

**TRENDS AND IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN ASSAM:  
A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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## DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Trends and Impacts of Tourism in Assam: A Geographical Analysis” is my bonafide work for the Degree of Master of Philosophy and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Dedicated to*  
*My Parents*

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an economic activity arising out of journeys and temporary stays of people travelling primarily for pleasure or any other hedonistic activity. Spatial interaction is, thus, an inherent feature of tourism and the subject lends itself to geographical analysis. According to Mathieson and Wall (1993), "Tourism is the temporary movement of people to outside their normal place of residence and work, and activities undertaken during their stay in the destinations and facilities created to cater their needs.<sup>1</sup> The study of tourism is the study of people away from their usual habitat, of establishments which respond to the requirements of travellers, and of impacts that they have on the economic, physical and social well-being of their hosts. It involves motivations and experience of tourists, the expectations of and adjustments made by residents of reception areas and the role played by numerous agencies and institutions which intercede between them.

Tourism is an important industry in many countries of the world, both in the east as well as in the west. It has come up as most important foreign exchange earner in many countries. Although tourism has not developed much in India, yet it has become third most important foreign exchange earner after the industries of Gems and Jewellery and of ready made garments. Foreign exchange received by India from tourism rose from Rs 5509 core in 1993-94 to 7365.61 crore in 2003-2004.<sup>2</sup>

Tourism has major economic and social significance. Firstly, it helps in earning money in terms of foreign and local currency. Secondly, it generates employment opportunities by developing transport and communication, food and lodging, selling curios and handicrafts and by developing amusement infrastructure. It provides jobs to guides and interpreters who assist tourists. Thirdly, tourism brings about better understanding among people of different areas. Fourthly, tourists visiting different regions not only like to see attractive tourist spots, but also wants to buy exotic handicrafts and enjoy cultural aspects of host areas such as music and dances, art and craft and festivals etc. This, brings cultural consciousness, cultural re-

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<sup>1</sup> Mathieson, A. and G. Wall (1993): "*Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts*", Longman, N. York, p.12.

<sup>2</sup> Batta, A, (2005): "*Tourism and Environment*", Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, p. 23.

awakening and socio-cultural rejuvenation of host population. Finally, there is a widespread belief that tourism is a powerful and beneficial agent of both economic and social change. Indeed, tourism has stimulated employment and investment, modified economic structure and made a positive contribution to balance of payments in many countries of the world. At the same time, alarm has been raised regarding negative impacts and burden on the host region that accompany rapid growth of tourist industry beyond a saturation point. In such a situation, any further growth of tourism may create more problems than benefits. Therefore, along with making facilities and services available to meet the demands of tourists, it is necessary to undertake steps to minimize negative impacts on environment and socio-economic conditions. This needs an analysis of existing state of tourism development for tourism planning and organization.

North-East India is considered to be a paradise for tourists. It is a place of magical beauty, bewildering bio-diversity and heavy precipitation. It is endowed with forest wealth and is ideally suited to produce a whole range of plantation crops, spices, fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs. Its virgin forests contain many species of rare and exotic birds and animals including rare species of Rhinoceros, Apes, Tiger, Deer and Bison etc. Apart from these, the region has many places of pilgrimage and of archeological and historical importance. It is said to be the melting pot of different racial and ethno-linguistic groups. Therefore, it represents kaleidoscopic view of traditional art, culture, handicrafts, fairs and festivals etc. Rugged hills and high mountains and large rivers provide opportunity for adventure sports like mountaineering, trekking, rafting and other games and pastime like angling, boating and pleasure cruising etc. Lastly, the region has several hill stations with tranquil atmosphere and salubrious climate. Those can be used as health resorts. All these natural wealth and opportunities provide an open invitation for establishing virtual paradise for travellers searching for continuous joy in pilgrimage, adventure, culture, nature, heritage, wildlife, golf and polo, river tourism and more. The region has excellent tourism potential, but poor infrastructure. Below potential tourism in North-East is a classic case of non-utilization of unlimited opportunities.

Assam is the most accessible of North- Eastern states of India. It has many places, those can attract tourists. Guwahati is gaining importance day by day not only by being the gateway to the North-Eastern region of India but as tourism hub as well.

This historical city, lying on the banks of the river Brahmaputra, has its own charm and attractions including those of Kamakhya and Umananda temples, presence of river Brahmaputra with facilities for pleasure cruising, state zoo and state museum etc. As a centre of pilgrimage, Hajo is the meeting point of Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus. Sualkuchi, a famous silk weaving centre is situated near Guwahati. Kaziranga National Park has one-horned Asian Rhinoceros, varieties of Apes, Deers, and many varieties of birds. Manas and Nameri National Park have facilities for river cruising and angling. Majuli, the largest river island in the world, has several historical Vaishnavite monasteries (*Satras*) those depict traditional Assamese art and culture. Sibsagar, the erstwhile capital of Ahom dynasty, has several relicts of historical importance and huge tanks those are used for aquatic sports. Haflong, in the North Cachar Hills amid virgin forest, is a hill station with salubrious climate. Darranga in Nalbari district is a place of border trade with Bhutan and where annual trade fair is organized. As many as 34, 36,484 tourists including 13, 105 foreigners visited Assam in 2007-2008. This gave a net earning of Rs 94.9 lakh to the Tourism Department of the state.<sup>3</sup>

Though Assam has a rich resource base for tourism development, it has not attained the desired level due to various reasons. Its far away location, transport bottlenecks, low economic growth, lack of private investment, travel restrictions like RAP (Restricted Area Permit) and prevailing precarious law and order situation in the state etc. are basic reasons for low tourist inflow.

Amidst such problems, main focal points of tourism in Assam continues to be restricted to the areas of wildlife like Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park and Nameri National Park, some archeological sites and monuments and pilgrimage places like Kamakhya temple. Unfortunately, Assam continues to be among less known areas in the country in spite of having vast tourist potentials. Imposition of travel restrictions on foreign tourists had also affected tourism during 1962-1995 when obtaining travel permit to the state was very difficult and time consuming. In such a situation, disappointed tourists dissuade others from coming to the state.<sup>4</sup> Tourists travelling together through recognized travel agents were only allowed to

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Commission Report (2008): "*Tourism in Assam: Status and Prospects*", Government of India, New Delhi. PP.12.

<sup>4</sup> State of Environment Report, Assam (2004): "*Tourism and heritage*", Assam Science Technology and Environment Council. pp. 24-26.

visit the state. Initially, permission for visiting Kaziranga National Park, Nameri National Park and Manas National Park was granted for travel groups consisting of fifteen plus tourists. Subsequently, tourists were also allowed to stay at Guwahati for a period of ten days. Fortunately, Government of India has withdrawn the travel restrictions from three north-eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura in 1995. However, still there are instances of foreign tourists facing inconvenience due to complex administrative formalities<sup>5</sup>.

Again, because of socio-political instability in Assam during Assam agitation (1978-1985) and Bodo insurgency movement during post 1987 resulted in significant fall in tourist inflow during 1990s.<sup>6</sup> But, recently due to some pragmatic approach taken by Tourism Department of Assam and a relatively tranquil socio-political situation of the state, there has been rise in the number of tourists. A satisfactory growth in foreign tourists from 5,752 persons in 1996-97 to 9,365 persons in 2004-05 (62.8 percent growth) shows reviving nature of tourism in Assam.<sup>7</sup>

Looking at the above facts and unemployment problems in Assam, this labour intensive hospitality industry can play a major role in providing subsidiary job opportunities to many. It is essential to preserve the physical and cultural resources of the state for the development of tourism as an industry. Keeping this in view, the proposed study examines the multidimensional issues related to geography of tourism in Assam and its impacts to the local society.

### **I.1 THE STUDY AREA:**

Assam is the second largest state among the eight sister states of North-Eastern Region of India. The other seven states are I) Arunachal Pradesh, II) Manipur, III) Meghalaya, IV) Mizoram, V) Nagaland, VI) Tripura, and VII) Sikkim. Fig I.1 shows Assam is located in sub-tropical latitudes from 24.3° North to 28.0° North and longitude of 89.5° East to 96.1° East. With a geographical area of about 78,438 kms, Assam accounts for one-third of the area of the North-Eastern region and 2.4 % of the area of India. The state has varied landforms, diverse flora and fauna and unique

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

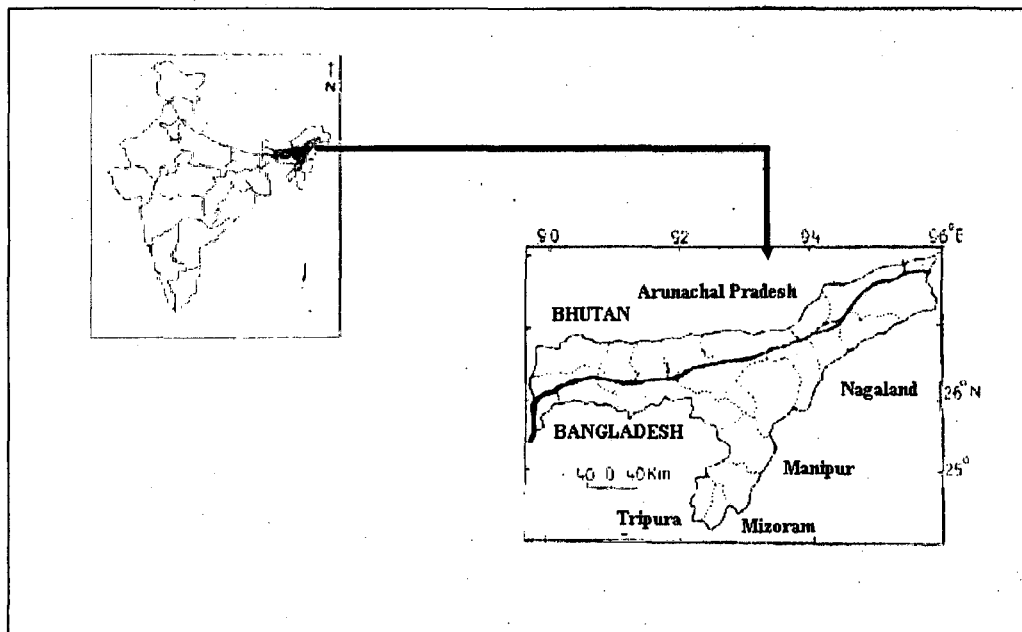
<sup>6</sup> Bhattacharya Prasanta (2004), "*Tourism in Assam, Trend and Potentialities*" Bani Mandir, Guwahati, pp. 53-54.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Tourism (2008), "*Annual Report*", Government of Assam, Guwahati, p .2.



cultural heritage. It is dominated by the mighty Brahmaputra River which originates in Tibet and forms the lifeline in Assam.

**Fig I.1 Location of Assam**



The broad physiographic divisions of Assam are (a) Brahmaputra valley (b) Barak Valley (c) Hilly region consisting of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. Brahmaputra forms a long and narrow valley with an approximate east-west extension of about 720 km and average width of 80 km. The valley gently slopes from North-East to South with an average gradient of 30cm per km. Barak valley (225 km length in Assam) is the product of fluvial processes of river Barak and its tributaries. It is bounded by foothills of Barail range on north and foothills of Mizo hills on south. Karbi Hills consists of two hilly lobes of equal size. Highest point of this region is Singhasan Peak (1357 meter). Barail Hill and southern ranges rising from southern part of Karbi plateau attains maximum height of 1866 meter in Theipibug peak of North Cachar hill district.

Assam has a humid climate with pleasant and long winter and short summer. Temperature varies from 18°C to 35°C in summer and from 7°C to 26°C in winter. Rainfall is heavy during monsoon season from June to September and average annual rainfall is around 2400 mm. Average humidity of the area is 83 percent. Best tourist season is from October till April covering both winter and spring. Population of the

state was 26.66 million in 2001 consisting of 13.78 million males and 12.88 million females. Sex ratio is 935 females per 1000 males and density of population is 340 persons per square km. Assam is one of the few states, which has improved sex ratio from 923 in 1991 to 935 in 2001. Literacy rate has also improved from 52.89 percent in 1991 to 63.25 percent in 2001. Average work participation rate was 35.78 percent in 2001.

Present study is an attempt to look at Assam as important recreation centre for tourism. It includes identifying all its major places of attraction and to examine tourism dynamics with study of possible impact on its economy, society and culture.

## **I.2 LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The Modern concept of leisure and tourism is essentially a product of western world. Importance of studies on tourism has been rapidly increasing in the western world. Studies on tourism in India started gaining importance since 1960's. Making of tourist and trekking atlases were taken up by various geography departments across the country. Setting up of departments of tourism studies in different universities show a major concern towards understanding the relevance of subject matter of recreation and tourism.

Till now literature on tourism in Assam is very limited. There are only a few studies related to possibilities of tourism in Assam. Major work on tourism in the region has been done by the tourism department of government of Assam. Studies relevant to present dissertation can be divided into following three parts.

### **Studies on tourism in different Parts of world**

Tourism study has been taken around the world as a subject of investigation. Most of the studies on tourism are related to Lake-tourism of Great Lake region of U.S.A., Cultural-tourism in Central America, Coastal tourism of Mediterranean region in Europe, Nature-based tourism in Africa, Adventure and Coastal tourism in Oceania and Adventure and Nature based tourism in Asia. Important studies among these are;

#### **(A) Studies on tourism in America**

Tourism studies of America are mostly on lake-tourism, adventure tourism and historical tourism. Hedrick (1934), Murray (1930), Booth (1948) devoted their

study on lake-tourism in U.S.A. Dearden (1982) studied cultural-tourism in Belize of Central America. All this literature deals with sustainability of tourism. Among works on tourism, Carlson (1938) has given emphasis on recreational mapping of tourist places which is very important tool for geography of tourism.

Hedrick (1934)<sup>8</sup> made a pioneering attempt in the field of systematic survey of recreational forms and values. He has tried to produce maps of various items of recreation and described the environmental features those hold significance for tourist spots. His work was primarily based on inputs as per the questionnaires sent to township assessors in Michigan State.

Murray (1930)<sup>9</sup> has discussed significance of recreational land use in northern Michigan. He identified the types of land useful for hunters and fishermen and stressed on the contribution that geographers may make in this field.

Booth (1948)<sup>10</sup> has analyzed lakeshore characteristics and nature of lakes themselves in terms of recreational values in Washington State. The study deals with the application of techniques in recreational mapping. The great lake region of USA has been projected as tourist area. Adventure tourism is the chief attraction for tourists in the area.

Carlson (1938)<sup>11</sup> has dealt with recreational districts of New Hampshire. The study highlights the financial contribution of recreational activities to local and state government. Location of recreational activities has been shown through maps. Cost-benefit analysis of tourism as an economic activity has been done in detail.

Dearden (1982)<sup>12</sup> has reviewed tourism prospects in Belize of Central America. Rich biodiversity and Mayan civilization is chief attraction for tourists. World's second largest barrier reef is found here. The study reveals that the place is ideal for different forms of tourism. Relics of ancient Mayan civilization are suitable for

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<sup>8</sup> Hedrick W.O. (1934): "The Recreational Use of Northern Michigan Cutover Islands", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 18 No .3. pp 551-552.

<sup>9</sup> Murray (1930): "Recreational property of Michigan", *Economic Geography*, Vol.9, No.2 pp.368-378.

<sup>10</sup> Booth, A.W. (1948): "The Lakes of the Northern Inland Empire: A study of Recreational Sites", *Bureau of Economic and Research*, Washington, pp 24-25.

<sup>11</sup> Carlson, A.S. (1938): "Recreational industry of New Hampshire", *Economic Geography*, Vol.14, pp.255-270.

<sup>12</sup> Dearden, P. (1982): "The Ecological Values of Coastal Ecosystems", *Environment Management*, Vol.49. p.98.

cultural tourist. On the other hand, the author has shown concern about increasing environment degradation in these areas.

### **(B) Studies on tourism in Europe**

The literature on tourism in Europe is based on coastal tourism in Mediterranean region and Wild-life tourism in Alps. Studies on Mediterranean coastal tourism discuss about mass tourism which is detrimental to environment. Studied by Valenzuela (1985), Gonen (1981), Sewak (1996) deal with Mediterranean coastal tourism. Study of Sewak (1996) is exhaustive among these. He has studied both tourist attractions and affects of mass tourism in Mediterranean coast. Dengjinyang (2002), Pearce (1982) and Brown (1935) have studied tourism in Europe beyond Mediterranean coast. Study of Dengjinyang (2002) is based on tourism planning. This type of investigation is important in understanding both attractiveness and suitability of a particular tourist location.

Sewak Gauri (1996)<sup>13</sup> has explained about most developed mass tourism industry of Mediterranean region. The author argues that mass tourism is a social phenomenon which is deeply embedded in European society. Mediterranean is the most visited tourism region in the world accounting for 30 percent of international tourism The Mediterranean tourism is nearing saturation point. The study looks at the construction of tourism infrastructure and direct impacts of people using and trampling ecosystem. These activities form a threat to coastal areas in Turkey, Cyprus, Tunisia, Morocco and Greece.

Dengjinyang (2002)<sup>14</sup> has discussed tourist activity of Zywiec country of southern Poland and selected three distinctive constituents of landscape viz. (1) land configuration, (2) water covered surface and (3) woodland scenery, in order to appraise the qualities of natural landscape which attract visitors. Some features like absolute height, relative height, mean flow of water and extent of forested area have been considered for the three distinctive constituents, which can be specified

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<sup>13</sup> Sewak Gauri (1996): "*Mass tourism in Mediterranean region, its impact assessment*", Unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Political Geography Division, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and New Delhi 110067.

<sup>14</sup> Dengjinyang et. al. (2002): "Evaluating Natural Attraction for Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 29 (2). PP. 422-43.

numerically. Those features have been used to calculate coefficients of attractiveness of constituents. Following this, the author has suggested various statistical operations, which are suitable for further development of tourism.

Pearce (1982)<sup>15</sup> has analyzed the situation of Western Pyrenees National Park, which covers an area of 50,000 ha on 70 km stretch of Spanish frontier. Peripheral zone of the park contains 30,000 inhabitants in 100 communes. Special management proposals had been devised to preserve natural and historical sites of interest within the park. It was predicted that agricultural employment will certainly contract in future and hence it is essential to build alternative forms of employment in selected centres in the peripheral zone.

Brown (1935)<sup>16</sup> has highlighted the growing demand of outdoor recreation in Netherland. The author has attempted to evaluate and develop methodology for ascertaining demand for potential areas for various kinds of recreational activities. It was because the growth of outdoor recreation in Netherlands was not matched by scientific research in the field of outdoor recreation.

Valenzuela (1985)<sup>17</sup> has talked about major centres of attraction in Mediterranean coast. Spain has become main focus of tourism along with its entire historical heritage. Tourists come here mainly to relax on sunny beaches and it has become coastal resort country and is known as a giant of world holiday trade. He has cited sunbath tourism in Mediterranean which is very popular among tourists.

Gonen (1981)<sup>18</sup> has observed that sea side resorts tend to spread along the narrow strip of Mediterranean coast. First such corridor along Mediterranean coast was in French Riviera. He has highlighted that new tourist settlements were on the basis of many attractions like sea-beaches, scenic landscape, historic sites, heroic battle-fields and non-industrial environment.

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<sup>15</sup> Pearce, D.G. (1982): "Preparing a National Tourist Geography", *Tourism Wildlife Park Conservation*, (ed), Singh T.V. Metropolitan, New Delhi, pp.136-149.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, B.M. (1935): "The Business of Recreation", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 25, No.3, pp. 467-475.

<sup>17</sup> Valenzuela, M. (1985): "Everything under the Sun", *Tourism Management*, Vol.22, pp. 637-648.

<sup>18</sup> Gonen, A. (1981), "Tourism and Coastal Settlement Processes in the Mediterranean Region." *Ekistics*, Vol.48, pp.45-47.

### (C) Studies on tourism in Africa

Tourism studied on Africa revolved around nature-based tourism. Viability of tourism in protected areas have been studied by Jafari (1982), Ferrario, F.F. (1982), Child (1992), and Stephenson (1993). Among these, Ferrario, F.F. (1982) has made use of both qualitative and quantitative technique to understand the impact of nature-based tourism. Fish (1992) has studied socio-economic impact of International tourism on host population. This study is important to understand to guest-host relationship in tourism environment.

Jafari (1982)<sup>19</sup> has analyzed the role of national parks in tourism for economic development. He has concluded that tourism provide economic rationale for establishing national parks. Answers to the questions of cost and benefit of such ventures were provided through detailed financial calculations. Circumstances show that national park can be of considerable benefit to a developing African country and that may be justified due to lack of any other practical alternative to achieve desired end.

Blake (1998)<sup>20</sup> has dealt with development of tourism in Algeria in 1966, when government decided to spend 65 million pounds over a period of seven years in an effort to attract foreign tourists and foreign exchange. The author has brought out the anomaly of luxury tourism in a country with low living standards and stressed the need to preserve tourism assets from over-exploitation.

Ferrario, F.F. (1982)<sup>21</sup> has assessed and identified tourist resources of South Africa. Assessment framework has used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to establish level of attraction, accessibility, presence of infrastructure and levels of environmental degradation. Attraction diversity of the region is high, although the resources were associated with poor accessibility, low level of tourism infrastructure

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<sup>19</sup> Jafari, J. (1982): "The tourism market Basket of Goods and services: The components and Nature of Tourism" *Studies in Tourism Wildlife Parks conversation*, (ed) Singh .T.V., et al., Metropolitan Book Company, New Delhi, pp 1-12.

<sup>20</sup> Blake, S. (1998): "Local economic development: a review and assessment of its current status in South Africa", *Urban Studies*, Vol.38, No.5, pp .1003-24.

<sup>21</sup> Ferrario, F.F. (1982): "Method Approach for Evaluating Tourist Resources: Case of South Africa", *Studies in Tourism Wildlife Parks conversation*, (ed) Singh .T.V., et al., Metropolitan Book Company, New Delhi, pp.114-135.

and moderate level of degradation. The study highlights some difficulties associated with establishing objective resource evaluation techniques for nature-based tourism.

Child (1992)<sup>22</sup> has considered the role of six different types of protected areas those have been established collectively as Parks and Wildlife Estates in Zimbabwe. The study covers benefits of Tourism to Zimbabwean protected areas. The author has argued that tourism can play a pivotal role, but must accept its dependence on the maintenance of its resource base and on the support of people on whose land the resources occur.

Fish (1992)<sup>23</sup> has analyzed the growth of international tourism as an important industry for Gambia. The study covers tourist expenditure, tourism generated employment and hotel ownership. Impact of tourism on the life style of Gambian people has been studied in detail. Fish observed that social and cultural concerns of Gambians are partially related to differences in lifestyle and income levels between the guests and the hosts. The author concludes the discussion with hints for proper training of local entrepreneurs of this industry.

Stephenson (1993)<sup>24</sup> has assessed impact of tourism on natural reserves in Madagascar. Expanding population and excessive deforestation of this unique island's ecosystem is causing the threat which has become one of its highest priority concerns. It is among the most popular reserves for foreign tourists and is experiencing loss of biodiversity at most frequented sites. Environmental degradation of the fourth largest island is the main concern of this study.

#### **(D) Studies on tourism in Oceania**

Studies on tourism in Oceania look at Adventure-tourism and Coastal tourism in Australia and Newzealand. Cockling (1990) and Hall (1991) have dealt with Adventure-tourism in Newzealand and Australia respectively. Both the studies looked

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<sup>22</sup>Graham Child (1992):“Tourism and the Parks and Wildlife Estate of Zimbabwe”, *Tourism Environment, Nature Culture Economy* (ed) Smith.L.et.al.Inter India Publications, New Delhi.pp 39-48.

<sup>23</sup> Fish, M. (1992): “A case study of international tourism in a small West African country: The Gambia” *Tourism Environment, Nature Culture Economy* (ed) Smith.L.et.al, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, pp 39-48.

<sup>24</sup> Stephenson (1993): “The impacts of Tourism on Nature Reserves in Madagascar”, *Environmental Conservation* .Vol.20, No.1, pp. 1-23.

at sustainability of tourism. Study by Hall (1991) is based on methodological aspects of geography of tourism which is important for tourism research.

Priskin (2001)<sup>25</sup> has assessed natural resources relevant to development of nature-based industry in the Central Coast region of Western Australia. A specific technique has been developed to quantify the natural resources for nature-based tourism on a regional scale. The study also covered tourist-host relationship. Impacts of tourism on local society, culture, environment and economy have been analyzed in detail. The author has shown that tourism can also benefit from conservation because the latter provides an array of resources and attractions that form basis of any type of nature based tourism.

Cockling (1990)<sup>26</sup> has studied the status of tourism in New Zealand. The study covered recreation activities of Southern Alps which includes trekking, skiing and sightseeing etc. Coastal area of New Zealand is chief attraction for beach tourists. According to study mass tourism is not beneficial for delicate coastal environment. Therefore, the study has suggested sustainable coastal tourism. Zonation based on tourist resources has been done looking at proper use of tourist resources.

Hall (1991)<sup>27</sup> has analyzed the efforts made to ensure that Australia continues to share the worldwide expansion of travel both in terms of foreign and domestic visitors. The author has devoted his work to methodological aspects of geographical research on tourism. Considering Great Dividing Range as study area, he has demonstrated the principles of functional approach to tourist movement. This approach allows tourism as a dynamic phenomenon not only in terms of the region of occurrence, but also in respect of areas receiving the impulses of tourism movement.

The above discussion reveals considerable literature on tourism contributed by geographers of developed countries. If these works are summarized, three major emerge: (a) studies of tourism as a general phenomenon, which examine geographical factors involved in development of tourism at micro, meso and macro levels (b) studies on development or potentials for tourism development of a specific country or region and (C) studies of specific branches or aspects of tourism.

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<sup>25</sup> Priskin, J. (2001): "Assessment of natural resources for nature-based tourism: the case of the Central Coast Region of Western Australia", *Tourism Management*, Vol.22, No.2, pp 637-648.

<sup>26</sup> Cocklin, C.(1990): "Resource assessment for recreation and tourism: a New Zealand example", *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Vol.19.No.5,pp 291-303.

<sup>27</sup> Hall, C.M. (1991): "*Expansion of tourism in Australia*", Longman, Melbourne. pp 67-89.



#### **(D) Studies on tourism in Asia**

Asia is land of biodiversity and richness in natural and cultural resources. Literature on tourism in Asia is mainly available for South-East Asian Countries and Nepal. Moti Ram (1996), Pigram (1983) and Smith (1990) have analysed impact of tourism in South-East Asian countries. Wells (1994) has dealt with people's movement to direct tourism activity to positive direction in Nepal. This piece of study suggests how regulation of tourist movement is essential in delicate bio-diversity areas like Annapurna National Park. Such studies are important to understand positive feedback mechanisms by human being towards nature.

Moti Ram (1996)<sup>28</sup> has analysed positive and negative impacts of tourism in countries of South-East Asia. Developments of handicraft and cottage industries have positive correlation with other aspects of development. On the other hand, spoiling the fragile environment, rapid growth of casinos and sex tourism is a matter of deep concern in some countries of South-East Asia.

Pigram (1983)<sup>29</sup>, has attempted to analyze trend of tourist flow to Bali in the early 1960's and change that occurred after development of Bali Beach Hotel and Ngurah Rai Airport in 1969. The author is optimistic about future prospects of tourism in Bali, though, infrastructure is poor in the peripheral zone.

Smith (1990)<sup>30</sup> has studied the impact of unregulated tourism in Indonesia. Tourism is fifth largest source of foreign exchange earner after oil, natural gas, timber and textile there. Informal development and uncontrolled growth of urbanization has resulted in coastal erosion, water-supply shortage, environmental degeneration,

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<sup>28</sup> Ram Moti (1996), "*Mass tourism and Impact assessment, a comparative study of Thailand and Singapore*", Unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Political Geography Division, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067

<sup>29</sup> Pigram, J. (1983): "*Outdoors Recreation and Research Management*", Buckingham, Kent, PP 123-125.

<sup>30</sup>Smith A.R. (1990): "Planning and Management for Coastal Eco-Tourism in Indonesia: A Regional Perspective", *Annals of Tourism Research* .Vol.33, No.12, pp. 43-47.

marine pollution, loss of natural ambience and traffic congestion etc. Indonesian government is promoting some integrated projects with total elements of infrastructure, recreational features and other facilities. The author has suggested regulated tourism in Indonesia.

Wells (1994)<sup>31</sup> has studied Annapurna conservation region in Nepal which has experienced deteriorating environmental conditions. It is geographically and culturally diverse area. Tourism has grown rapidly and 40,000 foreign trekkers now visit the area every year. There is active participation of King Mahendra Trust for nature conservation. This NGO has established multi-use alternatives like hunting, collection of forests products, using visitor needs for local development and delegation of management authority at the village level. Basic objective is to help inhabitants particularly farmers in maintaining control over their environment. High priority has been given to reduce negative environmental impact of trekkers and to increase local economic benefits from tourism. In fact, this study reveals people's urge to move tourism in right direction.

#### **(E) Studies on tourism in India**

Only a few scholars are working in the field of tourism in India. Literature on tourism in India is region-specific. Mandal (1998), Sattar (1997), Singh (1999), Sood (1991), Chander (1995), Negi (1992), Arora (1998) selected their area of study in Himalayan states of India. Whereas Dubey (1996), Laxminarayayan (1995), Raju (2004) based their studies in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kerala. Kaur (2001), Rajak (2001) and Ranga (2002) have worked at all-India level to study tourism. Among these works, studies by Sattar (1997), Singh (1999), Sood (1991) and Chander (1995) are important for understanding impact of tourism.

Ram Kumar Mandal (1998)<sup>32</sup> has discussed the impact of urbanization, migration as well as associated factors on tourism development in Jammu and

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<sup>31</sup> Wells, M.P. (1994): "Parks Tourism in Nepal: Reconciling the Social and Economic Opportunities with the Ecological and Cultural Threats", *Protected Area Economy and Policy*, UN Publication, pp. 12-17.

<sup>32</sup> Mandal Ram Kumar (1998) "Geography of Tourism and development, a case study of Western Himalaya.", unpublished M.Phil.dissertation submitted to Political Geography Division, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and New Delhi -110067.

Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The author has pointed out problems and prospects of tourism in highly fragile ecosystem of western Himalayas.

Sanjukta Sattar (1997)<sup>33</sup> has studied overall development of tourism in Sikkim in terms of demand and supply components. Spatio-temporal variations in tourism development have been analyzed through policies adopted by State Tourism Department of Sikkim through Plan effort.

Jaspreet Kaur's (2001)<sup>34</sup> study deals with tourism on the whole, meaning and concept of tourism, cultural aspects of tourism in India and Tunisia. Impact of various types of tourism, initiatives taken by governments of both the countries to boost tourism has also been looked at. She has suggested certain steps those India can take to develop its tourism sector on basis of Tunisia's experience.

Harjit Singh (1999)<sup>35</sup> has mentioned economy and socio-cultural changes in Ladakh and Lahaul-Spiti due to introduction of tourism. On economic front, new avenues of employment as tourist or trekking guides and change in traditional barter system have come into notice. Sudden rise in population, decline in polyandry, commercialization of local culture are more conspicuous on socio-cultural front. He has also cited the cases of pollution, contamination of water and soil in high altitude areas of Ladakh due to unregulated tourism.

Vibha Sood (1991)<sup>36</sup> has critically analysed the consequences of tourism development in highly fragile environment of Ladakh. Changes experienced by Ladakhi society in terms of socio-economic transformation are both positive as well as negative. New sense of awareness felt by local people about higher education and

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<sup>33</sup> Sattar S. (1997), "Development of Tourism Industry in Sikkim, A Spatio-temporal Analysis", *Geographical review of India*, Vol 62, No.7, pp. 317-334.

<sup>34</sup> Kaur Jaspreet (2001), "*Cultural Dimensions of Tourism in India and Tunisia, Case study of Goa and Tunisia*", unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Centre of Arabic and African Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067.

<sup>35</sup> Singh Harjit (1999), "Environment, *Development and Planning in the Hill Areas of India*", Research Report No 25, Research Report of visiting fellows to Queen Elizabeth House., Oxford University, pp 60-69.

<sup>36</sup> Sood, V (1991), "*Tourism and its impact on socio-economic set up of Ladakh*", unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067.

professional courses has been noted. On the other hand, loss of tradition and cultural due westernization and modernization, environment degradation are urgent matters need to be looked at.

Ramesh Chander (1995)<sup>37</sup> has investigated tourism geography of Kullu Valley of Himachal Pradesh. He has explored potentialities of tourism development in this pristine valley. Rich biodiversity, kaleidoscopic beauty of the Valley is a bonanza for any tourist. But the author feels that mass tourism is dangerous in the long-term. He has analysed potentials for tourism development in the region with survey methods which ramifies the consequences of tourism in the valley.

Satish Kumar Negi (1992)<sup>38</sup> has analysed prospects of international tourism in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spitti region of Himachal Pradesh. He has estimated the availability of tourism resources for international tourists in the region. The author argues that foreign tourism has great demand for trekking and skiing activities available in the area. At the same time he points out the lack of infrastructure facilities and of good tourist guides. He has given emphasis on protecting environment for attracting tourists.

Rajiv Dubey (1996)<sup>39</sup> has studied the relevance of tourism in regional economy of Madhya Pradesh. He has explained this through three developmental models. He has also expressed his concern regarding the responsibility of residents for further development of this industry in Madhya Pradesh.

Richa Arora (1998)<sup>40</sup> highlights the spatial arrangement of tourism activity in Himachal Pradesh. Her is a field based study looking at problems and prospects of

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<sup>37</sup> Chander R (1995), "*Geography of tourism; a case study of kullu valley*", Unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067.

<sup>38</sup> Negi, Satish Kumar (1992), "*Prospects of international tourism in Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh*", unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067.

<sup>39</sup> Dube, R. (1996): "*Development of Tourism in M.P.*", in S. Singh (ed) Profiles of Indian Tourism, APH Corporation, New Delhi, pp 34-45.

<sup>40</sup> Arora Richa (1998), "*Concentration and Dispersal of Tourism in H.P.*", unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067

tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Arora reveals that tourism is largely centered on Kullu and Lahaul and Spitti districts. She has looked at new places for tourism development. The need of proper infrastructure for tourism has been highlighted by her.

Laxminarayayan (1995)<sup>41</sup> provides detailed account of economic structure of Rajasthan. The study separately deals with various aspects of economy like power, industry and planning etc. It clearly shows role of tourism in Rajasthan, its prospects, problems and status in economy.

Bibek Kumar Rajak (2001)<sup>42</sup> has looked at growth of tourism industry in India economic context. The study shows India to be leading in tourism sector in South Asia but many of its potentialities still remain unexplored. Cost-benefit study of tourism has been attempted by the author. He has discussed contribution of tourism towards economic development of India.

Mukesh Ranga (2002)<sup>43</sup> has given an overview of tourism pockets in India. He has shown that tourism as an industry is still in nascent stage. Tourist activities are found only in a few areas. On the other hand, tourism in Sikkim Himalayas has not been exploited till now. Reason is lack of infrastructure, law and order problems and lack of publicity. Coastal tourism in Goa, Kovalam beach faces critical situation due to environmental degradation. Fluctuation in international tourist inflow is a serious concern.

Raju (2004)<sup>44</sup> has given an overview of ecotourism potential in Kerala. Eco-tourism destinations along with infrastructural facilities have been discussed in a general way in the article. Thenmala eco-tourism project of Kerala government has been shown as an example of successful tourism venture of the state. The author

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<sup>41</sup> Laxminarayanan, L. (1995): "*Economy of Rajasthan*", Chaitanya Book House, Jaipur, pp78-81.

<sup>42</sup> Rajak Bibek Kumar (2001): "*Tourism in India, its economic contexts and prospects*", Unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067.

<sup>43</sup> Ranga Mukesh (2002): "*Tourism Potential in India*", unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to the Centre for the Studies of Social System, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and New Delhi 110067.

<sup>44</sup> Raju, M. (2004): "Ecotourism in Kerala", *South Asian Journal of Tourism Studies*. Vol.12.No.3, pp 94-102.

expressed concern for high level of pollution on local beaches caused by uncontrolled discharge of chemical and biological effluents.

It is clear from above discussion that most of the studies on tourism have been related to Rajasthan, Himalayan Regions, Central India and Coastal States. The studies have been conducted with different perspectives like geography, economics, sociology, international relations and management aspect etc.

#### **(F) Studies on tourism in Assam**

Studies on tourism of Assam are not very old. This field started getting attention in the late 1960's. Statistical Cell of Department of Tourism, Government of Assam took initiative for field-based study of tourism in Majuli, Kamakhya and Kaziranga National Park. Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University also organised seminars and workshops in the emerging sector of tourism.

Bhattacharya (2005)<sup>45</sup> has given an account of tourism in Assam. He highlighted aspects of tourism beyond famous Kaziranga National Park and Kamakhya Temple. He has given explanatory notes regarding unexploited tourist potentials of Hill districts of the state. He cautions about fragility of environment, inaccessibility and poor infrastructure. His study is field-based looking at attraction components and associated infrastructural facilities. Based on two components he has calculated tourist potential index of different pockets of Karbi-Anglong and Noth Cachar Hill districts of Assam.

