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Potentiality of Agro-Tourism in and Around Panskura Community Development Block, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Agro-tourism refers to tourism of a particular region centering on local agriculture-based resources and related activities. Panskura, situated at a distance of 70 km from Kolkata and on South-Eastern railway, Kharagpur Division, and also well connected with the National Highway No 16, is bestowed with different colorful flowers; this has attracted people from the nearby districts in recent times. Tourists generally flock to Dokanda and the surrounding mouzas for a one-day visit. Because of the large number of footfalls, the local people do some business for this short period of the year. This short-duration tourism has benefitted the local people by providing extra income. There are other flower-growing mouzas that can also reap benefits in the same way, with little effort from the campaign and some infrastructural development by the local administration.

KEYWORDS: Agro-tourism; Flower cultivation; Potentiality; Accessibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

Flowers hold immense significance in the social and cultural lives of Indian people. We cannot imagine any social function or religious festival without flowers. Flower cultivation has been in practice in every part of our country since time immemorial; in the earlier days, this was usually for personal purposes, but today it is cultivated on a commercial basis. Realizing its growing demand as a cash crop worldwide, the All India Floriculture Development project was started in 1971 (Raj, 2017). After globalization and the free economy in the 1990s, floriculture sector has gained incredible thrust in the last few years. The area of flower cultivation in India has almost tripled from 106000 hectares during 2001-02 to 339000 hectares during 2018-19, and a similar trend has been noticed in production also (ICAR Pune, April 2020). The states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Haryana have developed as

foremost flower cultivated region in current periods (Vahonia et al., 2018). West Bengal, with its diversity in climate and soil characteristics, enjoys a significant position in the national scenario. In terms of area, West Bengal ranks fifth, and in terms of production, it occupies sixth position in 2017-18 (Sarkar, 2019). The leading districts are Darjeeling in North Bengal and Nadia, Howrah, East, and West Medinipur, and North 24 Pargana in South Bengal. In South Bengal, the undivided Medinipur district was famous for various tropical flower cultivation since the British period, and today, flower cultivation makes an important role in the regional socio-economic development of East Medinipur. In West Bengal, on the basis of flower cultivation and flower business, it is realized that Purba Medinipur district ranks second only after Nadia district. But when the amount of production is considered, Purba Medinipur district rank first in the state (Mandal, 2017). This high productivity is due to suitable soil

texture and the availability of cheap and skilled men in this district. Both traditional flowers like Sunflower (*Helianthus*), Rose (*Rosa*), Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Jasmine (*Jasminum*), Marigold (*Tagetes*), Tuberose (*Polianthes Tuberosa*), and cut flowers such as Rose (*Rosa*), Aster (*Asterias*), Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*), Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum*), Gladiolus (*Gladiolus*) are cultivated here.

Panskura Community Development Block is the most important zone in the Purba Medinipur district, producing a variety of flowers throughout the year. More than five thousand families in this block are directly engaged in flower cultivation for their livelihood (Primary Survey, 2021). An enormous number of flowers is providing to Kolkata as well as to different states from this zone every day. Flower cultivation along the bank of the Khirai canal and the adjoining areas is converted into a beautiful landscape during the winter season. This attracts people from neighboring districts and states for a day visit. Though there are many villages producing colorful florets, people mainly gather at Dokanda of Panskura C. D. Block due to its easy access both by roadway and railway (Fig. 1). This newly developed tourism economically benefits the farmers as well as others, thus it contributes to the local economy. In this background, the present work has been done to find out the potential of the Panskura Block as a future agro-tourism hotspot.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Agrotourism, also called agricultural tourism, agri-tourism, farm tourism, a fast-growing subsector of the rural tourism industry. Different scholars have defined “agrotourism” in different ways. According to the Tennessee Agritourism Initiative Steering Committee (2003), agritourism refers to a diversified economic activity, enterprise or business model that integrates the fundamental attributes of agriculture and tourism. Most of the studies on agrotourism must be accepted on a farm (Carpio et al., 2008; McKenzie & Wysocki, 2002) while a few others have opined that it should be based on agricultural setting, like farms, ranches, and nurseries (Che et al., 2005; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Agritourism included the activities, like On-farm sales of agricultural products, educational tourism, entertaining, lodgings, and outdoor recreation, etc. (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019).

