



**Development of Rural Tourism Circuit:
A Case of Garhbeta, West Bengal**

Dr. Moushumi Datta

Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Nagindas Khandwala College of Commerce, Arts and Management Studies, Malad (West), Mumbai-400064.

Abstract :

Tourism is a fast growing industry and is highly dependent on natural resources for its development. For tourism to develop the first necessity is to identify the tourism potentials of the area. The study area is Garhbeta which is located in Medinipur Sadar subdivision of Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal, India. The main objectives of the paper are to plan the development of Garhbeta Tourism Circuit, to plan eco-tourism in Garhbeta using RS and GIS, to prepare a comprehensive Model Tourist Plan Map and to analyse the benefits of tourism to the local people community.

Introduction :

Tourism is a fast growing industry and is highly dependent on natural resources for its development. Sustainability in tourism is a major challenge that can be achieved only through modern technology and innovative practices. For tourism to develop the first necessity is to identify the tourism potentials of the area. This generally takes place in rural areas. Rural economy is insufficient to support its people as it is highly dependent on indefinite forces of nature. Development of rural tourism or agro tourism may help the villages to develop in a sustainable way as it would mostly be unseasonal and would have the capacity to support the villagers sufficiently. The present study tries to analyse the tourism potential of Garhbeta by suggesting some plans for the development of rural tourism there.

Literature Review :

Garhbeta has a huge tourism potential. Unfortunately Garhbeta has not found a place in the mental maps of the tourists in general and forest officials in particular (Dutta, 2007). Rural tourism planning requires exploring diverse types of natural and cultural attractions along with demographic characteristics, to provide the base for designing the travel industry different from the mass tourism standard" (Banerjee et al, 2002, p. 2).

Study Area :

Garhbeta is a town in Medinipur Sadar subdivision of Paschim Medinipur district in West Bengal, India. It is on the banks of the River Shilabati. Its latitudinal extension is between 22°51'06"N and 22°52'00"N and longitudinal extension is between 87°20'06" E and 87°21'19"E. The area is known for its well-developed gorges representing a miniature of Grand Canyon and is also known as Gangani Khola covering 2.50 sq. km.