Abani Kumar Bhagawati (2004)<sup>46</sup> has looked at the potentialities of tourism development in river islands and wet lands of Assam. Assam has more than 50 big riverine islands and wetlands which are rich in terms of biodiversity. He especially focuses on Majuli Island, *Burhachapori* and *Deepor beel* situated at the outskirts of Guwahati. These areas attract migratory birds and have some rare animals. Foreign as well as domestic tourists get attracted to such places. But the author laments about the lack of entrepreneurship to promote tourism in these potential areas.

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<sup>45</sup> Bhattacharya P. (2005), "Potentiality of Tourism Development in Hill Districts of Assam" *Geographical Review of India*, Vol.67, No.2, pp.145- 161.

<sup>46</sup> Bhagabati A.K. (2004), "Biodiversity and Associated Problems in the Islands of Brahmaputra, Assam" *Geographical Review of India*, Vol 63, No.4, pp.331-343.

Anjan Bhuyan (2004)<sup>47</sup> has given an account of problems and prospects of rural tourism in Assam. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has undertaken the villages of Sualkuchi (In Kamrup district), Durgapur (Golagaht district), Lahul gaon (in Sibsagar) and Azara (In Kamrup district) for rural tourism development. In addition to these, Assam has number of interesting spots for rural tourism. Handicrafts of different communities such as *Mibi Galuk* of Mishing, *Dokhna* of Bodos, *Naga shawl* of Zemi Nagas, Colorful *Mekhela-chador* of Ravas and Tiwas can be good souvenirs for tourists. Festivals especially three *Bihus* of different Assamese communities, *Rajni gabra* (Dimasa), *Jeng Bihu* (Thangal Kachari), *Baisagu* (Bodos), *Aainitom* (Mishings), *Rongker* ( Karbis) are chief attraction of rural tourism. Bhuyan has argued for giving proper emphasis on rural tourism in Assam, which has till now been neglected.

Sujata Deori (2007)<sup>48</sup> has established at the prospects of eco-tourism in Assam. Assam can boost of successful venture of tourism with five National Parks and more than ten Wild-life Sanctuaries. She has described different ecotourism pockets of the state. Deori has shown the kind of increasing foreign tourism. The Author has given an account as to how local people in Kaziranga and Nameri National Parks are economically benefitting by providing services to tourists and selling handicrafts and souvenirs.

Pranabjyoti Nath (2005)<sup>49</sup> has discussed potential of tourism in Sonitpur District of Assam. Located in Central Assam, this district has better connectivity with other important tourist places in the state as well as other states of North-east India like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Moreover, Sonitpur has attractive tourist places like Nameri National Park and the historical town of Tezpur. Tezpur is just two hours journey from Kaziranga National Park. Tezpur as a tourist place is gaining popularity among tourists because of accessibility factor,

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<sup>47</sup> Bhuyan A. (2004), "*Developing 'Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship in Assam (its Problems and Prospects)*", *IASSI Quarterly*, Vol.23, No.1, 2004.pp.34-45.

<sup>48</sup> Deori Sujata (2007), "*Problems and prospects of eco-tourism In Assam*", paper presented in the international seminar in Darrang College, Assam 12-25, June 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Nath Pranabjyoti (2005), "*Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Sonitpur district of Assam*", Amiyo Kumar Das Institute of Social Science Research, Guwahati, Chenikuthi.pp.19-25.

Planning Commission Report on tourism in Assam (2002)<sup>50</sup> has given an exhaustive account of problems and prospects of tourism. The report summarizes the trends of tourist growth in Assam. The different forms of tourism and their spatial variation were covered under this study. Last chapter presents tourism policy of tourism policy of Government of Assam. The report also gives an account of causes of undergrowth of tourism in Assam.

Above discussion shows limited number of studies on tourism in Assam. These studies mainly deal with different components of Tourism. Recreational mapping is an important area of study. Studies on tourism in the State have not been conducted on regular basis. It is only in recent times the scholars from different fields have started looking at this important field.

### **I.3 Objectives of the study:**

Tourism and Environment have an intimate relationship. In fact, environment is the resource base of tourism, because it is environment of a particular place which attracts tourists. In this context, promotion of tourism can be a good way of generating revenue and employment and it can also help in conserving rich natural and cultural resources of Assam. But, also true that the rapid growth of tourism has produced both problems as well as opportunities for societies. Its impact has also been noted on economic, socio-cultural, environment and political spheres. Tourism is often opposed for its adverse impact on host society. In the light of these, objectives for the present study are;

1. To study natural environment in order to understand its role in making Assam a tourist destination.
2. To understand elements of social and cultural attractions which enhance uniqueness of Assam a tourist destination.
3. To study current status of tourism in Assam.
4. To analyse the nature of impact of tourism on society.
5. To study problems of tourism development in Assam and suggest possible measures towards minimizing these.

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<sup>50</sup> Planning Commission (2002), "Tourism in Assam: Status and prospects", Govt of India, New Delhi.



#### **I.4. Research questions:**

In the light of above framework and objectives, an attempt has been made to answer the following research questions:

- ❖ What is the natural and cultural environment in Assam? How does it influence tourism?
- ❖ What are the major tourist destinations? How do these are they attract tourists?
- ❖ How has tourism undergone change in Assam and nature of the change?
- ❖ Has tourism contributed towards raising socio-economic status of people?

#### **I.5. Database:**

Appropriate and upto date data is needed in order to answer above mentioned research questions. But procuring such data is not an easy task as far as secondary sources are concerned. Hence, the researcher had to base the study on data collected through fieldwork. Secondary data has also been used to show different aspects of tourism.

##### **1) Secondary sources:**

Data was collected from different government institutions and pamphlets brought out by some departments.

This information pertained to tourist inflow in Assam, their socio-economic background and available infrastructure. The sources were;

1. Department of Tourism, Government of Assam.
2. Department of Forest, Kaziranga National Park.
3. Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) Report.

##### **2) Primary Sources:-**

As mentioned above, data was also collected through field survey. Developed tourist area of Kaziranga National Park was selected to study impact of tourism on host population. Two types of questionnaires were canvassed to obtain used to obtain required information covering tourist profile as well as host profile and their perception of tourist- host interaction and impact of tourism.

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## **I.6. Methodology:**

To assess and meet the objectives, the study is mainly focused on the physical environment as recreation resource, inflow of tourists, their socio-economic background, response of the host community and available infrastructural facilities Assam. Two types of surveys were conducted;

### **1) Tourist Survey:**

Tourists were interviewed to get information on expenditure pattern, purpose of the visit, length of stay and their income and educational levels. The tourists were selected randomly. Interviews were conducted in December corresponding with peak tourist season. Altogether 130 tourists were interviewed conducted out of which 50 were foreign tourists and 80 domestic tourists.

### **2) Survey of local population:**

Survey was undertaken of local people from different backgrounds to analyse the community's perception of tourists and their impact on the society, culture and economy. People related to tourism activities of Kaziranga were interviewed. A sample size of the survey was 100 residents of different occupations and educational backgrounds was taken. They included 28 driver cum tourist guide, 12 workers in lodges, 18 lodge owners, 11 Mahauts, 11 labourers working in tourist related activities, 8 related to souvenir/handicraft sellers, 2 vegetable and fruit suppliers to hotels, 3 Travel agents and 7 security guards.

The present study has used both statistical and cartographic techniques. Different tourism parameter have been shown by computing percentages, averages and ratios etc.

After tabulation, the data was analyzed. The processed data has been represented through maps, bar diagrams and line graphs. Arc View GIS 3.2a has been used to construct map of the various population attributes in a GIS environment.

## **I.7. Organization of materials:**

Present study has been organized under five main chapters on various aspects of tourism. Introductory chapter deals with various concepts of tourism. It also includes introduction to study area, literature review, objectives, research questions, database and methodology.

Physical and Cultural environment plays decisive role in promoting tourist attractions of a place. An attempt has been made in Chapter two to explore Assam's unique endowments of nature and culture. It has been done under broad headings of natural and cultural background which has made it a potential area for development of tourism. Apart from landforms, drainage, climate, flora and fauna, interesting places of tourism like temples, picnic spots, festivals and handicrafts of Assam have been discussed in this chapter.

Third Chapter deals with the status of tourism in Assam. These has been seen in terms of tourism spots, facilities, tourist flow and stay pattern of tourists in different tourist destinations. This chapter also looks at on other aspects of tourism like transport, accommodation and economic significance of tourism. A study of types of available accommodation, its capacity and average occupancy of hotels have also been attempted.

An important aspect of the study of tourism is its impact on the destination. An attempt has been made to analyze both positive and negative impacts of tourism in Kaziranga National Park. Fourth Chapter deals with the impact of tourism on society, culture and economy of above-mentioned area.

Fifth chapter summarizes the main findings of the study and puts forward suggestions to improve the condition of tourism in the state.

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## Chapter II

### PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Assam has variety of resources. It has unique natural beauty, different species of wild animals, religious places, historical sites and friendly hospitable people. It is rightly called tourist paradise. Its dense forest contains numerous varieties of flora and fauna. Assam has melodious folk music and rich cuisine of delicious dishes. Items of handloom and handicrafts attract people from different parts of the world.

Assam is located between 24.3°N to 28° N latitude and from 89.5°E to 96.1° E longitude. Situated just below eastern Himalayas, it is surrounded by other Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Nagaland and Manipur in the east and south-east; Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya in the south and south-west and West Bengal in the west. Assam and its commercial capital Guwahati form gateway to north-eastern states, together called the 'seven sisters'. These states are connected with rest of India via Assam's border with West Bengal through a narrow submontane strip called the "Chicken's Neck". Assam also shares international border with Bhutan and Bangladesh. It has a total geographical area of 78,438 sq.km representing 2.39 percent land of India and a population of 26.6 million (2001) accounting for 2.59 percent of the total population of the country. The state comprises twenty three administrative districts, out of which two lie in hilly area.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Assam has suitable natural setting for tourism. Role of natural environment acquires significance in such areas which are blessed with diverse landscape. The study of the following aspects of natural environment of Assam, therefore, has great significance in order to comprehend it as one of the major tourist destinations of India;

- (A) Physiography to understand terrain and its role on demarcating enchanting tourist landscape.
- (B) Drainage and water bodies to understand their contribution towards providing scenic landscape and tourism related activities.

- (C) Climate as an important determinant of tourism activities.
- (D) Vegetation and animal life as tourism resource of the region.

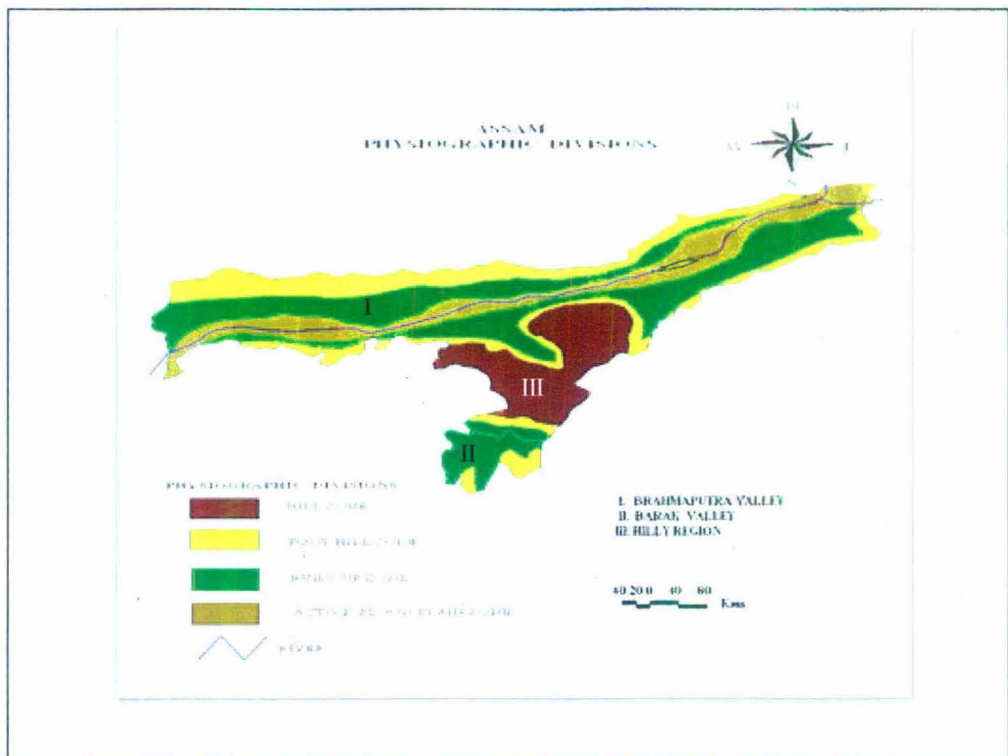
The above mentioned aspects are, of course, interrelated and affect each other. It is essential to understand their interrelationship to have an idea of natural environment in its totality.

## II.1 PHYSIOGRAPHY

Physiography is vital part of the personality of any area. Physiographically, Assam can be divided into three major divisions, viz. (I) Brahmaputra valley, (II) Barak valley (III) Hilly region consisting of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills.<sup>1</sup> (Fig II.1)

Figure II.1

### PHYSIOGRAPHIC DIVISION OF ASSAM



<sup>1</sup> Taher.M. (2001), "Physical background", *Geography of Assam* (ed) Bhagabati A.K, Bora A.K., Kar B.K., Rajesh publication .New Delhi. Pp 18-35.



## **(I) Brahmaputra Valley**

It is the most important physiographic unit of Assam. It is a narrow valley with an east-west extension of about 720 Km. The valley is girdled by Eastern Himalayas on the north and east, and Naga Hills, Karbi hills and Meghalaya Plateau on the south. It is open in west merging with the plains of West Bengal and Bangladesh. Brahmaputra valley covers about 72 percent of the total area of Assam. This plain consists of both new and old alluvium deposited by Brahmaputra river and its numerous tributaries. It is dotted with beels (swamps) and there are isolated hillocks on both banks of Brahmaputra in its central and lower parts. These isolated hillocks are, in fact, the outliers of Meghalaya Plateau, made of largely hard crystalline rocks of Pre-Cambrian origin. The valley as a whole gently slopes from north-east to south-west with an average gradient of 13 cm per km. In its upper reach, near Dibrugarh, the gradient is about 17 cm per km while the same is about 10 cm per km near Guwahati and diminishes further through rest of the western part. Being highly braided, the river provides favourable conditions for the formation of innumerable sandbars and islands, locally called chars. Its north bank tributaries originate from the Arunachal Himalayas. Two of these have trans-Himalayan origin viz, Subansiri and Manas. Most of these tributaries have wide catchments. Tributaries originating in Meghalaya Plateau, North Cachar and Karbi Hills with gentle gradient have built the south bank plain. The Brahmaputra Plain can be divided from north to south into five zones running parallel to the river Brahmaputra

### **(a) Northern Foothill Zone**

This zone comprises sub-Himalayan ranges characterized by the presence of alluvial fans at piedmont zone of the Himalayas. It is a narrow zone with elevation ranging between 150-600m and is relatively wider on western part and tapers eastward in Sonitpur and Lakhimpur districts. The highlands are characterized by southerly dipping piedmont plains formed as a result of coalesce of alluvial cones. It is a zone of unassorted detritus, where a major portion of stream water percolates down for a few kilometres downstream. The southern part of this zone is plain with tall grasses and damp soil. This area also has dense forest which provides ideal site for Wild life Sanctuaries and National Parks. As the zone is sparsely populated and endowed with dense forest and

various types of animals, it provides ample opportunities for nature and adventure tourism. Nameri and Manas National Parks, Sonai-Rupa Wildlife Sanctuary and a number of potential picnic and scenic spots are located along this zone.

#### **(b) Middle Plain**

It lies between northern foothill zone in the north and floodplain zone in the south. Like the foothill zone, it is wide in western side and comparatively high. High population density and relatively developed communication network characterize this area.

#### **(c) Middle Active Floodplain**

This zone is made up of recent alluvial sediments deposited by Brahmaputra river and its tributaries from surrounding highlands. Middle Active Floodplain zone lies adjacent to middle plain in the south running along the Brahmaputra river and is broken by presence of hillocks and levees. Floodplain zone is more extensive to the east of Karbi Plateau towards eastern side and beyond Guwahati in western side. Occurrence of seasonal flood is a common phenomenon in this zone. Swamp and grass vegetation of this belt provides an ideal habitat for a number of rare species of animals like Rhinoceros and Water buffalo as well as numerous migratory and indigenous water birds. This zone has as many as nine National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. These include Chakrasila Wildlife Sanctuary (Dhubri district), Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary (Marigaon district), Orang National Park (Darrang district), Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary (Nagaon district), Burha Chapari Wildlife Sanctuary (Sonitpur district), Kaziranga National Park (Nagaon and Golaghat districts), Bardaibam-Bilmukh bird Sanctuary (Lakhimpur and Dhemaji district), Pani-Dihing bird Sanctuary (Sibsagar district) and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts). The largest river island of the world known as Majuli constitutes a major part of active floodplain zone in Jorhat district.

#### **(d) South Bank Plain**

It is narrow with on an average width of about 5km Kamrup, Goalpara and Dhubri districts due to jutting out of Meghalaya Plateau towards the south bank of

Brahmaputra. The plain is quite extensive from Golaghat district eastward and in Nagaon district of Central Assam. Apart from dense settlements with a fairly well developed transport and communication network, the zone is characterized by the presence of a large number of tea gardens in its eastern half. This zone is quite important from tourism point of view because of scenic beauty, pollution free environment and colourful cultural life of tea plantation community.

#### **(e) Southern Foothill Zone**

This comparatively narrow zone is made up of high ground and isolated hillocks projected from adjoining hills. These high grounds are composed of lateritic soils in eastern and south-eastern part along Tirap district and Naga Hills. Erosional plains, monadnocks, and swampy areas along northern Meghalaya-Karbi foothills characterize western part of the foothill zone. The belt is quite important for outdoor recreation like trekking, jungle exploration and picnic from tourism point of view. The zone has a number of picnic as well as scenic spots such as Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary and hot spring (Karbi Anglong district), Chapanala, Akashiganga and Urdhaganga (Nagaon district) and Chandubi and Kulsi (Kamrup district).

#### **(II) Barak Valley**

This valley is enclosed by hill ranges on three sides, Meghalaya Plateau and Barail range of North Cachar Hills district on the north, Manipur hills on the east and Mizo hills on the south. This is plain area and is essentially a product of erosional and depositional activities of Barak river and its tributaries. It has an average east-west length of about 100km and a north-south width of about 70 km. It covers total area of 6,962 sq Km accounting for about 9 percent of geographical area of Assam. Gradient of this plain is also very low and it supports a system of sluggish streams and swamps locally known as Jheels. Northern, eastern and southern peripheral zones of the plain are dotted with low hillocks, generally used for tea cultivation. The plain supports one of the ancient capitals of Kachari kingdom called Khaspur. Relicts of palaces of that time are still present. Bhuban hill cave temple is another potential spot of attraction for tourism development. Besides, Silchar, the focal point of administration and business of the

Barak valley, acts as an important transit point of people and materials moving towards and from adjoining states of Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur.

### **(III) Hilly Region**

The region comprising Karbi Hills and North-Cachar Hills covers an area of 15,222 sq km, which is 19 percent of the total geographical area of Assam. Geologically Karbi Hills are projected eastern part of Meghalaya Plateau. Age-old erosion has highly denuded Karbi Hills and it is detached from the main Plateau by active head-ward erosion of Kapili and Dhansiri rivers. Slope of hilly area rises towards north and east. Its western part descends gently towards Brahmaputra plain. The hill ranges have an average height of 600m. In central part, however, occasionally some isolated peak rises to height of above 1200 metres. North Cachar hills lying to south of Karbi hills are of tertiary origin and have a comparatively more rugged topography. Barail Range lies in this area and separates Barak basin from Brahmaputra basin. It is a relatively high range with some of its peaks rising up to 1500 meters above mean sea level. Hilly region has ample scope for tourism, especially for those tourists who prefer wilderness and solitude. Apart from this, the region has peace-loving tribal people like Hmar, Kuki, Dimasa-Kachari, Zemi-Naga, Mizo and Paite etc. Rich cultures of these communities are source of tourist attraction. Haflong, Jatinga, Mahur, Maibong, Diphu, Panimur and Umarangso are some of potential tourist destinations. These spots have tourist attractions like historical monuments and scenic beauty (Maibong), scope for water sports and angling (Umrangso and Panimur), bird watching (Jatinga) and tribal life and culture (Diphu and Haflong). Besides, almost all these spots have ample scope of trekking, Jungle exploration, cycling, water sports, ballooning and parasailing. Lumding-Badarpur railway track passes through as many as 40 tunnels in this hilly region. These can attract both domestic and foreign tourists.

## **II.2. DRAINAGE AND WATERBODIES**

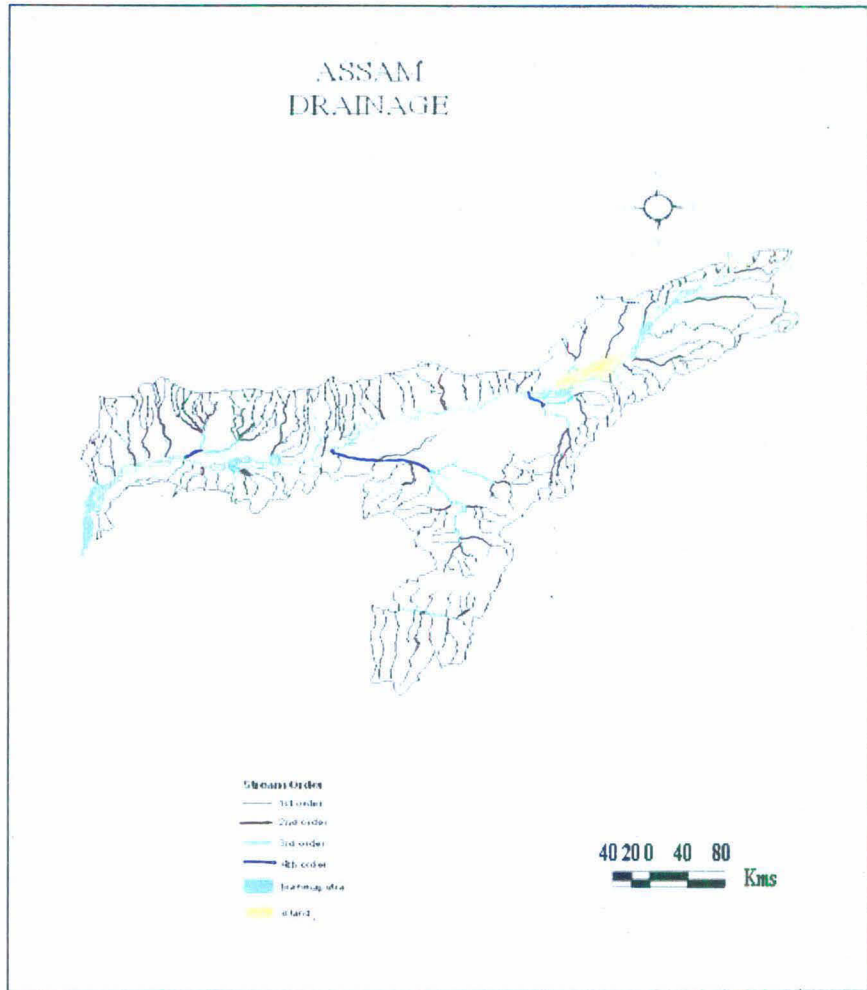
By virtue of its unique geographical location amidst the northern, eastern and southern hills and highlands and humid tropical monsoon climate, Assam is a land of innumerable rivers and their tributaries. Drainage consists of two major river systems

with numerous tributaries. Along with these, it has beels (wetlands), ox-bow lakes and swampy areas. Numerous criss-crossing tributaries along with major water bodies provide beautiful picturesque landscape. Brahmaputra is the master rivers of Assam. It drains a unique physical setting of diverse environments, such as cold dry plateau of Tibet, steep rain-drenched slopes of Himalayas, and alluvial plain of Assam. Brahmaputra River Originates from Chemayung-dung glacier on southern slope of Kailash range in Tibet at an altitude of 5150 metre. This river traverses a total distance of 2,906 km through Tibetan Plateau, Himalayan Mountains and hills and plains. Brahmaputra rolls down the plains of Assam east to west for a distance of 640 km up to Bangladesh border. This mighty river with a well-knit network of tributaries drains an area of 56,480 sq. km, accounting for 72 percent of its total geographical area of Assam.

Barak is the second largest river in the North East India as well as in Assam. The river originates in Ukhrul district of Manipur and bisects Cachar plains. It finally forms Meghna river in Bangladesh. Catchment of Barak river includes eastern part of Tripura, northern part of Mizoram, western part of Manipur, south-western part of Nagaland and southern part of Assam. Important tributaries of Barak namely Dholeswari, Rukni and Sonai drain the northern part of Mizoram. Langai is another important tributary of Barak flowing from north-eastern part of Tripura.

Figure II.2

**DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN ASSAM**



Hierarchy of stream orders (Fig.II.2) is important in assessing the spatial aspects of hydrological processes. The Figure shows a large number of 1<sup>st</sup> order streams which is typical feature of Himalayan streams. Major tributaries attain second order or Third order. Highest hierarchy of stream here is fourth order. The stream ordering gives a rough idea about the volume of water in each stream.

Brahmaputra and the Barak rivers have about 150 main tributaries. Some of the important north bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra are Subasiri, Jia Bharali, Jia

Dhansiri, Pagladia, Manas and Sonkosh. Lohit, Dibang, Burhi Dihing, Dhansiri, Kopili, Kulsi, Dudhnai and Krishnai are some prominent south bank tributaries of Brahmaputra. As all the north bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra originate from Eastern Himalayas, so melting snow and monsoon rain-water together cause devastating floods during summer in many areas. On the other hand, though south bank tributaries are comparatively less in number and smaller in size and length than the northern ones, they originate in areas of heavy rainfall of Meghalaya Plateau and Naga hills and cause floods in south bank plain during summer months.

The riverine tracts of Brahmaputra and Barak valleys provide favourable ecological conditions for growth and development of *beels* (wetlands), swamps and numerous islands. There are more than 3000 *beels* and swamps in Assam. Islands of Brahmaputra, especially spacious and permanent ones, favour luxuriant growth of a variety of grasses, bushes, trees and a wide variety of aquatic plants and animals which collectively form habitats for not only resident birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians but also attract a large number of migratory birds. Assam also has many tanks, at times called sagars. These were dug by under the patronage of Ahom and Koch Kings. These are mostly found in Sibsagar, Darrang and Sonitpur districts. Such aquatic environment can provide ample opportunities for water borne recreation, especially in winter months. Besides, rivers and the lakes contribute to scenic beauty of landscape and support varieties of aquatic flora and fauna, which can attract both domestic and foreign tourists.

### **II.3. CLIMATE**

Climate of a destination influences development of tourism. Tourist like to visit place with suitable climate. Their preferences vary according to type and time of travel. They often prefer to warm regions during winter where they can get plenty of sunshine. They like to rush to cool place during summer. However, when the travel is undertaken for a specific purpose other than just pleasure, they generally do not mind undergoing certain degree of inconvenience imposed due to relatively less favourable climatic conditions. Therefore, it is important to look into the climatic elements of Assam and its contribution to tourism activity.

Assam has a humid climate with pleasant and long winter and brief summer. It experiences heavy rainfall of around 2400mm between March and September. Humidity is very high with average of 83 percent in the summer months. The temperatures are generally mild, never extreme during any season. Summer is from April to June followed by monsoon from July to September. November to February are winter months. Best season to visit Assam is October to April covering both winter and spring. The state shows marked spatial variations in from climatic conditions primarily because of its location and physiography. Weather of Brahmaputra and Barak valleys gets affected by orographic factors. The climate of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys is normally characterized by orographic lows. Plains become hot during summer but the air over the hills and mountains remains relatively cool. Thus, local low pressure systems develop over the valleys and contribute towards making climate humid sub-tropical type which is slightly different from Koppen's 'Cwg' type, i.e. the humid meso-thermal Gangetic type.<sup>2</sup>

#### **(a) Rainfall**

Assam usually comes under the influence of monsoon. It receives large amount of rainfall from Bay of Bengal branch of south-western monsoon during June, July and August. More than 60 percent of rainfall is occurs during these months. During Pre-monsoon months (April & May) and Post-monsoon months (September & October) get small quantity of rainfall due to north-western and retreating monsoon respectively. Rainfall is scanty during the winter months from November to February.

Spatial variations in climatic elements are important aspect in Assam. However, the variations are not significant in case of temperature and humidity, unlike precipitation and number of rainy days. Rainy days are highest in eastern part situated in foothills of Aka, Dofla, Mishmi and Naga and Patkai Hills. Cachar area in the south also experienced higher rainfall due to location at foot of Barail Hill and Mizo hills. Number of rainy days are less in central Assam and western Assam

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<sup>2</sup> State of Environment Report (2004) "Administrative and Ecological Set Up", Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, Guwahati. pp 1-15.



The heaviest precipitation is received in the districts of Cachar and North Lakhimpur. Variations in rainfall within the state are due to the location of districts between Shillong Plateau and Eastern Himalayas. Rainfall is more or less evenly distributed in the plains of Assam barring a part of Karbi Anglong where a formation of “rain shadow” area is evident. Data on monthly distribution of rainfall from eight representative meteorological stations across the state is shown in table II.1 and figure II.3.

**TABLE II.1. MONTHLY RAINFALL (in cm)**

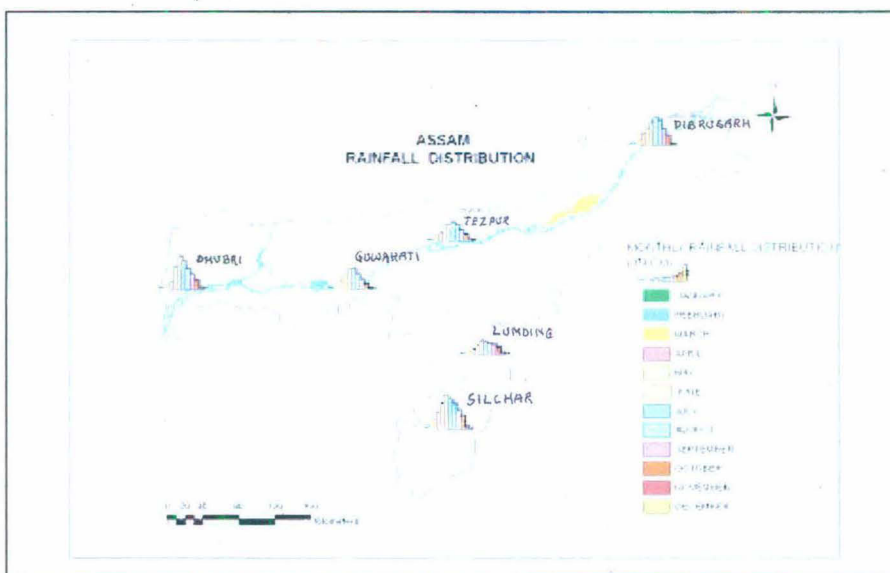
Stations	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dhubri	9.4	52.9	127.0	396.0	580.1	504.7	363.0	260.3	261.	148	19.7	9.7
Guwahati	11.4	12.8	57.0	142.0	248.0	350.0	353.0	269.0	166	79.2	19.4	5.1
Tezpur	12.4	12.5	53.6	137.1	280.4	305.0	342.8	298.2	181	112	23.4	8.6
Dibrugarh	34.0	37.0	103.0	209.0	305.0	440.0	516.0	450.0	298	158	25.8	16.8
N.Lakhimpur	36.0	71.0	65.0	203.0	323.0	507.0	501.0	338.0	325	207	17	20
Lumding	7.7	14.0	41.4	80.0	140.6	233.5	207.0	185.8	170	114	28.4	8.6
Silchar	16.3	49.8	140.0	290.0	469.7	611.9	547.0	454.6	347	234	46.9	8.8
Assam	23.0	40.0	56.0	203.0	277.0	435.0	417.0	352.0	271	144	29	14

Source: - Statistical Abstract, Directorate of Economic & Statistics, Assam, 2004

It is apparent from table II.1 and figure II.3 that maximum rainfall occurs in the months of June and July followed by August, September and October. The remaining months receive less amount of rainfall. July is the month with highest rainfall. However, the amount of rainfall is not equal in all stations. Silchar, North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh recorded highest rainfall during this month. Silchar experienced highest rainfall due to its location at the foot of Barail Hill and Mizo Hills. Silchar and North Lakhimpur recorded high rainfall due to its location at the foot of Arunachal Himalayas. Lowest rainfall is observed in Lumding due its location in the leeseide of Karbi Anglong hills.

Fig II.3

### MONTHLY RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION



As the whole range of tourist resources of the state is meant for out-door recreation, hence climatic elements have direct control on exploitation of it. Monsoon season (June to September) is characterized by heavy downpours, associated with high temperature, high relative humidity and sometimes flooding. So there is no tourist activity during this period. Majority of them prefer to come here in winter months of November, December, January and February which characterized by very scanty rainfall with low temperature. These four months are called bracing climate for tourist activity in Assam. During that period activities of Adventure tourism like Boat racing, River rafting, Para-sailing, Angling, Trekking, Rock climbing are taking place in different tourist destination.

#### (b) Temperature

The climate of Assam is neither too cold in winter nor too hot in summer. In general, it is of sub-tropical type. The variation in mean temperature during twelve months for eight stations is shown in Table II.2 and figure II.4.

**Table II.2:- Mean monthly temperature (in °c) of Assam.**

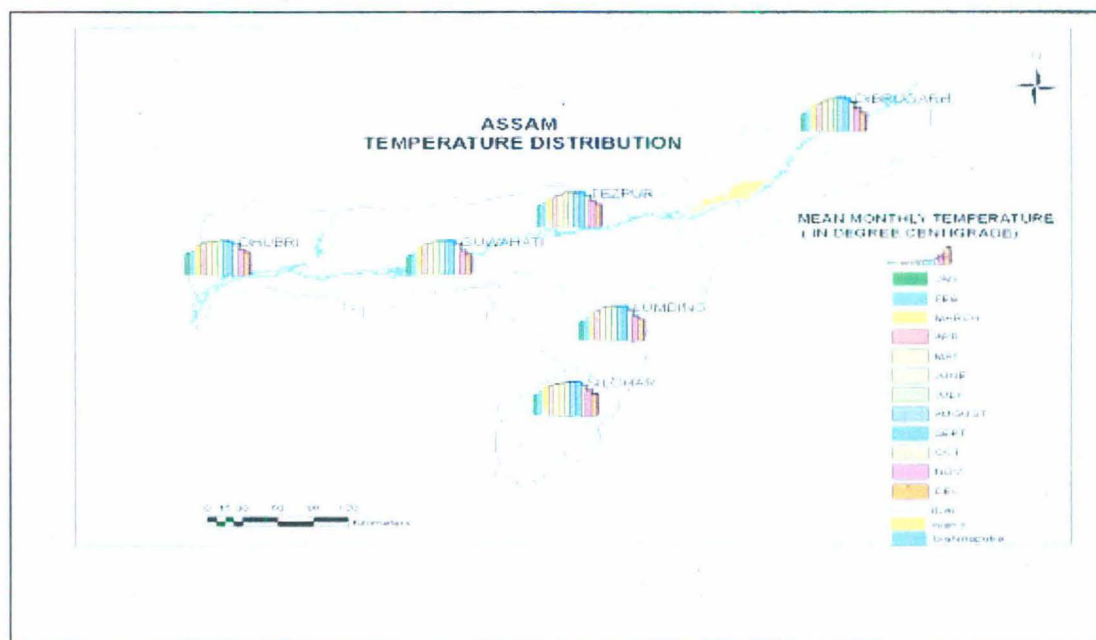
Stations	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dhubri	17.3	20.3	24.4	26.1	27.1	27.6	28.2	28.2	27.8	26.6	22.6	18.7
Guwahati	17.1	19.5	22.9	25.7	27.6	27.5	27.5	28.5	28.6	28.0	22.1	17.7
Tezpur	17.5	20.4	24.1	26.4	27.2	28.4	28.5	28.8	27.8	26.5	23.5	19.6
Dibrugarh	16.1	17.7	21.5	23.0	25.3	27.3	27.8	28.1	27.1	25.0	20.0	16.3
N.Lakhimpur	15.9	17.8	21.2	23.4	25.4	27.2	27.5	27.8	26.9	25.2	21.2	16.7
Jorhat	16.3	18.3	22.1	24.0	26.1	28.1	28.6	28.5	27.7	25.7	21.6	17.1
Lumding	16.3	19.2	23.3	26.4	27.4	28.1	28.4	28.8	28.2	26.2	22.3	17.3
Silchar	17.1	19.9	23.5	24.7	24.7	27.2	26.6	27.6	27.2	26.9	21.1	18.2
Assam	16.7	19.1	22.8	24.9	26.5	27.7	28.9	28.2	27.6	26.0	21.9	17.7

Source: - Statistical Abstract, Directorate of Economic & Statistics, Assam, 2004.

Table II.2 and figure II.4. shows gradual rise of mean monthly temperature from January to August and then starts declining towards December. The fall of the temperature is rather quicker than its rise, as steep fall of mean monthly temperature is evident in the month of November. The months of July and August have highest temperature followed by June, September, October and April. December, January and February have shown cold temperature. These months are known for tourism activity. Spatial variability in mean monthly temperature distribution is less in all the stations. However, Lumding, Jorhat, Dhubri and Tezpur shows slight high temperature than other stations during hot months of June, July, August, September and October. North Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Lumding shows relatively cold temperature than other stations during the coldest month in January. Location of North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh near foot of Arunachal Himalaya and that of Lumding at the foot of Barail Hill may be the explanation for this.

