

# An Analysis of Tourism Potentiality of Assam with reference to Sivasagar District

Karabi Biswas

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

---

## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 10 November 2018

### Keywords

Tourism, India, Income, Employment, Assam

### \*Corresponding Author

Email: bswwskarabi[at]gmail.com

---

## ABSTRACT

Tourism in India now-a-days is regarded as one of the most important services sector industry. Every corner of India is blessed with the beauty and resources to be regarded as a tourist hub. Assam is also blessed with ample amount of resources to be one of the leading state in tourism development, not only in India but worldwide. And if Assam can utilize its potentialities properly, it in turn can be a source of both income and employment generation and also foreign exchange earnings. Though the sector has possessed the ability, yet the industry has not attained its height due to the bottlenecks. Therefore, to attain the proper pace of tourism development in the country, the challenges should be removed with government help and by the will of the people to make their place a better one.

---

## 1. Introduction

Tourism as a concept bears immense importance. From the economic perspective, it is such a field where many people are involves both directly and indirectly. The tourism sector plays a pivotal role in the economic, cultural, social and industrial development of a region. But the problem is with the lower importance entrusted with the topic by the researchers in the past, but now work has started. Tourism is a situation where person from one country or region travel to another region or country for a short period. So it is a temporary, short term movement of people to destinations other than their permanent residence. At present, the tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in India. Tourism can be effective way for creating employment in both micro and macro level and helps in earning foreign exchange. As the tourism industry is highly labor intensive therefore, it create employment and career opportunities for the low skilled and semi-skilled workers, particularly the poor female and young educated workers. This industry is a growing service sector of the country contributing 6.23 percent towards national GDP. Tourism can take the economy much closer to the international economy by creating the proper scope. In a country like India, amidst all diversities, each state has its own attractions that can be the tourist spots. But is up to the states to use its attractions fully by moving forward with clear aims, objectives and programs to help the nation realize its tourism potential to the fullest.

The tourist destinations situated in different parts of the North East Region in general and Assam in specific, a promising destination for natural tourism, cultural tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage tourism and pilgrimage tourism. Assam is the significant sate of the north eastern region of India also known as the gateway to north eastern region is blessed with ample natural and wildlife resources. Assam has gradually become a major tourist destination, thus producing scope for income and job opportunities across the state.

### 1.1. Tourism and Economic Development

As tourism is known as the fastest growing service sector, this sector acts as the important agent of both economic and social sector. Tourism sector can be a source of income,

employment and investment, alters the economy's structure, contributes to foreign exchange earnings and helps in maintaining a favorable balance of payments in the country. Tourism sector is also known as the backbone of allied sector like hospitality, civil aviation, travel and transport, hotel, resort, home stays, street vendors and tour operations and etc. Tourism leads to witness able growth of economic, social, cultural and educational sectors. Several ancient monuments and work of the past are treasured beautifully with care for the tourist, thus it also impels preservations. Tourism generates varieties of employment opportunities ranging from a high level manager to room boys or sale girls. The tourism sectors can one of the significant contributors of growth, employment generation, increase of national as well as individual income, helps in earning foreign exchange and improves people's standard of living .Therefore, in a developing country like India, the importance of this sector has increased with rapid pace.

### 1.2 Tourism Potentiality of Assam with reference to Sivasagar District

Though the North Eastern region including Assam is always felt neglected by the Central government, yet the region can catch the eyes by developing its tourism sector. Tourism in Assam is generally nature based, which is blessed with ample resources in the form of green tea garden and mineral reserves, river and flora and fauna and cultural diversity. Therefore, rivers, national parks, wild life sanctuaries, lakes, hot water springs and tea gardens, festivals are the major attractions for the tourists in the state. Assam is rightly endowed with nature and has the appreciable possibilities to present itself as a tourist's hub to the globe. Sivasagar, situated on the banks of the river Dikhow, was once the capital of the Ahom Kingdom, is presently the headquarters of the district. The district carries its own peculiarities to become a major tourist destination. Sivasagar is known as the historic city of Assam, known for its ancient places and monuments of the Ahom rulers. The tourists' potentiality of the district is immense with its ethnic and cultural beauty, religious attractions and heritage sites. Most of the foreign tourists are seemed to be interested in the historical sites, they visit the religious places also as it is a part of the age old history. The main places of

