

Agradweep –A Sectrolal Place Changing Location by Bhagirathi’s River Bank Errision

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Abstract- The study investigates the economic impact of the proposed Riverside County Detention Center (RDC) on the tourism industry of the Palm Springs Area. The geographic, economic, and industry scopes of the study has been defined as consisting area in India. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. The dynamic growth Of this industry is evident from the fact that globally tourism accounts for more than 11%of the global GDP and 8% of the world trade employment. Nature has best of Agradweep at Katwa in West Bengal with unique beauty , splendor with its lush green and undisturbed valleys , five climatic zones , peaceful , total sanitation , environment friendly, hospitable & smiling people and a rich cultural heritage –which is unparallel and would be hard put to create and find anywhere else. The most peaceful and crime free in the river bank of Bhagirathi, “The land of Peace & Tranquility” Agradweep at Katwa itself become its natural and unique USP with global appeal.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Religious places are one of the important tourist resources. Religious places are related to all religions have a tourist significant, only the degree of important varies from place to place. One of them is Gopinath Temple which is Hindu (baisnab) religion related. It is quite old and attract a large number of tourist through it has location of disadvantages, find hopefully this tourist resources will have a great tourist significant in the days to come. In this background this religious spot is chosen for the study. This historical place is located on Agradweep village of Katwa sub-division of Bardhaman district.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

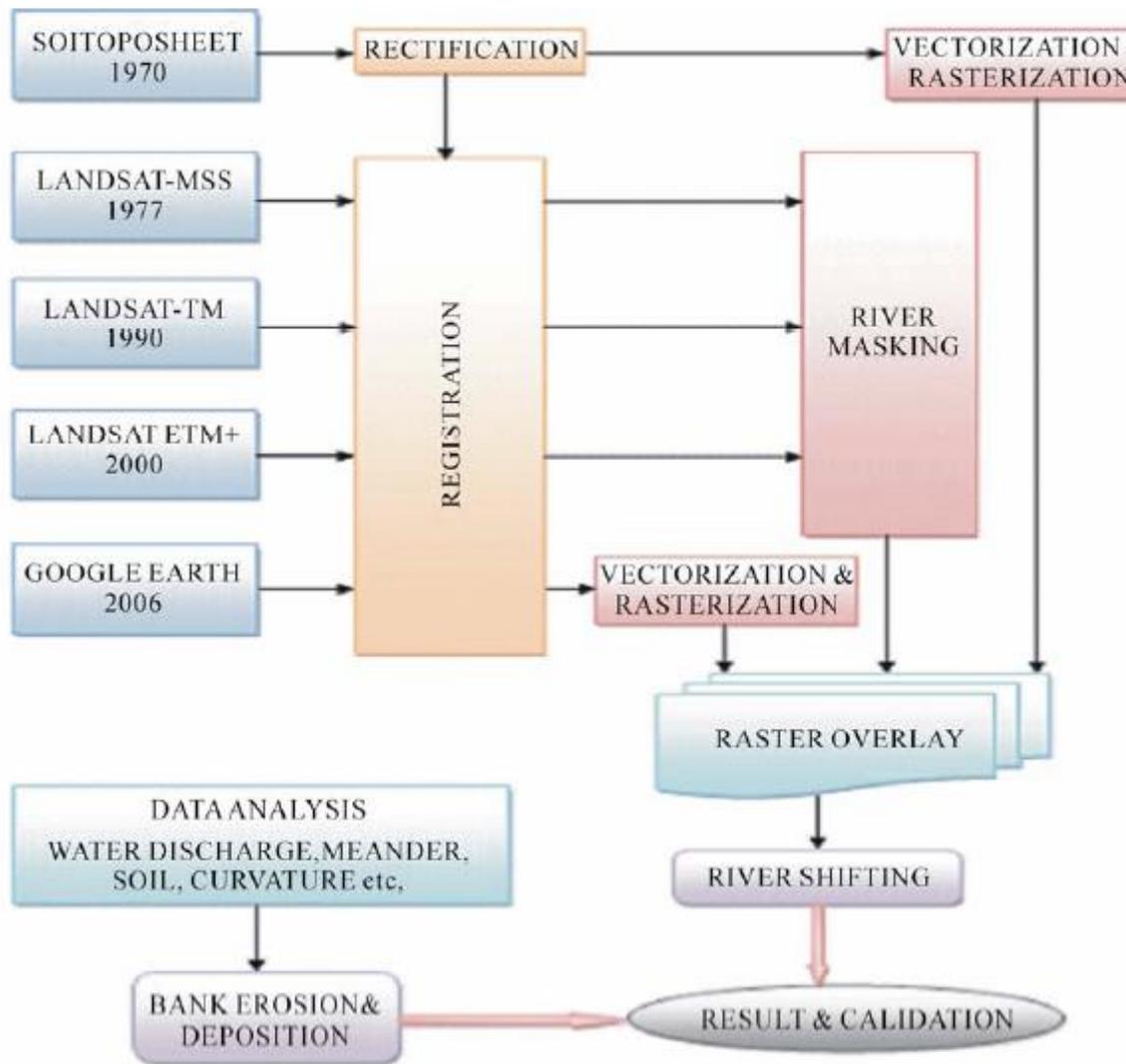
- A. To take a concept about Bhagirathi-Ganga river.
- B. To gain the information on Gopinath Thakur, significant person of ancient Baisnab history and local people’s respect and faithful.
- C. To earn the knowledge in erosion of Bhagirati river and destruction of Gopinath Mandir.
- D. To estimate the information of economic loss on local peoples due to Bhagirati river erosion and people’s believe on Gopinath Thakur.
- E. To develop the tourist spot as Agradweep area to highlight the natural beauty and historical religious significant of the location.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the study of Gopinath Temple two sources of information has been obtained, i.e., primary and secondary data. The primary data is obtained from held survey by collecting the answers of extensive questions which includes all aspects of socioeconomic condition like age, sex, occupation, education level, income of correspondent.

