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Boating Facility in Exotic Places brought to focus

Chief Secretary directed to finalize the list in a month

Target set to start the activities in 100 spots by December

Bhubaneswar, 9 July

With eco-tourism of Odisha emerging as a best practice, Government has brought to focus the boating facilities in different water tracks of the State as a fillip to the sector in post-covid days. This was discussed in a high level meeting held on digital mode under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra from *Lokseba Bhawan* today afternoon wherein Principal Secretary Tourism Sri Vishal Kumar Dev outlined the boating prospects and associated matters for discussion.

Considering boating and water sports potential of the State, Chief Secretary Sri Mahapatra directed the departments of Forest & Environment, Water Resources and Tourism to identify around 100 spots through joint verification for starting the boating facilities. The departments were asked to finalize the list in a month. Sri Mahapatra also directed to set the

floating jetties and boats in quick sessions, and, the activities should start by December of the current year.

Further, Chief Secretary made it clear that the locations should be identified on the basis of the objective criteria of their competitiveness for being popularized in tourism market, and, offering exotic experience to the tourists. Sri Mahapatra said, “Proper choice of the location and their popularization will attract private investment to the sector soon, and, that will take State’s eco-tourism to next higher level”. Chief Secretary also directed to put in place proper safety measures in boats and boating spots. He directed to adopt *community management model* with appropriate training and orientation to the local community, VSS and WSHG groups for operation and management of the facilities.

Available data show, Odisha has around 118 small and big dams including the major dams like Hirakud, Mandira, Patora, Deras, Hadgarh, Pitamahal, Jumuka, Indrabati, Kolab, Kunaria, Sarafgarh, Godhahada, Kanjhari and Sarbgarh *etc.* Similarly, the State is bestowed with the natural lakes like Chilika, Ansupa, Pata, Kanjia, Hiarkud. There are around ten major river basins namely Mahanadi, Bramhani, Baitarani, Rusikulya, Bansadhara, Nagabali, Kolab, Indravati, Subranarekha and Budhabalanga. Besides, there are many river confluences among these rivers and their tributaries. These places offer scores of sites for boating activities.

It may be pertinent here to mention that eco-tourism was started from the year 2016 under the trend sitting guidance of Chief Secretary Sri Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who the then served as Additional Chief Secretary Forest & Environment. Since then, eco-tourism has recorded constant increase in number of visitors to the eco-destinations over the years. The boating facilities will add more attractive contours to it.

Principal Secretary Tourism Sri Vishal Dev, Director Tourism Sri Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav along with Collectors of different districts and senior officers from concerned departments participated in the deliberations.

****U.K.Mohapatra, PRO to Chief Secretary.****