Figure II .4

### MONTHLY TEMPERATURE DISTRIBUTION



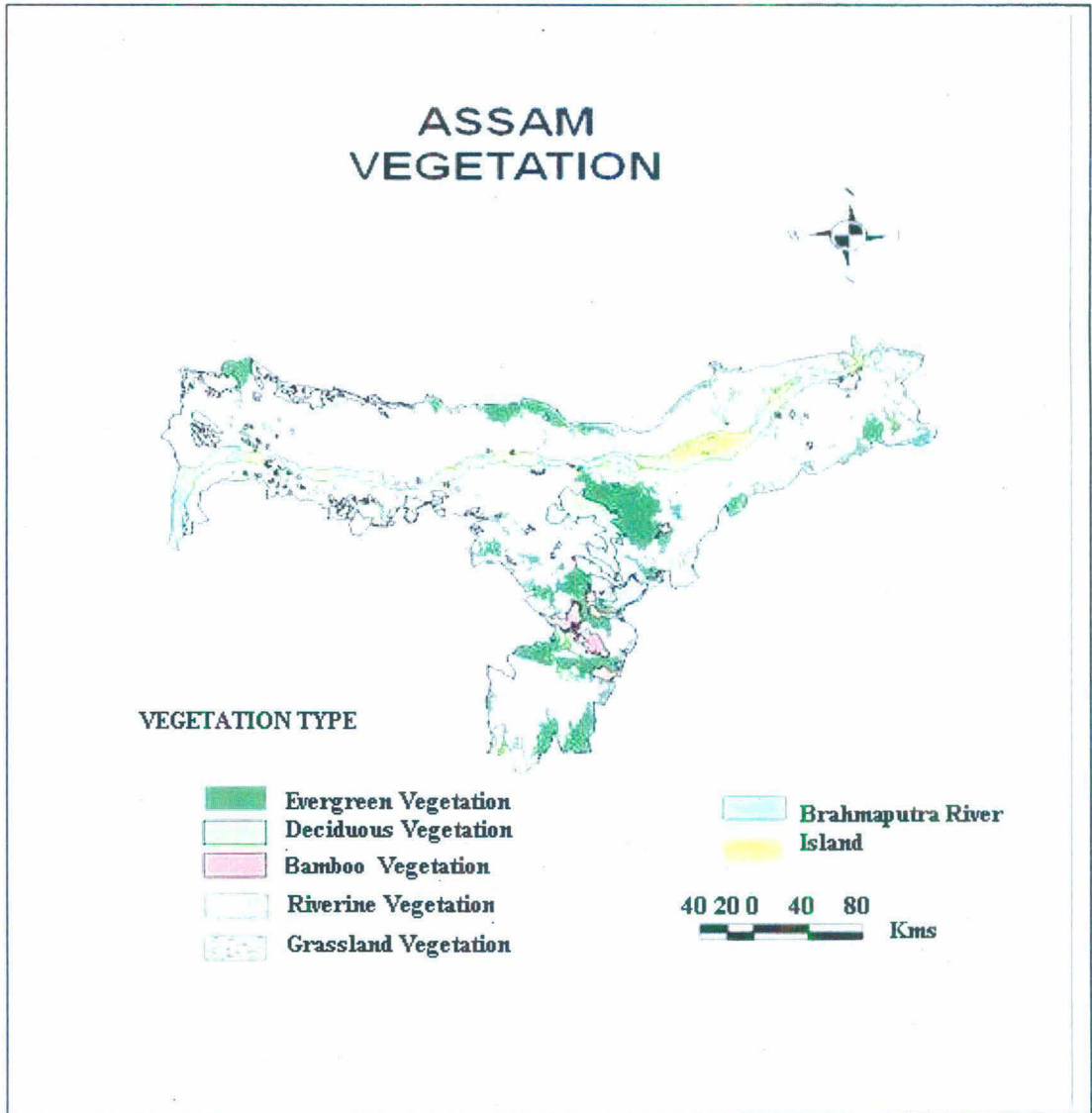
## II.4. VEGETATION

The vegetation of Assam is predominantly tropical, except in Hamren sub-division of Karbi-Anglong and parts Barail ranges along Kau Kaina and Thanjang Klang in North Cachar Hills, where sub-tropical vegetation can also be found. Based on the floristic composition the vegetation types of the state may be broadly classified into: (a) Tropical evergreen (b) Tropical semi-evergreen forest, (c) Sub Tropical Moist Evergreen forest (d) Mixed deciduous forest, (e) Riverine forest, (f) Grasslands and Savannah type of forest, (g) bamboo, cane and miscellaneous forest (Fig.II.5).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Patgiri S.R. "Vegetation types of Assam", *Envis Newsletter*, Guwahati, April-June, 2006, Vol.7 (3) pp 4-5.

Figure II.5

VEGETATION TYPES OF ASSAM



### **( a) Tropical Evergreen Vegetation**

The moist evergreen vegetation are prevalent in the districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and narrow belt along the foot hills of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji in Upper Assam, lower hill ranges of Barail of North Cachar hills, Sonai Reserve Forest (R.F.) in Cachar district, Longai R.F. and Dohalia R.F. of Karimganj district. There is luxuriant growth of floristic elements in these forests due to heavy rainfall, temperature between 7°C-30°C, relative humidity of about 80-90 percent and high fertile soil in humus. The giant lofty tree *Dipterocarpus retusus*, the tallest tree of Assam, which attains height of nearly 45m with a girth of about 4 to 6m found in these forests.

### **(b) Tropical Semi-Evergreen Vegetation**

The semi-evergreen vegetation in Assam are mostly confined along the North and South Banks of the river Brahmaputra, Bura-pahar and the projection of Karbi-Anglong towards Brahmaputra, Barail range of N.C.Hills, Hills and Hillocks of Cachar, Barak reserves in Cachar District, inner-line reserve forests in both Hailakandi and Cachar Districts. These vegetation are generally dominated by medium or short trees with lesser number of large trees. Luxuriant growth of several epiphytic plants mainly orchids and ferns occupies these semi-evergreen vegetation.

### **(c) Sub Tropical Moist Evergreen Vegetation**

This vegetation is confined only to places where elevation rises above 900 m and mainly found in Hamren subdivision around Dambusko (1363m) and Singhashan (1736m) in Karbi-Anglong and Kaukania (1736m) and Tunjang Klang (1861-1866 m) in North Cachar Hills districts. Ascending upwards from 900m to 1700m the vegetation is predominated by broad leaf plants. The tree trunks are often covered with epiphytic ferns species primarily of the Lycopodiaceae, Hymenophyllaceae and Polypodiaceae along

with orchids belonging to genera like *Bulbophyllum*, *Coeloyne*, *Dendrodoium*. Higher up beyond 1700m the broad leaf vegetation is replaced by pure stand of Pine forests.

#### **(d) Mixed Deciduous Vegetation**

The actual deciduous vegetation occurs mainly in the lower Brahmaputra valley. The most important hardwood tree of this forest is Sal (*Shorea robusta*). The Sal vegetation are particularly found in the districts of Nagaon, Morigaon, alluvial plains of south and north Kamrup, parts of Nalbari, Barpeta districts. It is also found in well drained low hills and alluvial plains of Kokrajhar, Bhabar and Terai regions of Kokrajhar and Goalpara districts, hill slopes of Garo and Khasi Hills in south Kamrup, lower altitudes of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar districts. Other commercially valuable species like Gamari (*Gmelina arborea*), Sirish (*Mimosa sirisia*) are found along with other economically less valuable species, especially in the two hill districts of Assam.

#### **(e) Riverine Vegetation**

The plants that grow on the river banks and islands are known as riverine or riparian vegetation. The riparian vegetation in Assam is mostly tall grass. The grasslands of Dhemaji, Majuli, Kaziranga, Pabitora, Orang, Bhurbandha, etc. on the banks of the Brahmaputra belong to this category. Along with grasses these areas also contain simul, khoir, karoi, kadam and local plum (*zyzyphus*) trees. Among the grasses of the wet tracts, *Hemarthria pratense (arali)* is of great importance. This is one of the best fodders for cattle and Great Indian one-horned Rhinoceros.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bhagabati A.K. (2003):“Biodiversity and Associated Problems in the islands of Brahmaputra, Assam”, *Geographical Review of India*, Vol. 63, No.4, pp 34-35.

#### **(f) Grasslands and Savannah type of Vegetation**

Grasslands and Savannahs are grass dominated biomes and are the major components of natural vegetation in Assam. These grasslands and savannahs are most conspicuous in Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Orang National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve and most of the Wildlife Sanctuaries of Assam like Sonai-Rupai, Laokhowa, Pobitora, Barnadi, Burhachapari etc. Vegetation studies have revealed that there two different types of Grasslands in Assam. (1) Grasslands in recent alluvium deposits of low lying areas. (2) Grasslands in old alluvium deposits of highland. Several species of grasses are found common in these two types of grasslands, but the grass growing on recent alluvium deposits attains a height of nearly 5m with different associated plants.

#### **(g) Bamboo and Cane Vegetation**

Bamboo brakes are mainly found along the edges of Reserve forests and residential compounds, often cultivated by villagers, with scattered distribution of a few species. Pure bamboo forests are, however, found in the two hill districts and mostly along the foot hills of Barail range near Jatinga of North Cachar.Hills and in hilly slopes of Karbi Anglong district. Altogether 38 species of bamboos distributed in 9 genera have been recorded in the state. Though bamboo is found in both the valleys, as also in the hilly areas, cane is confined mainly to swampy areas.

### **II.5 ANIMAL LIFE**

The wetlands, woodlands, grasslands and the river front including the newly emerging sandbars formed suitable habitat for faunal resources in Assam. About 193 species of mammals and more than 958 species and subspecies of birds and about 195 species of reptiles are so far reported from Assam. Wildlife of Assam has immense zoological importance having an admixture of both Indian and Malayan species some of which are



completely extinct in other areas and are presently found only the territorial limit of the state. Assam has a rich variety of wildlife fauna mostly restricted in the reserve forest areas. There are five National Parks and eighteen wildlife sanctuaries, two tiger reserves, two biosphere reserves, two world heritage site and five elephant reserves in the state (table II.3)

Table II.3. Protected Areas in Assam

SL	.Name of the National Park /Wildlife Sanctuaries	District	Area in sq.km
<b>A.</b>	<b>National Park:</b>		
1.	Kaziranga National Park *	Golaghat,Nagaon &Karbi.Anglong	849.79
2.	Manas National Park * and **	Barpeta &Bongaigaon	500.00
3.	Nameri National Park	Sonitpur	212.39
4.	Orang National Park	Darrang &Sonitpur	78.80
5.	Dibru Saikhowa National Park **	Dibrugarh &Tinsukia	344.00
<b>B.</b>	<b>Wild Life Sanctuaries :</b>		
1.	Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary	Jorhat	20.98
2.	Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary	Karbi Anglong	6.05
3.	Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary	Nagaon	70.10
4.	Burachapari Wildlife Sanctuary	Sonitpur	44.06
5.	Chakrasila Wildlife Sanctuary	Dhubri	45.57
6.	Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary	Darrang	26.21
7.	Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary	Sonitpur	191.65
8.	Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary	Morigaon	38.83
9.	Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary (Ramsar Site)	Kamrup	4.14
10.	Pani-Dihing Wildlife Sanctuary	Sibsagar	33.93
11.	Bordoibum Beelmukh Wildlife Sanctuary	Dhemaji &Lakhimpur	11.24
12.	Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary	Tinsukia	7.21
13.	Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary	Karbi Anglong	37.00
14.	Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary	Karbi Anglong	96.00
15.	East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary	Karbi Anglong	222.00
16.	Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary	Karbi Anglong	451.00
17.	Amsang Wildlife Sanctuary	Kamrup	78.64
18.	Borail Wildlife Sanctuary	Cachar &Karimgaj	326.25

Source:-Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry),Assam.\*\* Biosphere Reserve,\*World Heriatge Site.

Table II.3 shows that Karbi Anglong district has highest number of protected areas among all districts. Kaziranga National Park is part of this district, besides it Assam has five more wildlife Sanctuaries namely Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary, Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary, Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary, East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary and Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary. It is one of hill districts of Assam and known as biodiversity rich area. Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park has got World Heritage status for excellent job in Wildlife conservation. Manas National Park also has Biosphere reserve status. Among National Parks, Kaziranga National Parks has largest protected area followed by Manas National Park, Dibru Saikhowa National Park, Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary and Borail Wildlife Sanctuary respectively. Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary though has lowest area, it is known for habitat of some rare species of birds. It has been declared as Ramsar site for undertaking conservation measures on the basis of its biological and environmental importance.

Besides these there are 304 reserve forests which also support a variety of plants and animals. The wildlife of Assam comprises some of the rare endangered species such as one horned Rhinoceros, Pigmy Hog, Hispid Hare, Golden Langur, White Winged Wood Duck, Swamp Deer, Fishing Cat, Golden Cat etc. Such faunal resources are source of attractions for the tourists as well as researchers interested to ecology and biodiversity. Following are the some accounts of faunal resources of Assam.

**(a)MAMMALS: -**

Altogether 230 forms including species and subspecies have been recorded or are likely to be found in Assam. The total number of species listed so far is 193, which includes two recently extinct and true semi-wild (born free, living free).<sup>5</sup> Assam holds the entire world population of the Pigmy Hog, about 75 percent of the world population of the Indian Rhinoceros and Wild Water Buffalo, sizeable population of Asian Elephant, Tiger and the entire population of the Golden Langur in India. Pigmy Hog (*Assamese-Nal Gahori*) is only found in Assam. Though the animal appeared to be present in some

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<sup>5</sup> Choudhury, A. (1997) *Checklist of Mammals of Assam*, Gibbon Books, Guwahati, pp 4-5.

other forests of the north western range, the main habitat areas of the species are the Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Manas National Park. The Pigmy hog lives in dense scrub "jungles" characterized by tall thatch and elephant grasses. Another endangered species found in Assam is one horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). At present there are 1800 Rhinos present in different areas in Assam. It lives generally in the swampy areas where grass grows upto the height of 4.5 to 6.0 metre. Besides Kaziranga National Park, it is found in Orang and Manas National Park, Pobitora and Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuaries. One of the most endangered and endemic species of Assam, the Golden Langur (*Presbytis geei*) found to occur mostly in the foot hills along the Indo-Bhutanese border and confined to Dhubri, Kokrajhar and Barpeta districts. It is also found in Tokrabandha, Raimona and Jamduar forest reserves and Manas National Park. The animal is primarily an arboreal spending most of the day time on the top of the tall trees. Some of the more important rare species are Golden Langur (*Presbytis geei*), Assamese Macaque (*Macaca assamensis*), Hoolok Gibbon (*Hylobates hoolock*), Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*). The Indian Elephant (*Elephant maximus*) population in the habitat patches along the north bank of Brahmaputra river is one of the India's biggest and most important endangered species. Other commonly found mammals include Hog Deer (*Cervidae*), Indian Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*), Porcupine (*Erethion dorsatum*), Large Indian Civet (*Civettictis civette*), Indian Grey Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Jungle Cat (*Felix Chaus*), Common Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Clawless Otter and Jackel (*Canis aureus*), Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*), Barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and Rhesus monkey (*Macaca mulatta*).<sup>6</sup>

**(b) BIRDS: -**

The fertile islands of Brahmaputra and its tributaries and resourceful wetlands favour luxuriant growth of a variety of grasses, bushes, riverine trees and a wide variety of aquatic plants and animals which collectively form habitats not only for resident birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, but also attract a large number of migratory birds. About 958 species and subspecies of birds have so far been recorded or are likely to

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<sup>6</sup> Choudhury. A (1997), *ibid*, pp.12-13.

be occurring in Assam. The richness and diversity in bird species is due to its location in transition zone between various zoogeographic sub regions. Of the 20 orders of birds found in Assam, 12 contain threaten and 11 near threatened species. Some globally endangered species such as the Greater Adjutant Stork, White-winged Wood Duck, Swamp Partridge or Swamp Francolin and the Bengal Florican have their largest concentration in Assam.<sup>7</sup> Kaziranga itself is rich in globally threatened bird species, with several grassland specialists such as the Bristled grass warbler (*Chaeotomis striatus*), Slender-billed babbles, Jerbon's babbler, Bengal florican, Finn's weaver and White-throated bush cat, and several birds associated with wetlands, especially the White-bellied heron, Swamp francolin (*Francoilinus gularis*) and Marsh bubbler (*Pellomeum palustre*). The Majuli Island, Deepor beel bird sanctuary, Panidihing bird sanctuary are Known for some of the rarest bird. White-winged Wood Duck (Assamese-*Deohah*) especially found in Nameri National Park is the state bird of Assam. Grassland of flat floodplain dominated by thatch grass forms its best habitant. In addition to these, migratory birds like Oriental stork (*Ciconia boyciona*), a winter visitor that uses wetlands in the north bank and Kaziranga –Karbi Anglong landscape, but its main winter range extends south to Srilanka and east to Vietnam and Vietnam is one of the chief attraction here. The presence of exquisite avifauna with their habitat showcases Assam as an Ornithologist's Paradise.

**c) REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS:** - Due to its varied topography and habitat types support a species rich reptilian fauna in Assam. Members of three living orders namely *Crocodylia* (Crocodiles and Gharials), *Chelonia* (Turtles and Tortoises) and Squamata (Snakes and Lizards) are found here. The record of reptilian resources of Assam show the presence of 1 species of *Crocodylia*, 19 species of *Chelonia* and 77 species of Squamatas.<sup>8</sup> Presence of diverse reptilian species in a relatively small area is quite significant in Assam. This is among the high diversity of reptiles in any of the Indian states. Some of the rare reptiles found here are –among the poisonous snakes, mention may be made of *Naja naja* (Indian Cobra), Common vine snake (*Ahaetulla nasutus*), Rat Snake (*Coluber*

<sup>7</sup>State of Environment Report (2004), "Resource Base", Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, Guwahati, pp 5-6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

*mucosus*), Khasi Hills earth snake (*Stoliczkaia kkasiensis*), King cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*), Assam cat snake (*Boiga quincunclata*), Common kukri snake (*Oligodon amensis*), while Indian python (*Python molurus*), *Erynx johnii* and *Typhlops bothriortynchus* are main non-poisonous snakes; among lizards, Assam garden lizard (*Calotes maria*), Common Indian monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*), Assam flying dragon (*Draco blanfordii Boulenger*), while in case of tortoises Brown hill tortoise (*Manouria emys*), Elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*) and some of the turtle species like Assam roofed turtle (*Kachuga sylhetensis*), Keeled box turtle (*Pyxidea mouhotii*), Tricarinate hill turtle (*Melanochelys tricarinata*) represents spectacular biodiversity of the area. The water bodies as well as islands and wetlands of Assam constitute congenial habitat for amphibians. Some of the amphibian variety found here are *Bafo melanosticus*, *Hoplobatrachus crassus*, *Polypedates leucomystax*, *Limnonectes limnocharies*, *Bufo stomaticus*, *Rhacosphorus maximus* etc.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Assam stands a good chance of attracting tourists due to its rich cultural heritage and kaleidoscopic ethnic diversity. It is a meeting ground of Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan groups of people. Hence, variety is reflected through each and every sphere of life of its inhabitants. Colourful life of people, their traditional customs, festivals and dances are important sources of tourist attraction.

### II.6 Ethnicity

Assam is a zone of conglomeration of various ethnic tribes and groups with each having distinct dialect, culture and way of life, festivals, songs and dances. Geographical location and its fertile soil did attract stream of migrants since early times. Present population of Assam has four basic racial traits: Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, and Aryo-Mongoloid and Aryo-Mongoloid-Dravidian.<sup>9</sup> Ethno-linguistically, the entire population can be divided into three major groups like Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Chinese and Indo-European. These groups of people had settled in certain parts of the state at in different points of time. Austro-Asiatic group of people are now represented by Mon-Khmer speaking Karbi and Khasi tribes mostly inhabiting Karbi Anglong adjoining border of Assam-Meghalaya and some pockets of North Cachar hill district of Assam. Other groups of this race are Mundari dialect speaking tea tribal communities of Assam. They migrated during colonial times from Chotanagpur Plateau of India. Tibeto-Chinese group comprised Tibeto-Burman and Siamese-Chinese groups who entered Assam at different times beginning from pre-historic period. Mishings, Sonowal-Kachari, Thengal-Kachari, Deoris of upper Assam and Bodo, Rabhas of lower Assam form early settlers from Tibeto-Burman stock. On the other hand, Siamese-Chinese group of people comprise of Ahoms, Khamitis, Khamyangs, Aitons, Tai-Phakes and Turungs inhabiting upper Assam. Indo-European groups of people consist of both Hindus and Muslims and speak Indo-

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<sup>9</sup> Taher, M. (1988): "The Population base of Assam", *North-Eastern Geographer*, Vol.19, No.2, pp.15-23.

European languages. Early settlers of this group are Hindus who migrated from north Indian plain and settled in plains of Assam. This regular migration of different races created two distinct ethnic groups in the state, non-tribals or plain people who generally live in plains and the tribals who mainly live in the hills. There is also substantial tribal population in the plains. The plain tribes include are namely Deori, Lalung, Mishing, Rabha, Sonowal-Kachari and Thengal-Kachari. Prominent hill tribes are Karbi, Dimasa, Hmar, Zemi-Naga, Garo, Hajong, Konyak and Khasi etc. The spirit of oneness and togetherness between tribals and non-tribals and mutual amity and understanding between people of different communities and religions residing in the state contributed towards the formation of harmonious society. This unity is reflected in the culture of Assam. There is a remarkable spirit of tolerance. Assamese society owes a lot to Srimanta Sankardeva, who spearheaded Vaishnava Bhakti movement in this region.

## **II.7 Temples and Monuments**

Situated below foothills of Eastern Himalayas and sharing boundaries with other North-eastern states, Assam has history dating back to Vedic ages. Tantric Shaktiism, Saivism and later Vaisnavism flourished in the valley of Brahmaputra. In wake of Mahmmedan invasions, came Muslims of different groups many of whom stayed back and fused into Assamese milieu. This period marked the advent of Islam to the state. A handful of Sikhs from Punjab who had originally come as mercenaries almost miraculously got transformed into Assamese Society and as a result Sikhism flourished. Small Buddhist communities like Khamanas, Aitons and Tai-Phakes of Siamese Chinese origin keep Buddhism high.<sup>10</sup>

Assam is also rich in antique assets like ruins and monuments. Existing archaeological ruins of Assam go as far back as Gupta period (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD), though their number is very limited. The ruin of door-frame of Da-Parbatia Temple in Tezpur is perhaps finest and oldest specimen of sculptural art in Assam (Plate II.1). Its carving has the characteristic of early Gupta School of sculpture. Ruins of the Post-Gupta period are also found in different parts of the state. Stylistically, all the remains

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<sup>10</sup> Baruah, B.K. (1983): "*Cultural History of Assam*", Bina Library, Guwahati, pp 14-16.

belong to different north Indian art traditions with local influences. Almost all standing architectural monuments of Assam belong to medieval period and represent building styles of Koch, Kachari and Ahom royal courts. Some of the important monuments are Maibong stone temple, Khaspur ruins in North Cachar Hills, temples in and around Sivasagar such as Sivadol, Vishnudol and Devidol etc. Royal palaces such as Gargaon, Kareng Ghar, Talatal Ghar and the pavilion of Ronghar and Maidams (burial tomb) at Charaideo are remains chief attraction for tourists. There are as many as 12 archaeological sites (Table III.4) and about 25 major monuments dating back from 7th to 17<sup>th</sup> century AD.



Plate No.II.1. Da-Parbatia Gate in the historical town of Tezpur.



**Table III.4:-Major archaeological sites of Assam.**

Sl.No.	Name of the ruins	District	Nearest town	Period
1	Da-parbatia ruins	Sonitpur	Tezpur	5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
2	Suryapahar ruins	Goalpara	Goalpara	8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
3	Madan Kamdev ruins	Kamrup	Guwahati	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
4	Pandunath ruins	Kamrup	Guwahati	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
5	Cole park ruins	Sonitpur	Tezpur	7 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
6	Bamuni Pahar ruins	Sonitpur	Tezpur	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
7	Singari ruins	Sonitpur	Dhekiajuli	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
8	Na-Nath ruins	Nagaon	Hojai	7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
9	Sankha Devi ruins	Nagaon	Hojai	10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
10	Abhayapuri ruins	Bongaigaon	Abhayapuri	11 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
11	Borphukhuri ruins	Nagaon	Hojai	10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> Century AD
12	Numaligarh ruins	Golaghat	Bokakhat	12 <sup>th</sup> Century

Source:-Directorate of Archaeology, Assam

#### **INSTITUTION OF SATRA**

A unique feature of Vaishnavism in Assam is the Satra institution, Satras are monasteries which represent the organizational set up originally to propagate Neo-Vaishnavite religious and social ideals but which also become centres for cultivation and dissemination of all kinds of art and refinement. Some important places of Satra culture are Majuli, Bardowa, Barpeta and Madhupur. Satras (Monastery) exist throughout Assam. After coming in of British invasion in 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christian Missionaries came spreading message of love of Jesus and Churches sprang up in various places.

Convergence of people of different religions has resulted in numerous places of pilgrimage for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians strewn all over the state. However, spirit of accommodation and togetherness, tolerance and harmony prevails amongst the believers of different faiths. Assamese society is remarkably free from communal conflict and mutual amity. Among many of holy places, more prominent are Kamakhya and Bhubaneswar Temple, Nawagraha Temple, Umananda Temple, Vasistha Ashram, Hayagriva-Madahav Temple, Poa Meccca, Shivadol, Dargah of Ajan Pir, Satras of Majuli, Batadraba Satra and Shrine, Maha Bhairab Temple, Biswanath

Temple, Nagsankar Temple, Barpeta Satra and Kirtanghar, the famous Sikh Gurudwara established by Ninth Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur at Dhubri etc.

## **II.8 Fairs and Festivals**

Most of the festivals celebrated in Assam have their roots in diverse faith and belief of its inhabitants. These reflect social customs and traditions along with human desire of leisure and merry making. Most of the fairs and festivals are intimately connected to agriculture due to it being the mainstay of all indigenous communities. Fusion of heritage of tribes and sub-tribes has made Assam, the home of the very colourful festivals. Songs and dances, wearing of colourful dresses, tasting of innumerable varieties of food are special feature during festivals. Major festivals celebrated in Assam are *Bihu*, *Baishagu*, *Ali-Ai-Ligang*, *Baikho*, *Rongker*, *Rajini Gabra*, *Harni Gabra*, *Bohaggiyo Bishu*, *Ambubashi Mela* and *Jonbeel Mela* etc. People of Assam also celebrate Durga Puja, Diwali, Idd, Me-Dam-Me-Phi, the birth and death of Vaisahnavi saints Shrimanta Shankardev and Madhabdev. Some important festivals celebrated by indigenous communities have been described below;

### **(a) Bihu**

Bihu is the major festival of Assam. Irrespective of caste, creed and religion, the people of Assam celebrate Bihu with much pomp and gaiety. Rongali Bihu, spring festival is celebrated during mid-April. It is a festival of colour, creativity and joy. It marks the beginning of agricultural season. Mood of spring is celebrated with Bihu dance, one of the unique art forms of India, accompanied by lusty wild beats of drum along with indigenous instruments like buffalo-horn pipe (*Assamese-Mohor singor pepa*). Young boys and girls, clad in golden Muga silk, sing and dance to the tune of seductive bihu songs woven around themes of love and yearning (Plate II.2).



**Plate II.2.Bihu Dance**

**(b) Baishagu**

Baishagu is generally celebrated by Bodo Kacharis during mid-April. It is the most cherished festival of the Bodo community (Plate II.3). Bodos also celebrates it as springtime festival at the advent of New Year. The supreme deity Bathou or Lord Shiva is worshipped during these days by offering him chicken and rice-beer. In Baishagu dance, there is no bar of age or sex to join in their respective groups. Young boys and girls dance together during the festival. It is also customary that at the time of closure of this festival, one has to offer community prayer at a particular place called *Galjasali*.



**Plate No.II.3. Baishagu dance of Bodo community**

**(c) Ali-Ai-Ligang**

Ali-Ai-Ligang is the festival of Mishing tribe and is very colourful festival. It is held every year on the first Wednesday of the month of *Ginmur Polo* (February-March). The ceremonial sowing of paddy starts on this day. Dance performed by young boys and girls during this festival, reflects youthful passions and productive urge. Fish, Pork and Dry fish form the menu and feast is arranged for the festival.

**(d) Rongker**

Rongker is the important festival of the Karbis, who primarily live in Karbi Anglong. It is basically a festival of merriment and is performed at the beginning of New Year i.e. April. To propitiate different Gods and Goddesses for wellbeing of entire village, elderly male folk organize Rongker so that people could be free from diseases and natural calamities for the entire year. They also pray for good harvest. Women are not allowed to enter the worship arena during the festival. Traditional dance of Karbi community is very vibrant (Plate II.4)



**Plate No.II.4. Traditional dance of Karbi community.**

**(e) Baikho**

There is another tribe in Assam, known as Rabhas. Although Rabha community does not have any major festival of their own, but different group celebrates Baikho. Baikho is celebrated during spring season in order to propitiate the Goddess of wealth locally known as Baikho (Plate No II.5).



**Plate No II.5.Baikho dance of Rabha Community.**

**(f) Rajini Gabra and Harni Gabra**

It is annual festival of Dimasa tribe of North Cachar hill district. It is a socio-religious festival generally observed before starting new cultivation. Rajini Gabra is celebrated during day time. *Kunang* or the village headman propitiates family deity by closing village gate on worship day. On the same night the function of Harni Gabra is held. It is related to the worship of presiding deity for the protection and welfare of people. It is very interesting to note that during Rajini Gabra and Harni Gabra festivals if any outsider enters the village in spite of seeing the sign of closed gate, the entire function is considered to be spoiled. Then the intruder has to bear the total cost for holding the festival a new. The Traditional Dance of Dimasa Community is *Bai-Maijai*. (Plate No II.6)



**Plate No .II.6. Bai-Maijai Dance of Dimasa Community.**

### **(g) Bohaggiyo Bishu**

It is spring time festival of Deori community. Like other spring festivals, it is observed during mid-April for seven days involving joy and merry-making. Bishu is preceded by Than Puja. This has religious significance and arrangements to be made before the puja.



**Plate No II.7 Bihu Dance of Deori Community.**

Once every four years, sacrifice of white buffalo is made which is considered as substitute for the traditional human sacrifice. Deori bihu dance is known for vibrant rhythmic movements (Plate II.7)

### **h) Jonbeel Mela**

This spectacular fair (mela) is held every year winter at Jonbeel of Jagirod, a lesser known town situated at a distance of 32 Kms from Guwahati. Jagirod is on the National Highway 37. A few days before the mela Communities like Tiwa, Karbi, Khasi and Jaintia of come down from hills with their various products for this mela. Big bazaar held where products of these tribes are exchanged with local people in a barter system.

Before the mela, fire-worship or Agni puja is performed for the wellbeing of mankind. Govaraja or the king of the Tiwa tribe, along with his courtiers, visits the mela and collect tax from his subjects. The theme of the mela is of harmony and brotherhood amongst various communities. These communities perform their traditional dances and music to celebrate the mela.

#### **(i) Ambubashi Mela**

This is the festival of Kamakhya temple. Ambubashi is celebrated in mid-June. It is a ritual of austerity, celebrated with 'Tantric'rites. It is a common belief that reigning deity,'Kamakhya', the mother Shakti goes through her annual cycle of menstruation during this period. Doors of the temple remain closed for four days during Ambubashi. Daily worship and other religious performances are suspended during this period. All agricultural works is also forbidden. Temple-doors are opened on fifth day after the Goddess is bathed and other rituals are performed. Thousands of devotees visit this temple during Ambubashi.

#### **(j) Tea Festival**

Tea festival adds music and fun to tourists. This festival is organised by Tourism Department in November at Jorhat town. Exotic tea tour from plucking fresh leafes to staying in sprawling bungalows of British times, enjoying jungle safaris, golf, horse racing, ethnic food and cultural extravanza are chief attractions of tea festival.

#### **(k) Dehing-Patkai Festival**

This festival is held in eastern Assam. It derives its name from lofty Patkai range and playful Dehing River. It is heady cocktail of ethnic fares, golfing, tea heritage tours, adventure sports, wildlife excursions and down-memory-lane trips to World War II cemeteries and Stilwell Road, once a passage to golden land of Myanmar. Time of this festival is January during every year.



## (I) Rass Mahotsav

This festival takes place on world's largest river island Majuli. It showcases arts, crafts and lifestyles shaped by unique Vaishnav *Satras* (monasteries) and culture of various ethnic groups like Mishings, Deoris and Kacharies. Apart from an aura of spiritualism, it focuses on exquisite wood and bamboo crafts, basketry, pottery, silver filigree and mask work by local artisans.

## II.9. Food Habit

Assamese food is well regarded for its nutritional and therapeutic values. Prepared with minimal use of spices and edible oil, delicate flavouring of vegetables, meat and fish lends food its distinctive taste. Rice is the staple food for almost the entire population of Assam. That is why rice is the main item in meal. Most of the light refreshment (*jalpan*) items are also made of rice. Some popular snacks are *muri* (puffed rice), *chira* (pounded rice), *bukachawol*, *sandoh* and items made from *muri* and *chira*. Among pulses prepared soups of *mogu mah*, *kola mah* (different types of pigeon peas) and *mati mah* (grams) are eaten widely. The soup prepared from different types tuber roots like *mitha alu*, *simolou alu*, *Kath alu*, *goria alu*, *mua alu* are important items Assamese people. Vegetable dishes are broadly divided into three types according to taste. These are *tenga* (sour), *tita* (bitter) and *khar* (alkaline). *Tenga* dishes are cooked with different types of sour vegetables or leafy vegetables. Sometimes tamarind or olive is used to make a dish sour. These dishes are always cooked with fish. *Tita* vegetables are cooked with dry fish. *Khar* is extracted from two sources, from creepers and from the stem of banana plant and mixed with vegetable curries. Moreover, the most popular local item among Assamese is *Khar* (Alkali), *Kharisa* (a special pickle prepared from bamboo shoots) and *Kharali* (Prepared from mustard), *Thekera* etc. Non-vegetable food items like chicken, mutton, fish, egg, meat of duck and pork are also eaten by local community. However, pork is taboo for Muslims. Fish is most relished by people. Different types of fresh fish are used in preparing delicacies. Among beverages, rice beer and black are popular among people. Varieties of rice beer include *Sajpani* (Ahom), *Apong* (Mishing), *Arak* (Karbi), *Zou*(Dimasa), *Chuje*(Deori).

## II.10 Dress and Ornaments

Description of culture of Assam would be incomplete without reference to dress of people and ornamental decorations. Weaving is one of the most significant aspects of Assamese culture. Assamese people use cotton, silk and thread made from tree timber as raw materials for cloth production. Traditionally Assamese females wear *Mekhela-Chadar* or *Riha-Mekhela*. *Mekhela-Chadar* is made from *Muga-Silk* (golden silk) and is most popular and famous. *Suria* or *Dhoti* and *Kamees* or *Shirt* is traditional dress wore by Assamese males. Assamese people wear different style of ornaments according to their tradition, religion and social status. Beautiful and exclusive ornaments are basically made of Gold and Silver. The most popular ornaments of females are *Golpata*, *Maduli*, *Dugdugi*, *Jonbiri*, *Gamkharu*, *Muthikharu*, *Keyur*, *Kanphulli*, *Kankan* and *Nupur*. Traditional ornaments wears by males of Assam are *Biri*, *Gamkharu*, *Muthikharu*, *Magardana*, *Motamoni*, *Kunda* and *Lokapara*. Usually males use a special cloth over *Kameez*, which is known as *Seleng*. Traditional dress of tribal women are known as *gaseng* (Mishing), *jiso* and *wamkok* (Karbi), *dokhna* and *arnai* (Bodo) are traditional dresses.<sup>11</sup>

## II.11 Art and Craft

People of Assam have been craftsmen since times immemorial. Their passion for art has created wonders, whether with the silk, cane, bamboo, brass or others. In today's complicated and techno-savvy world, Assamese people have been able to retain the ethnic appeal and simplicity in their art and crafts. In fact, the natural beauty of Assam is said to be reflected in Assamese art and craft. Following are the main crafts produced by Assamese.

### (a)Cane and Bamboo:

These two are inseparable parts of life in Assam (Plate II.8). These are common items in everyday life in Assam. Right from household implements to construction of

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<sup>11</sup> Bordoloi .B.N. (1991). "*Tribes of Assam*", Assam institute of Research for Tribals & Scheduled castes. Guwahati pp 24-48.

dwelling and weaving accessories to musical instruments, these have multitude uses. One very good example of bamboo craft is *Jappi*, a traditional sunshade that continues to be a thing of prestige and is still a renowned part of Assamese culture. Even today, visitors to Assam are welcomed with *Jappi*, which is a symbol of dignity and affection. Cane and bamboo furniture are popular in domestic and export markets, while paati, the traditional mat have become part of interior decoration in many parts of the world.



