

# The Prospects and the Present Status of Tourism Industry in Assam

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is a very important industry in the process of economic development. It has wide scope for the generation of income and employment. Nowadays, Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. Assam is one of the constituent states of the north eastern region of India. It is an embodiment of natural beauty and has been a centre of tourist attraction. The state of Assam is famous for her unique natural beauty with flora and fauna, historical monuments, pilgrim centre, tea gardens and its colorful cultural festivals. The tourism in Assam is mainly based on Wildlife, Tea tourism, Historical monuments, Ethnic cultural heritages etc. Therefore, natural parks and sanctuaries, rivers, lakes, warm water springs, wildlife, forests are the main components of tourist attraction in the state. The whole tourism potentialities of the state can be grouped together under the following categories – Nature Tourism, Wildlife, Eco Tourism, Tea Tourism, Pilgrim Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Adventure Tourism etc. The present paper makes an attempt to examine the prospects and the present status of tourism industry in Assam.

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## **1. Introduction:**

Tourism is a very important industry in the process of economic development. The term Tourism can be defined as the temporary movement of the people to destinations away from their usual place or normal habitat, the activities entered upon during their stay in those destination and the facilities developed to provide their needs. It has wide scope for the generation of income and employment. Nowadays, tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. It is an implied export and a rich source of earning foreign exchange. There are many countries in the world where main source of income is tourism. Tourism promotes business and commercial activities in the country such as

transportation, hotel and restaurants services, shopping, banking etc. and these in turn help in removing unemployment by generating ample employment opportunities. Tourism has great educational, cultural, entertainment, national and international value. It promotes national integration and international understanding. The importance of tourism can hardly be over-emphasized.

Assam is one of the constituent states of the North-Eastern Region of India and situated in the far, north-east corner of the country. It is an embodiment of natural beauty and has been a centre of tourist attraction. Assam is the second largest state among the eight northeastern states of India. Assam is known as the land of red river and blue hills. The total

geographical area of the state is 78,438 square kilometers and it is about 2.39 percent of country's total geographical area. Assam is surrounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the North, Nagaland and Manipur on the East, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura on the South and Bangladesh, Meghalaya and West Bengal on the West. The area of Assam extends from longitude 89°49 E to 97°26 E and latitude 24°10 N to 27°58 N. The whole area of Assam can be divided into three major physical regions namely – Brahmaputra Valley, Barak Valley and the hilly areas of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill districts. As per the 2011 census of India, the total population of Assam stands at 3,12,05,576 of which 1,59,39, 443 are males and 1,52,66,133 are females.

Tourism industry in this region started very recently. Assam is blessed with an abundance of scenic grandeur. The state of Assam is famous for her unique natural beauty with flora and fauna, historical monuments, pilgrim centre, tea gardens and its colorful cultural festivals. The tourism in Assam is mainly based on Wildlife, Tea tourism, Historical monuments, Ethnic cultural heritages etc. Therefore, natural parks and sanctuaries, rivers, lakes, warm water springs, wildlife, forests are the main components of tourist attraction in the state. The whole tourism potentialities of the state can be grouped together under the following categories – Nature Tourism, Wildlife, Eco Tourism, Tea Tourism, Pilgrim Tourism, Cultural Tourism, and Adventure Tourism etc. The best tourist season is October to April covering winter and spring. The state of Assam is one of the most beautiful and attractive regions of India. Therefore, the present paper makes an attempt to examine the prospects and the present status of tourism industry in Assam.

**2. Objectives:** The main objectives of this paper are-

1. To examine the prospects of Tourism Industry in Assam.

2. To examine the present status of Tourism Industry in Assam.

**3. Methodology:** The research paper is fully descriptive in nature. The present study is purely based on secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from various sources like books, journals, magazine and internet etc. Analytical tools like table and graph have been used to explain the whole study.

**4. Discussion and Findings:**

**4.1 Prospects of Tourism Industry in Assam**

**(I) Nature Tourism** Assam is known for her bio-geographic richness with its dense forests, uneven topography, flora and fauna, the majestic Brahmaputra and its tributaries, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Assam offers basically nature-centric tourism.

❖ **Bhairabkunda:** It is a beautiful place at the border of Arunachal Pradesh.

❖ **Bhalukpong:** A beautiful place of the side of the river Jia Bhoroli, famous for angling and water sports.

❖ **Chandubi:** A natural lagoon, beautiful picnic spot.

❖ **Dibru- Chaikhowa:** 70 Km from Dibrugarh, national park, the habitat of elephants, buffaloes, famous for wild horses.

❖ **Haflong:** One of the hill stations in Assam with unsurpassed sylvan beauty.

❖ **Jatinga:** Near Haflong, North Cachar district, a beautiful hilly place, where birds behave in a mysterious way, the local people call that the birds commit suicide here on certain specific days.

