

ECOTOURISM POTENTIALITY OF BADBELA POND WETLAND COMPLEX OF JHALAWAR IN RAJASTHAN: A FIELD SURVEY

Dilip Kumar Sharma*
O.P. Sharma**

ABSTRACT

The importance of Wetlands for sustainable life support system is well known as the "KIDNEY OF THE LANDSCAPE" and "BIOLOGICAL SUPERMARKET", such moist and marshy land is partially or filled with water throughout the year. The Badbela Pond wetland complex of Jhalawar in Rajasthan is discussed in this communication. It is first wetland complex of Jhalawar district which is identified and notified by Department of Environment and Climate Change since August 31, 2023. It comes under Department of Forest and regulated by State Wetland Authority. Rich biodiversity of this place attracts more nature lovers which is beneficial to local people as well as Government. Not only ecologically but also economically it could be an important site of Jhalawar district of Rajasthan. The research paper is based on the author's detailed surveys were conducted in different season throughout the year, in which he observed the ecotourism potentiality of the site, which if developed in a planned manner, can prove to be hotspot of Rajasthan wetland ecotourism.

Keywords: Ecosystem, Flora and Fauna, Biodiversity, Ecology, Economy, Sustainable.

Introduction

The wetlands, vital parts of the hydrological cycle. These are highly productive ecosystems which support rich biodiversity and provide a wide range of ecosystem services, being part of our rich cultural heritage. Many wetlands are threatened by anthropogenic activities like discharge of domestic and industrial effluents, disposal of solid wastes, water withdrawal and changes in inflow and outflow of water cycle, over-exploitation of natural resources resulting in loss of biodiversity and disruption in ecosystem services provided by wetlands. The clause (g) of article 51A of the Constitution of India stipulates that "it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures". Wetland biodiversity are dominated by the influence of water and encompass of heterogeneous habitat for sustainable life support is an acceptable fact throughout the world. Wetlands are ecosystems that absorb excess water during floods and save human settlement from flood and also increase in water level. The importance of wetlands ecotourism in Rajasthan as they are closely associated with all life forms such as lakes, rivers, water sources, marshes. Rajasthan is known for a variety of wetlands which plays an important role as vehicle of the sustainable development. There are almost 123 natural and 931 manmade wetland sites in Rajasthan in which 2 comes under Ramsar convention, 443 verified by state wetland authority, 17 identified in protected areas, 11 identified under phase second programme of government of India and 54 newly identified for notification and development in which 44 notified so far. This paper will explore the opportunities and the status and scope of eco-tourism potentiality of Badbela pond wetland complex of Jhalawar district of Rajasthan in India. It will also focus on the challenges of this site and strategies by managers to resolve it. The findings of the study disclosed that coordination between public and private sectors and to make local people more aware about the importance of sustain nature and sustainable development to increase their participations in future.

* Ph.D. Scholar and Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, S.M.M. Government Girls College Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India.

** Professor and Head Department of Botany, Government College Bundi, Rajasthan, India.

Research Methods and Methodology

This paper is based on current exploration and field observation of the area. There are few studies that focus on the scope of wetland eco-tourism in Jhalawar district of Rajasthan. So this study mainly highlights the challenges and strategies from stakeholders and managers which will help for the growth of wetland eco-tourism in future. The suggestion from researcher will be highly helpful for the policy makers to overcome the challenges faced and indicate the status and scope of eco-tourism potentiality of Badbela pond wetland complex of Jhalawar district in Rajasthan. This research is a descriptive and is based on majorly secondary data collected from various stake holders of society, Rajasthan government gazette notifications and policies, tourism policies, NGOs' reports, research articles and websites of Tourism and Forest Department. The researcher also used the information and facts already available as base in order to analyse, explore and evaluate the problem at hand critically to figure out conclusion. The present work is result of survey in the area of Badbela pond wetland complex of Jhalawar district of Rajasthan in different season throughout the year 2023.

