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Prospects of Community Based Eco-Tourism in Sundarbans:
A Case Study at Munshiganj Union, Satkhira



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FORESTRY AND WOOD TECHNOLOGY DISCIPLINE
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2015

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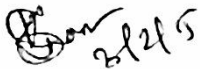
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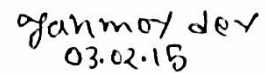
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Declaration

I, Tanmoy Dey declare that this thesis is a result of my own works and that it has not been submitted or accepted for a degree in any other University or Institution.

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Candidate: *Tanmoy Dey*

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Dedicated
To
My Parents
And
My Uncles and Aunts

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

This study identified the prospects of Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) in the study area. CBET deals with environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas that promotes conservation of nature with the involvement of local people. The study was done by questionnaire survey with purposive selection on the basis of diversity of occupation and sex in that area. Most of the people of this area are poor and depend on forest. Out of 82 respondents, 60 are male and 22 are female. Most of the people here are fisherman among male and housewife among women. Livelihood condition of the study area will increase by increasing income opportunity through community based ecotourism. The prospect of community based ecotourism in the Munshiganj union near the sundarbans at Shymnagar upazila in Satkhira district is great, because most of the people of this area want to involve with ecotourism and that will reduce the pressure on Sundarbans. Most of the people (96.3%) here are eager for involving into community based ecotourism. They are interested to work in community based ecotourism through house owner (20.73%), guide (20.73%), and boatman (18.61%). 96.3% people told that they have no social, cultural and religious obstacle for this. About 86.6% told that it will help to conserve the Sundarbans.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 General

The term “community-based ecotourism” is used to describe ecotourism ventures that are characterized by high environmental consideration, increased control and involvement of the local residents, as well as significant benefits for the host community (WWF, 2001). This concept is clearly distinguished from other ecotourism ventures that are largely or even totally planned and managed by outside operators and generate negligible benefits for local people (Scheyvens, 1999). Community-based ecotourism refers more specifically to tourism activities or enterprises that involve local communities; it operates in their lands, and is based on their cultural and natural assets and attractions (Nelson, 2004). Community-based ecotourism therefore is tourism which focuses on travel to areas with natural attractions (rather than, say, urban areas), and which contributes to environmental conservation and local livelihood enhancement. Ecotourism (ET) is a form of sustainable tourism and Community-based Ecotourism (CBET) is ecotourism where local communities are the main actors. Some see ecotourism itself as a contradiction in terms. Others simply misunderstand and misapply the concept, leading to many critical problems.

Community based ecotourism can bring numerous socioeconomic benefits to a country or a locality, in terms of generating foreign exchange, creating local employment, stimulating national and local economies, and fostering international peace and increased environmental awareness and education. But appropriate management structures, as well as adequate planning, design, and building guidelines for tourism facilities are required to ensure that tourism enhances rather than detracts from the natural setting. Further, carrying capacity needs to be assessed relative to the management objectives of each area, and appropriate management and physical structures must be designed to keep the of visitors and the visitation mode within the carrying capacity.

Community based ecotourism, as a logical component of community development, requires a multidisciplinary approach, careful planning -both physical and managerial - and strict guidelines and regulations that will guarantee sustainable operation. Only through inter-sectoral involvement will ecotourism truly achieve its goals. Governments, the private enterprise, local

communities, and NGOs all have vital roles to play. I firmly believe that every country (especially the less developed ones) should set up regional tourism plans, which should include clear ecotourism strategies and guidelines. Regional ecotourism councils, with representatives from all sectors involved in the ecotourism process, have recently been created in several countries with promising results (Meguid, 2006).

Tourism is a rapidly growing activity in third world countries. In the coming year it could be the largest income-generating source of the countries. During the time of reduced performance in the export sector, a number of developing countries have encouraged tourism as a source of quickly earning foreign exchange vital for their development. Bangladesh is small country, but it has conceived too many places which could attract the tourist. Due to lack of proper management and planning these places are not attracting the persons who like to be a tourist.

Sundarbans, the world largest mangrove forest covers a total area bird species and different beneficial and recreational fish 210 species (SBCP, 2003). The mangrove vegetation, tigers, crocodile spotted deer and diverse bird life are an attractive destination for such tours and ecotourism is considered to be one of the most feasible and promising development for the Sundarbans (Hussain and Acharya, 1994]. The Sundarbans Reserve Forest (SRF) of Bangladesh hosts 300 species of flora and 425 species of fauna, some of them are declared as threatened and endangered in local and global context (Biswas,et.al., 2007). Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is the iconic species of this forest. In addition, there are 291 fish species in the Sundarbans. Around 3.5 million people living around the SRF are directly or indirectly dependent on the eco-system services of the forest (Giri,et.al., 2007). Recognizing the ecological and socio-economic importance, the SRF was declared as 'Ramsar site' in 1992 and the UNESCO has recognized three wildlife sanctuaries (around 140,000 ha area) of this forest as a "World Heritage Site" in 1997 (Islam, 2003). Further, the Department of Environment (DoE) has declared 10 km buffer zone around the SRF as 'Ecologically Critical Area (ECA)' in 2010, where development activities are restricted. The Sundarbans has an immense value for its unique ecosystem as well as magnificent scenic beauty. At this most problems associated with tourism in the Sundarbans have not been identified as negative impact of tourism as well as not measured or evaluated except some generalized classifications. As the Sundarbans is deteriorating rapidly for various reasons and some peoples want to stay more closely to the nature, they want their

development with ecologically friendly. This is a new trend around world, which is called as eco-village-a village where each component of the development and daily livelihood of the people should be on environmentally friendly.

1.2. Potentials Community Based Eco-tourism in Bangladesh

The prospect of developing eco-tourism industry and CBET in Bangladesh is considerably high. Country's 186 km. long shoreline is world's longest continuous sea-beach Fifth Five Year Plan (1997- 2002). Each and every part of it is accessible. Every year, tourist sites generate around 3,00,000-4,00,000 tourists - both from home and abroad Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). In the southwestern part, country's landscape is decorated with world's largest mangrove forest-the "Sundarbans". Worldwide it is known for mentionable array of flora, fauna and most of all the exotic "Royal Bengal Tiger" Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). This "mystic" land has long been a strong attraction to the tourists, researchers and poachers. In the southeast, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with its lucrative natural landscape having tribal settlements within, definitely possesses the potentials to be an exotic eco-tourist spot. The lush, smooth green hill tracts in the whole of Sylhet district-having indigenous settlements, the coral reefs at the St. Martins Island, "Garo" hills in the northern Bangladesh ornamented with the indigenous settlements of "Garo" tribe and ancient historical sites in Mahastangarh, Bogra, and Lalmai, Comilla etc., in a consorted manner can frame a lucrative eco-tourism package within Bangladesh. In terms of resourcefulness, these places are important. In the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), the sectoral policy objective of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (line ministry responsible for Tourism affairs) clearly states that in order to "enhance revenue earning from this sector and to comply with the government's sustainable development goal and to protect the natural environment, ecotourism does offer lucrative potential." The average yearly growth in the tourism industry in between 1980 to 1995 was .3 percent whereas in Sri-Lanka and Nepal, it was 15 percent and 19 percent respectively. To enhance revenue earning, policy objectives are strongly inclined towards the development of eco-tourism industry in a concerted effort with the Ministry of Forest and Environment, Ministry of Fisheries Resources, Ministry of LGRD & C, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Home Affairs Fifth Five Year Plan, (1997-2002).