The primary data also collected from the temple authority, priest and person of the villages. Though my study is based mainly on primary data but I also collected secondary data from mahakuma library, Katwa information centre, NATMO, Gazetteer, different books etc. just to get a general idea about the background of the study area and its tourism potentiality.

The dissertation is manly descriptive one, but the discussion and analysis is base: d on field survey as well as secondary data. In this context, I have adopted both statistical analysis and cartographic representation based on survey data. I have computed and used different statistically techniques. Primary date was collected from the fill in the form of temple survey, tourist survey etc.



Flow chart of methodology

IV. RESULTS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AGRADWEEP AND IT'S IMPORTANCE

Agradweep is an ancient land in katwa Sub-division. Ptolemy mentioned it as Apnagar or Agaha, Will Ford Called it as Aghodeep and according to Renel, it was Aaghadweep. The present day's Agradweep's main attraction is Ghosh Thakur's Shreepaat's Gopinath. To reach there, one has to get down in Agradweep railway station, which is in Bandel – Katwa railway line and then travel about 2.5 km by toot or rickshaw to reach the Agradeep village, which situated on the banks of the river Bhagirathi. Due to frequent changes in the way of river Bhagirathi, Agradeep in past remained sometimes on east banks and some times on West Banks, Presently, it is on the eastern banks of the river. Every year Krishna Ekadashi and Trayodashi dates of Chaitrya month, to observe passing away of Ghosh thakur and Bhruni bath resectively.

From around five hundred years, the people of Gangetic West Bengal,s large area have immense sense of devotion for Ghosh Thakur's (Govindo Ghosh) Vaishnav idol Lord Gopinath, which is unparallel in India. From the time when Govindo Ghosh a resident of Kulai, a close disciple of Chaitanya establish the idol of Lord Gopinath in Agradweep, it become a place of pilgrimage for the Vaishnavs, but the occurrence of Baruni bath and festival is Known from an ancient time. According to the Scholars, Sometimes around 5000 B.C. and Baruni bath on Krishna trayodashi date of the month of Chaitra, new Year used to start. During Krishna Kadashi, Chandra (moon) remains in Satabhisha Constellation. According to the astrologers, God Varun is the lord of Satabhisha Constellation. For that reason, the other name of Satabhisha is baruni. We can say it for sure that the Barony festival of Agradweep is quite ancient in occurrence. According to the legends, the religious merit or piety one can get by bathing once in the Baruni festival is equals to bathing in the ganges during 100 solar eclipses.