attraction for the people at Sivasagar are the KarengGhar and Talata IGhar, Rang Ghar, Gargaon Palace, Sibsagar Tank, Joysagar Tank and Temples, Gaurisagar Tank, Rudrasagar Tank, Ajan Pir Dargarh Sarif, Namdang Stone Bridge and Assam Tai Museum. Hence the district possesses tremendous scope to grow as a tourists' destination.

## 2. Review of Literature

Kakkar and Sapna (2012) examined the impact of tourism on Indian economy. The study discussed how India emerges as a major tourist destination in the world by developing its tourism infrastructure and attracting tourist from various countries. Many events that happened in India like Cricket world cup, Commonwealth games, visit of US president Barak Obama has helped India to attract tourist. India's tourism industry is experiencing a strong period of growth. The study concludes that tourism sector is not only a major contributor of growth of Indian economy but a generator of employment opportunities in the country.

Sikder (2014) studied the potentialities of tourism sector on economic development of north eastern states of India. The north eastern states of India are well known for its natural beauty, green tea garden, diversity of cultural identity, wildlife but due to insufficient attention from central and respective state governments, the tourism potentialities of the entire north eastern region remain unutilized. The study found that tourism sector contributes some part of NSDP of the north eastern states but tourism infrastructure is still inadequate in the entire north eastern states.

Akhito ( 2017) analyses the association between tourism and economic development in Uttarakhand region of India. Uttarakhand is known as a Himalayan hill resort area with various tourist resources. The study analyses the characteristics of tourist visiting Uttarakhand using secondary data. The study found that tourism sector help local people or localities to develop economically in Uttarakhand.

Choudhuri *et al.* (2018) in their study made an attempt to study the extent of rural tourism to generate sustainable livelihood in North east India. Based on secondary data the study also discussed the government initiatives and policies to enhance tourism potential at the rural level. This study found that there has been considerable growth of rural communities and rural tourism in the north eastern region through developed village tourism, natural tourism and cultural tourism.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the tourism potentiality of Assam with special reference to Sivasagar district.
2. To analyze the various challenges of tourism development in Assam.

## 4. Research Methodology

The entire study is based on secondary sources of data. The present research paper is basically based on data from Statistical handbook of Assam, Director of Economics and Statistics, Directorate of Tourism, Assam for the information related to the tourists' arrival in Assam and revenue earned from them. To know the tourists' visit to the centrally protected monuments under Sivasagar Sub- Circle, data have been collected from the office of the Archeological Survey of India, Sivasagar Sub-Circle and Tourists' Information Office, Sivasagar.

## 5. Analysis and Interpretation

### 5.1 Domestic and Foreign tourist arrival in Assam

Assam as a whole can be regarded as a tourist destination.. It has an amazing natural beauty. The tourist spots attract the tourists' from all over the world. These tourists' spots can earn funds from its domestic tourists and can earn foreign exchange from its foreign tourists. Apart from the domestic tourists' there are a number of foreign tourists' who visit Assam.

