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Development of Beach Tourism and Associated Land Use Changes: A Case Study in Digha Development Authority Area

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Abstract:

Digha is located on the shore of Bay of Bengal and situated at a distance about 145 km southwest of Kolkata. The tourism at Digha has been developed mainly at Digha Development Authority (DDA) Area. Its impact is also visible on the surrounding area which is comprised of a number of villages. But connecting the time and dimension of the work, the area has been restricted to the DDA area only. The development of beach tourism on one hand and increasing beach erosion on the other hand has been raised. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) controversies have also hinted the growth of infrastructural facilities necessary for further expansion of thin tourism industry. The intensive use of generators due to power cuts at hotel and shops are making noise and air pollution. Moreover, there is a lack of effort for building alternative tourist attraction at Digha apart from sea has also made the tourism less diversified. So there are the issues which have prompted me to select this place for study.

The seasonal fluctuation of tourist and transport communication system, the populations, the production function has been studied very intensively and it has been analyzed. All these have been shown with the help of maps, diagrams, sketches, photographs for illustration of the content.

Keywords: *Tourism, Tourist, Development, Beach, Landuse.*

1. Introduction

West Bengal has a vast beach area with enormous potentialities as a tourist centre. It would not be true to say that this coastline entirely unutilized. In recent year the government of West Bengal has realized that the coastline could be utilize much more intensively to the benefit of the state. With a view to make an optimum of such an outstanding to develop a tourist's centre, enjoyable beaches for holidays and recreational purposes was mooted. The Digha tourist centre is a maiden endeavour in this direction.

Another consideration which led the government of West Bengal to set up a tourist centre at Digha may due to following reason. Economically the area was very backward; the setting of tourist centre would bring some relief to the poor residents. Another factor which also influenced that huge number of Bengali tourist was gone to spend their holidays in the sea resorts like Puri, Gopalpur etc and thus huge sum of rupees spent on that places and that money can change the economic structure of Digha. In addition quite a large number of people visit Kolkata for business and other reason. These people also no doubt are attracted to spend a day or two for relaxation.

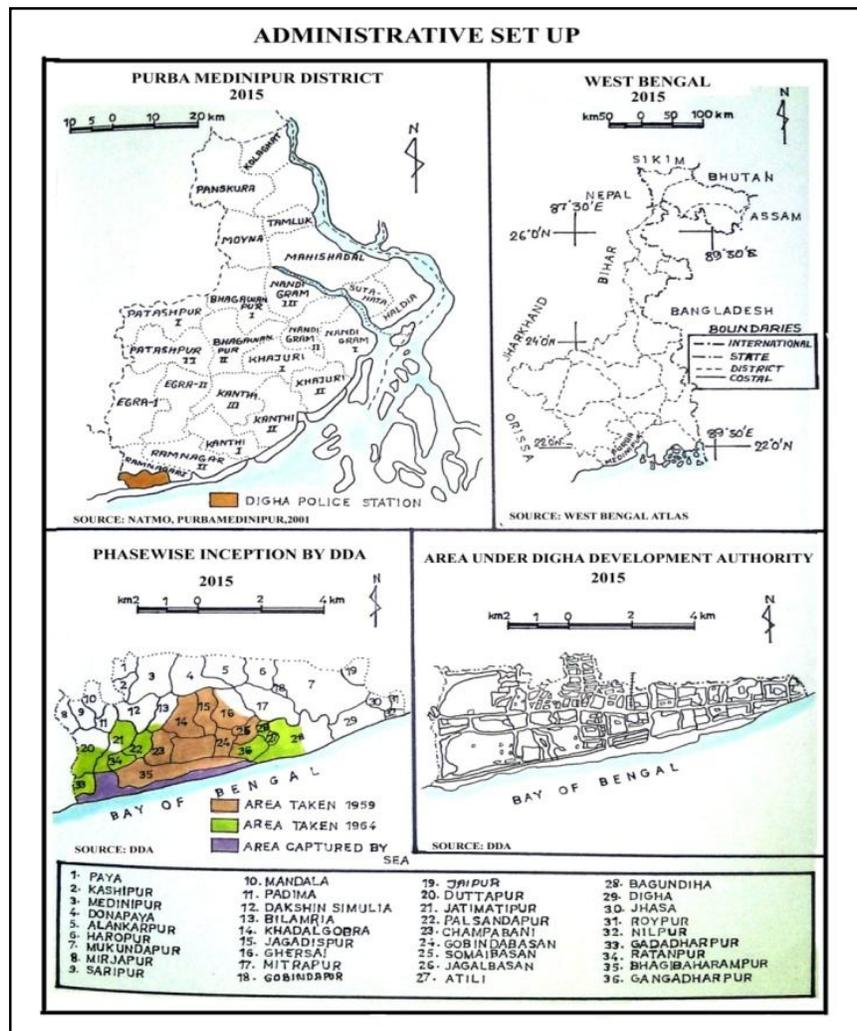


Figure 1

2. Population Composition

As per 2011 census the total population of Digha was 8,159 of which 4,162 are males while 3,997 are females. On the other hand the volume of tourist for the same year was around 3 lakhs. This indicates that the impact of floating populations more as it is about 37 times more than the present population or standing population.

