

The Prospects and the Present Status of Eco-Tourism in Assam

Himadri Lekharu

Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, India

ABSTRACT: Tourism today is one of the world's rapidly growing and dynamically developing industry. Growth of tourism industry led to increase economic activities throughout the world. It can develop the quality of life by increasing the number of attractions and recreational opportunities and services in an area. Tourism encompassing not only economic benefits but also social and cultural benefits as well. Thus tourism is a way of national integration and international understanding.

Eco tourism is a preserving travel to natural areas by not disturbing the integrity of the ecosystem. It involves travel to the destination where flora and fauna and cultural heritage are the primary attraction. Eco tourism helps in the conservation and protection of natural resources.

Assam, the most prominent state of North East India is said as the hotspot of tourist for its unique natural beauty and friendly climatic condition. This paper make an attempt to explore the potentiality of Eco-tourism industry in Assam.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, National Integration, Ecosystem, Natural Resources and Flora and Fauna.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term "Eco- Tourism" generally refers the travel destination where the natural beauty is the main area of attraction. It means the nature based tourism. It is completely a new approach in tourism and mainly depends on the idea of sustainability. The term "Eco-Tourism" was first used by Hector Ceballas in 1983 to describe the idea of nature based travel. The importance of eco-tourism has been increasing since the 'Berlin Declaration of Biological Diversity in 1997'.

According to International Ecotourism Society, "Ecotourism is a responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people" (TIES, 1990). Eco tourism reduces the adverse effect of tourism on nature and environment. It appreciates the natural and cultural heritage of an area. Eco tourism focuses on recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, socially responsible travel and creation of economic opportunities for local communities. It is based on the two objectives of conserving environment and improving the welfare of local people.

Assam, a land of myths and mystery is the largest state of North East India. It is bounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the North, Nagaland and Manipur on the East, Meghalaya and Mizoram on the South and Tripura and West Bengal on the West. Assam is a land of unique natural beauty with tremendous potentialities for growth and development of eco-tourism.

II.OBJECTIVES OF THIS PAPER

We prepare this paper with the following objectives:

1. To examine the prospects and potentialities of eco-tourism in Assam.
2. To examine the present status of eco-tourism in Assam.

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

III.METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the above objectives we prepare this paper in a descriptive and explanatory way. Assam has a bright future in the field of ecotourism and which we can try to highlight on the basis of secondary data collected from various research journals, articles, books, newspaper etc.

IV.PROSPECTS OF ECO TOURISM IN ASSAM

Assam forms a part of global bio diversity hot- spot. The forests area of Assam is rich in various types of flora and fauna which gives a sound base eco-tourism venture. Assam has 5 National Parks, several Wildlife Sanctuaries, Reserve Forests, and Bird Sanctuaries etc. Besides these various kinds of ornamental fishes, rare medicinal plants, various types of herbs and orchids are found in Assam. The glance of Assam's biodiversity varieties can be summarized as follows:

Table no 1

Table name: BIODIVERSITY ESTIMATION OF ASSAM

NAME	NO
Flowering plant	3017
Wild orchids	+193
Bamboos	42
Canes	14
Mammals	+164
Primates	9
Birds	+800 (280 migratory birds)
Amphibians	+60
Butterflies	1500 (approx.)
Reptiles	116 (approx.)

Source: Department of Environment and Forests, Government of Assam

The major eco-tourism prospects of Assam and their specialty can be introduced with the help of following tables:

Table no: 2

Table no: National parks and their specialty

Name	Area (sq. km)	District	Specialty
Dibru-Saikhowa	340	Dibrugarh and Tinisukia	Feral Horse, Wood Duck, Elephant
Manas	500	Chirang and Baksa	Golden Langur, Pigmy Hog, Hispid Hare, Elephant,
Kaziranga	858.98	Golaghat, Nagoan and Sonitpur	One Horned Rhino, Swamp Deer, Elephant, Tiger, Bengal Florican, Buffalo
Orang	78.81	Darrang and Sonitpur	Rhino, Elephant, Leopard, Green Pigeon, Barking Deer
Nameri	200	Sonitpur	Wood Duck, Hornbill, Lagure Capped