Study Area

It is a man made wetland constructed as check dam on Ghodakhal rivulet with inspiration of Sh. C.P. Meena (IAS) in 1986-87 named as Devsagar pond. During previous couple of years it is developed into wetland and migratory bird site by enormous work done by department of Forest. Luv-Kush Vatika also developed in 2022-23 specially for children so that they learn about nature, environment and wild life conservation. There are, Nakshatra, Navgrah, Rashifal, Lagn, Teerthankar, SaptahVatikas, Haritaka vatikas, watch tower, wild flora and fauna paintings, birthday vatika, exhibition centre, smriti van and Nursery. After the draft notification of the Badbela wetland complex for inviting objections and suggestions from all stack-holders of society. The State Government exercise the powers conferred by rule 7 of the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (Central Act No. 29 of 1986), hereby notifies Badbela wetland complex in revenue village Badbela of Tehsil Asnawar of district Jhalawar in Rajasthan as a wetland. It is the first notified wetland by forest Department as forest ecosystem in Jhalawar District. Different physical regions are present in the pond complex which will be developed as ecotourism point of view. It is situated on state highway 89 the distance from Jhalawar district headquarter and Teendhar Chouraha on NH52 is 16 km and 3 km respectively lies in between 24° 30' 33" to 24° 30' 53" North latitude and 76° 15' 47" to 76° 16' 10" E in Jhalawar District of Rajasthan. The Badbela pond Wetland complex comprising of total area of 18.00 Hectare and its Catchment Area/Zone of influence comprising of total area of 15.00 hectare which comes under agricultural use falls under Forest land block Gordhanpura C, Catchment area and agriculture fields of village Badbela and Badbeli.

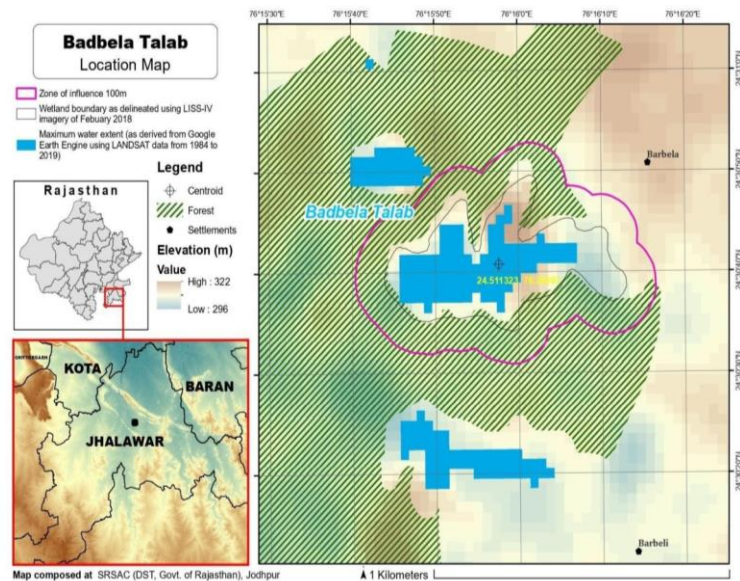


Figure: The location Map of Badbela pond Wetland Complex and its Zone of influence.

Source: As per Department of Environment and Climate Change notification, Govt. of Rajasthan

Activities which are prohibited in Badbela Talab Wetland complex and its Catchment Area/Zone of Influence:

- Conversion for non wetland uses including encroachments of any kind like setting up of any new industry and expansion of existing industries.
- Manufacture or/and handling or/and storage or/and disposal of construction and demolition waste, hazardous substances, hazardous Microorganism Genetically Engineered organized or cells, hazardous Waste, electronic waste, plastic waste etc covered under various acts.
- Solid waste storage and disposal. Discharge of untreated Solid/liquid waste and effluents from industries, cities, towns, villages and human settlements.
- Any type construction of permanent nature except for boat jetties within fifty metres from the mean high flood level observed in the past ten years.
- Commercial mining, stone quarrying and crushing units, extraction of commercial water including groundwater, establishment of large scale commercial livestock, animal husbandry and poultry farms.
- Reducing area or capacity of the water body control inflow and outflow of water.
- Feeding of fishes, migratory birds and wild fauna by the public and any type of poaching activities

Activities which are regulated in Badbela Talab Wetland complex and its Catchment Area/Zone of Influence:

- Fisheries, Plying of boats and Desilting.
- Construction of temporary structures.
- Water extraction for certain purposes.
- Conversion of land for any type of construction.
- Setting up of any new industries and expansion of existing industries.
- Mining.

