

# The impacts of costal tourism on local community in Digha- Shankarpur coastal Area of West Bengal

Bimal Duari

PhD Research scholar  
Department of Geography,  
Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, WestBengal

**Abstract:** The impacts of coastal tourism on local community involve social, cultural, political and economic issues. Therefore, keeping in view the importance and relevance of the stakeholder cooperation for sustainable coastal tourism development, and the local community/residents being the key stakeholders, the objective of this quantitative research is to study the local Residents' Attitude in Coastal resort Digha-Sankarpur, West Bengal, India- towards the impacts of coastal tourism as also to suggest the strategic interventions for current problems and future needs. In this process the researcher collected primary data from 180 respondents in the study area by survey method and further analysis done through Mini Tab & SPSS using different statistical tools & techniques like- simple statistical calculations, co-relation, regression to come to the conclusion. The study finding suggests that the residents' participation and co-operation is necessary to make the development more imperishable.

**IndexTerms** - coastal tourism, environment, local community, residents' attitude

## INTRODUCTION:

Tourism over the years cropped up to be a revolutionizing phenomenon and it is emerging as a catalyst of the development process due to economic and employment generation as well as generates a number of socio-economic benefits, particularly in remote and backward areas at the regional, national as well as global levels. The objective of sustainable tourism is to ensure that development brings a positive experience for different stakeholder's like-host community, tourism operators and the tourists themselves (Yazdi, 2012). There are three major elements for any tourism activity like-visitor, host community & environment/place. We can examine the interdependent relationships between tourism and the environment in terms of the interaction of the visitor, the place, and the host community (UNWTO, 2004). The growth of tourism in general, and in coastal areas in particular, is related to three main factors: increased personal incomes and leisure time, improvements in transportation systems, and greater public awareness of world destinations due to improved communications (EEA, 2001). This growth, which has reached its peak in recent decades, exerts pressures on the environmental and cultural resources of coastal areas, and negatively affects the social, economic and cultural patterns of tourist destinations (Marina & Alessio, 2009). Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005).

## LOCATION:

Digha- Shankarpur Coastal area lies in the southwest corner of the Purba Medinipur District of West Bengal. This area lies in the coastal tract of adjoining Bay of Bengal and boarder of West Bengal and Orissa. The costal area of Digha-Shankarpur(Fig 1) is located in the SOI toposheet No. 73-O/6 and 73-O/10.The extents of the study area is between latitudes -21°36'50" N and 21°30'00"N and longitudes 87°29'40" E and 87°37'00"E . The width of the area is 2.5 to 3.0 Km from the low tide level and length is 14 Km from the Orissa border to the Jaldha Mouza.The Digha planning area comprises of 42 mouzas under Kanthi sub-division of which 17 mouzas are in Ramnagar Police Station and 25mouzas are in Digha Police Station.Total area of this planning area is 8752.63 Acres.