Traditions tell us that King Vikramaditya of Ujjain (in different opinion, King Vikram Kesari of Mangalkot) used to come to Agradweep for Baruni bath. Date of establishment of lord Gopinath idol in Agradweep by Ghosh Thakur coincided with the date of passing away of Ghosh Thakur and Baruni, which increased the importance of Agradweep as Shreepaat. Sometimes in between 1574-76 A.D. King Maansingh came to Bengal to defeat the Pathan Muttan and on his return, he paid a visit to Agradweep for offering prayer to Lord Gopinath. There is mention of Lord Gopinath Agradweep in the epic "Tirthamangal", composed by Vijayram Gupta during 1174 (Bengali era). This implies that the renounce and fame Lord Gopinath of Agradweep is ancient in origin. Gadadhar Das, brother of Kashiram Das who wrote the Bengali Mahabharat, also mentioned Lord Gopinath in his Writings.

**Agradweep Gopinath Rai Padatala,
Nivas amar Sai Charan Kamala**

(Agradweep remains under the feet of Lord Gopinath and I live under the same lotus-like feet)

EMERGENCE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF LORD GOPINATH

In the Ganges West Bengal, there are many here says and traditions the establishment of Vaishnav god Lord Gopinath. The establisher of idol of Lord Gopinath was Govindo Ghosh, who is known as Ghosh Thakur in this region. They lived in the Kashipur Vaishnavtala nearby Agradweep. According to legends, he was born in Vaishnavtala. Govindo Ghosh and Govindananda of Chaitanya Bhagvat is one and same person.

It is written in Chaitanya Charanamrita that Nityananda along with Vasudev and Madhav Ghosh came to Gour from Neelachal Govindo Ghosh remained with Chaitanya to preach. Mahaprabhu for sometimes in Neelachal. During 1515 A.D. when Shreechaitanya for the Second time came to Gour Banga, Govindo Ghosh became his cotraveller. It is not known that exactly where Govindo Ghosh met Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. But according to some, they met in Kashipur Vaishnavtala. According to legends during their travel, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu abandoned Govindo Ghosh after observing his accumulator urge.

The fault of Govindo Ghosh was that he provided myrobalan fruit to Mahaprabhu for month refreshment which he

