sq. km) 3713 sq.km.*

*In the district of Malda there is a despondent condition in industrial sector. There is no heavy industry. Only some small and semi small industry are located. On the same time everywhere in Malda its wetlands are being vanishing very fast from the face of the earth. District wetlands are encroached by burgeoning population and converted it into residential and agricultural land. In this situation wetland centered tourism can be a better alternative for conservation of wetland and also for revival of the district economy through tourism.*

*So on the basis of above discussion it is a call of time to make a proper tourism plan along district wetlands specially taking Chatra beel of Englishbazar block as a focal area of study.*

**Keywords :** Anthropogenic pressure, Land use, Pollution, Degradation, Burgeoning population.

## Short Profile

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well as their own national heritage often circumventing ideological and political differences and reducing prejudicial attitudes through mutual participation.

The oxford dictionary defines wetlands as swamps and other damp areas of land, but in common parlance the word is used interchangeably with lakes which denote a large body of water surrounded by land. The internationally accepted definition of wetland is areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh or brackish or salt, including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters.

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Many wetlands are prime locations for tourism. Consequently, tourism has contributed, and continues to contribute, to a growing awareness of the value of nature in general and wetlands in particular. In this way tourism can create public support for the conservation of wetland. The development of tourism can also be away to make wetlands economically viable, and can provide employment and income for local people. Moreover, some wetland sites have been able to raise considerably funds directly from tourism. Some of the mechanism used to raise such funds is discussed below. Tourism is growing rapidly, and the regions that are facing the greatest growth are in developing countries with high levels of biodiversity. Unfortunately, many conservation organizations have inadequate funds to respond properly to the demands of tourism and wetland conservation.

Clearly, wetlands provide society with a range of essential services, and these services should be recognized by some form of public financing. However, as this is not always possible, managers need to be inventive in raising funds, and tourism is a promising sources of such revenue.

The main methods used by protected areas to raise funds for nature conservation.

**\*Entrance fees:** fees to be charged per person or per vehicles, or a combination of both for entrance and excess to wetland areas.

**\*User fees:** fees to charged to visitors for undertaking specific recreational activities or for the use of specialized facilities within wetland areas, subject to compliance with the areas regulations (e.g. for parking, camping fishing, hunting, boating, diving, sports, photography etc).

**\*Concession and leases:** contracts to be signed between managers of wetland areas and business or individuals under which the business or individuals are permitted to operate within the

wetland area.

**\*Direct operation of commercial activities:** provision of commercial goods and services (such as accommodation, guiding ,specialized rental equipment, food sales merchandising of clothing, crafts and souvenir,for example).

**\*Taxes:** levies on certain goods, services or transactions that provide funds for national or local government, and that, in this case, are used to support the conservation of wetland areas.

**\*Volunteers and donations;** volunteers are persons who offer their services to a wetland area of their own free will and without payment (except in some cases, to cover their basic living expenses); donation are gift or money, or in some cases goods and services, that are donated to support the conservation of wetland areas.

Clearly, as wetland areas rely increa singly on income from tourism to pay for conservation initiatives, local communities often have to compete with conservation projects for revenue.

The challenge is to direct a substantial proportion of the income earned through these means to community/ local poverty reduction projects.

Conservation could do more to address to poverty reduction, as poverty alleviation also can lead to improve conservation outcomes. when commercial operations are being developed, local people living within or around the areas should be involved, in order to bring jobs and income to the community.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

In West Bengal, 54 natural wetlands, covering an area of 291963 hectare and 9 artificial wetland covering an area of 52564 hectares. In Malda district there is 22 wetland out of which Chatra beel and Bhatia-gabgachi

beel in Englishbazar block and Bamaongolabeel in Bamongola block, Jatradanga beel and Dhajora beel in Old Malda block are prominent. Nearly 75% of all wetlands in the district are privately owned, making it imperative that the public participate in wetland management and protection. Urbanization in district particularly in Englishbazar and Old malda is a pervasive and rapidly growing form of land use change. Especially the encroachment around the water bodies has brought landscape transformation from wetland and upland. Drastic changes in land use pattern associated with urbanization have resulted thus an immense impact on wetland areas, where human settlements are located. So every where in the district its wetlands are being vanishing very fast from the face of the earth. This has led to ecological disaster in some areas, in the form of large scale devastation due to flood.

