

THE SCOPE OF TOURISM IN MEGHALAYA



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BA 6TH SEMESTER

GU ROLL NO : UA-201-003-0031

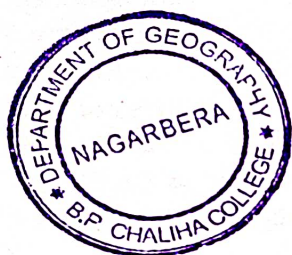


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CERTIFICATE

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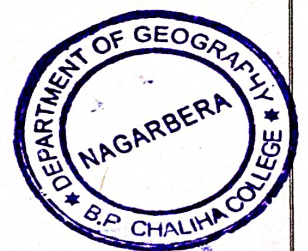
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Acknowledgement

The Report on '**Tourism of Meghalaya**' was conducted for Partial fulfillment of Project Report on BA VI semester course under Gauhati University, Guwahati with the objective to carry out a review of various studies on tourism that have affected the State of Meghalaya. This project seeks to understand the extent of the status of Tourism in Meghalaya.

I am grateful to Dr. Kamal Chandra Pathak Principal, B.P Chaliha College, Nagarbera for his kind help during the preparation period. I sincerely thank Prof. Sochin Boro Choudhury, Assistant Professor, in the Department of Geography, B.P. Chaliha College, Nagarbera for supporting the study at right time with purpose of turning knowledge into action as my supervisor. I would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Biman Lahkar, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography, and B.P. Chaliha College for constant support and guidance to keep the study on track.

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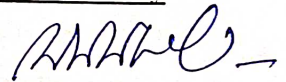
Sincere thanks to my team members who assisted in the identification of different studies to review under this study and supported in the design of the report.

Riki Thakuria

CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled “**Scope of Tourism in Meghalaya**”, submitted by **Name Riki Thakuria** (Roll UA-201-003-0117) is his own work and has been done under my supervision. It is recommended that this Project Report be placed before the examiner for evolution.

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Chapter 1

The Scope of Tourism in Meghalaya

Abstract

Present Report deals with the study of “Status of tourism in the state of Meghalaya”. The purpose of the paper is to bring into spotlight the utility of tourism as a potential tool in providing an alternative means of livelihood without hampering the cultural values and the natural environment of a place. It also point out the difference in characteristics between mass and alternative tourism and the suitability of the latter in the context of Meghalaya where the tourism resource base is dependent on nature and culture. Thirdly, the paper cites the potential tourism attributes or resources that the state has been bestowed that need to be tapped cautiously for ensuring a sustainable development. Fourthly, the paper highlights the trend of tourist arrival in the state in the last more than one decade and finally the paper also sought to venture out ideas to overcome the challenges due to fragility of resource base, lack of community participation and seasonality impact.

Keywords: Mass tourism; Alternative tourism; Attraction resource base; Community participation

Statement of the Problem

Tourism is considered as one of the most important tools in upbringing rural development and the most promising employment generators worldwide. Tourism is well recognised for being an industry without smoke and hence it is the most convenient industry to play a leading role in global sustainable development initiative. However, whether tourism is in concurrence with the principles of sustainable development or not, depends on the approach of organization of tourism itself (Nayak et al. 2013). Two major forms of tourism should be taken into consideration-conventional mass tourism and alternative tourism. The former is characterised by rapid but unstable development and short term economic benefits, extreme concentration of tourists in one place with little or no concern for the environment and local culture and hence does not comply with the principle of sustainable development (Tariang W.2013). The latter, however, is characterised by its small scale, spontaneous growth, local

control, and hold high responsibility for long-term local economic benefit, environmental stability and cultural enrichment. Alternative tourism can also be referred to so many other names like eco-tourism, responsible tourism, green tourism, niche tourism, sustainable tourism and so on depending on the concerned service or products offered or the concept of subject matter under discussion (Saha SK, 2018).

In the context of Meghalaya as a tourist destination, it is difficult to differentiate between mass tourism and alternative tourism. Many tourist spots in Meghalaya are nature based or eco-tourist spots where the locales or hosts are very much concerned about keeping the spot clean and green [Govt. of Meghalaya 2018], yet the same tourist spots experience high inflow of single day or overnight domestic tourists during monsoon season and also a high concentration of day picnickers during the month of November and December and even up to first or second week of January every year [Ministry of Tourism]. However, so far local people have shown no serious complaint of visitors' intolerance, instead local people gain a lot of economic benefit with increase number of visitors. Hence it becomes apparent that large concentration of visitors is not a pertinent negative indicator of alternative tourism [6]. In fact, lack of pre-information to visitors about the environmental and cultural desirability of the host community, absence of proper garbage disposal system, poor maintenance of recreation, sightseeing sites and garbage disposal zones, poor management and poor projection of desired rules and regulations are characteristic factors causing degradation of features of alternative tourism. Certain visitors may not choose to visit a place embedded by stringent rules and regulations, however, alternative tourists are not worried about the rules because they know their own ethics and abide by them no matter whether they come alone or in groups. Alternative tourists are both spontaneous and instant learners or researchers who like to explore new things in a conscious manner and they know how to appreciate local effort in preserving the environment and cultural values (Milen, 2017).

Objectives

The major objectives of the Present study are:

- to study the status of tourism in Meghalaya,
- to analyse the trend of tourism in the study area,
- to understand the prospect of tourism in the study area

Research question

- What is the present status of tourism in the study area?
- What are the factors affecting the trend of tourist flow in the study area?
- How to boost the tourist flow to the study area?

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY:

A methodology is the theoretical and systematic analysis of the method applied to a field survey or the analysis of the methods and principle associated with branches of knowledge. The study is mainly based on secondary information.

During the pre-field stage, detailed literature study has been done about tourism and history of Meghalaya. Which includes a number of books / journals, internet sources upon Meghalaya (Shillong). In the field stage, tourist places were visited and the gathered information. Ultimately in the post field phase of this study, location map of the tourist places has been prepared for further analysis and collected information has been analysis interpretation and the dissertation has been prepared.

Chapter 2

Review of Relevant Literature

In this research authors Nayak and Mishra discussed about problems and prospects of promoting tourism in Meghalaya. The study was based on qualitative and descriptive methodology nature and used mostly secondary data. According to the research Meghalaya had apply 100 tourist spots and they stressed of the account of major festival of the Meghalaya. The author also discussed about the tourism places in India and northeast India in the research. The author discussed the importance of government initiatives to the proper management of tourist inflow. They conducted had SWOT authors of Meghalaya tourism. In these research mainly focused in the problems and prospects of promoting in Meghalaya.

In the present research, author discussed about some key topics related to tourism in Shillong. The topic covers the potentiality of tourism development, various places of tourist attraction and some measures for future development of tourism in Shillong. The study was based on qualitative and descriptive methodology and used secondary data. There was a description about the festivals of Shillong, its fooding, transport linkages etc. There were some findings done by the author that are – At the same time parks are not properly maintain for natural beauty and the high rate of crime, water scarcity, pollution, robbery etc. which could be solved by the involvement of tribal community and by the government initiatives and proper co-operation and co-ordination of survey of India.