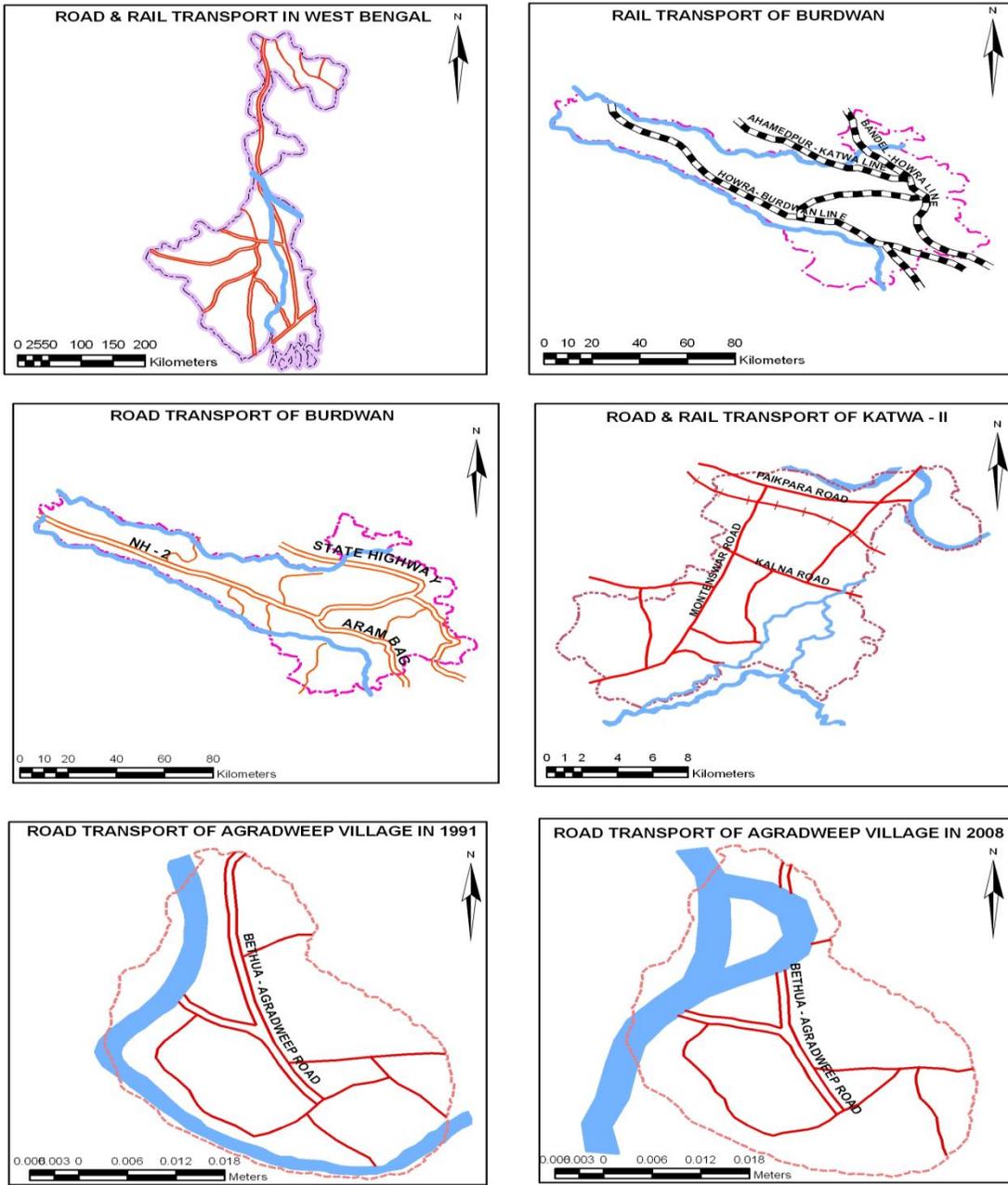
gathers previously. For this sin, Shree Chaitanya left his dear disciple. But at last, due of severe yearning of Govindo Ghosh, Shree Chaitanya asked him to establish Shreepaat in the ancient pilgrim of Agradweep. From then, Govindo Ghosh started living on banks of Ganges in a hut and continued his religious prayers. After this incidence, one day while bathing in the Ganges Govindo Ghosh found a long of wood which he brought to his hut. After some time, Mahaprabhu came to Ghosh Thakur's hut and with his divine commandment that wooden log changed to stone. With Mahaprabhu's directions and hard work of an unknown sculptor, the idol of lord Gopinath was carved out. Mahaprabhu himself established that idol and named it as lord Gopinath. Ghosh Thakur became the first priest of Lord Gopinath.

It is not known for sure that exactly when Lord Gopinath was established in Agradweep but it can be assumed that when Shree Chaitanya for the second or last time came to Gour, sometime during 1514 – 15, the idol was established. Around 2 feet high standing idol was carved out of touchstone, which is not only the pride of the Vaishnav but also of the people of the katwa subdivision and unique piece of Bengal's art craft.