Table-1

Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrival in Assam and Revenue earned from the tourists

Year	Tourists staying at tourist lodges		Tourists in other accommodation like hotel		Total revenue earned from tourist lodges only (□ in lakh)
	Domestic	Foreigner	Domestic	Foreigner	Both
2010-11	25831	594	4101616	15039	143.60
2011-12	26439	696	4381897	15964	184.49
2012-13	22057	711	4522609	16997	248.19
2013-14	23890	579	4420503	18507	191.32
2014-15	21092	422	4842734	19589	211.77
2015-16	42988	1077	5599962	25243	1057.24
2016-17	24036	474	5389841	6735	252.39

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, Directorate of Tourism, Assam

The accommodation of tourists' clearly shows that the numbers of domestic tourists' outshine the number of foreign tourists' to the state. Both domestic and foreign tourists' prefer to stay in other accommodations like hotel rather than tourists' lodges. However, the total revenue earned from tourists' are of tourists' lodges only. The revenue earned over the years is seen increasing from 2010-11 to 2012-13, but it 2013-14 it dropped to the lowest of all the years. The highest revenue

earned from tourists' and the highest number of both the domestic and foreign tourists arrival is witnessed in the year 2015-16, but again in 2016-17 it dropped drastically.

### 5.2 Significance of Tourism on Assam and Economic Aspect

The tourism sector of India is one of the significant contributor of growth among the services sector. As Assam is

endowed with ample amount of resources to present itself as a attractive tourist destination, hence there is ample scope for the state to grow on the economic front also. This industry can encourage various entrepreneurial activities if proper attention

is paid. The industry has multi-dimensional effect and hence can create ample scope for job opportunities. Thus, it can create employment as well as can provide a source of income.

**Table-2**  
**Employment in Tourism Industries in India and in Assam**

Item	Total Employment (in Lakh)		Share in Total Employment (in percentage)	
	India	Assam	India	Assam
Total Employment	5355.4	121.11		
Tourism Characteristic Industries	234.2	3.47	4.37	2.87
Tourism Specific Industries	437.9	4.46	8.18	3.68
Tourism Connected Industries	203.7	0.99	3.8	0.82

Source: Regional Tourism Satellite Account of Assam, 2009-10

The total employment in Assam was 121.11 lakh as compared to 5355.4 lakh in India (in 2009-10). The total share of employment in the tourism industry in India was 4.37 percent, while for Assam it is 2.87 percent only. The tourism specific industry constitutes 3.68 percent of the total employment in Assam while tourism connected industries constituted a share of only 0.82 percent in the state. This picture clearly shows that the overall employment in tourism industry is lower in Assam compared to the national statistics.

### 5.3 Domestic and Foreign Tourists Arrival to Sivasagar District

Sivasagar district of upper Assam division is famous for its Ahom rule and ancient monuments. In their ruling phase, the district became the symbol of various architectural works and other symbolic places. That termed the place as the historic city of the state. The historic monuments are the creations of the rulers at different point of time and these make the city a tourist hub. A number of domestic as well as foreign tourists visit the place to witness its beauty.

Table-2  
Visitors of Centrally Protected Monument in Sivasagar district

Period	Domestic	Foreigner
2014-15	353290	1412
2015-16	451813	1743
2016-17	393606	1771

Source: Archeological Survey of India, Sivasagar Sub-Circle and Tourists' Information Office, Sivasagar

The arrival of foreign tourists is comparatively very less to the domestic tourists. But over the years, the foreign visitors have increased to the district. Both domestic and foreign visitors mostly stay in other accommodation rather than the tourists lodge basically due to unavailability of rooms. Most of the tourists come to visit only the monuments and stay for 4 to 5 days.

### 6. Challenges to Tourism Development in Assam vis-à-vis Sivasagar

The district as well as Assam despite of having so much potentiality for tourism development has not achieved the goal yet. There is every possibility of improvement if proper care is taken in this field. There are some major challenges in this development path that should be removed.

**Infrastructural bottleneck:** Proper infrastructure is one of the utmost necessities of tourism development. When people travel to tourist spots, they must get good transportation facility and affordable accommodation. The communication or the service should be systematic because people plan their tour as per their time. Therefore, the tourist spots should be managed in such a way that it does not cause any inconvenience to the tourists. There are some places which are in remote areas and the road to travel is also in a bad condition. So, this type of situation cannot bag the tourist and it stands as a discouraging factor.

