

Community Involvement in Nature Conservation Eco- Tourism Practices in Chandubi Area

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Abstract: *The socio- economic development of a state depends on the proper, well planned, scientific utilization of natural resources. To harness the vast potentiality of all round of development in rural areas. We have together share, care and preserve with the natural wealth, viz forest, wild life, water bodies like river, wetlands etc. In order to accelerated the development perspective, promotion of eco- tourism is the best way, It has not help us to open way for income generating, but also help to propagate the social, cultural and natural heritages in broader sense. Beyond it, eco- tourism is helpful to community involvement in nature conservation and to change the environmental arena of an ecological sensitive area. In this paper we are trying to carry out documentation on eco- tourism potentiality at Chandubi Beel of South Kamrup. Connected to Assamese myth, legend and mystery, Chandubi Beel may become a tourist heaven all over the world. And also to examine the changing trends of community involvement in nature conservation through tourism practices. In this paper, descriptive and analytical method has been used. We have visited the famous place, meet local people, consulted tour operators and reviewed various books and articles published in news papers and magazines.*

I. Introduction

The socio- economic development of a state depends on the proper, well planned, scientific utilization of natural resources. To harness the vast potentiality of all round of development in rural areas. We have together share, care and preserve with the natural wealth, viz forest, wild life, water bodies like river, wetlands etc. In order to accelerated the development perspective, promotion of eco- tourism is the best way, It has not help us to open way for income generating, but also help to propagate the social, cultural and natural heritages in broader sense. Beyond it, eco- tourism is helpful to community involvement in nature conservation and to change the environmental arena of an ecological sensitive area.

II. Objectives and methodology

The prime objective of this paper is to carry out documentation on eco- tourism potentiality at Chandubi Beel of South Kamrup. Connected to Assamese myth, legend and mystery, Chandubi Beel may become a tourist heaven all over the world. And also to examine the changing trends of community involvement in nature conservation through tourism practices.

In this paper, descriptive and analytical method has been used. We have visited the famous place, meet local people, consulted tour operators and reviewed various books and articles published in news papers and magazines.

III. Meaning and location of Chandubi Beel

Chandubi, literally means water body where the sun sets, is recognized internationally as Ramsar Site by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources). In Khasi dialects Chan means five and Ublee means the statue of God. According to the local people, the nearby hillocks named Dangor Pahar, Teponhalia, Kundaburha, Loru Khunda Ghuli, Tengabari Ghupa and Ouguri Ghal were the 'Ublee's worshiped by the Khasis. In due course of time the word 'Chan Ublee' abbreviated as 'Chandubi'. In Assamese legend, this is the place where the palace of the marcent Chand Sadagar was submerged in water in somewhere else. During British period, Englishman came here to boating, fishing, hunting crocodiles and enjoyed the Sunset. But scientifically it reveals that this large water body occurred as a result of tectonic eruption on the great earthquake of 1897.

Surrounded by tall hills and green dense forest, Chandubi beel is a natural paradise. At present this wetland covers an area of 448.60 hectares. We are trying to carry out documentation on eco- tourism potentiality at Chandubi Beel of South Kamrup of Assam (India). Connected to Assamese myth, legend and mystery, Chandubi Beel may become a tourist heaven all over the world.

IV. Scene of Chandubi Beel

Looks like an octopus, Chandubi beel has depth about one meter to three meter and most of the water body is covered with aquatic vegetation like water hyacinth, elephant grass, various species of algae etc. The climate of Chandubi beel area is suitable for tourist all over the year. More than 250 species of birds both local and migratory, more than 70 species of fish, 8 species of amphibians, 4 species of turtles, 12 species of serpents are recorded so far. The Sal forest (*Shorea robusta*) vegetation is painted with large number of epiphytic orchids and climbers. Endangered hoolock Gibbon, Slow loris, Indian Samber, Barking deer, Wild Elephant are the prime attraction to this area.