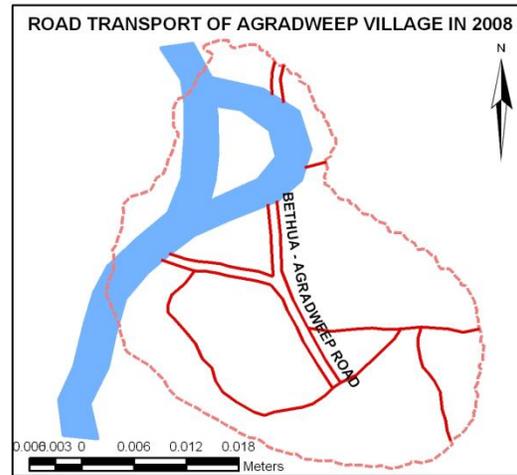
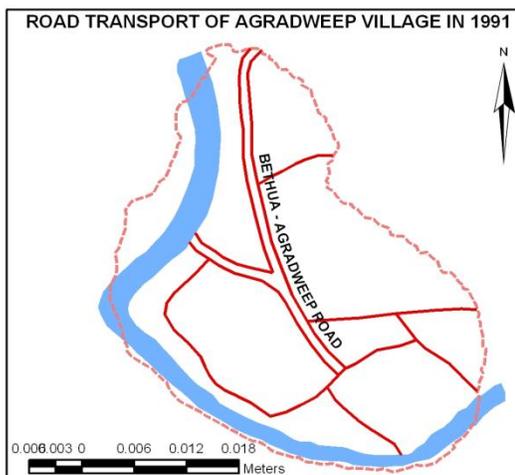
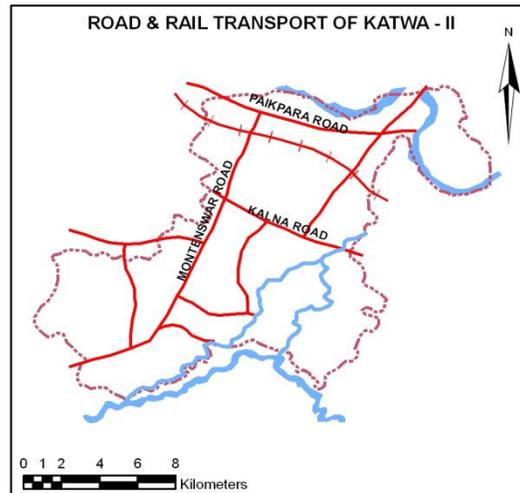
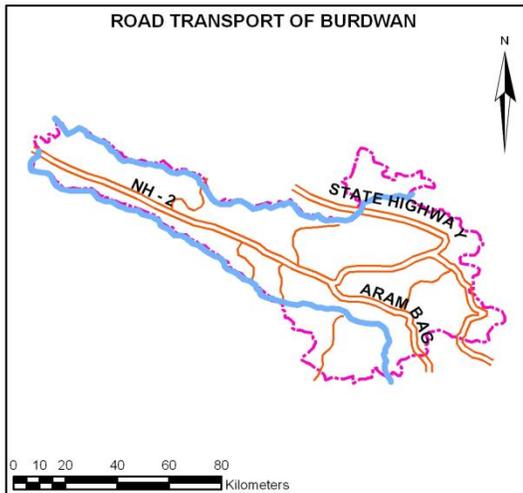
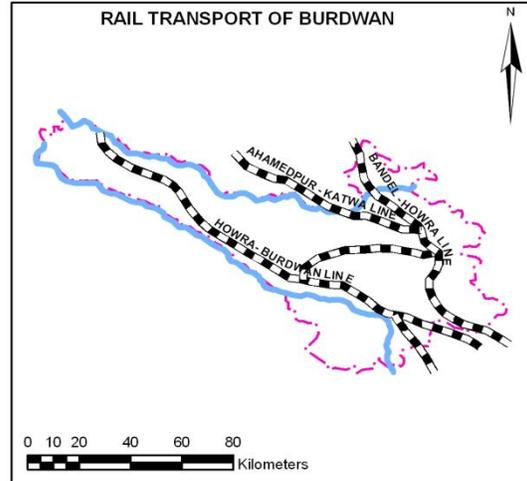
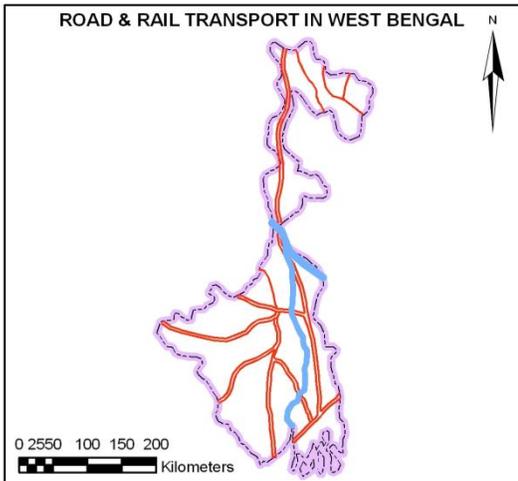
After the establishment of idol of Lord Gopinath, Ghosh Thakur remains alive for many years. He was married to a lady of Singh family of Vaishnavtala. One boy was also born to his wife. But his wife died while giving birth to the Child. His son also died in the age of five. For these reasons, Ghosh Thakur was very sad unable to worship with consistency. So, lord Gopinath appeared in front of Govindo Ghosh and him that all the ritual which his son was entitled to perform after his death would be performed by Lord Gopinath.