The population of Digha may be viewed from three aspects:

- Standing (i.e. resident) population
- Tourist population
- Floating population other than tourist

2.1. Standing Population

The population who usually live in Digha Town having their source by different services and who have their own establishment may be considered as standing population.

2.2. Tourist Population

The visiting population who generally come to enjoy the beautiful environments of the pleasant sea beach and stay here for longer or shorter period in hotel accommodation may be considered as tourist population.

2.3. Floating Population

A large number of people from nearby region (Contai, Ramnagar, Digha PS etc) daily come to the town to render different services, but do not stay on may be subdivided according to their services. The categories are:

- People connecting with marketing of agricultural commodities and handcrafts.
- People who came to serve in different office.
- People come in the connection with transportation activities.

3. Landuse by Digha Development Authority

Area under Digha Development Authority extends over an area of 1100 acres under Digha PS in Purba Medinipur district. The entire area was acquired by DDA in order to establish a sea resort with modern amenities and services. From Orissa Border this planning area stretches eastward along seashore up to Smith's bungalow and Barristers Colony. Physically it is more or less rectangular in shape with sand dune scattered here and there. Initially development of Digha concentrated in the eastern most part of DDA, where the road from Contai is meeting with the seashore. This development took place as an unplanned manner which plunders the beauty of the beach. Ugly structures, both pacca and kacha are now being used as restaurants, shops, residences, official purposes etc giving impression of the chaotic environment.

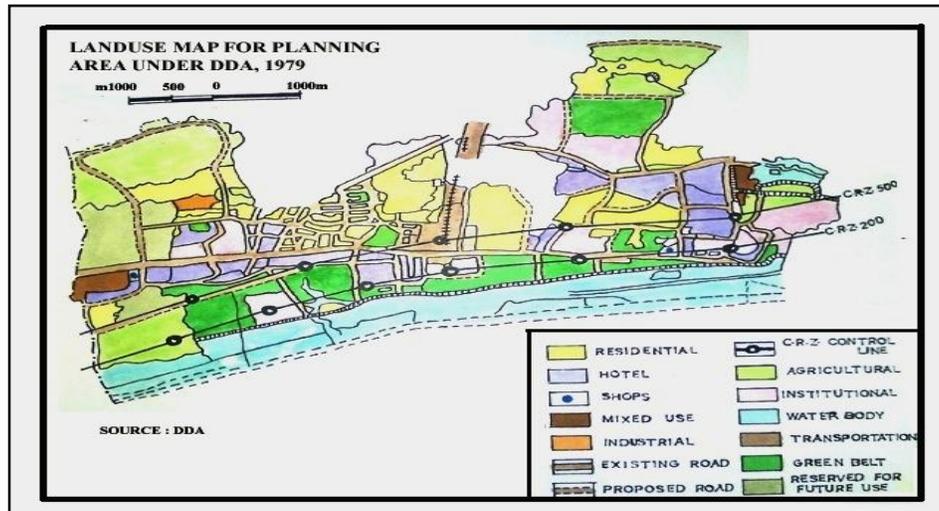


Figure 2

The existing foreshore road running through the town is not only acting as a bus terminal, on the eastern side of the town, but is also used for commercial purposes. In the first year of 7th five year plan (1985-90) an all round development plan has been undertaken. In this way it is purposed that Digha should be developed not only as a tourist health resort but as a planned modern township. Commercial land use comprises of hotels, cottages, lodge, holiday homes, market etc. in this sector Govt. and private both have important functions. Tourist lodge like Saikatbas, Malancha, Nirala etc are the commercial area occupied by Government. The main private commercial area occupied by huge number of private hotels and holiday homes.

3.1. Present Landuse

Looking to the needs of tourist town, Digha suffers from inadequate development of recreational activities and which must be increased. Land under this use occupies only 8.45% of the developed area. Sea beach is the main focus of recreation. At present the picnic spot, the play ground besides the health centers and the afforested area beside the beach provide some spot for recreation to the tourist as well as with the growth of in number and duration of stay of tourists, the demand for recreational space is bound to increase rapidly.