Development of Agrotourism plays a significant role in enriching the business forms of farming, increasing income, improving infrastructure, and advancement of industrial

structures in the rural area (Sumantra et al., 2017). In many parts of the world (such as in southern Thailand), agrotourism activities have not only enhanced local cultivation by increasing agricultural supply, agricultural variation, and the promotion of tourism businesses (Songkhla and Somboonsuke, 2012) but also have improved the present status of the environment and the flower grower's lifestyle (Yang, 2012). It is an important process by which sustainable development, increasing poverty, job opportunity, and regional progress (Joshi & Bhuiyan, 2012). Preservation of environment, involvement of local community, sound regulation, maintainable marketing system, and planning are important for the expansion of agrotourism (Kurnianto et al., 2013).

Agritourism is not a recent phenomenon; It can be back to late 1800s when families go to see farming families to get liberation from the city's summer hotness. With the passage of time, the nature of agrotourism has expanded. Agritourism has not spread much across the states of India and is still concentrated in the western belt of Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nādu (Mukherjee & Ranjan, 2020; Chakraborty & Mandal, 2013). It is slowly growing in some states like Karnataka, Goa, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, etc. (Dangi, 2018).

West Bengal, having diversity in nature and human culture, has every possibility to become an agro-tourism center if promoted and developed in a planned manner. In West Bengal, agro-tourism is in its infancy. A commercial effort was, however, noticed at village Dighisole, Jhargram in Paschim Medinipur, which was the first ISO-certified resort promoting agritourism in this landscape. In the district Birbhum, the village Dwaronda was also planned in West Bengal by an NGO in the nineties (Chakraborty & Mandal, 2013). At present, the agrotourism business is run successfully by Tathagata Farm House (A private Entrepreneurship) at Darjeeling, West Bengal (Mukherjee & Ranjan, 2020).

3. OBJECTIVES

- To know the favourable factors of the growth of floriculture.
- Why and how has it become a tourist attraction?
- Impact of short-duration tourism (day visit) on local people: positive and negative effects.
- Problems faced by the tourists.
- Strategies for future development.



Fig. 1. Colourful landscape at Dokanda village in Panskura C D Block.