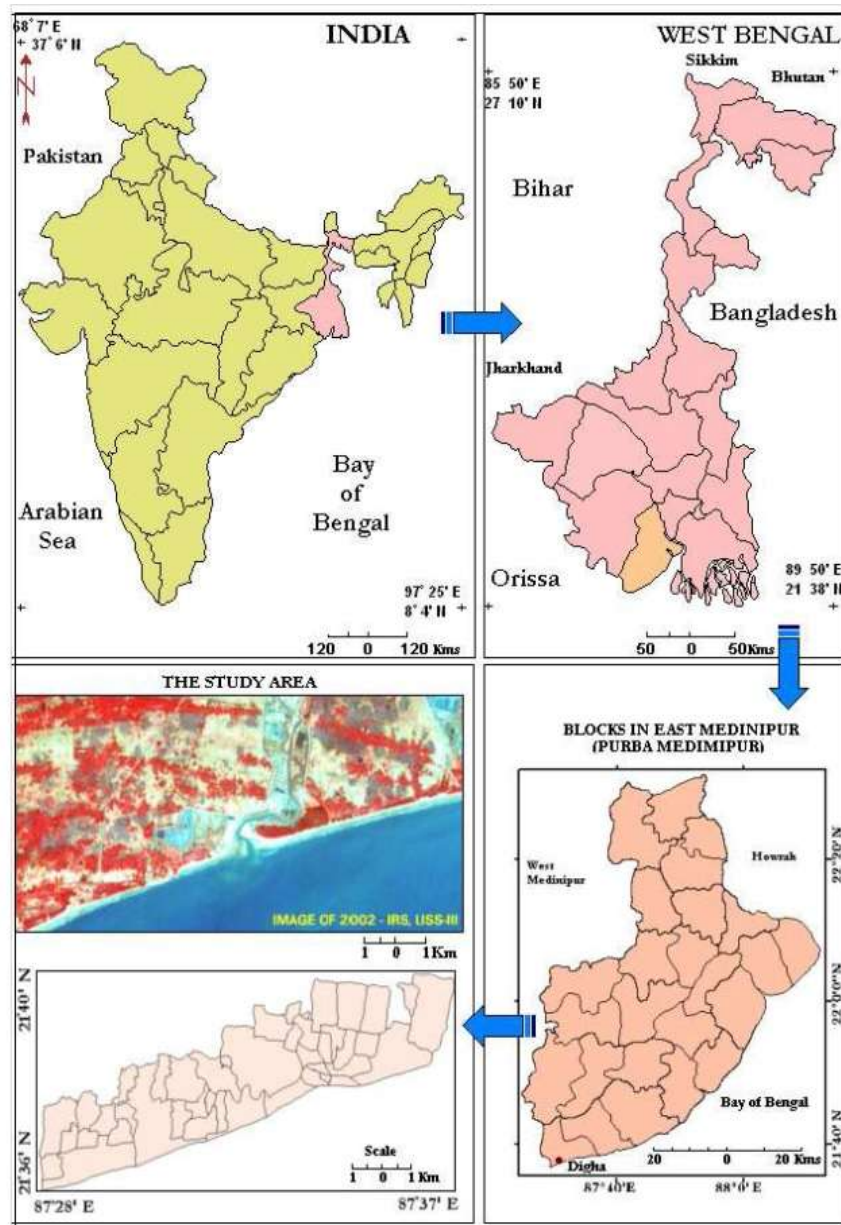


Fig- 1, Location Map of The Study Area

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

**Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal (2002)** have suggested that tourism development can be modeled by using six factors namely the level of community concern of local residents; the utilization of the tourism resource by local residents; the level of ecocentric values of local residents; the state of local economy; the perceived cost and the perceived benefits of tourism development.

**Allen, Long, Perdue & Kieselbach (1988)** observed that, the degree of impacts depends upon the frequency of interaction between residents and tourists, their willingness to serve as gracious hosts.

**Sheldon and Abenoja (2001)**, stressed that sustainable tourism cannot be successfully implemented without the involvement of those affected by tourism.

**Smith and Krannich, (1998)** have found that increasing levels of tourism dependence in a community are associated with increasingly negative attitudes about its development, as well as lower levels of local satisfaction and higher levels of crime concern.

**Liu, Sheldon and Var (1987)** shows that the growing pressure from tourism, in turn generates stronger criticism of tourism, with a growing public awareness among the population of environmental and cultural problems that it creates and consequent increase in opposition to tourism development.

**Pearce (1980)** argues that areas with a high level of tourism development generate resident dissatisfaction due to traffic and parking problems, crime, inflation, etc.

**Sukla and Patra (2017)** in his research article studied about Physical and Anthropogenic Activities and Its Impact on Digha-Sankarpur Coastal Sand Dunes, West Bengal

**Mondal and Bhushan(2013)** in their paper is an attempt to understand and examine the nature based resources development of Digha-Sankarpur, West Bengal coast which is an emerging industry and a wide scope of Eco-tourism and natural resources along the coast of Digha-Sankarpur, West Bengal

**Dandapath and Shukla(2013)** in their paper studied about the linkage in-between the developmental parameters of Tourism industry (like invariably leads to accelerated road transport, indiscriminate expansion of hotel industry ( like Urban sprawl) and illegal encroachment by small traders and Other activities by Local People in the coastal West Bengal) and Environment and their impact in the costal West Bengal Tourist Destinations.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS:**