On the same time In the district of Malda there is no heavy industry. Only some small and semi small industry are located. Among them many industries have been destroyed like sericulture due to lack of attention. Mango cultivation and agriculture is the backbone of the district economy. But due to population explosion the balance between food and consumer is very uneven. With in 1951 – 1961 the decadal variation signifies a steady growth depicting about 20 % where the net area has increased only around 1 hectare. In this way within 2001- 2011 it has been observed that the decadal growth rate has been some what slowdown which is 21.50 in 2011 where 2001 it was 24.13.the net sown area has reducing from 278176 to 278010.and the production of food grain has reducing in a steady way from 56.78 to 32.44quintal per hectare in last 50 years. So from the above statistics it is clear that condition of agriculture is too poor in the district. Mango cultivation is also suffering from river bank erosion, flood, small land holding and climatic disturbance which have declined the land for mango cultivation, simultaneously the mango

production. So it is high time to search a new way to restore district economic health. And in this way tourism especially eco-tourism can play an important role. Gour and pandua is the two important historic tourists place. But due to lack of attention and interest they fail to promote district tourism.

In this situation wetland would be a better option for tourists especially those who love eco-tourism. United Nations world tourism organization (UNWTU) said responsible, sustainable tourism can play available role in conserving and protecting the world's often fragile wetlands.

#### OBJECTIVE:

1. To find the complex relations between wetlands, poverty reduction and sustainable tourism development.
2. Consulting about specific tourism planning, environmental and community involvement needs together with specialist associates who would welcome the opportunity to advice to achieve sustainable outcomes.
3. To support the wetlands international mission to sustain and restore wetlands, their resources and biodiversity.
4. Promoting the bird and wetland conservation and waste management.
5. Actually to develop an informed and stake holder agreed -upon action plan for wetland conservation and to pursue appropriate conservation designation of priority sites through a better understanding , management and conservation of wetland habitat and biodiversity, tourism industry will also benefit as best practices, wise use and site appropriate development will be encouraged and supported

#### METHODOLOGY:

Maps, reports and memoirs published by the geological survey of India, centre for wetland management and ecological design, government of west Bengal, kolkata etc. are to

be used for collecting basic information about the genesis of wetlands. And information regarding the development of transport network and population influx will be collected.

#### RESULTS:

Actually destroying or degrading wetlands can lead to serious consequences in ecological and economic sector of the district. Following ground are badly affected with the wetland loss of the district.

1)Wetland functions as natural sponge that trap and slowly release flood water. Trees root mats and other wetland vegetation also slow the speed of flood waters and distribute them more slowly over the flood plain. This combined water storage and braking action lowers flood heights and reduces erosion. In flood prone district like Malda if wetland loss can not be stopped then flood condition would be out of controlled.

2)Grogan nut or fox nut, an aquatic crop, commonly known as Makhana (*Euryale ferox salibs*) is an highly nutritious, fully organic non-cereal food, which is extensively grown in Harishchandrapur block. Degradation and loss of wetland can lead to serious adverse effect on Makhana production of the district.

3)Wetlands are the hotspots of biodiversity and are characterized by the heterogeneous assemblage of species attributed with significantly large numbers of gene pools belonging to both the wetland and ecotones. So the loss of wetland is a great threat for bio-diversity and environment.

4)Encroachment of wetlands and rapid filling of ponds in Malda district have collectively resulted in disappearance of few aquatic plants like kalmi, kachu, hingche, kulkhera, sushni, thankuni, shaluk and medicinal plants like thankuni and bramhi etc.

5)Jute is the second most cultivated wetland cash crop in Bengal. Large number of wetland in Malda district is used for jute retting. So availability of water bodies is the major advantage for the district farmers to go for jute cultivation.

#### SUGGESTION:

It may be concluded that a proper tourism plan is required to save the wetland and as well as district economy. We have take chatra beel of englishbazar block for case study.

#### Tourism plan along Chatra Beel:

Chatra beel is situated parallel with NH34 in Englishbazar town. It is stretching from northwest to southeast direction. From north to south Chatra Beel is 3.20 km long and west to east it is 1.50 km long.

- 1)Afforestation along the wetland.
- 2)Make a children park and Deer park in surrounding area.
- 3)Make restaurant, shop (for cloth, crafts, souvenir, and mango products) around the wetland.
- 4)Providing different type of water game facility and paragliding.
- 5)Provide fishing and boating facility.

If all above suggestion fulfilled then Chatra Beel is look like.



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