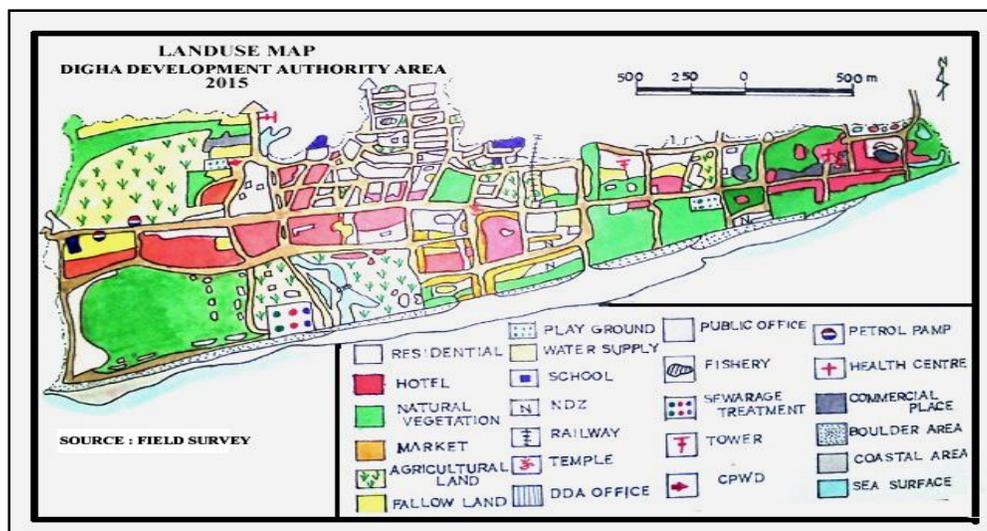


Figure 3

About 11.95% of the urbanized land of the planning area is devoted to institutional use. Land occupied by National Marine Research Laboratory area and health center represents the major of the institutional land use. Educational institute are conspicuous of their absence in Digha and need therefore be provided properly in future.

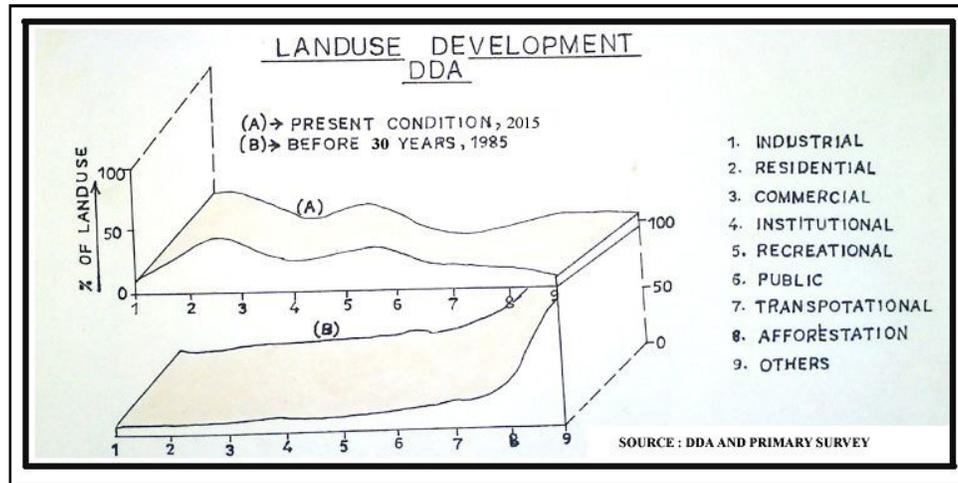


Figure 4

3.2. Market

There is a plan to develop a super market at Digha. The place has also been selected. But due to inefficiency in plan implementation and monetary storage, proper structure could not be provided by the government. The market place is now occupied by ugly tin and bamboo structure and goomties. In recent times, some pacca structures were established at New and Old Digha for tourist attraction. In Old Digha there is a market called Nehru market and it is the main market in Digha.

