

## SCOPE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN ASSAM IN THE CURRENT SCENARIO

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### ABSTRACT

*Indian tourism sector is one of the growing sectors in our country. Based on this sector some allied sectors, like hospitality, civil aviation, and transport are also growing in recent times. Releasing the importance of this sector, Govt. of India has invested huge amount of money in recent times for infrastructure development. Nestled in the footsteps of the Himalayas, India's North-Eastern part is a land of Blue Mountains, Green Valleys and Red Rivers which also signify the abundance of Natural Beauty, Wild life, Flora & Fauna and Colorful people. The different National Parks and sanctuaries, Brahmaputra and Barak Rivers and its tributaries, Natural Lakes, Natural Water Falls, Dense Forests, Wild life are the main components of tourist attraction in Assam. Based on these components, Tourism Sector in Assam categories into four segments: (a) Nature Based, (b) Historical, (c) Religious and (d) Others. It is fact that Assam has the potentiality of developing tourism in a big way, but the present position is not a happy situation. Only 0.22 percent of the foreign tourists visiting India last year opted Assam as one of their destinations.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tourism Sector, Industry, Market Tourism, Scenario, Nature Based.*

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### Introduction

Tourism sector is one of the key sector in our country. There is a direct link of this industry with the other sectors, like Hospital Industry, Aviation Industry, Road Transport etc. Releasing the importance of this sector, Govt. of India as well as State Government has invested huge amount of money in the last few years for infrastructure development in the state. Tourism industry provides a lot of business scope to the other Industries. The Hotel Industry, Restaurants, Transport Agency and other related activities are interlined with this sector. Tourism sector generate numbers of employment, generate revenue, promote national integration and international understanding, and provide a plate form to the local manufacturer to sell their own products especially handloom and handicraft.

### Methodology

The descriptive survey method has been used to identify the various potentialities of tourism sector in Assam and its various problems. The various information has been collected from industry portals, newspapers, trade associations, internet etc.

### Objectives

- The objective is to show the potentialities of tourism Sector and various problems faced by this sector in Assam.
- Another objective is to explain the significance of tourism marketing.

### Tourism Potential

Tourism Sector in Assam categories into four segments: (a) Nature Based, (b) Historical, (c) Religious and (d) Others.

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- **Nature Based**

Places in Alphabetic Order	Distance from Guwahati in km.	Speciality
Bhairabkunda	137	Natural beauty located at the border of Assam & Arunachal Pradesh
Bhalukpong	205	Situated by the side of river Jia Boroli. Famous for angling and water sports
Chandubi	64	It is an ideal destination for nature lovers, picnic spot especially in winter.
Dibru-Chaikhowa	490	This is a place where a lots of flora and fauna is available. The area is protected for Birds.
Haflong	355	Single Hill station of Assam with natural beauty.
Jatinga	364	A beautiful hilly place, where birds behave in a mysterious way. It is believe that the birds commit suicide here on certain specific days
Kaziranga	217	Internationally famous national park, covering 42996 hector, famous for One-Horn rhinoceros is a best attractive tourist destination in Assam.
Manas	176	Manas situated in the foothills of the Himalayas covering 2837 sq km. It acquired the status of a Biosphere reserve national parks in the country,
Pabitara	65	A wild life sanctuary declared in 1987.
Potasoli	173	Famous for eco-camp in an environment friendly atmosphere.

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Guwahati

- **Historical**

Places in alphabetic order	Distance from Guwahati in km	Specialty
Digboi	523	Digboi Refinery, an ISO - 9001, ISO 14001 and BS OHSAS 18001 certified Refinery. First oil refinery in Asia.
Sibsagar	369	Sibsagar is a famous tourist attraction for all categories of tourist. Famous for Rong Ghar, Kareng Ghar.
Tezpur	137	Cultural town of Assam

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Guwahati

- **Religious**

Places in Alphabetic Order	Distance from Guwahati in km	Speciality
Barpeta	137	Barpeta is known as "Land of the Satras". This is the place where the Assamese reformer, saint, Scholar and Cultural exponent Srimanta Sankardeva and his able disciple Shri Madhabdeva founded Assamese Culture in the region through their his socio-religious Vaishnava-reform movement.
Batadrawa	134	Birth place of Shri Sankardeva, the Vaishnava reformer, saint and a great literary figure in Assam.
Hajo	35	Sacred place for Hindus, Muslims and Buddhist.
Kamakhya		Situated at the top of Nilachal Hill attracts thousands of devotees and other tourists every day by its natural grandeur. An important religious place of the Hindus.
Madan Kamdev	35	This is an Archaeological site in Kamrup district in Assam.
Majuli	326	The largest river island in the world, centre of Vaishnava culture. The centre of Assamese Art, Dance, Drama, Music etc.

