

# TOURISM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ASSAM

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## **Abstract:**

Tourism industry is economically important and grows rapidly. Assam is well blessed by Nature and it lays at the centre of one of the world's richest biogeography areas. State has huge potential to attract tourist from all over the world. Sources reveal that revenue collected from tourism increase year by year and it directly help in economic development of Assam. This paper makes an attempt to explore the contribution of tourism to economic development of Assam.

**Keywords:** Tourism, biogeography, revenue, economic development.

## **1.0 Introduction:**

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the world economy, and it is now considered as an efficient tool for promoting economic growth. Tourism is the world's largest industry and it represents the fastest growing segment of this market. Tourism industry with an impressive growth rate across the world is one of the fastest growing industries (Chaturvedi 2010; Chaudhary 2010; Sheehan, Ritchie, & Hudson 2007; Sharpley 2006). Tourism is regarded as a leading sector for the 21st century due to its significant share in the world economy. According to the World Tourism Organization (2010), as a result of an ever increasing number of destinations opening up and investing in tourism development, modern tourism has become a key driver for socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, infrastructure development, and the export revenues earned. Moreover, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the tourism sector is the largest sector in the world in terms of income generation and employment creation. The concept of tourism is new with tremendous potentiality for sustainable developments of nature-based tourist resources include beautiful forest and wild life and landscapes. Though Assam is a very backward state in comparison to some other states of Assam, yet it has the greatest potentiality to develop tourism industry. Assam has tremendous strength of tourism attractions like scenic beauty, cultural variety, ethnic mixture, and diverse flora and fauna. Such wealth of tourism resources endows Assam with comparative advantage over many other states. Yet for a variety of reasons this advantage has not brought for Assam the preeminent position that it deserves. It is therefore important to give a dynamic thrust to tourism promotion and new directions to tourism growth.

## **2.0 Objective:**

The objective of present paper is to identify the contribution of tourism industry to economic development of Assam.

## **3.0 Methodology:**

This research paper is the form of an explanatory study in analyzing the contribution of tourism industry to economic development in Assam. The present study is based on secondary data collection. The secondary data was collected by various published sources like books, journal, magazine, reports, publications, etc. The findings were discussed in the light of published literature.

**4.0 Findings and Discussion-****4.1 Domestic and Foreign Tourist Inflow in Assam:**

Assam is known for its friendly treatment to all visitors, no matter where they come from. Tourist attraction includes forests, wild life and landscapes for eco-tourism; centers of pilgrimage for spiritual tourism; heritage, trains and hotels for heritage tourism and also includes colourful fairs and festivals held for leisure tourism. Wildlife sanctuaries at various places of Assam can attract the tourists all over the world. For example, the national park of Kaziranga in the district of Golaghat is a gift of Nature which covers approximately an area of 429.93 sq. km. situated on the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra. Herds of rhinoceros, vast grassy and green forests of the park can easily enamor any tourist of the world. Beside kaziranga other wildlife sanctuaries like Manas, Orang, Dibru-saikhuwa and Nameri can attract tourists all over the world. Moreover, the world's largest river island 'Majuli' will encourage tourism industry in Assam to a great extent. The following table shows the inflow of both domestic and foreign tourist to the state. The table reveals a increasing trend of both Indian and foreign tourist inflow.