1.3 Basic preconditions for community-based ecotourism:

1. Landscapes or flora/fauna which have inherent attractiveness or degree of interest to appeal either to specialists or more general visitors.
2. Ecosystems that is at least able to absorb a managed level of visitation without damage.
3. A local community that is aware of the potential opportunities, risks and changes involved, and is interested in receiving visitors.
4. Existing or potential structures for effective community decision-making.
5. No obvious threats to indigenous culture and traditions.
6. An initial market assessment suggesting a potential demand and an effective means of accessing it, and that the area is not over supplied with ecotourism offers

1.4 The principles and objectives of CBET

1. Recognize, support and promote community ownership of tourism
2. Involve community members from the start in every aspect
3. Promote community pride
4. Improve the quality of life
5. Ensure environmental sustainability
6. Preserve the unique character and culture of the local area
7. Foster cross-cultural learning
8. Respect cultural differences and human dignity
9. Distribute benefits fairly among community members
10. Contribute a fixed percentage of income to community projects

The relationship between tourism and conservation can be a symbiotic one. The benefits that a well-managed coastal area can accrue to the tourist industry are clear; however, tourism can also facilitate the protection of coastal areas. If tourism is properly controlled, it can create the conditions necessary to support the process of conservation through productive planning and comprehensive management (Eber, 1992).

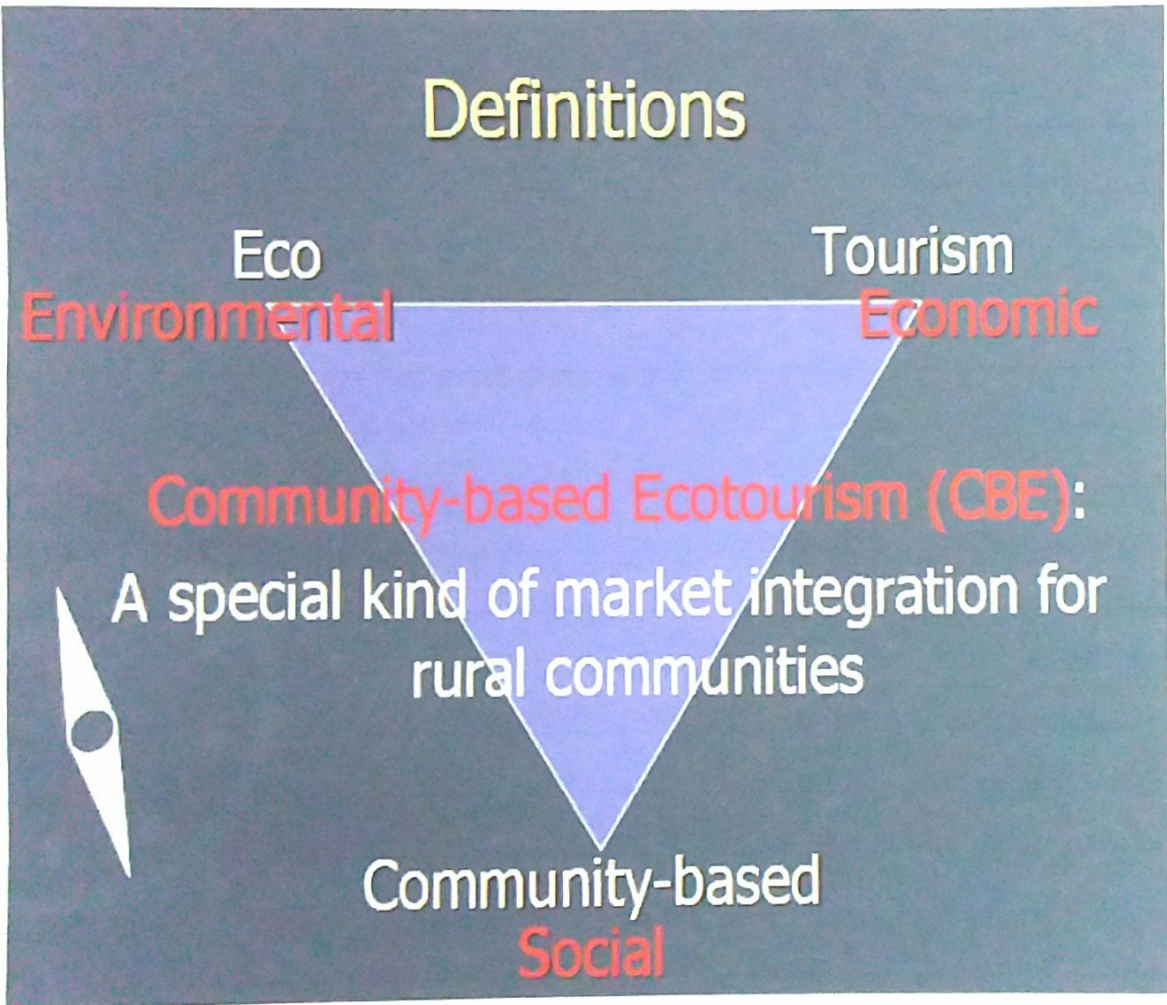


Figure 1: The 3 main aspects of Community-based Ecotourism

Source: (Environmental Strategies, Professor: Steven Wolf)

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1. General

Mathieson and Wall (1982) created a good working definition of **tourism** as "the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs."

According to Macintosh and Goeldner (1986) **tourism** is "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors."

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines ecotourism as "... Is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features – both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations." (IUCN, 1996).

According to oxford dictionary "Community is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common" "CBT is tourism that takes environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life", (REST, 1997).

