



Eco-Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh

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Received 12-03-2022	Abstract: Eco-Tourism is one of the fastest growing Industries. It deals with responsible tourism. It encourages people to visit natural sites and take a responsive step towards tourism and sustainability. Eco-tourism is an integral part of sustainable tourism. This is a review paper based on the available secondary data. The information have been derived from online search engines mainly the Google Search Scholars. It is often perceived as a tool for promoting sustainable development in developing countries. Arunachal Pradesh "the land of down-lit mountains" has unparalleled natural beauty with extensive geographical diversity and climatic conditions varying from the tropical to the temperate having a variety of wildlife, flora and fauna. Tourism industry can play a vital role in the state. As this sector is a labor-intensive industry, it can open an employment opportunity. A large number of unemployed persons can be employed by this industry. The government should take necessary steps for development of the industry	Keywords: Eco-Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism, Geographical Diversity
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INTRODUCTION

Land of Dawn-Lit Mountains, Arunachal Pradesh borders states like Assam and Nagaland and shares international borders with countries like China, Bhutan and Myanmar. Home of 26 major tribes, Arunachal Pradesh also amazes tourist with its lush green forest cover which happens to be the hearth of biodiversity and ecological hotspot (Shackley, 1995; Dodum, 2016). Thus Arunachal Pradesh happens to be one of the exotic tourist destinations of India. Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh is based on wildlife, natural beauty, unique flora and fauna, holy shrines, turbulent rivers, vibrant and colorful cultural festivals (Tagiya, 2015). Eco-Tourism is often perceived as a tool for promoting sustainable development in developing countries (Brandon, 1996). Eco-Tourism is one kinds of sustainable tourism, both environmentally and culturally, which has the capability to ensure economic and social benefits to the whole society (Wearing and Neil, 2009). The term Eco-Tourism can be well described with the following five criteria: nature conservation, low impact, sustainability, meaningful community involvement and environmental education.

DISCUSSION OF LITERATURES

Potentialities of Eco-Tourism

Eco-Tourism can be described as a tourism that nurtures responsibility among the tourists to maintain the suitability between the economic aspect of tourism and environmental conservation (Weaver and Lawton, 2007). This involves usage of sustainable eco-friendly transport, eco-friendly housing, encouraging local neighborhood economy, integrate culture and heritage (Suvarna, Rodrigues, Rao and Nair, 2022). Arunachal

Pradesh being a state with lots of diversity to amaze tourist has a greater potentiality of eco-tourism.

The Potentialities of Eco-Tourism of Arunachal Pradesh is discussed below:

Flora and Fauna: Arunachal Pradesh is the only state that can claim to have four major varieties of the big cats in its jungles viz. tiger, leopard, clouded leopard and snow leopard. The state is also home to lesser feline species like the golden cat and marbled cat. More than 500 species of birds have been recorded to have existed, many of which are highly endangered and restricted to this state, such as the white winged duck, Sclater, Monal Bangal Florien etc. Besides, there are seven species of primates that include the Takin which is found in Arunachal Pradesh only. A large majestic mammal known as "Mithun" is found here, which is endemic to this state. Each district of Arunachal Pradesh has its own exclusive and rare variety of Orchids. One of Asia's largest Orchidarium is in Arunachal Pradesh located at Tipi. In an effort to pressure the natural habitat, a number of Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks have been identified namely: Sessa Orchid Sanctuary, Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, Kane Wildlife Sanctuary, Mouling National Park, Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dihang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve and Namdapha National Park.

Socio-Cultural Life: Since Arunachal Pradesh is endowed with thick evergreen forests covering more than 80 percent of its total area and has five major river:- Kameng, Subansiri, Lohit, Siang and Tirap winding their way through the

Sylvan hills, it is an ideal place for Tracking, Angling, Boating and Rafting. The upper reaches offer landscape for adventure tourism. Arunachal Pradesh is home to at least 26 major and more than 100 sub-tribes, each with its distinct tradition and customs. The majority of the population, comprising of tribes like Adi, Galo, Aka, Apatani, Nyishi, Tagins etc are rooted to their ancient beliefs and indigenous practices of worshipping "the Sun and the Moon". The religion is known as Donyi-Polo (which literally means Sun and Moon). Being a distinctly tribal state, festival is an essential and integral part of the socio-cultural life of the people in the state. Most of these festivals are connected with agriculture and celebrated with ritualistic gaiety either to thank God for his providence or to pray for a bumper harvest. The festivities mirror the culture, the artistry and skill of the people in music dance.