Penang in the research paper of tourism in Meghalaya discuss about January 2019. The purpose of the author's paper was how to bring it into the limelight by taking cultural values and the utility of tourism in a places natural environment as instrument and providing an alternative means of livelihood. Here the author mentions a lot about the scope of that tourism spot. However the author does not mention anything about protecting the potential resources of that tourist industry. The author not mention anything about community participation and community control over the tourism management here. Local communities in the tourism establishment should be encouraged to come forward and become active participants in the alternative. Also in

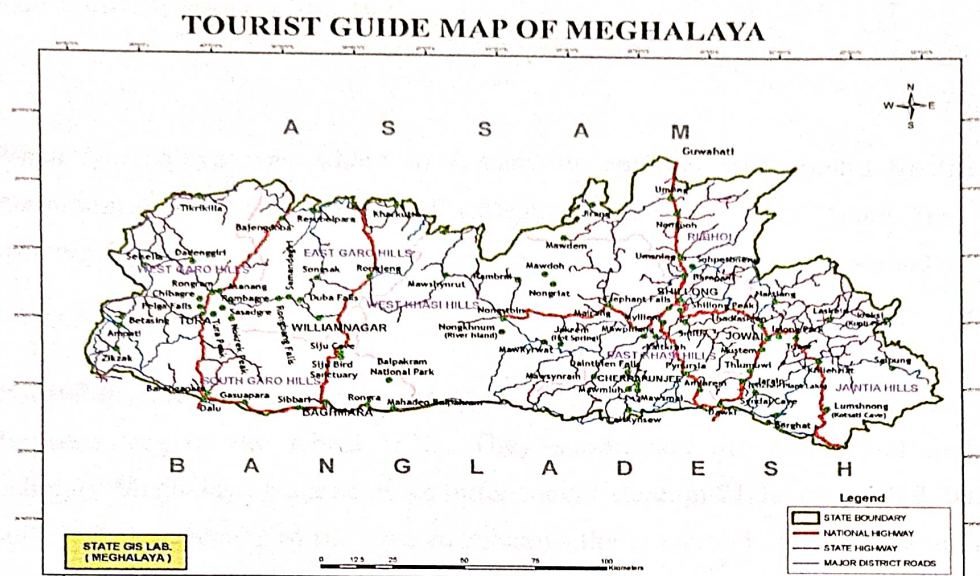
the field of tourism, tourist development and special programs should be organised to raise awareness on collecting non profit in which the tourist industry in nature based.

Bhutia .S about the sustainable tourism for regional development in N.E states of India trends problems and prospects .The author stated the structure of Northeast India i.e. how many states are involved and its locational significance .Each state of Northeast India has different economic status , the industrial sector has mainly grown around tea , petroleum , natural gas, etc. . Most of the states are depend on agriculture .Tourism is also one of the source of economy. Travel and tourism is the largest service industry in India, and this industry provides heritage, cultural, medical, business and sports tourism. Problems related to tourism because of infrastructure facility, particularly in terms of quality and experiential and site services in certain circuit and mostly hill elsewhere.

The Cherrapunjee tourism industry has a great contribution in the development of the economy. As per report of author of tourism, tourism industry had Rs: 764 trillion in Indian economy and also provided 36.7 million job for the development of the economy in the year 2014. India tourism industry is significantly growing sense last decade. As per of the published by ministry of tourism, the total number of foreign tourism / tourist arrived in India in the year. 2014 is 768 million.

Chapter 3

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA



History

The history of Meghalaya is associated with the three predominant tribes inhabiting the state since centuries. The Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos are the chief inhabitants of the state of Meghalaya. According to legends the Khasis were the earliest immigrants of the state. The Khasis made their way across northern Myanmar to Assam. The Khasis symbolize the Mon-Khmer language of south-East Asia. The Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos had their own kingdom then. The kingdom of Khasis, Jaintias and Garos came under the British administration in 19th century. In 1765 the British came to Sylhet (now in Bangladesh). Khasis used to visit Pandua, the border of Sylhet, for trade purposes. Bengal used to import limestone from the Khasi Hills. Eventually the British started trading in limestone and developed contact with the Khasis.

In 1824 the Burmese invaded Cachar and the Jaintia Hills. In the same year a friendship treaty was signed between the Jaintia Rajah and the British for accepting the protection of the British. The Khasi chiefs allowed the passage of the British through their territories. After the Burmese invasion was over the British demanded a corridor through the Khasi and the Jaintia

Hills to connect the Assam valley with Surma Valley. Prior to 1970, this state was an integral part of undivided Assam. The capital city Shillong was the capital of the Assam. On 2nd April 1970, Meghalaya was created as an autonomous state. Meghalaya got the full-fledged state status on January 21st 1972.

When Meghalaya was added to Assam an uprising was started by the people for the attainment of independence from the state of Assam. Freedom fighter Tirot Singh started an uprising but his uprising was suppressed. Several treaties were signed with Khasi chiefs.

In 1862 the Jaintias revolted under U Kiang Nongbah. The British eventually took control of the resources of the Khasi Hills. They suppressed the chiefs and took control of the judiciary. Meghalaya became as an independent state on 21 January 1972, when it was carved out from two districts of the state of Assam - the United Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills. Before attaining the full statehood, Meghalaya was given a semi- autonomous status in 1970.

In 1971, the Parliament passed the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, which conferred full statehood on the Autonomous State of Meghalaya. Meghalaya attained statehood on 21 January 1972, with a Legislative Assembly of its own.

When Bengal was partitioned on 16 October, 1905 by Lord Curzon, Meghalaya became a part of the new province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam'. However, when the partition was reversed in 1912, Meghalaya became a part of the province of Assam.

Important events in the history of Meghalaya

- 1815 - The Khasi states came under British rule.
- 1835 - The British incorporated Meghalaya into Assam
- 1873 - The British annexed the Garo Hills
- 1874 - The Assam province constituted, Shillong made the capital
- 1905 - Partition of Bengal and Meghalaya became a part of Eastern Bengal and Assam

- 1909 - Municipality constituted under Bengal Municipality Act
- 1912- Meghalaya became a part of the province of Assam.
- 1947 – India attained independence
- 1960 - Movement for a separate Hill State began
- 1972 - Meghalaya attained statehood
- 2013 - The High Court of Meghalaya was established

Geography of Meghalaya

The state of Meghalaya is situated in the north-eastern part of India. Meghalaya is bounded by Assam on its east, north and north-west and by Bangladesh on the south and south-west. The Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills which form the central and eastern parts of Meghalaya are an imposing plateau with rolling grassland, hills and river valley. The state capital is Shillong which is located at an altitude of 1496 mts. above sea level. Meghalaya is located between Latitude $20^{\circ} 1' N$ & $26^{\circ} 5' N$ and Longitude $85^{\circ} 49' E$ & $92^{\circ} 52' E$. The State is bounded on the North by Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong districts of Assam, on the East by Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills Districts of Assam, and on the South and West by Bangladesh. The total area covered by the state is 22,429 Sq. Km and the total forest area is 8510 sq. km. The highest point is the Shillong peak which is at a height of 1965 m above seas level.

The state has a number of rivers but none of them are navigable. Some of the rivers are Ildek, Dudnai, Krishnai, Jinari, Didak, Jinjiram, Mahadeo, Moheshkali, and Someshwari. Nearly 37.5% area of the total land is under forest. The climate of the central and eastern Meghalaya is conducive, whereas in the western Meghalaya, except for the winter, it becomes oppressive. Meghalaya, known for its clouds and rainfall. The Mawsynram village receives the world's highest rainfall, on the average this is about 750 cm or about 250 inches.

Climate

Meghalaya literally means the 'Abode of Clouds'. As the name suggests the state is associated with clouds and rains. The climate of Meghalaya is generally very humid. It is directly influenced by the south west monsoon and the north east winter winds. The four main seasons of Meghalaya are Spring (March to April), Monsoon (May to September), Autumn (October to November) and Winter (December to February). The rainfall is heaviest in south eastern Garo hills and decreases in the central regions and in the north. Cherrapunji-Mawsynram region receives the heaviest rainfall with an annual average of 12670 mm. The average rainfall in the state is 12000 mm. The temperature starts warming up with the advent of spring and reaches the maximum in the summer (monsoon) months of May and June. The winter is quite severe with minimum temperature coming down to as low as 2° C in the Khasi Hills. April and May are the warmest months and January is the coldest month.

