



## Potentialities of Tourism Sector in Northeast India

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### ABSTRACT :

The North-eastern region of India is indeed an undiscovered paradise in the country. The N.E. region has issues and challenges in front for which it is devoid of the deserved exposure and priority. The contemporary issues prevailing in the region are critical and needs to be focused upon so as to sort out the differences. It is in no way lesser than any other region whether it be in resources or serene beauty. In fact it is a full bunch of assets for the country as it enhances some of the export industries as well as it is rich in varied cultural traditions with varied lifestyles and varied cuisines to offer as attractions for tourists. It initiates a whole lot of facets to look up to and induces innovate new ideas for better presentation of the region. One of the major issues for the region is its weak link or connectivity with the centre for which it has been suffering since ages. Its resources could not be optimally used and lacks the priority. There are even rumor sourced presumptions about the region for its distorted connectivity. The study here makes a research on how's and whys for the backlogs and tries to peep on to the positivity to bring a revolution and give the region its desired and deserved attention and esteem.

**Keywords:** *Cultural traditions, Northeast region , potential , Varied Cuisines, Dzukou Flower Valley.*

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### I. Introduction:

Northeast region of India is a tourism paradise, consisting of 7 states also known as Seven Sister States along with 1 brother state of Sikkim. These states are known for rich bio-diversity, natural beauty, people, culture, lakes and unique wildlife. The North-eastern region of India is indeed an undiscovered paradise in the country. The N.E. region has issues and challenges in front for which it is devoid of the deserved exposure and priority. The contemporary issues prevailing in the region are critical and needs to be focused upon so as to sort out the



differences. It is in no way lesser than any other region whether it is in resources or serene beauty. In fact it is a full bunch of assets for the country as it enhances some of the export industries as well as it is rich in varied cultural traditions with varied lifestyles and varied cuisines to offer as attractions for tourists. It initiates a whole lot of facets to look up to and induces innovate new ideas for better presentation of the region. One of the major issues for the region is its weak link or connectivity with the centre for which it has been suffering since ages. Its resources could not be optimally used and lacks the priority. There are even rumor sourced presumptions about the region for its distorted connectivity. The study here makes a research on how's and why's for the backlogs and tries to peep on to the positivity to bring a revolution and give the region its desired and deserved attention and esteem.

### **Brief Review of literature:**

Ram Krishna Mandal stated in his paper “The North-East Region (NER) of India which comprises of eight states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura shares most of its boundary with China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. The NER accounts for about eight per cent of the country's geographical area and about four per cent of population.”

Abhilash Borah stated “Pristine wilderness and a rich cultural mosaic gives northeast India remarkable potential for tourism and improving the infrastructure will benefit tourists and the area itself”

### **II.Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of the study are:



1. To trace out the potentialities and endowment accessibility specially focusing the tourism sector of the N.E. Region.
2. To detect the reasons its resources and potentialities are undiscovered and lack publicity.
3. To find out ways of promoting and enhancing the overall location in all possible aspects including developing connectivity.
4. To have a brief assumption on the future scopes and realizable opportunities of the area.

### **III: Methodology:**

This research design used by the researcher to achieve these objectives is basically descriptive in nature. The sources of data collected by the researcher are secondary in nature. The objectives were targeted to fulfill by depending on the basic observation and study on the data received from all possible sources of secondary data to analyze the potentialities of the regions and enhancing its discovery. The secondary data has been collected from several relevant books, newspapers, magazines, online sources etc.

### **IV. Result and Discussion:**

The seven states of North East India along with Sikkim, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura Agriculture is the major economic activity, followed by animal husbandry. The North-East Region (NER) of India which comprises of eight states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura shares most of its boundary with China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. It covers 255.79 lakh hectares land accounting for about eight per cent of the country's geographical area and about four per cent of population. The



region has diverse hill ecosystems covering more than two-third of total geographical area. Tribals account for more than 30 per cent of the total population of NER. The region has 3.73% of the total population of the country and contributes 2.6% to the Net Domestic Product with the total forest cover of more than 66.1% against the national average of 21.1%. Inadequate and poor infrastructure, inhospitable terrain and a comparatively late start in the development process are some of the reasons for economic backwardness of the region. However, the NER has certain strengths in different angles to achieve economic development in easy way. From the geo-political angle, the NER is located in a strategic location as it is bounded by these several foreign countries. Naturally it has got both advantages and disadvantages due to its location. So far advantages are concerned it is connected with the South-East Asian countries mainly China, Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia and Indonesia etc where almost half of the world's population live. There is no doubt that this vast population could have great advantage for establishing any kind of trade and commerce. But the vary geographical condition basically the rivers and mountains of the country stand as a barrier and create geo-political tensions which ultimately act as most disadvantages factors in creating a conducive atmosphere in the path of developing trade relation among those countries.