Community based ecotourism, as defined by WCN -The World Conservation Union, is "environmentally, responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas and local communities in order to enjoy, study, and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features- tangible and intangible heritage -both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio- economic involvement of local populations"

2.2. Economic aspects of CBET

“Ecotourism is described here as a special kind of market integration for rural communities. Encounters between hosts and guests in ecotourism are transactions that involve more than the exchange of money for goods or services; they also involve the trade of expectations and ideas about nature and culture.” Also, when ecotourism is community-based, it essentially brings the market home, and this allows for different ways of participating in the market economy without necessarily or irreversibly disrupting normal livelihoods or social relations. For example, parks must look to another source of revenue that can rival the income from poaching. Indeed, sale of some animal species and their parts has long been a successful way of benefiting from wildlife. Demand has increased and this calls for new ways of protection. “Asian pharmacists pay cash — astronomic prices for rhino horn to grind into medicine. Yemeni men lay out more than \$1,000 for a carved rhino-horn dagger” (Knox ,1990).”

2.3. Environmental Aspects of CBET

By making the local economy more sustainable ecotourism also gives more support for environmental conservation and fosters sustainable development. New management practices can also encourage the reduction of tourist pressure on critical areas. An example of this is given by ecotourism practices in Costa Rica, where: Admission fees were raised by a factor of 10 in 1994 (from \$1.5 to \$15 for foreign visitors). In consequence, visitor numbers plummeted by an average of 44% in the following year (Raterman, 1997), but total revenues increased substantially. This way, it was possible to combine the maximization of economic benefits and reduce the pressure on ecosystems. Admission fees are a means to keep the number of visitors within an ecosystem’s carrying capacity (McNeely,1990), or to limit growth rates, so that planning, management and control measures are not outpaced by the development (Lindberg, 1991).

2.4. Social aspects of CBET

From a social perspective, ecotourism is meant to enhance respect and interest in local natural history and culture, but also to encourage the sharing of expectations and ideas about nature and culture between tourists and locals. It should also increase local awareness and

education and provide better linkages between actors in their local environment, such as local officials, NGOs and communities. As a whole, it relies on both economic and environmental goals to benefit the communities. It is clear that these benefits will allow this environmental strategy to be effective. "Look at the rhino from the Zambians' perspective: here's an animal walking around with

2.5. Community-Based Ecotourism and Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation through tourism is defined as tourism that generates net benefits to the poor, not only economic benefits, but also creating positive socio-cultural and environmental benefits to the poor (Ashley, 2001). Many countries have adopted community-based ecotourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. In Asia, the Greater Mekong Sub-region comprising Cambodia, The Peoples Republic of China, Laos Peoples Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam have set up paradigm related poverty alleviation strategies which stated that community-based ecotourism should be a major source of securing the biodiversity in the sub-region and playing a major role in tackling the issue of poverty (WTO, 2005). There has been an employment creation on part-time basis as guides, drivers and home stay managers and service payment benefits which they used to fund community development projects such as agriculture, school projects, water among others. Africa's poverty is at the centre stage in cotemporary development debates because the situation is bad and getting worse. In accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, the World Tourism Organization has placed tourism at the front of poverty reduction in Africa. Community-based ecotourism in particular has been advocated for within the academic literature as an important community economic development strategy due to the potential economic and social benefits that the sector can generate while also protecting the natural resource base (Mulindwa, 2007). In Tanzania, community-based ecotourism has been embraced as a tool for poverty alleviation .A bulk of tourism investment is concentrated in a small number of globally community owned famous parks in the northern parts of the country such as Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Tarangire, Lake Manyara among others (Nelson, 2004). In Ghana community-based ecotourism has received much attention at the national level due to opportunities it has created for rural communities to earn income and has created tourism related jobs through the conservation of local ecosystem and culture. These gains have been

consolidated as a show of significant impact on poverty alleviation (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2010).

2.6. Challenges to Community-Based Ecotourism

In terms of community-based ecotourism management, there are some issues of concern such as carrying capacity and the problem of benefit flow to local people at ecotourism sites (Bhoj and Jan, 2007). By definition, ecotourism prefers small number of tourists but in many cases, control and monitoring of the carrying capacities of target areas are often difficult. The impact of tourism on the environment includes depletion of natural resources, pollution, soil erosion, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2011). Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. There are arguments about the influx of tourists, economic benefits from tourism and infrastructure development which suggest that if these are not managed properly, they may turn ecotourism into mainstream mass tourism. Currently, there are negative impacts in some instances, but these could increase in the long-term and as noted by (Autthapon and Suthida, 2010), all stakeholders including local people have had very little experiences in managing co tourism and its varying objectives. Several critical factors according to them have been noted as constraints for the progress of poverty alleviation through community-based ecotourism: (a) limited access of the poor to the tourism market; (b) lack of commercial viability for their product in term of value and price; (c) weak marketing capability; (d) lack of intergovernmental suitable policy framework and (e) inadequate knowledge about tourism and service skill, managing and implementing at local level. But employment and education can also bring negative social impacts. "Tribal elders traditionally hold most of the knowledge and respect of the community. As the younger generation gain jobs and money from tourism, they may also gain prestige that rivals the elders. Their income from ecotourism is frequently many times what a villager makes from traditional means. This can lead to jealousy, and even murder, as in the case of a young Malagasy guide who was stoned to death by his peers (Jolly *pers. comm.*). Uncontrolled growth of tourism and the influx of western values can erode the local culture."

Another negative impact of ecotourism is the increased pressure on the region created by tourism in some areas, even when practiced as ecotourism. This includes trash, increased use of natural resources, etc. "Higher standards of living (a benefit from ecotourism) have attracted mainland Ecuadorians to the Galapagos, producing an uncontrolled growth of 12% a year in the local population. This creates several problems: resentment of "newcomers taking jobs..., shortages of basic foods at local shops and raised prices" (Boo, 1990). Additional negative social impacts include: begging by children; incompatibility of local versus foreign customs as female visitors dress inappropriately; social dualism; and growth of hostility towards tourists due to expatriation and overcrowding. Without proper planning and control of ecotourism, the attitudes of the local inhabitants towards tourism can go from "euphoria to apathy to annoyance to antagonism" (Long, 1990).

2.7. The following are the key elements of CBET:

2.7.1. Natural and Cultural Resources

1. Natural resources are well preserved
2. Local economy and modes of production depend on the sustainable use of natural resources
3. Customs and culture are unique to the destination

2.7.2 Community Organizations

1. The Community shares consciousness, norms and ideology
2. The Community has elders who hold local traditional knowledge and wisdom.
3. The Community has a sense of ownership and wants to participate in its own development

2.7.3. Management

1. The Community has rules and regulations for environmental, cultural, concepts of CBET.
2. A local organization or mechanism exists to manage tourism with the ability to link tourism and community development.