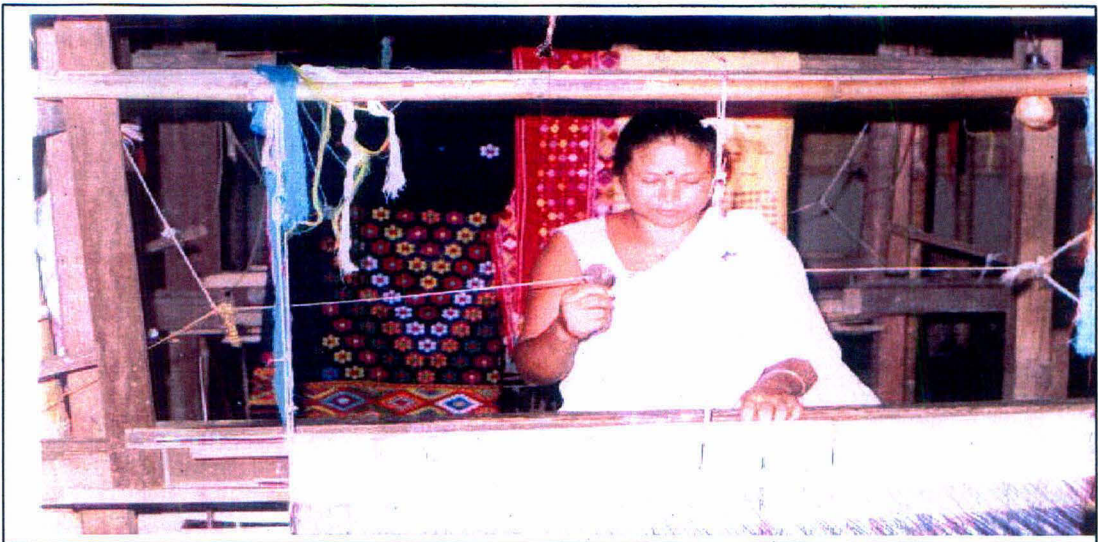
**Plate No. II.8. Cane Products**

**(b) Metal Craft:**

Metal craft are extensively prevalent in Assam. Fancy articles as well as traditional utensils made of bell-metal brass are found in every Assamese household. *Sorai* and *Bota*, trademark of Assamese culture, have been used for centuries to offer betel-nut and *paan* while welcoming distinguished guests. Entire population of two townships near Guwahati namely Hajo and Sarthebari is engaged in producing traditional bell-metal and brass articles. Beside these, gold, silver and copper are also used in traditional metal crafts in Assam. State Museum in Guwahati holds rich collection of metal articles

**(c) Handloom:**

Weaving is integral to life in Assam. Assam is the home of several types of silk, the most prominent and prestigious being *Muga*. Golden silk *Muga* is exclusively found this state. Apart from *Muga*, there is also *Paat* and *Eri* silk, the later being used in manufacturing of warm clothes for winter. Women of Assam weave fairy tale designs on their looms (Plate II.9). Traditional handloom silk still scores over factory made silk because of richness of texture and design, in their individually, character and classic beauty.



**Plate No II.9. Traditional method of weaving clothes.**

**(d) Woodcraft:**

Assam is home of dense forests where huge stocks of wood and timber are available. Wood-carving has formed an integral part of people's culture and economy. Like cane and bamboo works, woodcraft in Assam is equally exotic and delightful. The decorative panels in royal Ahom palaces and 600 years old *Satras* shows tradition of woodcraft in Assam. Commercial articles include figures of one-horned Rhinoceros and replicas of Kamakhya temple. These two items head the list of items demanded.

**(e) Pottery:**

Pottery is probably as old as human civilization itself. Pottery can be traced back to many centuries back in Assam. *Kumhars* and *Hiras* are two traditional potter communities of Assam. While *Kumhars* use wheel to produce pots, interestingly, *Hiras*, perhaps are the only potters who do not use wheel at all. Another interesting thing is that only Hira women are engaged in pottery, while their men procure raw material and sell wares. Commonly used pottery products include earthen pots and pitchers, incense-stick holders and earthen lamps etc (Plate No II.10).



**Plate No II.10- Pottery products**

**II.12 Language and dialects.**

Language is the most important medium of human interaction. Linguistic composition of any area reflects socio-cultural diversity of its population. Assam is a multiethnic society. The state is meeting place of three major language families: Austro-

Asiatic (5 families) Sino-Tibetan (24 families) and Indo-European (12 families).<sup>12</sup> There is high degree of bilingualism among Assamese. Assamese is the official languages of the state. Linguistically, modern Assamese traces its roots to eastern Magadhi Prakrit, with strong influences from Tibeto-Burman and Mon-Khmer languages which are spoken by indigenous ethnic groups in the region. Bodo, a Tibeto-Burman language, is largely used by Bodo Community. Bengali is the second most spoken language in the state. It is predominant language in Barak Valley. Assam also has significant high proportion of non-scheduled language speakers (12.53 percent). Among non-scheduled languages/dialects Mishing, Karbi, Santhali, Deori, Garo, Rabha, Dimasa are important with more than one lakh speakers of each. Tribal language speakers like Bodo live largely in lower and middle Brahmaputra valley. Mishing is spoken in upper Brahmaputra valley, Karbi in Karbi Anglong district and Rabhas in south-bank part of the lower Brahmaputra valley. Nepali speakers on the other hand, live mostly in Sonitpur, Nagaon and Tinsukia districts. Tea-gardens and urban areas have major concentrations of Hindi speaking population. The state altogether has 87 languages/dialects including 69 non-scheduled ones. This is indicative of high degree of linguistic diversity in the state.

### **II.13 House type**

Bamboo is the prelude and interlude of rhythmic local life. Traditional Assamese huts are bamboo walled, mud walled, mud plastered and thatch roofed. Bamboo fencing, bamboo gates, bamboo based looms, household appliances and decorative items are the trademark feature of any Assamese household. Rural people construct separate shades for cattle, ducks and poultry. Granary (*bhoral*) is generally constructed towards eastern direction and in a corner in front of a house. Every household must possess spacious courtyard for threshing and processing paddy and the place is neatly fenced with bamboo. Almost all the families have their kitchen garden (*bari*), some portion of which is used as jungles which provide them with firewood and house building material like bamboo etc. Houses have apartments and first room is used as a drawing room in which guest are

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<sup>12</sup> Kar .B.K. (2001), "*Population*", *Geography of Assam*, (ed) Bhagabati A.K, Bora A.K., Kar B.K., Rajesh publication, New Delhi. pp.137-141.

welcomed. However tourists shows special interest in traditional stilted houses (*Chang Ghar*) made by Mishing community (Plate No II.11). Mishing village consists of 10 to 100 or more households built on bamboo platform mostly on riverine area. They construct their houses on piles, where floor is about 4 feet to 6 feet above ground. Level for floor is obtained using stilts which may be of wood or bamboo. They construct floor using thick bamboo splits on the sheets. Platform ultimately forms the main house which is walled using matting of split bamboo. A house has generally above 40 feet to 100 feet in length and 10 feet to 15 feet in breadth. A house has generally is above 40 feet to 100 feet in length and 10feet to 15 feet in breadth. The main material used for construction of house is wood, bamboo and thatch. <sup>13</sup>



**Plate No II.11- '*Chang Ghar*', traditional house of Mishing Community.**

## **II.14 Marriage**

Assamese Hindus follow marriage customs of 'Veda' and tribals have their own marriage customs. Assamese Brahmins have four different types of marriage customs such as *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Arya* and *Prajapatya*. *Prajapatya* marriage is generally found in

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<sup>13</sup> Mipun.Jatin Dr. (1995). "*The Mishings of Brahmaputra valley*", Rajesh publication, New Delhi.pp.123-124.

Assamese society. Marriage is strictly prohibited within the same clan. Due to the diversity of religion, caste, language, culture etc, it creates different customs in different places in Assam. Socially accepted form of a Bodo marriage custom is more or less the same in all their villages, though certain rites vary from clan to clan. On the auspicious day, elders go to see the would be bride and study her character. If she is liked, they come back and leave a pair of silver bangles stuck in the ceiling or a couple of wine bottles hanging by it. If these are not returned within the following week, consent of the girl's family is indicated. Before wedding, the groom goes to the girl's house to see and know each other. The girl gives him presents of handkerchiefs and napkins she herself has woven and bows before him. Her not following this signifies her not accepting the boy. Hinduised Bodos engage a priest to perform the ceremony, while others follow their elaborate tribal customs.<sup>14</sup> Tiwas have embraced Hinduism and their marriage customs are generally same as those of other Hindus, but there is no use of sacred fire ceremony known as *Homas*.<sup>15</sup>

The above description of physical and socio-cultural diversity shows that there are enough tourism resources in Assam. But these have not been exhibited systematically highlighted at national and international levels to attract tourists. In fact, tourism in Assam is mainly based on Wildlife and Religious spots. Tourists visiting the state do not have proper knowledge about its cultural attractions. Rural tourism needs to be kept in mind should be kept in mind to exploit the unexplored cultural resources of the state. At the same time, creation of accommodation, transportation and other tourist facilities is very important. Most of the rural areas have poor road and tourist accommodation facilities. These issues should be addressed properly to turn potential tourism resources into reality.

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<sup>14</sup> Narzi Bhabendra (1994): "*An introduction to Bodo society and culture*", Bina Library, Guwahati.pp.53-155.

<sup>15</sup> *Homa* is a sacred fire lit in the middle of the marriage place. Both the bride and groom exchange garlands and recite Vedic hymns around *homa*. The groom then applies vermilion (*sindoor*) on the brides hair. During this ceremony *sankhas* (conch shells) are blown which signifies the binding of the couple in holy matrimony.



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## Chapter III

### STATUS OF TOURISM

#### Introduction

Tourism as an industry is of recent origin in Assam. Though it was initiated here as back as 1958 but still is at a fledgling stage. As mentioned earlier, Assam is potential source of natural resources and tourist attraction centers among seven sister states of north-east region of India. With the lifting of the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) for foreign tourists visiting Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura in 1995, there has been an increase in arrival of foreign tourists in the state. Magnificent scenic beauty and exquisite archaeological ruins, varieties of wildlife, birds and places those have historical and socio-cultural importance attract tourists to this region.

Though tourism is recent in Assam but many people used to visit the state for various other purposes in the past, especially for business and religious activities. Such movements do not come under preview of tourism. Kamakhya temple has always been an important center to attract pilgrims from different parts of India. However, when British declared Kaziranga a game reserve in 1916 and subsequently it became wildlife sanctuary in 1950, Assam was projected as an attractive destination for tourists, particularly those who are interested in nature and wildlife. Later part of 1930's may be considered to be humble beginning of modern tourism in the state because some people from inside and outside the state started visiting Kaziranaga and Kamakhya temple.<sup>1</sup> Since then, significant changes have taken place in the state's tourism sector because of various efforts made by the central and the state governments in this direction. Major development was setting up of Department of Tourism under government of Assam in 1958 and Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) in 1988 to promote it as a tourist destination. Since the inception of the department of tourism, it has made considerable progress in its organizational set up as well as in the field of operation to manage affairs of tourism, while ATDC is responsible for developing tourism sector on commercial basis. It took over most of

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<sup>1</sup> State of Environment Report (2004:) "*Tourism and Heritage*", Assam Science Technology and Environment Council, Guwahati. P-170.

tourist lodges, tourist bungalows, hotels, guest houses and entertainment projects etc. Along with those, they also took control of transport which was earlier under Department of Tourism and many other functions performed by that Department to market tourism. Since then, it has been making efforts in coordination with Directorate of Tourism to promote tourism. It is therefore, important to look at contemporary status of tourism in Assam.

### **III. A. Temporal Pattern and Trend of Tourist Traffic to Assam**

Assam is one of the most advanced states in northeast India. The northeast is said be 'unexplored paradise' for tourists for its rich natural resources and ethnic diversity. Assam contains cultural diversity as well as an ecosystem which is both scenic and delicate. So, ecotourism is a good theme for the region. Its wildlife sanctuaries, trekking trails and mountains are waiting to be explored. Tourism in Assam is basically nature-centric although there are historical and religious places of tourist attraction. *National Tourism Policy, 2002* shows its concern for developing the state as a natural tourist spot specifying rural based tourism and sports, and above all ecotourism region. Such tourism specialties are also very important from sustenance of region's bio-diversity which otherwise may face degradation.

Despite central initiatives and realization of tremendous economic aspects of tourism, present status of tourism and tourism related entrepreneurship in Assam are not encouraging. Lack of proper infrastructure and initiatives, less favourable law and order situation, compounded by negative publicity have been most important constraints for development of tourist industry in Assam and rest of Northeast region. However, with the new strategy and approach of the Government vis-à-vis tourism sector, some progress in security factor and participation of private sector in tourism related infrastructure development, have brought in a perceptible rise in tourist inflow to Assam from 2002 onwards. This is evident from table III.1

**Table-III.1:- Tourist flow in Assam 1995-2007**

Year	Domestic Tourists	% rise in Domestic Tourists.	Foreign tourists	%rise in Foreign Tourists	Total Tourists	% of Foreign tourists to total Tourists	% rise in total Tourists flow
1995	3,48,532		2575		3,51,107	0.73	
1996	3,27,260	(-)06.50	5885	(+)56.24	3,33,145	1.77	(-)5.39
1997	8,42,656	(+)61.16	4194	(-)40.32	8,46,850	0.5	(+)60.66
1998	9,39,721	(+)10.33	3843	(-)09.13	9,43,564	0.41	(+)10.25
1999	9,64,939	(+) 02.61	5218	(+)26.35	9,70,157	0.54	(+)02.74
2000	10,01,577	(+)03.66)	5959	(+)12.43	10,07,536	0.59	(+)03.71
2001	10,10,652	(+)00.90	6171	(+) 03.43	10,16,823	0.61	(+)00.91
2002	19,53,915	(+)48.28	6409	(+)03.71	19,60,324	0.33	(+)48.13
2003	18,67,682	(-)04.60	6788	(+)05.58	18,74,470	0.36	(+)08.00
2004	22,88,093	(+)18.37	7285	(+)06.82	22,95,378	0.31	(+)18.33
2005	24,67,652	(+)07.27	10,782	(+)32.43	24,78,434	0.43	(+)07.38
2006	34,79,870	(+)29.08	13,657	(+)21.05	34,93,527	0.39	(+)29.05
2007	34,89,814	(+)00.28	13,799	(+)01.02	35,03,613	0.39	(+)00.28

**Source:** Department of Statistical Records, Directorate of Tourism, Assam.

Table III.1. shows that the number of tourists has been increasing since 1995. There was decline in the number of tourists in 1996. Even the years of 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2007 recorded only slight rise in tourists visiting Assam. This was probably due to disturbed political situation in the region. However, highest increase was witnessed in 1997, 2002 and 2006. These were times of peace in the state. Same pattern is observed in the visits of domestic visits. More and more foreign tourists are visiting Assam over the years yet their number is not very large.

**Table III.2: Foreign Tourists flow in Assam as compared to National and North-Eastern Region (1995-2003)**

Year	No. of Foreign Tourists			Share of Foreign Tourists inflow in Assam as compared to National total. (%)	Share of Foreign Tourists inflow in Assam as compared to rest of North-Eastern States. (%)
	India	Northeast *	Assam		
1995	2123683	-	2575	0.12	-
1996	2287860	8011	5885	0.26	73.46
1997	2374094	6042	4194	0.18	69.41
1998	2358629	6284	3843	0.16	61.15
1999	2481928	8134	5218	0.21	64.15
2000	2649378	11445	5959	0.22	52.06
2001	2537282	10139	6171	0.24	60.86
2002	2654894	13481	6409	0.24	47.54
2003	2597861	17512	6788	0.26	37.86

**Source:** - R.B.I. Tourist Statistics, 2004; Directorate of Tourism, Assam and Basic Statistics of Northeastern Region, North Eastern Council, 2005. \* Excludes Sikkim.

Assam is most accessible states of North-Eastern states of India. That is why its share of foreign tourist's inflow shows better position as comparison rest of these states. It is evident from Table III.2 that its share of foreign tourist's arrival is more than 50 percent of total tourist arrival in North-East except in 2002 and 2003. However, as comparison to national level, share of foreign tourist inflow is insignificant. There has been little improvement of foreign tourist's arrival in years of 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. Efficient tourism development policy is necessary to attract more tourists in Assam which includes improvements of infrastructure and publicity about unexplored tourist destinations.

**Table III.3: Generation of Tourism Revenue (Rs.000)**

Year	DOT*	ATDC**	TOTAL	% of Net State Domestic Product
1996-1997	3,688	N.A.	(>)3,668	0.0019
1997-1998	2,743	1,972	4,715	0.0023
1998-1999	3,105	1,979	5,084	0.0022
1999-2000	3,172	3,226	6,398	0.0025
2000-2001	9,999	6,498	16,497	N.A.
2001-2002	7,562	7,885	15,447	N.A.
2002-2003	8,700	11,176	19,876	N.A.

**Source:** - ATDC, 2003. \*Directorate of Tourism \*\* Assam Tourism Development Corporation N.A. - Not Available.

It is evident from Table III.3 shows increasing generation of revenue from tourism related activities over the years. Assam Tourism Development Corporation has shown better performance in terms of revenue collection as it works for marketing of tourism in the state, while Department of tourism under directorate of tourism works on planning for new tourist destinations. Contribution of tourism to Net State Domestic Product though increasing with time but its share in the economy of Assam is negligible.

It can be said that from the above analysis that tourism in Assam is still at its infancy. The inflow of foreign tourists is slowly picking up, however rise in their number is not very significant over the last ten years. So is the case in respect of revenue earnings. The figures of the last three financial years indicate marked improvement. But it is premature to forecast a major and positive transformation. A coherent approach towards tourism development is need of the hour. Government of India is also taking special initiatives for development of tourism in North-Eastern region including Assam. Special travel concessions to tourists visiting these states are one of them. Development of tourist circuits and improvement of tourist infrastructure is priority for promoting tourism. Work for achieving these goal has started through government actions.

The following discussion is an attempt to present the contemporary status of this sector in terms of the indentified tourist places, their tourist resources, accessibility pattern and the facilities available. The spatio-temporal dimension of tourist flow to tourist places has also been analyzed in order to understand the present status of the sector.

### **III.B. POTENTIAL SITES INDENTIFIED AS TOURIST CENTRES**

Although Assam is endowed with immense potentiality for tourism development, only a small portion of it has been identified and developed for the purpose. Only few spots have been developed to meet the demand of the domestic and foreign tourists mainly due to the lack of necessary initiatives. Though campaign has been made for popularizing lesser known destinations yet, dearth of required facilities and prevailing socio-political situation in the state restrict tourist flow. Slow pace of economic development and urbanization also hinder growth of economically better-off people expected to participate in the recreational and adventure activities. In spite of these hindrances, efforts have been made to identify and develop tourist spot and classify them as per availability of tourist facilities.

On the basis of the available tourist resources in the state, the tourism department has categorized tourism into the categories of: wildlife tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimage tourism, adventure tourism and tea tourism. Pilgrimage and wildlife categorizes continue to attract the domestic and foreign tourists. The *sakti peeth* Kamakhya Temple and Kaziranga National Park constitute the most attractive points for tourists. Though the concept of cultural tourism is quite old but it has still not been projected for tourism development. Adventure and tea tourism are two areas recently adopted by tourism department.



Fig.III. 1-Location of tourist places in Assam

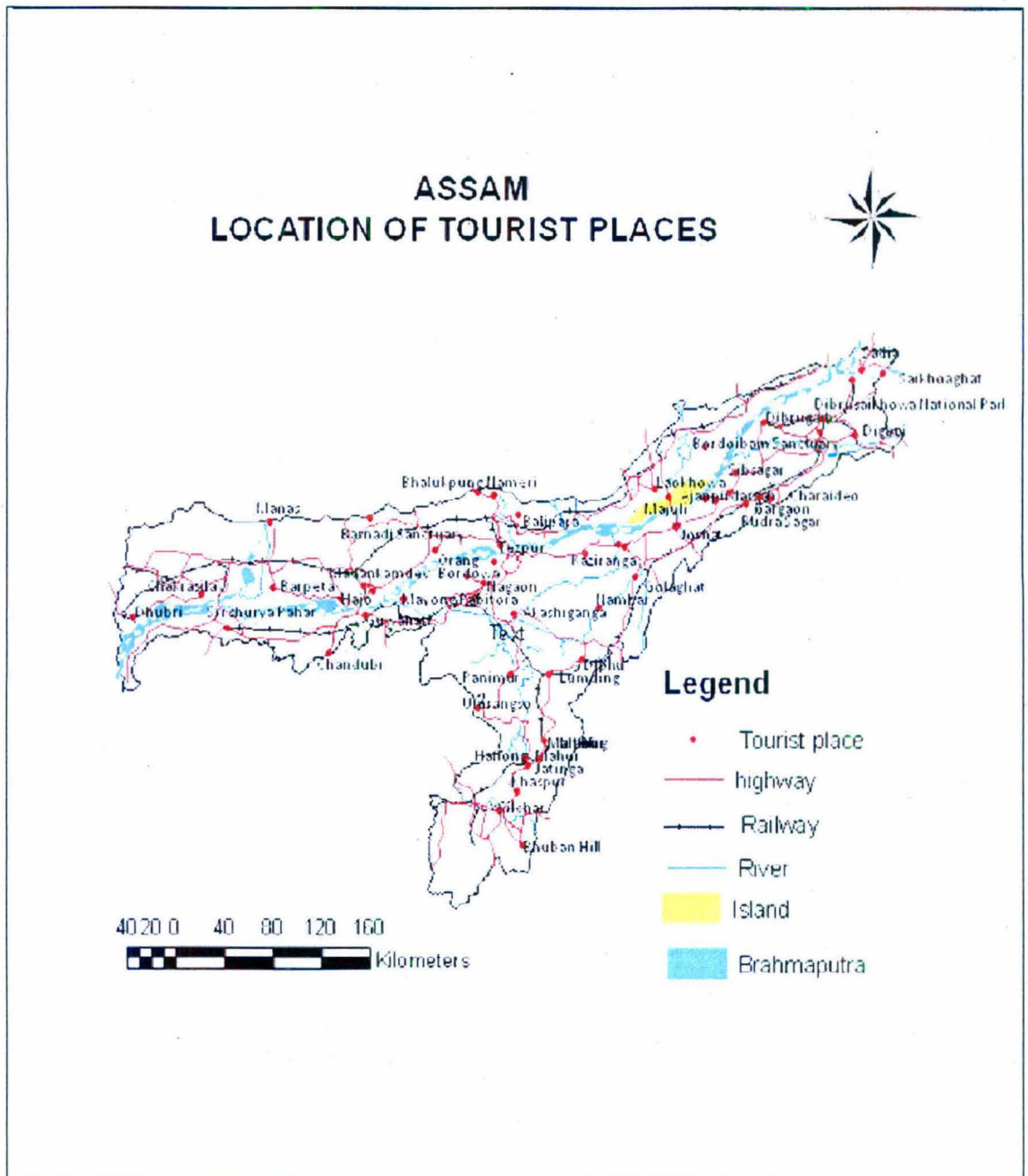


Figure III.1 shows that tourist places are scattered all over the state. Important centres of wildlife tourism are Kaziranaga National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Nameri National Park, Manas National Park, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Bordoibam-Bilmukh Wildlife Sanctuary and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. Majuli, Bordowa, Sualkuchi and Barpeta are known for cultural tourism. Sibsagar, Charaideo, Rudra Sagar, Jorhat, Tezpur, Khaspur, Surya Pahar, Maibong and Diphu are seen as destinations for historical tourism. Religious spots such as Hajo, Dhubri and Ajan-Pir-Dargah are popular among tourists. Panimur, Umrangso, Haflong, Diphu, Mayong, Sadia, Chakrasila and Bhuban hill. Shurya Pahar, Chandubi and Mayong are places for adventure tourism.

Department of tourism has identified 32 sites of Tourist's interest. However tourist infrastructure are quite limited and confined only to certain sites. An account of these tourist destinations along with their resources has been presented below.

#### **(1) Tourist attractions in and around Guwahati.**

Guwahati is getting importance not only by being the gateway to the North-Eastern States of India but as a tourism hub as well. Number of ancient temples and archaeological sites belonging to 7th to 17th century are found here. The city got the name Guwahati, "*Guwa*" meaning beetle nut and "*Hat*", meaning market in Assamese. Guwahati has its own charm and attractions to suit all categories of visitors. At present, the department of tourism has projected five major tourist spots within the city. These are Kamakhya temple, Basisthashram, Nabagraha temple, State zoo cum Botanical garden, State Museum and Gandhi Mandap respectively.

Kamakhya temple is well known as an important centre of pilgrimage. The temple is visited by 800 visitors per day in rainy season (May to Sept) and by about 2000 visitors per day in dry season (Oct to April)<sup>2</sup>. It is located on top of Nilachal hill (293metre height) at a distance of 9 km west of Guwahati. The temple site also possesses rock sculptures and archaeological remains. These monuments are preserved under the provision of the Ancient Monument Protection Act<sup>3</sup>. It is a

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<sup>2</sup> Master Plan for Guwahati Metropolitan Area-2025 (Draft) (2005): "*Tourism prospect in Guwahati*", Department of Municipal Administration, Govt. of Assam, Guwahati.

<sup>3</sup> Choudhary, P.D. (1964): "*Archaeology in Assam*", Department of Archaeology, Government of Assam, Guwahati.

famous Hindu shrine. Tourist's inflow is highest during Ambubachi fair held annually in latter part of June. Nearly one lakh devotees visit the temple daily during this time.

**Table III.4:- Tourists flow in Kamakhya (2005-2007)**

Year	Domestic Tourists (No)	Foreign Tourists (No)	Total Tourists(No)
2005	707469	1043	708512
2006	999417	1391	1000808
2007	967249	1026	968275

Source:-Directorate tourism office, Assam.

It is evident from table III.4. that there are fluctuations in inflow of tourists. Highest tourist arrival was recorded in 2006. Most of the tourists visit Kamakhya during stay in Guwahati. Some foreign tourists also visit the temple. Domestic tourists visit in very large numbers. Good accessibility, availability of accommodation due to its nearness to Guwahati is another factor for tourism growth.

Next importance place of tourist attraction in Guwahati is Basiathashram. Located 14 km from the city center, it is considered to be the hermitage of legendary sage Basistha. The site is endowed with terracotta and stone sculptures. Three hill streams *Sandhya, Lalita and Kanta* meet here, bestowing the Ashram a unique charm amidst idyllic natural panorama. Natural and scenic beauty especially in the upstream of Basistha River is another tourist attraction here.

Nabagraha temple is located on top of Chitrachal hill (216 metre) 3 km from Guwahati railway station. Nabagraha is known as "Temple of Nine Planets". It was a great centre for study of Astrology and Astronomy during ancient times. The place is ideal for viewing city skyline.

State Zoo-cum-Botanical garden is another popular destination for tourist as well as local people. It is located at a distance of nearly 5 km from city centre. Covering an area of 175 hectares, this Zoo-cum-Botanical Garden is house for endangered and rare species of wild animals and plants. Among the main attractions are one horned Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Zebra, and Chimpanzee etc. Apart from these, it has other added attractions like children's park, forest museum, orchid house, a lake with boating facility, watch tower, palm grove and a herbarium which make it a centre of attractions for tourists.

Assam State Museum is located in the heart of Guwahati within walking distance from Guwahati railway station. It is among the biggest museums in the country. Exhibits are displayed in ten different sections like epigraphy, sculpture, natural history, art and crafts, old costumes, musical instruments, literature, ethnography, arms and ammunitions and miscellaneous. Since inception, the museum has been popular among local people and excursionists. Domestic as well as foreign tourists generally make a visit to the museum due to its convenient location. A large number of local visitors, excursionists and domestic tourists visit this museum daily.

City sight-seeing tours conducted by both government and private agencies include Gandhimandap, memorial of the nation, located at the top of Sarania hill (180 metre altitude). This visit also provides good view of fast growing cityscape. Apart from these, Umanada and Sukreswar temple are other two attractive sites. Ancient Umananda Siva temple situated on Peacock Island in middle of Brahmaputra is another place of attraction. A large number of devotees visit the temple every day. The site is ideal for viewing spectacular view of sunset over Brahmaputra.

Some comparatively recent attractions like planetarium, Gita mandir, Balaji temple and Sankar Dev Kalashetra have developed within the city. These have also been able to attract some tourists.

## **(2) Sualkuchi:**

It is located at a distance of 32 kms from Guwahati on the north bank of Brahmaputra. Sualkuchi is one of the largest weaving villages engaged in weaving Muga (golden silk) and Pat (mulberry) silk. It is an ideal tourist spot for getting first hand experience of cottage industry and also for buying silk garments. However, in spite of its natural and cultural richness, Sualkuchi has not been able to attract large number of tourists mainly due to lack of publicity and inadequate infrastructure. Sualkuchi is accessible through ferry service from Guwahati.

## **(3) Hajo**

This is the meeting point of three religions namely Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. It houses a number of shrines. Hyagrab Madhab Mandir is famous among Buddhists. Some Buddhists hold that Lord Buddha attained nirvana here. Large

numbers of people from Bhutan visit this temple in winter season. There is also a mosque built by Pir Giyasuddin Auliya and it is stated that it has one-fourth sanctity of Mecca. Because of this, it is known as *Poa (quarter) -Mecca*. Apart from these, Hajo is also well known for bell metal and brass products prepared by local artisans. The place is popular among local people and tourists. But absence of modern tourist facilities in this tourist spot restricts the growth of tourism.

#### **(4) Chandubi**

A natural lake and fine picnic spot. It is located about 64 km to south-west of Guwahati near Assam-Meghalaya border. The lake and its surroundings, broken by glades, is an ideal holiday resort and have added attraction of fishing and rowing. Though there is a tourist lodge of tourism department and also paddle and rowing boats, it is yet to gain popularity due to lack of publicity and transport . Chandubi attracts seasonal picnickers only.

#### **5) Pabitora**

It is about 60 Km. to the east of Guwahati on the border of Kamrup and Marigaon districts. It is the habitat of world famous endangered one horned Rhino with a density of five Rhinoceros in per square Km which is more than Kaziranga National Park. Other mammals found are Leopard, Leopard cat, Fishing cat, Jungle cat, Wild Buffalo, Wild pigs, Chinese pangolins etc. Pabitora is also rich in migratory birds. Elephant ride & Jeep Safari facilities are available. It is a suitable site for bird watching. Boating is another pleasure at *Haduck Beel (wetland)* at Pabitora. Though sanctuary is hardly at a distance of two hours drive from Guwahati city, it has failed to attract attention of excursionists and tourists. Inadequate publicity, accomodaton and transport facilities are contributing factor for this. One Inspection Bunglaw(I.B.) provides some accommodation for tourists. Mayang Tourist Lodge under Tourism Department and Forest Department Inspection Bungalow at Mayang, provide comfortable accommodation.

**Table III.5: - Tourists visiting Pabitora Sanctuary**

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total Tourists (No)
2005-06	4127	29	4156
2006-07	5112	34	5146
2007-08	3250	12	3262

Source: - Statistical cell, Directorate tourism, Assam.

Table III.5 shows tourist inflow is not large. Very few foreign tourists visit Pabitora. Domestic tourists do visit the place. Altogether 3262 tourists visited Pabitora in 2007-08, out of which 12 were foreign and rest domestic tourists.

#### **(6) Madan Kamdev**

Madan Kamdev is an important archaeological site located 40 Km north of Guwahati near National Highway No.52. It is known for relicts of seven ancient temples. These were built in ninth and tenth century AD. *Siva Lingas* and images of *Siva-Parvati* in *umalingam* (*Siva* and *Parvati* sitting together in compromising posture) posture exist in the site. The remains of temples reveal glorious past in terms of art and architecture that flourished in this area. Presence of sculpture of different gods and goddesses in classical style along with erotic sculpture on walls make it a 'Konark of the North-East India'.<sup>4</sup> Mandakini River flowing near the temple attracts local picnickers and devotees, especially in winter. However, organized effort for tourism promotion have not taken place.

#### **(7) Manas National Park**

Located in Himalayan foothill bhabar area in western Assam, Manas is well known as World heritage site with combination of scenic beauty and rare wealth of wildlife. It covers an area of 519.77 sq. Km. The core area is 360 Sq. Kms. The park has more than 20 endangered species and is famous for its scenic beauty. The rare species found at Manas are Hispid Hare, Pigmy Hog and Golden Langur, Rhinoceros, Wild Buffalo and Tiger etc. Other common animals are Elephant, Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Himalayan Bear, Wild Boar, Sambar, Swamp Deer, and Hog Deer etc. It is

<sup>4</sup> Bhuyan,G.N.(2008): "*Monumental Assam*", Cultural Heritage of Assam,(ed),Deka Dinesh,Directorate of Information &Public relations ,Assam,Dispur ,Guwahati.pp 127-128.

also an important bird watching area. White Winged Wood Duck was recently seen in the Park. Another chief attractions is that hundreds of winged species migrate to Manas during winter. Among them are River chats (White Capped Redstars), Forktails, Cormorants and various types of ducks including Ruddy Shelduck. Woodland birds are no less attracting and include Indian Hornbill and Great Pied Hornbill. Manas used to be paradise for wildlife lovers and anglers till late 1980s. Unfortunately, due to Bodo agitation and associated deteriorating law and order situation, the park received not more than a dozen foreign visitors from 1991 to 1993.<sup>5</sup> It was closed for tourists due to terrorists problem. It was again opened only 2005. However, visits of tourists after this period have improved.

**Table III.6: - Tourists visiting Manas National Park**

Year	Domestic Tourists(No)	Foreign Tourists(No)	Total Tourists(No)
2005	13,648	72	13,720
2006	16,792	85	16,877
2007	25,417	125	25,542

**Source:** - Statistical cell, Directorate tourism Assam

Table III.6 shows that number of tourists has been increasing since 2005. Gradual increase in number of tourists during last three years is impressive but the number of foreign tourists was low. It is probably due to information as insurgency prone area. More than 25,000 thousand domestic tourists visited Manas in 2007. Accommodation facility is not developed well. A forest bungalow at Mothanguri, within the park, provides dormitory accommodation for 48 persons. A number of rest houses and camp sites are also available.

### **(8)Barpeta**

Barpeta is an important centre of Vaishnavite culture and has a number *Satras* (Vaishnavite Monastery). Among the *Satras* those are regularly visited by people are *Barpeta, Patbaushi, Sundaridiya, Sunpura, GanakKuchi, Satra Kanara and Jania*. *Satra* located in the heart of Barpeta town attracts devotees from all over the State particularly during Holi when DouL festival is organised and on anniversaries of various Vaishnava Gurus. Buildings within *Satra* premise have fine architecture.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmed, P.N.S. (2006): "*Tourism in Assam: Need for a Paradigm shift*", Challenges of Development in North-East India, (ed), Syiemlich R.David et al.Regency Publications, New Delhi. p-411.

*Kirtan Ghar (sanctum sanctorum)* is considered to be the largest in Assam. Three *Guru Asanas* are placed in this building in honour of Shrimanta Sankardeva, Shri Madhavdeva and Shri Badula Ata. Two *Satradhikars* (Chief Priest of *Satra*) sit behind the *Asanas* to hold *Nam-Prasangas* (communal prayer) regularly. Numerous buildings are located within the premise covering an area of 20 Bighas. Town of Barpeta is uniquely divided into 22 *Hattis* those are inhabited by the followers and families of the Gurus. These are administered by *Satra* administration. This unique feature is not found in any other place in Assam. Traditional handicrafts of Barpeta including ivory carving are popular all over Assam. Local fire cracker industry, *Brass metal* industry of Sarthebari is also well known. Barpeta can be reached by Bus and Railways. Nearest Railway Station Barpeta Road lies at a distance of 21 Km. from Barpeta town. Barpeta Road is connected to all parts of Assam by National Highway No.31. There is regular bus service between Barpeta and Guwahati

#### **(9)Tezpur**

Tezpur literally means *city of blood* (as a result of the great mythological war fought here between Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva). It is at a distance of 181 km from Guwahati. The place is known for its mythology, legend and folklore. This beautiful town possesses a number of archaeological sites, pilgrimage and scenic spots in an around it. Among these, finest specimen of iconographic art (6<sup>th</sup> century AD) of Assam is prominent. It can be seen in Da-Parbatia village (7 km from Tezpur town). Agnigarh (rampart of fire) reminds romantic legends of Usha and Aniruddha (nephew of Lord Krishna) and also provides a spectacular view of Brahmaputra river. Another spot, *Bamuni hill* has important remains of rock sculptures which date back to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The town is dotted with number of pilgrimage. Mahabhairab and Bhairabi Temples are of great significance. An annual fair is held at Mahabhairab temple on the occasion of Sivaratri, which attracts thousands of devotees as well as domestic tourists.



**Table III.7: - Tourists visiting Tezpur**

Year	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Total Tourist
2000	1367	21	1388
2001	2621	16	2637
2002	2248	30	2278
2003	1669	21	1690
2004	1657	42	1699

**Source:** - Tourist Information Centre, Tezpur.

Table III.7 shows number tourist has not increased since 2001. Highest increase in tourist visit was seen in 2001 followed by 2002. Foreign tourism arrival is low probably there is no tourist circuit covering Tezpur. Domestic tourists visits historical places and also enjoy ferry service in Brahmaputra.