Economy

Agriculture is the predominant occupation of Meghalaya. Being an agrarian economy, majority of population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities. However, even after that, due to low productivity and unsustainable farm practices, Meghalaya has to depend on imports of food items. Meghalaya has a vast source of natural resources like limestone, coal, Kaolin and granite. Meghalaya is mainly an agriculture-based economy. Nearly two-thirds of the total people of Meghalaya earn their livelihood through this. But still the contribution of agricultural sector is only one third to the state's Net State Domestic Product (NSDP).

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Mines & Minerals

Agriculture

Agriculture is the main source of occupation of the state. Nearly 80% of the state's population depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. Jhum cultivation (old tribal habit of cultivation) is still practised in this state. This cultivation practice adds to the problems because it results in soil erosion and destruction of forests. Rice and Maize are the main food crops of the state. The cash crops are potato, turmeric, ginger, blackpepper, arecanut, betel vine, tapioca, short staple cotton, jute, mesta, mustard and rape seed. The agro-climatic variations of the state supports the horticulture production. The state is renowned for its oranges, pineapple, banana, jackfruit and temperate fruits like plum and peaches.

Majority of the population of Meghalaya depends upon agriculture for their livelihood. Because of the presence of the pleasant climatic conditions various kinds of vegetables and fruits can be found in Meghalaya. About 81% of the people of Meghalaya depends on agriculture. The farmers in Meghalaya are practicing modern and improved methods of Agriculture. Using of Plant protection measures, Chemical fertilizers and introduction of High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds of Wheat, Maize, Paddy, etc has contributed to the increase in production of food grains. Mechanisation of Agriculture has raised to some extent.

Crops in Meghalaya

There are also various types of Crops grown in Meghalaya which includes:

Food Grains

Food-grains constitute the main food items of the entire population of Meghalaya. Food Grains include Rice, Maize, Wheat, Pulses.

Oil Seeds

Rapeseed and Mustard are the most important oilseed crops grown in Meghalaya. Other oilseed crops include Soyabean, Groundnut, Sesamum, Linseed, Castor and Sunflower. **Fibre Crops** important fibre crops grown in the State are Cotton, Mesta and Jute. These crops have been also the traditional cash crops of the Garo Hills.

Horticulture Crops

The Horticulture crops of Meghalaya Includes: Fruits, Vegetables, Tuber Crops, Plantation Crops, Spices Potatoes, Ornamental Plants, Medicinal Plants, Indigenous Plants, Mushrooms.

Various Agricultural Schemes

The government of Meghalaya has taken up various schemes to develop the agricultural structure of the state. The various schemes include: **Various Agricultural Scheme**

- Bio Control Laboratory
- Seed Farming and production of Pulses, Cereals and Oilseeds etc

- Soil Survey of the State
- Integrated Farming in Micro Watershed
- Training of Rural Educated Youth for Self Employment in Farm Based Activities.(TREYSEFA)
- Winter Cropping and Development of Cultivable Land
- Agriculture Academic Studies
- Fertilizer Distribution
- Soil Testing Lab
- Seed Testing Lab and Seed Certification
- Special Development Programme for Areas Bordering Assam
- Maize Development through Cluster Approach
- Plant Protection including IPM
- Farmers Training Institute
- Agriculture Information Unit
- State Rice Mission
- Basic Agriculture Training Centre
- Jute Technology Mission
- Agriculture Engineering (Mechanical)

Industry

Meghalaya is a industrially backward state. There is a public sector cement factory in Cherrapunjee. Besides this there are mini cement plant at Damas and Sutnga. The tantalum capacitor unit at Umiam-Khawan is in production. Apart from these there are a number of small-scale industries like bakeries, furniture making, steel fabrication, tyre retreading, spice. The Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) assisting the industrial units by way of term loans and by participating equity capital. The level of industrialization in Meghalaya is low. But Meghalaya has a rich base of minerals like coal, limestone, silimanite and granite, which could be really helpful in increasing the trade and industries of the state. People are also engaged in small scale industries and making of handicrafts and other household products. There are limestone and cement factories in Meghalaya. Meghalaya is also a hub of horticulture and flori-culture industries where most people are engaged.

Mines & Minerals

Meghalaya has rich natural resources like limestone and coal. The quality of the coal is not good due to high sulphur content. Other mineral deposits are silimanite, feldspar, glass sand, dolomite, fire clay, quartz etc.

Infrastructure

- Irrigation
- Transport

Irrigation

The irrigation potential is much larger than the achievement.

Transport

Aviation

Umroi, is the only airport of the state and it is located 35 km away from the state capital Shillong.

Tourism

The entire state is full of lush green vegetation and presents a soothing sight to the people from the plains and to all lovers of nature. Shillong, the state capital is the best beautiful hill resort in the north-eastern region. It is a place of great interest with its orchids and tree-lined boulevards. Shillong has a number of tourist attractions like Ward's Lake, Lady Hydari Park, Polo Ground, Mini Zoo, Elephant Falls, Shillong peak, the golf course etc. Cherrapunjee, which remains a perennial source of interest to the visitors because of its record rainfall. Simsang valley in the Garo hills is also delighted the tourists.

Distance from Shillong to Major Cities and Towns

- Kolkata: 1166 kms
- Pune: 2705 kms
- Bangaluru: 3015 kms
- Chennai: 2730 kms
- Delhi: 2044 kms

- Guwahati: 98 kms
- Mumbai: 2815 kms
- Tura: 305 kms
- Cherrapunjee: 51 kms
- Nongstoin: 94 kms

Distance from Cherrapunjee to Major Cities and Towns

- Kolkata: 816 kms
- Pune: 2802 kms
- Bangaluru: 2710 kms
- Chennai: 2507 kms
- Delhi: 2102 kms
- Guwahati: 148 kms
- Mumbai: 2746 kms
- Tura: 329 kms
- Shillong: 53 kms
- East Khasi Hills: 14 kms
- Nongstoin: 123 kms

Distance from Nongstoin to Major Cities and Towns

- Kolkata: 743 kms
- Pune: 2703 kms
- Bangalore: 2637 kms
- Chennai: 2434 kms
- Delhi: 1984 kms
- Guwahati: 162 kms
- Mumbai: 2810 kms

- Tura: 215 kms
- Cherrapunji: 115kms
- East Khasi Hills: 100 kms
- Shillong: 94 kms

Distance from Tura to Major Cities and Towns

- Kolkata: 536 kms
- Pune: 2394 kms
- Bangalore: 2430 kms
- Chennai: 2227 kms
- Delhi: 1891 kms
- Guwahati: 223 kms
- Mumbai: 2497 kms
- Shillong: 305 kms
- Cherrapunji: 437 kms
- East Khasi Hills: 315 kms
- Nongstoin: 215 kms

Meghalaya is covered mostly in forested terrain with one third of the state covered with forests. The state has an eco-region and sub tropical forests with mountainous forests and lowland tropical forests. The forests are a home to large variety of mammals, birds and plants. Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is a popular hill station of the north east. Meghalaya covers a total area of 22, 429 sq kms and is spread across about 300 km long (east-west) and 100 km wide.

Meghalaya state is also known as Meghalaya plateau. The elevation of the plateau ranges from 150 m to 1961 m. The central part of the plateau has the Khasi hills and the eastern section is bounded by Jaintia hills. The highest point in the state is the Shillong Peak with an altitude of 1961 meters. The Garo Hills bound the western section of the plateau. Meghalaya has mostly rain fed seasonal rivers which create beautiful waterfalls and deep gorges in this beautiful valley.