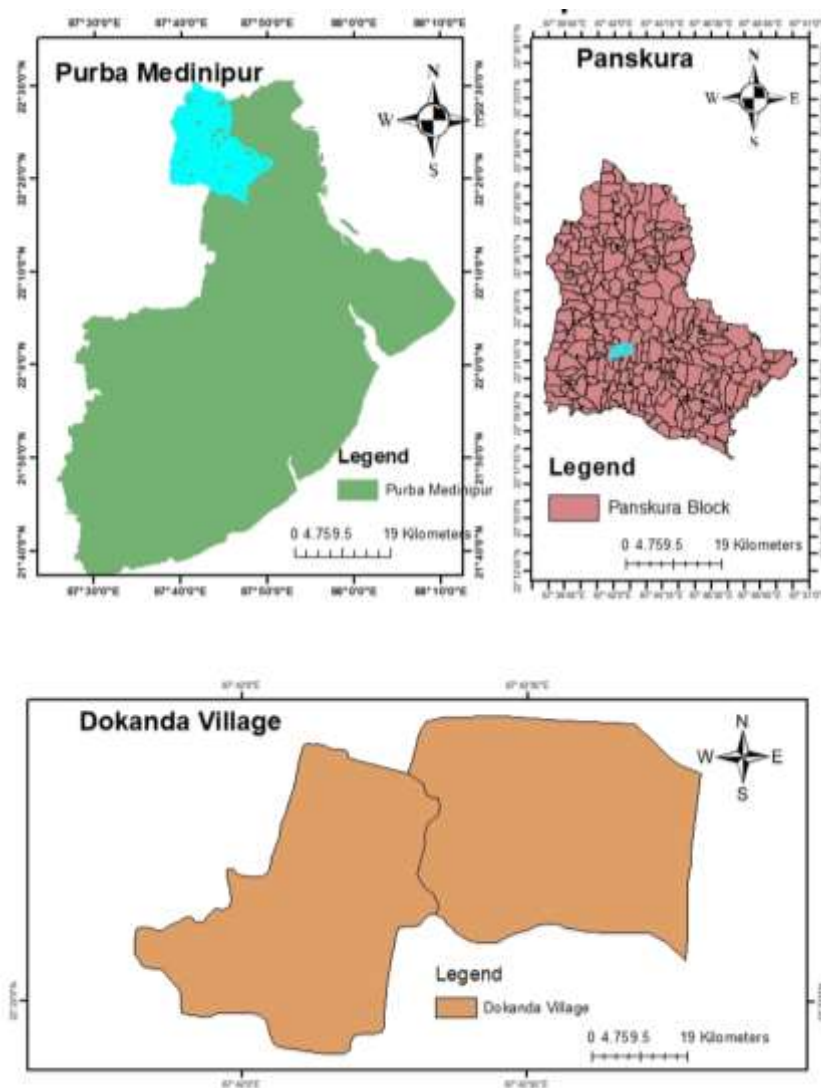


Fig. 2. Locational map (Prepared by the researcher based on a map collected from Panskura C D Block).

Table 1 Gram Panchayet (G.P.) Wise Flower Cultivated Area of Panskura Block (2019-20)

Sl No	Name of the GP	Total Area (in Hectare)	Cultivated area (in Hectare)	Flower-cultivated area (in Hectare)	% of flower cultivated area
1	Mysora	3094.52	2545	202.32	7.95
2	Keshapat	2237.05	1593	220.53	13.84
3	Ghoshpur	2198.17	1411	72.83	5.16
4	Gobindanagar	2818.01	2510	266.05	10.6
5	Haur	2792.89	2246	124.02	5.52
6	Other GPs	11424.00	9569	205.75	14.15
	Total	24564.86	19874	1091.50	57.22

Source: Panskura Block Development Office, Panskura, Medinipur East (West Bengal, India)

4. METHODOLOGY

A well-defined methodology has been carried out to find the possibility of Panskura as a zone for agro-tourism. The whole study has been done through the following stages: I. At first, a literature review was conducted to get an idea about the concept of agrotourism and its development in different parts of the biosphere, including India, from websites and other documents such as journals, articles, valuable books, and yearly reports of government and other organizations (NGO); II. Maps and secondary data have been collected from Panskura Municipality, Panskura Community Development Block, and the Agricultural Development Office of Panskura Community Development Block; III. Depending on the objectives of the study, structured questionnaires have been prepared for groups, local people, and tourists; IV. Primary Data was generated from a physical survey among 300 people (tourists 200 and local beneficiaries 100) in January & February 2022, in Dokanda Village. The sample size was kept small because of covid restrictions during the survey; V. Preparation of a map using Arc GIS software and analysis of various primary data using MS Excel software; VI. Finding other potential zones for agro-tourism in the area.

5. STUDY AREA AND LOCATION

Purba Medinipur in West Bengal has twenty-five Community Development Blocks (C-D. Blocks) out of which one block, namely Panskura, is selected as a study area. The coordinates of this block are 87.741° East and 22.397° North. Panskura C-D Block is confined by Daspur I C-D Block in the North, Kolaghat and Tamluk CD Blocks in east, Moyna C-D Block in the south, and Debra

and Pingla CD Blocks in West (Figs. 1 & 2). Out of the six bordering blocks, Pingla and Daspur, I belong to West Midnapur District and the rest fall under jurisdiction of Purba Medinipur (East Midnapur). The total geographical area is 246.92 sq km.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. A. Major Hub of Flower Production in Bengal

Panskura is the leading C D Block in Purba Medinipur district of flower production both in terms of quality and quantity. Based on the purpose or use of growing, flowering crops cultivated in this area can be classified into the following two major categories (Table 1).

I. Traditional flowers: These are existing in religious and social formalities, and used as decoration by women, *e.g.*, Aster (*Asterias*), Rose (*Rosa*), Marigold (*Gemes Tagetes*), Tuberose (*Polianthes Tuberosa*), *etc.*

II. Non-traditional flowers: These are denoted to as cut flowers. Generally, these flowers are harvested along with a long stem, *e.g.*, Various types of Roses, Carnation (*Dianthus Chryophylius*), Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum*), Gladiolus (*Gladiolus*), *etc.*

The factors responsible for the successful flower cultivation in the study area are as follows:

I. Topography: The study area is a flat surface with very slow run-off. The average height is 5-7 meters above mean sea level. The average slope from 0 to 5 degrees from north-west to south-east. This type of topography is suitable for various types of flower cultivation.