3. Benefits are fairly distributed to all.
4. A percentage of profits from tourism are contributed to a community fund for economics.

2.7.4. Learning

Tourism activities and services aim at:

1. Fostering a shared learning process between hosts and guests.
2. Educating and building understanding of diverse cultures and ways of life.
3. Raising awareness of natural and cultural conservation among tourists and local community.

2.8. Participation in Community-Based Ecotourism

Local community participation in all endeavors of ecotourism is not a new concept. The word participation implies how and to what extent people are able to share their views, take part in an activity, project, programme, decision-making, profit sharing and other issues related to the tourism development process. The most important reason for the inclusion of local inhabitants in ecotourism is equity, taking into consideration the conservation of the area through ecotourism development which inevitably entails restrictions in the traditional usage of local resources by the residents (Lindberg, 1998). In fact, numerous studies indicate the importance of incorporating the perceptions, values and interest of the local people in the very region where the ecotourism resource/destination is found (Thomson, 2002). The involvement of local people should be encouraged from the very beginning by promoting public dialogue and by enabling them to participate in the process of decision making and profit sharing (Diamantis, 2004). The main underlying concept for the development of community-based ecotourism is the empowerment of local people. This is only possible when ecotourism planning takes into consideration the views, the perceptions and preferences of the local inhabitants (WWF-International, 2001). Community participation in community-based ecotourism makes the project sustainable and attains the objective in its establishment. When people do not receive sufficient benefits as a result of non- participation, they are prone to develop negative attitude towards ecotourism development. This might occur for example when indigenous people whose survival depends heavily upon the exploitation of the natural resource perceive tourism as a threat that deprives them of their livelihood by competing with others over land and resource (Ross and Wall, 1999). In such instances, community-based ecotourism is very likely to either fail

completely or not succeed to the minimum possible degree thus, remaining far from the desired sustainability (McCool and Moisey, 2001).

2.9. Stakeholders in Community-Based Ecotourism

Stakeholders are organizations, individuals and institutions directly or indirectly involved in development, operation and management of community-based ecotourism projects. The organizations include governmental agencies such as research institutions, non-governmental institutions, local people, traditional authorities and tourists. Stakeholder's interest in community-based ecotourism can affect the outcome of tourism development. In fact, tourism is complex and dynamic, with linkages and independencies and therefore requires multiple stakeholders with diverse and divergent views and values. Stakeholders assume collective responsibilities for the ongoing directions and success of any ecotourism establishment (Gray, 1989). Community-based ecotourism should therefore involve collaborative effort of all the stakeholders to avoid creation of imbalances and uneven development of ecotourism sites. The ecotourism industry is complex because of its nature and dynamics between its stakeholders (Lawrence, et.al., 1997). Each group brings to the industry its own set of interests, capabilities, strategies and traditions and if not well structured conflict may arise and at the end, the community-based ecotourism may not give the desired benefits to the stakeholders involved.

2.10. Benefits of Community-Based Ecotourism

Community-based ecotourism helps improve standard of living for example through increased disposable income of individuals. Besides these, there is an underlying concept of development of community-based ecotourism which is empowerment of local people. In particular, the concept of empowerment of host communities can be divided into four different categories: Economic, psychological, social and political. In economic terms, ecotourism generates long-term benefits that are distributed equitably within the host communities and can be used for the constant improvement of the community's infrastructure. Moreover, ecotourism can contribute to the psychological empowerment of the local people by enhancing their sense of self-esteem and by cultivating pride for their cultural and natural heritage. This happens because ecotourism reveals to the public the value of host community in terms of natural beauty or cultural uniqueness. In addition, ecotourism may strengthen social bonds within the community

by promoting cooperation among its members. Finally, ecotourism brings about political empowerment, since it creates a forum for the expression of peoples' voices concerning issues of local development (Scheyvens, 1999). The concept of community-based ecotourism development appears to meet the majority of the targets established in the definition of sustainable tourism, since it constitutes a tool for both social empowerment and long-term economic development of the local communities (WWF-International, 2001). This is even more crucial for small, rural and remote communities that often suffer from the lack of governmental attention and assistance. Self development through ecotourism is particularly important for these communities, since it gives people the opportunity to utilize their own internal strengths and resources in order to become more self-sufficient (Joppe, 1996). Wearing and Neil (1999) stated that the more obvious reason to initiate an ecotourism project is to maximize the benefits of tourism, specifically: (a) additional revenue to the local business and other services, example, Medicare, banking, car hire, cottage industries, souvenir shopping, tourism attractions; (b) increased market for local products, example, locally grown produce, artifacts, value added goods thereby sustaining traditional customs; (c) employment of local labor and expertise, example , eco-tour guides, retail sales assistance, restaurant table waiting staff; (d) source of funding for the protection of and enhancement or maintenance of natural attractions and symbols of cultural heritage; and (e) heightened community awareness of the value of local indigenous culture and natural environment. Benefits to the local business area and its communities are the major reason for undertaking community-based ecotourism. It is also one of the outcomes desired by all stakeholders in community-based ecotourism.

2.11. Community Based Ecotourism in different countries

2.11.1. Cambodia

Cambodia is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations. Cambodians are very proud of their rich cultural heritage, particularly Angkor Wat, which is one of the Eight Wonders of the World and also included in the United Nations heritage site. After the civil war period, in 1998, the Government paid much attention to tourism by setting up the General Department of Tourism directly under the Council of Ministers. The Department is concerned about a US\$173mn for the

country in 2006. Tourism is the second largest contributor, after mining, to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The country projects 1.3 million arrivals with US\$190mn generation from tourism in 2007. During the first quarter of 2007, it welcomed 420,000 visitors. It projects two million visitors with US\$290mn revenues in 2010. (Bhoj and Jon,2007).

2.11.2 Myanmar

Myanmar is a country rich in cultural heritage that could easily attract tourists. However, the tight centralized planning; closed economy as well as political instability has been a major barrier to tourists visiting the country.

