

Impact of Tista River on the socio-economic life of the riparian people of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

A river is a lifeline for any region. The river basin provided the floodplain, which is directly affected by the people's habited and livelihoods. Rivers have an economic, political and social impact on the culture of the people. However, it also plays a role of negative character for the adjacent people. Thus, a river in a region plays a dual character in its behaviour in an alluvial channel. The River Tista is known as the lifeline of Jalpaiguri District as it plays a noticeable role in the development of the people. The mighty Tista is very important for the riparian people due to its water resources, small-scale navigation and facilitating agricultural production. Here are the community development Blocks, namely, Rajganj and Jalpaiguri (at the right bank), Mal and Maynaguri (at the left bank) along the Tista River of Jalpaiguri District, has been selected as the study area. Throughout the present study, the authors have tried to analyze various fields where the Tista River influenced the socio-economic aspects of the riparian inhabitants and highlighted the impact of increased human intervention on the river. For this purpose, primary and secondary data have been collected and presented through various cartographic techniques. The study helps to manifest the role of the Tista River in the concerned region.

Keywords: Tista River; inhabitants; irrigation; tourism; household uses; human interventions.

1. Introduction

Human beings have been dependent on the river from an earlier time (Buzarboruah, 2014). Rivers have been the backbone of nearly all human settlements for generations (Adoloye, 2009). Tista is the largest and longest river in the entire region of Terai and Duars. The region bears an agrarian community. The Tista River plays a significant role in the socio-economic welfare of the region. Sarkar (2011), in his research work, has a detailed analysis of the agrarian lifestyle of the people along the Tista River in North Bengal. Being the largest river of North Bengal, it plays an important role in the socio-economic development of the state. Mukhopadhyay (1982) analyzed the forms, processes, landform development,

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