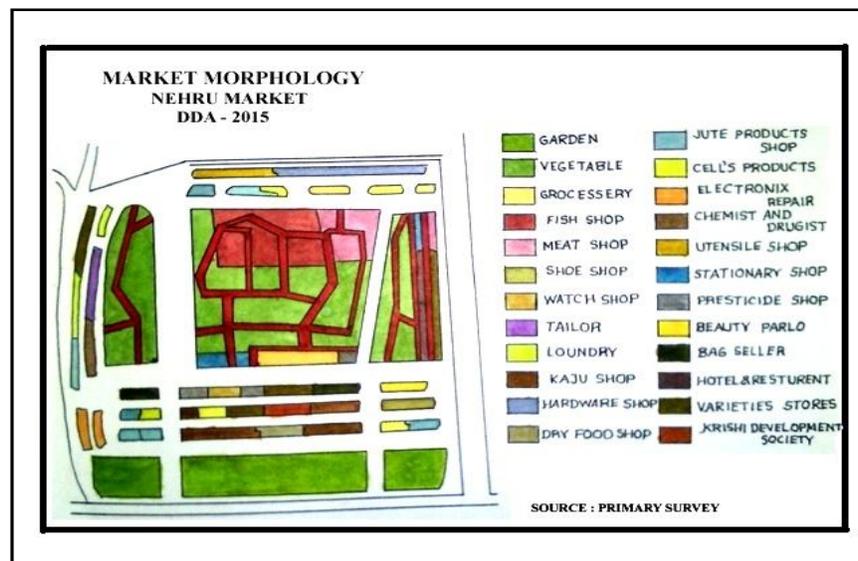


Figure 5

4. Infrastructural Facilities

4.1. Water Supply

Only 40% of the establishments have got the facilities of pipe water supply from the single overhead tanks provided by Digha Town. Some do also derive water from some shallow tube well sunk at their own cost. The hotel Sea Hawk has its own deep tube wells sunk to serve its own purpose. Other units except goomties get their water facilities owned by them or provided by the government. The goomties however, get their required order from the pipe water supply provided at the road side or tube well provided in some public places.

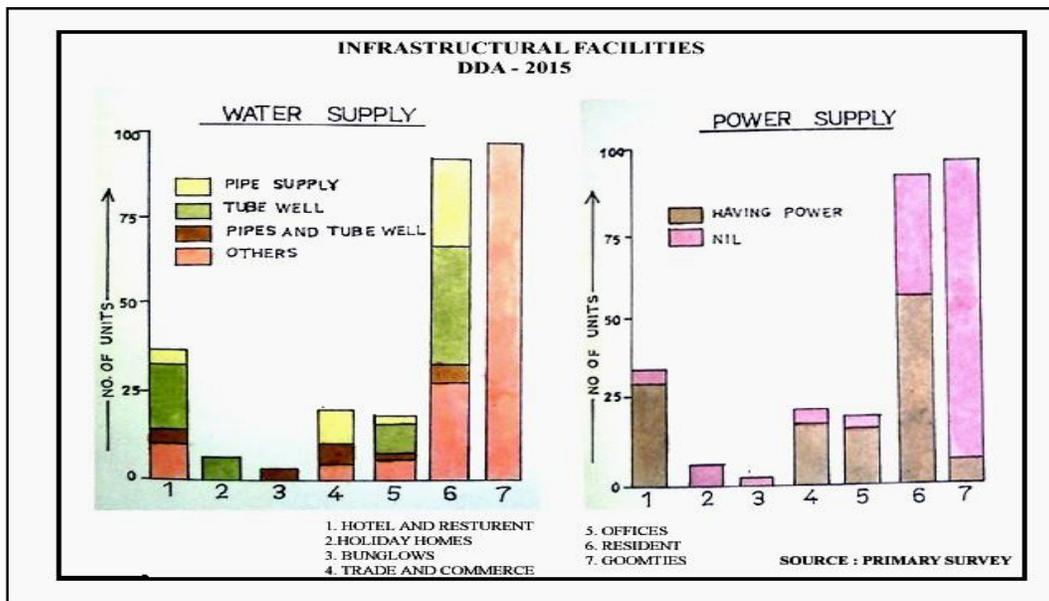


Figure 6

4.2. Power Supply

D.V.C. supply has been provided in the town for illuminating roads and giving supply to as many as 50% of the units. Hotel Sea Hawk has however installed its own powerful generators to illuminate its own premise. W.B.S.E.B. has provided one generating station in the town which remains stands by when D.V.C. falls; it is switched on to the generating of the town which remains as a standby. For long failure of D.V.C supply, general water supply is very much affected because of low voltage of the low generator supply and thereby putting much difficulty to the hotel management of the town.

4.3. Sanitary Facilities

Describe standards of environmental sanitation are an essential ingredient of a recreational town like Digha. At present 1/3 rd of the hotel establishment have their own facilities, while the rest shares with others. Absence of such facilities for 14% units cause major nuisance to the close beach side and Jhaw Groves.