Myanmar has been actively involved in regional as well as sub-regional cooperation efforts for the development of both intra-regional and inter-regional tourism development. However, its tourism industry development pace is still at a modest level due to existing substandard tourism infrastructures. In 1992, the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism was formed, and in 1994 a high level Tourism Development and Management Committee was set up. Myanmar also organized "Visit Myanmar Year" in 1996 which promoted tourism industry in the country. According to the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, the total arrival of tourists in Myanmar was 653,549 in 2005-06, and 654,602 in 2006-07. In terms of distribution of tourists region wise, Asians account for 55.7, West Europeans 30.5, North Americans 7.4, Oceanians 2.8, East Europeans 1.6, Middle East 0.9, other Americans 0.5 and Africans 0.1 percent respectively in 2006-07. The total earnings from Tourism sector were US\$178mn in 2005-06 and US\$198mn in 2006-07 (Myanmar Tourism Statistics, 2006-07). A separate policy for CBET is not emphasized from conventional development policy but ecotourism is included in all tourism promotion and marketing. In Myanmar, some of the most well known ecotourism sites are Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park, Popa Mountain Park, Hlawga Wildlife Park, Shewesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, Inlay Birds' Sanctuary, Moyingyi Wetlands and Sein Ye Forest Camp. Limited knowledge and shortage of foreign investment are hindering the development of CBET in the country. (Bhoj and Jon, 2007)

2.11.3 Thailand

Thailand is the most successful tourism development country in the Mekong region. According to Leksakundilok (2004), international tourists visiting Thailand almost doubled from 529,860 in 1990 to 10,132,509 in 2001. The “Amazing Thailand Year” campaign (1998-99 and extended to 2000) is one of the main reasons that tourist numbers increased dramatically during 1998-2000 at the rate of 7.53, 10.5 and 11.64 percent respectively. The Government has strongly supported the investment in the sector to promote tourism at the community level. The National Ecotourism Policy was formulated by the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (TISTR) during 1996-97. The Policy offered a common understanding and framework for action for the various organizations and individuals involved in ecotourism. In Thailand, the main objective of the CBET is to develop sustainable tourism and quality marketing programmes. The concept was forced due to national and international awareness of environmental concerns. The aim of CBET is to preserve tourism areas to attract quality tourists to visit the country and to stay longer. NGOs are encouraging communities to view ecotourism approach as a means of exercising control over the development of their communities instead of just responding to external forces. The National Ecotourism Policy was officially proclaimed by 1998 and followed by the National Ecotourism Action Plan 2002-06 in 2001. The State Steering Committee for Tourism headed by the Deputy Prime Minister is one of the main actors coordinating the agencies concerned with sustainable tourism development. The tourism development strategy 2010 is under implementation. This will ensure that tourism development in Vietnam is a “spread head sector in the economy” and will develop in line with cultural and ecological tourism while preserving and realizing cultural identity, good traditions and customs of the people. (Bhoj and Jon, 2007).

2.11.4. Yunnan, China

Yunnan is a Province of China with rich tourist attractions: highland plateau landscape, snow-covered mountains and canyons, various ethnic cultures and unique micro-climates. By the first half of 1990s, Yunnan had established a tourism product and services, with investment concentrated on “one centre, three tourist routes, four places, five areas, six products and nine key projects” (Zhang ,2001). Yunnan has initiated foreign investment projects in sectors such as

infrastructure, agriculture and biological resources, minerals, tourism resources and environmental protection. It received more than 38 million foreign and Chinese tourists and got US\$2.48bn revenue from tourism accounting for 10 percent of the provincial GDP in 1998. It has identified priority areas for ecotourism, including five ecotourism zones and eight eco-cultural tourism routes (WTO, 2002). Some tourism projects in Yunnan are promoting “green tourism” which supports both sustainable mass tourism and ecotourism.

2.11.5. Vietnam

The tourism industry is new for Vietnam as compared to other GMS countries. The WTO reported that only 7,000 foreign tourists travelled to Vietnam in 1989 compared to about 25,000 tourists who travelled to Lao PDR in the same year. In 1991, a tourism development master plan for Vietnam was published by WTO in collaboration with UN. This plan targets the number of tourists to increase to 500,000 in 1995 and to about 1.5 million by 2000 generating 28,700 new employment opportunities (Jansen and Verbeke, 1995). Ethnic minorities' area benefited from CBET in Vietnam through employment opportunities and infrastructure development in the last decade. In 1999, a workshop on “Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy for Vietnam” brought together a variety of stakeholders who shared ideas and exchanged views about policy development for ecotourism. Vietnam then revised the Tourism Master Plan that includes specific guidelines for tourism in National Park and for CBET. (Bhoj and Jon, 2007).

2.11.6. Laos

The National Tourism Development Plan of Laos, which was prepared by a UNDP consultant in 1999, recommended the promotion of a niche market to include ‘special interest tourism’ (e.g. bird-watching, butterflies, orchids, weaving and Buddhist culture) and ‘adventure tourism’ (Schwettmann 2001). Such a market aims to optimize otherwise limited marketing opportunities and to highlight the quality of Laotian historical, culture and environmental attractions. This form of tourism can be of benefit to the country while tourism infrastructure is still in its infancy. Ecotourism initiatives in Laos since 1999 mainly focus on National Biodiversity Conservation Areas and adjacent communities. The first officially approved ecotourism project in Laos was launched in Luang Namtha Province under the title of ‘Nam Ha

Eco-tourism Development Project'. This project LNTA was working in collaboration with UNESCO and funded by the New Zealand government (Schwettmann 2001).The 'Forespace Ecotourism Project' in the Nam Kan/Nam Nga Protected area is another project in cooperation with UNESCO (Yamauchi and Lee 1999). Other areas are being encouraged to follow the project lead particularly Phou Khao Khouay National Park, north of Vientiane. The Lao government has established broad guidelines for development focussed on capacity management, sustainable use of resources, respect for cultural and natural diversity, and the involvement of local communities in decision-making (Yamauchi and Lee 1999). Ecotourism in Laos is in it's infancy but has established a firm base for future development. Nam Ha has provided a good model for ecotourism development in Laos (Lyttleton and Allcock 2002), where cash income has so far been distributed among villagers. Negative impact are small but could increase over the long term. Thus careful attention and appropriate capacity building is needed for the following phase. However, there are arguments about the influx of tourists, economic benefits from tourism and infrastructure development which suggest that, if these are badly managed, may turn ecotourism into mainstream.

Chapter Three

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Location

Munshiganj union under shymnagar upazila in Satkhira district is bounded by sundarbans on the south and east side, Burigoalini union on The north, Ramjan Nagar and Essoripur union on The west.

3.2. Reconnaissance Survey

In order to get a view of the nature of the study area and prior to data collection, a reconnaissance survey was initiated to acquire some basic ideas regarding to community based ecotourism through the personal interview with the local people of the study area. During the survey, views were exchanged with the peoples about the objectives. The survey has helped to realize the existing condition of the area.

3.3. Questionnaire Preparation and Testing

Considering the objectives of the study a questionnaire was prepared for the selected community. After preparing the questionnaire, questionnaire was tested to fulfill the objectives of study and collecting the selected information of the study. Then some point was adding or cutting and final questionnaire was prepared.