**Role of Media:** The media is also a very powerful agency to disseminate information worldwide. It can create people's preferences to visit a place. Now-a-days, social media is also one of the way to transform the tourism industry from its traditional to the informational pattern. The users of social media generate various personal visits and shares information in their user handle which works as a source of information to the others. Thus, people can know about a place and might plan to visit it also. Therefore people should try to post correct thing and everyone should give information about a visit.

**Advertisements:** Some tourist spots endorse brand ambassadors to promote the place. Many renowned persons are seen advertising for a particular place. Those places that do it are in better position as they get a benefit over those who do not advertise their specialty. And thus give the other regions a disadvantage.

**Attitude of the local people:** The behavior or attitude of the local people of a tourist spot also sometime works as a hindrance for the development of a particular tourist spot. Sometime, it is seen that some people do not like others to visit the place; they want to be the sole proprietor of that place. Some people or even the local vendors differentiate between the domestic and foreign tourists. They try to charge different price to different tourist which do not convey the right feeling in the minds of the tourists.

**Insurgency:** Insurgency is a great cause of concern among the people of Assam. This is a bottleneck in the arrival of tourists to the state. The phenomenon like extortion, killings, bandh and strikes have become so

common in the country that people consider it risky to visit such a place. The tourists, both foreign as well as domestic fear that they can be a easy target for the insurgents.

**Absence of trained tourist guides:** One of the prime challenges to tourism development is the absence of trained tourist guides. In Assam the tourist guides are not given proper training and instructions about how should behave with the tourist, what plans are to be taken to impress them. It is often seen that the tourist roam themselves alone from places to places. There is not proper management or agency to take care of the tourist's expectations and therefore tourists. Especially the foreign tourists have to face a lot of difficulty as they also face language problem with the local people also.

## 7. Conclusion

Tourism is a multi-dimensional and multi-sartorial activity and hence a holistic approach should be undertaken if this

industry is to be developed. Assam with its great potentialities can contribute to the economy of Assam and benefit the people. But to attain that economic security, the hurdles that the tourist industry faces, should be removed. The spread effect of tourism industry is much higher than any other industry. From local small vendors to the tourist guides, the travel agencies are benefitted where a number of people are engaged. In Sivasagar district, it is seen that many women run shops in front of Kareng ghar, which provides the women a source of income and the tourist also get to know and buy the traditional things. Despite of its being a tourists hub, the employment generation and revenue earning in the district as well as in Assam is not so satisfactory, it has potentiality to achieve more. The first thing to do is to formulate the policies properly and then execute them. Apart from this, the mindset of the local people should also be welcoming to the tourist, people should be friendly enough with the visitors that they create a sense of love and respect for that place in them.

## References

1. Kakkar L. & sapna (2012), ' impact of Tourism on Indian Economy', International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research, 1(4) :70-75.
2. Sikder U.K., (2014), 'Tourism & Economic Growth of North Eastern States', International Journal of Advanced Research, 2(4) : 2-13.
3. Akhito N., (2017), 'Development of Tourism and Tourist Identity in India : A Case Study of Uttarakhand', Journal of Urban and Regional Studies in Contemporary India, 3(2):1-12.
4. Choudhury K., Dutta P., & Patgiri S., (2018), 'Rural Tourism in North East India : prospects and Challenges', IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social sciences, 23(2): 69-74.
5. Visakhi P., Gupta B.M., Gupta R., Garg A.K., (2017), 'Health Tourism Research : a Scientometric assessment of Global Publications Output during 2007-16', International journal of Med. Public Health, 7(2): 73-79.
6. Goowalla H & Neog D., (2011), 'Problem and Prospects of Tea Tourism in Assam-A Swot Analysis', 2011 International Conference on Advancements in Information Technology, 2011: Singapore.
7. Nath B.K., & Baruah D., (2017), "Problem and Prospects of Spiritual tourism Development in and Greater Guwahati", International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science Society and Culture, 3(1):141-147.
8. Industrial and Investment Policy Assam, 2014
9. www.tourism.assam.gov.in