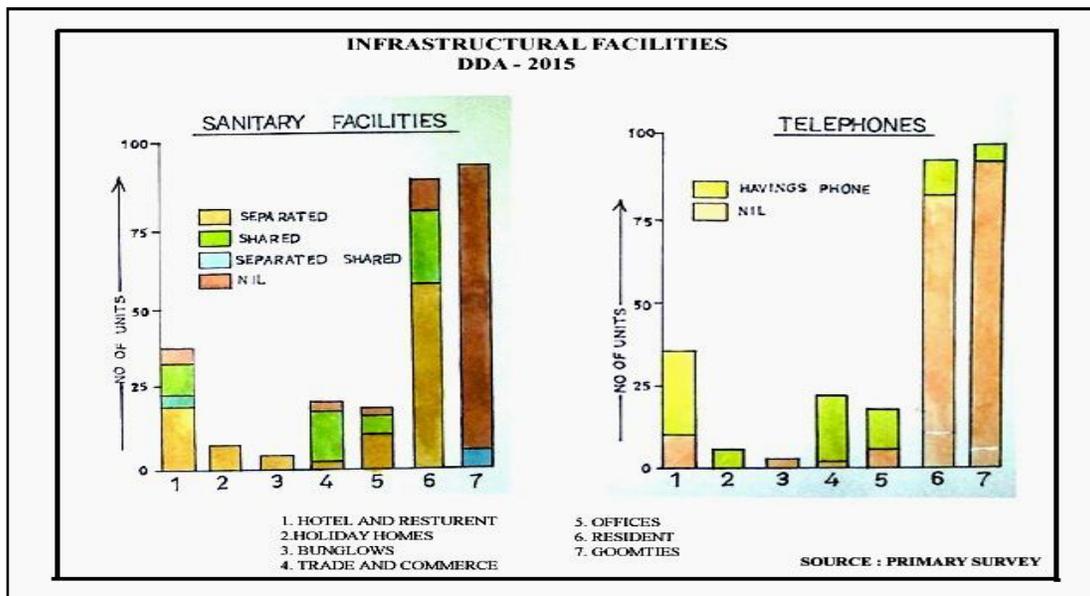


Figure 7

4.4. Post and Telegraph Facilities

There is only one post office equipped with telephone exchange at Digha to serve the town. Observation shows that maximum telephones come from Contai, the sub-divisional centre, in which Digha is located. Maximum telephones come from Kolkata. It shows that the interaction between Digha and Kolkata is very high.

Types of Establishment	Water supply				Telephones		Power supply		Sanitary facilities			
	Pipeline	Tube well	1 & 2	Others	Having	Nil	Having	Nil	Separated	Shared	1 & 2	Nil
Hotel and Restaurant	4	17	7	10	29	8	32	5	20	3	12	5
Holiday Homes bungalows	10	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	0	0
Trade and Commerce	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	0
Offices	5	0	6	10	19	2	18	3	3	15	0	3
Residents	5	1	7	2	12	3	13	2	8	4	0	3
Residents	30	6	34	20	78	12	60	30	65	21	0	4
Goonties	0	0	0	92	85	7	8	84	0	0	4	88

Table 1: Infrastructural facilities
Source: Primary Survey

5. Tourism

5.1. Seasonal Variation of Tourist

As Digha is a sea resort and has developed as a tourist’s town. The most organized industry of the town obviously tourism, which has a great impact on the general economy of this area. Climate is a great influencing factor of tourism. The tourist population of this town is however is not uniformly distributed over months within the year. July to September is considered to be unfavorable season for tourist inflow in Digha. In other months the tourist population of Digha is very high. Vacation of academic institution and govt. holidays and weekend are most favorable for Digha.