**Table-1 Year Wise Domestic and Foreign Tourist's Inflow in Assam-(2000-01 To 2014-15)  
In Numbers**

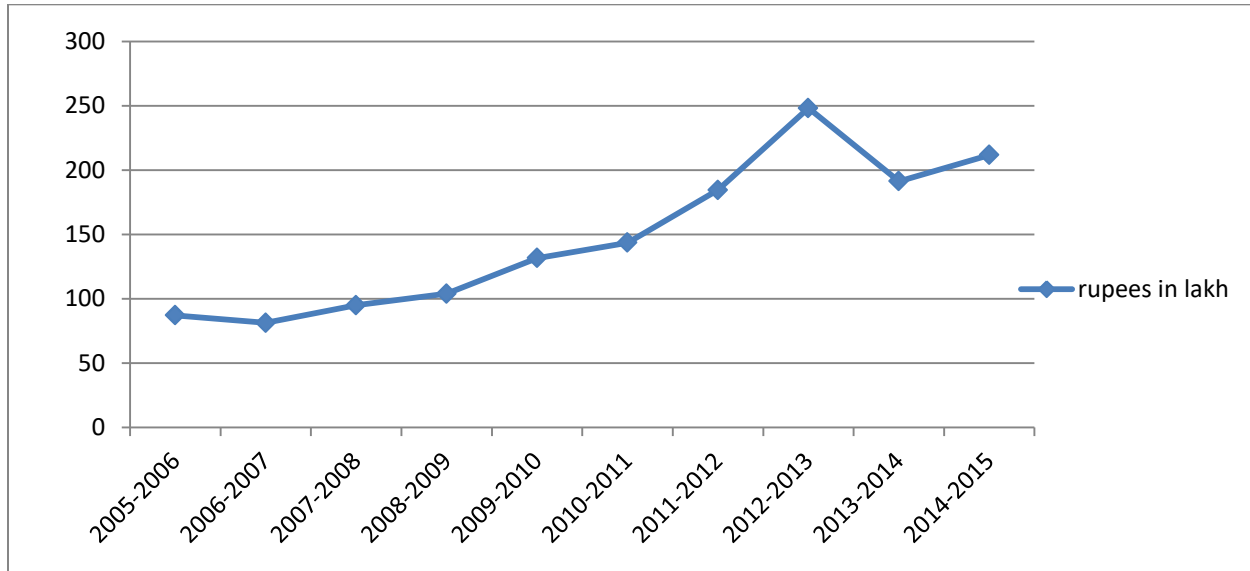
Year	Tourist staying in Tourist Lodges		Tourist staying in other accommodation like Hotels etc.	
	Indian	Foreign	Indian	Foreign
2005-06	24280	755	2562148	7554
2006-07	20279	649	3459591	13008
2007-08	24057	960	3465757	12839
2008-09	26439	674	3672267	13859
2009-10	25665	664	3869860	14030
2010-11	25831	549	4101616	15039
2011-12	26439	696	4381897	15964
2012-13	22057	711	4522609	16997
2013-14	26394	726	4417999	18360
2014-15	21092	422	4842734	19583

Source: Statistical handbook Assam 2013, 2014 and 2015

Director of Economics and Statistics , Govt. of Assam

**4.2 Revenue Collects From Tourism:**

Travel and tourism play an important role in India's economy. Tourism is one of the enormous service industries in India with its contribution of 6.23 percent to national GDP and 8.78 percent of total employment, witness more than 5 million annual foreign tourists arrivals and 562 million domestic tourists. Assam is well blessed by Nature and it lays at the centre of one of the worlds richest bio-geographic areas. It is the treasure house of various economic resources. It has a rich cultural and ethnic heritage that can easily make it a tourist-spot. Tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities in Assam because Assam is not only characterized by the blending of flora and fauna it is also exceptionally rich in biodiversity. In Assam large numbers of people engaged in agriculture sector and which is seasonal in nature. So tourism sector can sustain the income of people because this industry has huge potential to generate employment opportunity. In Assam though the tourist industry is not well-developed but revenue collected from this sector increased year by year. The following figure shows the revenue collect from tourist lodges.



**Fig:1 Year Wise Total Revenue Earned From Tourist Lodges in Assam, 2005-2006 To 2014-2015**

Source: Statistical handbook Assam, director of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam.

The above fig shows a increasing trend of revenue earned from tourist lodges in Assam. In the year 2012-2013 highest revenue collect from tourist lodge which was Rs. 248.19 lakh and in the year 2013-14 it was decrease to Rs. 191.32 lakh. But it was again start raising from the year 2014-15 to Rs. 211.77 lakh.

#### **4.3 Problems Face by Tourism Industry:**

From the above discussion it is clear that tourism industry has huge potential to develop in Assam. The main constraints that are coming into the way of its development are:

- a) Lack of infrastructure,
- b) Communication bottlenecks,
- c) Geographical isolation,
- d) Ethnic clashes leading to political instability,
- e) Growth of insurgent activities
- f) Lack of fund
- g) Absence of leadership and entrepreneurship ability
- h) Indifferent attitude of the Government both at State and Central level
- i) Defective socio-economic and political set up
- j) Lack of a proper tourism development policy of the Government etc. To overcome from all of this proper government policies and cooperation from local people is essential.

#### **5.0 Conclusion:**

The fact that tourism is one of the rapidly growing sectors of the world economy is beyond doubt. The development of the tourism sector not only increases economic growth directly, but also stimulates the growth of other sectors through backward and forward linkages and increases domestic incomes and effective demand. This sector can positively contribute to economic development of Assam. Tourism infrastructure is inadequate in the state, so by providing good transport and communication and making sufficient provision for accommodation of the tourist at and near the tourist spots with all types of civic amenities the states can earn huge amount of income from tourist sector.

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