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# **The Hurdles behind the Development of Tourism Industry in North-East India with Special Reference to Assam**

**Tribhuwan Kr. Bhartiya**

*Graduate Science Teacher, Vivekananda Vidyalaya Higher Secondary School, Digboi, Tinsukia, Assam, India*

### **Abstract**

*North-East India is endowed with enormous natural resources that exhilarate the tourism. Despite of having great diversity of flora, fauna, culture and traditions of tourist attraction, North-East India is far behind in the field of tourism industry. The reasons of lagging behind of tourism industry in North-East India in particular Assam are the failure of government machineries for proper advertising, law and order and development of socio-political set up for the tourism. Local people of Assam are also not as interested and motivated for this sector as needed. There is a need to develop a tourism friendly environment in this area. The tourism friendly environment can be developed by co-operation between the government and local people of the area of tourist attraction, the revival of the feelings of "atithi devo bhawah" (guests are our god) in local people and feelings of support for the tourist. With this tourism friendly environment more and more tourist will get attracted and hence provide the opportunity of employment for the local people that will increase the revenue of the state and living standard of the people.*

**Key Words:** *Foreigner tourist, Foreign exchange earnings, Indian tourist, Local Peoples, Tourism.*

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**Introduction:** North-East India is endowed with great diversity of flora and fauna. Its beauty can't be estimated easily. In addition to its natural beauty of flora and fauna it has also great diversity of culture associated with the peoples of different stock. Because of the presence of huge diversity of flora, fauna and culture with different languages, North-East India is also known as MINI INDIA. Its green forest, blue hills, enchanting rivers as the basis on which an eco-friendly tourism can be developed. For that a lot of matters needed to be properly addressed, including development of good approach road to the spots of tourist attraction, creation of infrastructural facilities like good quality tents with provisions for food and other logistics, river cruising and water sports, bird watching towers, etc. These facilities may attract a large number of tourists.

At the present time the rate of growth in foreign exchange earnings from tourism is exceptionally high. The most significant feature of the tourism industry is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. It provide very large opportunity for utilizing natural resources like landscapes, mountains, chapari (sand beach), maidam, pond, marshy land, rivers etc. for the economic benefit of the population. It also adds value to a multitude of human-made attractions such as monuments, palaces, forts and the unique rural and

city environments. A unique feature of the tourism sector is that facilitates employment to a large number of people in hotels, airline services, travel agencies, making handcrafts, undertaking cultural activities, traditional food stall and other tourism-related works.

### **Objective of the Study:**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the scope of tourism in Assam.
- To study the status of infrastructure for tourism in Assam.
- To study the status of law and order for tourism in Assam.
- To study the mentality of local people about tourism.
- To study the intention of tourist for visiting Assam.
- To study the behavioural approach of people nearby the studied tourist places in Assam.

### **Hypothesis:**

The null hypothesis is assumed of:

- There is no scope of tourism in Assam.
- There is no infrastructure for tourism in Assam.
- There is no law and order in favour of tourism in Assam.
- The local peoples are against the tourism in Assam.
- There is no tourist who wants a tour in Assam.

### **Research Methodology**

- A. **Method:** Descriptive survey method is used in the research.
- B. **Selection of Tools:** Both primary and secondary data is used in the study. Primary data is collected by face to face interview with the local people and phone in interview is conducted with the peoples living outside the Assam i.e. prospective tourist. Secondary data is collected from the various newspapers, websites of Ministry of tourism, Government of India and Department of tourism, Government of Assam.
- C. **Justification for the Selection of Tools:** The data for this study could also be collected by observation method or questionnaire method. In observation method, it is must to be a tourist at each tourist places, have lived with the local people of each place and also have lived outside the Assam for study of interest of prospective tourist to travel this area. All of these are almost impossible. In questionnaire method it is needed to develop and standardise separate questionnaire in different languages for local peoples, local tourist, external tourists and peoples living outside the Assam in our country. This is also highly tedious and time consuming work.

So investigator have used personal interview for data collection because it is easy to randomly select local people, tourist ( local and foreigner) and peoples of outside of Assam and take interview either directly face to face or via phone. In this type of study, interview method is highly applicable because peoples like most to talk and share their experiences.