After this incidence, Govindo Ghosh starting Lord Gopinath as son and on Chaitra Ekadashi just before Baruni festival, Govindo Ghosh passed away. Legends says that even Lord Gopinath shed tears in sorrow and also performed all the ritual of funeral ceremony. From that year onwards, the same day, every year, the idol of Lord Gopinath was made to do the oblation rituals of the unreal ceremony. Govindo Ghosh affectionately that lord Gopinath as his son. In Gour's Vaishnav addition's among punchvarna affection toward Children is worth mentioning. In whole of India only in Agradweep's temple, it is said that Lord himself appeared to his worshipper in the incarnation of a child.

ROUTE MAP AND EFFECTS OF RIVER BHAGIRATHI



ROUTE MAP AND EFFECTS OF RIVER BHAGIRATHI



V. EROSION OF THE RIVER BANK OF BHAGIRATHI AND TRANSFER OF THE GOPINATH TEMPLE

First-time (1514-15):

Sometime during 1514-15, the idol of lord Gopinath was established in the hut of Govindo Ghosh where he used to worship. So, the Gopinath temple was actually the hut of Govindo Ghosh as there was not exactly any sort of temple. According to the legends, this place was on the eastern banks of river Bhagirathi, where the Agradweep Village was situated. But due of the erosion of the river, the exact place cannot be pointed out today.

Second Time (1723):

It is said that during the reign of king of Nadia, Krishnachandra, in 1723, a beautiful temple of lord Gopinath was constructed. This information is present in the book 'Manashamangal' written by Vijay Gupta. It is mentioned in the book, that there was a majestic temple present in Agradweep. There is no confusion about this, that the above said temple is the same temple of lord Gopinath. But due to the erosion of the banks of Bhagirathi River, the temple was destroyed. Due to changes in the way of Bhagirathi, the position of Agradweep Changes from eastern to Western banks of the river and Vice