There is a major issue regarding the awareness from different stakeholders about sustainable tourism in the coastal resort- Digha-Sankarpur , West Bengal. Environmental issues are big concern to maintain for the future sustainability as the area is facing erosion, congestion (Old Digha sea beach), sewage and garbage's etc. The Economy of the area is also not very sound in spite of having a beautiful sea resort. The shortage of some facilities like quality accommodations, recreational opportunities, hospitality skills from local people are the major hindrances of coastal tourism development. The main problem is to understand residents' attitudes on the impacts of tourism development and it is complicated because opinions towards tourism are formed from residents' perceptions of many factors. Proper co-ordination is required amongst stakeholders involved in this tourism development process to maintain long term sustainability on environmental, economic and socio-cultural fields. Moreover, need to ensure community participation (which may not be up to the satisfactory level) by increasing benefits of local people and local needs for sustainable coastal tourism.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To study the existing tourism status & feasibility and effectiveness of environmental contingences for sustainable development of tourism in the study area.
2. To study the community attitude towards tourism development and the impacts caused by the tourism in the above mentioned area.
3. To suggest the measures for the sustainable Tourism development in the region

#### **HYPOTHESIS:**

**H1:**Tourism development Impacts local community to some extent.

**H2:** Sustainable development can resolve the current tourism related problems addressing the futuristic community needs.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

Test of research instrument (questionnaire) is also important for reliability test. In statistical term, the usual way to look at reliability is based on the idea that individual items (or set of items) should produce results consistent to the overall questionnaire. As per Andy Field (2005), any value between 0.7 to 0.9 considered as highly reliable

For each item, respondent used 5 point Likert scale to rate their opinion and attitude, where 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree.

The statistical techniques used for the analysis of the data include percentage method, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression. Statistical tools used as SPSS & Minitab. The percentage method is used for explaining the description of the respondent. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to measure attitude of residents toward tourism impacts 5 point Likert scale. Multiple regression techniques have been used to study the joint influence of selected group variable of residents' attitude on overall attitude. Response mechanism has been used to examine the role and contribution of sustainable development for the resolution of the current problems to address future needs of the community

#### **FINDING AND ANALYSIS:**

The study is confined to the rural residents' attitude towards coastal Tourism Development in and around coastal resort Digha-Shankarpur. A profile of respondent, rural residents is depicted in table 1.

**Table I: Profile of Respondent Rural Residents**

N=150

Description		No of respondent	Percentage of Respondent
<b>a)</b>	<b>Age(Year)</b>		
	Bellow 25	32	21.33
	25-40	83	58.66
	Above40	35	23.33
<b>b)</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Married	107	71.33
	Unmarried	43	28.66
<b>c)</b>	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	116	77.33
	Female	34	22.66
<b>d)</b>	<b>Qualification</b>		
	Under Secondary	87	58
	Secondary and Above	63	42
<b>e)</b>	<b>House hold Monthly Income</b>		
	Below 10000	73	48.66
	10000-25000	47	31.33
	Above25000	30	20
<b>f)</b>	<b>Involvement in Tourism</b>		
	Direct	55	36.66
	Indirect	67	44.66
	No involvement	28	18.66

Source: Author 's survey

Of the total 150, more than half of the survey residents were from the age group of 25-40 years, followed by above 40 years which comprised 23.33%, , and the rest of the age groups i.e. below 25 represents about 21 % of the respondents. Surveyed residents represents more married (71.33%) than Unmarried (28.66%) In terms of gender male (77.33%) outnumber females (22.66%). Although, the study area represents rural villages having less scope for income and education, still there are good representation of above Secondary(42%) respondents and non Secondary (58%). It is of the note that the majority of the respondents (48.66%) had monthly household income less than Rs. 10,000/- while only about 20% had monthly income more than Rs.25,000/-. The survey included a question about the resident's involvement in tourism, wherein the largest number of residents (approx. 44%) reported to have indirect involvement as against 36% directly and 19% not involved in Tourism.

Further efforts were made to conduct the reliability test (Cronbach Alpha) for the responses of local residents (questionnaire) on tourism impacts by SPSS windows programs tool. Score for environmental factor is- 0.779, economic factor is- 0.805 and socio-cultural factor is- 0.817.