❖ **Kaziranga:** Internationally famous national park, the home of great Indian one-horn rhinoceros, tigers, elephants, buffaloes, deer, wild ducks and geese, breeding place of pelicans, habitat of reptiles

and monkeys more particularly golden langurs and host of other species.

❖ **Manas:** Situated in the foothills of the Himalayas, one of the magnificent national parks in the country, the Manas river flows through it, famous for the tiger project, a habitat for various wild animals.

❖ **Orang:** A wildlife sanctuary, known as miniature Kaziranga.

❖ **Pabitora:** It is a wildlife sanctuary.

❖ **Potasoli:** It is situated at 38 km distance from Tezpur town. It is famous for eco-camps set up jointly by the department of forest and Assam anglers association.

**(II) Wildlife Tourism** Assam has colorful wildlife forestry. Assam is famous for one horned rhinoceros. Some of the endangered species found in the state are hoolock gibbon, the stamp tailed macaque, the capped langur, the golden langur, the pigmy hog, the clouded leopard, the golden cat, the white winged wood-duck etc. All these can make Assam as one of the best destination of the tourists. Assam includes five numbers of National Parks and Eighteen numbers of wildlife sanctuaries. Assam national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are attract large numbers of both domestic as well as international tourists in every year.

**(III) Eco Tourism** Eco-tourism is a new concept, developed around the idea of travelling of places of natural beauty, moving around and staying with the places of nature for a couple of days. It is a faster growing sector. Eco-tourism has twin objectives, firstly, conserving environment and secondly, improving the welfare of the people. Assam has immense potentiality for eco-tourism due to its unique nature and climatic condition. The state is generally free from industrial pollution. Its green forests, blue hills, enchanting rivers are the basis on which eco-friendly tourism can be developed in Assam.

**(IV) Tea Tourism** Tea was first discovered in Assam in 1823 by two intrepid British adventures, Robert and Charles Bruce and since then tea has become an integral part of Assam's economy. Assam tea is one of

the largest producers of tea in the country. Assam produces more than 50% of the country's total tea production. It is a major source of revenue and employment of the state. Each of these lush green tea gardens of Assam is a treasure house of exotic beauty of nature with colorful people and their enchanting songs and dances, sprawling bungalows and residential facilities. Many of these tea gardens have polo fields and golf courses. These facilities can form into an attractive package for tourism.

**(V) Pilgrim Tourism** Assam has many ancient temples and shrines like Kamakhya temple, one of the most revered religious places in the country, Ambubachi mela, it becomes a centre of attraction in the month of June, Barpeta, famous for Vaishnava monastery, Batadrawa, birth place of Shri Sankardeva, Madan Kamdev, vast archeological ruins of fine erotic sculpture, Majuli, the largest river island in the world, the centre of Vaishnava culture, Surya Pahar, situated on a hill surrounded by innumerable status of Durga Devi, Ganesha, Surya, Chandra and Buddha, Umananda temple, Navagraha temple, Hajo, sacred place for Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. These places have potential to attract a large number of religious tourists.

**(VI) Culture Tourism** Cultural Tourism is one of the important features of Assam tourism. Assam has diverse ethnic tribes and groups, each have its own cultural heritage. Each of these tribes possesses some unique features in its socio-cultural life including customs, religious belief, language, culture, cultural dress, way-of-life, festivals, food habits, songs and dances which are different from others. The state's Tourism department also organizes various cultural festivals like Tea Festival, River Festival, Rongali Festival, Dihing Patkai Festival and Elephant Festival which can be considered to develop state's tourism. The domestic as well as foreign tourists are attracted due to its unique culture.

**(VII) Adventure Tourism** The enchanting blue hills and speedy rivers of Assam provide an enormous

scope for the development of adventure tourism. Adventure tourism can generate a lot of employment opportunities for local youths. The adventure sports activities like trekking, rock-climbing, para-sailing, water sports, river rafting are promoted by the Department of Tourism.

#### 4.2 Present status of Tourism Industry in Assam:

The following table 1 highlights the present status of tourism industry in Assam.