3.4. Sampling Design

In this study 4 villages (Munshiganj, Horinagar, Singhortoli, Chunkuri,) were selected nearby Sundarbans under Munshiganj union. Total 82 people were selected for interview purposively.

3.5. Questionnaire Survey and Data Collection

To obtain information questionnaire was prepared to correspond all the aspects. Interviewing method was applied to collect information. Randomness was strictly ensured for better output. People numbers were 82 among 4 villages. Data were collected by interview procedure. Direct questions and different scales were used to obtain information like sex, age, education, profession, religion, marital status, income, house type, boat type, hotel type, interested sector, opinion and others. All of the information required for the study was collected with meticulous care.

3.6. Data collection procedure

3.6.1. Primary data collection

Primary data has been collected through personal interview. A set of questionnaire has been developed which covers the information necessary for the study.

3.6.2. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary information such as statistical data, reports, maps have been collected from various Government and Non-government organizations such as Forest office (Kadamtoli), Joar Ecotourism (Satkhira), Rupantor Ecotourism (Khulna).

3.7. Data Processing and Analysis

The data were processed, analyzed and interpreted to find the result of the study. After completion of data collection the response to the questions of interview schedule were transferred to a master sheet to facilitate tabulation. The analyzed data are represented through tabular and graphical form. The report of the study is written through the systematic way by using computer program of MS word, and SPSS (11.5).

Chapter Four

4. Result and Discussion

Community Based Eco-Tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and Teaming new ways to live on the earth. Community based ecotourism includes programs that minimize the adverse effects of traditional Tourism on the natural environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, initiatives by hospitality providers to promote recycling, energy efficiency, water reuse, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities are an integral part of community based ecotourism. Historical, biological and cultural conservation, preservation, sustainable development etc, are some of the fields closely related to community based ecotourism. Many professionals have been involved in formulating and developing eco-tourism policies.

4.1. Present Condition of the People of Munshiganj Union

A total of 82 local people were interviewed at Munshiganj union at Shymnagar upazilla in Satkhira district. Wide ranges of indicators were selected in various aspects of the present condition of the communities. The indicators included sex, age group, religion, marital status, education, income, present profession, interest on CBET based on profession etc. A detail analysis were made on these parameters and presented in this section are used to make a clear picture on the prospects of CBET in the study area.

4.1.1. Age Group

It was found that 15.9%, 24.4%, 40.2%, 18.3%, 1.2% and 0% of local people were belong to age group in 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 55-65 and above 65 years respectively. Results showed that the highest number of people were between 36-45 age group indicating middle age group. Sahin et al., 2010 found 30.30%, 39.39%, 21.21%, 9.09%, and 0% of local people were belong to age group in below 25, 26-40, 41-55, 56-70, and 71 years respectively at East Dhangmari village in Dacope upazilla.

1= 18-25, 2= 26-35, 3= 36-45, 4= 46-55, 5= 56-65

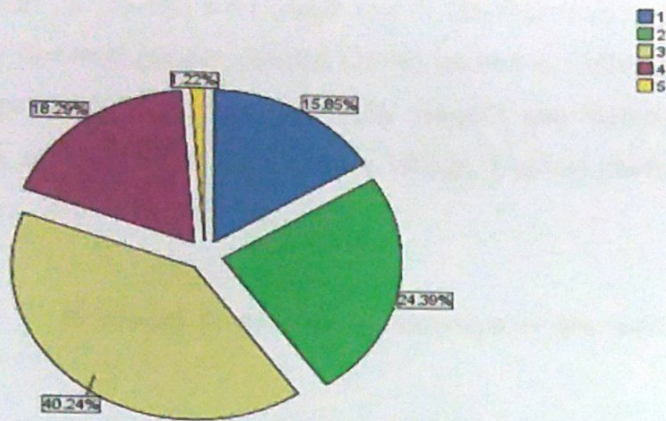


Fig.2: Age group of respondents.

4.1.2.Sex

The survey was conducted among the 82 local people from study area which 60 (73.2%) were male and 22 (26.8%) were female. Sahin et al., 2010 found 10 (31.3%) were male and 23 (69.3%) were female among 33 respondents who are involved in tourism activity respectively at East Dhangmari village in Dacope upazilla.

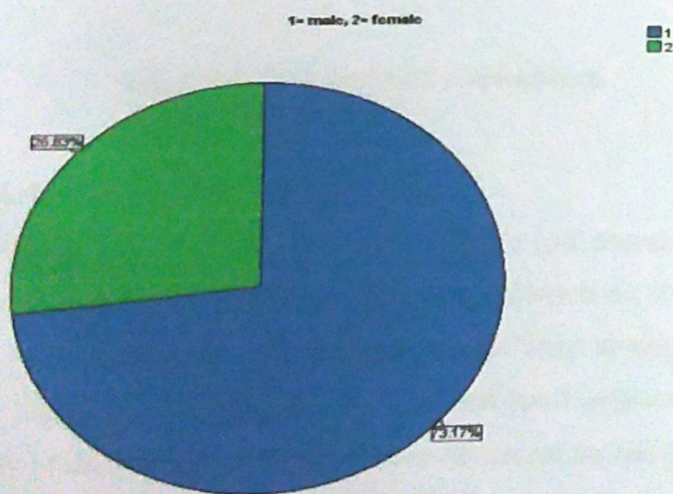


Fig.3: Sex of respondents.

4.1.3. Marital status

It was found that 11 (13.4%) were single and 71 (86.6%) were married people while there were no widow and divorced people. Ahmed (1996) studied at Gallamari and they obtained married fisherman respectively 92%, 94% and 72%. Hasan's and Mahmud (2002) found that on the coastal fishing community of the Kalapara village, Kuakata showed that 39% fisherman were married and rest 10.61% was single.

1= single, 2= married, 3= widowed, 4= divorced

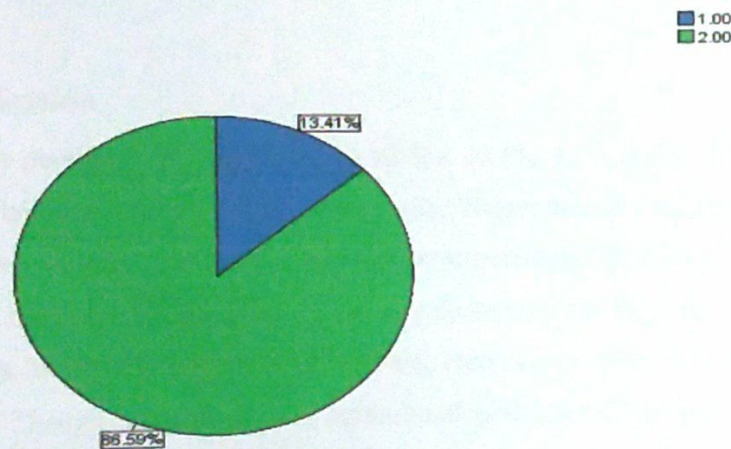


Fig.4: Marital status of respondents.