- D. **Administration of the Test:** The test was conducted on 80 persons. Out of which 50 persons were randomly selected from the different tourist places present in Assam and 30

person i.e. prospective tourist interviewed via phone present in different states like Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

For the foreign tourist website of different travel agency present out of North-East region were observed for the availability of different tour packages for the North-East region because it is tourist agency that guide and suggest the foreign tourist to make a tour.

#### E. Difficulties Encountered in Collection of Data:

- Some persons not cooperated properly.
- Persons also feared of leakage of their personal views so didn't cooperate freely and frankly as needed.
- It was time consuming too and took much time in making persons ready for the interview.
- The presence of different language speaking persons like Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, English etc. created some communication problem during the interview.
- As felt by the investigator, there was a great manipulation in the answer given by the interviewee.

**Results and Discussion:** Followings are the table and graphs that shows the inflow Foreign and Indian tourist arrival in India from 1997 to 2014.

**Table No-1**

<b>Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India, 1997-2014</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>FTAs from Tourism in India (in Million)</b>	<b>Percentage (%) change over the previous year</b>
1997	2.37	3.8
1998	2.36	-0.7
1999	2.48	5.2
2000	2.65	6.7
2001	2.54	-4.2
2002	2.38	-6.0
2003	2.73	14.3
2004	3.46	26.8
2005	3.92	13.3
2006	4.45	13.5
2007	5.08	14.3
2008	5.28	4.0
2009	5.17	-2.2
2010	5.78	11.8
2011	6.31	9.2
2012	6.58	4.3
2013	6.97	5.9
Jan-June, 2014	3.54(P)	5.2 @

(P) Provisional, @ Growth rate over Jan-June, 2013.  
 Source: (i) Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India, for 1997-2013  
 (ii) Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, for Jan-June, 2014

**Graph No. 1**



Following are the table and graphs that shows the foreign exchange earning i.e. revenue earning from the Tourism in India.

**Table No- 2**

**Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE), in US\$ Million, from Tourism in India, 1997-2014**

Year	FEE from Tourism in India	Percentage (%) change over the previous year
1997	2889	2.0
1998	2948	2.0
1999	3009	2.1
2000	3460	15.0
2001	3198	-7.6
2002	3103	-3.0
2003	4463	43.8
2004	6170	38.2
2005	7493	21.4
2006	8634	15.2
2007	10729	24.3
2008	11832	10.3
2009	11136	-5.9
2010	14193	27.5
2011	16564	16.7
2012	17737	7.1
2013 <sup>#2</sup>	18445	4.0
Jan-June, 2014 <sup>#1</sup>	9334	-0.8 @

<sup>#1</sup> Advance estimates, @ Growth Rate over Jan-June, 2013

<sup>#2</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> revised estimates.

Source: (i) Reserve Bank of India, for 1997 to 2010

(ii) Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, for 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014

**Graph No. 2**



Following are the table and graphs that shows the Indian and Foreign Tourist arrival in Assam and Revenue earned from the Tourism in Assam.

**Table No-3**

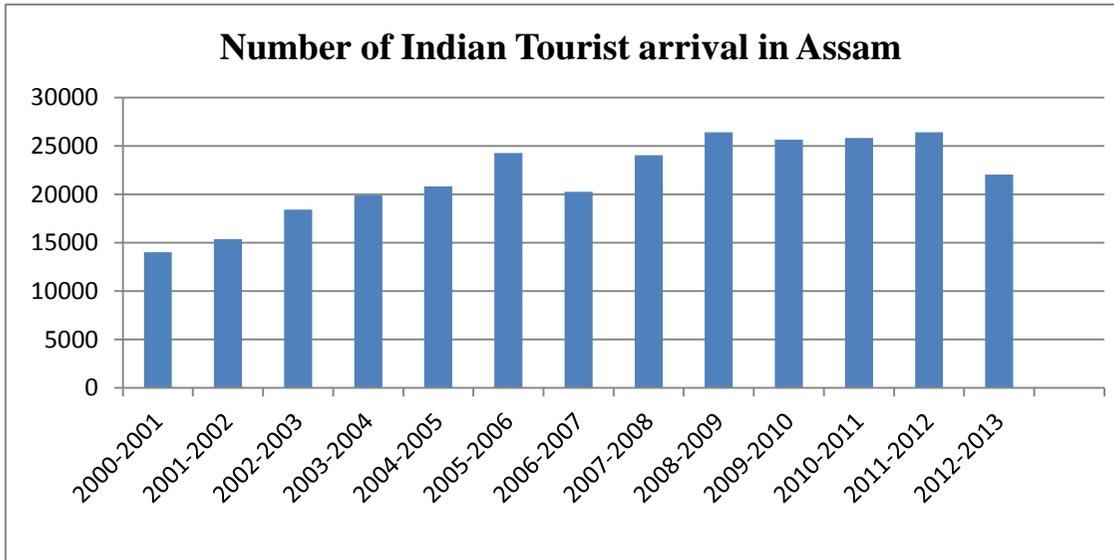
**Year wise Number of Indian and Foreign Tourists inflow in Assam:**