#### **(10) Bhalukpong**

Bhalukung, a beautiful picnic and angling spot, was capital of Bhaluka, the grandson of king Bana (an Asura king during Mahabharata age). It is at a distance of 64 kms. from Tezpur. This picturesque spot lies on way to Bomdilla (Arunachal Pradesh). It is only gateway to the western part of Arunachal comprising districts of Tawang, West Kameng, East Kameng and their attractive tourist spots namely Bomdila, Tawang and Sela Pass etc. Other attractions of Bhalukpong are hot spring and big orchid garden at Tipi. Near it, lies Nameri National Park covering an area of 200 sq km. Nearly river Jia-Bharali attracts anglers. Siwalik Hill, deciduous forest and river Jia Bhoroli add charm to it. Nameri is famous for rare wild animals. Wild animals found here are Tiger, Black bear, elephant, Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Indian Bison, Pangolin, Indian wild dog, deer, Civet Cat, Capped Langur and Jackals etc. Various species of birds such as endangered white winged wood duck, four species of Hornbill and butterflies and reptiles are also found here.

**Table III. 8: Tourists visiting Nameri National Park (1999-2008)**

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total Tourists
1999	729	78	807
2000	808	89	897
2001	1183	74	1257
2002	977	89	1066
2003	989	188	1177
2004	1279	230	1509
2005	1968	365	2333
2006	2278	368	2646
2007	2287	524	2811
2008	2780	430	3210

**Source:** - Statistical cell, Directorate tourism Assam.

It is apparent from table III.8 that number of tourists has been increasing since 1999. This is because it gets good publicity. It falls in Guwahati-Bhalukpong-Tawang tourists circuit. Tourists visiting Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh like to visit Nameri National Park because it is a transit point. Adventure activity like angling, rafting in Jia Bharali river is another attraction here.

#### **(11) Orang National Park**

Orang National Park is known as miniature Kaziranga. It covers an area of 78.81 Sq. Km, Orang National Park is situated on North bank of Brahmaputra river. Sixty percent of the national park is grassland. Animals seen here are Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros, Elephants, Tigers, Sambar, Barking Deer, Pangolin, Hog Deer, Civet cat, Otters and Wild Boar. Various species of birds including Pelican, Cormorant, Greylag Goose, Large Whistling Teal, Greater Adjutant Stork, Kingfisher and King Vulture are found in this national park. Unfortunately Orang has failed to attract of domestic as well as foreign tourists due to lack of adequate publicity and amenities. There are two Inspection Bungalows inside the park. One is at *Silbori* and the other at *Satsimlu*. One Tourist Lodge is coming up at *Nalbari*

(Tourist Department).<sup>6</sup> In addition, there is a Government Tourist Lodge, a Circuit House and other private hotels of moderate rates at Tezpur. There are also hotels and lodges found nearby.

### **(12) Bordowa**

Bordowa is birth place of great neo-vaishnavite reformer of Assam, Sri Sankardeva. It is located about 13 km to the north-west of Nagaon town. This celebrated place of pilgrimage possesses some relics associated with life and works of the saint. There are two *Sattras* or Vaishnav monasteries, *Narowa Sattra* and *Salaguri Sattra*. Bordowa has a historic *Namghar* (Place of worship), an institution of vaishnavite literature and research and collection of rich heritage of the works on art and drama. The museum in *Sattra* premise has a treasure of fine wood carving sculptures, which are important specimens of rich tradition of medieval wood carving in Assam. There is also another small museum managed by *Srimanta Sankardev Gaveshana Kendra* having as many as 142 ancient manuscripts and items of material culture. The area is ideally suited for cycle tour, which can provide opportunity to explore life and culture of the countryside. Though the place is rich in terms of tourist resources, facilities are, however limited. It is yet to gain popularity as a tourist place. Lack of publicity is one of the reasons behind it. Department of tourism and a few hotels provide accommodation facilities at the nearest Nagaon town.

### **(13) Kaziranga National Park**

Kaziranga is located between 26°30' N and 26°45' N latitudes and 93°08' E to 93°36'E longitudes within three districts namely Nagaon, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts. It is at a distance of 217 kms from Guwahati and 96 kms from Jorhat. The park is approximately 40 km in length from east to west, and 13 km in breadth from north to south. The park area is circumscribed by Brahmaputra river which forms northern and eastern boundaries and Mora Dipholu river forms southern boundary. Other notable rivers within the park are Dipholu and Mora Dhansiri. Kaziranga is home of more than two third of the world's one horned Rhinoceros population. Kaziranga is also famous for Elephants, Bisons, Deer, Bears, Tigers,

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<sup>6</sup> Annual Administrative Report (2007): "New tourist accommodation in Manas", Department of Tourism Govt. of Assam, Guwahati.p-11.

Leopard Cats, Jungle Cats, Otters, Hog Badgers, Capped Langurs and Hoolock Gibbons. Some major birds found here are namely Oriental Honey Buzzard, Black-Shouldered Kite, Black Kite, Brahminy Kite, Pallas's Fishing Eagle, White Tailed Eagle, Grey-Headed Fishing Eagle, Himalayan Griffon etc. Large numbers of migratory birds visits the park lakes and swampy areas during winter. Neighbouring tea gardens and hill ranges of Karbi Anglong make it an ideal spot for appreciating landscape and natural beauty. Native life and culture of tea tribal community as well as Karbi people of nearby villages may prove to be another source of attraction for tourists. One of the important feature of the park is that it is probably the best National parks in India for easy wildlife sighting and having regular facility of Elephant Safari (October to April).<sup>7</sup> Both domestic and foreign tourists regularly visit this park (Table III.9).

**Table III. 9 Tourists flow in Kaziranga National Park (1997-2007)**

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total	Revenue(Rs)
1997	17,117	2,408	19,525	21,97,068
1998	18,157	1,011	19,248	18,02,856
1999	37,696	1,623	39,319	22,29,291
2000	50,498	1,838	52,336	30,38,258
2001	44,162	2,144	46,306	34,94,084
2002	59,811	2,055	61,866	53,60,425
2003	57,864	3,773	61,637	61,38,657
2004	67,719	5,154	72,873	66,12,508
2005	72,362	4,711	77,073	76,41,019
2006	69,574	6,473	76,047	82,57,236
2007	53,640	6,106	59,746	87,34,185

**Source:** Department of Forest, Kaziranaga National Park.

It is clear from Table III.9 that it is the most important destination of tourists in Assam. There has been nearly two and half-fold increase in foreign tourists and three fold increase of domestic tourists during last ten year. Increasing number of foreign and domestic tourists in the park is the result of the growing demand for nature-based

<sup>7</sup> Choudhury.A. (1997): "Kaziranga the Rhinoland", Sanctuary Asia, Vol.17, No.4, Bombay.P-14.

tourism all over the world. About four fold increase in revenue during this period is an excellent achievement. This money will help in developing tourism infrastructure. Development of tourism infrastructure here is best compared to other tourist spots in Assam. There are four government tourist lodges and twenty four private accommodations available here.

#### **(14)Garampani**

It is one of oldest Sanctuary containing hot water spring (*Garampani*) and waterfalls and is surrounded by Nambor Sanctuary having 51 rare species of orchid. Located at a distance of 300 km from Guwahati, 50 km south-east of Kaziranga and 21 km south-west of Golaghat, Garampani is one of the promising tourist destination in Assam. Garampani Wildlife sanctuary is smallest wildlife sanctuary of Assam. It covers an area of 6.1 sq.km of alluvial terraces of Dhansiri River. The Sanctuary is rich with tropical semi-evergreen vegetation. Tigers, Elephants, Gaurs, Bears, Sambar, Barking deer, Rhesus macaques, Hoolock gibbon, wilds and varieties of birds like Great pied Hornbill and Hill myna etc. and reptiles like Python, Cobra and Monitor lizards are found here. Though, it is located only at a distance of about 50 km from Kaziranga, it has failed to attract tourists due to lack of publicity and necessary infrastructure development. Its popularity is still confined to picnickers from Golaghat and from its neighbourhood.

#### **(15)Majuli**

Majuli is world's largest inhabited river island. It is also cultural capital of Assam and seat of Vaishnavite culture for the past five hundred years.<sup>8</sup> The island is at about a distance of 200 kilometers from Guwahati. One has to board a ferry from Jorhat to reach here. The island was formed due to course change by Brahmaputra river during early times. Majuli is famous for *Satras* (Vaisnavite monasteries). These are important centres of Assamese art, crafts and culture. It is also a showcase for

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<sup>8</sup> Report to the World Heritage Committee (2008): "*Referred Nominations of Cultural Landscapes, River Island of Majuli in Midstream of Brahmaputra River in Assam*", IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), P-141.

cultural heritage of ethnic tribes those inhabit the island namely Mishings, Deoris and Sonowal-Kacharies. It is located in totally pollution free environment. A large number of migratory birds visit this island. Majuli offers a bouquet of traditional handicrafts and pottery, ethnic culture and dance forms and water sports etc. to visitors. It receives more than 50,000 domestic tourists and more than 200 foreign tourists every year (Table III.10). In spite of its rich tourism resources, Majuli does not have a developed infrastructure for tourism. There is lack of hotel facilities for tourists. But a good aspect is that some *Sattras* provide guestrooms. In addition to *Satra* facilities, there are Inspection Bungalows at some points on the island (the one at Kamalabari is well located) and a Circuit House at Garamur.

**Table III.10: Tourists visiting Majuli.**

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
1998	11210	11	11221
1999	17042	13	17055
2000	21639	21	21660
2001	31151	17	31168
2002	71113	49	71162
2003	92693	60	92753
2004	58176	105	58281
2005	32325	206	32531
2006	60417	247	60664
2007	51312	211	51523

**Source:-**Statistical cell, Directorate tourism Assam.

It is apparent from table III.10 that the number of tourists visiting this island has increased since 1998. There was decline in tourists arrival in 2005. Tourists visit is again got momentum in 2006 and 2007. Though number of foreign tourists is increasing but it is still less than expected. An effort to upgrade Majuli as World Heritage site by the UNESCO is going on. The publicity for this campaign will help in increasing foreign tourists arrivals.

## (16) Sibsagar

Sibsagar was capital of the *Ahom* Kings who ruled for 600 years in Assam. It is situated about 150 km east of Kaziranga National Park and its distance from Guwahati is about 369 km. The place is attractive for those who like calmness of nature. The town has been built around a beautiful tank named Sibsagar Lake. The tank, spread in an area of 129 acre was artificially built about 200 years ago. The town gets its name from this lake. It is gradually becoming sought after tourist spot. Number of archaeological remains, palaces, and temples of Ahoms are still found in and around the town.

There are also several temples around Sibsagar Tank including Siva temple, Vishnu temple and Devidol temple. The other important places and tourist attractions include Joysagar Tank, *Rang Ghar* (royal sports pavilion) and *Kareng Ghar* (seven storied royal Palace). *Rang Ghar* is the place from where Ahom kings and nobles witnessed games like buffalo fights and other sports (Plate III.1). Here, Bihu festival is particularly popular among tourists. November to April is the best time to visit Sibsagar. One can reach the place by air, by road and also by train. There are many airports around Sibsagar those include the Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Dimapur and Tezpur. Apart from that, NH 37 connects Sibsagar with the commercial Guwahati. One can also go there from Kaziranga National Park or from Dibrugarh city. There are a number of tourist lodges and circuit houses at Jorhat and Sibsagar.



**Plate No III.1: *Rang Ghar* (Royal Sports Pavilion) constructed by Ahom Kings at Sibsagar.**

### **(17) Jaysagar**

Jaysagar tank and temples are situated about 5 kms south of Sibsagar town. It was built by King Rudra Singha in memory of his mother, Joymoti, a patriotic martyr. It covers an area of 318 acres. Three temples were built on its banks in 1698 by the same ruler. They are Vishnu Temple, Shivadol and Devidol. All three temples, especially the Devidol, are well decorated with stone sculptures depicting various gods and goddesses of Hindu mythology. Sibsagar and Jaysagar tanks are ideal for watching aquatic birds both resident as well as migratory. Such sagars or large tanks are also suitable for boating and canoeing. The area enjoys a comparatively long tourist season of over six months, extending from September to March.

### **(18) Gaurisagar**

Gaurisagar tank was built by Queen Phuleswari Devi. It is located at a distance of about 12 kms from Sibsagar town. It is dedicated to goddess Durga. Three temples Vishnudol, Sivadol and Devidol were later built by Queen of Ahom King Siva Singha.

### **(19) Ajan Pir Dargah**

Ajan Pir Dargah Sarif is situated at *Saraguri Chapori*, 22 kms from Sibsagar town. It was built in memory of Saint Ajan Pir who was the first Muslim saint to compose *Zikir* and *Zari* in Assamese language. *Zikir* and *Zari* are Assamese devotional songs. Dargah is regarded as a holy place both by Hindus and Muslims. Thousands of devotees visit this place to pay homage to the saint *Isale Sahab* in the month of February. Village and riverine landscape near to it are other sources of tourist attraction. However, deplorable road conditions are major problems faced by visitors.

### **(20) Gargaon**

Gargaon palace is situated at 13 kms east of Sibsagar. Gargaon was also capital of Ahom rulers. It is a place of historical significance. The seven-storeyed palace known as Kareng Ghar was built in 1762 by Rajeshwar Singha, on the ruins of an earlier palace that had been built by king Suklengmung in 1540. The palace is connected with *Talatal Ghar* (Underground Chamber) by a tunnel. At present, Gargaon palace is an important site for excursionists.



### (21) Charaideo

It was the first capital of Ahom Kingdom, built by Sukapha, in the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Charaideo is 28 kms east of Sibsagar town and is famous for the maidam (burial vaults) the kings and other royal members which resembles with pyramids of Egypt (Plate No III.2). Some of these graves have artistic brickwork and architecture. These are amidst very scenic environment of dense forest and a few tea gardens. At present, some of the *maidams* have been renovated and an archaeological park has been developed by State Archaeology Department, which will enable it to attract more tourists.

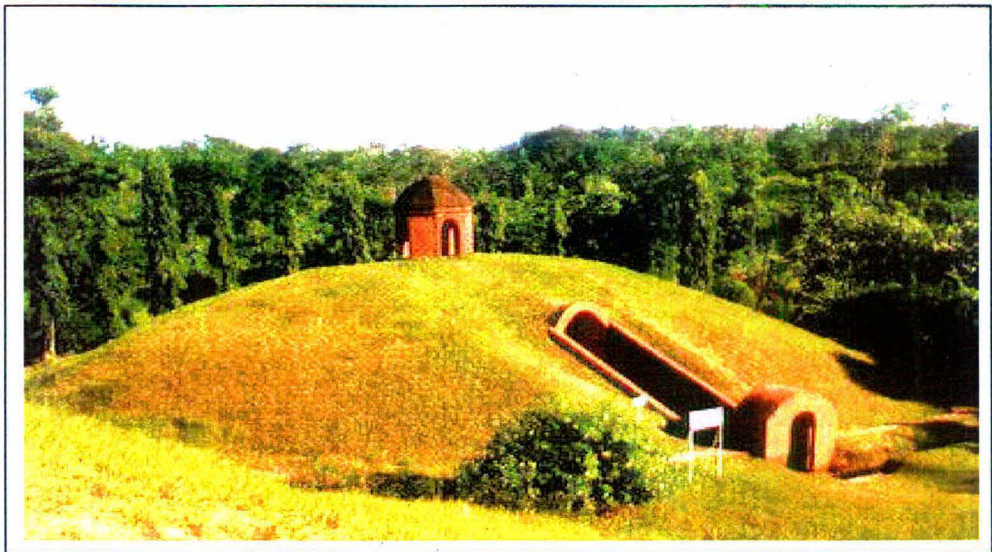


Plate No III.2 Maidams (burial vaults) of Ahom Kings at Charaideo.

### (22) Dibrugarh

Dibrugarh, the largest tea exporting town in India, is situated on south bank of Dibru river with misty outlines of Himalayas in the background. The town is surrounded by several tea gardens. Primary attraction of Dibrugarh is the scenic beauty of tea gardens. Jalal Mandir located near Assam Medical College is another tourist attraction. It is a fast developing town in upper Assam and is the gateway to some of the districts in Arunachal Pradesh

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<sup>9</sup> Ahom rulers reigned Assam for six centuries (1228-1826 AD) which ended with the arrival of British in the 19th century. The kingdom was established by Sukapha, a Tai prince from Yunan province of China.

### **(23) Tinsukia, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve.**

Tinsukia, a commercial city of Assam, is also gateway to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve. This park covers an area about 340 sq.kms. It extends over Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts. Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve is one of the bio-diversity hot-spots with over 350 species of avifauna providing unique habitat to some threatened species. It is also a safe heaven for extremely rare white winged wood duck and many migratory birds. Indigenous specie of Wild-Horse, called Feral Horse is a major attraction here. It is an important business center of eastern Assam and a transit point for visitors to and from Arunachal Pradesh. It is also a transit point for devotees from different parts of India, who annually visit Parasuram Kund in Aruanchal Pradesh for holy bath.

### **(24) Digboi**

Oil town Digboi is situated in Tinsukia district at a distance of 527 km from Guwahati and 36 km from Tinsukia on National Highway No.38. Here Asia's first oil refinery was established in 1889-90. Indo- Myanmar border with famous Pangsua Pass is nearby. Through it, Successive generations of people of Mongoloid origin entered India through it. Digboi also has an oil museum and a Wildlife Sanctuary is near it. One may also see herd of elephants or Royal Bengal Tiger, besides some rare species of birds. Moreover, Dibru Saikhowa National Park (Assam) and Namdapha National Park (Arunachal Pradesh) are only a few kilometers away from it. Apart from the refinery, the oil-park, museum, golf club and war cemetery of World War II are some important attractions of this town. There are coal mines in the Margherita-Ledo area to the south of it, which can also attract tourists. But these places have not got much attention of tourists due to lack of adequate publicity, tourist facilities and their peripheral location.

### **(25) Haflong**

Situated at an altitude of 1,100 meters, Haflong in rugged terrain of North Cachar hill is Assam's only Hill-Station. Here one can at times see rainbow down below. It is located at a distance of 353 km from Guwahati and about 90 km from Silchar. The town also has the big and beautiful Haflong Lake in its centre. It has picturesque surroundings. Haflong is area of several tribes like the Dimasa, Zemi-Naga, Hmar, Kuki, Biate and Hrangkhwal, etc

## **(26) Jatinga**

Jatinga is known for a mystery related to unnatural death of many birds. It is located at a distance of 7 km south of Haflong. The migratory birds come during the month of August to November and it becomes the ornithologists' paradise. From the elevated watchtower one can see some birds yielding to their death on some night. Panoramic view of Barail Range is an added attraction of this town.

## **(27) Mahur**

It is an ideal place for adventure activities and picnic. It is a small town located at a distance of 26 km from Haflong on the bank of Mahur River. Glimpse of the tribal life and culture of Khasi, Dimasa Kachari, Kuki, Naga and Hmar are other attractions for tourists.

## **(28) Maibong**

Located on the bank of Mahur River, Maibong once flourished as capital of Dimasa-Kachari kingdom. Stone houses and temple of Kachari King can be seen here. It is at a distance of 50 km from Haflong, district headquarter of North Cachar hill districts. Stone house & temple of Kachari king and other ruins of the kingdom are the main attraction of the place. The stone carvings of palace gate still stand in the middle of Mahur River and are a reminiscent of its glorious past. There are also rock sculptures. Maibong is situated at a distance 110 km from Haflong. It has largest Zemi- Naga village in the North-East. The biggest traditional dormitory (*Hang Seuki*) of Zemi-Naga community is situated here. Preservation of culture and tradition is the main objective of the dormitory.

## **(29)Umrangso**

It is 112 km from Haflong and 224 km from Guwahati. Huge Hydro-Electric Power plant has come up here with dams on Kopili River. Near Umrangso also has hot spring (*garampani*) believed to have medicinal value. Visitors to this town can enjoy sightseeing and fishing Kopili river. In future, water sports in Kopili reservoir can also be developed.

### (30) Diphu

This hill town is the headquarter of Karbi-Anglong district. It is located at a distance of 269 km from Guwahati and about 52 km west of Dimapur (an important gateway to Nagaland). Diphu is the centre of Karbi art and culture. There are number of places of interest near Diphu. These are;

(a) **Amreng** located at the confluence of Kapili River and its tributary Amreng, is surrounded by mystic blue hills and evergreen forests.

(b) **Khanduli** is extensive grassland with undulating moulds that look like desert with grass dunes in the moonlight.

(c) **Umanguli** is an area of 35 sq. Kms of high grassland on top of a hill and surrounded by one big river and one small river on three sides. There are trekking paths to Khanduli and Baithalngsu. Rafting and Angling expedition on river Barapani, golf course, horse riding and hang gliding can be other attractions.

(d) **Singhason** is the highest place (1359 metre) of the district. One can trek through forest covered rocky hills and enjoy enchanting view of Brahmaputra Valley and the Himalayan, Patkai and Barail ranges on a clear day. The area has an very high diversity of flora and fauna.

### (31) Silchar

Silchar, the biggest city of Barak valley is an educational centre and gateway to the states of Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. It is well connected by rail, air and road transport. National Highways network connect it with to Guwahati, Imphal, Aizwal and Agartala. The British had established first polo club in the world at Silchar. First competitive modern form of Polo was also played in Silchar and the plaque for this feat still stand at the back side of District Library.

Attractions at Silchar include ruins of erstwhile capital of Kachari kingdom at Khaspur which are the best surviving examples of Kachari architecture. These are as ruins of a brick-built two storied palace, temple of Ranachandi and Vishnu and some walls and tanks. Another historical place is Badarpur Fort on the banks of Barak

river. This fort has been constructed on single big stone and was stronghold of British East India Company. Kachari 'King Govinda Chandra Narayan signed a treaty with British representative Scot in this fort in 1824.<sup>10</sup> Other attractions are Kachakanti Temple at Udharbond, Sidheswar Shiva Temple, Narsing Akhra, Bhairab Bari and Bharambaba Temples at Silkuri and picturesque tea estates of Barak valley

### **(32) Bhuban hill**

Located amidst Barak valley reserve forest at a distance of 42 km to the south-east of Silchar town, and about 8 km east of Motinagar, Bhuban Hill is an important pilgrimage place. Endowed with forest and tea gardens, the area is rich in natural beauty. Adventure activities like trekking and jungle exploration can be initiated in and around Bhuban. Jungle exploration can be done to witness local flora and fauna, especially along 25 km long trek from Motinagar-Bhuban Hill-Barak River. The area can have tourist season of over three months from October to February. Presently, it is not attracting foreign tourists.

## **III.C.TOURST FACILITIES AND SERVICE**

Apart from attractions, tourist resources include facilities and services meant for tourists which provide economic returns. Hence, tourist facilities and services are as important as the attractions. Basic tourist facilities and services include transport, accommodation, travel agencies, tour packages and food services etc. An overview of such facilities and services of the tourism sector in Assam has been presented along with government plans and programmes for the development of tourism.

### **III.C.1.Transport Facilities**

As tourism is dependent on provision of reasonably good 'travel' and 'stay' conditions. Good transport network is a pre-requisite for its growth and development.

#### **III.C.1.a. Roads and Railways**

Road network under PWD had length of 31,528 km in 1991-92. Share of national highway, state highway and other PWD roads is 2033 km (6.44 percent),

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<sup>10</sup> Endle.S. (1997): "*The Kacharis*", Munishiram Manoharlal Publication, New Delhi, p.251.

1801 km (5.74 percent) and 27685 km (87.8 percent) respectively. Except Hailakandi, Karimganj and North Cachar Hill districts, all other districts are linked by National Highways.

**Fig.III.2. - Road Networks in Assam.**

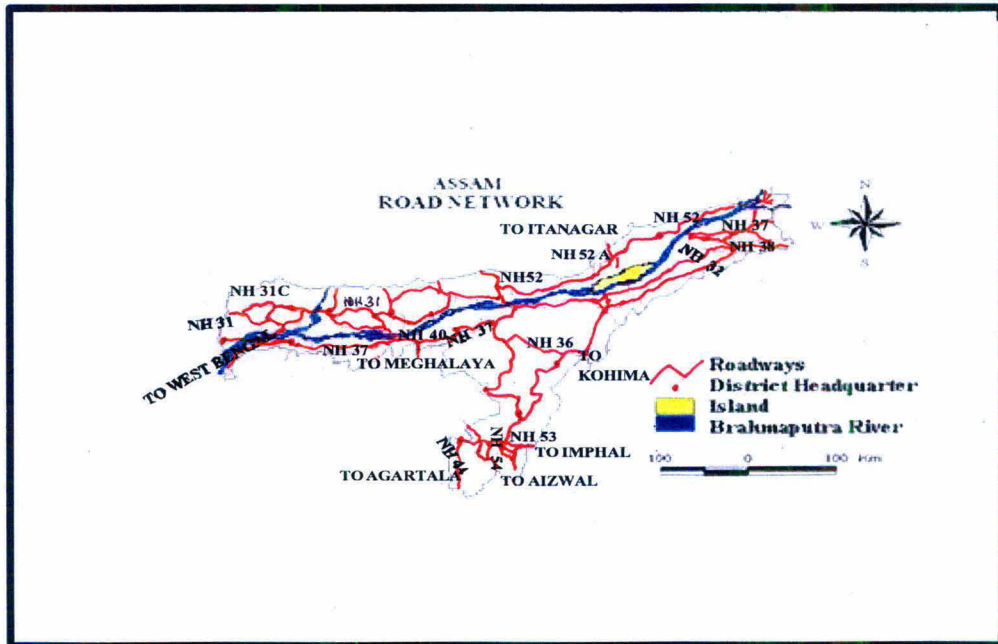


Figure III.2 shows both NH 31 and NH31C connect Assam with rest of India via Koch Bihar and Alipur duar respectively. The NH31 and NH 52 serve the entire north bank areas of Brahmaputra valley, which was known as North Trunk Road during British period. NH 37, once known as Assam Trunk Road, mostly serves the south bank areas of Brahmaputra.

NH 52A connects Assam with Itanagar, capital of Arunachal Pradesh via Banderdewa. NH 40 and NH 51 c onnect Assam with Meghalaya. NH 44 joins Assam with Meghalaya and Tripura on the south, while the NH 53 and 54 connect Assam with the neighbouring states of Manipur and Mizoram respectively via Silchar.

NH 38, once known as Stilwell Road, links Assam with Myanmar through Arunachal Pradesh. NH 36 and NH 39 join Assam with Nagaland via Dimapur. The tourist destinations developed so far are thus well connected by existing surfaced road network, except Chandubi (Kamrup district), Pabitora (Marigaon district), Ajan Pir Dargah (Sibsagar district), Manas National Park (Barpeta district), river island of

Majuli (Jorhat district), Khaspur and Bhuban (Cachar district) and Orang National Park (Darrang and Sonitpur district) where visitors have to negotiate 10 and 20 km of gravel road managed by PWD<sup>11</sup>. However badly managed surfaced road network in places remains a major cause of discomfort for tourist and general passenger traffic.

Though railway is an important transport infrastructure for tourism as well as for overall economic development but due importance has not been given by the authorities concerned to develop quality railway service in the north-eastern region. But, in terms of railway route length per thousand sq km, Assam is well over all India scenario and ranks fourth (India-19 km/000 sq. km and Assam-31.5 km/ 000 sq km in 1991). Out of a total of 62366.86 km of gauge length in India, Assam's share is 2466.83 km, which comprises 3.9% of the length of the country (North Eastern Council Report 2002). However, the gauge length declined to 2373.52 km as couples of MG (Metre Gauge) tracks were abandoned in the state. Assam represents 97.5% of the total gauge length of the northeast India (2435.20 km). Out of the total gauge length, share of BG (Broad Gauge) and MG (Metre Gauge) in the state were 902.94 km (38.04%) and 1470.58(61.96%) respectively in 1998-99. However, conversion of Guwahati-Tinsukia-Dibrugrah (560 km) line from MG to BG was completed and opened for traffic in 1998. Another BG line connecting Guwahati and Goalpara was completed in 2000. Interestingly, it took 102 years to initiate up gradation of the main meter-gauge track to broad gauge one. Considering export potentiality of tea, oil and other raw materials of the region, British had set up most of the present skeletal railway track.

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<sup>11</sup> Barua.N (2001):"Tourism in Assam: Paradigm of a thriving industry", Tourism towards 21<sup>st</sup> century, S.Gupta (ed.), Deep &Deep Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.p.145.

**Table III.11: - Comparative picture of travel time of bus and train services along some important routes of Assam (2004)**

Journey route		Distance in km		Travel time in hrs.	
From	To	Train	Bus	Train	Bus
Guwahati	Jorhat	457	308	12	7
Guwahati	Sibsagar	502	363	14	8
Guwahati	Dibrugarh	640	443	17	10
Nagaon	Jorhat	310	185	11	4
Nagaon	Dibrugarh	484	310	16	7
Jorhat	Sibsagar	70	55	3	2
Jorhat	Dibrugarh	224	135	9	3
Sibsagar	Dibrugarh	155	80	6	2

**Source:** Baishya.D. (2005): Railway System in N.E.Region, *The Assam Tribune*, January7, 2005, Guwahati.

Table III.11 shows railway system cannot meet with the existing needs, nor can it compete with road transport in terms of both travel time and comfort. Railway takes more time to reach destinations as compared to road. Railway tracks have to negotiate long route than roadways. It may be noted that late running and operational problems are some common issues with train service in the state. As only a single broad gauge track connects Assam with the rest of India, there area unnecessary haltages of long distance trains at different railway stations for crossing.<sup>12</sup>

That is why tourists as well as general passengers prefer bus journey to journey in the state. However, Guwahati, the gateway to north-east region, is comparatively well connected by train service with rest of the country. Train service continues to be the

<sup>12</sup> Bora A.K. (2001), "Transport and Communication", *Geography of Assam* (ed) Bhagabati A.K, Bora A.K., Kar B.K., - Rajesh publication .New Delhi. P-245.



major mode of travel to Guwahati for budget class tourists, especially domestic ones (Table III.12).

**Fig III.3: - Railway Network in Assam.**



It is evident from figure III.3 that railway network on both bank of Brahmaputra. Railway is not evenly distributed. There is no railway line connecting both sides of the Brahmaputra valley except through Saraighat Bridge in Guwahati. Lack of feeder railway tracks for connecting important towns like Tezpur and Jorhat etc. is a limitation of railway network Guwahati, Rangia and Dibrugarh remain as busiest railway stations.

**Table III.12: - Major Train services from Guwahati.**

Name of the Train	From	To	Week days	Total days in a week
Rajdhani Express	Guwahati	New Delhi	Sun, Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri.	5
North-East Express	Guwahati	New Delhi	Daily	7
Avadh Assam Express	Guwahati	New Delhi	Daily	7
Brahmaputra Mail	Guwahati	Delhi	Daily	7
Kamrup Express	Guwahati	Howrah	Daily	7
Saraighat Express	Guwahati	Howrah	Mon, Thu, Fri.	3
Kanchanjunga Express	Guwahati	Sealdah	Daily	7
Lohit Express	Guwahati	Jammu	Mon	1
Dadar Express	Guwahati	Mumbai	Tue, Wed, Sun	3
Trivandrum Express	Guwahati	Trivandrum	Wed	1
Cochin Express	Guwahati	Cochin	Fri	1
Bangalore Express	Guwahati	Bangalore	Tue, Sun	2
Egmore Express	Guwahati	Chennai	Mon, Fri.	2
Total				53

**Source: - Railway Time Table.**

Table III.12 shows Guwahati is well connected among metros. Moreover, there are services to distant places like Jammu, Trivandrum and Kochi etc. Regular train services are available to Delhi and Kolkata. However, daily service to south Indian states is not available.

### **III.C.1.b. Air Transport**

Indian airlines and Vayudoot were two agencies providing air service to airports of Assam situated at Guwahati (Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport), Tezpur (Salonibari), Jorhat (Rowrah), Dibrugarh (Mohanbari), Lakhimpur (Lilabari) and Silchar (Kumbhirgram), till 1995. After the implementation of open sky policy, a few private airlines have extended their services to Assam as well as other

parts of North-Eastern India. With the withdrawal of RAP (Restricted Area Permit) system, it is expected that more foreign tourist will visit the state by availing air services.

**Table III.13: Profile of foreign tourist arrivals through LGB international airport, Guwahati. (2000-2005)**

Year	No of Foreign Tourists	% increase over previous year
2000	1405	
2001	2059	(+)46.55
2002	1938	(-)5.88
2003	2064	(+) 6.5
2004	2513	(+)21.75
2005	3789	(+)50.78

**Source:** - Airport immigration register, LGB International Airpor, Guwahati.

Table III.13 shows that number of foreign tourists has been increasing over years. However, in 2002 there was decline in foreign tourists arrival. It may be due to disturbed socio-political situation in the region. Similarly, tourists inflow was less in 2003 than in 2001. Meanwhile, phenomenal increase in number of tourist is seen in 2005 which may be due to withdrawal of RAP from that year.

**Table III.14: No. of weekly flight services in different airports in Assam.**

irport	Indian Airlines	Jet Airlines	Spicejet	Air Deccan	Indigo	Kingfisher	Total
Guwahati	27	11	8	10	7	7	70
Dibrugarh	9	4	-	1	1	2	17
Silchar	18	-	-	1	-	1	20
Jorhat	2	-	-	1	-	1	4
Tezpur	2	-	-	-	-	-	2

**Source:** - Based on Flight Schedule of Representative Airlines.

Table III.14 shows apart from Indian airlines, five private companies namely Jet Airlines, Spicejet, Air Deccan, Indigo and Kingfisher operating their service. Highest number of flight services are available in Guwahati airport. Other than it, Silchar and Dibrugarh also have 20 and 17 flights plying in it. Silchar is important town of Barak valley and it is near Aizwal and Imphal. Most of the oil and tea industry are found near Dibrugarh and it have better service to meet the requirements of official work. Private airline service is also better here. Tezpur airport do not have private airways service. It only has services of Indian Airlines.

The sixth airport situated at Lakhimpur was being served by a skeletal Vayudoot service up to early 1995. It was not in operation since then. As per the number of weekly flights, Guwahati continues to be most accessible airport of Assam followed by Silchar and Dibrugarh. Silchar is the only airport having more direct flights form and to Kolkata next to Guwahati. Tezpur and Jorhat are least accessible destinations in terms of weekly flight service. These two airports are connected by Kolkata-Tezpur-Jorhat-Kolkata route of Indian airlines. In such circumstances, no direct air service can be availed to Jorhat or Tezpur from Guwahati or Dibrugarh. Hence the tourists, specially foreigners, prefer to go by air up to Guwahati, as it is easy to get bus and car from there to all the important destinations of Assam as well as of North-East India. To facilitate air-traffic, Guwahati airport has been developed as a model airport to meet international standards by Airport Authority of India. However, it was observed that both Indian Airlines and private ones often fail to adhere to time schedule. Delay of flights is a common feature. Operation of private airlines is also characterized by frequent flight cancellation due to operational and technical problems which cause inconvenience to tourists. Introduction of an International weekly flight on Mumbai-Kolkata-Guwahati- Bangkok route is another development since April 2002. Similarly, introduction of small aircraft service by Alliance Air in 2003 is another step for enhancing air connectivity of north-eastern states of India. Since air transport in the state is comparatively recent, it has still a long way to cater needs of the tourists. Air connectivity is vital for a modern conomy.

It is indispensable for developing tourism. Fuel price and tax concession are offered to encourage internal air services within North-East should continue.<sup>13</sup>

### III.C.1.c. Waterways

Waterway is a cheap and comfortable means of transport for both goods and passenger traffic. Waterways can provide support in tourism promotion as a means of movement of tourists as well as for water-related recreational facilities namely river cruising, rowing, rafting etc, apart from scenic appeal. However, potentials of waterway and associated tourism activities are yet to be exploited for tourism.

Total length of internal waterway in Assam is about 9,600km, of which about 1,600km are navigable by steamers and large boats and the rest by small country boats.<sup>14</sup> 891 km length waterway of Brahmaputra between Dhubri and Sadiya is known as waterway No.2. Beside, Barak and major tributaries of Brahmaputra namely Subansiri, Jia Bharali, Pagladia, Manas, Burhi-Dihing, Disang, Dikhow and Dhansiri are also navigable in their lower reaches. Directorate of Inland Water Transport run 43 ferry services in Assam across the major rivers for passenger traffic.<sup>15</sup> Such ferry services are often availed by domestic as well foreign tourists, especially in Guwahati and Majuli. Though, Inland Water Transport Department has proposals of water taxi, hovercraft and luxury boat services to ply between Guwahati and some other tourist destinations and commercial centers such as Sualkuchi, North Guwahati, Tezpur, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, etc. but these have not materialized so far.<sup>16</sup> At present, Assam Tourism Development Corporation is running a luxury cruise vessel service at Guwahati for tourists. In the same way, Blue Hills Travels (private tour operator) had initiated speed-boat service in Guwahati in 1990. It is heartening to note that Assam Boat Racing and Rowing Association (ABRA) have recently introduced boat racing and rowing activities as part of beach festival organized annually on Brahmaputra *chars* (sand bars) close to Guwahati. Similarly, a newly emerged tour operator, The

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<sup>13</sup> Planning Commission Report (2002): "*Strategy for Assam's Development*", Government of India, New Delhi, p-18.

<sup>14</sup> Das, M.M. (1984): "Water transportation in Assam; a geographical study", *Geographical Review of India*, Vol .6, No.3 .pp.24-32.

<sup>15</sup> DONER Document (2005): '*Executive summary of Brahmaputra tourism*', Ministry of development of North-Eastern Region, Govt of India, New Delhi. P-245.