Quick Facts of Meghalaya

- *Year of formation -1972*
- *Latitude -20° 1' N & 26° 5' N*
- *Longitude-85° 49' E & 92° 52' E*
- *Area -22,429 Sq. Km*
- *Population -29,64,007 persons*
- *Male population -14, 92,668*
- *Female population -14,71,339*
- *Capital Shillong*
- *Districts-7*
- *Literacy-75.48% (2011 census)*
- *Forest Area -9, 496 Sq. Km*
- *Average Rainfall -1200 cm per annum*
- *Temperature Average -18-20° C*
- *Highest Point - Shillong Peak (1965 m)*
- *Principal Languages -Khasi, Garo and English*
- *Time zone - IST (UTC+5:30)*

Climate of Meghalaya

The climate of Meghalaya is moderate but humid. The average annual rainfall in Meghalaya is 1200 in some areas. The best time to visit Meghalaya is from the month of February to the month of October.

Resources in Meghalaya

The state of Meghalaya is very rich in natural resources. Meghalaya is also blessed with rich flora and fauna. The state also contains areas covered with evergreen forests. Meghalaya is a storehouse of vast natural resources and natural beauty. With high hills and beautiful valleys adorning the state, caves and waterfalls, these places have deposits of minerals, valuable forests, exquisite flora and fauna species.

Mineral Resource in Meghalaya

Meghalaya is a safe deposit of minerals. The major minerals that are present in the state are

Coal, Limestone, Clay and Sillimanite. Other minerals include Phospherite, Glass-Sand, Granite, Quartz & Feldspar, Gypsum, Base Metal, Gold, Uranium and Iron-Ores. Coal and Limestone are also exported to Bangladesh, earning a good amount of foreign exchange.

Forest Resources in Meghalaya

The total estimated forest area in the state is 8510 sq. km. The State contains areas of very beautiful scenery with evergreen forests. The forests of Meghalaya can broadly be grouped under the tropical type and the temperate type, mainly based on the altitude, rainfall and dominant species. The various types of forests found in Meghalaya are Tropical moist and dry deciduous forests, Tropical Forests, Tropical evergreen forests, Tropical semi-evergreen forests, Grass and Savannas, Temperate Forests and Sacred Groves.

Types of Forest in Meghalaya

- *Alluvial Sal*
- *Foothill and Plateau Sal*
- *Very Moist Sal Bearing Forests*
- *Mixed Deciduous Forests*
- *Evergreen Forests*
- *Bamboo Forests*
- *Grasslands*
- *Assam Sub-Tropical Pine Forests*

Quick Facts of Forests of Meghalaya

- *Reserved Forest: 713.12 km²*
- *Protected Forest: 12.39 km²*
- *National Parks (including proposed)-267.48 km²*
- *Wild life Sanctuaries- 34.20 km²*
- *Dense Forest-5,681.00 km²*
- *Open Forest-9,903.00 km²*
- *Scrub-259.00 km²*
- *Non Forest-6,586.00 km²*
- *Total forest cover-5,584 sq km km²*
- *69.5 % of the total geographical area of Meghalaya*

Flora in Meghalaya

Meghalaya is blessed with a rich, varied, dense, widespread, exotic and cultivated flora. Nature, in its generous abundance, had given Meghalaya a unique type of vegetation, ranging from tropical and sub-tropical to temperate or near temperate. Both tropical and temperate vegetation is done in Meghalaya. The famous plants of Meghalaya are its Botanical Wonder, Orchids, Decor Plants, Money Spinning Plants, Lac and Gum plants. Meghalaya is also famous for its honey production. Floriculture, or flower farming is one of the prime occupations of the people here as the weather supports growth of beautiful flower species and plants. There are also many orchid types which grow in Meghalaya.

Fauna in Meghalaya

Meghalaya has a rich and interesting plethora of fauna. It is said that about 50% of the total number of mammals found in the entire Indian sub-continent can also be found in Meghalaya and its adjoining states in the North-East. The mammals, such as Tupaia, Rhizomys, Cannomys, Chiropodomys, Micromys etc occur only in Meghalaya and its adjacent areas. Some of the most interesting animals found in Meghalaya are the Hoolock - the only tailless ape in India, Golden Cat, Leopard Cat, Jungle Cat, Large Indian Civet, Binturong or Bear Cat Himalayan, Black Bear, Barking Deer and Pangolin.

In the forests of Meghalaya, especially in lower altitudes, multifarious species of birds can be seen in abundance. Some of the common birds are: Hoopoe, Long tailed Broadbill, Scarlet Minivet, Burmese Roller, Blue-throated Barbet, Red-vented Bulbul, Himalayan Black Bulbul, Himalayan Whistling Thrush, Spotted Forktail, Black-breasted Kalij Pheasant, Red Jungle Fowl, and Mynas like Jungle Mynas, Hill Mynas etc and Turtle-dove. Meghalaya's butterflies are famous all over the world for their beauty, among which are Blue Peacock, the Karserhed, the Orange Oak Leaf, the Dipper, and the Bhutan Glory.

Reptile population in Meghalaya includes lizards and snakes, poisonous and non-poisonous. Important ones are: Indian Cobra, King cobra, Coral Snake, Vipers, Python, Blind Snake, Copperhead, Red-necked Kulback and Green Tree Racer. Besides mammals, birds and

reptiles, Meghalaya has a number of amphibians and fishes and insects. Amphibians like frogs, toads etc. and fishes like rohu, mrigal, kalibaus, puti and many more of hill stream adaptation are found abundantly in Meghalaya. Among the insect population, ants, flies, bees, beetles are common.

Rivers of Meghalaya

In the Garo hills of Meghalaya, the most important rivers of the northern system from west to east are the Ringgi, Kalu, Chagua, Didram, Ajar, Dudnai and Krishnai. Among these rivers only the Kalu and Krishnai are navigable. Other main rivers of the southern system are Sanda, Daring, Bandra, Dareng, Simsang and Bhogai. Simsang River is the largest river in the Garo hills district of Meghalaya and navigable only for about 30 Km. Other navigable rivers in Meghalaya are Bhupai and Nitai. In the central and eastern part of the plateau the other important northward flowing rivers include Digaru, Umkhri and Umiam and the south-flowing rivers include Mawpa, Kynchiang (Jadukata), Umiew or Barapani, Myntdu and Myngot. The gap between Raj Mahal hills, Chhota Nagpur and the Shillong Plateau is known as the Malda gap.

Culture of Meghalaya

The Meghalaya society is the only matrilineal society in northeast India. In this society type, the women lead the society and has more status than men in the society. The society within Meghalaya does not allow dowry for marriage. Meghalaya is a land of diverse tribes and races of people living in harmony. The art and craft of Meghalaya is very unique. The three tribes of Meghalaya the Khasis, the Garos and the Jaintias are apt in making different kinds of cane and bamboo items. Meghalaya is also very popular for its various dishes like Jadoh and Tung Rymbai, Ki Kpu and pickled bamboo shoots. The state of Meghalaya is also very fond dance and music. The people of Meghalaya celebrate many festivals. Apart from Christmas, New Year, Diwali, Independence Day, Durga Puja tribal festivals are celebrated across the state with much Fun and fervor. The festivals celebrated in Meghalaya are mostly for celebrating harvest and sowing period of farming. Some of the important festival celebrated by the different tribes of Meghalaya include Shad Suk Mynsiem, Wangala and Behdienkhlam.