II. Climate: The climate follows a hot tropical monsoon pattern. The average temperature is

Table 2 Sources of Irrigation in Panskura Community Development Block, 2017-18 (area in hectares) [DTW- Deep tube well, *STW-Shallow Tube well, *RLI-River lifting irrigation]

	Canal area	Tank		DTW		STW		RLI		Total	
	Area (Hec)	No	Area	No	Area	No	Area	No	Area	No	Area
	780	2224	2152	962	9199	215	912	21	775	3422	13818
In %	5.6	64.99	15.59	28.11	66.59	6.3	6.62	0.6	5.6	100	100

Source: District Statistical Handbook, District of Purba Medinipur-2017-18

26.4°C with a wide range from 10.3°C to 40°C during the extreme. The average relative humidity remains around 74%, varying from 66% to 86% (Haldia Station, IMD 2000). The annual average rainfall is 175.26 cm. About 80% of rainfall occurred during the monsoon season. Winter and summer months are more or less rainless, though sometimes rain occurs due to westerly disturbances in winter and Norwester in summer. Otherwise, the region enjoys sunny weather with a long daytime of 12 to 13 hours, which is favourable for the cultivation of various types of flowers. These variations in climatic elements encourage the growth of flowering plants during all seasons.

III. Soil: The region is characterized by fertile, well-drained, neutral to alkaline loamy soil which is ideal for the growth of flowering plants. Soil fertility is increased naturally by the fresh or newly deposited alluvium in the river valley of the Cossye (also known as Kangsaboti) during the time of the flood.

IV. Irrigation: Since flowers are quite delicate with higher moisture content, water has to be precisely managed in different stages of flower cultivation. Marigold plants should be irrigated at an interval of 4-5 days in summer, whereas the winter crop needs irrigation at 8-10-day intervals, depending upon the water requirements of the plants. The flower growers collect the water for irrigation purposes mainly from a deep tube well (66.59%) and the tank (15.5%) (Table 2). Besides, they also depend on shallow tube wells and River Lifting processes from the Cossye and its tributary Khirai.

V. Presence of Highland: In rural Bengal, agricultural land is divided into two types: lowland and highland. Lowland is strictly used for paddy cultivation, whereas the highland is devoted to vegetables and flowering plants. About 25% of the total land area is highland in this area (Block Development Office, Panskura).

VI. Experienced and Skilled Man Power: Flower cultivation has been practiced for a long time. The

survey reveals that 12% of the respondents have been involved in floriculture for 3 to 4 decades.

VII. Market: As the flower is a very sensitive and perishable crop, there should be flower markets in the nearby area. In the study area, the flower growers use the local wholesale markets at Panchha Durga, Dalpara, Panskura bypass, Deulia, Kolaghat, and the Mallik Ghat market at Kolkata. About 56% of total respondents sell flowers at Dalpara, Panchhadurga, Gosaiberh, Keshapat, Khira, Panskura bypass and different local markets, 44% go to the market at Kolaghat and Deulia, located in nearby Kolaghat C.D. Block and Mallikghat in Kolkata. All these markets are easily accessible to the farmers (Figs. 2 & 3).

VIII. Good Communication System: Good communication is one of the most significant factors for the development of any agricultural related activity, especially floriculture. Most of the flower-growing *mouzas* (the smallest administrative units) in Panskura are well connected with the National Highway (NH 16, Kolkata to Chennai), State Highway (SH 4, Jhalda to Contai), and the South Eastern Railway of Howrah-Kharagpur Division. The Dokanda village is located beside the South Eastern Main railway line of the Kharagpur Division and thus connected to major stations like Howrah, Panskura, Kharagpur, Medinipur, Jhargram, etc. It is 1 kilometre away from Khirai, the immediate station after Panskura junction. The village is also well connected with the surrounding districts through National Highway 16. Good communication has also played an important role in developing tourism in this area.

IX: Changing Nature of Recreation: As Khirai station is the midway station between Kharagpur and Kolkata, people from Kolkata and other areas easily travel here for a short break just to relieve themselves from their busy and stressful daily urban life with a minimum or no loss of work.