**Table II: Attitude towards tourism impact**

N=150

Strongly disagree= 1, Disagree= 2, Undecided= 3, Agree= 4, Strongly agree=5 Source- self survey

A .Environmental		Mean (X)	SD
<b>En1</b>	Tourism development leads to increase waste and noise in the area	3.41	1.42
<b>En2</b>	Because of tourism roads and surroundings are well maintained	3.34	1.5
<b>En3</b>	Tourism results in urbanization and congestion/over crowdedness	3.54	1.42
<b>En4</b>	Tourism leads to pollution of water resources.	3.45	1.44
<b>En5</b>	The creation of tourism infrastructure leads to problems like deforestation, land sliding, etc	3.62	1.40
B. Economic			
<b>Ec1</b>	Tourism generates more business for local entrepreneurs	3.47	1.33
<b>Ec2</b>	Tourism results in increased purchasing power of locals	3.45	1.26



<b>Ec3</b>	The most of the jobs in the tourism in my area pay low wages	3.42	1.28
<b>Ec4</b>	Creation of tourism facilities is a costly affair	3.41	1.29
<b>Ec5</b>	Tourism leads to increased cost of living for hosts	3.56	1.26
<b>C. Socio-Cultural</b>			
<b>Sc1</b>	Tourism improves image of the community	3.10	1.45
<b>Sc2</b>	Meeting tourists from different cultures and areas is a valuable experience	2.90	1.39
<b>Sc2</b>	Tourism results in conflicts between residents and tourists	3.01	1.41
<b>Sc3</b>	The access to various facilities by the host is limited due to presence of visitors	3.16	1.46
<b>Sc4</b>	Tourism creates more pressure on local services like Police, Fire Protection and Public Utilities	3.40	1.39
<b>D. Overall Attitude</b>			
<b>OA</b>	Overall Impact : Tourism Development Impacts Local Community	4.02	1.02

Table 2 presents the attitudinal measurement of the rural residents towards the Tourism impacts in terms of 16 items broadly grouped under the three categories of the Environment, economic and socio-cultural impacts with five statements within each subhead. The last statement measures the overall attitude towards the impact of the tourism development on the local community. Of the total 16 variables 15 statements have recorded mean value more than mid value (3) on five point scale, along with the overall attitude having mean value above 4, results to the acceptance of the first hypothesis that tourism development impacts local community in some extent.

Further, multiple regression techniques have been applied to study the joint influence of selected group variable on overall attitude. All the identified variables were grouped into four major categories on the basis of similarities i.e. Environment(En1-5), Economic (Ec1-5), and Socio-cultural(SC1-5) and Overall Attitude(OA). Regression coefficients have been tested with the help of most powerful “t” test.

Table 3 shows the strength of relationship between the dependent variable OA and all the independent variables taken together. When Environment Impacts is increased by one unit, OA increases by 0.2384. For one unit increase in Economic impacts, OA attitude increases by 0.7743. When Socio-cultural is increased by one unit, OA decreases by 0.4460, which all are significant at 1 percent & 5 percent level. Multiple correlation coefficient between dependent variable OA and independent variable (R=0.40) indicates that OA is influenced by independent variables. It is also evident from the value of  $R^2=0.16$  of variation in OA accounted by joint variables of En, Ec, and SC. The lower values of  $R^2$  indicates that although there exists a positive relationship between tourism impacts and OA but overall attitude toward tourism impacts is a function of a number of variables other than the selected group variables taken in the study.

**Table III**  
**Regression Equation of Overall Attitude (OA) on environment, Economic and Socio-cultural**

Variable constant	Regression Coefficients	T value	Multiple correlation
Environmental	0.2384	2.00*	R= 0.828
Economic	0.7743	6.45***	(R <sup>2</sup> ) =0.330
Socio-Cultural	0.4460	-3.88***	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =0.317

\*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4= Agree,5= Strongly Agree

Table IV shows the mean values for the 3 variables of sustainable tourism development as response mechanism variables to respond to the challenge of the impacts caused by the tourism development.

In view of the resulted research findings the following conclusion is drawn on the basis of the responses of surveyed sample.

**Table IV**  
**Sustainable Tourism Development as Response Mechanism**

Response Mechanism	Description	Mean
<b>STD1</b>	Residents' participation and cooperation in necessary to make development more sustainable that finally cultivates harmonized guest-host relationships.	4.26
<b>STD2</b>	STD is a long-term approach that requires strategic partnership among all the stakeholders.	3.67
<b>STD3</b>	STD can prove to minimise negative impacts maximizing positives that resolves the current problems addressing futuristic needs	4.11

It is clear from the above table that for STD1 and STD 2 have accorded mean value above the mid value on 5 point scale, which implies that Residents' participation and cooperation in necessary to make development more sustainable and co-operation from all stakeholders also required for sustainable coastal tourism development in Digha-Shankarpur, West Bengal. STD3 accorded mean value above 4 on 5 point scale, which suggests sustainable tourism development in the study area can prove to minimize negative impacts and maximize positives that resolves the current problems and addressing futuristic needs, also proves the second hypothesis.

