

Perception of tourism on the socio-economic improvement of Purulia: A case study from the Ajyodha Hills, Purulia, West Bengal, India

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a process that brings economic development of a region and connects the local people with the rest of the world through social contact. The elevated plateau of Chotanagpur covered with many natural panoramic beauties is the centre of attraction as tourist spots. The geomorphic makeup of this terrain and its broadcasting in the internet through the recently developed various social media has attracted many visitors within West Bengal as well as the adjoining states to visit the place. The income flow from the tourists has led to well-developed communication and secured hospitality, development of habitable hotels in the region and vice-versa. As of late, tourists and visitors expect to enjoy the retro-urban facility, which is readily made available to the visitors. Last but not the least, cultural heritage of this region in the form of songs, dance and handicrafts are other important aspects of attraction offered by the residents to the tourists both as gift and with payment attracted and mesmerized the tourists.

KEYWORDS Tourism, Ajyodha Hills, Socio-economy, Purulia, West Bengal.

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INTRODUCTION

Purulia is located at the first step of the gradual descent from the elevated plateau of Chotanagpur proper to the plains of lower Bengal and also a part of the Ranchi penplain. This area is fully covered with lush green landscapes, verdant hills and panoramic beauty. Near about 12% of the geographical area of the district is under forest cover (State Forest Report, West Bengal, 2011-12) that provides the life supporting system of the tribal people and the local residents. Forests are the natural vegetation of the study area, primarily composed of trees and shrubs and has sustained the ecological set up of the region. It represents a complex ecosystem that comprises of diverse flora and fauna. The geomorphoecological setup helps in modulating the micro climate, ecological balance,

purifying the natural environment and helping in growth and development of a particular region (Archer et al., 2005; Roy and Mukherjee, 2018; Patra et al., 2018, 2019). But slowly and steadily the idea of enjoying the natural environment to take a break from the monotony of busy life and spend some time amidst a natural habitat has been very popular in last few decades (c.f., Beaver, 2002; Reynard, 2008; Arbabi and Mirazizi 2014). Purulia as a place of natural beauty is known since decades (Fig. 1). The area is filled with the most magical places including Joychandi Hills, Ayodhya hills, Saheb bandh, Gajaburu hills, Doldanga, Baranti Reservoir, Cheliama, Surulia and Murugama dam to mention a few are hotspots of attraction (Bhaya and Chakrabarty, 2016; Patra et al., 2018, 2019).