

POTENTIALITIES AND STATUS OF TOURISM IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

The regions, which have plenty of natural beauty and resources like cultural heritage, archaeological relics, historical ruins, biodiversity etc, enough scope for the tourism promotion. Assam, the most prominent state of North East India is said to be the hot spot for tourism for its immense natural beauty. The state of Assam is known not only for its unique natural beauty but also for possessing numerous historical monuments, pilgrim centres and wildlife sanctuaries including the world famous Kaziranga Natural Park, home of great Indian one horned rhinoceros, Manash Tiger Projects. Besides, in this beautiful land there lies the world's largest inhabited river island Majuli, the historical capitals and cities like Guwahati, Sivsagar, Jorhat etc. which draws due attention from the tourist across the world. Further, there are some other significant avenues of tourism such as tea tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism. Considering the potentiality of tourism to strengthen the state economy, this paper attempts to examine the status of tourism in Assam compared to top five tourism developed states of India. The present study is also attempts to identify problems of tourism sector and give some policy measures for the development of tourism industry in the study area.

Keywords: Tourism Industry, Status, potentiality, infrastructure, economic development

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the world's fastest growing eco-friendly service oriented industry, especially in the second half of the last century having a designated catalyst impact of income and employment multiplier in the development process of a nation. It is a composite product involving transport, accommodation, catering, natural resources, entertainments and other facilities and services such as shops and banks, travel agents and tour operators. The most significant feature of this industry is its capacity to provide large-scale employment, poverty elimination, job-creation, promoting the growth of ancillary industries and development of industrially backward regions. With the emergence of e-commerce, innovations and technological advancements, demographic changes and the deregulation of airline industry, the travel and tourism is spontaneously contributing to improve Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This has led to the improvement of other related industries especially transportation, construction, retail etc. As reported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Tourism Highlights 2015 Edition, International tourist arrivals grew to 1.1 billion in 2014 from a mere 25 million in 1950. The UNWTO estimate that approximately 1 in every 11 person in the World is employed by the tourism industry. As of 2014, the global tourism industry generated USD 7.6 trillion, constituting 10% of the global GDP. Considering the importance of tourism, developing countries like India, have made attempt to attract international tourists. India with its well-known cultural heritage and natural beauty can certainly attract foreign tourists. However, tourism is not developed much in India in comparison to some neighbouring countries like Thailand.

North-East is a paradise for tourist. Its enchanting hills, dancing rivers, roaring waterfalls, thick and dark forests, innumerable varieties of flora and fauna, countless species of wild animals and plants, mysterious clouds, melodious folk dishes, handlooms and handicrafts and above all its green landscape used to attract people from different parts of the world. Located at the gateway of North-East of India, Assam is a beautiful and diverse state with an incredible range of cultures and landscapes has become a centre of tourist attraction. The geographical area of the State is 78,438 sq. km. of which 98.4 percent area is rural. Assam shares about 2.4% of the country's total geographical area and provides shelter to 2.6% population of the Country as per 2011 census. Thus, the unique physiological beauty with innumerable varieties of flora and fauna, historical monuments, religious place like Kamakhya and other temples are shines situated in Guwahati and other parts of the state etc. are rich tourism resources of the state. Assam boasts of famous wildlife preserves- the Kaziranga National Park, which is home to the Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros and Manas National Park, Orang National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Nameri National Park, the largest river island Majuli bearing the centuries of vaishnave culture, historic Sivasagar, famous for the ancient monuments of Ahom Kingdom, the city of eternal romance, Tezpur and the scenic tea-states, colourful cultural festivals etc. The beauty of cultural heritage and the richness of nature's endowments make Assam a tourist paradise. Assam, dominated by the mighty Brahmaputra River, is renowned for its tea and other rare species of wildlife on the verge of extinction. Though Assam has the potentialities in this sector but various studies shows that it is not working with its full potentialities. In this study, an attempt has been made to focus on potentialities and status of tourism sector in Assam.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify socio-economic importance of tourism industry
2. To examine the present status of tourism in Assam with other top 5 tourism developed states of India.

3. To see the trend of tourist inflow and revenue collection in Assam.
4. To identify the obstacles in the development of tourism in the state.
5. To suggest measures for the development of tourism in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is analytical and descriptive in nature. The present study is based on secondary data. To study the status of tourism in Assam, the secondary data are collected from India Tourism Statistics, Ministry of Tourism, Statistical Handbook of Assam, Economic Survey of Assam etc. Moreover, various e-journals and books have been used for required analysis.

1.0 Socio-economic Importance of Tourism:

According to the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) by 2020, Indian tourism can recruit 50 million people under its operation and this can contribute almost 7% of the country's national income. The WTO and WTTC have highlighted its economic benefits and tourism is now considered as a global instrument to reduce poverty. The most significant feature of tourism industry is its capacity to provide large-scale employment, poverty elimination, job creation, generating revenue, promoting the growth of ancillary industries and development of industrially backward regions. The state has abundant resources for development of tourism industry. The share of state in the field of tourism is too small of course. This share can be increased through the initiatives taken both by of government and non-government agencies as well as the public itself. The socio-economic importance of tourism in the state can be understood from the following points.