People and Festivals of Meghalaya

Different communities dwell in Meghalaya in harmony. **Khasis, Jaintias, Garo, Hajong and Tiwa** are some of the major tribes dwelling in Assam. Most of the native populations of Meghalaya are Christians. These different communities and tribes of Meghalaya have their own fairs and festivals, dance and music, languages, arts and crafts and delicacies. The people also have their distinguished religion, culture, age old traditions, rituals and celebrations.

The Khasi people form the majority of the population of the eastern part of Meghalaya. They are also known for their simplicity. The Garo people are the second largest tribe in Meghalaya and comprise about a third of the local population. The Hajong is a tribal ethnic group of Meghalaya and is the fourth major tribe in Meghalaya. The Hajongs are primarily rice farmers and spend their livelihood through that occupation.

NGOs in Meghalaya

A non-governmental organization is created by natural or legal persons. An NGO maintains its non-governmental status. Their fund come from private donation or fundraising work. They help people or the environment. There are different NGO's like general NGOs who work for the development of society, environmental NGOs who work for the development of the environment, animal NGOs who work for the care and development as well protection of animals. Some of the NGOs located across important towns and cities of Meghalaya are:

All Community Transformation Society

Address: Charisma Cottage. Spring Side

Shillong - 793 014

Phone: +91-9863083872

Impulse NGO Network

Address: Lower Lachumiere,
Shillong 793001
Phone: +91-9436702626

Meghalaya Women's Alliance
Address: Jaiaw Langsning, Block I
Shillong - 793002
Phone: 0364-2242185

North East India Committee on Relief & Development
Address: Homeleigh, Laitumkhrach
Shillong - 793003
Phone: 0364-2211236

Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya
Address: Near Eden Bless School,
Umkdait, Nongmensong,
Shillong-793021
Phone: 0364-2220834, 2228844

Also Read: NGOs in Shillong

Ka Lamphang Society for Sustainable Development
Address: Sohsarat, Sohra,
East Khasi Hills
Laitkynsew - 793108
Phone: +91-9856469841

Bakdil
Address: Bakdil, Lower Chandmari,
Tura: 794002, West Garo Hills
Phone: +91-9436313194

St. Xavier Society of Christ Jesus

Address: Lower Mawprem

Protection And Conservation Of Environment

Address: New Tura, Matchakolgre,

P.O. Araimile, West Garo Hills,

Meghalaya 794101

Phone: 03651-223720, 9436112592

Cheramo Chedil Socio Cultural Club

Address: C/o Shri Asish R Marak,

Cherangre Tura, Near Baptist Church

P.O. Chandmari, West Garo Hills

Meghalaya- 794002

Phone: 09856-091545, 09862-080101, 09856058793

United Sonamati Youth Social Cultural Association

Address: Sonamati, P.O. Garobadha,

West Garo Hills, Meghalaya-794105

Phone: 03651-223122

An amalgamation of natural beauty, different tradition and its people make Meghalaya, the hill state of the north-east an incredible place. With its rich history and geography, having different culture with its beautiful dance and music, authentic food, unique art and craft and colourful festival; Meghalaya owns a profile unique in its own sense.

<https://www.meghalayaonline.in/about/profile>

Chapter 3

Scope of Tourism in Meghalaya

Meghalaya is endowed with the gift of nature. Being a hilly area with a moderate climate, it is the perfect destination for summer vacation. The potentiality of eco-tourism is dependent on availability of natural resources, involving beautiful sceneries, topography, water resources, vegetation and wildlife and cultural resources and Meghalaya has them all. Also known as the abode of clouds due to heavy rainfall during monsoon season, Meghalaya is bestowed with cascading crystal-clear water bodies, diverse flora and fauna, deep gorges and canyons, high cliffs and gentle meadows and valleys in many areas, magnificent waterfalls and caves in some areas, green canopies, gigantic rocks, sacred groves, etc. (Nayak et al 2013). One can experience a thrill simply by travelling on the hilly roads in many parts of the state. Apart from the gift of nature, the beauty of Meghalaya also lies on its rich cultural heritage and tradition, beliefs and customs, languages and numerous dialects. The capital city of Meghalaya, i.e. Shillong, is one of the most preferred destinations for holding of meetings, conferences and conventions, festivals, trade fairs and Sports events, besides it is also an educational hub and many prestigious hospitals are located in the city. The city is also one of the most preferred destinations in India for holding of international concerts due to the likeness of its people for music and hence it has got the name as the rock capital of India. The state is also known for the inherent knowledge of its people to treat medical or trauma cases using herbal medicines. Some places in the state are famous for the existence of fossil remains or stone impressions of folkloristic origins like Ka Iew-Luri-Lura (legendary animal market) at Mawlyngbna, U Thlen (dragon snake) at Sohra. Meghalaya is also known for the

agrarian lifestyle of the people and their good use of leisure time in weaving, arts and handicrafts (Ministry of Tourism , GoI 2017).

Based on the above available resource base, it can clearly be understood that Meghalaya has a huge potential for development of alternative or eco-tourism. There are four main approaches of ecotourism which can be employed in the context of Meghalaya based on the availability of resources and the fragile nature of the resource base viz. adventure tourism, cultural tourism, agri-tourism and educational tourism.

- Adventure tourism: It can be of two types, hard and soft. Hard tourism activities that have been undertaken or can be undertaken in the future in the state involve rock climbing, caving, trekking in wilderness areas. Soft adventure tourist activities are comprised of backpacking, exploring bio reserves, bird watching, camping, canoeing, cruising, eco-tour, educational programmes, boating, fishing, hiking, kayaking, orienteering, rafting, sky walk, side walk by the cliff side, sightseeing, swimming, angling, mountain cycling and car or bike racing, parachuting, attending or participating in games and sports events, etc.
- Cultural tourism: Cultural tourism products that Meghalaya can offer include of homestay, homely stay in local resorts, exploring legendary attractions, tasting local cuisines, attending religious festivals, visiting cultural heritage sites, museums, monuments and churches, pilgrimage to some sacred sites in Jaintia and Garo hills, visiting sacred groves, attending cultural events, shopping for local souvenirs, attending music festivals, talent shows, story-telling, etc.
- Agri-tourism: Agri-tourism has not been projected as an approach in any tourism events and yet some activities like exhibition of agri-products fruit, pickles, jams, tea leaves, heirlooms had been witnessed and wine festivals were conducted many times in the state. Some other agri-tourism activities that can be undertaken include of barn dances, breweries, cabin living, campfires, camping in agricultural sites, flower arrangement, jelly making, meeting banyard animals, gardening, farm cooking contest, fee-fishing, herb walk, hiking paths, etc.
- Educational tourism: Educational tourism activities that can be offered to tourist visiting the state include of wildlife discoveries, exploring cultural heritage sites and monuments, exploring folklores associated with places, rivers, waterfalls, stone impressions or fossil remains, science expedition, marvelling the traditional skills of creating arts and crafts,

calligraphy and carving on rocks, walk with nature, exploring biodiversity, learning local history and literature, learning indigenous herbal treatments, visiting museums, exploring local tribal lifestyle, etc.

It is important to note that the tourism landscape on the basis of the above foreseen resource base is fragile in nature and hence proper assessment of the fragility level of the physical landscape and local culture and incorporation of the outcome of the assessment in the infrastructure development plan, site maintenance, management and community participation plan before developing a place for tourist attraction is a prime necessity in order to achieve the objective of sustainability.