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam 2015

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

Table: 3
Table name: Wildlife Sanctuaries and their specialty

Name	Area (sq. km)	District	Specialty
Pobitora	38.80	Morigaon	One Horned Rhino, Leopard, Tiger
Pobha	49	North Lakhimpur	Wild Water Buffalo
Laokhowa	70.13	Nagaon	Wild Buffalo, Swamp Deer, Duck, Cormorant, Rhino
Bherjan-Borajan-Podumoni	7.22	Tinisukia	Hoolock Gibbon, Pigtailed Macaque, Stump Tailed Macque
Chakrashila	45.56	Dhubri and Kokrajhar	Golden Langur And Aquatic Bird
Sonai rupai	220.00	Sonitpur	Tiger, Elephant, Hornbill
Garampani	6.05	Golaghat	Elephant, Hoolock Gibbon And Birds
Nambar	325.25	Karbi Anglong	Elephant And Hoolock Gibbon
Burha sapor	44.06	Sonitpur	Water Buffalo, Aquatic Bird, Bengal Florican, Rhino
Barnadi	26.22	Udalguri	Pigmy Hog, Elephant, Hornbill, Hispid Hare
Gibbon	20.98	Jorhat	Hoolock Gibbon, Birds
Nambor	97.15	Golaghat	Elephant
Amcheng	78.64	Kamrup	Vulture, Python, Cobra, Butterflies
Borail	326.26	Cachar	Himalayan Black Deer, Horn Bill, Clouded Leopard
Morat logri	451	Karbi Anglong	Wild Pig, Woodland Bird, Rock Python

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam 2014/15

Table : 4
Table name: Bird Sanctuaries and their specialty

Name	Area(Sq. km)	District	Specialty
Pani -Dehing	33.93	Sivasagar	Aquatic birds, migratory birds
Deepar beel	4.14	Kamrup	Aquatic and migratory birds
Bordoibam- Billmukh	11.25	Dhemaji and Lakhimpur	Aquatic and migratory birds

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam 2014/15

Besides these there are several places where natural beauty are tremendously available and there is a huge potentiality for the development of eco-tourism industry. In this regard we can highlight the following places as a prospect of eco-tourism.

Table no: 5
Table name: Places Where Eco Tourism Industry Can Developed

Name	District	Specialty
Bhalukpung	Sonitpur	Evergreen forests, mystic blue hills and bank of river Jia bhoroli
Chandubi	Nagaon	Chandubi lake, tea garden, deep forests
Haflong	NC Hills	Haflong lake, hill station,
Jatinga	NC Hills	Famous bird mystery
Majuli	Jorhat	Rare migratory birds like pelican, water sports

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

Digboi	Tinisukia	Garden city
Sasoni Merbill	Dibrugarh	Biggest lake in Assam
Koyakujia	Bongaigaon	Koyakujia lake, Boating
Diphu	Karbi angling	Botanical garden, boating facilities
Umrangshu	NC Hills	Hills and greenery
Joypur		Rain forest
Gerukamukh	Dhemaji	Hills and scenic beauty of subansiri
Pancharatna	Goalpara	Reserve forest
Maibong	NC Hills	Hill station
Panimoor	NC Hills	Thrilling waterfall of Kapili River

Source: Primary Data

These are the various tourist spot which are rich in natural beauty and can be developed as eco-tourism spot. The natural beauty of Assam is God gifted; if we use it properly then the eco-tourism industry of Assam will be one of the largest GDP contributors to our nation. The tea gardens of Assam have also a large potentiality to generate Eco Tourism. The tea garden of Assam is a huge reservoir of natural beauty and bio-diversity.