- It will bring socio-economic benefits to community.
- It will help in generating substantial revenue for the state exchequer.
- Development of tourism will create self-sustainable jobs for the local people in the state.
- It may develop mutual understanding with the people of other region.
- It will create suitable environment for development of basic infrastructure facilities for tourism including communication links.
- It will encourage traditional artisans and the handicraft sector.

2.0 The Present Status of Tourism Scenario in Assam:

Assam is endowed with plentiful natural and cultural resources which can form the basis for a very lucrative tourism industry, creating employment and generating income not only in the urban centres but also in the rural areas. Assam can become one of the most attractive destinations in the country because of its magnificent tourism products like exotic wildlife,

awesome scenic beauty, colorful fairs and festivals, age old historical monuments, lush green tea gardens and golf courses, massive river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, serene and tranquil country side and warm and hospitable people. The tourism potentiality of Assam is quite rich. The state has suitable natural infrastructure for the promotion of tourism. Tourism in Assam is based on wildlife, natural beauty, unique flora and fauna, holy shrines, lush green tea gardens, turbulent rivers, vibrant and colourful cultural festivals. In Assam there are five national parks, eighteen wildlife and two proposed wildlife sanctuaries. The Kaziranga National Park was declared world heritage site by UNESCO in 1985. Other important destination of tourism are Kamakhya temple, Majuli, the world's largest river island in Brahmaputra, remnants of Ahom rulers and their predecessors, tea garden with its bungalows, golf courses etc. The whole tourist potentialities of the state can be grouped under the categories-(a) wildlife and Nature Tourism, (b) Tea & Golf Tourism, (c) Eco Tourism, (d) Cultural Tourism, (e) Pilgrim Tourism, (f) Adventure Tourism, (g) Rural Tourism, (h) Medical Tourism. In the following discussion, it is tried to compare the status of tourism based on domestic and foreign tourist inflow in Assam with other top five tourism developed states of India in 2016.

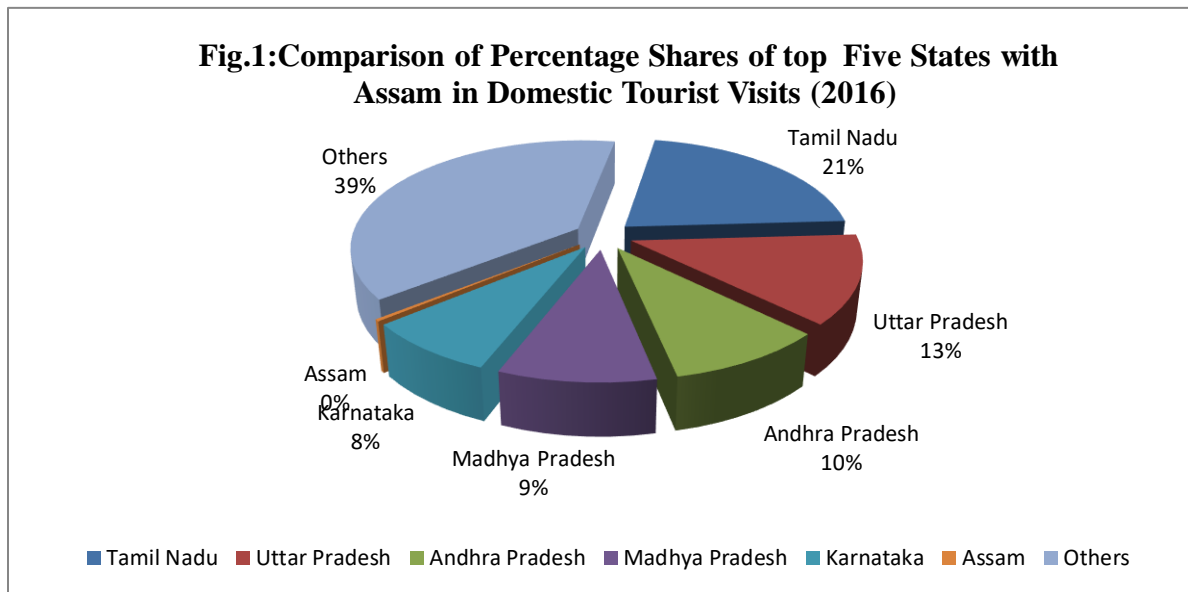
2.1 Table-1: Comparison with percentage shares between rank of top 5 states and Assam in terms of domestic tourist visits, during 2016: The following table shows comparison of percentage share of top Five States with the state Assam in terms of domestic tourist visit in 2016.