**Table-1: Year Wise Indian and Foreign Tourists Inflow in Assam and Revenue Earned from the Tourist Lodges**

SL. NO.	Year	Number of Tourists			Total Revenue earned from tourist lodges in Assam (Rupees in Lakh)
		Indian Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total	
1	2000-2001	975970	7406	983376	35.87
2	2001-2002	1690672	5211	1695883	38.89
3	2002-2003	1240562	5986	1246548	41.03
4	2003-2004	2030107	6854	2036961	60.44
5	2004-2005	2186250	9365	2195615	69.01
6	2005-2006	2586428	8309	2594737	87.11
7	2006-2007	3479870	13657	3493527	81.3
8	2007-2008	3489814	13799	3503613	94.99
9	2008-2009	3698706	14533	3713239	103.92
10	2009-2010	3895525	14694	3910219	131.63
11	2010-2011	4127447	15633	4143080	143.6
12	2011-2012	4408336	16660	4424996	184.49
13	2012-2013	4544666	17708	4562374	248.19
14	2013-2014	4444393	19086	4463479	191.32

15	2014-2015	4863826	20005	4883831	211.77
16	2015-2016	5642950	26320	5669270	1057.24
17	2016-2017	5413156	28419	5441575	252.39
18	2017-2018	5934391	31739	5966130	24.3
19	2018-2019	6027002	41209	6068211	30.31

**Sources:** Statistical handbook Assam, Director of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam.

The table 1 shows that, the total number of tourists (Indian and Foreign) visited the Assam has increased from 9, 83, 376 in 2000-2001 to 4,143,080 in 2010-2011 and then increased to 6,068,211 in 2018-2019.

Here, the table 1 shows the revenue earned from the tourist lodges in Assam. The total revenue earned

from tourist lodges in Assam increases from 35.87 lakh in 2000-2001 to 143.60 lakh in 2010-2011. In the year 2015-2016, highest revenue earned from tourist lodges in Assam which was Rs. 1057.24 lakh and the period 2018-2019, total revenue earned from tourist lodges in Assam was 30.31 lakh.

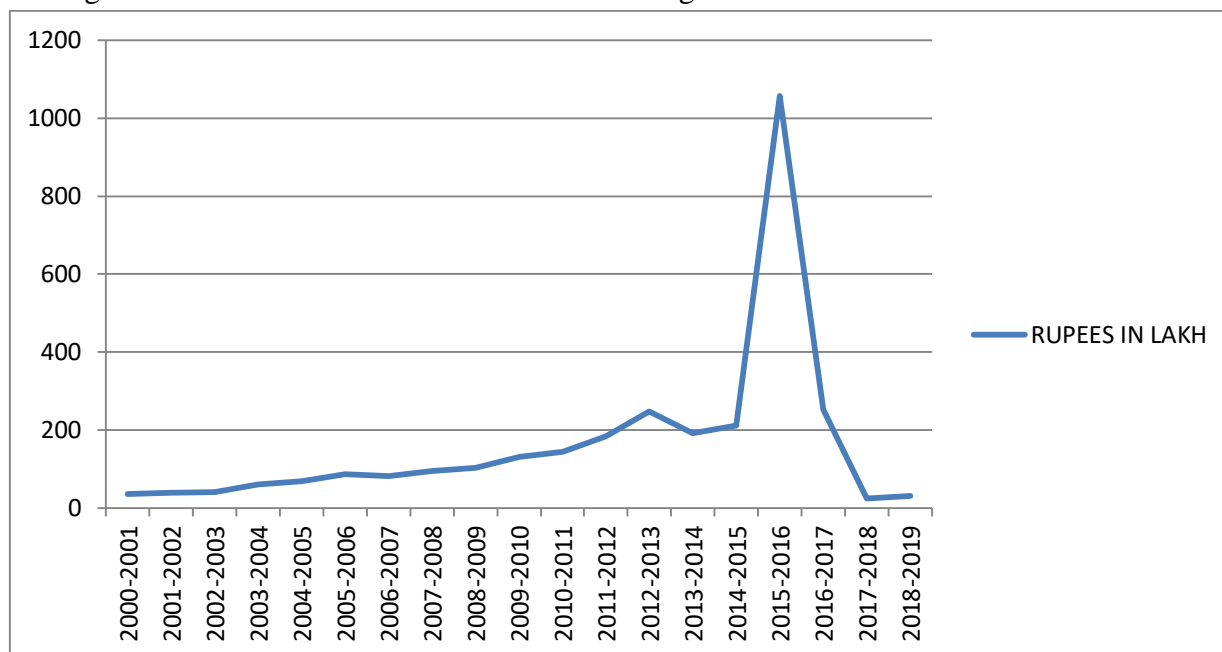


Fig:1 Year Wise Total Revenue Earned From Tourist Lodges in Assam 2000-2001 To 2018-2019

**5. Conclusion:**

From the above discussion, it can be observed that, tourism is one of the rapidly growing industries of the world economy. Tourism is a major source of economic growth and development in Assam. Tourism has great capacity to create large scale of

employment, raising standard of living and reducing poverty in the state. Assam has significant potential for attracting indian as well as foreign tourists. So, it plays a vital role in socio-economic development of Assam. Therefore, the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests and the covid19 pandemic are badly

impact on tourism industry in Assam. This pandemic is expected to huge range of unemployment rate in the state in the coming days. So, the government has undertaken various initiative steps for development of tourism industry in Assam.

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