Tourism in India

India had a modest 17,000 tourist arrivals with foreign exchange earnings of Rs. 7.7 crores in 1951. In course of time the tourism industry in the country progressed and played a great role in employment creation and revenue generation. The country earned about Rs. 5070 crores of foreign exchange with a tourist inflow of over 39.2 lakhs (Gupta, 2007). According to the report of World Economic Forum India ranked 11th in the Asia Pacific region and 62nd overall on the list of the world's attractive destinations. It ranked the 14th best tourist destination for its natural resources and 24th for its cultural resources, with many World Heritage sites, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, and strong creative industries in the country. India also bagged the 37th rank for its air transport network. The industry ranked 5th in terms of expected long-term (10 year) growth and expected to be the second largest employer in the world by 2019. The sector was expected to contribute 6.4 per cent of total employment and generate 40,03,7000 jobs in the country. Its contribution to GDP was also estimated to be US\$ 187.3 billion by 2019.

Tourism in the North East India

“The North East India which comprises eight states is strategically important for its international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar. The region is blessed by the Nature and is located at the centre of one of the world's richest bio-geographic areas” (Das, 2012-13). It is famous for her bio-diversity and rich cultural and ethnic heritage. The mighty Himalayas, Brahmaputra river, onehorn rhinos, rain-fed forests, pristine environment, wildlife sanctuaries, Bihu, and many more embodiments of the region are just manifestations

of this richness that attract the tourists all over the world. The region has immense potential for ecotourism. According to the report of North Eastern Council (N.E.C., 2008) on vision 2020 tourism may be developed around four concentric circles such as (i) Intra-state, (ii) Inter-state, (iii) Pan regional within the region and other regions of the country, particularly the eastern region, and (iv) International tourism.

Tourism in the Meghalaya State

Meghalaya, the abode of clouds, is one of the smallest states in North East India. It is surrounded in the East and North by the state of Assam and in the West and South by Bangladesh. It is a hilly strip in the eastern part of the country and about 300 km long from East to West and 100 km wide.

The state lies between 85° 49' and 92° 53' East Longitude and 20° 1' and 20° 5' North Latitude. It has a geographical area of 22,429 sq km covering 0.7 per cent of the total area of the country and 8.6 per cent area of the North Eastern Region. Geographically the state is a plateau having rising and falling topography. The elevation of the plateau ranges between 150 to 1965 meters. The central part of the plateau comprising the Khasi Hills has the highest elevations followed by the Jaintia Hills. The highest point in the state is the Shillong Peak having an altitude of 1965 meters. It has a forest cover of 9,496 km² which is about 37 per cent of the total area of the state. The state is endowed with gift of nature having a pleasant and bracing climate. The maximum temperature rarely goes beyond 28 degrees whereas during winter it is of sub-zero degree. It is the wettest state of the country having average annual rainfall as high as 1200 cm in some places. The deep forests, sprawling water bodies, cascading rivers in the hills, the lofty mountain ranges with interplay of lush green valley form an ideal habitat for flora and fauna. Of the 17,000 species of orchids in the world, about 1250 exist in India of which nearly 300 are found in Meghalaya (Govt. of India, 2003: 2). The state has some of the thickest surviving forests in the country and therefore constitutes one of the most important ecotourism circuits. The biodiversity of the state can only be

matched by the ethnological diversity. It is a paradise for nature lovers, nature - scientists and ethnologists. It is also known for its 'sacred groves' and waterfalls. Meghalaya has an estimated 500 natural limestone and sandstone caves spread over the entire state. Considering these natural assets, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos, tourism holds high potential in bringing about prosperity to the state. However, it is still at the nascent stage and has a long way to develop. Considering the strength and weakness of Meghalaya, its geo-political status and the emerging free global economy, it cannot be expected to become an industrially advanced state. It can neither be a state with abundant agricultural surplus nor a state for intermediate trading. However, there exists a great scope in tourism that can play a major role in the overall development of its economy (Govt. of India, 2003). Although tourism in North East India has suffered on account of years of insurgency and the resulting security concerns, Meghalaya is perhaps the least affected in this regard. However in recent years conflicts have arisen between Garo militants and Indian security forces. The militants have been launching guerilla attacks against police and army personnel. Kidnapping and ransoms have become a norm in the western districts of the state. Extortion is being carried out on the wealthy members of the state particularly the Coal Barons who own coal fields. Ethnic tension is also simmering between illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and local indigenous tribal. Criminal activities are a major problem in the state. Drugs like Ganja, cocaine, opium, etc. are sold large in amounts. Local mafias extort local businesses. Smuggling of weapons, narcotics, black market goods, etc. is a major problem. The state lies in a major smuggling route between Bangladesh and India. However most of the battles happen only in the western part of the state. The rest of the state is particularly safe with exceptions of the border areas, both state and international. Lack of co-ordination among private companies involved in tourism and the State government is also a major problem. As such infrastructure is inadequate for large scale tourism. The state is lacking in terms of rail mode of transportation. Umroi is the only airport having connectivity with Kolkata, Aizawl and Silchar for smaller flights. It has relatively poor road network specially NH 62. While some of the major circuits such as Shillong-Jowai, Shillong-Tura and Shillong-Sohra are well developed; the internal road networks are rather poor and inadequately maintained. There are few markets outside the state capital Shillong. Banking facilities are also limited and only a few establishments in the state accept credit cards. The Garo Hills region which has some of the most important tourist spots is not well connected with the rest of the state. Because of these reasons tourism sector is not taking its momentum as revealed from the tourists flow statistics shown in Table 2.

Tourist Attractions in Meghalaya At present, Meghalaya has over 100 tourist spots almost

half of which are located in the East Khasi Hills district (Tables 3 and 4). In particular, the state has two National Parks and three Wildlife Sanctuaries. The state also offers many adventure tourism opportunities in the form of mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking and hiking, water sports, etc. The state offers several trekking routes, some of which also afford an opportunity to encounter rare animals such as slow loris, assorted deer and bear. The Umiam Lake has water sports complex with facilities such as rowboats, paddleboats, sailing boats, cruise-boats, water-scooters and speedboats. Meghalaya has an estimated 500 natural limestone and sandstone caves spread over the entire state including most of the longest and deepest caves in the subcontinent. Krem Liat Prah is the longest cave, and Synrang Pamiang is the deepest cave. Both are located in the Jaintia Hills. Cavers from United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Ireland and the United States have been visiting Meghalaya for over a decade exploring these caves. Not many of these have however been developed or promoted adequately for major tourist destinations. Important tourist spots are Nohkalikai Falls and Standing stones. Cherrapunji which is one of the most popular tourist locations in North East India lies to the south of the capital Shillong. The town is well known and has guided tours of Tree Root Bridges. The popular waterfalls in the state are the Elephant Falls, Shadthum Falls, Weinia Falls, Bishop Falls, Nohkalikai Falls, Langshiang Falls and Sweet Falls. The hot springs at Jakrem near Mawsynram are believed to have curative and medicinal properties. The state is also known for her sacred groves (Ramakrishna, 1996; Saraswati, 1998; Tiwari et al. 1998). These have been preserved by the traditional religious sanction since the ancient days. The Mawphlang sacred forest is one of the most famous sacred forests being located about 25 kilometers from Shillong and represents the pristine glory and wisdom of the elders of yore in preserving the ecological system. Nongkhnum Island located in the West Khasi Hills district is the biggest river island in Meghalaya and the second biggest in Asia. It is 14 kilometers from Nongstoin. The island is formed by the bifurcation of Kynshi River into the Phanliang River and the Namliang River. Adjacent to the sandy beach the Phanliang River forms a very beautiful lake. The river then moves along and before reaching a deep gorge, forms a pretty waterfall about 60 meters high called Shadthum Fall. The Mawlynnong village located near the India-Bangladesh border is known for its cleanliness. The travel magazine 'Discover India' declared the village as the cleanest in Asia in 2003, and the cleanest in India in 2005. Some of the interesting features include the presence of Living Root Bridges and another natural phenomenon of a boulder balancing on another rock. Meghalaya also has many natural and manmade lakes. The Umiam Lake, popularly known as Bara Pani on the Guwahati-Shillong road is a major tourism attraction. The state has several parks;