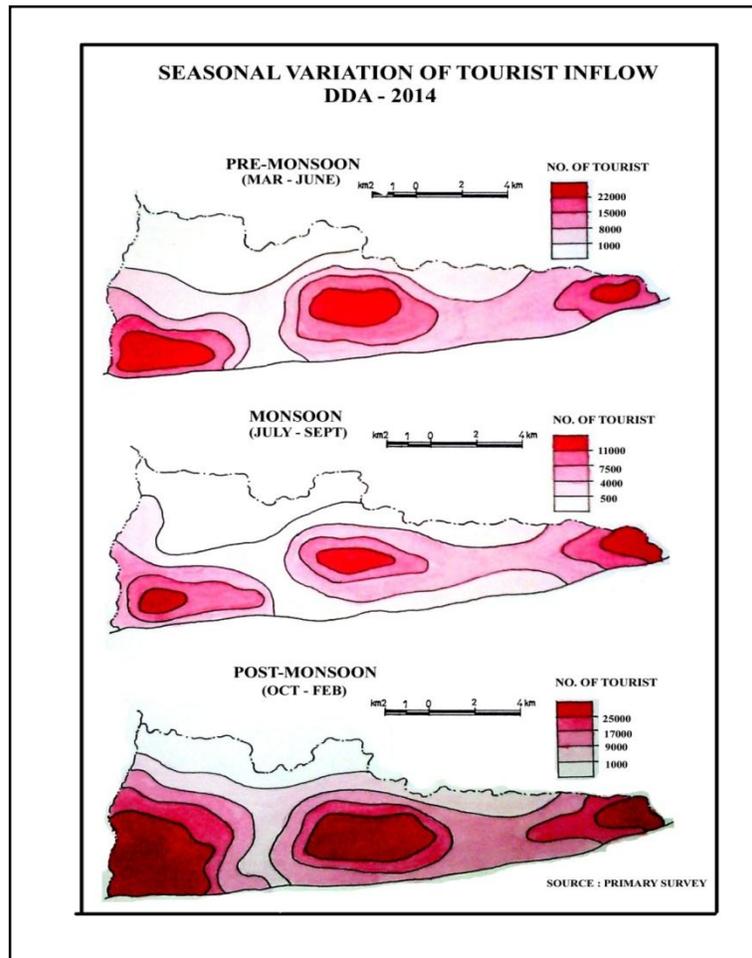


Figure 8

5.2. Accommodation

Digha is growing first rate which is revealed the number of growth of establishment of year wise. Except temples all other establishment has grown considerably during last 15 years. The year growth is spectacular since 1980. But all this growth concentrate in the western portion of Digha area which is very near of Orissa border which is might create some planning problem in future. From the hotel survey it can be seen that there are 63 private hotels and 42 private holiday homes with total seat capacities 2550. Tourist lodge is controlled by the department of tourism of govt. of west Bengal.

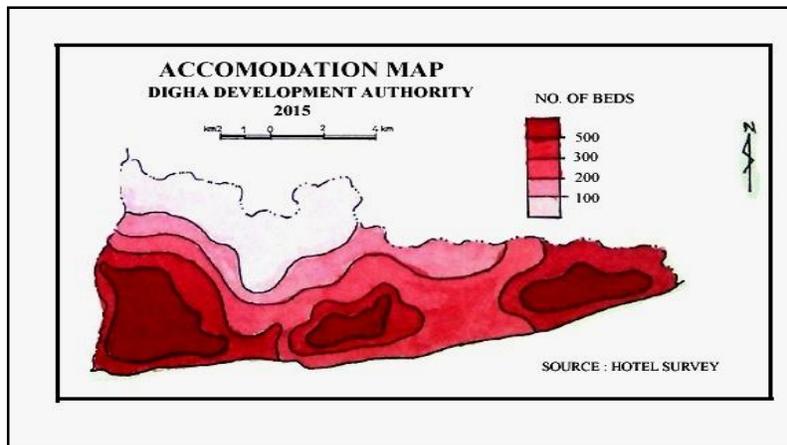


Figure 9

5.3. Tourist Growth

Since the inception of Digha it draws a considerable number of tourists every year, but the first data is available in 1965. The importance of Digha is continuously increasing which is evident from the growth of tourist in Digha town.

5.4. Duration of Tour

The rise in tourist population causes a simultaneously rise in the number of service or accommodation units at Digha. The tourist population of Digha can be sub-divided into two main types.

- a) Tourist who stay at hotel &
- b) Day trippers.

Most of the tourists are day trippers. And who lived in the hotels their average days of staying in the hotel are 2-3 days. One reasons for this short duration stay of tourist may be that except sea beach, there are at present no other recreational facilities. In a pick season daily arrival of tourist at Digha is around 1250.