4.1.4. Educational Status

There was strong relationship between society and education. Human resource development is largely a function of literacy and educational attainment. It was found that 8.5%, 48.8%, 29.3%, 6.1%, 3.7%, 1.2% and 2.4% of local people were belong to education of illiterate, primary school, high school, SSC, HSC, graduate and above respectively. Wang et al., (1996) stated that majority of the local people (86%) have no education and (30%) can sign. Among the rest 15% have only class one to five level of education and 9% have class six to ten education. Sahin et al., (2010) stated that education is needed to build awareness among people to develop facilities in the area of East Dhangmari village in Dacope upazilla.

Table.1: Educational status of respondents

1= illiterate, 2= primary school, 3= high school, 4= ssc, 5= hsc, 6= graduate, 7= above

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	7	8.5	8.5	8.5
2	40	48.8	48.8	57.3
3	24	29.3	29.3	86.6
4	5	6.1	6.1	92.7
5	3	3.7	3.7	96.3
6	1	1.2	1.2	97.6
7	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

4.1.5. Profession

Among the study peoples 11%, 2.4%, 4.9%, 26.8%, 36.6%, 1.2%, 1.2%, 2.4%, 7.3% and 6.1% were students, boatmen, hotel owners, housewife, fishermen, farmers, teachers, honey and golpata collectors, motor cycle drivers and others respectively. Dominant percent peoples are fishermen here. They collect fish and also collect golpata and honey during seasons. In my study all of female are housewife and have no income. Here motor cycle driving is a popular and profitable work. Though Bangladesh is an agricultural land some of the peoples here are farmers for lacking of agricultural land. It is a matter of joy that there were no unemployment person among the study people. Sahin et al., (2010) found that 27.3% forest fisher, day labor 21.1%, wood cutter 15.2% farmer 12.1%, shopkeeper 9% and boatman 1% at East Dhangmari village in Dacope upazilla.

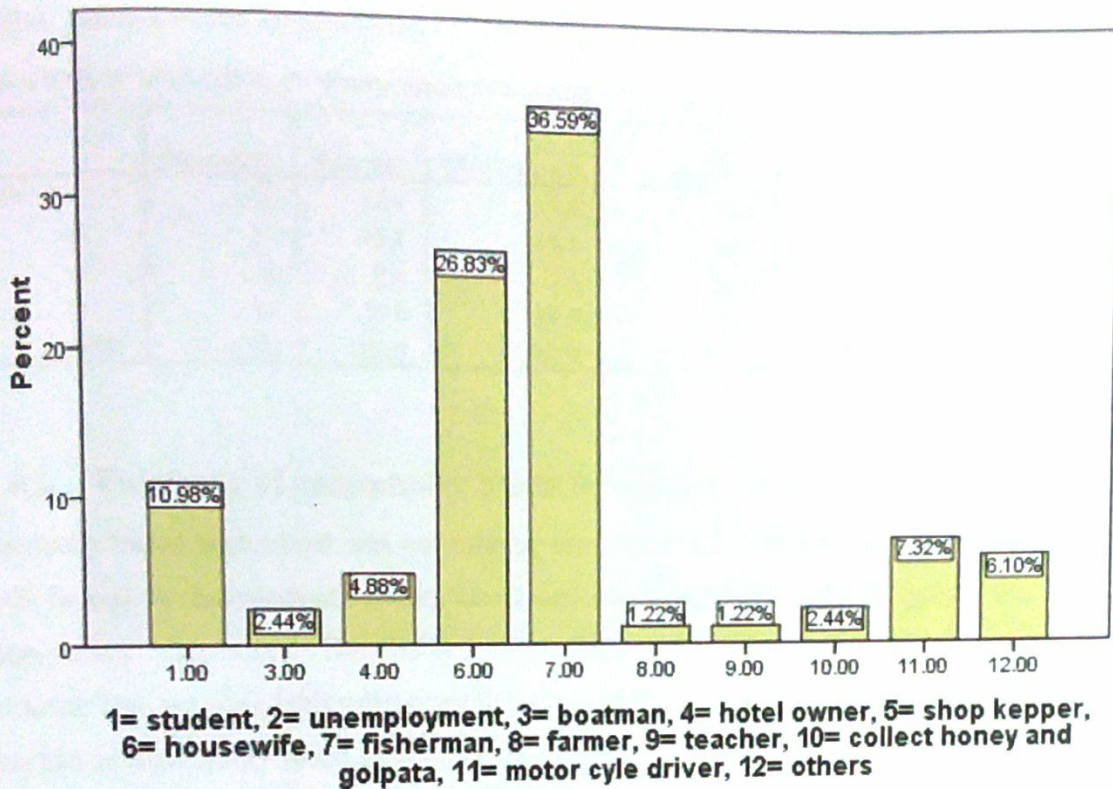


Fig.5: Profession of the respondents.

4.1.6. Income of the Respondents

Firstly it should be admitted that it's very difficult to obtain income data partially because of people's reluctance to reveal the true income and partially because they do not have any proper account of their income. Most of the study people income was between Tk 5001-1000 per month. Some people (11) out of 82 income was below tk 5000 per month. Only few people income was above tk 1000 per month. Housewives had no income. Sahin et al., found average income per year was 48000, 42000, 45000, 50000, 70000 and 40000 for forest fisher, day labor, wood cutter, farmer, trader and boatman respectively at East Dhangmari village in Dacope upazilla.

Table.2: Income of the respondents.

1= < 5000, 2= 5001-10000, 3= 10001-20000, 4= > 20000, 5= no income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	11	13.4	13.4	13.4
2	37	45.1	45.1	58.5
3	2	2.4	2.4	61.0
5	32	39.0	39.0	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

4.2. Existence of community based ecotourism in study area

Community based ecotourism was not running here but a non government organization (NGO) JOAR funded by International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN) started this in one village named Munshiganj. They helped people for house making and producing organic food for tourist. Two people of this village got this kinds of facilities initially. Another village of study union had no community based ecotourism existence.

4.3. People

All of the study people except three were interested for community based ecotourism.

Table.3: Interested people.