States	Domestic Tourists	Percentage Share	Rank
Tamil Nadu	343812413	21.31	1
Uttar Pradesh	211707090	13.12	2
Andhra Pradesh	153163354	9.49	3
Madhya Pradesh	150490339	9.33	4
Karnataka	129762600	8.04	5
Assam	5160599	0.32	23
Others	619455110	38.40	

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2017

Although Assam has been progressing in tourism, yet it was not there in the list of the top five states of India in respect of domestic as well as foreign tourists in 2016. In the following

discussion, it is tried to compare the status of tourism based on domestic and foreign tourist inflow in top five states with Assam. From the Table 1 and 2, it is seen that Assam had only 0.32 % of India’s total domestic tourists and 0.05 % of the foreign tourists in 2016. In the year 2016, Assam stood 23rd position among the 36 states of India, in respect of domestic tourist inflow and stood 27th position with regard to foreign tourist. It has been observed that Assam’s position or status in tourism is not satisfactory as compared to the other states of India. Thus, it is necessary to assess the causes of backwardness of tourism in Assam. The following diagram shows comparison with percentage share of top Five States and Assam in terms of domestic tourists visit in 2016.



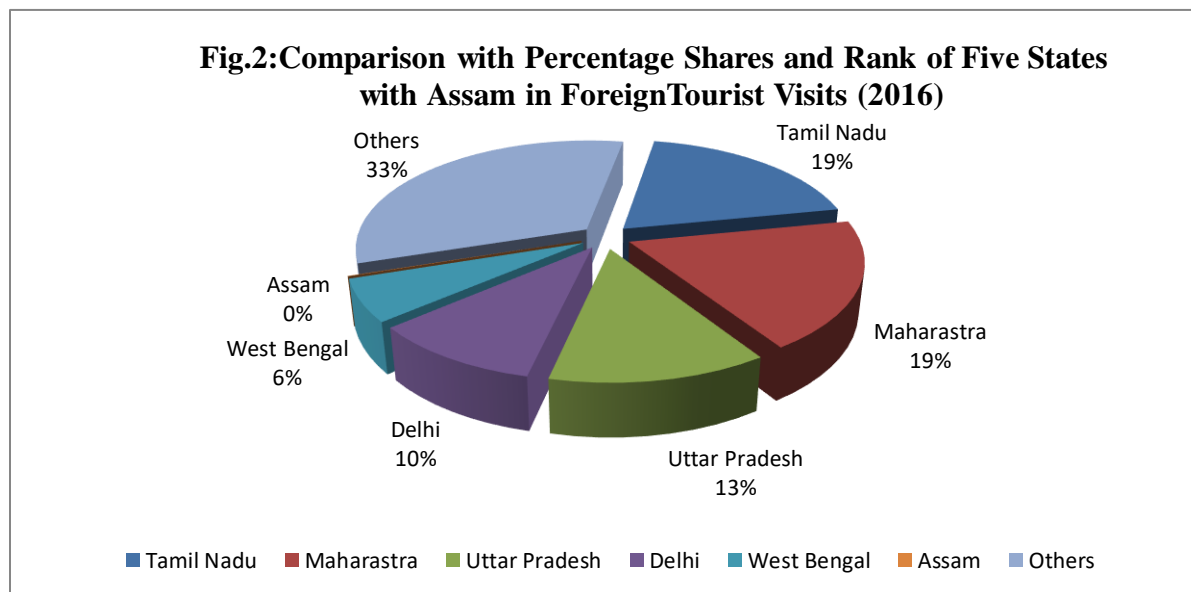
2.2 Table-2: Comparison with percentage shares and rank of top 5 states with Assam in terms of Foreign tourist visits, during 2016: The following shows comparison between percentage share of top Five States/UTs and Assam in terms of foreign tourists visit in 2016.

States	Foreign Tourists	Percentage Share	Rank
Tamil Nadu	4721978	19.11	1
Maharashtra	4670048	18.90	2
Uttar Pradesh	3156812	12.78	3
Delhi	2520083	10.2	4

West Bengal	1528700	6.19	5
Assam	12685	0.05	27
Others	8097426	32.78	

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2017

The following diagram shows comparison with percentage share of top Five States/UTs with Assam in terms of foreign tourists visit in 2016.



2.3 Travel Trade: In order to provide quality services to tourists, the Ministry of Tourism grants recognition to inbound tour operators, Travel agents, tourist transport operators, adventure tour operators and domestic tour operators in the country. This ministry has a scheme of approving Travel Agents, Tour operators, adventure tour operators and tourist transport operators, the idea being to encourage quality, standard and service in these categories so as to promote tourism in India. This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide agencies.