<sup>16</sup> Deka, T. (2007): "Assam tourism and its future", *The Assam Tribune*, January15, 2007, Guwahati.

Assam Apex Tourism Development Co-operative Society Ltd (TOURFED) has started providing river tour facilities from Guwahati connecting Mayang, Sualkuchi and Dokhola hill along the Brahmaputra River. In 2004, Assam Bengal Navigation Company also started long distance luxury river cruiser in collaboration with State IWT (Inland Water Transport Department).

### III.C.2.Tourist Mobility: Role of Government

To facilitate comfortable movement of tourists to different tourist centers, Department of tourism had a couple of package tour service.

**Table III.15: Weekly Tour Provision of Assam Tourism Department (2005)**

Sl. No.	Conducted tour from Guwahati	Duration (days)	No. of Days in a week
1	To Kaziranga	2	5
2	Guwahati local sight seeing	1	2
3	To Hajo, Sualkuchi, Madan Kamdev	1	1
4	To Shillong	1	2
5	To Tezpur and Bhalukpong	2	1
6	To Haflong	3	1
7	To Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary	1	3

**Source:** Tour-Package, Assam Tourism.

Table III.15 depicts seven weekly tours conducted by tourism department. Tour covering Kaziranga National Park is most frequent conducted on 5 days in a week. Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is next most frequent with tour on 3 days. Guwahati and local sightseeing, visit to Shillong forms another weekly tour programme having 2 days frequency in a week. Test of the tour programmes are not conducted regularly due to lack of adequate number of tourists. However, it has been seen that low number of tourists responding to tour packages is due to lack of proper publicity by tourism Department. Guwahati local sightseeing tour and conducted tour to Shillong are the two most popular package tours among domestic tourists. Kaziranga package tour is popular for both the domestic as well as foreign tourists. Unfortunately, conducted tours are operated without any provision of trained guide.

**Table III.16: Vehicles available in various centres under Assam Tourism Department (2005)**

Sl. No.	Tourist center	Coach	Mini Coach	Car	Jeep	Total
1	Guwahati	1	8	4	5	18
2	Kaziranga	-	-	-	4	4
3	Nagaon	-	-	-	-	-
4	Tezpur	-	-	-	1	1
5	Sibsagar	-	-	-	-	-
6	Diphu	-	-	-	-	-
7	Haflong	-	-	-	-	-
8	Silchar	-	-	-	-	-
9	BarpetaRoad	-	-	-	1	1
10	Bhalulhpung	-	-	-	-	-
11	Jorhat	-	-	-	-	-
12	Chandubi	-	-	-	-	-
13	Delhi(I.B.)	-	-	1	-	1
14	Calcutta(I.B.)	-	-	-	-	-
15	Siliguri (I.B.)	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	1	8	5	11	25

**Source:** - Directorate of Tourism, Govt of Assam.

It is apparent from Table III.16 that availability of vehicles under tourism department is not satisfactory. Except Guwahati and, other tourist centres have either no or insignificant number of vehicles. As all the package tours start from Guwahati, most of the vehicles are at Guwahati tourist office. The rest to the tourist lodges, except Tezpur, Barpeta Road and Kaziranga, are not provided with vehicle to meet the demand of tourists. As most coaches have seat capacity ranging from 10 to 26, hence such vehicles are not suitable for domestic as well as foreign tourists who come either in small groups or with family. Scheduled tours are often cancelled due to lack of adequate number of tourists required for operating such a large coach. It is also observed that vehicles of tourism department are often requisitioned to facilitate law-enforcing agencies, resulting in cancellation of scheduled tours causing negative publicity.

### **III.C.3. Tourist mobility: Role of Private agencies**

Private sector participation is essential to promote tourism. As traveling is determined by one's personal choice and taste, hence private sector can handle some

of the affairs relating to tourists with more flexibility than a typically structured government tourism organization.<sup>17</sup> Government of India has developed schemes to recognize tour operators and travel agencies to facilitate smooth movement of tourists considering the role of private sector. Tour operators organization is one, which makes arrangements for transport, accommodation, sight seeing, entertainment and other related services for tourists. On the other hand, travel agency is one, which basically makes arrangements of tickets for travel by air, rail, passport and visa, etc.<sup>18</sup>

**Table III. 17. Travel Agencies in Assam (2005-06)**

Sl. No.	Name of the agency	Place	Area of activity
1	Rhino Travels	Guwahati	Centrally recognized 'transport operator', mainly handing general passenger traffic.
2	Blue Hill Travels	Guwahati	Centrally recognized transport operator.
3	Green Valley Travels	Guwahati	State recognized agency. (general passenger traffic)
4	Assam Valley Travels	Guwahati	State recognized agency.
5	Network Travels	Guwahati	State recognized agency
6	Jungle Travels	Guwahati	Ticketing & overseas tour arrangements
7	Pelican Travels Hotel	Guwahati	State recognized agency.
8	Capital Travels	Guwahati	State recognized agency.
9	Bota Tours and Travels	Guwahati	State recognized agency.
10	Toyali Travels	Guwahati	Ticketing & tour arrangements.
11	Destination North East	Guwahati	Centrally recognized transport operator.
12	B S S Travels	Guwahati	Acting as a ticketing agent.
13	Kaziranga Tours & Travel	Guwahati	Acting as a ticketing agent.
14	India tour and Travels	Guwahati	Acting as a ticketing agent.
15	Wings International	Duliajan	Acting as a ticketing agent.

**Source:** Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Assam.

It is evident from table III.17 that out of the 15 recognized travel agencies operating in Assam, 14 have office in Guwahati and one is based at Duliajan (Tinsukia district). There are three centrally recognized tour operators in Assam. Six state recognized travel agencies concentrate on general passenger traffic. While five travel agencies only acts as ticketing agent. These agencies help tourists coming to Guwahati or other major towns of the state without any haltage at destinations. Interestingly, there is lack of trained tour guides in package tours operated by both government and private agencies. State department of tourism or ATDC has not yet adopted strategy of recognizing tourist guides. However, DRDA (District Rural Development Agency) has made an attempt in this regard to train local educated unemployed youths as tourist guides in Kaziranga and Manas in 1995-96. The

<sup>17</sup> State of Environment Report (2004): op.cit. P-180.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



venture of DRDA was quite successful in the case of Kaziranga, where a numbers of local youths could provide guide service to tourist and try to make it means of earning. But no follow up action has been seen in succeeding years by the agency or state tourism department in extending such ventures to other areas of the state.<sup>19</sup>

### III.C.4.Accommodation

Accommodation is an important component of tourism industry. Maximum investment as also income involved in tourism business lies in accommodation sector.<sup>20</sup> But as tourism industry is till in its infancy in Assam, hotel business is far behind expectation in terms of internationally accepted criteria of hospitality. Department of Tourism has tourist lodges in most important tourist places, which provide accommodation at moderate cost. Besides it, luxury and moderate hotels are also available in many towns of Assam.

**Table III.18. - Accommodation in Assam.**

SL.NO.	No of Tourist Lodges	No.
A	Total No. of lodges under Directorate of tourism, Assam	10
B	Total No. of lodge under management of ATDC Ltd.	6
C	Total No. of Pvt. Hotels	284
D	Total No. of Star Category hotels.	37

**Source:** Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Assam

Table III.18 shows that there are 16 government lodges, out of which 10 are operated by directorate of tourism. Assam Tourism Development Organization Ltd. has 6 units. Total number of Private hotels is 321, out of which 37 are star category hotels and 284 other are Private hotels. Private sectors role in providing accommodation is important feature of tourism development in Assam. Government departments are also keen in of expansion of accommodation facilities in all popular tourist destinations of the state.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Tyagi, N (1991): "*Hill Resorts of U.P. Himalaya: A Geographical Study*", Indus Publication Company, New Delhi. pp. 12-13.

**Table III.19 : - Distribution of government tourist lodges in important Tourist destination  
in Assam (2005-06)**

Sl.No.	Destination	Accommodation unit	Bed Capacity	Remark
1	Kaziranga	4	108	Including dormitory
2	Guwahati	1	56	
3	Tezpur	1	35	Including dormitory
4	Jorhat	1	24	
5	Haflong	1	22	Including dormitory
6	Diphu	1	20	
7	Silchar	1	26	Including dormitory
8	Nagaon	1	17	
9	Chandubi	1	16	
10	Sibsagar	2	14	Including 4 bed accomodationin Ajan Pir Dargah
11	Bhalukpong	1	12	Including dormitory.
12	Barpeta Road	1	10	
	Total	16	360	

Source: Statistical cell, Tourism Department

Department of tourism has set up number of tourists lodges with modern amenities in all leading tourist spots namely Guwahati, Chandubi, Barpeta Road, Tezpur, Bhalukpong, Nagaon, Kaziranga, Jorhat, Sibsaagar, Diphu, Haflong and Silchar. Table III.19 shows that Kaziranga National Park has highest tourist accommodation having four units. Sibsaagar has two accommodation units while rest of the destinations has one each. Some accommodation units have dormitory facility including Kaziranga, Tezpur, Haflong, Silchar, Sibsaagar and Bhalukpong. Bed capacity is highest in Kaziranga with 108 beds followed by Guwahati, Tezpur, Silchar and Jorhat.

However, it is found that except Kaziranga, other accommodations of the department are not managed professionally. Some destinations like Kaziranga, Bhalukpong and Tezpur suffer from shortage of adequate accommodation during tourist season (September to April), where provision of alternative hotel accommodation is less or insignificant. Apart from such lodging facilities, the department of tourism is also trying to extend its services in 5 places namely Nalbari, Jagiroad, Kaliabar, Bokakhat and Moran by constructing some way side amenities like motels and restaurants. But most of them are not managed properly.

Demand of the tourists cannot be fulfilled only through government accommodation. Private accommodation is also important to meet food and lodging facilities of tourists. Number

of private accommodation units has come up in and around some prominent tourist destinations including Kaziranga. Some of these units have shown professionalism in serving tourists. Modern amenities like internet, bars, massaging and scope for playing games like billiard have been introduced in some resorts. But their number is not very high. Department of tourism has identified 323 accommodation units in 18 tourist destinations of Assam (Table III.20)

**Table III.20: Private Accommodation units in Assam recognized by Department of Tourism, 2005.**

Sl. No	Tourists Place	Accommodation Units	Room	Bed
1	Guwahati	149	4069	7600
2	Hajo	1	4	14
3	Jorhat	30	499	799
4	Majuli	3	14	29
5	Tinsukia	23	621	1019
6	Sibsagar	18	354	628
7	Dibrugarh	27	473	786
8	Kaziranga	34	484	850
9	Golaghat	5	68	114
10	Diphu	2	8	28
11	NortLakhimpur	11	231	357
12	Dhemaji	2	26	36
13	Haflong	1	5	25
14	Bongaigaon	2	24	35
15	Goalpara	5	68	194
16	Nameri	1	15	30
17	Tezpur	22	387	661
18	Silchar	12	316	532
Total		323	7272	13115

**Source:** Statistical cell, Directorate of Tourism, Assam

Table III.20 shows that out of total 323 accommodations units, Guwahati has highest number. Including Kaziranga, places having more accommodation are Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Tinsukia. These destinations have more than 20 accommodation units each. Presence of high accommodation units may be because these are important towns of Assam. Some destinations have very few private accommodation units. These include Hajo, Majuli, Nameri, Diphu, Haflong, Bongaigaon, Golaghat and Goalpara. These are located in less accessible areas and have low commercial activity. Bed capacity is highest in Guwahati having 7600 beds.

Guwahati is transit point for all travel purposes and high level of urbanization leads high number of incoming people. Accommodation has grown with more demand of staying facilities to cater the need of increasing mobile people. Internationally famous Kaziranga National park has 850 private beds. These much of accommodation facility is not sufficient looking at the tourists inflow in peak seasons of December, January, February and March. Majuli, largest river has only 29 beds. Haflong known as only hill resorts in Assam has just 25 beds. Lack of appropriate accommodation is one of reason behind slow pace of tourism development in such areas.

It is noticed that neither the existing approved hotels (by the central and state tourism departments) nor the tourist lodges (run by tourism department of Assam) can meet the accommodation demand in the state. Though Guwahati and other important places of the state have registered associations of hotel owners, there is a dearth of information on the status of hotels of their accommodation capacity. So, in a sense, this vital sector of the industry is running without proper evaluation.

#### **III.D. Adventure Tourism: A New Area of Development**

Dimension of tourism activities have expanded with the growth of tourism all over the world. Modern tourism incorporates varieties of fields and activities. Provision to undertake adventure programme can play an important role in promoting tourism industry in an area, provided it has sufficient infrastructural facilities as well as attractions. Though Assam has a vast scope to develop adventure activities in air, land and water, such activities are still to emerge. However, traditional adventure activities like boat racing take place in some places like Sualkuchi and Barpeta in lower Assam.

With the establishment of ATDC (Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.) in 1988, both land- and water-based adventure activities have come to be frequently organized in the state. So far ATDC is associated with 22 Adventure clubs and associations of Assam devoted to promoting adventure sports. Out of these, 17 are at Guwahati and 5 are operating at Diphu, Jorhat, Golaghat, Tezpur and Dhemaji. ATDC provides logistic and technical support to such organizations to conduct training programmes and camps. Most of such training programmes and camps are

organized mainly in and around Guwahati and Umtu (upstream of Digaru River) in Meghalaya for river crossing exercise.<sup>21</sup>

Potentialities of land-based adventure activities in the two hill districts viz. N.C. Hills and Karbi Anglong are yet to be tapped. Hilly terrain can provide ample scope for activities like trekking, hiking, jungle exploration, parasailing, hang gliding and hot air ballooning, etc. Prevailing disturbed law and order situation is considered to be one of the main causes for slow pace of land-based adventure activities in two hill districts.

**Table III.21.Land-based adventure infrastructure of ATDC (2007-08)**

Sl.No.	Name of item	Quantity	Placed at
1	Mountain Bike	70 Nos.	Kaziranga -22 Nos.
			Haflong-6 Nos.
			Guwahati-42 Nos.
2	Tent(dome type with two person capacity)	171 Nos.	Kaziranga-132
			Haflong- 17Nos.
			Guwahati-22 Nos.
3	Trekking equipment	272 Nos.	Haflong tourist lodge.
4	Rock climbing equipment	372 Nos.	Placed at Guwahati

**Source:** Assam Tourism Development Corporation.

Table III.21 shows infrastructure for land-based adventure namely rock climbing and trekking equipments, tent and mountain biking. Rock climbing equipment numbering 372 is highest. ATDC organized number of rock climbing programmes in and around hills of Guwahati. These are also lent to local adventure clubs on payment basis. Trekking equipments numbering 272 is in Haflong Tourist Lodge. There are recognized trekking routes in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar districts of Assam which are occasionally used for trekking organized by Assam Tourism Development Corporation. There are 171 tents most are placed in Kaziranga. There are 70 mountain bikes are available for biking activities in hill terrains. Distribution of infrastructure is not even, most of the equipments are available in Guwahati, Kaziranga and Haflong.

<sup>21</sup>Bhattacharya P. (2005): "Potentiality of Tourism Development in Hill Districts of Assam", *Geographical Review of India*, vol .67(2) .pp 145- 161.

Water- based adventure activities and expeditions are confined mainly to a few water bodies namely Brahmaputra, Manas, Jia Bharali, Kaliyani and Kapili. However, after the inception of ATDC, adventure activities started gaining momentum. Boating facilities for tourists were introduced in Dighalipukhuri Lake in Guwahati in 1991. Such facilities were extended to Tezpur, Chandubi, Nagaon and Sivasagar later on. This ultimately proved to be a new avenue of earning. ATDC has been providing river cruising facility since 1992 on the Brahmaputra in Guwahati for both domestic and foreign tourists, especially in tourist season (September to April). Water-based recreational activities varied from low risk boating to high risk white and blue water rafting. These have recently been introduced in Assam but are not adopted in a professional way. There are no special package tours offered by government or private agencies to meet need of those tourists who prefer adventure activities. Only two private groups, Blue Hills travels and Assam Bharali Anglers Association are equipped with speedboats and rafts, that too without regular services.

Angling in Jia Bhoroli River in Nameri National park is also another part of Adventure tourism. Angling competition is regularly held at Jia Bhoroli in November every year, where a good number of anglers both from outside the state as well as abroad participate. This competition is organized by Assam Bhoroli Anglers Association in collaboration with State Forest Department.

### III. 22: Revenue generation from angling in Nameri National Park.

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total Tourists	Revenue(Rs)
2004	55	7	62	4650
2005	44	7	51	2890
2006	57	11	68	3250
2007	41	5	46	2775
2008	71	5	76	5400

Source: Forest Ranger Office, Nameri National Park.

It can be seen from Table III.22 that revenue generation is gradually increasing over the years. Amount of revenue generation depends on the number of tourists. In 2008, 2006 and 2004 revenue was more as more tourists participated in angling.

Assam has highest number of tea gardens in India. Striking feature of these tea gardens is availability of golf courses as well. Upgradation of those golf courses with other tourist facilities will attract golf loving tourists like Japanese, American and European. Many of these tea gardens have a large number of airstrips and their little upgradation will facilitate charter flights. A list of golf courses along with nearest air strips and airports are given below (Table III.23).

**Table III. 23: - Golf courses existing, recommended.**

S NO.	Name of the Golf course	District	Nearest airport /airstrip
<b>PartA</b>	<b>Existing</b>		
1	Bishanath Gymkhana Club	Sonitpur	Salonibari/ Borjhar
2	Borsola	Sonitpur	Salonibari/ Borjhar
3	East Boroï Club	Sonitpur	Salonibari
4	Mangaldai Polo & Golf Club	Darang	Salonibari
5	Thakurbari Club	Sonitpur	Salonibari
6	N.Lakhimpur Planters Club	Lakhimpur	Lilabari
7	Misa Planters Club	Nagaon	Borjhar/ Misa
8	Jorhat Gymkhana Club	Jorhat	Rowriah
9	Seleng District Club	Sibsagar	Rowriah
10	Sonari Gymkhana Club	Sibsagar	Rowriah
11	Tingri Golf Club	Tinsukia	Mohanbari
12	Samdang Golf Club	Tinsukia	Mohanbari/ Doomdoma
13	Kanjikoah Golf Club	Tinsukia	Doomdooma/ Panitola
14	Dibrugarh Planters Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari/ Chabua
15	Margherita Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari
16	Moran Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Rowriah/ Moran
17	Zoloni Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari
18	Dhunseri Polo Club	Golaghat	Rowriah/ Behora T. E.
19	Nazira	Sibsagar	
20	Narengi Golf Club	Kamrup	Borjhar
22	Digboi Golf Course	Tinsukia	
23	Golf Course	Sonitpur	Tezpur
<b>PartB</b>	<b>New Recommendation</b>		
1	Kapili Golf course	N.C. Hill	Halflong
2	Narakasur Golf course	Kamrup	

**Source:** Assam Tourism Development Corporation.

It is apparent from the table III.24 that most of golf courses are located near air-strips. About 23 golf courses exist and two new golf courses are being developed. Most of the golf courses are in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sonitpur and Sibsaagar districts of Upper Assam where large number of tea-gardens are found. New golf courses of

Kopili Golf Course in North Cachar Hills and Narakasur Golf course in Kamrup district are measures to extend golfing in other areas.

From the above discussion, it is clear that present status of tourism in Assam is not very impressive. Barring a few instances, Assam and the entire northeastern states are often criticized for poor tourism infrastructure. Absence of good accommodation facilities, affordable and reliable communication network, poor quality of roads and lack of food arrangements are said to be major hindrances in tourism development in the state. Image of deteriorating law and order situation along with negative publicity both at national and international levels, have dampened the spirit of tourism in the last two decade. Stability in social and political front is prerequisite for tourism. But unfortunately due to prevailing situation, no major private investment in tourism promotion has come. Though there is some induction of private participation in transportation and accommodation sector, lack of co-ordination between government and private entrepreneurs put hurdles in tourism development. The state government offers no major incentive or subsidies to private entrepreneurs devoted for tourism development in the state. Thus, as on today, development of tourism in Assam is restricted to a few pilgrimage and wildlife destinations. Colourful cultured mosaic and rare topographic features are silently waiting for their proper use for the development of tourism sector in Assam.



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## Chapter IV

### IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign educational experience actively affect various sectors of economy, which positively contribute to the social and economic development of a country as a whole. According to recent statistics, tourism generates about 10 percent of the world's income and employs almost one tenth of the world's workforce. All considered, tourism's actual and potential economic impact is astounding. Many people emphasize the positive aspects of tourism as a source of foreign exchange, a way to balance foreign trade, an "industry without chimney."<sup>1</sup>

But there are also a number of other positive and negative sides of tourism activities, which are not considered by advocates of tourism perspectives. Rapid growth of tourism has produced both problems and opportunities on a vast scale for societies and their impacts have been economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political. These days, tourism is frequently criticised for its adverse impacts on the host country. Tourism is inter-sectoral and its experiences consist of many components such as attraction, accommodation, transportation, food and beverages etc. Change in any one of these may have repercussions for the others leading to cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts are difficult to assess due to consequences of a large number of small changes. These individually may appear to be almost insignificant but seen together, can have far-reaching implications. Again, it is difficult to individualize changes which are attributable to tourism from those caused by other forces. Moreover, tourists are mobile so many impacts may occur off-site. Same intervention may have different consequences at different stages of development. In other words, identical development may be viewed in dissimilar ways in different circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

As stated earlier, impact of tourism on local communities can be both positive as well as negative. These may be in the nature of economic, social or environmental effects. It depends to what extent tourism is developed in a particular region. Every

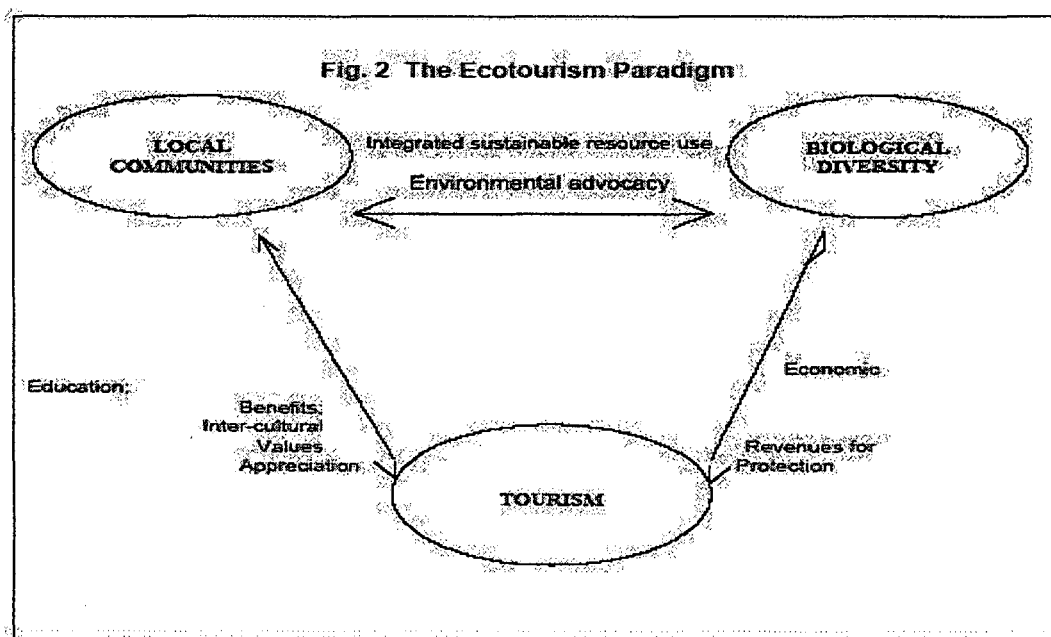
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<sup>1</sup> D.Pearce (1992): "*Tourism Development*", Longman Scientific and Technical, New York, p-183.

<sup>2</sup> S. Williams (1998): "*Economics of Tourism*", Routledge, London, p-180.

region has its own capacity, that is to say, the incoming influence that does not harm the host community. If we overcome that limit, negative impacts of tourism will follow. Figure (IV.1.) shows dynamics between people, resources and tourism in successful tourism development: each making a positive contribution to the others.

**Fig. IV.1. The Ecotourism Paradigm**



**Source: Page and Dowling (2002)<sup>3</sup>**

All the three elements in this model are in co-interaction. Local communities use natural resources but they also protect these. Tourists come to enjoy the nature and acquire knowledge about it, but they can also pollute and destroy it or on the other side help to protect it by drawing attention to unique natural resources in an area. Local communities affect tourists by imparting them knowledge of their culture and way of life. Impact of tourism on the local population can be first of all, economic: by generating income and developing resources, cultural: sharing knowledge and experience, etc. Whenever we develop a new tourist destination we should always bear in mind this co-interaction.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen J. Page and Ross K. Dowling (2002): "Ecotourism", Prentice-Hall, Pearson Education Ltd, London.p.24.

In order to minimise negative effects on local society we can check the following points while arranging a tourism activity in a region or taking part in it.<sup>4</sup>

1. Are local people involved in tourism industry as employees?
2. Does the organization cooperate with local businesses?
3. Does it have a respectful attitude towards the local culture?
4. Is there respect to nature and how is it protected?
5. How much economic benefit will local population get from tourism?
6. Are tour operators concerned about ecological aspects of hotels, transport, and restaurants?

It is a great challenge to make tourism a profitable business in an area without some negative effects on the local communities. It is possible for the tourism industry to cooperate with other industries and bring benefits to both the tourism organizations and local businesses. The first step to achieve it is to understand the needs and desires of both the host community and the tourists.

More and more people are taking to travel with economic advancement of the society. Unlike before, now there is a growing desire amongst international tourists to visit economically 'less developed' but culturally rich regions of the world. Kaziranga National Park in Assam has become an important attraction for the national as well as international tourists. It is known worldwide for its success in conservation of one-horned Indian Rhinoceros. Apart from this, it provides habitat for a number of threatened species and migratory birds. It became popular as an international tourist destination after attaining the status of a Game Reserve in 1916 and of Wildlife Sanctuary in 1950.

Flourishing tourism in Kaziranga has made local people important stakeholders in its conservation. Since its establishment as a game sanctuary and gradually being given the status of National Park, Kaziranga experienced varied forms of conservation agenda. In the meanwhile, it had to cope up pressure from livelihood needs of local peasants, who were dependent on these forests. Peasant society resisted formation of any such sanctuary in the early 20th century. Moreover, those who were dispossessed by this park gradually

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<sup>4</sup> Fennel, D.A. (1999): "What's in a name? Conceptualizing Natural Resource-based Tourism." *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol.25, No.1, p.98-100.

became partners in the emerging tourist economy. Arrival of tourism-based economy contributed to the idea of resource generation. It has duly appropriated Assamese middle class in due course of time and thus, helped in advocacy of protection of National Park through all possible desired means.<sup>5</sup>

#### **IV.1. Relevance of Kaziranga National Park towards understanding the Impact of Tourism in Assam.**

Kaziranga National Park is a tourist destination and conservation area particularly notable as a refuge for endangered Indian one-horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). It hosts the largest population of one-horned Rhinoceros in the world. The park contains significant stock of three other large herbivores namely Asian Elephant, Asiatic Water Buffalo and eastern subspecies of Swamp Deer. Kaziranga also has the highest density of tigers in the world and was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006. Kaziranga is recognized as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International for conservation of avifaunal species. Destination Kaziranga is well known in the sphere of tourism. On the popularity front, it has been able to attract more than 50 percent of tourists visiting the state. This destination is ideal for tourism study where people participation in conservation of nature along with sustainable tourism are highly commendable. Moreover, tourism infrastructure is better organized than other destinations in Assam. The context of tourism development and the impact of it on local communities are the focus of present study.

##### **IV.1.a. Kaziranga National Park.**

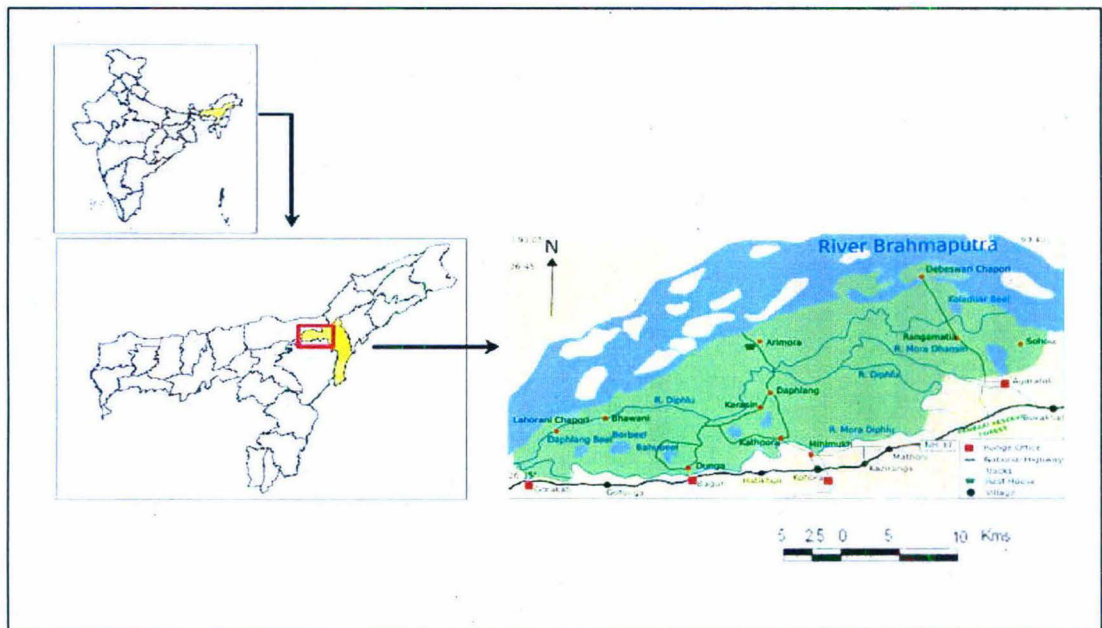
It is located between 26°30' N and 26°45' N latitudes, and 93°08' E to 93°36' E longitudes spread over three districts in Assam namely Nagaon, Karbi Anglong and Golaghat (fig IV.1). The park is approximately 45 km in length from east to west, and 15 km in width from north to south. Kaziranga covers an area of 378 sq. km, out of which approximately 51.14 sq.km was lost to erosion by flood in recent years. A total of

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<sup>5</sup>Saikia,A (2005): "The Kaziranga National Park in India: Dynamics of Local Social and Political History", *National parks & Landscapes of Resistance in South Asia*, Proceedings of 20th European Conference on South Asia, Austria. P-3.

429 sq.km was added along the present boundary of the park that has been designated separate National Park status to provide extended habitat for increasing population of wildlife and to give a safe corridor for movement of animals to Karbi Anglong Hills. Elevation of Kaziranga ranges from 40 metre to 80 metre. The park area is circumscribed by Brahmaputra River, which forms northern and eastern boundaries, and Mora Diphlu river which forms southern boundary. Other notable rivers within the park are Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.

**Figure IV.1. Location of Kaziranga National Park.**



Kaziranga has land made up of fertile alluvial soil deposited by Brahmaputra. Landscape consists of exposed sandbars, riverine flood-formed lakes known as *beels* which make up 5 percent of the surface area and elevated flat parts known as *chapories*. These provide retreats and shelter for animals during floods. Many artificial *chapories* have been built with the help of Indian Army to ensure safety of animals. Kaziranga is one of the largest tracts of protected land in sub-Himalayan belt. Due to the presence of highly diverse and visible species, it has been described as a "biodiversity hotspot".<sup>6</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Lahan,P (1972: "Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam. A brief description and report on the census of large animals", *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 70 (2): 245-277

park is located in the Indo-Malaya ecozone with dominant biome of Brahmaputra Valley semi-evergreen forest of tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forest biome and a frequently flooded variant of the biomes of Terai-Duar tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas, and shrubland.

#### **IV.1.b. Conservation history of Kaziranga National Park**

Kaziranga's status from simply a reserve forest to a world natural heritage site reveals about successive excellence in wild life conservation especially of one- horned Rhinoceros which is on the verge of extinction. Table IV.1 shows that it has passed through different stages. What was given a status of Reserved Forest in 1908 got different designations over time, finally got the status National Park in 1974 and was declared World Natural Heritage Site in 1984.

**Table IV.1 Conservation history of Kaziranga National Park.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Particulars.</b>
1908	Kaziranga declared as a Reserved Forests.
1916	Area declared as a Game Sanctuary.
1950	Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary declared.
1974	Kaziranga National Park notified.
1985- 1999	Six additions to Kaziranga National Park notified.
1984	Kaziranga declared as a World Natural Heritage site.

Source: Department of Forest, Kaziranga.

#### **IV.1.c. Tourist activities in Kaziranga National Park.**

Kaziranga occupies a significant position in the international tourist map today as among best wildlife resorts. Observing wild animals especially one-horned Rhinoceros, wild buffalo, including birds are main visitor tourists activity in and around the park. Means of travel inside the park are trained elephants with mahout guides, or Jeeps or other four wheel drive vehicles. Most rides are booked in advance and depart from the Park Administrative Centre in Kohora. The Park has four tourist routes under the jurisdiction of four Ranges namely Kohora, Bagori, Agaratoli and Burhapahar. These roads are open to light vehicles from November to mid May. It remains closed from mid-May to mid-October due to monsoon. Visitors willing to view wild animals by motorcars are guided through these roads by the staff of tourism department. The visitors are allowed to take in



their own vehicles. However, no visitor is allowed to enter the park without an accompanying representative of forest department. Observation towers are situated at Sohola, Mihimukh, Kathpara, Foliamari and Harmoti for spotting wildlife. Wildlife watching, including bird watching is the main activity inside the park. Viewing scenic landscape of the park with different vegetation types interspersed with numerous wetlands and the snow covered Himalayas at a distance constitute added attractions. Hiking in the park is not allowed taking into consideration large number of potentially dangerous wild animals. An interpretation centre is being set up at Bagori range of Kaziranga, to guide visitors about everything about the park.

#### **IV.1.d. Demography and Socio-Economic profile of people in Kaziranga National Park**

The landscape area in terms of the administration structure mainly comes under three districts namely Nagaon, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong. Demographic set up is complex with people from various ethnic backgrounds having different cultural and religious beliefs settled in various pockets. Population pressure in Karbi Anglong is relatively low compared to the other two.

**Table IV.2. Figure of the districts that constitute the Kaziranga Lanscape.**

District	Area ( sq. km)	Population	Density( persons per sq km)	Forest (sq.km)	Forest cover %to total area
Karbi Anglong	10434	12320	78	894.4	85.7
Nagaon	3831	1893171	494	1035	27
Golaghat	3502	28096	236	228	6.5

Source: Census report, 2001.

Table IV.2. shows that Nagaon district had highest population with a number of 18, 93,171 persons in 2001. Karbi-Anglong hill district is less populated than others and it has highest forest cover among; it has highest area among all.

**Table IV.3. Demography and livelihood pattern of people living around fringe villages of Kaziranga National Park.**

DEMOGRAPHY		LIVELIHOOD PATTERN	
1.Number of villages	150	1. Type of Housing (%)	
2.Number of Urban areas	2	a. Thatched Roof (%)	80
3.No of Tea Estate	9	b. Assam Type with slanting roof (%)	20
4.Population	1,48,855	2.Land Ownership (average holding in ha)	0.4
5.Household(No.)	27,354	3.Cropping intensity %	150
6.No of poor households (% to total household)	32.26	4. Value of the land per ha (Rs)	28,500
7.Social Categories ( % to total population)		5.Value of Productive Assets owned per household e.g. livestock( Rs)	2000
a.SC (%)	23	6.Income per capita per households(Rs)	3809
b.ST (%)	11.36	7.% of population depending on daily wage	50
c.OBC (%)	44.58	8.Drinking Water Supply (% of villages)	50
d.GENERAL (%)	21.04	9.Sanitation and drainage provision (% of villages)	0
8. Literacy (%)	69.84	10. % of people engaged in primary economic activities	68

Source: Technical Assistance Consultant's Report, Asian Development Bank (ADB) June 2008<sup>7</sup>

Table IV.3. showing demographic and livelihood pattern of people living in fringe villages of Kaziranga National Park reveals that these are about 150 revenue villages and 27,354 households in the zone of influence of the park. There are no villages inside the National Park but it has dense settlements and tea plantations on three sides. Out of these, 46 settlements are in close proximity of less than 5 km. of the park. Important among these are Durgapur, Bosagaon, Jugigaon, Daffaloda Gaon, Naharjan Gaon, Gormur, Juganiati, Nepalikhuti, Paranganiati No.1, Lokhowjan Gaon, Agaratoli, Inglepathar, Maupara, Mirigaon, Halmara and Chandra sing Rongi gaon etc. Total population living in the immediate area of the park is about 1, 48,855. The Other Backward class (OBC) population is highest accounting for 44.58 percentage of the total population. These groups here represent Ahom, Koch-Rajbangsi, Moran, Motok and Nath communities. Scheduled Castes (SC) population constitutes the second largest group with 23 percent population. They include mainly Koiborta, Bania, Hira and Kumar communities. General population of 21.04 percent belongs to Brahmin, Kalita, Keot and Kayastha communities. Scheduled tribe population is relatively less with a share of 11.36 percent. Major tribal communities are Karbi, Mishing, Deori, Tiwa and Bodo-Kachari. Southern boundary on both sides of National Highway from Burhapahar to Kohora has sizeable

<sup>7</sup> Technical Assistance Consultant Report(2008): “North-Eastern Integrated Flood and River bank Erosion Management Project, Assam”, Asian Development Bank, Assam, p-24.