X: Avid Use of Social-Media: Overcrowding in traditional tourist resorts has increased interest in



Fig. 2. Flower market of Kolaghat.



Fig. 3. Vegetable stall & Fast-Food stall at Dokanda near the flower-producing area.

an unconventional spot among tourists in the present day, which has been fueled by different print media and electronic media, mostly social media. Today, anything that happens anywhere is shared on social media by people immediately. Thus, every single activity of one's life, including his/her recent trends in travel, food, fashion, entertainment, *etc.*, becomes widespread among followers and viewers through social media within a short span of time. Sharing this recent trend through a YouTube channel, Facebook and other social media helps make it more informative and thus reliable and acceptable to others.

6.2. Development of Tourism

Panskura C.D. block is famous for both vegetable and flower cultivation. Though flower

cultivation is practiced throughout the year with mild temperatures, low humidity, and rainless sunny weather in the winter season favor the growth of colorful flowers like gladiolas (*Gladiolus*), Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum*), Rose (*Rosa*), Marigold (*Gemes tagetes*), Tuberose (*Polianthes tuberosa*), Aster (*Asterias*), Carnation (*Dianthus taryophyllus*), *etc.* There are several schools and colleges surrounding this flower belt. Sometimes students visit this area only to enjoy the beauty of the area, and sometimes for an academic project. Dokanda is one such village in this area through which the mainline of the South Eastern Railway passes; the beautiful landscape of the area lures curious passengers to take snaps of the colorful bed from the train. Sharing of these photographs and videos via different social media has made this village more popular and attractive