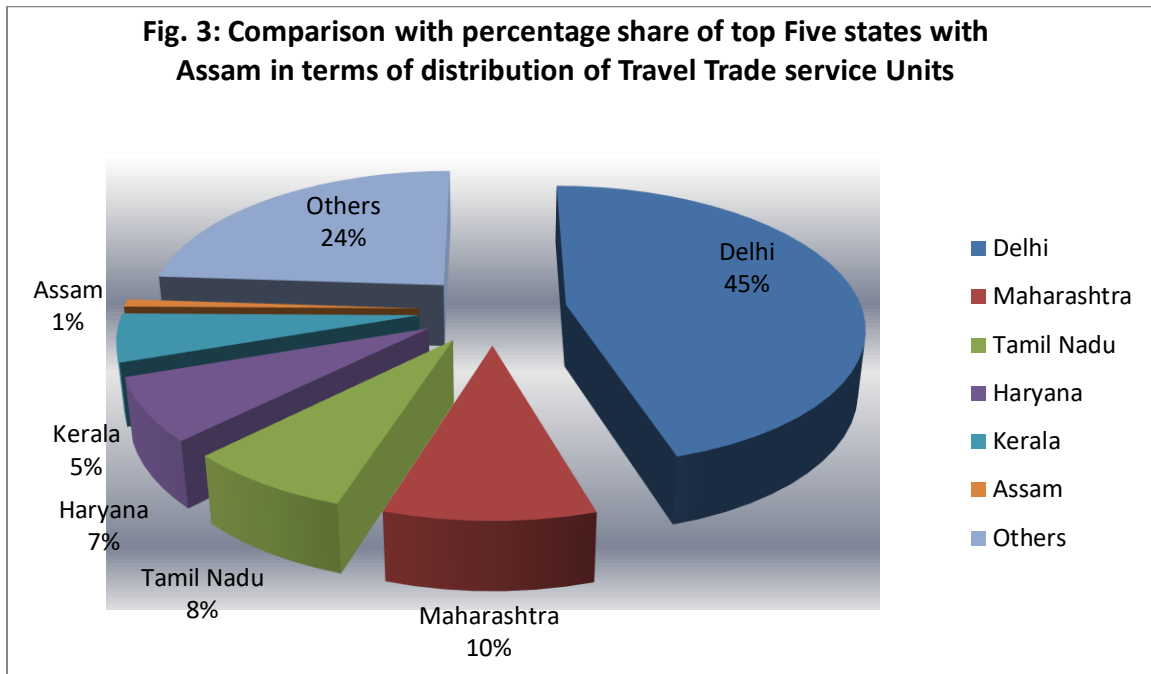
The state-wise distribution of Travel Trade Services units are given in table 3. Out of 172 recognized travel agents in the country, 40 are from Delhi, followed by 38 from Maharashtra, 29 from Tamil Nadu and only 1 from Assam. The highest numbers of registered Travel Agencies are from Delhi. Out of 823 recognized travel trade service providers in the country, only 7 are from Assam.

Table 3: Selected State-wise Number of Recognized Inbound Tour Operators, Travel Agencies, Tourist Transport Operators, Adventure tour Operators & Domestic tour Operators in 2016

States	Adventure tour operators	Domestic tour Operators	In bound Operators	Tourist Transport Operators	Travel Agency	Total
Delhi	19	42	217	55	40	373
Maharashtra	3	8	24	6	38	79
Tamil Nadu	2	8	16	8	29	63
Haryana	3	8	38	0	10	59
Kerala	0	5	25	5	10	45
Assam	0	1	5	0	1	7
Others	10	33	95	15	44	197
Grand Total	37	105	420	89	172	823

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2017

The following figure shows comparison with percentage share of top Five States/UTs and Assam in terms of domestic tourists visit in 2016.



2.4 Distribution of Classified Hotel & Hotel Rooms in India, as on 31st December, 2016

The Ministry of Tourism has adopted a system of approving and classifying the hotels on the basis of the facilities and services provided by them. The No. of approved hotels is a voluntary scheme of Ministry of Tourism. Table 4 provides the Number of classified hotels and hotel rooms by categories in different states/ UTs of the country. It may be seen from this table that Maharashtra has the maximum 12784 No. of hotel rooms followed by Kerala(11736), Delhi (6910), Tamil Nadu (5944), Telangana (4681) and only 1228 hotels room in Assam among 36 states of India. Table 4 also shows that as compared to top five tourism developed states, there no any number of 5 star deluxe or 5 star hotels in Assam. Moreover, Assam do not possesses sufficient number of 4 star, 3 star and 2 star hotels as well as rooms. This may cause have adverse affects of foreign and domestic tourist inflow as well.