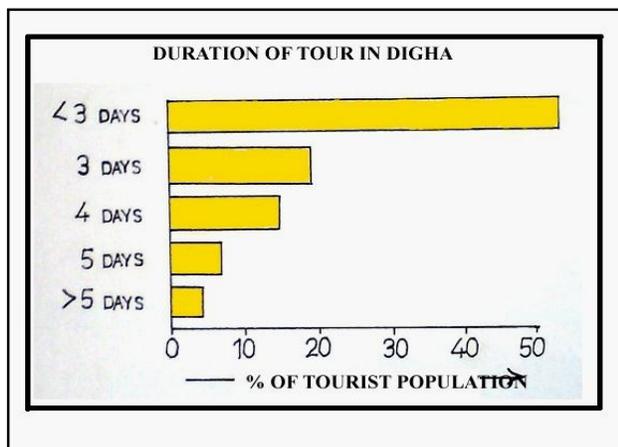


Figure 10

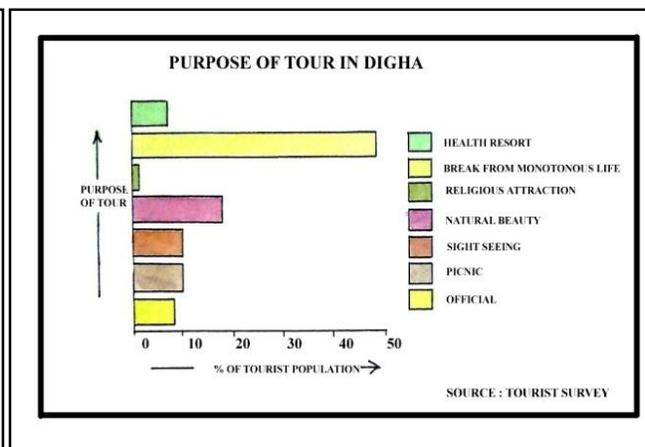


Figure 11

6. Problem of Digha Tourism

Digha is the most popular beach destination in west Bengal. The main tourist product in Digha is Digha sea resort followed several other sub-products like Amarabati Lake, cashew nut processing units and science centre etc. other sub-product near Digha which attracts the tourist are Chandreswar Temple, Talsari Beach in Orissa and Udaiapur beach. However as the survey has been conducted in Digha, a number of problems has been observed in Digha which may hamper the growth of tourism in future.

6.1. Beach Erosion at old Digha

The old Digha beach is near to the CBD of Digha, where a majority of hotels and eating place, bus stand, markets has been developed. The deterioration of the beach and its surroundings ambience in old Digha have been resulted due to –

- i) Storms, cyclone, shifting sand and wind erosion caused by distinction of wind breakers and vegetation cover.
- ii) Changing land use due to development encroachment of the foreshore between the beach and plantation cover by hawkers and stalls. The foreshore protection dyke has been constructed to protect the beach that has also been eroded to a great extent.

6.2. Power cut and Lack of Safe Drinking Water

Digha as urban centre as well as centre of beach tourism needs electricity facilities the local people as well as the tourist people. It has been observed from the survey of the local shops and hotel that supply of electricity is irregular. There is frequent power cut especially in summer. The Old Digha market committee has taken initiative to provide electricity to the local shop by inst,alling generator. Power cuts create themselves problem their business. Similarly, in old Digha hotel survey supported the finding of irregular power supply. The hotel owners also installed generators. So in this scenario a huge amount of noise pollution and air pollution created in the old Digha as well as new Digha.

In cause of providing safe water and pure drinking water, there is no concrete arrangement, neither in Old Digha nor in New Digha done by the Digha Development Authority.



Figure 12

6.3. Open Sewerage System and No Treatment of Total Sewerage

A growing tourist centre needs on efficient and coverage sewerage system in order to dispose of safely the extracted material from hotels and residence. The survey revealed in Old Digha the sewerage system installed in order to support the urban structure. It created a lot of problems. The uncovered sewerage system becomes the origin of various diseases. It also spread bad odors and this situation become unwanted in a tourist spot. In New Digha where no such place covered sewerage system has been built.

6.4. Violating CRZ Regulation Act by Hotel Owners



Figure 13

The CRZ notification divided the whole coastal zone into four categories: CRZ – I, II, III, IV. In coastal zone management plan by west Bengal, CRZ of west Bengal classified into three categories. Western Digha beaches have been classified in CRZ- III. It has been mentioned in the regulation that development activities would be best on MEF guidelines for the development of beach resort or hotels in the designed area of CRZ-III, prior approval of the ministry of environment and forestry should be obtained. Construction of beach resort/ hotels with prior approval of MEF in the designed areas of CRZ-III temporary occupation for the tourist/ visitors shall be subjected to some controls which are followed-

- i) It has been stated in the regulation that the project authority shall not undertake any construction within 200m from the high tide line. In many case the survey reveals that's hotels have been constructed within 100-150m from the high tide line both in Old and New Digha.
- ii) No necessary arrangement has been made for the treatment of the effluents and solid wastes. In some cases it has been found that the untreated effluents and solid wastes have been discharge into the water on the beach.

iii) It also been stated in CRZ-III regulation that ground water shall not be tapped within 200m from high tide line; within the 200-500m it can be tapped only with the occurrence the central/ state ground water board. But the hotels are illegally installing tube wells without having any permission from state ground water board.