### **Potency and endowment accessibility of tourism in the region:**

Pristine wilderness and a rich cultural mosaic gives northeast India remarkable potential for tourism and improving the infrastructure will benefit tourists and the area itself. Northeast region of India is a tourism paradise, consisting of 7 states also known as Seven Sister States along with 1 brother state of Sikkim. These states are known for rich bio-diversity, natural beauty, people,



culture, lakes and unique wildlife. Here is a brief glimpse of some of the incredible tourist destinations in North East India:

- Pelling in Sikkim is one of the incredible tourist places and has become the best chosen tourist destination in Sikkim. The town is also known for scenic location, breathtaking views, and considered as heaven on earth for its natural sanctity.
- Ravangla in Sikkim is a tourist town situated at an elevation of 7000 ft in South Sikkim and act as the starting point for trekking to Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary. Ravangla attracts a lot of Himalayan
- The colorful city of Shillong in Meghalaya is one of the most favorite destinations among the travelers and one of the quaintest places in India. Top tourist places in Shillong includes waterfalls, Ward's Lake, Shillong Peak, Umiyam Lake and Elephant Falls, birds offers mesmerizing view of few major Himalayan peaks.
- Cherapunji is the wettest places on the planet and the only place in India to receive rain throughout the year. Cherrapunji is also famous for Seven Sisters' falls, Nohkalikai falls, living root bridges and Mawsmai Caves.
- Madan Kamdev Temple in Assam is one of the most beautiful temples of the Brahmaputra Valley and has most prominent statues of the Sun, Ganesha, and Vidhyadhar. This archaeological site is located in Baihata Chariali, 40 Kms. away from Guwahati. Kamakhya temple is another most divine temple in the state.
- Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh is the most beautiful unexplored location in India and named for world heritage site for its stunning natural beauty. The town of Ziro is rich biological diversity, uneven hillocks, paddy fields and Sidheshvar Nath Temple which has one of the highest Siva Lingam in India.



- Dzukou Flower Valley in Nagaland is one of the valley of flower in India and a famous trekking adventure spot for best holiday in Nagaland. The enchanting Dzukou Valley is well known for its natural beauty, seasonal flowers and the overall flora and fauna.
- Tawang is home to the largest Buddhist monastery, and to the ancient tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. A visitor can take a breathtaking walk on the ingenious living root bridges across the Asia's cleanest village in Meghalaya, and then experience a pristine wilderness in the only floating National Park in the world, the Keibul Lamjau National Park in Manipur.

Try an elephant safari, looking for the exotic unicorn rhinos in the Kaziranga National park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site or discovering Majuli – an interesting riverine island hosting the rich neo-Vaishnavite culture with its distinct tradition and culture in Assam. Take part in the famous Hornbill Festival in Nagaland, and many other fascinating soul-soothing places that are the pride of Northeast India. It creates a lasting impact for anyone who visits this abode and experiences a rich cultural mosaic of natural beauty, the spirit of universal brotherliness and societal fabric!

A kaleidoscope of rich traditional values, deep cultural understanding and universal brotherhood ethics among its citizens, a variety of ethnic tribes having fascinating culinary heritage – it is the northeast! Geologically speaking, Digboi, one of the Asia's oldest oil producing sites, where the first oil well in Asia was drilled. Discovered in the early days of oil exploration, it has been a destination of oil and other coal excavation. Undoubtedly northeast is one of those amazing and rich oil, petroleum, natural gas and mineral-producing sites which have been a big factor for boosting the region's economy and the country's GDP increase.



And even though Northeast India is blessed with spectacular gifts of nature, the attention the region should receive is far less than its deserving merits. Comprised of the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim, collectively known as the “Eight Sisters,” the region has the potential to emerge as an enchanting destination of Incredible India. It only needs an honest and positive thrust by policy-makers, propelling and implementing it in the right direction with adequate monitoring efforts, leaving no stone unturned, to transform the neglected region into one of the most sought-after travelling destinations for visitors seeking pleasure, enjoyment, and recreation.

If there is something that can advance the economy of the area to an all-time high, bring inclusive growth and development, the solution is to look for the potential in its fascinating tourism industry. With influx of tourists from all corners of the world, the rural communities have wonderful opportunities to display their rich resources to those visitors, providing revenue to upgrade the existing social, cultural and infrastructural fabric. Northeast India’s rich treasure of cultural heritage and exotic presence of flora and fauna play a crucial role in forwarding the tourism industry. This can only multiply the benefits for both the pleasure-seeking tourists and the societal structure of the region, provided no harm is inflicted upon the environment and ecosystem functioning.

### **Reasons for its potency is not receiving deserved publicity:**

Having spectacular biodiversity, wildlife, culture, tribes, snow-capped Himalayas, tropical forests, shrines of diverse religions, ancient villages and historically important archaeological sites, the Northeast provides a wonderful opportunity for exploratory tourism at its very best. Governmental authorities



should take essential steps to enhance rural entrepreneurship, youth and capacity-building programmes that will groom the rural population to the possibilities of earning income in a fast changing and globalised world.

Media have to play greater role in bringing the stories of Northeast India to its ever growing viewers. In earlier cases there has not been a strong commitment to do this.

Unfortunately, militant insurgency has been a bane for the region, engulfing the peace and security into a major crisis for which the tourism industry suffers. Torrential rain, floods, erosion, and landslides are regular events that must be addressed with proper management, utilizing the best scientific tools and tackling the unfortunate events that hamper the lives and livelihoods of the people.