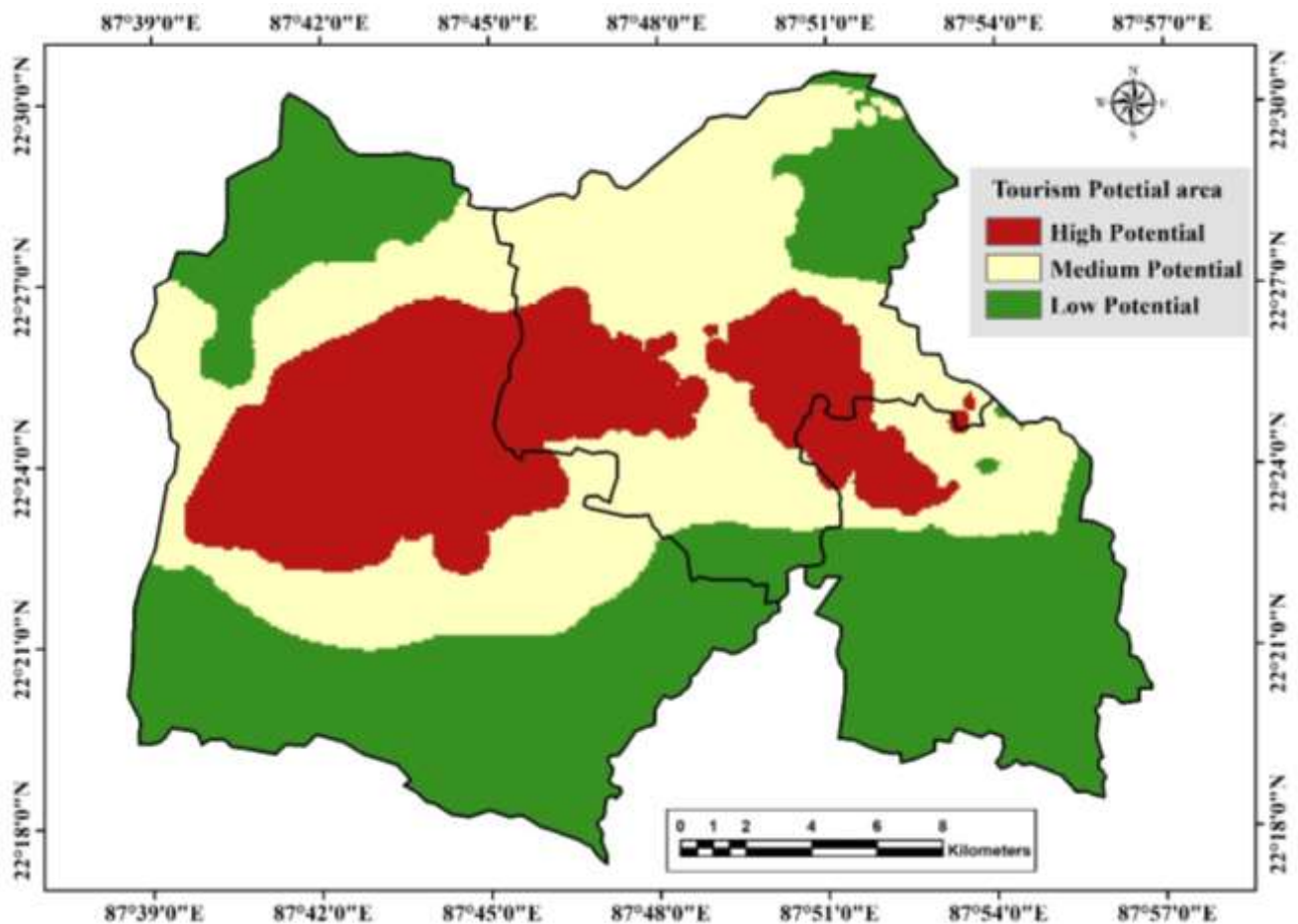


Fig. 4. Potential zone of agrotourism in Panskura, Purba Medinipur (Based on information collected from the field survey, 2021)

in 2017. But this enthusiasm has been affected by the complete or partial lockdown of nearly two years due to COVID-19 until the complete restoration of normality in March 2022. During this period, Indian people experienced two peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic waves. The second peak in April to May was the most devastating, When the lockdown was relaxed and local train services were partially resumed in the month of November 2021, changes in traveling patterns were noticed. People become very doubtful about long tours (long duration and long-distance traveling); they prefer short tours as a safety measure (Kock et al., 2020). During the normal period, Digha is the most favored short tour destination among the Bengalese, but since the train service to Digha was not restored completely, people avoided Digha and preferred some fewer familiar places like Dokanda. Dokanda in Panskura, popularly known as “*Khirai - The valley of flowers*” by netizens, has become an ideal destination for a short trip as it is only a two-and-a-half-hour local train/bus journey from Howrah. Other than the scenic beauty of the area,

tourists can also gain knowledge about the various facets of flower cultivation from the cultivators directly. This place has become so popular that it has witnessed the footfalls of about 4 lakh tourists in the last winter (Primary survey, 2021-22).

6.3. Characteristics & Nature of the Tourist

- ❖ Most (86%) of the tourists come from nearby districts of Howrah, Kolkata, South and North 24 Parganas, Hoogly, West Medinipur, Jhargram, and others come from the neighboring states of Jharkhand and Odisha.
- ❖ Among the respondent tourists, 72% are male, and 28% are female. About 70 percent of the tourists belong to 20 to 40 years age group. Only 24% of tourists are senior citizens; this low percentage may be due to the recent memory of the COVID-19 pandemic, hectic day-long journey, and also fewer infrastructural facilities and recreation for elderly people in the area.

- ❖ This village is located at a distance of 1 kilometer from Khirai Railway station under the South-Eastern Railway in the Kharagpur- Howrah division and 3 km from National Highway No 16 (Kolkata to Chennai). About 70% of the tourists avail of the local train as it is a comfortable journey and less expensive. 18% of tourists travel to this area by bus or private car, and the remaining 12% travel by Motorbike.
- ❖ The tourist season prevails in a period of five months, ranging from November to March, but maximum footfalls (about one lakh) take place on the weekends, national and state holidays such as 25th December, 1st January, 23rd January, 26th January, and during Saraswati Puja and Valentine's Day (14th February) of every year.
- ❖ Most of the tourists come in a small group with fewer than five members (60%). As per a field survey, about 78% of tourists come with their family, and 22% come with their friends and colleagues, etc.

