

**Kolakham** – a small picturesque village of 62 Nepali families belonging to the “Rai” community is one of the most beautiful and sought after places by adventure loving people and bird watchers. The village is also a paradise for nature loving people. Located at an height of 6200 ft and on the fringe of Neora Valley National Park. The village comes under Kalimpong Subdivision of Darjeeling District.

Kolakham offers a majestic view of mighty Kanchenjunga, the world third highest peak along with its adjoining peaks, ie. Kabru, Kabru Dome, Pandim, Siniolchu etc. stand high on the north western sky. Lava with its monastery along with Rishyap are distinctly visible and Nathula is a distant view from the village. Number of mountain ranges creates numerous valleys which are mesmerizing. And never ending lush green of Neora Valley forest makes Kolakham is one of the most coveted places to visit in Darjeeling district.

Kolakham is just 8 kms from Lava and the entire route passes through Neora Valley National Park. The park is enriched by its amazing bi-diversity of endangered species of plants, animals and birds. Neora Valley forest is a home of the Red Panda, the Musk Deer and the Clouded Leopard apart from Leopard, Bison etc. which are regularly seen wild lives.

Neora Valley National Park extends from a lower altitude of around 100 ft. upto 10500 ft with an area coverage of 88 sq. km. The highest point of the park touches Rachel Pass, which is located at the tri-junction of the Indian states West Bengal and Sikkim along with Bhutan.

Adventurous enthusiastic can go for hiking in the forest of course with all cautions as the chances of meeting wild animals are very high. For following more adventurous trails, it is always advisable to go along with a experienced guide.

The main crop of Kolakham village is cardamom, which is the prime source of income for the villagers. But now-a-days home tourism is becoming popular which is getting another major source of income.

**Things to do / Activities in Kolakham :** Kolakham is a place of serenity. Walking leisurely in and around the village and to watch the lifestyle of the villagers along with enjoying the spellbound natural beauty. A further walking inside to Neora Valley forest is enthralling.

Another major attraction of Kolakham is Changey water falls, which is 6 kms away from the village. Journey through the virgin forest along with the magnificent view of mighty Kanchenjunga is really exiting. For enjoying the beauty of Changey water falls, a 900 ft walking trail to be managed from the last motorable point. Waterfall driving down around 400 ft to reach its end point to make itself one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Darjeeling hills.

**Places to visit around Kolakham :** From Kolakham it's easy to visit several beautiful places as a day tour. Lava, Loleygaon, Rishyap, Charcole, Rikisum, Pedong etc are the places which are full of natural beauties and offer full blown view of Eastern Himalayas along with mighty Kanchenjunga and its neighbouring peaks. Jhandi Dhara in Loleygaon which is famous for spectacular sunrise view on Mount Kanchenjunga and Mount Everest.

**How to reach Kolakham :** There is no public transport system to connect Kolakham from the rest of the places. The only way to reach there by a hired SUVs. Kolakham is 123 kms from New Jalpaiguri Railway Station via Kalimpong and 117 kms via Gorubathan. Bagdogra Airport is almost same distance as NJP.

## Charkhole

Situated at a distance of 150 km from Siliguri and 39km via - Kahmon 80Km from Lava, the small Lepcha village of Charkhol, popularly known as Lolegaon, is a paradise on earth in all true sense. The nature has abandoned all its wealth in this solitary land placed at the lap of the Himalayas at an altitude of 5000ft.(Approx).

As the first rays of the dawn kisses the crown of the Kangchenzonga, Charkhol Lolegaon unfolds its enthralling charm with the widest view of snow-capped range around. Situated amidst the deep, moist woods of towering pine, cypress, oak and rhododendrons, Charkhol Lolegaon can boast of its serene tranquility, which is, at time and again, pierced by the cheerful chirpings of innumerable known and unknown birds.

Numerous species of butterflies, a wide variety of flowers and orchids spread riot of colors in the surroundings of Lolegaon much to the joy and visual satisfaction of a beholder. The spectacle of scintillating sunrise or sensuous sunset from the nearby hilltop of **Jhandi Dara** is an experience of the lifetime. On clear days even the mighty Mt Everest is visible from the spot.

Lolegaon offers quite a few short trek routes and excursion points too. A trek to Samtaha ; excursions to Kafer (15Km), Lava (39Km), Rishyap (30Km), Pedong(50Km), Rishi (30Km from Pedong), Rikisom (53Km) and Gumba Dara (29Km) make holidays at Charkhol Lolegaon cherishable for lifetime.

The most lucrative attraction at Lolegaon is however, the famous 'Canopy Walk' along the hanging wooden footbridge amidst the huge pines and oaks, which gives the enthralling feel of the surrounding beauty and wilderness.