V.PRESENT STATUS OF ECO TOURISM IN ASSAM

In Assam tourism industry is a major source of revenue generation. Tourism industry plays a significant role in case of earning foreign exchange reserves. Also it provides various employment opportunities to the local people. But in spite of huge potentialities and God gifted natural beauty, the development of tourism industry is not very satisfactory. In this regard we can highlight the revenue earnings from national parks of Assam

Table no: 7
Table name: Tourist Inflow to the National Parks of Assam

Name	Year	No of visitors		Revenue (in Lakh)
		Indian	Foreign	
Kaziranga	2010-11	112392	7447	136.73
	2011-12	117308	7521	149.46
	2012-13	93747	7418	205.76
	2013-14	119289	6922	268.66
	2014-15	123360	7994	290.46
Manas	2010-11	10843	503	14.67
	2011-12	19705	237	24.17
	2012-13	15892	218	25.48
	2013-14	20527	211	30.93
	2014-15	9786	475	33.48
Orang	2010-11	1702	180	1.82
	2011-12	2678	159	2.45
	2012-13	1847	70	2.76

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

	2013-14	2329	16	2.43
	2014-15	1946	45	2.31
Dibru-saikhuwa	2010-11	2351	40	0.56
	2011-12	3970	42	0.90
	2012-13	2656	19	1.08
	2013-14	4230	54	2.09
	2014-15	4249	27	2.10
Nameri	2010-11	4460	352	2.72
	2011-12	5601	457	3.51
	2012-13	4370	528	4.54
	2013-14	5866	806	11.26
	2014-15	8448	1035	14.13

Source: NEDFi Databank

From the above table we can summarize that the tourism industry play an important role in Assam's economy. Therefore it is very essential to take necessary steps for the improvement of this industry.

VI.FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we come to know that there is a huge potentiality of Eco tourism in Assam. But despite of this the development of Eco tourism industry is not very satisfactory. Most of the people of Assam are completely unaware about the concept of Eco tourism and its importance to the environment as well as to the economy. Therefore instead of conservation of natural resources they destroy it to live a comfortable life. Moreover there are many problems associated with the improvement of the tourism industry. Some of these are:

- Insufficient transport and communication facilities: Assam is hilly areas surrounded by dense forest and lots of mountains. Therefore the communication system is not very satisfactory to attract the foreign tourists. Moreover Assam is connected to the mainland of India through a narrow road called as "Chicken Neck" for which Assam is not able to earn some facilities like other state of India. The central government is not interested to development of North Eastern State and there is a lack of proper transportation and communication facilities in Assam due to lack of sufficient fund.
- Growth of insurgent activities: The growth of insurgent activities is another reason for the development of tourism industry in Assam. There are many insurgency group in Assam as well as in the North Eastern part of India. The growing activities of insurgency groups demotivate the tourist. The growth of insurgency group is mainly due to weak law and order situation of this region.
- Lack of proper tourism policy: In 2008 Government of Assam introduced a tourism policy but it is not properly implemented yet due to lack awareness and sincerity of Government Officials.
- Unavailability of standard accommodation facilities: The accommodation facilities in tourism potential areas in Assam are very low standard. The accommodation facilities are available only in the National parks, but there is a lack of standard transportation facilities in the other tourism potential areas of Assam.

The government of Assam is not only responsible for the lower growth of tourism industry in Assam, the people of Assam is also responsible for this. Most of the people of Assam are unaware and unconscious about the benefits of the Eco Tourism industry which not only protects the environment but also give a standard income potentiality to the local people. To promote this industry in Assam, the government should take various awareness programs among the common people. Moreover the government of Assam should take the necessary steps for the security of tourist.



ISSN(Online) : 2319-8753
ISSN (Print) : 2347-6710

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

REFERENCES

1. Chutia .S, "Problems and Prospects of Tourism Industry In Assam" IJIRSET, vol:4, Issue : 2, pp. 633-638, 2015
2. Devi. M.K, "Ecotourism in Assam: A Promising Opportunity For Development" SAJTH, vol:5, No:1, pp.179-192,2012
3. Das .D, "Tourism Industry in North Eastern State: Prospects and Problems" GRMJ, vol:2, Issue: 7, pp. 1-6,2012-2013
4. Deka U.C,"Tourism in Assam's Economics Development: Policy Implication" Development Studies, vol:24, No:4,pp.122-124, 2004
5. NEDFi Databank

BIOGRAPHY

The author completed M.A. in Economics from Dibrugarh University in the year 2015. Presently she is pursuing M.Phil under the Department of Economics, Dibrugarh University. Her area of interest in research is Development Economics and International Economics.