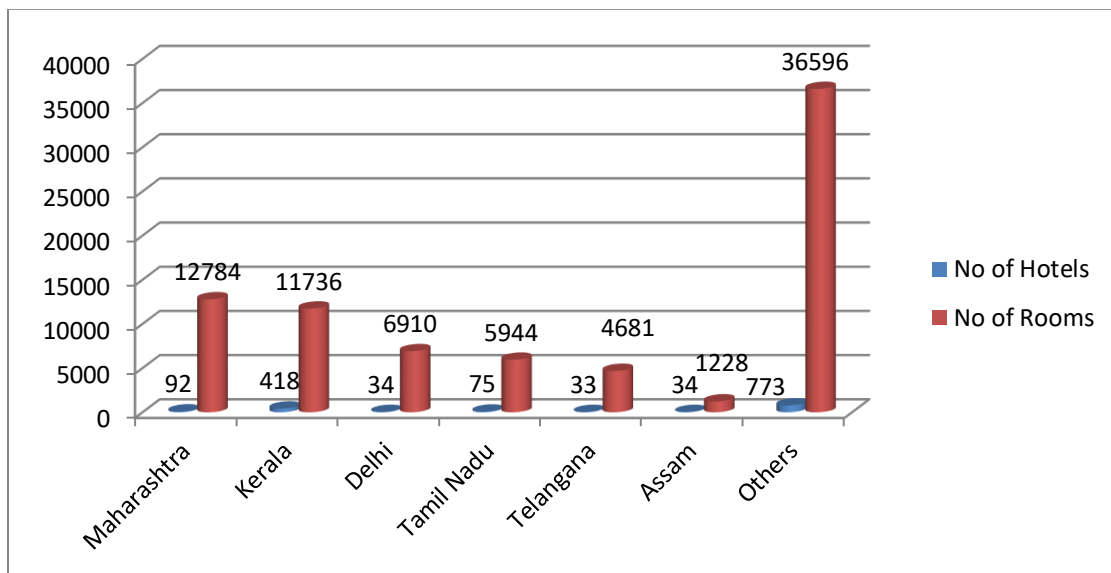
Table 4: Comparison in terms of Distribution of Classified Hotel & Hotel Rooms in Top Five Tourism developed States with Assam as on 31st December, 2016

States/UTs	5 Star Deluxe	5 Star	4 Star	3 Star	2 Star	1 Star	Apartment	Time Share	Heritage Hotel	B & B Establish	Guest House	Total
Maharashtra												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	24	15	11	28	1	1	0	0	0	9	3	92
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	7376	22 81	11 83	17 72	49	54	0	0	0	30	39	1278 4
Kerala												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	13	25	15 0	19 2	23	0	0	0	11	4	0	418
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	1797	20 63	38 40	36 67	21 5	0	0	0	13 9	15	0	1173 6
Delhi												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	18	5	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	5489	66 4	64 2	10 1	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	6910
Tamil Nadu												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	4	12	4	33	5	11	0	0	2	4	0	75
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	965	16 07	51 8	23 04	13 9	34 4	0	0	55	12	0	5944
Telangana												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	6	6	4	15	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	33
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	1732	10 83	58 6	12 74	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	4681
Assam												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	0	0	2	18	12	0	0	0	0	2	0	34
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	0	0	21 6	69 5	31 3	0	0	0	0	4	0	1228
Others												
<i>No. of Hotels</i>	81	73	32	13 9	11	0	0	0	27	295	11 5	773
<i>No. of Rooms</i>	1367 8	85 16	29 07	77 91	46 0	0	0	0	10 64	1529	65 1	3659 6

Grand Total												
No. of Hotels	146	13	21	42	53	12	0	0	40	316	11	1459
		6	0	8							8	
No. of Rooms	3103	16	98	17	11	39	0	0	12	1596	69	7987
	7	21	92	60	90	8			58		0	9
		4		4								

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2017

Figure 4: Comparison with Top Five States and Assam in terms of Distribution of Classified Hotel & Hotel Rooms



The diagram shows comparison with percentage share of top Five States/UTs with Assam in terms of distribution of classified hotels and rooms in 2016.

3.1 Tourist Inflow to the National Parks of Assam In Assam, tourism industry is an important source of revenue generation. Tourism industry plays a significant role in case of earning foreign exchange reserves. The table-5 shows the number of tourist visited in the National Parks of Assam along with revenue earning by the state over the last four years. The Kaziranga National Park has generated 493.15 lakh in 2016-17 while Manash, Orang, Diru-Saikhowa and Nameri National Park earned 76.24 lakh, 4.02 lakh, 0.26 lakh and 18.58 lakh respectively. The numbers of foreign tourists has increased in Kaziranga and Manas during 2015-16, in comparison to 2014-15, remained the same in Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and decreased in Orang and Nameri National Parks. During the period 2016-17, there was an increase in both Indian and Foreign tourists in Dibru-Saikhowa and Nameri National Parks with an increase of only foreign