6.4. Impact on local people: Positive Impact

- ❖ The new trend of a short trip to Dokanda village has created momentary employment opportunities for the locals, mostly the youth. The primary data collected from the field survey revealed that about 70 percent of the beneficiaries belong to 25 to 45 years age group. They are mostly food and ice cream sellers (48%), E-rickshaw drivers cum tourist guides (22%), flower sellers (16%), and stationery item sellers (14%). 94% of the beneficiaries are male.
- ❖ During the tourism season, the local sellers earn an extra income. During normal times 52 % of sellers earn a monthly income of less than Rs. 5000, and only 6% earn more than Rs. 10000 pm. But during tourism season, this distribution pattern changes to 30% for < Rs. 5000, 56% for 5000 to 10000, and 14% for more than Rs. 10,000. The local beneficiaries are getting 25% to 35% extra income during the tourism season.

6.5. Impact on local people: Negative Impact

- ❖ Stress on the environment: Most of the tourists coming to this place for a picnic purpose throw thermocol plates here and there. This destroys the aesthetic view and

puts a huge stress on the local environment. Thermocols are non-biodegradable, and they emit chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) when burnt.

- ❖ Damage to flowers: Some over-enthusiastic tourists casually destroy full bloom flowers, buds, and even plants while taking snaps in the midst of a garden.

6.6. Upliftment through the Dokanda Model

A one-day trip to Dokanda has caused some problems, but it has benefitted the local people as they earn an extra income during this season. Dokanda is a small village where mainly chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum*), marigolds (*Tagetes*), aster (*Asterias*), carnation (*Dianthus Caryophyllus*), etc., are cultivated (Fig. 4). But there are other villages with a greater variety of colors where tourists can visit. These are

- Mahatpur, Janabarh, and Naskardeghi are famous for Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum*) and winter season flowers like Petunia (*Petunia*), Aster (*Asterias*), Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*), Dahlia (*Dahlia*).
- Raniara: Specialised in Gladiolus (*Gladiolus*) cultivation.
- Bajju, Dalpara, and Manur are famous for Rose (*Rosa*) and winter season flower cultivation.

These areas remain unexplored by tourists due to their distant location from the Panskura Railway Station and the national highway. But these villages have full potential for developing as an agro-tourism spot centered on the Cossye River. Besides, there are a few temples and an amusement park in Panskura Municipality, which can add a different flavor to the tourists. The historical town Tamralipta, where the Bargavima temple is situated, is just 30 kilometers away from this place. On the way from Khirai, the tourists traveling by private car can stop at the wholesale flower market at Kolaghat and Samtaber, Deulti (Howrah District), to visit the house of the famous Bengali writer Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. So, there is a scope for the expansion of tourism, and it is high time to take the initiative to promote this region as a major agro-tourism spot in the coming years.

6.7. Problem of the Tourists

Though the overall experience by the tourists is good, there are some specific problems faced by

the tourists. The survey report of the respondents identifies some inconveniences namely the bad condition of village roads with transport problems (39%), lack of sufficient car parking area (18%), low quality of food (16 %), and lack of proper sanitation (10 %), shortage of drinking water (9%) and lack of affordable guest house in the surrounding area (8%).

- **Road condition:** The maximum number of tourists comes by train at Khirai station, but the way from Khirai Station to the flower growing plots is unmetalled, and the condition of this road is troublesome for tourists, particularly for senior citizens. The tourists coming by roadway also face the same situation, as the road approaching the agricultural field from the national highway is metalled.
- **Lack of parking space:** Being a village, there is no specific parking lot as is found in the city. Moreover, the village roads are narrow. So, the tourists coming with their private cars face parking problems when gatherings are very large.
- **Food quality is not good:** Though some temporary food stalls are installed near the flower-growing fields of Dokanda, they are not efficient in making good-quality fast food.
- **Sanitary Problem:** The sanitary problem is very crucial in this study area from the tourist's point of view. Though some temporary arrangements are done in that peak month of the year, they are not properly maintained and are few in number.
- **Problem of drinking water:** The Ghoshpur Grampanchayat (Local Administrative Body) arranges drinking water by one submersible pump and a water tank with a water pipeline, but this is not sufficient for travellers.
- **Shortage of good accommodation:** The shortage of good accommodation near the flower garden is another problem for tourists; the nearest guest house is located in the Panskura Municipality area at a distance of 10 km.

6.8. Suggestion

In the near future, agro-tourism can flourish not only in Dokanda but also in other parts of Panskura Block if proper planning is adopted and infrastructural development is done.