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Guwahati

- **Others**

- **Sualkushi:** Famous for Assamese Silk, Muga (Golden thread) and other varieties of silk. Thousand of weavers engage with this sector.
- **Guwahati:** Known as Gateway to the North-East India situated on the bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra. It is a fast growing metropolis. The famous Goddess Kamakhya, the ancient Siva temple Umananda situated on the Peacock island in the middle of the river Brahmaputra, the Navagraha Temple, Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Balaji Temple, Science Museum, Vaisisthashram etc. all are attractive destination for tourist.

### **Potential Variety of Tourism**

- **Nature Tourism**

Assam is known for its bio-geographic richness. With its, uneven topography, dense forests flora and fauna, the big river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, wild life sanctuaries like Kaziranga, Pabitora, Manas and many rare species of animals, Assam offers basically nature-centric tourism.

- **Tea Tourism**

Since 1823 tea has become an integral part of Assam's economy. There are about 1750 tea garden in Assam which is a treasure house of glamorous beauty of nature with colourful people and their delightful songs and dances, extensive bungalows, and residential facilities. But this tea tourism remains unexplored.

- **Eco-Tourism**

Eco-tourism is also a new concept of tourism sector. It provides welfare of the local people. The natural beauty of Assam is the main source where there is immense scope for eco-tourism, (example- Nameri eco-tourism) as its natural scenario and climatic condition look like those in Kerala and Kashmir.

- **Cultural Tourism**

Bihu is the main cultural festival of Assam which attracts lots of Indian tourist as well as foreign tourist. Assam comprises various ethnic tribes and groups each having a distinct language, culture, way-of-life, festivals, songs and dances. Most of these people have their own traditional festivals. They have their own songs and dances, traditional colourful dresses, innumerable varieties of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes which is the main attraction points of Tourist.

- **Pilgrim Tourism**

Ambubchi Mela is a centre of attraction in the month of June-July every year where Lakh of people come for pilgrimage from different places of India.

- **Adventure Tourism**

The High hills and speedy rivers of Assam provide a huge scope for the development of adventure tourism in Assam. The Department of Tourism Govt. of Assam conducted some of the adventure sports activities like Rock-climbing, Trekking, Para-sailing, Water sports, River rafting and Angling etc to this segment. Every year annual Angling competition held at Bhalukpung-Potasali side in which Indian and foreign tourists participate. Assam has a number of ideal places like Nilachal hills in the city of Guwahati and the hills around Kaziranga. Since most of the tourists come to the state through Guwahati and visit Kaziranga, there is an enormous scope for hang gliding.

### **Problems of Assam Tourism**

- **Absence of a Tourism Policy**

There is lack of proper tourism policy in Assam. In 2008 only the State Government of Assam announced the first tourism policy with the objective of harnessing the State's tourism potential in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, socio-culturally enriching and economically beneficial to the people.

- **Insurgency**

The insurgency problem is a big challenge of Assam Government. Domestic tourists as well as foreign tourist hesitate to visit Assam due to afraid of insurgency issue. From 2001 the law and order of Assam gradually improving and the activities of Militants has declined.

- **Underdeveloped Infrastructure**

Most of the places of tourist attraction are not connected by proper road. There is a lack of infrastructural facilities like good categories Hotels and Tourist Lodges, reliable communication network, clean and hygienic accommodation for pilgrimages etc. As a result bad images go to the market about the various tourist destination of Assam.

- **Lack of Coordinated Efforts**

There is a lack of coordination among several agencies like Department of Tourism and Department of Archaeology. There is a lack of coordination between various public sector industries and private sectors industries and the Department of Tourism. For the development of Eco tourism and Tea tourism it is very essential to make a combine effort by all the stake holders..

- **Absence of Tourist Guides**

There is a lack of trained guides placed in important places which is most essential for tourist attraction. Recently The Department of Tourism initiated a programme to train tourist guides. But unfortunately the effort did not yield good result as most of the trainees left the job. This type of problem can be solve by the Government of Assam by adopting a two-front strategy – (i) tourist guide training programme for a very limited number of youths, and (ii) setting a target of inflow of the tourists.

- **Strategy for the Future**

India receives more than three million foreign tourists in a year while a small country like Thailand, with much more limited geographic and historical attraction, receives more than nine million tourists in a year.

- **Market tourism**

To develop tourism sector, the first step to identify the customer and his or her needs and inclinations. As tourists are very temporary, they exposed the services for shorter periods. So the concern service holders of a particular tourist place should treat the tourist in such a way that they will carry a memorable experience from their tour. In 2019 The Govt. of Assam appointed Priyanka Chopra as a Brand Ambassador of Assam Tourism. The Govt. of Assam is trying to spread the message to the Indian tourist as well as foreign tourist by providing information about various tourist destinations in Assam by the help Priyanka Chopra. Effort is now going on to show the natural beauty of Assam and its rich cultural heritage by displayed hoarding in the national and international airports.

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