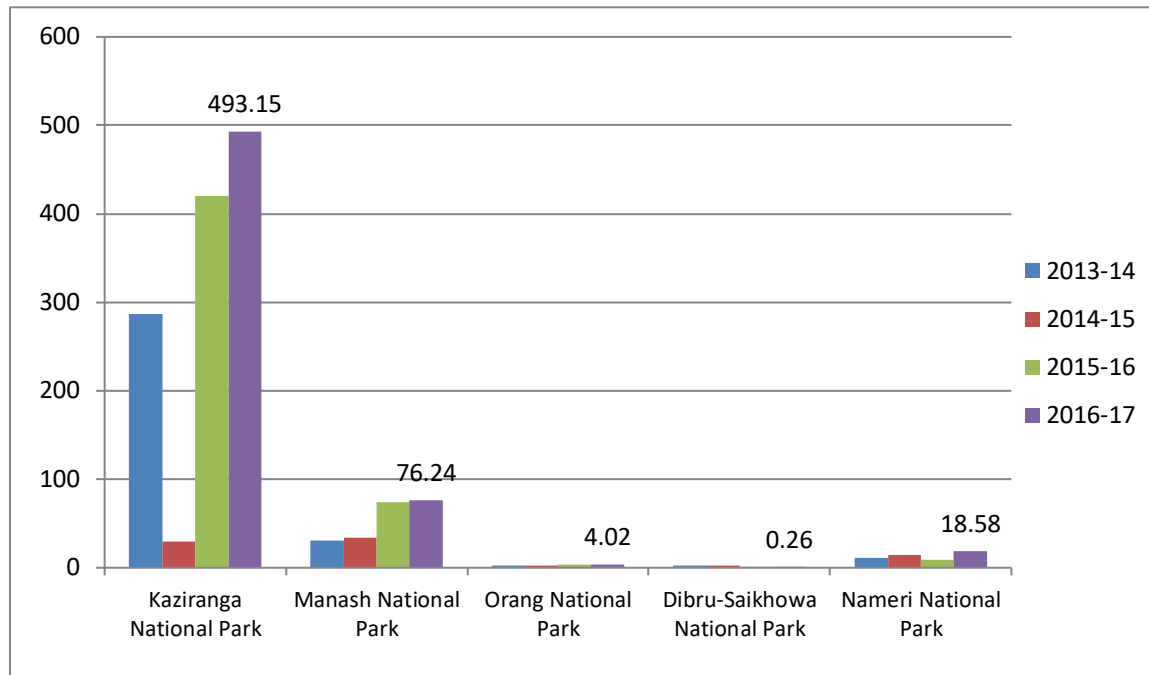
tourists in Orang National Parks. However, there was a decline both in Indian and foreign tourists in Kaziranga and Manas National Parks as well. The numbers of tourists Arrivals in national parks along with Revenue Collection during the last few years is presented below in table 5. The table also indicates that there is some sort of fluctuation, both in the inflow of tourist and the revenue collection from these parks during this period and the arrival of foreign tourist excluding Kaziranga National Park is not satisfactory.

Table 5: Revenue Collection on arrival of Tourists in National Parks of Assam:

Name of National Park	Year	No of visitors		Revenue (In Lakh)
		Indian	Foreign	
Kaziranga National Park	2013-14	119289	6922	268.66
	2014-15	123360	7994	29.46
	2015-16	162799	11417	419.77
	2016-17	159669	7383	493.15
Manas National Park	2013-14	20527	211	30.93
	2014-15	9786	475	33.48
	2015-16	40559	614	73.69
	2016-17	36201	351	76.24
Orang National Park	2013-14	2329	16	2.43
	2014-15	1946	45	2.31
	2015-16	3502	20	4.04
	2016-17	3354	62	4.02
Dibru-Saikhowa National Park	2013-14	4230	54	2.09
	2014-15	4249	27	2.1
	2015-16	2695	27	0.16
	2016-17	2968	58	0.26
Nameri National Park	2013-14	5866	806	11.26
	2014-15	8448	1035	14.13
	2015-16	10384	702	9.25
	2016-17	11539	874	18.58

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2016 & Economic Survey Assam 2017-18

Fig 5: Revenue Collections from National Parks of Assam during the last four yrs.(Rs in Lakh)



3.2 Revenue Collection from Tourism in Assam: Though Assam has been hospitable to visitors from an ancient era, yet tourism started flourishing only after the establishment of the Directorate of Tourism of Assam in 1959. Over the years, since 1959, this department has made considerable progress in this sector. The volume of tourist traffic that Assam has been receiving since 2006-07 and magnitude of revenue earning by the state is shown in the following table.

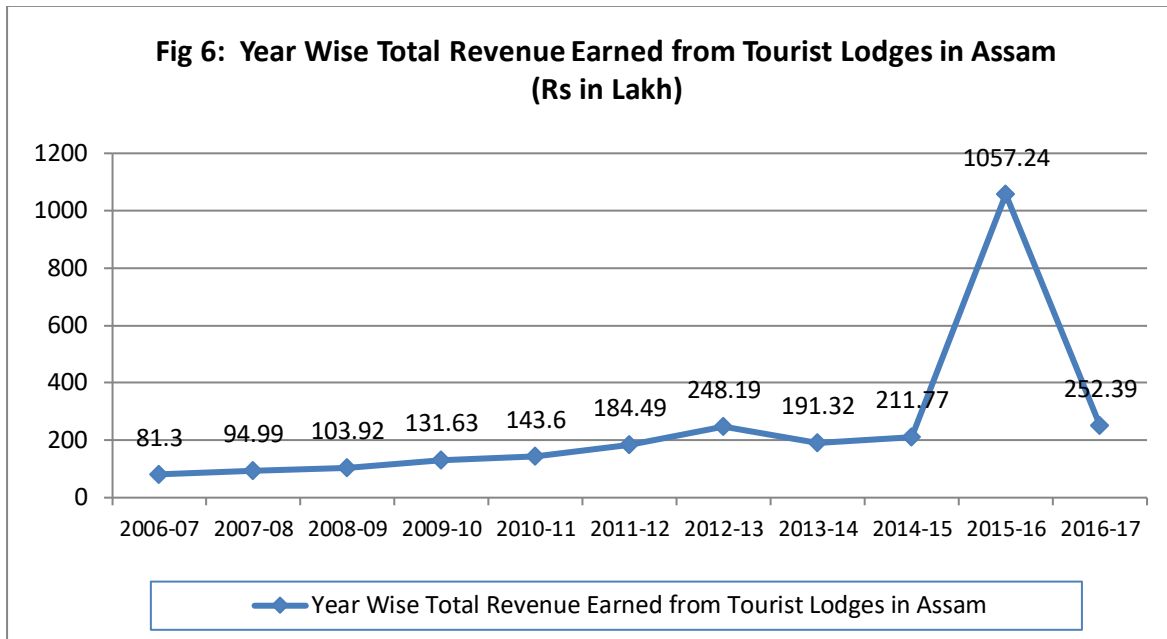
Table 6: Indian and Foreign tourists to Assam and revenue earned from the tourists