Bengali speaking population. They are new comer to the area. *Char* areas (marshy land) located on Brahmaputra river in north have considerable Nepali and Bangladeshi immigrants.

It is noteworthy that, while the study is ethnically diverse, but same is not true at village level. For example Diffalopathar and Lakhurakhunia are predominantly Assamese caste Hindu villages, Bandardub and Harmati are predominantly Muslim villages while Inglepathar and Mandu-Be are inhabited by Karbis. There are more than 50 Karbi villages surround the northern part of the National Park , important among these include Chandra Singh Ingti, Dhakrang Ingti and Phawn Ingti. Many Mishings live in stilt houses within the study area. This tribe is represented largely in Dhuba Atigaon, Naharjangaon, Mishinggaon and Juganiati villages. Mishing houses are situated closer to Kaziranga's boundary. Other tribes in the study area are grouped under umbrella term of "tea tribes". They have been traditionally employed mainly as labour on tea estates. They are from the tribes of central India such as the Santhals and Oraons. Their socio-cultural attributes are quite different from those of the local tribes. The term "tea tribe" is still prominent in official terminology. The British brought many other socially marginalized groups to tea estates in the mid-nineteenth century. With the expansion of tea industry, a well-organized system of labour recruitment from various parts of India was in place by mid 1860s. It resulted in the migration of thousands of lower caste Hindus to Assam.<sup>8</sup> Non-Tribal population living in the study area comprises of Hindus belonging to *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Kayastha* and Scheduled Castes. Muslims preferentially settled in the plain part of the study area. A few Christian households are found in the foothills and valleys. Non-Tribal population has been steadily increasing over time which is also the result of immigration of Bengali-speaking Hindus and Muslims from West Bengal.

Livelihood in the villagers is based on agriculture, tea plantation and poultry/dairy related activities. Most of them are poor subsistence farmers. Some of them have taken to fishing and are even tempted poach wildlife in the Park due to poverty.<sup>9</sup> Many people

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<sup>8</sup> Guha, A. (1977): "*Immigrants and autochthones in a plural society, in North East India: A sociological study.*" Concept Publishing Company, Delhi p.43-60.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO-IUCN Enhancing Our Heritage Project Team (2003): "*Initial Management Effectiveness Evaluation Report of Kaziranga National Park, Assam.*" Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India.p.25.

from surrounding villages are employed in Kaziranga and some have been recruited and trained as rangers. Others find jobs in budding tourism industry, spreading word that a healthy park is a long-term source of wealth for the community. Mishing community maintain their own gardens and do not practice shifting cultivation. They are engaged in occasional employment unlike Karbi who inhabit hills of Karbi-Anglong situated in close proximity to southern boundary of Kaziranga. Karbi gardens are larger and more diverse in terms of plant species than those maintained by Mishings. Karbi supplement own garden's produce with crops harvested from fields under shifting cultivation and from small paddy fields in the foothills. Nepalis mostly lives in *Chapori* area (elevated land near swampy tract) and deal in dairy business.

#### **IV.2. Impacts of tourism in Kaziranga**

Promotion of tourism can be one of the means of introducing new growth in an economically backward but culturally rich region. Kaziranga represents a typical illustration of a region where tourism was promoted to boost the economy at the risk of damaging strong man-environment relationship. Economy of tribal people living in the fringe of protected area is mainly forest based. Before the declaration of Kaziranga as reserve area and tourist place, it provided livelihood to nearby communities for their sustenance. Karbi tribals used to collect firewood and vegetables from the forest, Nepali herdsmen used grasslands of Kaziranga for their cattle. Old generation still remember their deep-rooted relations with the ecology of Kaziranga. The nostalgic *Bhoor* (a raft made from banana trunk) cruise to Brahmaputra River via Dipholu River through the wilderness of Kaziranga, catch of big fish still carries sweet memories of bygone days. But, things are different now; after promotion of conservation and introduction of tourism in Kaziranga, the fringe villagers are prohibited to collect forest products which they were earlier getting freely. There are also some positive sides of tourism development. These include cultural reawakening of local people, value-addition of their cultural resources and development of entrepreneurship through tourism related activities etc.

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This study is the outcome of field-based enquiry on socio-economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Kaziranga National Park. Table IV.4 shows demographic profile of 100 local respondents associated with tourism industry in the Park who were interviewed for impact study due to tourism development.

**Table IV.4. Demographic characteristics of the surveyed local people.**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age ( Years)</b>		
20-29	31	31
30-44	60	60
Above 45	9	9
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	68	68
Female	32	32
<b>Occupation</b>		
Agriculture	54	54
Businessmen	10	10
Servicemen	32	32
Others	4	4
<b>Income (Rs) Per month</b>		
Less than 1000	4	4
1000-2000	21	21
2000-5000	49	49
5000-10000	6	6
Above 10000	20	20
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	4	4
Primary	21	21
Middle School	12	12
High School	22	22
Higher Secondary	8	8
Graduates	16	16
Post Graduate	12	12
Others	5	5
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	75	75
Unmarried	25	25

Source: Field Survey,2008-09.

The above table shows that most of the respondents were below the age of 45 years. This constitutes an active group involved in different economic activities. This was

also the reason of selecting more males. They represented different occupations, income groups and education levels. Most of the respondents were engaged in agriculture activities. Higher educated person also participated in the survey. Large number of people shared income range between rupees 2000 to 5000. This portion was shared by driver-cum-tourist guides, workers in hotel/lodge, souvenir and handicraft sellers, worker for anti-poaching activities and seller of fruits, vegetables and milk to hotels.

#### **IV.2.a. Socio-Economic impacts of tourism in Kaziranga National Park**

Growth of tourism has produced both problems and opportunities for the society. Its impact has been on economy, socio-cultural, environmental and political spheres. Positive side of tourism industry is well-documented. Tourists spending can boost economy of an area by bringing wealth and raising income and employment and by bring infrastructure development. In contrast to positive effects on employment and generation of cash, tourism has some negative effects too. These include inflation, decline in quality of life of local residents and hike in property prices etc. Economic effects of tourism can be seen in terms of expenditure by tourists and its effects on income, employment and development of infrastructure in fringe areas of the park.

##### **IV.2.a.i. Estimated expenditure by tourists**

Direct benefits are related to net value addition associated with increased tourist spending in the state due to increase in the number of tourists. This is calculated by allocating tourist expenditure to various sectors that receive it and subsequently applying appropriate ratios of net-value added for each sector. Further, due to the additional facilities and infrastructure being created, average spending by a tourist would increase as also his length of stay. Money spent by tourists will be received by different segments of tourism industry, which provide various services and facilities. Revenue accrued from tourist expenditure can be utilized for socio-economic upliftment of local people. Fifty foreign and 80 domestic tourists were interviewed to understand their expenditure pattern. It was found that per tourist expenditure incurred by group tourists was higher than individual tourists. Group tourists join conducted tours where they pay a selectively higher price and they also expect better facilities than individual tourist. Average length

of stay of a tourist in a group is less than a individual tourist. It can be seen from table IV.5. that group tourists and individual tourists constitute 39 percent and 61 percent of total tourist respectively. Average length of stay of a tourist in a group is 3 days and that of individual tourist is 5 days.

**Table IV.5: Distribution of tourist type.**

Type of tourist	Tourist motivated by wildlife (%)	Tourist motivated by culture (%)	Tourist motivated by other reasons (%)	Total
Group tourist	25	13	6	39
Individual tourist	38	18	5	61

Source: Field survey

Group tourists travel by super deluxe coaches and sometimes by cabs and jeeps from Guwahati to Kaziranga. On an average, group tourists spend Rupees 1500 on transport from Guwahati. Travel agencies also organize travel from Guwahati and Jorhat airport to Kaziranga and the fare varies according to facility of AC (Air-condition) or Non-AC (Table IV.6). Tourists coming by air mostly prefer to travel from Jorhat than Guwahati because it is only one hour drive to Kaziranga from former compared to six hour journey from latter. The individual tourists rely on public buses and at time on taxis, Jeeps in case buses are not available. Average tourists while travelling by public bus incur Rs 250 on travel expenditure from Guwahati to Kaziranga.

**Table IV.6. : Fare charged per vehicle Guwahati and Jorhat Airport to Kaziranga.**

Airport	Non AC- Tata Sumo (Rs)	AC Tata Sumo( Rs)
Guwahati	6700	8100
Jorhat	4200	4500

Source: Wild-Grass Tourist Resort, Kaziranga.

**Table IV.7 Average tourist expenditure pattern in Kaziranga National Park,  
2008-09.**

<b>Expense head</b>	<b>Foreign tourist (Rs)</b>	<b>% to total expenditure</b>	<b>Domestic tourist (Rs)</b>	<b>% to total expenditure</b>
<b>A. local Transport</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>24.43</b>	<b>1290</b>	<b>32.74</b>
a. Jeep Safari	1500	19.89	950	24.11
b. Boat riding	200	2.65	200	5.07
c. Elephant riding	140	1.85	140	3.55
<b>B. Accommodation</b>	<b>1450</b>	<b>19.23</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>20.3</b>
<b>C. Food item</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>10.34</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>14.72</b>
<b>D. Sightseeing</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>20.16</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>14.46</b>
a. Entry fees	20	0.23	20	0.5
b. Still- camera	500	6.63	50	1.26
c. Video -camera	1000	13.26	500	12.69
<b>E. Souvenir</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>16.57</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>12.69</b>
<b>F. Miscellaneous</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>9.28</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>5.07</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>7540</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3940</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field-survey.

Table IV.7 reveals that major portion of expenditure by a foreign tourist is on transport which accounts for 24.43 percent of total expenditure. It is followed by sightseeing (20.16 percent) and accommodation (19.23 percent). Domestic tourists spend more on transport i.e. 32.74 percent of total spending followed by accommodation with 20.30 percent expenditure. Souvenirs, local utensils, natural paintings and other handicraft items are priced heavily specially for foreign tourists. Their average expenditure on souvenir is Rs 1250. Sightseeing charges for foreign tourists are more than those for domestic tourists. Miscellaneous expenditure includes expenditure on beverages, snacks and film rolls etc. Only the money spent on Jeep Safari goes to local people; those from elephant ride and boat ride goes to forest department of Assam. Kaziranga Jeep Safari Association, a private body provides Jeeps in the tourist destination. More than seventy local youths have got employment as tourist guides. Kaziranga Jeep Safari Association is also engaged in providing financial support to meritorious but poor students, training of tourist guides and bird-watcher specialists etc.



Earnings from tourists expenditure on accommodation and food help the hospitality sector in Kaziranga National Park. Moreover, local people engaged in this sector get income with more tourists visiting the National Park. Indirect benefits arise out of the multiplier effect of tourist expenditure in the tourist destination. It is because of the fact that different segments of tourist industry have to purchase various commodities and services from different sectors of the economy to meet tourist demands. Poultry farms set up by local people and supply of milk and milk products from nearby Nepaligaon village are directly linked to tourism in Kaziranga.

However, sharing of benefits between tourists and host population is not satisfactory. Foreign tourists often complain that sightseeing charges using camera and video-camera in Kaziranga are very high for them. People running Jeep Safari service express unhappiness about increasing road toll tax and fees for security guard which they have to pay to the forest department. Their actual earnings come after deducting toll tax and security guard charges from the total Jeep Safari charges. Jeep safari has to carry a security guard in each trip. Hike of road toll tax from 150 rupees to 300 rupees and charge of security guard from 80 rupees to 150 rupees along with increase in fuel price have affected their income.

#### **IV.2.a.ii. Tourism effects on income of local people**

In labour intensive service-oriented industry like tourism, great proportion of income is likely to be in form of wages and salaries of workers. Income is also created directly by providing accommodation in hotels in places having number of tourists attractions. Level of income from tourism is closely associated with the level of employment. Development of tourism has greater importance in areas having a fewer jobs and suffering from unemployment.

Tourism has greater significance in areas like Kaziranga where about 68 percent of workers are engaged in primary sector economic activities (Table IV.3) like agriculture, forestry and horticulture. There are no other opportunities of employment for local people as the area is industrially underdeveloped. To cater to the needs of tourists as well as for wildlife conservation, lot of local people are employed in tourism related jobs. There is highly varied income in tourism related activities in Kaziranga. It basically

depends upon the nature of job. Accommodation in hospitality industry is high earning sector. Income accruing from it is generally high. The hotel/lodge owners in Kaziranga National Park have good business during tourist season.

**Table IV.8. Estimated income from tourism-related activities in Kaziranga National Park.**

<b>Sr.No</b>	<b>Nature of Job</b>	<b>Monthly income (Rs)</b>
1	Tour agents	2000-5000
2	Tour operator	10000-20000
3	Driver cum tourist guide	4000**
4	Sale of Souvenir and Handicraft	2000-5000
<b>5</b>	<b>Employment from the park in labour and allied activities</b>	
a	Worker of anti -poaching activities	2200*
b	Worker for construction of bridges, culverts etc	1500
c	Labourer for removal Mimosa ( a weed)from grassland	800
d	Security guard to protect the tourist Jeep.	2800*
e	Boat –man	1700*
f	Mahout	1500*
g	Informer about the movement of poachers.	500
<b>6</b>	<b>Employment from Hotel/Lodge</b>	
a	Hotel owner	10000-60000
b	Worker in Hotel/Lodge.	2000-4000
c	Seller of fruits, milk and vegetables to hotels	2000-5000
d	Performer of traditional dance in large hotels near the park.	1200

Source: Field-survey (2008-09). \* indicates salary fixed by Forest Department, Assam.

\*\* Salary fixed by Jeep-Safari Association, Kaziranga.

Income of a lodge owner is, therefore, high starting from Rs 10,000 to Rs 60,000 per month (Table IV.8). Workers in lodges include manager, storekeeper, house-keeper, cooks and helpers. They earn in the range of Rs 2000 to Rs 4000 depending on the establishment. A few people in surrounding villages are indirectly related to accommodation industry by supplying fruits, vegetables and milk to hotel/lodges. They earn between Rs 2000 to Rs 5000 per month. Artists from neighbouring villages entertain tourists by performing traditional dances. They also earn about Rs1200 per month. Tour operators and tourist agents have income by organizing tours. However, tour operators

have greater earnings than tourist agents. Local youths working as drivers cum tourist guides under Jeep Safari Association earn about Rs 4000 as fixed salary. On the other hand, workers of anti-poaching activities, security guards to protect Jeeps carrying tourists, boat man and mahout earn fixed salary ranging from Rs 1500 to Rs 2800 per month (see table IV.8). Labourers engaged in seasonal works like construction of bridges, culverts etc, for removing Mimosa (a type of weed) from grassland or as informers about the activities of poachers get Rs 500 to Rs1500.

**Table IV.9: Income and savings (Yearly) of SHG in Bosagaon village.**

Sl No.	Name of the Self Help Group	Income prior to forming the SHG(Rs)	Income after SHG (Rs)	Savings of members prior to SHG(Rs)	Savings of members after SHG (Rs)
1	Rukmini SHG	2,360	18,000	1,230	14,560
2	Makoni SHG	6,520	24,000	490	5,400
3	Luitporia SHG	12,270	36,000	1,320	8,140
4	Kamdhenu SHG	4,300	16,200	120	3,200
5	Lakhimi SHG	11,750	38,400	310	2,400
	Total	31,720	1,32,600	4,570	33,700

Source: Field-survey.

Local women Self Help Groups (SHG) actively participate in selling home made handicrafts, souvenirs and traditional food items through souvenir shops, hotel/lodges. Tradition of weaving is maintained even today in almost every household. SHGs help in mobilizing funds for investment in handicrafts, poultry farming and allied activities. More than 15 active SHGs are engaged in tourism related activities in fringe villages around Kaziranga. Their performance in capital formation is quite impressive. Income generated from selling handicrafts and souvenirs to tourists is shared through co-operative mechanism. The income generated through SHGs is impressive. Performance of five women SHGs in Bosagaon Village near Kaziranga shows how this has led to increase in income from tourism after forming SHGs (Table IV.9).Table clearly shows that all the five women SHGs had low income and savings before the formation of Self Help Groups. There is remarkable rise in income as well as savings of women members after forming SHGs. The effectiveness of the SHG which are organized and run by women is highly praiseworthy. Within a short span of time the members of the SHGs

have been able to generate income. On the other hand, prior to joining of this SHG, the income and savings of the people were low. But after joining the SHG, they could generate more income and savings which was highly praiseworthy.

Positive aspects of income effect are sometimes overshadowed by unhealthy competition among different service providers to tourism. In order to get better supplies, lodge owners give higher price to vegetable sellers. This results in price rise of essential commodities. During the survey over 74 percent respondents stated about general price rise of vegetables, fish, meat and meat products during tourist season in Kaziranga (Table IV.15). Forest guards, mahouts and labourers for anti-poaching activities provide services to tourists as well as work for conservation of National Park. Their salary is very low compared to other government employees. Moreover, hectic job schedule never allows time to carry additional activities like agriculture and other petty business. The government needs to pay attention to their demand. To meet their family expenses, in some cases forest guards were found to be helping poaching activities in the park.<sup>10</sup> This is really unhealthy for survival of tourism in ecologically sensitive destinations like Kaziranga.

#### **IV.2.a.iii. Effects on employment**

Tourism not only creates income but provides employment. While some jobs are created in travel agencies or as tour operators and other intermediaries supplying services but bulk of jobs are created at tourist destinations. Concept of multiplier has the same impact in employment sector as in income. Stay of tourist at a destination result in creation of jobs directly in tourism industry. These employees and their families demand goods, services and other public utility services like schools, hospitals etc. inducing further generation of employment indirectly and so on. In other words, a spiral effect of employment starts.

Conservation and management of protected areas have potential to generate substantial employment through various activities such as removal of exotic species, construction within these areas etc. At present local people are hired as labourers. Tourism benefits the people living in fringe of park and helps in empowering local

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<sup>10</sup> Talukdar.S (2008): "Another Rhino killed in Kaziranga." *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati. 26 February, 2008.

people. About 35 hotels or lodges of various kinds are located just outside Kaziranga Park. Out of these, four are run by government. About 300 local people are employed in these hotels. But, only a few hotels/lodges are owned by local people. However, some families are offering home stay facilities just outside the park, so that the tourist may get an idea of local life. People from the adjoining areas own 70 Jeeps, which are allowed to be driven into the park, and most of them act as drivers cum guides. Jeep safari is very popular in Kaziranga (Plate IV.1). Twelve local community members own and run public phone booths on National Highway 37 which cuts across the park.



Plate IV.1: Jeep-safari service inside Kaziranga provides employment to local people as driver cum tourist guides



Plate IV.2: Handicraft shop in Kaziranga run by local community.

There are 26 shops selling souvenirs etc. and are owned and/or managed by local people (Plate IV.2). Many local cultural groups also regularly perform traditional dances at some resorts (Plate IV.3). Local people sell handloom-woven cloth to tourists. There is tremendous scope for the sale of handicrafts in and around the park.



Plate IV.3: Foreign tourists enjoying *Jhumur* dance of tea-tribal community at a resort of Kaziranga.

Local people also get employment from the park in the form of labour and allied activities. Labour requirements of the park include labourers for anti-poaching activities and construction of bridges, culverts etc. Approximately 100 to 200 people are hired per range for removal of Mimosa weed which is harmful for the herbivores. About 60 people are engaged as boatmen, 35 mahouts are providing elephant ride service to tourists. During tourist peak season, park authorities have to hire 50 additional private elephants to meet tourist demand.<sup>11</sup> This is an dimension of tourism where local skilled people are employed. Park authorities also hire 15 local people as security guards to protect the tourist jeeps inside the park. The park has developed a very good network of intelligence throughout villages surrounding the park. There are key informers in every village, who

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<sup>11</sup> Vasu, NK (2003): "*Management Plan of Kaziranga National Park (2003-2013)*", Forest Department, Assam,p-41.z

reports the activities of poachers and are monetarily rewarded for the information. The director of Kaziranga National Park has arranged special fund for such rewards.<sup>12</sup>

Employment potentials of tourism compared with other industries have also been criticized on several grounds. Some of them are that employment is part-time, seasonal and therefore does not provide regular jobs. In many areas there are insufficient number of workers with specific technical and managerial skills resulting in the in-coming of outsiders with high wages and opportunity to life and work in pleasant or exotic environment etc.<sup>13</sup>

Climatic constraints produce a pronounced seasonal effect in tourist inflow. As a whole, tourist activity in Kaziranga is an out-door activity. Climate has direct control over utilization of tourism resources. Most of the tourists (around 96.18 percent) enjoy their leisure trip in autumn (October, November), winter (December-January-February) and early spring (March-April). On the other hand late spring (May) and summer season (June –July-August-September) experience only 3.82 percent of the total tourist arrivals due to hot weather with heavy monsoonal downpours.

Fig. IV.2. Seasonal pattern of tourist arrival in Kaziranga National Park (March 2007- Feb 2008).



Source: Department of Forest, Kaziranaga National Park.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p -45.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, A.M. (1988): "Tourism and Economic Development: Western European experience", Routledge, London, p.98-99.

Figure IV.2 illustrates seasonality of tourism in Kaziranga National Park and shows tourism activity to be nearly absent during June to September. The Park is open to tourist only from October to April. Seasonality of tourism has tremendous effect due to non-existence of other employment avenues. About 78 percent of the local people interviewed mentioned this point. Moreover, there is a dearth of agricultural labourers during tourist season which coincides with field-preparation for paddy sowing.

Most of locals associated with tourism in Kaziranga are unskilled and earning low remunerations. Most of jobs are part-time in nature. Jobs of labourers needed for removal of Mimosa weed, for anti-poaching activities, as boatmen, mahouts, security guards are temporary in nature.

#### **IV.2.a.iv. Effects on development of tourism infrastructure**

Term 'tourism infrastructure' denotes all those built in services which are essential for modern social life and economic development. It is an essential feature of developing economy for its rapid growth and development. Tourism is one of the important factors for eradicating unemployment and it plays a vital role in the regional development of an area. Tourism development requires infrastructure, primarily in the form of accommodation, transportation services and public utilities. Transportation developments need to take account of the needs for external linkages (ports, airports, railway connectivity etc.) to allow tourists to gain access to destination, as well as provision that allows for circulation within the destination area i.e. local roads and vehicle hire services etc.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the accommodation facilities are available in Kohora range which is central point of all tourism activities in Kaziranga. Before the introduction of tourism in Kaziranga, it was a sleepy village with just two or three shops. Locational advantage in terms of accessibility has converted it as a hub of all business activities. Facilities for tourists were limited prior to 1950 and accommodation consisted mainly of a P.W.D. inspection bungalow at Kaziranga and a forest rest house at Baguri range. This accommodation was found grossly inadequate for meeting demands of increasing number of visitors due to which one visitors' camp at Kaziranga and later on two tourist lodges

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<sup>14</sup> Williams.S (1998): "*Tourism Geography*", Routledge, London, p.71-72.



were constructed by the department on a small hillock at Kohora and one Forest Rest House was also built at Arimora. Management of these two Tourist Lodges was handed over to Tourism Department in 1963 after the creation of new department under the Government of Assam.<sup>15</sup> At present five Government tourist lodges of different categories exist at Kohora that come under jurisdiction of Tourism Department (Table IV.10). There are also rest houses, dormitories and lodges maintained by the tourism department and ATDC (Assam Tourism Development Corporation). Number of private accommodation is also increasing over time. Presently, there are 24 tourist lodges and resorts available in Kaziranga (Table IV.11).

**Table IV.10: Distribution of government accommodation facility in Kaziranga National Park.**

Sl No.	Name of Accommodation units	Type of Accommodation(No.)					Total no of beds
		Double bedded	Double bedded(tent)	Double bedded(cottage)	Three bedded	Dormitory Hall.	
1	Bonani Tourist Lodge,Kohora	5	–	–	–	–	10
2	Bonoshree Lodge,Kohora.	9	–	–	–	–	18
3	Kujaban Lodge,Kohora	–	–	–	4	–	8
4	Aranya Lodge.	19	–	9	–	–	56
5	Prashanti Cottage,Kohora.	–	–	6	–	–	12
6	Soil Inspection Bunglaw,Kohora	7	–	–	–	–	14
7	Forest inspection bunglaw.	7	–	–	–	–	14
8	Forest Transit Camp, Kohora.	4	–	–	–	–	8
9	Forest Inspection Bunglaw, Baguri.	5	–	–	–	5	60
10	P.W.D Bunglaw, Baguri.	5	–	–	–	–	10

Source:-Tourist Information Officer, Kaziranga.

<sup>15</sup> Vasu, N.K., op cit., pp 45-46

**Table IV.11: Distribution of private accommodation facility in Kaziranga National Park.**

Sl No	Name of Accommodation units	Type of Accommodation(No.)					Total no of beds
		Double bedded	Double bedded(tent)	Double bedded(cottage)	Three bedded	Dormitory Hall.	
2	Dhansiri Guest house,Numaligar	37	-	-	-	-	74
3	Riverview Guest house,Numaligar	16	-	-	-	-	32
4	Wild grass Resort, Kohora.	19	-	-	-	-	38
5	Jungle Camp	8	-	-	-	1	36
6	Kaziranga Wildlife Society	-	1	1	2	-	10
7	Chikuni Bhaban	8	-	-	-	-	16
8	Green Reed Resort, Kohora.	3	-	-	-	1	26
9	Ashray Family Lodge, Kohora.	2	-	-	1	-	7
10	The Park,Kohora	3	-	-	2	-	12
11	Maa Kamala Lodge, Kohora.	3	-	-	1	-	9
12	Ruby Lodge.	6	4	-	-	-	16
13	Bonhabi Resort.	14	-	-	-	-	28
14	Heritage Nest	6	-	3	-	-	18
15	Dhansiri Lodge	7	-	-	4	-	26
16	Unicorn Cottage	-	3	-	-	1	18
17	Florican Lodge	4	2	-	-	-	12
18	Jupuri Ghar	8	-	-	-	-	16
19	Namdang House	8	-	-	-	-	16
20	Emerald Hotel &Resort,Kohora.	24	-	-	-	-	48
21	Don GuestHouse.	2	-	-	1	-	5
22	Anabil Lodge	3	-	-	-	-	6
23	Dolphin Lodge	9	-	-	-	-	18
24	Regal Resort	2	-	-	1	-	7

Source:-Tourist Information Officer, Kaziranga.

The lodges and resorts are in synchronous with surrounding ambience. Architecture is of traditional style and ethnic types and these are equipped with modern amenities to cater tourists needs. One may not find all luxuries in most of the lodges but these offer all-inclusive range of facilities which are necessary for comfortable stay. Wild Grass Resort, Iora Retreat and The Park Hotel has modern amenities like cable

television, coffee and tea maker, high speed internet access, air conditioning, mini bar and child beds. Moreover, these resorts arrange special outdoor games like horse buggy ride, golfing, swimming and indoor games like billiard, table-tennis, badminton, different board games for children and adults. They also organize village treks to neighbouring Mishing and Karbi villages to introduce way of life of these communities. These resorts also conduct hiking through nearest tea, rubber and coffee plantations. It offers immense opportunity to know about the intricacies of plantations agriculture where the glorious legacy of erstwhile British rulers lies. Health clubs, bars, souvenir shops, conference halls, spa and wellness centres with traditional massage, pedicure, manicure, steaming etc. are also available in these units.

Transportation services and public utilities have been improving over the years. Kaziranga has excellent accessibility with major towns of Assam. Buses owned by Assam State Transport Corporation and private agencies running between Guwahati, Tezpur and Upper Assam stop at the main gate of Kaziranga on NH 37 at Kohora. Nearest town is Bokakhat at a distance of 23 kilometers. Major cities near the park are Guwahati (217 kilometers) and Jorhat (97 kilometres). Furkating (75 kilometers), which is under the supervision of Northeast Frontier Railways, is the nearest railway station. Jorhat Airport at Rowriah (97 kilometers), Tezpur Airport at Salonibari (approx 100 kilometers away), and Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati (approximately 217 kilometers) are nearby airports.

**Table IV.12. Nature of road for jeep Safari movement inside in the Park.**

Range	No of central gravelled road	No. of fair-weather road
Central (Kohora)	2	30
Western (Bagori)	2	24
Eastern(Agoratoli)	3	17
Total	7	71

Source: Management plan Kaziranga, 2006.

Most of tourist agencies make arrangements for safe journey of tourists at affordable cost. There are 7 gravel roads and 71 fair weather roads in four ranges of the National Park (Table IV.12). These are used for jeep safari inside the park.

**Table IV.13 Wild-life observation tower for tourists in Kaziranga.**

Sl.No.	Range	Watch tower tourist zone
1	Central (Kohora)	Kathapara, Bhaiamari, Mihibil, Kerasing, Goroimari
2	Western (Bagori)	Donga, Bahubeel, Namduar
3	Eastern (Agoratoli)	Sohloa, Pelican Colony, Kaladuar, Tinibeel.

Source: Management Plan, Kaziranga, 2006.

Upgradation of tourist sightseeing facility inside the park is going on. Number of observation towers increased from five at Sohola, Mihimukh, Kathpara, Foliamari and Harmoti to twelve now (table IV.13). These meet the long felt requirement of tourists to view biodiversity of Kaziranga.

There has been increase in demand of jeep safari and elephant rides in the National Park. A total of 10,084 domestic and 5,767 foreign tourists availed both jeep and elephant safaris in 2008-09.<sup>16</sup> There are 47 departmental elephants to assist tourists for sightseeing. Department of tourism also hires more than 50 elephants during tourist peak season. Sightseeing on elephant rides provides good opportunity to watch wildlife in Kaziranga.

Forest department of Kaziranga is also launching a new package of trekking attraction to Kukurakata hill in Burapahar range. Trekking is an important feature of African game reserves. Beside enthralling tourists, trekking expedition would also help keep an eye on poachers. Since a large portion of the park is visible from atop Kukurakata hill, poachers generally mark their kill from here. A steady flow of tourists, accompanied by forest guards, would help keep poachers at bay.<sup>17</sup> Night camping in Kaziranga's wilderness will be another attraction. Trekkers will be served traditional and mouth-watering Karbi cuisine such as chicken and rice cooked in bamboo segments (*sunga pitha*). Eco-Development Society of Karbi villages concerned will get Rs.80 for food served to every trekker.

<sup>16</sup> Patar,P(2009): "Increasing tourist inflow in Kaziranga National Park", *The Sentinel*, 28<sup>th</sup> April,2009,Guwahati.

<sup>17</sup> Field-survey information.

Table IV.14. Tourist perception about amenities in Kaziranga.

S. NO.	Tourist Perception	Foreign		Domestic	
		YES (%)	NO (%)	YES (%)	NO (%)
1	Duration of Jeep Safari service is of optimum duration.	20	80	67	27
2	Observation towers should be more.	76	24	45	55
3	There is regular change in elephant ride timings.	83	17	74	16
4	The hiring Charges of Jeep Safari are reasonable.	67	33	12	88
5	The number of accommodation units is adequate.	79	21	78	22
6	Quality of accommodation units is adequate.	78	22	65	35
7	Entertainment facility is fine.	67	33	56	44
8	Shopping facility is up to the mark.	45	55	78	22
9	Tourist guide service is fine.	24	76	38	62
10	Overcrowding of tourists inside the park.	74	26	67	33
11	Quality of food service is good.	89	11	48	52

Source: Field-survey.

Increase in tourist inflow in Kaziranga over years is most encouraging. But tourism infrastructure in Kaziranga is not sufficient to meet tourists need. Interview with tourists reveals that lack of hotels of international standard is one of the shortcomings in accommodation facilities. About 78 percent foreign tourists showed concern about shortage of quality accommodation near the park (table IV.14). There are only two resorts of international kind (Wild-Grass Resort and Iora Retreat) but these are not sufficient to meet increasing tourist pressure. Elephant rides are held two times in morning (5.30 a.m. - 6.30 a.m and 7.30 a.m.-8.30 a.m.). These often show cancellations due to lack of sufficient number of elephants. About 83 percent of foreign tourists and 74 percent of domestic tourists talked about this problem. Again the duration of Jeep Safari of one hour, is not enough for meticulous observations of nature. Around 80 percent of foreign tourists stated this fact. 76 percent of foreign tourists and 45 percent of domestic tourists mentioned insufficiency of wildlife observation tours as a serious inadequacy in park management. Informative tourist guides for introducing biodiversity richness to tourists is essential. About 76 percent foreign and 62 percent domestic tourists highlighted the lack of tourist guide aptitude in bird-watching and having good knowledge about little creatures and local plants etc. Condition of culverts in some areas is very pitiable which may lead to fatal accidents during Jeep safari (Plate IV.4).



Plate IV.4. Dilapidated culverts in Kaziranga can lead fatalities at any time.

Kaziranga is a major tourist destination in Assam. Development of tourism infrastructure is important for tourists' pleasure. The concerned authorities must realize development cannot take place in a haphazard manner, it has to be in an orderly phase. Tourism development in Kaziranga should follow proper analysis of tourist necessities, at the same time it is also to be maintained that it does not interfere the lives of local people.

#### **IV.2.b. Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

Tourism is one of the most vibrant, growing and economically useful activity in the world having wide cultural and social ramifications. Tourists not only bring money to a region, they also carry along with them a strong and visible life style, dress code, food habits, merry making manners and some newness to the region of their travel. Tourism can bring both benefits as well as problems to the local society and its cultural patterns. Although it is very difficult to measure the economic or environmental effects, socio-cultural impacts are major considerations in developing tourism in many places. These impacts can be especially critical in countries like India and places like Kaziranga National Park that still have a traditional society. Socio-cultural impacts can be both positive as well as negative. Some of the positive aspects are exchange of cultural

information, stimulation of interest in preservation and conservation of host cultural heritage, arouse host pride in their heritage and local crafts, customs and traditions. Negative impacts of tourism arise mainly due to destroying traditions, customs, manners, commercialization of culture, new patterns of local consumption, risks of promotion of anti-social activities like gambling and prostitution, moral drift of social values etc.

“Culture is that complex phenomenon which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society.”<sup>18</sup> Assamese culture as it appears today is a composite culture of different communities which lived together harmoniously for many years. Evolution of Assamese society centered on Brahmaputra River and its tributaries spanning entire North-East, was the outcome of conflict and assimilation of communities.<sup>19</sup> Assamese culture because of tribal and non-tribal mixture appears to be a duplication of Indian culture. If Assam linguistically is a mini India, its culture is also a replica of India’s composite culture. Traditional knowledge system and indigenous skills those its people have been historically sharing are also well indicative of the region’s great potential for sustainable prosperity. Because of rich socio-cultural elements present there, tourists considered it among preferred destinations. Assamese culture is reflected in various elements such as folklore and ceremonies related to wedding and religious practices, customs and traditions, local handicrafts and history of different ethnic groups, social structure, food and drinks, traditional architecture, songs and music, languages of different ethnic communities, traditional dress and recreational activities etc.

Cultural effect of tourism in Kaziranga is manifested as change in any one or more elements among those mentioned above resulting from the presence and activities of tourists. Even though tourism is a recent phenomenon in Kaziranga, concomitant socio-cultural impacts on local population have been considerable with far reaching effects and consequences. During the course of the survey, it was found that effect of development of tourism on lifestyle of the local community has not been uniform. This has been evidenced by the fact that non-tribal population mostly from Ahoms, Kalita and Koibarta communities and sizeable proportion of Mishing tribes and Nepali

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<sup>18</sup> Tylor, E.B. (1987): “*Primitive Society*”, Gordon Press, London, p-12.

<sup>19</sup> Duta, A.K. (2001): “*The Brahmaputra*”, National Book Trust, New Delhi, p-101.

Communities have undergone greater change than neighboring Karbi tribal because the formers are more open to change and more receptive to new ideas. On the other hand Karbis are more reticent and wary of outsiders and their participation in tourism related activities is relatively limited. Moreover, Karbis have less awareness regarding the benefits from tourism. However, due to initiative of tourism department of Assam, Karbi villages are also taken as a part of ethnic tourist circuit in Kaziranga. Impact of tourism activities on their ways of life is gradually becoming visible now-a-days. Socio-cultural change has been predominantly felt in and around village near Kohora (Central Range) which is the hub of all tourism related activities.

There have been modifications in the traditional lifestyle and consumption pattern of local people. Interviewed people wore non-traditional dresses. Only the old-aged people wore traditional clothes. It can be inferred that most young people have switched to non-traditional clothes which are mainly shirt trouser for man and salwar kameez for women. However, zeal for wearing traditional dress is quite pronounced among few communities. It was observed during the field survey that Karbi and Mishing tribals take pride in exhibiting traditional dress. Karbi families from neighbouring Chandra Singh Ingti and Dhakrang Ingti villages near Kaziranga National Park received visitors in their traditional style. Karbi youths were seen wearing *Choy-Aan* (Jacket) with *Rekong-ke-er* (loin red cloth of silk) with a *Gamosa* (a short towel like cloth) on his shoulders and a *Poho* (turban) of *endi* silk on head. Karbi women and girls are very fond of their traditional dresses and they have been using these even in the face of a strong competition of modern trends. Karbi woman greeted tourist wearing traditional attire *Pinicamflak* (a piece of cloth tied around waist like a *Mekhela*), *Pe-kok* (piece of artistic cloth to cover upper part of the body) and *Wankok* (waist band).