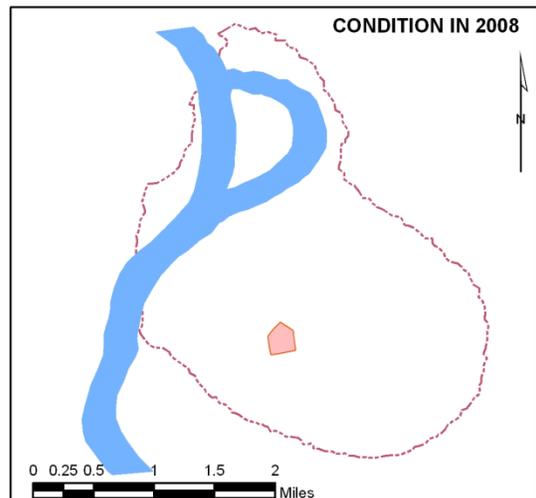
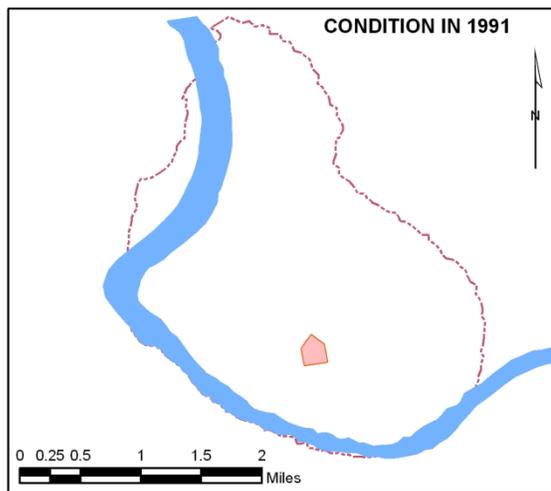
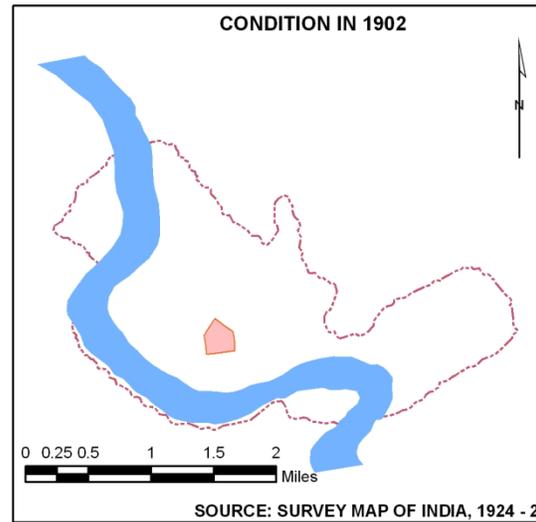
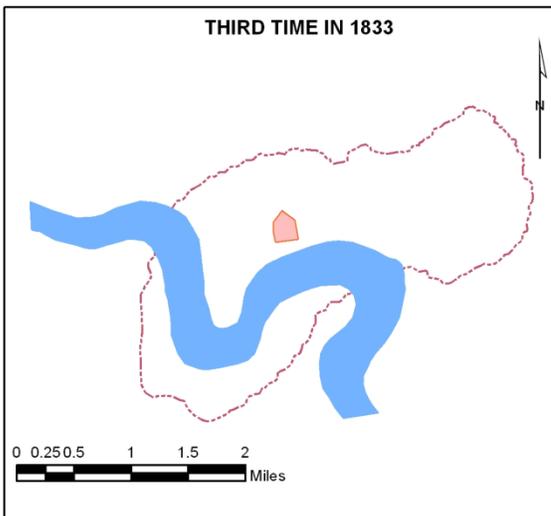
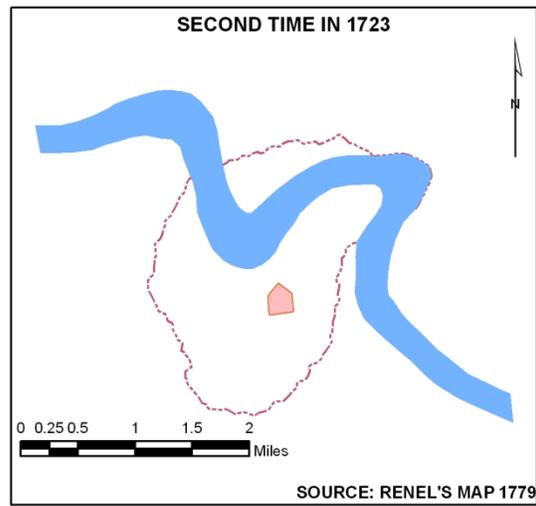
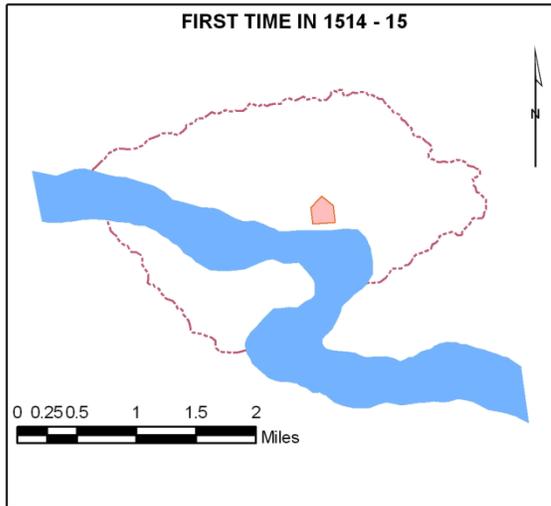
Versa. Along with this, the position of the temple also changed. The idol of lord Gopinath was firstly established on the eastern banks but on second occasion, it was established on western banks, which is considered on the first temple of lord Gopinath.