Year	Tourist staying in Tourist Lodges		Tourist in other accommodation like Hotels		Total Revenue earned from Tourist lodges only (Rupees in Lakh)	% change in revenue
	Indian	Foreign	Indian	Foreign		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2006-07	20279	649	3459591	13008	81.30	
2007-08	24057	960	3465757	12839	94.99	+16.84
2008-09	26439	8674	3672267	13859	103.92	+9.40
2009-10	25665	669	3869860	14030	131.63	+26.66
2010-11	25831	594	4101616	15039	143.60	+9.09
2011-12	26439	696	4381897	15964	184.49	28.47
2012-13	22057	711	4522609	16997	248.19	34.53
2013-14	26394	726	4417999	18360	191.32	-22.91
2014-15	21092	422	4842734	19583	211.77	10.69
2015-16	42988	1077	5599962	25243	1057.24	399.24
2016-17	24036	474	5389841	6735	252.39	-76.13

Sources: Economic Survey Assam 2017-18 (Figures in Column 7 are calculated by the author)

It is evident from the Table 6 that there is some sort of fluctuation, both in the number of tourists and revenue collected during last ten years. However, since 2007-08 Assam has been witnessing an increase, both in the number of tourists and the revenue collected. Of course, the rise in revenue collection does not have much gradual tendency, yet it can be termed encouraging. Here the total revenue earned from tourist lodges increases from 2006-07 to 2012-13 and it reduces in the year 2013-14, and again it starts increasing and it is highest in 2015-16 as compared to the other years.

Year Wise Total Revenue Earned from Tourist Lodges in Assam (From 2006-07 to 2016-17): The following graph shows comparison with Total revenue earned from tourist lodges in Assam.



The above graph shows almost an increasing trend of revenue earning from tourist lodges in Assam during the period 2006-07 to 2016-17. In the year 2015-16, highest revenue collected from tourist lodge which was Rs. 1057.24 lakh.

4.0 Problems faced by Tourism Industry in Assam:

Tourism in Assam does not seem to be attaining a noteworthy height despite the various measures taken by the Government for their development. Some of the glaring reasons are as follows-

- **Inadequate infrastructure:** To attract tourists, there must be dissemination of information, infrastructural facilities like good hotels and tourist lodges reliable communication network, clean and hygienic food and accommodation and the like. These are strong discouraging factors which works against a good inflow of the domestic and foreign tourists.
- **Sense of insecurity among the tourists:** The foreign and the domestic tourists consider it risky to visit this part of the country, in view of prevailing law and order situation and political unrest. The general impression has been that any foreign or domestic tourist could be a soft target of the insurgents. Contrary to this general impression, however,

there is not a single instance of harassment, not to speak of threat to life to any domestic or foreign tourists visiting the region. But the general impression about deteriorating law and order situation is enough to ward off any tourist.

- **Lack of Coordinated Efforts:** Lack of Coordinated efforts among tourism administrators, travel and tourism association, owners of hotel industry, civil aviation, PWD, Railway etc in handling the demands of the tourist.
- **Lack of accommodation for the tourists:** Accommodation sector of the state reflects a highly polarized development with places lacking in quality service and facilities
- **Poor maintenance of the tourist places:** Except a few, the government tourist lodges designated to accommodate tourists, are not well managed.
- **Lack of tour guides:** Assam virtually does not have adequate trained guides in important places of tourist attraction. Consequently, as the tourists arrive at such a place there is hardly anyone to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the tourists.
- **Lack of tourist information or query cells:** To attract tourists, there must be dissemination of information, reliable communication network. Lacks of such infrastructural facilities are some strong discouraging factor stands against a good inflow of the tourists.
- **Lack of consciousness:** Lack of consciousness among the people about the tourism potentiality of the state and that it can be a sustainable source of their livelihood.
- **Natural Calamities:** Flash floods, heavy rainfall, waterlogged roads, soil erosion etc. which stands as the stumbling-block to the development of tourism in Assam.
- **Frequent Bandh:** Moreover, in many times frequent bandhs are call upon by different organisations in the state which severely affects the movements of the tourists inside the state as well as stop their entrance into the state.
- Minimum investment by the government in tourism sector and inadequate campaign about tourism in Assam both at the national and global level.