#### CONCLUSION:

The present research work reveal that tourism development in Digha-Shankar pur, West Bengal has an impact on local community to some extent based on the above findings. As per the impact analysis economic issues will be the top priority in the model, Socio-cultural issues will be dwelt next and environmental issues need to be considered at last in the model for sustainable coastal tourism development in Digha- Shankarpur, W.B. (Integrated development model for sustainable tourism development like Prakobsiri Pakdeepinit, 2007). Again, residents' participation & co-operation in sustainable tourism development where the residents will get benefit from tourism should be given top priority and also need to ensure stakeholders participation and co-operation for sustainable tourism development in the region. To ensure whole hearted participation and co-operation from local community it is necessary to try and eliminate all the negative impacts caused due to tourism development like environmental degradation, economic uncertainty and low wages due to seasonality and lack of hospitality skills and socio-cultural problems due to insufficient infrastructural development and proper planning. Locals are getting economic benefits from tourism development in the area as it was discussed with some local residents involved with different tourism related professions, like one van (Tourist transport) driver is earning Rs. 750/ per day in pick tourist season and one coconut seller is earning Rs. 650/ per day in pick tourist season, one steward is earning Rs. 400/ per day as tips, one barber is earning Rs. 1100/per day during pick tourist season. A well maintained park (Amarabati Park) which is situated in New Digha was recorded a tourist flow of about 48,000 on 25th December-2013 (As per the information received from ticket counter) also requires casual staffs from local community to give proper service. Sustainable tourism development could lead a better economic prosperity to locals. Economic impact on local community due to tourism development is more significant and careful planning is much needed from different stakeholders (Govt. & private) on infrastructure development, tourism promotion, facilities for foreign tourists, skill development for locals and should ensure overall economic development in the region. It is also very significant to get the honest view about the environmental deteriorations in the region although the result of environmental degradation experienced little late. Aged people are more concern about environmental deteriorations.

Tourism development ensures better cleanliness and maintenance which in turn makes the people (Both host and guest) happy. The major area of concern is the sewage and garbage in the Old Digha which causes pollution and mosquito born diseases in this area. Soil erosion in this area is a big problem. Proper land use plan should be developed for the local entrepreneurs as they are not getting enough opportunity to do the business and not in a position to compete with big businessman who all are coming from outside to doing business in Digha. Local authorities should ensure CRZ guidelines for all and right awareness building on environment protection will help to get a sustainable future. On socio-cultural head, it is very important to develop the lifestyle of locals for right participation in tourism in the region. There are some confusion amongst the local residents about the role of local panchayat and Digha-Shankarpur Development Authority regarding the development of local communities in the area. Although the DSDA was established initially to look after tourism development but at the same time the authority should ensure the facilities, infrastructures and the overall environment for all the entrepreneurs including locals. It had been observed that the standard of living is increasing for the locals but at the same time the locals are facing problems in the field of electricity and fresh water during pick tourist season. West Bengal suffers by many problematic issues which have created conflicts between different stakeholders. This coastal resort of West Bengal has unique ecological features that provide significant but under-utilized tourism potential, including coastal areas (except old Digha), recreational parks, fish landing harbor, temples, marine

aquarium, science centre, flora & fauna, water sports and scenic beauty. A proper, planned sustainable development of these resources is required which could enhance community livelihoods throughout this area. Apart from this there are different issues those may often overlooked must be addressed in the research like the role of tourism demand, the nature of tourism resources, intra-generational equity, socio-cultural progress, co-ordination between different stakeholders and finally the long term sustainability. There should be wholehearted participation and positive awareness from local community for sustainable tourism development. Finally we could conclude that residents' participation and cooperation is necessary to make development more sustainable that cultivates harmonized guest-host relationships which could be strengthened by equitable distribution of benefits and costs to residents, leading a favorable attitude towards tourism.

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