

An Overview of Development Agenda, Government Strategy and the Enhancing Scope of Tourism Sector: A Special Reference to the North-East India

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Abstract

Being one of the tourist hotspots in India the region of North-East, it attracts a large number of tourists from different places of the world. The tourism sector of a country contributes a notable amount of revenue in the economic development of the country. The north eastern region of India enrich in natural beauty that welcomes the nature lovers from native country as well as foreign lands. Among the eight North-Eastern states, Assam needs a special mention here, since it is the place for numbers of tourism. It is widely known for Eco tourism, Wildlife tourism, Religious tourism, Cultural tourism, Adventure tourism, Rural tourism, Medical tourism, Educational tourism and others. The state government of Assam has launched several schemes for the growth of Tourism industry. As a result, it has opened doors for different livelihood options for the local people. In this paper focus has been given in analyzing the role of the government authority in providing livelihood facilities via different governmental schemes related to tourism.

Keywords: Hotspot, revenue, livelihood, tourism.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the tourism prospects of North East India from a developmental perspective.
2. To analyze the impact of various schemes of the government authority to provide livelihood facilities to the local population.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the developmental prospects of tourism industry in North-East India?
2. How does the government help in facilitating different livelihood options to the people via the tourism industry?

METHODOLOGY:

The present research work is both analytical and descriptive in nature. While conducting the study focus have been given to secondary data that are collected from sources like books, articles, newspapers, magazines and web sources.

INTRODUCTION:

The North Eastern region of India consists of the eight prosperous states of the nation having their unique identities which are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Diversity has its unique way of beauty. This perfectly suits the scenario of the north eastern region of India which is blessed with diverse natural as well as cultural beauties. The scenic beauty, distinct historical culture, favourable weather, rich biodiversity, rare wild life along with the ethnic heritage of the land of seven sisters and one brother attracts a huge number of tourists every year into the north-eastern region of the Indian nation. For being the hotspot of tourist attraction, the tourism industry of this region is prosperously developing. People from different countries visit different tourist destinations with various purposes like religious, adventurous, cultural, educational, medical and for wildlife tourism. Orderly visit of tourist to places like Kaziranga National Park, Kamakhya temple, Cherrapunji, Dawki, Mawlynnong, Loktak Lake, Dibru Saikhowa National Park, Nameri National Park and Forest Reserve, Dihing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhalukpong, Gangtok, Lachung, Manas National Park, Singalila National Park, Majuli, Ziro, Dzukou Valley and so on gives a constructive boost for more growth of the tourism sector in this region as well as provides further enclosure for hospitality sector. It has also increased the scope of employment opportunity in the region. The adventure of mountaineering, trekking, river rafting, paragliding, bungee jumping and others in the region has opened up paths of employment generation for the locals.

Policy implementation and the tourism sector in north east India: an overview

The task of policy formation as well as implementation plays a pivotal role while maintaining the developmental agenda by the government authority of a nation. In other words, by means of formulating and implementing numerous schemes and programmes they try to draw the attention of the common people which helps them to remain in power for a longer tenure. There are several aspects like education, health, agriculture, communication, entertainment and others which are considered appropriate for this purpose by the government authority. Tourism constitutes one of those prominent aspects for policy making. With the increasing demand of people's positive approach towards maintaining a balanced and quality life, has resulted in the rising urge towards places with scenic beauty. This changing approach has made the government realized the significance of giving more stake to the tourism sector. As a result of which, the government authority has adopted several schemes for giving a boost to the tourism sector. Revolving around the tourism industry of the north eastern region of India, small scale