Thangkharang Park, the Eco-park, the Botanical Garden and Lady Hydari Park to name a few. Dawki, which is located at about 96 Kilometers from Shillong is the gateway to Bangladesh and affords a scenic view of some of the tallest mountain ranges in Meghalaya and the Bangladesh border lands. The state has two National parks and two wildlife sanctuaries. Balpakram National Park with its pristine habitat and scenery is a major attraction. The Nokrek National Park in Garo Hills has its own charm with lot of wildlife. Species like golden cat, golden langur and hoolock gibbon are endemic to the state. Meghalaya resonates with fairs and festivals which are celebrated throughout the year. Music remains an integral part of every festival and ceremony of the state. The four major festivals of the three tribes are the Wangala Dance of Garos, Shad Suk Mynsiem and Nongkrem Dance Festival of Khasis, and the Behdeinkhlam Festival of Jaintias. The Shillong Golf Course in the state has one of the oldest 18-hole golf courses in the country. The golf course with very favorable climatic conditions has the potential of attracting ardent golfers from corporate houses within the country and from neighboring countries.

Trend of Tourist Inflow in Meghalaya

According to the Meghalaya tourism statistical report, 2016, the share of foreign tourist visits into the state from 1999-2014 was quite low compared to that of domestic tourists. The period from 2005-2010 witnessed a steady decrease in number of foreign visitors in the state. The following **Table 1** shows the statistic of tourist arrival in the state from 1999-2014.

Table 1: Trend of Tourist Inflow in Meghalaya 1999-2014

Year	No. of tourists		Total
1999	1971	159730	161701
2000	2327	169929	172256
2001	2390	178697	181087
2002	3191	268529	271720
2003	6304	371953	378257
2004	12707	433495	445902
2005	5099	375911	381010

2006	4259	400287	404546
2007	5267	457685	462952
2008	4919	549954	554873
2009	4522	591398	595920
2010	4177	652756	656933
2011	4803	667504	672307
2012	5313	680254	685567
2013	6773	691269	698042
2014	8664	717789	726453

Source: NEDFi Databank 2014

Moreover, compared to Assam, the leading recipient of tourists in North-East India, Meghalaya still functions as an add-on destination to Assam for the last one or two decades and till today. A statistical report on tourist arrival in North East showed that in 1996, Assam received 3,27,260 domestic tourists and 5885 foreign tourists while Meghalaya received a mere 1,36,183 domestic tourists and 1573 foreign tourists. In the year 2000, there were 10,01,577 domestic and 5,959 foreign tourists who visited Assam, while Meghalaya received only 1,69,929 domestic and 2,327 foreign tourists. In 2007, there were 34,79,870 domestic and 13,657 foreign visitors in Assam while there were only 3,75,911 domestic and 5,099 foreign visitors in Meghalaya. However, compared to other North-East states, Meghalaya still stands second to Assam in terms of tourist arrival. The state also witnessed a steady increase in both domestic and foreign tourist arrival since the year 2011 onwards.

State Government Initiatives

During the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) the state government made some allocation (Rs. 25 lakhs) separately for tourism . During 1974-79 the tourism department organized tourists' festival to popularize tourism in the state. Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) was constituted in 1977. During Eighth Plan (1992-97) privatization of MTDC was proposed in order to encourage investors from outside the state. In Ninth Plan (1997-2002) the government adopted a policy resolution declaring tourism as an industry; and tourism

promotional activities were initiated. The first tourism policy was announced in 2001 in order to create jobs, generate revenues, and to bring national integration and cohesion through understanding geographical and cultural diversities of the state. In 2003 Institute of Hotel Management in Shillong was established to impart education and training to the potential workforce in hotel industry. The institute offers B.Sc. degree in Hotel Management, Applied Nutrition, and Catering Technology. Tourism information centers were established in Shillong, Tura, and Jowai in Meghalaya and one in Kolkata. Initiatives have been taken to promote tourism through investment on public private partnership (PPP) mode. Provision of financial incentives in terms of subsidies up to a maximum of 30% of project cost and 100% income tax concession to entrepreneurs in tourism sector have been made under the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy 2007. With the evolving role of the tourism sector as a major engine of economic growth, it was felt necessary to revamp the first tourism policy and the government came up with a new policy in 2011 in order to help create the basic infrastructure for tourism development along with private sector providing quality products and offering active support services.

Boosting Tourism Development in Meghalaya-Challenges and Prospects

Even though Meghalaya has the potential resources for sustainable tourism development, there are also hindrances that must be addressed and incorporated in development planning in order to achieve sustainability in the process.

- The adventure tourism resource of Meghalaya is purely nature based which implies that adventure tourism in the state takes place mainly at the cost of serene landscapes which are fragile in nature. Hence, it is important to know the context of fragility of attraction sites so that precautions can be undertaken may it be in the case of infrastructure development or in maintaining limits in entry of visitors and waste disposal so that the process of development itself should not go beyond the carrying capacity of the attraction sites and whatever resources belonging to the attraction sites should not be disturbed, tarnished or degraded in any way.
- Meghalaya has a rich cultural resource base for cultural tourism development because of its distinct cultural identity, customs and traditional lifestyles, the existence of stone impressions, waterfalls associated with folklores, monoliths and monuments, unique arts and crafts, etc, however, the indigenous folks are not even aware of the economic value of all these cultural attributes that they have and even if they are aware, they do not have the

courage to come out of their conservative nature and they do not have the knowledge to present them to the world. Eco-tourists are eager to learn much about the culture and way of life of local folks by involving themselves in homestay in local households, in cooking and eating, in games and religious rituals, however, they do not find a way to do so. Therefore, the need of the hour is to generate proper conscientization of local people about their own economic situation and their own position in the world and how to get rid of that situation by becoming active participants in the process of cultural tourism. Raising awareness on the economic value of cultural attributes and creating platforms for the local people to display their culture to the world is vital to the process of cultural tourism development in the state.

- The state has a huge potential for agri-tourism on account of the fact that agriculture remains central to the economy of the state and the agricultural products of the state are known for their good quality. Agri-tourism requires less investment compared to other forms of tourism, however, so far it was not projected as an approach in tourism development initiatives of the state. Hence, it requires that agri-tourism should be encouraged and be projected in a distinguishable manner.
- Lack of local control over management of most of the attraction sites is another challenge which demotivate community participation. Local control and local economic benefit should be the central focus while setting up plan for tourism ventures. Mawlynnong, one of the eco-tourist destinations in Meghalaya, sets a good example of the success of eco-tourism on account of citizen control and equal sharing of benefits among local households which then serve as motivational factors for more active community participation in tourism.
- The negative impact of seasonality is quite high in the state. To reduce this impact, it is advisable to introduce more niche tourism products during low seasons to serve the demand of different types of tourists. It is also important to note that the state government has introduced theme tourism programmes which were quite successful and hence more of such theme tourism approaches should be organized in the state.