Archeological and Religious sites:

Arunachal Pradesh is home to many monuments and archeological sites, which for long time have been acting as sources of inspiration for many historians (Singh, 2009). There are places of worship and pilgrimages such as 400 years old Tawang Monastery, Parasuram kund, Gorsam Chorten, Golden Pagoda, etc. These places are drawing a large number of pilgrimages every year. The archeological excavation sites in Malinithan, Bhismaknagar, Vijayanagar, Itafort etc are also drawing attention to a historian's delight. Therefore, Arunachal Pradesh is ideal for tourist destination.

Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh; Travel circuits and places

- **Tipi (5km from Balukpong):** It is a botanical Paradise of the state. It is home to about 450 species of orchids. Some of them are rare and endangered species. There is an Orchids museum too in this place.
- **Sessa (24 km from Tipi):** A natural Orchid Sanctuary amidst chirping birds spread over 10 sq km. Over 2600 Orchids representing 80 species have been cultivated in natural surroundings. It is an exemplary effort of natural resources conservation.
- **Dirang (42 km from Bomdila):** There are hot water spring where people take bath for curving skin ailments, Apple and kiwi Orchards, National Yak Research and Breeding centre at Ngukmadung, Sheep Breeding Farm and Sangti valley where Siberian black necked Stork are seen.

- **Sela Pass (45 km from Dirang, 4114 mt from sea-level):** Sela Pass is the world's second highest motorable pass at 14000 ft with a high-altitude serene Crystal blue water natural lake. The natural beauty of the surrounding landscape is dream come true feeling.
- **Jaswant Garh(4km from Nuranang):** There is a memorial for Veer Jaswant Singh of the 4th Garhwal Rifles, the recipient of the Mahavir Chakra (posthumous) who alone stopped the Chinese army for 72 hours during the 1962 aggression, is a place where Patriotic emotions of all Indians find a natural expression.
- **Tawang(183 km from Bomdila,3500 mt above MSL):** This is a hill resort of Arunachal Pradesh at a height of above 10,000 ft has a dream holiday destination, towering snow capped peaks feeding the horizon, long invigorating walks and quaint mysticism and solitude of Gudpi and Chong-Chugmi ranges and Tawang Chu River and Valley. Tawang is a seat of Mahayana Buddhism famous for Tawang Monastery of the Gelukpa founded by Mera Lama Lodre Gyatso during the 17th century and a birth place of 6th Dalai Lama. This is the 2nd largest Monastery in Asia and the World, and which manages the religion affairs 17 Gompas in the region. The most imposing part of the Monastery is the three storied assembly hall which houses the temple and the 28 ft high Golden Statue of Buddha. The Monastery has a big library having a impressive collection of ancient books and manuscripts where the famous Buddhist scriptures Kangyur and Tangyur inscribed in Gold are preserved. Ugyelling Gumpa- is the birth place of Gyalwa Tsewang Gyatso, Gyangong Ani Gumpa are nunneries among the oldest in the country. Tawang is also famous for beautiful natural lakes, like the Sangetsar lake with splendid natural beauty of surrounding, Pt Tso Lake surrounded by a picturesque landscape, Madhuri Lake, Jang water fall and so on. Other places to see in and around Tawang are the War Memorial, Craft centre, and Bumla Pass.
- **Ziro (167 km from Itanagar):** It is a beautiful plateau and headquarter of Lower Subansiri district bounded on all sides by picturesque hills situated at an altitude of 5000 ft. The place has an imposing landscape of beautiful lush green forest, rivulets and elevated Paches. It is famous for Paddy-cum-Pisciculture cultivation. The area is renowned for the terrace paddy fields where the unique system of polyculture and water management is

practiced by the local people. Ziro valley has been a favorite for being listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO. Lately, it has also been developing a colorful personality of its own. The courtesy goes to different festivals like the Ziro Festival of Music. This is an outdoor music festival held in the Ziro valley in the Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh. It showcases the independent music scene in India.