- i. Promoting new spots by *Gram Panchayat* (village governing institute) and Block Development Office should be done

through different forms of mass and social media, particularly by social media, as this is a more powerful means of attracting new travelers than simple advertisements.

- ii. As all the potential villages are located far away from the railway station, it would be convenient for the people to go there either directly by private car from NH 16 or by electric car from Panskura Railway Junction. In spite of having metalled roads along both sides of the Cossye River, they are not in good condition. So, these roads should be restored in such a way that tourists with private cars can easily access the area to enjoy the beauty of the colorful flowers in the Panskura CD Block. Besides, the non-metalled village road should be transformed into a metalled road immediately. Enough places for car parking should be provided by the local government.
- iii. Most of the small hotels have developed in Kolaghat Census Town - the gateway to Purba Medinipur (East Midnapur), and there are very few in Panskura. So, the government should construct cottages in the fallow land. Govt can also encourage the local people to build homestays. Homestay will help the host families earn an extra income. Since there is only one or two families staying with the host, the guests must be treated with utmost care. The locals, particularly women, should be given training on hospitality along with food and beverage services (by using the local menu) so that the tourists can get quality service.
- iv. Financial help should be provided to the local people for building a new structure and upgrading their existing facilities, i.e., beds, rooms, bathrooms, taps, cleanliness, etc. The government should provide incentives and tax relaxation to encourage the local people.
- v. Today, the internet is not a luxury but a basic necessity in our daily life. So, the Internet or wi-fi network should be strong enough so that tourists can not only do online bookings but can stay connected with the outside world.
- vi. Infrastructure is the key to developing a successful tourism destination. So, besides the transport and accommodation system, sufficient arrangements should be made for providing drinking water, permanent toilet latrine facilities, and, obviously, health

service. There are a few Rural Primary Health Centers in the potential zone, but without beds and admission facilities. Panskura Super Specialty Hospital at Pitpur village is located within 10 kilometers. So, the government should arrange a Mobile Medical Unit for emergency situations.

- vii. In spite of having a high literacy rate of 87.02%, 56.91 percent of people are unemployed (Census of India, 2011). So, the local people can be trained so that they can act as tourist guides because many electric car drivers act as guides for tourists. A tour guide can talk about the related local traditions, culture, folklore, performing arts, festivals, and fairs for gathering this the tourist spot.
- viii. To make tourism sustainable and eco-friendly, local administration should develop a proper waste management plan with the help of Panskura Municipality. Tourists should be encouraged to use biodegradable products. Volunteers can be appointed to maintain the cleanliness in the area.
- ix. Shopping is one of the favourite activities of people during traveling. Tourists would like to purchase some tangible objects either for gifting purposes or to make the trip memorable. But besides flowers, there is actually no other alternative item for tourists to buy. So, the government can establish different industries based on flowers such as perfumery, dry flower, Oil extracting industry, or the cosmetic industry. It will create new job opportunities for the locals, also. Encouragement to the local people to sell their handmade products to tourists should be done.

7. CONCLUSION

Panskura Community Development Block has emerged as one of the flower-producing regions of Purba Medinipur. Agriculture and floriculture constitute the primary sources of livelihood for a substantial portion of the local people. The favourable agro-climatic conditions, along with well-drained fertile soil, easy accessibility of flower market provide an ideal environment for the cultivation of different types of flowers in the open field throughout the year. Many people earn their livelihood by direct or indirectly, by floriculture activity for selling of flowers to state and national markets. But recently, some activities were

recognized by expansions of agro-tourism, i.e., a same-day visit, has been started centering on flower cultivation. Lakhs of tourists who get fed up their busy life, city pollution, and pressure, and seek peace and pleasure in a pollution-free environment, come to Dokanda and its adjoining areas, to enjoy the aesthetic beauty of blossoming flowers in the winter season from the surrounding districts of the state, as well as outside the state. It has benefited by creating new jobs and business opportunities. The local beneficiaries gain an extra profit of 20 to 30 percent during the tourism season. In the near future, agro-tourism can flourish not only in Dokanda but also in other parts of Panskura Block, as about 56% of the total agricultural land is devoted to flower cultivation in the winter season. To harness this vast potential, the administration should give proper attention to this special type of rural tourism by assessing its opportunities and challenges and by adopting proper planning for development.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST/COMPETING INTERESTS

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