Related Works

A comprehensive review of literature, articles has been made to find out the research gap and to recognize the applicable research problems for the study, According to the proposal is approved by Ramsar convention (1971) "Wetlands are transitional zone which occupy intermediate position between the dry land and open water". Wetlands also considered as Eco tone between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (Odum, 1971). Eco-tourism is a sustainable hypothesis that supports the nature. As per 'TIES' eco-tourism is highlighted as a "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and welfare of local people. Cammorata, (2013) describe eco-tourism as "Traveling to a remote area to enjoy, protect, and bring awareness to endangered wildlife." Hall and Page (2006) defined eco-tourism as "Any form of tourism development which is regarded as environmentally friendly and has the capacity to act as a branding mechanism for some forms of tourist products". Brandon (1996) et al. stated that "Ecotourism has been widely advocated as an economic tool for biological conservation and community development in recent decades". The term eco-tourism refers to "ecologically sound tourism". This concept of eco-tourism is emerged from Belize in Central America that is popular for wildlife and greenery "Eco tourism is a particular type of tourism that proposed a new aspect in the travel & tourism sector and reduces the destructive impacts on environment". "Eco-tourism" also refers to 'ecological tourism that is responsible travel to fragile, pristine and usually protected areas that strives to below impact and small scale'. This concept is relatively new as it creates attention in the mind of researchers during 1980s. Schaller (1999) have given the various names like soft tourism, nature tourism, eco-tourism, responsible tourism and green tourism, village tourism. It can be defined as a "powerful travel to nature areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the eco system, while producing the economic activity that makes the conservation of natural resources financially beneficial to local citizens". According to Ceballos-Lascurain (1987) it is defined as an "ecological tourism involving traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas, with the specific aims of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects found in these areas". Honey (2008) described eco-tourism as "travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (often) small scale".

Elizabeth Boo (1990) "Ecotourism 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 population". Scholars like Santhosh P Thampi (2003) investigated on Ecotourism marketing at Kerala, where he stated, "Almost all districts of Kerala have a number of potential ecotourism destinations". A.K. Bhatia (2006) has explained the trends of tourism sector where he traces the history of travel in early times, and described tourism in a much uncomplicated method. In developing countries the concept of 'ecotourism' is an emerging trend which focuses on the nature conservation and promotes economic growth. Krippendorf (1987) investigated that tourism should provide additional benefits to the people which can increase their satisfaction level.

Results and Discussions

- **Principle:** According to the International Eco-Tourism Society (TIES) in 1990, eco-tourism is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" as given below:
 - To reduce the harmful effect on the natural environment that can cause destruction and to focus on the clean environment with local people participation
 - To provide education to the travellers, scholars, nature lovers, school and college students about the significance of preservation and management of nature and natural resources.
 - To provide direct revenues for the management and conservation of protected areas. like photography, adventure zone, and selling of eco-friendly product and service
 - To promote green energy such as solar energy, cycling, walking, e-vehicles etc.
- **Challenges:** There is also a pressure in the environment through the flow of tourism and it provides major threats to its ecosystem are as given below:
 - Flow of tourists' activities leads disturbance and any type of pollution in nature and in many places tourist also throw some garbage which causes destruction in the eco-tourism sites.
 - Some of the following problems of wetland site are Lack of strong economic plan, strategy and damage of the environment due to overuse of natural resources, and lack of financial support from central and state government.
 - Loss of Habitat leads human wildlife conflict, Illegal trade and poaching. Lack of awareness in local people and lack of promotion of benefits and also a problem of employment among local people
 - Shortage of skilled and trained employees, communication network in between public and private sector in term of modern technology, training centres and tourist guides.

Suggestions & Recommendations

- There are also various activities which are done for the promotion of the site and the tourists get attracted by the different kind of activities like trekking, hiking, school/college educational tour site, education camp, bird watching, cycle safari, night camping, holiday /weekend destination and photography.
- There is also scope of adventure sports near Luv- Kush Vatika. Luv- Kush vatika also developed as birthday vatika/bal vatika for childrens and nursery for planting on their birthday.
- There should be proper coordination between private and public sector. The importance of local people and their participation is very important to address the various challenging issue of site. Providing employment opportunities for the local people and establishment of training centres for them.
- Conducting awareness and promotional programme and providing education materials to focus on conservation and preservation of natural resources through various medium such as newspaper, journals, radio, television and social media like face book, twitter, instagram, whatsapp etc.
- There should be proper interpretation and information for the tourist who visits. and use of proper technique to reduce the crowd of tourists like use of tourist sign post, advance booking of ticket, use of e- rickshaw and cycles. Proper parking system is must and tourist should walk from the parking to the sites for the benefit of the environment.