Third Time (1833):

The frequent erosion of bank of Bhagirathi River induced destruction of the temple structure. But it did not resist the people of Agradweep to construct the temple. In 1833 A.D, the people of Agradweep again constructed the temple on the eastern banks of the river as the village Agradweep was then on the eastern bank. From 'Sambad Bhaskar' published on 24 May 1849, it is known that Kalidas Poddar of Jessore (presently in Bangladesh) donated Rs.5000 for the construction of two rooms in the temple and digging of four ponds for the common people. This information is present on a terracotta seal of the temple.

Just near to relics of 1833's temple, a new temple was constructed in 1961. The present temple is still safe from the continuous erosion of river Banks of Bhagirathi. But from 1994, the eastern banks started erosion which stretched to the western bank from 2007. If the erosion on the eastern banks continued till today, the temple of around 200 years old (176 years) which is about 320 meters away from the banks of river Bhagirathi would have been destroyed by the erosion procedure.

CHANGABLE BHAGIRATHI AND LOCATION OF GOPINATH TEMPLE



VI. CONCLUSION

Even the pride of the hundred year old is huge and about one lakh of people comes to Agradweep for bathing in the Ganges during Barone, there remains a pyramid of ill management of the preparations for food shelter issue of the pilgrims. Many pilgrims, after worshipping in the temple returns to the nearby town Katwa for staying. This a set back for Agradweep to be an attractive tourist-stop.

Transport Problem: On one hand, the location of Agradweep is in deep rural part of W.B. on other hand, there is a huge crisis of the transport facility which prevented Agradweep to be in the lime light for tourist destinations. The main connectivity – the Bethua – Agradweep road is almost destroyed by devastation by Bhagirathi, The only mean of transport direct to temple is the rickshaw. The present condition of Katwa-Agradweep Ghat bus route is miserable. After the onset of darkness in the evening, there remains a huge problem of transportation as nothing is available to a pilgrim or tourists.

The erosion of the banks of the river Bhagirathi manifested the problem of development of Agradweep. Agriculture is the main occupation here. But the erosion devastated the agricultural field to a severe extent. This made a number of young men to find work in different states such as Gujrat, Maharashtra and many other states of the country. This negatively affected the Age sex pyramid of the area.

Due to unruly nature of the most of pilgrims, ignorance of the people of Agradweep and inactive role of the administration and Panchayat Samiti, the pollution free banks of Agradweep becomes a hub of pollution every year during the festival.

All last can said that the erosion of the banks of the river Bhagirathi was able to suppress the sense of devotion of the people of Agradweep and the pilgrims but increased it exponentially. People of Agradweep accepted the erosion by Bhagirathi as the will of lord Gopinath and maintain the age old traditions associated with the temple. This included the Dot Utsav after the Chaitra Ekadashi. During this period, the whole of Agradweep in the mood of Celebrations and enjoyments.

Along with the slight artificial to Agradweep due to modernization, the feel of nature continues here with the association of many known and unknown birds, butterflies etc. there remains the continuous flow of Bhagirathi, high lands and bamboo forests in Agradweep.

Last but not least, it can be said that if someone visit Agradweep, he will not only find the present of joy the devotion to lord Gopinath but also the science beauty of the rural village and natural sceneries of Agradweep.

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- [3] R.K. Mukherjee writes, "Leaving the hill of Rajmahal, Ganges seemed to have passed northwards through the modern kalindri and then southwards in the lower course of Mahananda. East of the ruins of ancient Gour" (*The Changing face of Bengal*, *ibid*, p. 141).
- [4] Jadunath Sarkar writes, "time has leveled to the dust the glories of the Gauda under hindu and Muslim rule and the ruins of their capital lies scattered in heaps for miles along the eastern bank of Kalindri river through which flowed the main current of the Ganges down to the close of the thirteenth Century" *9th History of Bengal: Muslim period 1200-1757*, [Patna: Academia Asiatica, 1973], p. 24).
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