business establishments like hotels, restaurants, guest houses, home stays, souvenirs shops and others have been growing in the nearby areas of the tourist spots which involves a large amount of people's engagement for financial purposes. As per the data of Statistical reports a gradual increase in the numbers of tourist in the region has been observed. The government of the Indian nation has also adopted measures for the advancement of tourism sector in its north eastern region. The plan of developing rural tourism sites has included the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. In the year 2015, the Central government has introduced Swadesh Darshan Scheme under which the ministry has split the region of north east into theme-based circuits so that it would boost tourism in the zone. In the context of Assam some of the prominent schemes adopted by the state government are Amar Alohi, Assam Darshan, Paryatan Sanjibani, Paryatan Sarathi, Punyadham and others. Among them the Amar Alohi Scheme is adopted with an objective of providing new dimensions and thrust to the Rural Homestay Facilities in the state of Assam and creation of self-employment opportunities for educated youths in rural and semi-urban areas of tourism potential and importance. Assam Drashan scheme was announced in the state budget of 2019-20 to boost tourism by upgrading the basic amenities in religious and historical tourist places. Other than Assam, the government of Manipur under the banner of tourism department is caring out publicity campaign inside and outside the region to showcase the products and destinations of Manipur to the outside World. With the assistance of the tagline "Go Green", they are promoting responsible and sustainable tourism. Under the tourism and cultural ministry of India a scheme called PRASAD has sanctioned 18 projects to promote tourism in north eastern states. It aims to increase pilgrimage tourism in order to generate multiple employment facilities to boost the economy. It also tries to promote local art and culture, handicrafts and cuisines. Apart from these it also emphasizes on the development of world class infrastructures in religious destinations. By adopting such strategic steps in the field of policy making the government is making consistent effort towards establishing themselves as a potent policy maker.

The scenario of Tourism during Covid 19 pandemic

Such a scenario of positive growth of tourism in the region takes an undesirable turn due to the sudden and unexpected occurrence of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) movement in the later part of the year 2019 especially in Assam. Protest movements were being conducted in some parts of the region but in a rigorous way which ultimately resulted into several undesirable consequences. It was the first hitch which strikes hard the growing industry of tourism in north east by not permitting the situation to welcome the tourist into their desired destinations of the land. Another substantial retard came in the form of Covid19 pandemic which has shaken the entire world order. It gives a setback to the ever growing chances of prosperity in the region of north east in regard to tourism industry. The step of locking down the entire country since the month of March by the legal authority of the nation has additionally worsened the situation. This was usually the preferential period for the tourist to visit the places of north east. Pre-booking of hotels and others were being cancelled by the visitors and in some cases owners need to initiate

the refund policy to their customers by bearing a heavy financial loss. All types of inter-state as well as inter-district transportation services were being stopped for a longer period of time to break the chain of transmission of the virus. This has hampered the both public and private transport sectors. Such a heavy strike on the tourism industry equally smashed the parallel employment industry. In other words, people are starting to lose their relatable jobs of tourism industry. As mentioned earlier, this industry has provided the scope of engagement into the various employment opportunities to a large number of people especially the locals of the region. Therefore, the sudden temporary pause of the tourism industry has caused a massive unemployment problem for these people who were the part and parcel of the sector. Moreover, for the purpose of flourishing of any sector it is essential to have sufficient investment ventures. This region lacked investment agents especially for the prevailing furious state of terrorism. It was expected that with the changing course of time, the investment venture would slowly start to get new impetus in the region. But this pandemic situation has further created hurdles in the path of new investments as a result of which it would become quite difficult to work constructively upon building the road of development for tourism sector in the region.

The governments of the north eastern region have been adopting several measures for tackling the widespread of the pandemic in their respective states. They are providing the much needed focus on the health sector along with issuing Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs) as well as new guidelines from time to time in order to deal the disorders generated by the pandemic situation. They have also issued quarantine guidelines for the people coming from other parts of the country or World. In the light of such circumstances, it can be said that for the revival purpose of the tourism industry in the region several measures need to be adopted and most importantly it requires a careful handling of the matters. As pointed out by a prominent scholar the government needs to take confidence building measures to regain the assurance of the people so that it could attract them even in such a phase of uncertainty.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION:

In the conclusion, it can be stated that the region of North-East India has great potential regarding tourist destinations which will be flourished with the help of governing authority. It has been observed that after the adoption and implementation of various schemes by the government authority, the young population of the rural and semi-rural areas is getting their desired employment opportunities. This has also resulted in finding their skills and talents in various fields. Moreover, this has helped in the growth of small scale industries in the region ultimately resulting in the entire socio-economic development. It requires the cooperation from the local population to achieve the desired goal of development. Along with this, availability of infrastructural facilities in the regions, beautification of different tourist places, internal peace and maintenance of cordial relation with the foreign countries need to be emphasized so that the numbers of tourist increases in the coming years. While focusing upon these spheres government should maintain eternal vigilance on the formation as well as implementation of numerous schemes in the direction of elevating the tourism sector. This will further help to register a

positive growth in the world travel, tourism competitiveness index. Thus, it can be said that apart from contributing towards the economic growth of the nation, the government authority can portray a remarkable picture in front of the international community by initiating various plans for the development of the tourism industry.

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