Year	Tourist staying in Tourist Lodges of the Directorate		Tourist Staying in other accommodation like Hotel etc.	
	Indian	Foreign	Indian	Foreign
2000-2001	14016	486	961954	6920
2001-2002	15373	456	1675299	4755
2002-2003	18427	520	1222135	5466
2003-2004	19894	508	2010213	6337
2004-2005	20820	804	2165430	8561
2005-2006	24280	755	2562148	7554
2006-2007	20279	649	3459591	13008
2007-2008	24057	960	3465757	12839
2008-2009	26439	674	3672267	13859
2009-2010	25665	664	3869860	14030
2010-2011	25831	594	4101616	15039
2011-2012	26439	696	4381897	15964
2012-2013	22057	711	4522609	16997

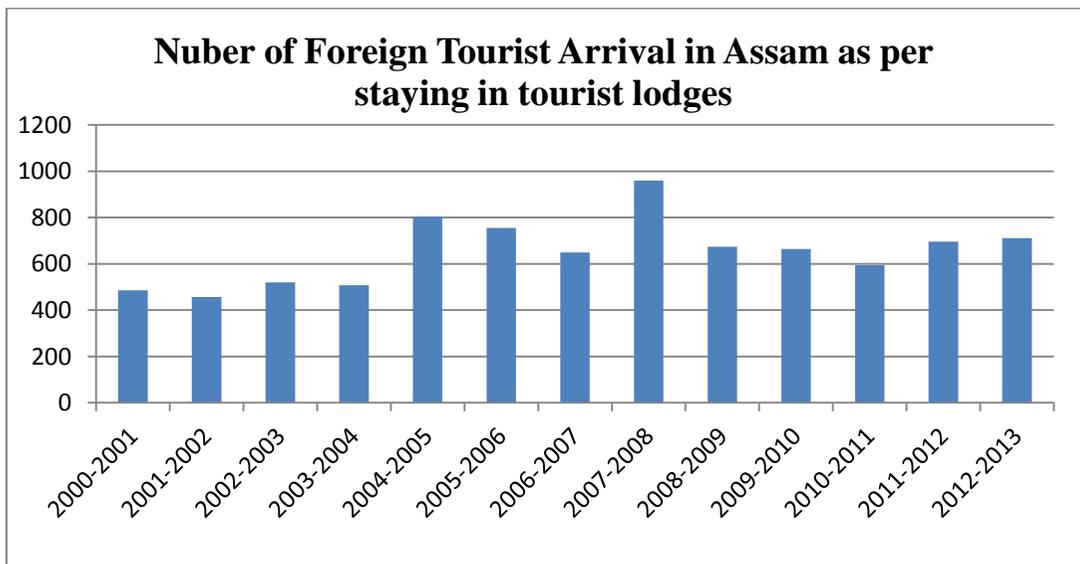
Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2013

Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam.