- **Malinithan (Lower Siang District, Likabali):** It is a place of relics on stones with ruins of temples and valuable sculptures associated with the mythological legend of the Lord Krishna. The site has a temple ruin dating back to 10th and 14th century A.D. of rich sculptural and architectural value. Beautifully designed and decorated basement of temple, divine images, icon, deities, animal motifs, and floral designs, carved columns and panels have been unearthed. It is believed that on the way to Dwarka from Bhismaknagar, Krishna and Rukhmini rested here and they were offered the choicest flower by Goddess.
- **Mechuka:** Mechuka is a small hamlet nestled at 6000 feet above sea level in the Mechuka Valley in Shi-Yomi district of Arunachal Pradesh. The place is a paradise on earth with untouched natural beauties. Due to its mesmerizing landscapes, exotic tribes, natural beautiful lake, snow-capped mountains and Siyom River or Yargyap Chu (local name) this place is becoming a popular tourist destination in Arunachal Pradesh. The melted water flows here from the snow-capped peak is believed to have medicinal values. This place has Buddhist Monastery (Samten Yangcha of Mahayana sect) one of the oldest Buddhist Monasteries in Arunachal Pradesh is situated on a hill top overlooking the valley.
- **Parasuram Kund:** In Lohit District, it is situated within the Kamlang Reserve Forest area. This place on the Lohit River carries a strong mythological link with the legend of Parasuram, a Hindu Sage. According to the legend, Sage Parasuram washed away his sin matricide in the waters of the Lohit River at Brahmakund. Each year thousands of pilgrims from all over the country congregate on Makar Sankranti Day, to wash their sins. A fair (Mela) is held during this period.
- **Bhismaknagar (30 km from Roing):** It is the oldest archeological and mythological site in Arunachal Pradesh, dates back to 8th century A.D. The fort was excavated during 1965-70 which yielded Terracotta Plaques, decorative Tiles, Potteries, Terracotta Figurines etc.

Popular legends and traditions identify the ruins of the fort as the site of the capital of Raja Bhismak, father of Rukhmini (wife of Lord Krishna).

- **Mouling National Park (Jangging 151 km from Pasighat):** Lush green vegetation and home to some rare wildlife such as Takin, Serow, Goral, Clouded Leopard, Black Bear, Red Panda etc. During winter, large number of migratory birds is seen in this park.
- **Golden Pagoda Namsai:** Also known as Kongmu Kham, this majestic Buddhist temple was open for public on 2010. 68 km from Tinsukia, Assam the World Tripitaka Foundation is currently developing this as the first international Tripitaka centre in India.
- **Namdapha National Park:** Namdapha National Park of Arunachal Pradesh is the eastern most protected forest area of India covering 1985 sq km of area. With abundance of floral and faunal biodiversity, Namdapha National Park allures tourists with its green canopy of evergreen trees.

Remarks on Strategy Development

Eco-Tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism sectors and therefore, the State Government needs to give tremendous thrust to this sector as because:

- The development of tourism industry generates not only revenues to the government but also develops the area on all respects.
- This sector links up the hill areas with the rest of the country and removes the social and economic isolation of the Tribal people.
- Development of the tourism sector can flourish the local tribal economy in a number of ways.
- Its most important impact is the creation of employment opportunity for the tribes. Employment will be generated in the hotels, restaurants, transportations and other kinds of lodging as well as in the tour operating sector. There are a few small scale industries in the state absorbing a little number of youths. There is a high unemployment problem. The government sector is already saturated. The Private and tourism sector can solve this problem.

CONCLUSION

Tourism industry can play a vital role in the state. It is a labor-intensive industry. A large number of unemployed persons can be employed by this industry. The central as well as the state

government should take necessary steps for development of the industry and allocate huge budgetary allocations for this sector. Since the state has huge potentials for tourism, Eco-Tourism enhances the sustainable development of environment and economy. It also brings positive changes in social and cultural aspect of human life.

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