6.5. High Dependence on Beach Tourism Lack of Planning Regarding Diversification of Tourism

The main attraction of the tourist coming to Digha tour enjoy in sea beach. But due to the sea erosion and some anthropogenic reasons, Old Digha beach can no longer give enjoyments through beach bathing or beach walking. It is now highly dangerous to have bath in the sea from old Digha side. So, maximum tourists are now going to New Digha where the beach is wide and easy to take bath. There is a new to disperse its load by developing other attracting points within or outside of Digha. It is true none of the other attraction can substitute the enjoyment provided by sea.

7. Suggestions Regarding the Development of Digha Tourist Town

7.1. Preparation of Master Plan

Any master plan for the development of tourist centre must co-relate tourist requirement and resources. One of the early steps in planning is gathering information of the potentiality available for desire growth. One of the main problems in investing the potentiality of tourism can be simple lack of information. Recording of information and development of statistics is therefore important. The development plan aims at not merely developing the basis facilities of communication, transportation service and accommodation but also other amenities which are likely to make the visits of tourists more enjoyable.

The discussion so far has pointed out major problems which Digha is facing today. A number of steps have already taken by Digha Development Authority and some plan has been planned by them for future implementation.

7.2. Beach Protection and Restriction on Development Activities

The Geological Survey of India has suggested that in the western part of new Digha, in the area between Hotel Sea Hawk and Sankarpur beach area under DDA, the zone of 200m from high tide line should be kept as no development zone. While the zone between 200m – 500m from high tide line should be kept as secondary protective zone. In secondary protective zone building ground and first floor limited to 7.5 m height for hotel and beach resort.

In the already developed area of Digha, 30 – 50m zone from sea wall towards land should be treated as primary protective zone where a buffer has to be created by afforestation through continuous plantation of casurina, accacia and cactus. No human activity should be allowed except social forestry and corridors to beach.

Slum survey result in water logging is unpredictable occasional hazards against which proper guard has to be taken by a drainage network for clearance of water logging. Beside protection of continuous plantation of 5-7m high plants has to be offered to the cost facing and second row of dunes to the north of the foreshore road so that they can stand with a wind speed of around 150km/ hours.

7.3. Generator Related Pollution Problem and Provision of Safe Drinking Water

The frequent power cuts in a tourist spot make the tourists unhappy. The use of generator should be restricted and appropriate measures have to be taken in order to reduce the pollution created due to intensive use of generators.

Regarding drinking water facilities a water project may be under taken to supply its various areas and hotels, lodges and guest houses. DDA may play a pioneer role in this respect.

7.4. Covered Sewerage System Required

The sewerage system in west Digha has to be modernized. The sewerage system should be covered and monthly cleaning is urgently needed in order to maintain the system. As this is a tourist centre whose popularity is growing day by day basic are like drinking water, electricity, sewerage system at old Digha should be easily accessible and quality maintenance is must the renovation of old sewerage system. At Old Digha is elegantly needed for its efficiency.

7.5. Location of Hotel According to CRZ Plan

The CRZ plan which should have been effective by DDA subjected to controversy and lack of communication between the development authority and hotel owners. The survey of the hotels, lodges shows that most of the hotel owners are not aware about the concept of Coastal Regulation Zone. There are a number of instance which suggests that coastal regulation zone bass not been implemented properly i.e. the roof of a building has been demolished where as another building having some height and just behind the above mention building has been scared. The authority (DDA) must convene a public meeting where they can complain the concept and mechanism of implementation of CRZ. Awareness campaign should carry out so that no building should come up within CRZ zone. Administrative strictness must the main trained and these hotel owners who suffered loss due to implementation of CRZ should compensate by training a specific policy for this.

7.6. Security Concern

In this regard it can be said that the lighting condition of the main street should be improved. There are long stretches where there is no provision of street light or it is not working or it is stolen. The Digha Development Authority should be careful about this problem. Besides the beach area should be lighted sufficiently. There is only one police station in Digha where security personal number is

insufficient to give protection wherever and whenever it is necessary. The district administrative should conscious the security provision of this popular tourist spot.

7.7. Developing Other Areas of Interest Along with Beach Tourism

Beach development authority has already taken many steps for development of tourism in Digha in the following way:

- i) Preparation of master plan for creation of various tourism products, sub products and support services in the identified 200 acres land in new Digha.
- ii) Effects are on for creation of several sub products with private sector participation like water sports in the sea, development of Aqua Park, construction of passenger ropeway, development of amusement park, construction of small auditorium etc.

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