**Graph No. 3**



**Graph No. 4**



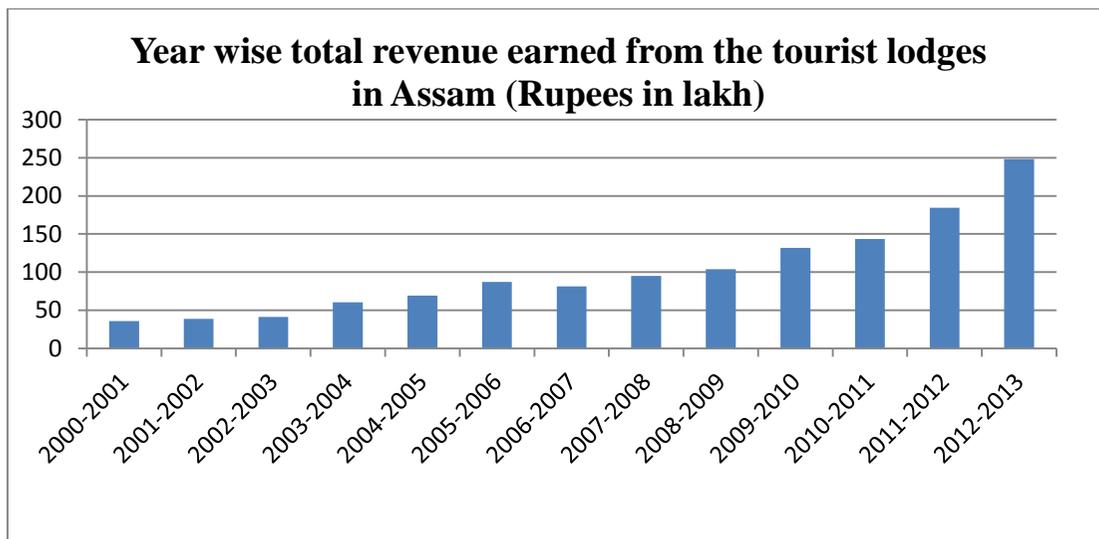
**Table No-4**  
**Year wise Total Revenue Earned from Tourist Lodges in Assam:**

Year	Total Revenue Earned (Rupees in lakh)
2000-2001	35.87
2001-2002	38.89
2002-2003	41.03
2003-2004	60.44
2004-2005	69.01
2005-2006	87.11
2006-2007	81.30
2007-2008	94.99
2008-2009	103.92
2009-2010	131.63
2010-2011	143.60
2011-2012	184.49
2012-2013	248.19

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2013

Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam.

**Graph No. 5**



The table and graphs shows that the inflow of both Indian and Foreign Tourist has increased with time in India as well as in Assam. But when we compare the growth in tourist inflow of Assam with that of India then it is very less. Similar condition existed with the revenue earned from the Tourism in India and Assam.

With the expense of time Assam is also growing with India but the pace of growth of Assam is lagging behind that of India. As Assam is an indispensable part of India so its growth should also be in conformity of India.

**Table No- 5**  
**STATE/UT-WISE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURIST VISITS, 2013-2014**

S. No.	State/ UT	2013		2014		Growth Rate		Rank 2014	
		Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	243703	14742	285146	17235	17.01	16.91	31	27
2	Andhra Pradesh	98017783	69552	93306974	66333	-4.81	-4.63	5	22
3	Arunachal Pradesh	125461	10846	180964	5204	44.24	-52.02	32	30
4	Assam	4684527	17638	4826702	21537	3.03	22.11	22	26
5	Bihar	21588306	765835	22544377	829508	4.43	8.31	15	8
6	Chandigarh	936922	40124	1061419	28365	13.29	-29.31	25	24
7	Chhattisgarh	22801031	3886	24488465	7777	7.40	100.13	12	29
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	481618	1582	579638	1799	20.35	13.72	28	34
9	Daman & Diu	819947	4814	795167	4620	-3.02	-4.03	26	31
10	Delhi *	20215187	2301395	22626859	2319046	11.93	0.77	14	4
11	Goa	2629151	492322	3544634	513592	34.82	4.32	23	11
12	Gujarat	27412517	198773	30912043	235524	12.77	18.49	11	15
13	Haryana	7128027	228200	13442944	547367	88.59	139.86	18	10
14	Himachal Pradesh	14715586	414249	15924701	389699	8.22	-5.93	17	12
15	Jammu & Kashmir	10891424	60845	9438544	86477	-13.34	42.13	21	18
16	Jharkhand	20511160	45995	33427144	154731	62.97	236.41	9	16
17	Karnataka	98010140	636378	118283220	561870	20.68	-11.71	3	9
18	Kerala	10857811	858143	11695411	923366	7.71	7.60	19	7
19	Lakshadweep	4784	371	7315	514	52.91	38.54	36	36
20	Madhya Pradesh	63110709	280333	63614525	316195	0.80	12.79	7	13
21	Maharashtra*#	82700556	4156343	94127124	4389098	13.82	5.60	4	2
22	Manipur	140673	1908	115499	2769	-17.90	45.13	33	33
23	Meghalaya	691269	6773	716469	8664	3.65	27.92	27	28
24	Mizoram	63377	800	68203	836	7.61	4.50	34	35
25	Nagaland	35638	3304	58413	3679	63.91	11.35	35	32
26	Odisha	9800135	66675	10790622	71426	10.11	7.13	20	21
27	Puducherry	1000277	42624	1188093	83291	18.78	95.41	24	19
28	Punjab	21340888	204074	24271302	255449	13.73	25.17	13	14
29	Rajasthan	30298150	1437162	33076491	1525574	9.17	6.15	10	5
30	Sikkim	576749	31698	562418	49175	-2.48	55.14	29	23
31	Tamil Nadu	244232487	3990490	327555233	4657630	34.12	16.72	1	1
32	Tripura	359586	11853	361247	26688	0.46	125.16	30	25
33	Telengana	54084367	153966	72399113	75171	33.86	-51.18	6	20
34	Uttar Pradesh	226531091	2054420	182820108	2909735	-19.30	41.63	2	3
35	Uttarakhand	19941128	97683	21991315	101966	10.28	4.38	16	17
36	West Bengal	25547300	1245230	49029590	1375740	91.92	10.48	8	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1142529465</b>	<b>19951026</b>	<b>1290117432</b>	<b>22567650</b>	<b>12.92</b>	<b>13.12</b>		