Studying food habits of a particular community provides a window to the culture. It enables us to look into customs and traces social and economic history of a particular society. Assamese food is as diverse as its culture. Along with traditional food, a lot of other derivations from outside of Assam as well as foreign cuisines have become popular. About 2 percent of the respondents have experienced change in food habits and tastes (Table IV.15).



**Table IV.15. Perception of local people about tourists and their impact on Kaziranga National Park.**

Serial No.	Questions asked	Positive-response in percentage
A		
1	Interference in your simple living.	56
2	Set bad examples especially for youth.	67
3	Superimposition of foreign culture.	49
4	Cultural degradation in the society.	47
5	Upsetting the regard for the religion and religion practices	23
6	Cultural has become a commodity for tourists.	45
7	Price rise of essential commodities	74
8	Unavailability of local goods for no-tourists.	78
9	Inferiority complex and resentment among locals.	34
10	Promotion of overly commercial way of thinking.	32
11	Rising criminality and loss of morals.	
12	Increasing beggar mentality.	29
13	Lowered standard of arts and culture.	47
14	Sanitation problems.	57
15	Crowding and congestion.	81
16	Change in food habits.	2
17	Others.	
B		
1	Contact with the outside world.	81
2	Spread of Knowledge.	89
3	Understanding other cultures.	83
4	Economic prosperity in the region.	48
5	Maintenance and promotion of local culture.	72
6	Opening of new craft centers.	77
7	Encouragement of local handicraft industry.	91
8	Increased availability of social amenities.	87
9	Improved self-image of the society.	79
10	Increased rate of urbanization.	57
11	Better land use.	23
12	Change in demographic structure.	78
13	Greater education opportunities.	47
14	Appreciation of local culture and tradition by outsider.	86
15	Others.	48

Source: Field-survey.

Actually the food habit and taste to which people are accustomed for years are difficult to change but tourists demand has led to the change in menu. The changes in eating habits are mainly seen among young people. Earlier people used to take less spicy food. Now items like *Chow-mein*, *Chats*, *Puri-bhaji*, and *Pao-bhaji* have become popular among young people. A recent craze amongst students as well as elders is for the Tibetan snack known as *momo*. Lodge and guest house owners have modified their method of cooking and types of food served according to requirements of tourists. Domestic tourists in most of cases prefer food of the region they come from. Majority of domestic tourist in Kaziranga are from West Bengal. Bengali tourists generally prefer sweets like *rasagolla*, *sandesh*, and *rasmalai* etc. So these desserts have been introduced in hotels to cater to their taste. There is also provision of north and south Indian foods to cater to tourists. Foreign tourists, on the other hand, relish on traditional Assamese food like *poita bhat* with *mitha tel* and *khorisa* (fermented rice with mustard oil and bamboo shoots), *chunga chawl* (rice cooked in bamboo), *masor tenga* (sour fish curry), *bet bhaji* (burnt or fried cane tender shoots), *dhekia* (Fern) fry, duck preparations, *bah-gaj* (bamboo-shoot) dishes and pickles like *kharoli* (made of mustard seeds), *pani tenga* (tangy mustard chutney) and different *pithas* (steamed or roasted rice cakes) as a dessert. These traditional food items have become popular with the development of tourism. There has been a change in drinking habits as well. Locals now consume cold drinks, bottled fruit juices and other beverages. Some locals have started taking beer or rum in addition their local *laopani* (rice beer). A few of locals prefer foreign liquor, as this is considered as prestigious among their peers.

In many ways, modifications in lifestyle have come due to 'demonstration effect' which is defined as an effect on the behaviour of host community caused by observation of the actions of tourists and their consequences.<sup>20</sup> Residents frequently resent the apparent material superiority of visitors and may try to copy their behaviours and spending pattern. This is especially true for youths. Young people observe the freedom and tendency of lavish expenditure of foreign tourists and get affected. At times local young people get a feeling of frustration and resentment when he has to work while

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<sup>20</sup> Teo, P (1994): "Assessing socio-cultural impacts: the case of Singapore", *Tourism Management*, Vol.15, No.2 p-126.

tourists enjoy. Most of the respondents stated that by emulating the visitors, local youth are adopting new clothing style, started beginning eating and drinking imported food and beverages favoured by tourist. In most instances inability to emulate the visitor leads to greater awareness of poverty, envy and frustration. One respondent stated that sometime parents have to meet the lavish and expensive demands of their children even at the cost of selling their land. Poachers and other miscreants are taking the advantage of this situation to lure people and engage them in unlawful activities. Frustrated youth get money by illegal cutting of bamboo from Burhapahar range of Kaziranga for supplying to Jagirod paper mill.<sup>21</sup>

Traditional life of locals has been affected by tourism. The locals are undergoing a change in social values in general. This change is more pronounced in and around Kohora which is the main centre of tourist activity in Kaziranga. Social system of Assam is based on tradition of cooperation. Competition and professional jealousy were nearly absent. Religious and cultural differences hardly affected the relationship. Sense of communal harmony was very strong among them. The tradition of *khauri-khowa* (mutual help in agriculture) has now nearly disappeared. 32 percent of respondents blamed tourism for promoting commercial way of thinking. With integration of the traditional lifestyle with market economy, many traditional institutions have been affected. About 47 respondents blamed tourism for cultural degradation. Locals remain busy during tourist season and earning is more compared to agriculture. Karbis, like other tribes, have some traditional institutions which have survived since time immemorial. Importance of traditional village council of Karbis called *Me* and bachelors dormitory of Karbis, known as *Jirkedam* are now on decline.

Development of tourism has also brought economic prosperity in the area as highlighted by 48 percent respondents but with imbalances in the society. Benefits of tourism have uneven in the society. Hotel owners are getting larger share of the benefits as compared to other workers. This is raising disparities.

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<sup>21</sup> Statement from respondents during field survey.

Tourism also has positive impacts on society. Interaction with foreign tourists helped in enhancing education awareness among locals. About 47 percent respondents stated that education opportunity has increased with tourism development. Local youths are learning foreign languages to get employment as tourist guides. Some of them are taking courses on bird watching. Nearly 83 percent of respondents supported that tourism helps in understanding to other cultures. Learning about better cultural aspects of other area motivates local people for development. Environmental awareness, knowledge about health and hygienic also grows with interaction with tourists. Most of the rural households are using *gobar* (cow dung) gas and LPG instead of firewood. This enhances standard of living and lessens pressure on forests for firewood. Around 79 percent of the locals said tourism has improved self-image of the society. Tourism altered the status of an individual within his home society through acquisition of skills like entrepreneurship, communication skills that others may lack. Some of the youths earned praise for better dealings with tourists.

Purchase of souvenirs that depict native peoples and their cultural forms are popular among tourists. However, behind the practice lie real problem of authenticity. Problems are particularly acute in marketing of low-cost souvenirs. Relatively a small number of native products are overwhelmed by poorly manufactured imitations of native designs like tea-towels, key-rings, bracelet, oven gloves and so forth. One of the respondents told that souvenir products are often bought from outside. Domestic tourists in most cases bargain too much. Selling outside products at low price instead of handmade products is easy.

Nearly 45 percent of local respondents informed that culture has become commercialized. Introduction of entry fees as Rs.500 per person to rural tourism site in Durgapur village near Kaziranga also annoyed a few respondents. Commercialisation of village ambience also affected the mindset simple villagers. About 86 percent of locals opined about the appreciation of their culture by tourists. Locals expressed happiness and pride in entertaining foreigners (Plate IV.5). A few tribal art forms were revived due to tourism. One of the female respondents told that after arrival of tourist to their villages, they got confidence to communicate with others. Organization of traditional games to

showcase tourists in Durgapur village near Kaziranga is very appreciable. It will definitely revive games those are almost at the verge of extinction



Plate IV.5: Foreign tourist using rice husking tool (*Dheki*) in a rural ambience near Kaziranga National Park.

Occupational changes are also observed among locals with the development of tourist activities. Economy of people living in fringe areas of Kaziranga was primarily forest based. People used to depend on Kaziranga for firewood, fodder and another forest based resources. However Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 prohibited the villagers from using forest within and debarred them entering even to collect dry firewood, fodder or any other forest based produce or graze their animals.<sup>22</sup> As result of declaration of Kaziranga as a National Park in 1974, people have switched to other occupations. Villagers of Nepaligaon are no more dependent on pastures of the park to graze their herds of cattle and were forced to leave this occupation. They have switched over to

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<sup>22</sup> Sharma,U(2004): "Experiences in protected Areas, National Parks and Participatory Conservation with emphasis on Kaziranga National Park, Assam", *Journal of North-East India Council for Social Science Research* ,Vol 30, No.1,p.8-10.

occupations like business and services etc. It was observed that some young boys of Nepaligaon supply dressed chicken to private hotel and restaurant in Kaziranga. Some locals from this village also work as chowkidars, cooks, and waiters and helpers in tourism establishments.

Change in occupation was also observed among Karbis. New generation of Karbis shifted to tourism activity as tourist guides and workers in hotels. Unavailability of forest land and risk involving in traditional *jhum* cultivation (slash and burn cultivation) made them move to service sector of tourism related activities. A few Karbi youths have also set up juice shops for selling juices of orange, pineapple and litchi as these are abundantly grown in Karbi hills. Karbi women sell medicinal plants at Kohora market in Kaziranga.

Another demerit of tourism development is increase in alcoholism. Younger generation is quite badly affected. Children have started absenting themselves from schools and prefer to earn money by working in and around tourist establishments. A few children do small tourism related jobs during weekends for pocket money. Alcohol is easily available at these places and employers often encourage children to take to drinks. Consequently, alcoholism has also increased among school children.

Tourism has affected religious practices. Around 23 percent of the respondents supported this fact. They affirmed that tourism has a role in upsetting religious practices among Karbi, Mishing and Tea-tribal communities. Conversion to Christianity has an adverse impact on these communities. A few respondents informed that there are instances when Christian missionaries visit nearby villages as tourist and try to convert simple villagers. The tribals are taught to disapprove existing norms of society and as a result inferiority complex grows. But conversion of religion is not seen among non-tribes, possibly because they have strong and age-old religious tradition.<sup>23</sup>

Nearly 81 percent of respondents talked about crowding and congestion problem in Kaziranga in peak season of tourism. There has been mushrooming of noisy *dhabas* (roadside eateries catering mainly to truck drivers) and other eateries and resorts, most of which have come up during the last decade. Some of these have been blocked the

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<sup>23</sup> Dutta A.K. (2001): *op.cit.* p.203.

conventional corridors of movement of wild animals. Animals get scared by flashing lights, noise and other human activities in these eateries and resorts. There are incidents where the animals, out of fright and confusion, have attacked people or strayed into nearby villages.

Increase in the number of visitors and corresponding management have always been a agenda of development of tourism in National Park and Sanctuaries. Kaziranga National Park is no exception from these. Social impact of tourism on the host communities has been mixed with both positive as well as negative affects. Pleasure in rejuvenating unique culture and tradition provides impetus towards involving tourism related activities. Dealing with tourist provides broad outlook to their lives which is necessary to improve quality of life. Tourism development has not generated proportionate infrastructure in the villages. Many villages near the National Park do not have even drinking water and electricity. Roads connecting villages are in pathetic condition. These issues must be kept in mind for better management of tourism in the area.

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## Chapter V

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Travel and stay attributes are important parts of tourism activity. In a geographical sense, basic distinction between tourism and other forms of leisure is the travel component. Spatial interaction of tourist movements between origin to destination and their stay pattern define feature of tourism.

I.2 Tourism contributes towards economic development of many countries of the world. It has placed crucial role in terms of foreign exchange earnings. Tourism has major economic, cultural, and political significance. Impacts of tourism have both positive and negative sides.

I.3. North-East Indian is known for richness in wildlife and cultural diversity. In spite of it, tourism development is much below potentials. Poor infrastructure is one of the major reasons behind underdevelopment of tourism.

I.4. Tourism development in Assam is also not satisfactory, though its geographical position is more advantageous than many other states of North-East India. Nature has bestowed Assam with everything needed for tourist attraction. In addition to wildlife tourism, it has much to offer for recreation of tourists in the form of cultural, religious, and historical places and for adventure tourism. Tourism activity is not attaining desired level because of transport bottlenecks, lack of private investment, travel restrictions like RAP (Restricted Area Permit) and disturbed law and order situation etc. Those are the basic reasons for low tourist inflow. But inflow of tourist in recent years has been encouraging. Current pace of tourist inflow is vital for economic growth and providing employment opportunities to local people in Assam. It will also help in preservation of its physical and cultural resources.

I.5. Assam has three physiographic divisions namely Brahmaputra Valley, Barak Valley and Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. It has humid climate with pleasant and long winter and short summer.

## II. PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

II.1. Assam is gateway to North-East India. North-Eastern states are connected with rest of India by a narrow strip called 'Chicken neck'. It shares international border with Bhutan and Bangladesh. It represents 2.39 percent of landmass of India and has 2.59 percent of total population of India.

II.2. Physiography of Assam is diverse. It has both valley and hill components. Brahmaputra Valley is very rich in terms of tourism resources. There are numbers of National Parks and wildlife Sanctuaries in this zone. The southern foothill zone under this unit is important for outdoor recreation like trekking, jungle exploration and picnic. Barak Valley is suitable for historical tourism as it bears the relict of Kachari Kingdom. Hilly region of Assam comprising Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill districts have tourist attractions like historical monuments and scenic landscape, scope for bird watching and tribal life and culture. Beside, almost all these spots have ample scope for trekking, jungle exploration, cycling, water sports, ballooning and parasailing.

II.3. Assam is a land of river and tributaries. Brahmaputra and Barak rivers have about 150 main tributaries. The riverine tracts of these two river valleys provide favourable ecological conditions for growth and developments of wetlands, swamps and numerous islands. Islands and wetlands of Brahmaputra collectively form the habitat of wide variety of aquatic plants, animals and attract large number of migratory birds especially in winter. In Addition to natural water bodies numerous tanks are available here. Those were dug by under the patronage of Ahom and Koch Kings. Such an aquatic environment can provide ample opportunities for water borne recreation.

II.4 Tourism activity is defined by nature of climate of Assam. There spatial variations in climatic conditions. Spatial variations in rainfall are highly pronounced than temperature and humidity. Weather of Brahmaputra and Barak valley gets affected by orographic factors. Tourism activity remain closed in monsoon season because of heavy downpour and hot weather. Major tourism activities are confined to winter months comprising November, December, January and February. Those months are suited for tourism due to scanty rainfall with low temperature.

II.5. Vegetation of Assam is predominantly tropical, although sub-tropical vegetation is found in some pockets of two hill districts. Vegetation types are mainly tropical

evergreen, tropical semi-evergreen, sub tropical moist evergreen, mixed deciduous, riverine forest, grasslands and bamboo vegetation. Commercially valuable species like Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Gamari (*Gmelia arborea*) and Bamboo and Cane are available in Assam. Grasslands and Savannah vegetation is most conspicuous feature of National Parks and Sanctuaries of Assam. This vegetation is ideal habitat of some rare species like Wild Buffalo, one horned Rhinoceros, Leopard and tiger etc.

II.6. Assam is also rich in terms of faunal resources. About 193 species of mammals, more than 958 species and subspecies of birds and 195 species of reptiles have are so far been reported here. These are mostly found in protected areas including five national parks, eighteen wildlife sanctuaries, two biosphere reserves, two world heritage site and five elephant reserves. Some of these are regarded as attractive tourism destinations of India.

II.7. Socio-cultural diversity of Assam is another source of attraction for tourists. It is meeting ground of different ethnic groups, each with own heritage, culture and tradition.

II.8. Assam is also famous for temples and monuments. Religious places like Kamakhya in Guwahati, Poa Mecca in Hajo and famous Gurudwara at Dhubri are some important religious destinations. Monuments of Assam are known from archaeological and historical point of view. Some of the monuments are testimony of past glorious days of Ahom, Koch and Kachari Kingdoms existed during medieval time.

II.9. Fair and festivals are important tourist attraction in Assam. Festivals celebrated in Assam have their roots in diverse faith and belief of its inhabitants. Most of the festivals are intimately connected to agriculture due to it being the mainstay of all indigenous communities. Community praying, dance and merrymaking are important part of these occasions. People make different food items during these events. Festivals like elephant festival in Kaziranga, Tezpur festival, Tea festival are organized by tourism department to showcase dance, music and food forms of Assam.

II.10. Both vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes are important part of Assamese diet. Locally found medicinal herbs are included in vegetable dishes. Use of minimal spice is special feature of traditional food. However, people are more fond of non-vegetarian food than vegetarian food. Beverages in the form of local rice beer are popular among different communities. Black tea is most important part of daily refreshment.

II.11. Colourful dress and ornaments of its inhabitants is distinctive feature of cultural tourism in Assam. Handmade traditional dresses of different communities have artistic appeal. These are precious items as souvenirs on the shopping list of tourists.

II.12. Arts and Crafts of people of Assam reflect excellent craftsmanship. Cane and bamboo craft, metal craft, handicrafts, woodcraft and pottery making are part of every rural life. Home made items have great demand for their quality. Tourists visiting in the state can collect those as souvenirs.

II.12. Socio-cultural diversity of Assam is reflected in the presence of different dialects. In addition to Assamese, Bodo and Bengali languages, there are large numbers of different dialects spoken by different ethnic groups. Understanding of those dialects will facilitate to know more about folklore and way of life of different ethnic groups in original form.

II.13. Traditional house type is based on climatic condition. Architecture of slanted roofed Assam type house and stilted house of Mishing community is dictated by heavy rainfall during monsoon season. Assamese villagers have kitchen gardens for vegetables, fruits and herbs and a big courtyard for threshing and processing of paddy. These types of arrangements of space reflect agricultural economy of people.

II.14. Marriage type reflects customs and traditions of a society. Assamese Hindus solemnize marriage ceremony according to Vedic customs, while tribals have their own marriage customs.

### **III. STATUS OF TOURISM**

III.1. Though tourism is recent in Assam but many people used to visit the state in the past mainly for business and religious activities. Later part of 1930's may be considered to be humble beginning of modern tourism because some people from inside and outside the state started visiting Kamakhya and Kaziranga National Park. Since then, significant changes have taken place in tourism sector because of various efforts made by the Central and State governments in this direction.

III.2. Tourist flow in Assam is not encouraging though it has enough tourism resources, Lack of proper infrastructure and initiatives, less favourable law and order situation, compounded by negative publicity have been most important constraints for low tourism

development. However, with new strategy and approach of the Government vis-à-vis tourism sector, some progress in security factor and participation of private sector in tourism related infrastructure development, have brought in a perceptible rise in tourist flow towards Assam from 2002 onwards. Although the inflow of tourists in Assam over the years has been positive and dominant in the northeastern perspective, while compared with the national scene, its share is abysmally low and tourism revenue generation is also insignificant.

III.3. In spite of Assam being endowed with immense potentiality for tourism, only a small portion of it has been identified and developed for this purpose. Due to lack of necessary initiatives only a few spots have come up to meet the demand of domestic and foreign tourists. Department of tourism has identified as many as 32 sites of tourist interest. However tourist infrastructure are quite limited and confined only to a site.

III.4. Assam has good road connectivity with rest of India. The tourist destinations developed so far are thus well connected by existing road network. However, places like Chandubi (Kamrup district), Pabitora (Marigaon district), Ajan Pir Dargah (Sibsagar district), Manas National Park (Barpeta district), river island of Majuli (Jorhat district), Khaspur and Bhuban (Cachar district) and Orang National Park (Darrang and Sonitpur district) are exceptions where visitors have to negotiate 10 and 20 km of gravel roads. Even in other areas, badly managed roads remain a major cause of discomfort for the tourist and general population.

III.5. Majority of tourists reaches Guwahati by Train. Rail transport is economical in terms of such a long journey. However inside the state, railway communication is in bad shape. Poor connectivity, late running and operational problems are some of the common features of train service. Tourists as well as general passenger prefer bus journey over train journey because of these problems. Moreover, no tourist place in Assam except Guwahati is well connected by train.

III.6. Air service in the state is of comparatively recent origin. There are six airports in Assam. Flights of Indian Airlines and other private airways provide regular service to those air ports. However, Only International Airport of Guwahati has good connectivity with other states of India. Hence, the tourists, specially foreigners, prefer to avail air service up to Guwahati, as it is easy to get bus and car service from here to all important

tourist destinations in Assam as well as in rest of North-East India. Air transport is also infested with problems like delay and cancellation of flight due weather and operational problems.

III.7. Brahmaputra as a National waterway-2 has important role to play in providing transportation as well as adventure tourism facility in the state. However, its potentials have not been utilized yet. At present, Assam Tourism Development Corporation is running a luxury cruise vessel service at Guwahati for tourists. Similarly a few private players are also organizing river cruising in Brahmaputra near Guwahati. Assam Bengal Navigation Company has also started long distance luxury river cruiser in collaboration with State IWT (Inland Water Transport Department) since 2004 connecting some important tourist destination including world famous Kaziranga National Park. Extension of such services to other tourist destination is need of the hour.

III.8. Role of government agencies facilitating tourism development is very essential. Department of tourism organize weekly tours covering tourist places near Guwahati, Shillong and Kaziranga. Such conducted tours are not successful because of lack of tourist guides, vehicles and sometimes unavailability of tourists.

III.9. Participation of private agencies in travelling is not satisfactory. There are only a few tour operators for tourism services. Lack of trained tourist guides is another area of major concern.

III.10. Accommodation facilities are not adequate in most tourist destinations. Accommodation units are run by both government and private agencies. Except Kaziranga, other accommodation facilities of tourism department are not managed professionally.

III.11. Water, land and air based adventure tourism activities have great scope. Both private and government agencies organize adventure tourism but only in a few selected pockets of Assam.

III.12. Status of tourism in Assam is not very impressive. Poor tourism infrastructure, lack of coordination between tourism department and private entrepreneurs, disturbed political situation and negative publicity at both national and international levels are some major reasons behind underdevelopment of tourism.

#### **IV. IMPACTS OF TOURISM**

IV.1. Tourism activities create both problems as well as opportunities for societies and have their impacts on economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political spheres.

IV.2. Tourism in Kaziranga has helped locals to become part of Conservation process.

IV.3. Relevance of Kaziranga National Park is important for understanding impact of tourism as it is most developed tourist spots in Assam. Moreover, it is most frequently visited tourist destination. Participation of local people in tourism related activities in large numbers is another feature of this park.

IV.4. Kaziranga National Park is located is known as biodiversity hot spot. It has a good conservation history, especially due to its efficient wildlife conservation policies.

IV.5. Kaziranga National Park offers various tourist related activities. Main tourist activity in the park is wild animal viewing through guided tours by elephant or jeep. It remains closed from mid-April to mid- October due to monsoon. There are numbers of rest houses, dormitories and lodges available in the park for accommodation. Dense settlements and tea plantations are found on three sides of the Park.

IV.6. Livelihood in the villages is based is based on agriculture, tea plantations and poultry/dairy related activities. Some local people find jobs in budding tourism industry.

IV.7. Tourists expenditure from tourism activities in Kaziranga National Park helps earnings of local people. There are both direct and indirect benefits of tourist expenditure. Tourist guides cum drivers, souvenir and handicraft sellers and locals working in accommodation sector have directly benefited from it. Poultry farmers and milk suppliers are indirectly benefitted by tourism. However, sharing of benefits between tourists and host populations are not satisfactory.

IV.8. There is highly varied income in tourism related activities in Kaziranga. Self Help Groups (SHG) are also beneficiaries from tourism activities. Positive aspects of Income effect are sometimes overshadowed by unhealthy competition among different service providers to tourism. Price rise of essential commodities in tourist peak season is a concern for the locals. Salaries of forest guards, mahouts and labourers for anti-poaching activities are quite low.

IV.9. Development of tourism in Kaziranga provides employment to local people. More people are employed in services associated with accommodation facilities for tourists.



Nature of employment in tourism is part-time, seasonal and does not provide regular jobs. Most of locals associated with tourism in Kaziranga are unskilled and earning low remunerations.

IV.10. Tourism infrastructure is growing with the development of tourism in Kaziranga National Park. It is highly visible in accommodation establishments. Numbers of government and private accommodation units are increasing. Meanwhile, modern recreation facilities are also added for luxury stay. Upgradation of transportation and sightseeing facilities inside the National Park is going on. But tourism infrastructure is not sufficient to meet increasing tourist inflow particularly in season. Shortage of quality accommodation, frequent cancellations in elephant rides due to shortage of elephants, short duration of jeep safari, lack of professional tourist guides are some of the shortcomings reported by tourists.

IV.11. Socio-cultural impacts can be a concern especially in places like Kaziranga National Park having traditional society.

IV.12. There have been changes in traditional lifestyle and consumption pattern of locals. The change is also visible in dressing pattern of people. Most young people have switched to non-traditional clothes. However, tourism development also aroused zeal for wearing traditional dress among few communities. Local people of nearby villages greet tourists wearing traditional dresses.

IV.13. Very few local people experienced change in food habits and tastes. The changes in eating habits are mainly seen among young people. Lodge and guest house owners have modified their method of cooking and types of food served according to the requirements of tourists. Local food items have become popular with the development of tourism. There has been change in drinking habits of locals as well. Some locals have started taking beer or rum in addition to their local *laopani* (rice beer).

IV.14. Change in lifestyle of locals has also been due to 'demonstration effect'. was also observed. Local youths by emulating visitors are adopting new clothing style, have started eating and drinking imported food and beverages. In most of instances, inability to emulate the visitors leads to greater awareness of poverty, envy and frustration.

IV.15. Traditional social institutions have got affected due to integration of traditional lifestyle with market economy because of incoming of tourism.

IV.16. Benefits of tourism are distributed unevenly in the society. Hotel owners are getting larger share of benefits compared to other workers.

IV.17. Interaction with tourists has helped in enhancing education awareness among locals.

IV.18. Tourism has helped in understanding other cultures, motivated local people for development. Tourism has improved self-image of the society. Some youths earned praise for better dealings with tourists. Appreciation of local culture by tourists is another positive impact of tourism. It helps in revival of traditional arts and sports.

IV.19. Misrepresentation of native products as souvenirs is observed. Low priced souvenirs are generally represented by non-native products.

IV.20. Commercialization of culture is one of the negative impacts of tourism. Introduction of tourist entry fees in rural tourism site in Durgapur has also affected the mindset of villagers.

IV.21. Occupational changes are also observed among locals in Kaziranga National Park.

IV.22. Increase in alcoholism among school going children was found to be demerits linked to tourism. Moreover, children have started absenting themselves from schools and prefer to earn money by working in and around tourists establishments.

IV.23. Tourism has also affected religious practices. It was upsetting religious practices among tribals.

IV.24. Crowding and congestion problem during tourist peak season affects wildlife of Kaziranga. Mushrooming of dhabas and resorts has blocked the conventional corridors of movement of wild animals. They were scared by human activities in the eateries and resorts and sometimes attacked people out of fright and confusion.

IV.25. Efficient tourism management in Kaziranga National Park is very important so that negative impacts of tourism are minimized.

IV.26. Tourism development has not generated proportionate infrastructure in the villages. These issues must be kept in mind for better management of tourism in the area.

APPENDIX -I

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

NEW DELHI -1110067

(SURVEY OF TOURIST VISITING ASSAM, 2008)  
FOREIGN / DOMESTIC TOURIST

NO----- DATE----- PLACE-----

1. a) Name.....  
b) Sex (Male/Female) .....  
c) Age .....  
c) Country / State .....  
d) Permanent Address.....  
e) Occupation .....  
f) Income .....Currency.....
2. Education Qualification-----
3. Purpose of visit to Assam (?)  
a) Pleasure ( )  
b) To explore new and strategic places ( )  
c) Business ( )  
d) For educational purpose ( )  
e) Official work ( )  
f) Any other purpose (specify) ( )  
.....
4. Sources of information (?)  
a) Own previous experience ( )  
b) From others who visited earlier ( )  
c) Tourists information bureaus ( )  
d) Travel agencies ( )  
e) Books and literature ( )  
f) Any other (specify) ( )  
.....
5. Is this your first visit to Assam? Yes/No
6. If no, how many times you have been here before (?)  
a) Once ( ) Places visited (1) ..... (2) ..... (3).....  
b) Twice ( ) Places visited (1) ..... (2) ..... (3).....  
c) Three times or more ( ) Places visited (1) ..... (2) ..... (3).....
7. Places Planned to visit .....
8. Plan of travel (?)  
a) Group travel ( )  
b) Travel with friends ( )  
c) Family travel ( )  
d) Lone travel ( )  
e) Others (specify) ( )
9. Group size = Total..... Male..... Female....
10. Tour Organized by (?)  
a) Travel agency ( ) specify name &place...  
b) Self Organized ( )  
c) others (specify).....

**11. The area of your interest (√)**

- a) Archaeological spots
- b) Monuments
- c) pilgrimage
- d) Museum
- e) Dances & festivals
- f) Art & handicraft
- g) Native life & culture
- h) National Park
- i) Wildlife
- j) Zoo
- k) Flora & Fauna
- l) Stay in hill station
- m) Land & air based Adventure sports
- n) Scenery & natural landscape
- o) Water sports
- p) Angling
- q) Recreation and Entertainment
- r) others (specify)

**12. Details of expenditure**

Place	length of stay	Accommodation	Food item	Local transport	Shopping	Sightseeing
<b>Total</b>						

**13. No of persons on whom this expenditure incurred..**

**14. Are you satisfied with the entry formalities? Yes / No**

**15. Comment on entry formality (√)**

- a) RAP ( Restricted Area Permit )/ Inner line permit restricts our mobility ? Yes/ No.
- b) Entry formalities for the tourist should be (√)
  - i) withdrawn
  - ii) Modified
  - iii) Kept as they are
- c) Any other comment .....

**16. Where did you stay during this tour ? (√)**

- a) Tourist bunglaw
- b) Dak bunglaw
- c) Circuit house
- d) Any other govt. accommodation
- e) Hotel
- f) With friends and relatives
- g) As paying guest

17. Maintenance of room services (√)
- a) Excellent ( )
  - b) Good ( )
  - c) Satisfactory ( )
  - d) Unsatisfactory ( )
18. Opinion about food & beverage services (√)
- a) Excellent ( )
  - b) Good ( )
  - c) Satisfactory ( )
  - d) Unsatisfactory ( )

19. The behaviour of the staff (√)
- a) Excellent ( )
  - b) Good ( )
  - c) Satisfactory ( )
  - d) Unsatisfactory ( )
20. Transport service quality (√)
- a) Excellent ( )
  - b) Good ( )
  - c) Satisfactory ( )
  - d) Unsatisfactory ( )

21. Tourist perception about the amenities provided in the National Park. (Say Yes or No)

- a) Duration of Jeep Safari service is of optimum duration. Yes/No.
- b) Tourist Observation towers should be more. Yes/No.
- c) There is regular change in elephant riding timings. Yes/No.
- d) The hiring Charge of Jeep Safari is reasonable. Yes/No.
- e) The number of accommodation unit is adequate. Yes/No.
- f) Entertainment facility is fine. Yes/No.
- g) Shopping facilities is up to the mark. Yes/No
- h) The tourist guide service is fine. Yes/No
- i) Overcrowding of tourists inside the park. Yes/No.
- j) Quality of food service is good. Yes/No.

22. Are you satisfied with the amenities provided? If no what improvement should be made in your opinion

.....

23. How is the behaviour of locals towards you?

.....

24.a) Do you make an attempt to understand the locals and culture of this place ? yes/no

- b) If no why? (√)
- i) Hectic itinnency so limited time ( )
- ii) Hostile attitude of people ( )
- iii) Problem of communication ( )
- iv) Not interested ( )
- v) Others (specify).....

25. What interested you during this tour?

.....  
.....

26. What are the main problems that you encountered during your stay in Assam? What improvements can be made?

.....  
.....

**APPENDIX- II**  
**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

**NEW DELHI -1110067**

(SURVEY OF LOCAL PEOPLE)  
2008

- Date .....Place.....
1. Name ..... 2. Age.....
2. Sex :-Male/Female 3. Marital Status:- Married/Unmarried
- 4.Address.....
5. Education Qualification :- (√) 6. Occupation :- (√)
- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Illiterate ( )               | (a) Agriculture ( )      |
| b) School level ( )             | (b) Service ( )          |
| (c) College level ( )           | (c) Businessman ( )      |
| d) Graduate or higher level ( ) | (d) Others(specify)..... |
7. Monthly income :- (√) (a) Below Rs 1000 ( ) (b) Rs 1000-2000 ( )  
(c) Rs 2000- 5,000 ( ) (d) Rs 5000-10000 ( )  
(e) Above 10000 ( )
8. (a)Do you wear non-traditional cloth ? (√)  
(i) Never ( ) (ii) Rarely ( ) (iii) Often ( ) Always ( )  
(b) When did you start wearing them .....  
(c) What kind of clothes ? (give details).....
9. (a) Do you eat non-traditional food ? (√)  
(i) Never ( ) (ii) Rarely ( ) (iii) Often ( ) (iv) Always ( )
10. (b) When did you start ?.....  
© What kind of food ?  
.....
11. (a) Do you follow religious customs faithfully ? (√) Yes ( ) Not very particular ( )  
(b) If no, were you always like this ? When did you change ? .....  
.....  
.....
12. (a) Do you follow social customs faithfully ? (√) Yes ( ) , Not very particular ( )  
(b) If no, were you always like this ? When did you change ? .....  
.....  
.....
13. ( For those who changed their employment to enter tourism or related field )  
(i) Since when are you in this field .....  
(ii) Why did you change the field .....  
.....

- (iii) How much did you earn (monthly ) from your previous occupation .....
- (iv) Which occupation do you prefer .....
- ( v ) Do you have to change your place of stay due to occupation ( give details ).....
- .....
- (vi) Was there any modification in family size due to change in occupation (details).....
- .....
- .....
14. Employment opportunities due to tourism (√)
- (a) Travel agent ( ) (b) Tour operator ( ) (c) Driver cum tourist guide ( ) (d) Driver ( )
- (e) Hotel/Lodge ( ) ( f ) Public phone booth ( ) (g) Sale of souvenir ( ) (h) Sale of Handicraft ( ) (i) Performance of traditional dance in large hotel near the park ( )
- (j) Employment from the park in the form of labour & allied activities ( ) (k) Others (specify).....
- .....
15. Employment from Hotel /Lodge (√)
- (a) As a owner ( ) (b) As a worker in Hotel/Lodge. ( ) (c) Sell of local fruits and vegetables to the Hotels ( )
16. Kind of employment from the park in the form of labour and allied activities (√)
- (a) Labour for anti poaching activities (b) Construction of bridges, culverts ,etc. ( )
- © Labour for removal of Mimosa, a weed ,harmful for the herbivores ( ) (d) As a Security guard to protect the tourist jeeps inside the park ( ) (e) As a informer about movement of poachers to the park authorities ( ).(f) Others (specify)....
- .....
17. Monthly income from tourism related activities .....
18. How do you see tourists having a good time and you have to work ? (√)
- (a) Dislike it and wish you could do the same ( )
- (b) Do not bother much and ignore it ( )
- (c) Others (specify ).....
19. How do you feel when you see tourists financially better off and with a different life style ? (√)
- (a) Like it and wish you were like that too ( )
- (b) Dislike it and ignore ( )
- (c) Others (specify ).....
20. Do you face much difficulty in obtaining (√)
- (a) Agriculture products of daily consumption ( )
- (b) Livestock products of daily consumption ( )
- (c) Daily use commodities ( )
- (d) Others (specify).....
21. What improvements in social amenities or services structures do you find in recent years ? ( say 5 years ) .....
- .....
- .....
22. What changes the women workforce have undergone due to development of tourism?.....
- .....
- .....
23. What are the main problems which you are facing due to tourists ?.....



.....  
.....  
.....

24. Do you feel that (√)
- (a) Tourism should further encouraged ( )
  - (b) Tourism should be discouraged ( )
  - (c) It should be as it is ( )
  - (d) Others (specify).....
25. What are your perceptions about the tourists and their impacts? (Say Yes or No )
- A.
- 1. Interference in your simple living .....
  - 2. Set bad examples especially for youth .....
  - 3. Superimposition of foreign culture .....
  - 4. Cultural degradation in the society.....
  - 5. Upsetting the regard for the religion and religious practices .....
  - 6. Culture has become a commodity for tourists.....
  - 7. Inflation at a high rate.....
  - 8. Unavailability of local goods for non-tourists.....
  - 9. Inferiority complex and resentment among locals.....
  - 10. Promotion of overly commercial way of thinking .....
  - 11. Rising criminality and loss of morals.....
  - 12. Increasing beggar mentality.....
  - 13. Lowered standard of arts and culture .....
  - 14. Sanitation problems .....
  - 15. Crowding and congestion.....
  - 16 Change in food habits.....
  - 17. Others (specify).....
- B.
- 1. Contact with the outside world.....
  - 2. Spread of knowledge.....
  - 3. Understanding other cultures.....
  - 4. Economic prosperity in the region.....
  - 5. Maintenance and promotion of local culture.....
  - 7. Opening of new craft centers.....
  - 8. Encouragement of local handicraft industry .....
  - 9. Increased availability of social amenities .....
  - 10. Improved self-image of the society.....
  - 11. Increased rate of urbanization.....
  - 12. Better land use.....
  - 13. Change in demographic structure .....
  - 14. Greater education opportunities .....
  - 16. Appreciation of local culture and tradition by outsiders .....
  - 16. Others (specify).....

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