5.0 Suggestions to Improve the Scenario:

In spite of the constraints as mentioned above, Assam is still maintaining a bright prospect of socio-economic development through tourism sector. For this purpose, some short term and long-term measures, as listed below, are to be adopted.

- (a) **Infrastructure:** All the infrastructure connected with tourism such as good road communication, good hotels and safari resorts, water spots, tents and other logistics for eco-tourism should be developed. The inaccessibility of some of the erstwhile popular tourist destinations in Assam is one of the limitations of tourism

development. It is essential to link existing and prospective tourist destinations with road communication system.

- (b) **Coordination with various bodies and agencies:** Department of Tourism alone cannot promote tourism activities in the state as tourist resources of the state are under various departments, viz. archaeology, Assam Tourism Development Corporation, tea garden, civil aviation, forest, culture, sports, etc. Hence, interdepartmental cooperation is necessary for tourism development in the state.
- (c) **State policy for Tourism:** A proper tourism development policy of tourism for the state of Assam has to be evolved on the line of National Policy of Tourism. However, the state government of Assam has launched a new Tourism policy- 'Tourism Policy of Assam 2017' with the aim of increase tourist inflow in the state by two to three folds within the next five years. Proper implementation of this policy is an urgent requirement for the promotion of tourism in Assam and will encourage the private sector to pro-actively participate and invest in tourist places. Both the government and private agencies should give a serious thought in this matter. The state government and private agencies should join hands in the process of tourism planning and policy implementation for the state.
- (d) **Publicity Drive:** In spite of having tremendous tourism potential, Assam has not yet aggressively marketed itself. Both the national and global level efforts should be made to increase the demand for tourism in Assam. Information about tourism in Assam should be made available in the embassies in New Delhi and diplomatic offices in Major Indian cities. Intensive campaign should be carried out by government and private agencies through print and electronic media at both national and international levels to project the positive image of the state. However, a brand image of Assam as "Awesome Assam" already created to portray the states uniqueness and exotic beauty with a renowned celebrity as brand Ambassador.
- (e) **Facilities for the tourists:** Tourism is known as a 'hospitality service' and it should ensure all possible facilities to the tourist, who are to be treated as honoured guests. There is lack in basic amenities in the destinations. These need improvement. Planned, sustained and well-thought long-term efforts are to be made to improve the socio-economic and political set up of the state. More hotels, and resorts and guest houses should be set up nearby the tourist spots.
- (f) **Tourism package for the North East:** Tourism in Assam cannot be viewed in isolation. Many tourists visiting Assam would like to visit Shillong, Cherapunji, Tawang, Bomdila, Tezu, Meo etc. There should be an integrated approach to promote tourism in the NR Region with an attractive package of nature, eco, tea,

adventure tourism. All the north-eastern states should join hands for an integrated tourism development in the region. The North-Eastern Council should come up to play an integrated role in this regard.

(g) **Role of the Government:** A strong political will is of excessive in need for the restoration of peace and political stability in the area with a whole-hearted efforts including political dialogue with the various insurgent groups working in Assam should be made to redress their grievances within the framework of Indian constitution in a democratic manner.

(h) **Civic Consciousness:** Above all, people's consciousness to development their own area through the improvement of tourism industry is a need of the hour.

CONCLUSION

We may conclude from the above discussion that the status of Assam in tourism sector is not satisfactory as compared to other top five tourism-developed states of India. In this study, we have found that we do not have adequate accommodation facilities as compared to other states of India, very few numbers of tourist service agencies and insufficient number of classified hotels as well as hotel rooms. This may cause have adverse affects of foreign and domestic tourist inflow as well. Again this study found that over the period the inflow of tourist-domestic and foreign are fluctuating and the arrival of foreign tourist excluding Kaziranga National Park is not satisfactory. Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa are some of the states and UTs which get much attention from the domestic and foreign tourists. Assam and other NE states do not figure even in the top 10 states/UTs of India in terms of tourist visits. By well-planned publicity, trained manpower, improved service quality, well developed accommodation, coordination with other bodies and agencies, tourism can be geared up in the state. Renovation of major monuments, presenting the unique and natural atmosphere, promotion of crafts and projection of folk and classical dance forms that exist in the rural areas will not only help in promotion of tourism venture, but also provide economic benefits for local people and craftsman as well. The high-powered Shukla Commission has recommended for establishing a North-East Tourist Development Corporation to develop tourism in the region. The proper implementation of 'Tourism Policy of Assam 2017' is an urgent requirement for the promotion of tourism in Assam. Effective methodology has to be evolved to forge coordination of various departments and organisation directly and indirectly associated with tourism. The 'Cooper & Lybrand' in the year 1996, rightly stated that if the vast tourism potentials of NE India are fully developed within twenty years, the region will receive more tourist than the Singapore and Bangkok.

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