Conclusion

There is a need of an urgent action by the government and local people to sustain the environment. There should be proper planning and management for the conservation of nature and education of the tourist is very essential for it. The long term policy is required for the growth of Badbela wetland complex. The Government should play positive role with private sectors and local people for the development of eco complex. However, no doubt that there are a lot of scopes of eco-tourism as this is new concept. On the other hand it is necessary that natural environment should be conserve with the scarce resources. This study show that the role of everyone is important like government, private sector, NGOs, community etc. for Badbela wetland eco-complex and benefits should be given to the local people to improve their standard of living. This study is conducted to focus on the outlook and challenges in future due to the management strategies. This study can help the government, private sector and scholars for the further research gap and various suggestions can be implemented in future. The present study can be useful for tourists, local people, service suppliers, and government and marketing agencies for the planning of the site. Wetland habitats of the area are under threat at present so Govt. of Rajasthan notified it for its better eco restoration. Investigation shows that there is significant amount of pollution which is eutrophic in nature and enhance by intensive agriculture practices. Considering these reasons, the survey of Badbela pond wetland complex of Jhalawar district in Rajasthan was undertaken.

References

1. Ahmed, R. (2013). Desert Ecotourism in Rajasthan: A case study of Jaipur.
2. Akhtar, J. (1990). Tourism Management in India. Ashish Publishing House.
3. Amposta, J.B. (2009). Looking for environmental excellence in tourist destinations. *Tourismos*, Vol. 4, No.2, pp.91-106.
4. Ashutosh, K. (2016). Developing Rural Areas through Promoting-A Case study of Samode Region Rajasthan. *DU Journal of Undergraduate Research and Innovation*, 122-143
5. Athma, P., & Lakshmi, V. (2006). Eco-tourism in Andhra Pradesh. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 36(8).
6. Bhatia, A. K. (2006). International tourism management. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd
7. Boo, E. (1990). Ecotourism: the potentials and pitfalls: country case studies. WWF.
8. Brandon, K. (1996). Ecotourism and conservation: A review of key issues.
9. Cater, E. (1994). Ecotourism in the Third World: problems and prospects for sustainability. *Ecotourism: a sustainable option...?*, 69-86
10. Ceballos-Lascurain, H. (1987). The future of ecotourism. *Mexico journal*.
11. Drumm, A. (1991). An integrated impact assessment of nature tourism in Ecuador's Amazon region. London: School of Environmental Sciences, University of Greenwich.
12. Davidson R. (1989). *Tourism*. Pitman Publishing: London
13. Dr. Simmy Narula and Karan Kapoor (2018) A study of ecotourism in Rajasthan: Environmental issue and its ways of control
14. Divyendu Sen and Suchita Jain (2021) Ecotourism: Nature and prospectus in current scenario. (2022) Study of possible ecotourism Hotspots around Gagron fort and differentiate from tourism: A field survey. (2023) Ecotourism: Relaxed way to sustain nature
15. Fennell, D. A., & Smale, B. J. (1992). Ecotourism and natural resource protection: implications of an alternative form of tourism for host nations. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 17(1), 21-32.
16. Gupta, V. K. (1987). *Tourism in India*. Gyan Publishing House.
17. Government of rajasthan -Gazette notification, Jaipur march 21,2023
18. Government of rajasthan –constitution of state wetland authority notification
19. Gazette notification wetland –Government of India, September 26, 2017
20. Hall, C. M., & Page, S. J. (2009). Progress in tourism management: From the geography of tourism to geographies of tourism—A review. *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 3-16.
21. Hawkins, D. E., & Lamoureux, K. (2001). Global growth and magnitude of ecotourism. *The encyclopedia of ecotourism*, 63-72.
22. Kuldeepsingh (2019) Scope of ecotourism through strategic approach: A review study of Rajasthan(India).
23. Rajasthan ecotourism policy 2010 and 2021.