Source: State/Union Territories Tourism Departments

From the Table No-5. Assam is also lagging in attracting the tourist in rank with the other states having comparable same or less resources of tourist attractions.

**Reasons of Lagging of Tourism Industry in Assam:** After interviewing the local people, people living outside the Assam i.e. prospective tourist the investigator found the following reasons of the lagging of tourism industry in Assam:

- 1. Presence of Extremism:** Most of the persons use to tour for joy but not devote their life. Approx 90 percent of people avoid to making their tour to Assam due to the insurgency emerging out of at least 10 banned outfits in the entire Assam.
- 2. Feelings of Communalism:** There is a feeling of communalism in some section of people. Despite of taking as source of revenue, local people keep themselves part away from the tourists which make them unwilling to visit the different places in this region and hence dampened their zeal to visit again.
- 3. Lack of Awareness among Local People:** There is a lack of awareness among the local people about the tourism. The absence of tourism related courses and local level training of people for the tourism may be a great reason for the unawareness of the local people about tourism.
- 4. Underdeveloped Infrastructure:** The good approach road to the spots of tourist attraction, infrastructural facilities like good quality tents with provisions for food and other logistics, river cruising and water sports, bird watching towers, etc are highly underdeveloped in this region.
- 5. Lack of Proper Advertising:** There is a lack of proper advertising about the presence of resources of tourist attraction present in this region.
- 6. Lack of Communication Technology and Facilities:** Geography of North-East region is full of hill and hillock and forest reserve. So it is a little bit of challenge to install hi-fi technology and facilities up to the mark under the present socio-political situation of Assam too.
- 7. Lack of Proper Management for the Development of Tourism of Assam:** The inefficient leadership is also responsible for not able to raise sufficient funding for the development of tourism.

In addition to these there are many other reasons that cause the tourist to keep themselves away from this region to visit.

**Conclusions:** At the present time tourism industry is growing very fast in India. It has a great potential of employment generation. In Assam it is also growing but in comparison to average growth of India and other states having same resources of tourist attraction, growing with very less speed. There are many reasons that act as a factor for the lagging behind of the tourism industry in Assam. The prevalence of extremism in this region is the most important factor that is responsible for its backwardness. In addition to extremism, the feelings of communalism in some local people, underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of proper advertising etc. are the other important factors that act as hurdle in the development of tourism industry in Assam. For the proper development of tourism industry in Assam, it is a must to remove these hurdles.

### **Limitation of the Study:**

- The study is limited only to some places because it is not possible to visit each and every place in limited time.
- As the study is spread out in vast area so there is a great chance of communication problem because in different area different languages are spoken.
- As the method applied is interview, so there is a great chance of subjectivity.
- Most of the data used is secondary data so its authenticity depends upon the authenticity of secondary data.

### **Scope for Further Research:**

There are following scope for further research:

- A comprehensive study is required for the study of mentality of local people about tourism industry.
- For suggesting ways for the propagating awareness among the local people about the tourism industry.
- To suggest proper means of advertisement by general public without the help of government.
- To search new areas of tourism attraction in Assam.

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