Chapter 4

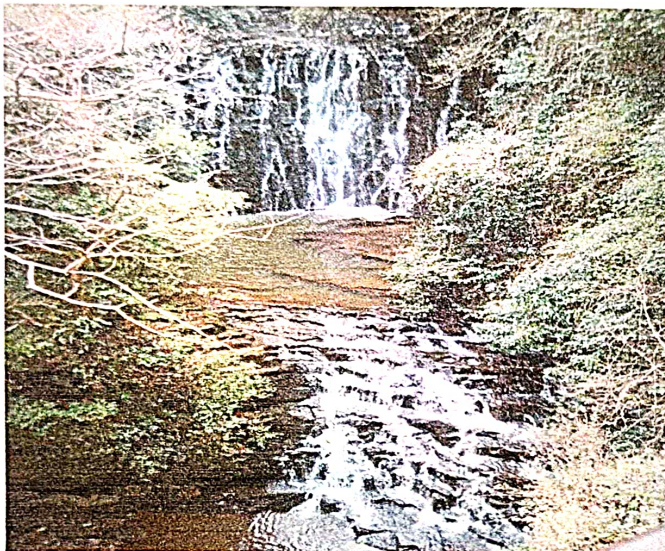
Results and Discussions

MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS IN MEGHALAYA :

1. ELEPHANT FALLS

Elephant falls is situated on the outer reaches of the main city of Shillong. Originally the KHASI people named this falls “KA KSHAI D LAI PATENG KHOHSIEW” because the water falls into three steps.

When the Britishers came and found the water falls then they renamed it “ELEPHANT FALLS” because on the left side of the falls there was a rock resembling an elephant, but this rock was destroyed by the Earthquake in the year 1897.



2. MAWLYNNONG VILLAGE

Located in the East Khasi hills district of Meghalaya, Mawlynnong village is also referred to as 'GOD'S OWN GARDEN'. The village is just 90 KMS from Shillong. In the year 2003 the village has earned the acclaim of being the cleanest village in Asia and cleanest village in India in the year 2005. Mawlynnong is very popular for its cleanliness and is a community based eco – tourism initiative. The village offers the visitors with picturesque natural beauty.

Especially in the monsoons, the village looks extremely beautiful when there is greenery everywhere with abundant flowering orchids dangling from the trees and waterfalls paving the way to small streams add to the beauty of Mawlynnong. The locals of the village have made collective effort to keep the ambience of a clean



3. LIVING ROOT BRIDGE

The most attractive feature of the Mawlynnong village is the LIVING ROOT BRIDGE. There can also enjoy a trek to the LIVING ROOT BRIDGE at a neighboring Riwai village.



4. DAWKI

Travelling from Shillong to DAWKI is certainly a thrilling experience. Throughout the journey we passed across ravines and deep gorges. “DAWKI “is located at a distance of 95 kilometers from the city of Shillong. UMNGOT RIVER is a popular tourist destination in DAWKI. This is the venue of annual boat race. DAWKI is the gateway to BANGLADESH where major import and export transactions take place.



5. ECO PARK

The Meghalaya government has established a large ECOPARK "in the plateau, which houses several hybrid and indigenous orchids in the greenhouse donated by Shillong Agri – Horticultural society. Also the ECOPARK offers mindblowing view of distant plains of neighboring BANGLADESH.



6. UMIAM LAKE

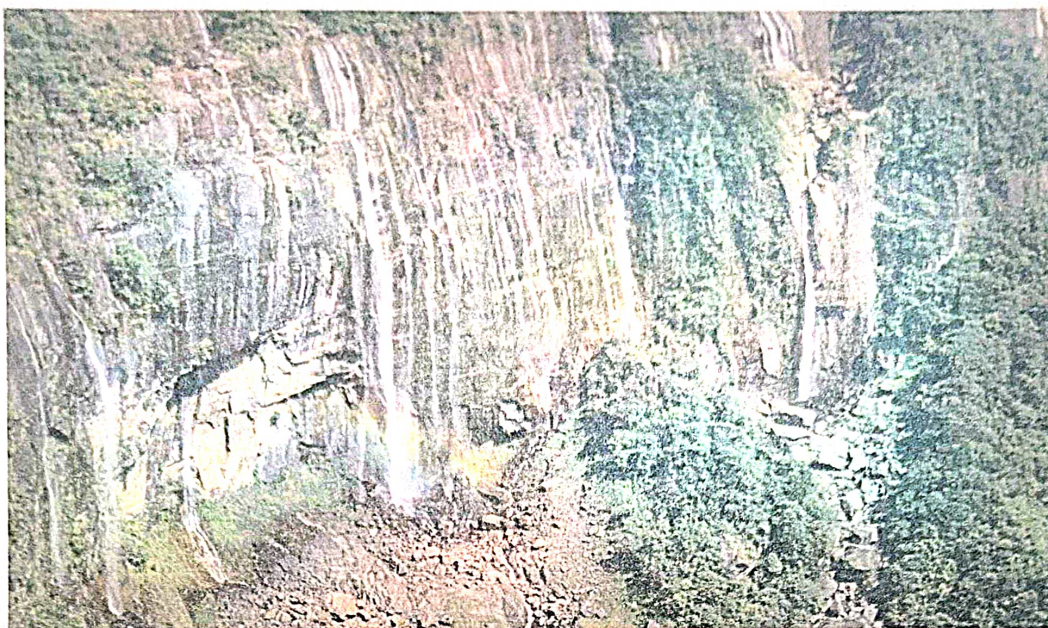
The UMIAM LAKE, located to the North of Shillong, combines beauty and adventure facilities and it is also famous as Barapani or big water. It is an admired tourist destination for water cycling, kayaking and boating.



7. SEVEN SISTERS FALLS

The Nohsngithiang Falls or Mawsmi Falls is popularly known as the SEVEN SISTERS WATER FALLS because it has seven segments. This majestic waterfall is the fourth highest waterfall in India, a height of 315 meters over the top of limestone cliffs of the East Khasi Hills in Cherrapunjee. The Seven Sisters Falls is one of major tourist spot in Meghalaya and attracts lots of tourists.

The Seven Sisters Falls is a rain feed fall. Based time to visit during the Monsson season between June and September for a great view. There are a plenty of other tourist attraction near Seven Sisters Waterfalls like Mamgai caves and the Nohkalikai Falls...



PROBLEMS Most of the places of tourist attraction of Meghalaya Shillong Municipality except the plain terrain belong to the category of either mountains or forest. At the same time parks are not properly maintained for natural beauty which adds some more to this backwardness. Though waterfalls are the foremost tourist spot in Municipal area, it lacks proper parking facility, drinking water facility and garbage disposal facility. There is no such conducted tour facility to visit all those places comprehensively or no proper infrastructure is available to know the actual beauty of the nature of those places by tourist. The participation of tribal community in tourism development is very low. The rate of crime, water scarcity, pollution and robbery are quite high. Conflict between the tourist spots and promotion of tourism development is a common affair. Moreover since neither Government nor the Municipality has taken any drastic steps to promote tourism in this area and remained unnoticeable in the tourism landscape.

Problems can be solved through mutation and promotion of proper tourism policy by the local self-government. Development of infrastructural facilities is also required .Tourist information centers are needed to be activated for proper maintenance of natural tourist spots .At the same time basic facilities for tourists likes food , drinking water , lighting , toilet , lodging , security etc. should properly be maintained , to preserve the physical landscape from the man-made natural hazards .

Considering the economic backwardness of the states there has been a number of incentives and special packages, especially by the government of Meghalaya. With the opening of international border opportunity for border trade in an organised manner at DAWKI. Asian development bank is preparing a sub – regional plan for development of tourism covering Bhutan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The Northeast India figures prominently in this plan because the proposal of constructing Asian highway.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Meghalaya has a huge potential for alternative tourism development because it is bestowed with varied natural attraction attributes. However, in tapping such potential resources for tourism venture, it is also necessary to establish measures in order to ensure long term benefits. Community participation and community control over management of tourism is a determinant of success of tourism and hence local communities should be encouraged to come forward and be active participants in alternative tourism development and special programmes for raising awareness on community participation in tourism should be organised. Where tourism venture is nature based, it is impossible to avoid seasonality effect, however, the same effect can be reduced by introduction of niche tourism products and theme tourism approaches to serve certain high end visitors during the low seasons.

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