Unfortunately, due to the presence of such obstacles, the area's tourism potential is unexplored, under-explored and not up to a satisfactory mark. Due to lack of marketing activities and state-of-art infrastructural facilities, the tourism industry suffers badly. Now it is the time to renew efforts and address the crying needs.

It is imperative to create a multi-dimensional approach towards addressing the issues, which are focused on socio-cultural and economic issues – essential for all-round development of the key region in a quest to bring growth, peace and development.

### **Ways of promoting and enhancing the overall location:**

In the context of a globally growing sector like tourism, Northeast India with both physical and human diversities is one of the most promising regions of



the country in respect of tourism promotion. Among the Northeastern states, Assam took the pioneering step to recognize tourism as a sector of economy in as back as 1958. When the British declared Kaziranga a game reserve in 1916 and wildlife sanctuary in 1950, Assam was projected as an attractive destination for tourists, particularly those who are interested in nature and wildlife observation. In Kaziranga, provision for elephant safari was started for tourists in 1938 at the initiative of forest department (Dept. of Forest 1969). Apart from it, Shillong, the administrative headquarter of the Assam province during the British period witnessed an environment of outdoor recreation initiated by the colonial ruler. In response to this at least some people from inside and outside the state started visiting Kaziranga, Shillong and also the Kamakhya temple (Guwahati) in the later part of 1930s which may be in considered to be the humble beginning of modern tourism in the region. Since then significant changes have taken place the region's tourism sector because of the efforts made by the central and the respective state government in this direction. However, tourism as an industry is of recent origin in Northeast India and despite a long history of hosting both international and domestic tourists, tourism sector of this region is still in infancy, witnessing merely 0.9% and 0.2% of the domestic and foreign tourist arrivals respectively of the country.

Some sorted out ways to promote the sector of the region are

- Emphasizing on improving the connectivity through transport and communication development with the centre.
- Applying promotional schemes and advertisements to make tourists aware of the availability of such bunch of heavenly destinations.
- Employ professional explorers enhancing employment under specific tourism promoting schemes to discover the yet undiscovered locations.



- Taking steps for beautification and strict maintenance of cleanliness in the destinations.
- Promoting derivative and parasitic business enriching and supporting the core site. Like setting up provision for quality home stay, fooding etc. near the destinations.
- Taking competitive advantage over uniqueness of ethnicity of the locality to attract and promote exclusive culture and traditional cuisines.
- Assisting and educating local citizens to caress their locality and employing them authorizing for the maintenance and hospitality of tourists.

#### **Future scopes and potency overcoming the backlogs :**

North-east India has great potential for development and could well become the growth engine that will give the next big push to the Indian economy. It can be believed that the North-East could be transformed into an economic corridor connecting India, Myanmar, Bangladesh and the ASEAN countries. The benefits of such a transformation would be multifaceted, impacting not only India but the entire sub region, paving the way for integration of India's North-East with the economic mainstream. The first North-East Connectivity Summit, held in November 2014 had highlighted the connectivity and infrastructure requirements to achieve the transformation. During the last one year, we have seen a lot of forward movement towards removing connectivity and developmental bottlenecks. Major investments in infrastructure have been announced, projects such as the Trilateral Highway are nearing completion and connectivity within the region has seen significant improvements. However, implementation still remains a key challenge. Clearly, we need more action on the ground and a coordinated effort by the government and the private sector is perhaps the need of the hour. Above all, we need to identify an implementation



model that works for the region. This research is an attempt to highlight the opportunities that the region represents while presenting some ideas for enabling inclusive growth.

## **V.Findings and Recommendations:**

After having a study on the topic, following findings could be given:

1. The Northeast region of India is blessed with immense natural assets in the form of varied topography and serene destinations which are readymade alluring products for tourism industry.
2. The tourism destinations are scattered in the entire region portraying varied vivid culture and traditions adding a heterogeneous taste of the location promoting the concept of “Unity in Diversity.”
3. Apart from the beauty of the destinations, the traditional cuisines of each state and culture act as an attraction for the tourists.
4. The region is devoid of the deserved focus and priority as compared to the centre of the country.
5. The distorted communication link plays a major role in cutting off the region from the centre.
6. Various disadvantages both manmade and natural as discussed prevent the region from getting the deserved position.
7. Efforts are to be made to overcome the backlogs and promote the region undergoing proper steps for its betterment.
8. It is potent and has huge untapped and undiscovered sites to be enhanced.



The region is even capable of contributing a lot in the industrial sector, describing the region as industry engine

## **VI.Conclusion:**

The Northeast region of India is an abundant source of resources and natural endowment but is located aloof from the centre for which it is devoid of the deserving attention and promotion. The connectivity of the region is very important and needs to be developed in every way. The ways of efforts sorted out for the promotion of the region can be applied for a better tomorrow. It shares a huge source of potency that needs focus and enhancement for which the government can initiate innovative schemes of promotion that in turn creates employment and enriches the region to the optimum.

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