Table - 1

Name of the some animals species founded in Chandubi Area

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific name
1	Slow loris	<i>Nycticebus coucang</i>
2	Hoolock gibbon	<i>Hylobates hoolock</i>
3	Elephant	<i>Elephus maximus</i>
4	Bear cat	<i>Arctictis bintarong</i>
5	Clouded leopard	<i>Neofelis nubulosa</i>
6	Fishing cat	<i>Felis verrina bennet</i>
7	Golden gat	<i>Selis tannincki</i>
8	Swamp Deer	<i>Crvus duvauchi</i>

Source: Forest Department, Govt. of Assam

Chandubi beel may be ultimate destination to wildlife lovers, trackers and other adventure sportsman if proper publicity is takes place. It is 60 Km away from Guwahati city with good road connectivity. Boating, Rafting, Cannoying, Angling, Tracking beyond ornithology, anthropological and anthrobotanical survey could accelerate the promotion of eco-tourism potentiality at Chandubi Area in a large extent.

Chandubi has vast potentiality in Eco-Tourism aspects. It is not only a treasure of wilderness but also rich in ethnic cultures. Chandubi area is inhabited by the ethnic Pati-Rabha community, Khasis, Karbi, Tea-Tribes. Traditional foods, customs and folk-lore of these communities enriched this area. Anyone who is interested in anthropology may come to Chandubi area to enjoy the hospitality of the simple, well-hearted people. Beyond it, this area is famous for folk songs and folk dances of Pati Rabha community.

The moderate temperature and humidity make the Chandubi area as a natural health resort. One could rejoice the natural beauty of this area all over the year in various dimensions. For adventures of nature lovers Chandubi area could become a prime attraction. Tracking through the dense, Sal forest, Rocky hill tops from the beel area to “Teponhalia” Ouguri Ghal could become a memorable event to the nature lovers. As this track is habitat of wild elephants (*Elephus Maximus*) Hoolock, Gibbon, Caped Langur, Methun, Barking Deer, Samber and varieties of birds. Chandubi is also a habitat of various colourful butterfly species.

Table: 2

Name of the some Orchid species founded in Chandubi area

Sl. No	Name of the Species	Ecological status
1	<i>Calantha odora</i>	Endemic
2	<i>Eria barbata</i>	Endemic
3	<i>Eria ferrugina</i>	Endemic
4	<i>Eulophi manii</i>	Endemic
5	<i>Gastrodia exilis</i>	Endemic
6	<i>Habelaria concinna</i>	Endemic
7	<i>Liparis delicupala</i>	Endemic
8	<i>Liparis Torta</i>	Endemic
9	<i>Tainia khasiana</i>	Endemic

Source: Forest Department, Govt. of Assam

The small water fall on the hilly river, Bor Nijora increases the attraction of Chandubi beel. The underground river (Muddki) is 3 K.M. away from this beel. Tracking through this river is also an adventures journey to the wildlife lovers. Both the river and Chandubi beel is riched in aquatic animals. Many more species yet to be scientifically indentified.

V. Conclusion

In order to preserve the natural wealth, to harness the Eco-Tourism potentiality through community participation is very important. In this regard Chandubi area is a role model to other parts of the state. The arena of nature conservation through Eco-Tourism practice by active involvement of the local community has changed at Chandubi area. An N.G.O. named “Wave Eco Tourism” has changed the entire scenario of nature conservation through Eco-Tourism at Chandubi area, till 2009. The local community indulged in illegal tree falling, fishing, hunting of wild animals and other destructive activities. Most of the peoples are poor and they

have no regular income sources. So they earned their livelihood by destroying the forest and wetland Chandubi beel.

In the year 2009, the director of the “Wave Eco Tourism”, Mr. Nirontor Gohain came to this area. He gathered a few local youths and trained up them. With the help of energetic and brave youths he could able to manage the local communities and could able to stop the destruction of the wetland and nearby forest lands. Due to the resistance of the local people tree smugglers and poachers couldn’t enter the forest. The safety of the natural resources and wild animals ensured by the local peoples.

At present there is no disturbance of wild animals in human habitations at Chandubi area. Many people’s came to this area to visit and enjoy the natural beauty and wilderness. For their visit income is generated to the local people by guiding them and other hospitalities. Instead of tree falling the local people have now engaged in ‘Tree Planting’ and ‘Bee Keeping’. Way of livelihood developed day by day. The Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi has appreciated the marvelous deeds of “Wave Eco Tourism” and local youths. The Chief Minister assured the local community that all possible assistance and help could be provided from the Govt. side.

But the future development of the Chandubi area depends on the active support of the people of Assam and abroad. One may help the preservation and development of world famous Chandubi beel by paying a visit or insist others to visit this area. To realize, to enjoy and to determine anyone can go to Chandubi.

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