1= yes, 2= no

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	79	96.3	96.3	96.3
2	3	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

4.4. Interested profession

The respondent of the study area were interested in all sectors except hawker and souvenir seller. All women were interested for cooking in home. It was found that 20.7%, 18.3%, 3.7%, 20.7%, 1.2%, 25.6% and 9.8% people were interested in house owner, boatman, hotel owner, guide, homemade seller, cooker and transporter respectively.

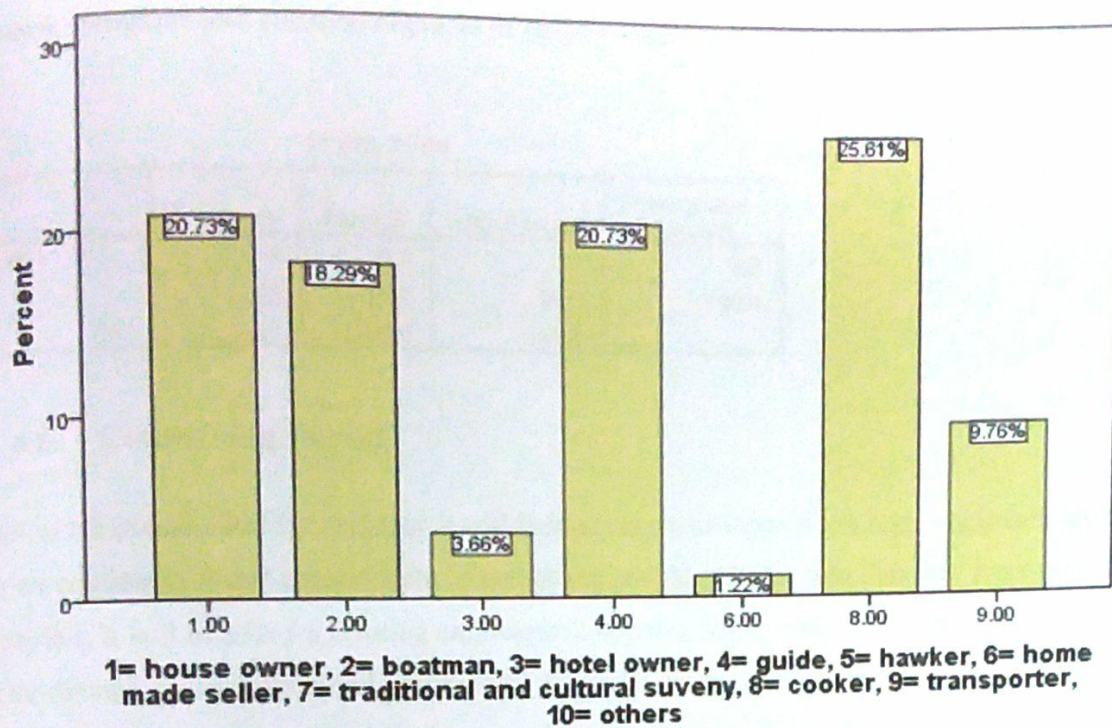


Fig.6: Interested profession of the respondents.

4.5. House and Boat type of the Respondents

Most of the houses of interested people (95.1%) were local type made with soil and golpata. Three people among interested had semi paka tinshed and one had building. Most of the interested people boats were small (64.7%) types and some had medium (35.3%) type of boats.

4.6. Interest to cook for tourist

All of study women are interested to cook in their houses. Only one woman told that she was interested for cooking in restaurant.

4.7. Religious and Cultural Obstacle

Most of the study people (96.3%) told that they had no religious, social and cultural obstacle for community based ecotourism. Only three people two men and one woman told that they had religious and social obstacle for this. People will come in their house and stay in their house it not safe for their young girls and women.

Table.4: Religious and cultural obstacle of respondents.

1= yes, 2= no

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	3.7	3.7	3.7
2	79	96.3	96.3	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

4.8. Conserving Forest

Most of the people (86.6%) said that it will help to conserve forest. Only one people told that it has no relation to forest conservation. Another ten people (12.2%) told that they have no idea about this. It will helpful for creating employment opportunity by producing alternative working sector through community based ecotourism. Although the present tourism in Bangladesh is not in large it can be a major threat to the natural environment at the estimated future growth rate 1.3% per year (SBCP, 2003; and Islam 2003). So development of community based eco-tourism can be a good way for reducing this threat.

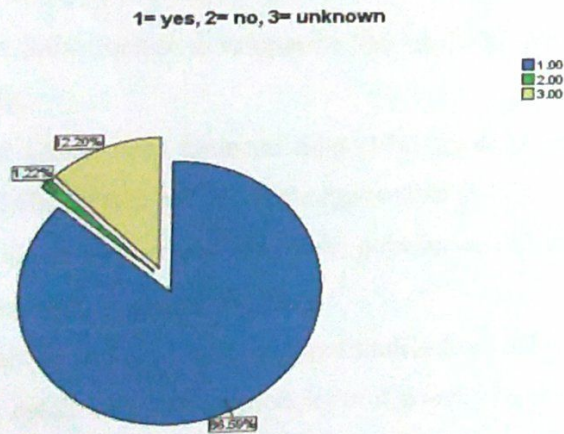


Fig.7: Thinking of respondents about conserve forest.

Chapter Five

5. CONCLUSION

There is a great scope for developing community based ecotourism so it can be a good example for our country if proper step will be taken. Most of the respondents of that area want to involve into community based ecotourism. As respondents are representative of that area so there have a great scope for developing community based ecotourism. Bangladesh is also an over populated country so it is important to involve local people with ecotourism. The ecotourism offers many opportunities to reflect on the importance of sustainability, and the possibilities of implementing approaches which move us in a new direction. Most of the people of the study site are poor so it is necessary to improve their economic condition besides conserving forest. If it is done in proper way it will be very helpful for both local people and tourist in that area and also for conservation of Sundarbans. So proper step should be taken from government and other organization for development of community based ecotourism here.

5.1. Recommendation

1. Need infrastructure development like roads, houses, bridges and ensure security for the tourist.
2. Local people need financial support for house making or other things from government and different non-government organization (NGO).
3. Provide a framework for local populations to engage in businesses and in direct employment in the tourism area.
4. Create indirect employment opportunities from the production of tourism-related inputs.
5. Mass media can this for publicity of this area as a community based eco-tourism area.
6. Take into consideration community attitudes and cultural values and concerns.
7. To create awareness among people about their potential opportunities, risks and changes involved, and is interested in receiving visitors by local NGO or other such organization.
8. Local elite and political people can take part a good step to successful this.

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