

TRIBAL CULTURAL TOURISM *A Sustainable Tourism Resource in Arunachal Pradesh.*

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ABSTRACT

Arunachal Pradesh-state located in North Eastern part of India sub continent fall on Himalayan belt. Region has abundant gift of natural resources because of its ideal geographic location. State is habitat of tribal people who were practice a unique culture. The natural and cultural heritage of the state has an exotic feature which makes the state a unique destination for tourism. In the State one can experience the different colours of Arunachal culture in one platform. This paper highlights the potential tribal culture which can be a unique tourism resource. Meanwhile it also tries to highlight the strength and opportunities of the state in terms of tourism as well as recommendations for tourism growth in the state. Here, we also can understand the barriers to tourism development in the state.

Keywords: Tribal Tourism, Tourism Development, Cultural Heritage, Barrier to Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a one of largest sector in terms of employment generation. It is also popularly known as smoke less industry and had a huge share in all round development. It is also one of the major sources for foreign exchange, domestic product and income. It is also plays an important role in conserving culture and ecology. Tourism helps to promote sustainable development.

From the past decades many times it has been proven that tourism is continuously growing and also sharing a huge role in the conservation of nature, ecology and Culture. In every aspect we find a touch of tourism. If we talk about culture and ecology then, it comes cultural tourism and Ecotourism. These are one of major segments in tourism. Ecotourism is defined by the National Ecotourism Strategy as- "Nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and which is managed to be ecologically sustainable". Similarly the Cultural tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organization (Report WTO, 2012) as "trips, whose main or concomitant goal is visiting the sites and events whose cultural and historical value has turn them being a part of the cultural heritage of a community".

From the above definitions, it becomes clear that eco-tourism, which in a bigger context embraces village cultural tourism, nature-based tourism amongst others, are seen as an important activity for supporting, preserving and promoting indigenous communities and their lifestyle, rituals and heritage in dedicated eco-systems, while promoting development

and awareness amongst the community and region in particular, and at a national and world level, at large.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE STATE- ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The Frontier State of India, Arunachal Pradesh shares its border with Tibet (China), Bhutan, and Myanmar (Burma). The Habitat of the most Splendid, Variegated, multilingual tribal people of the world The land of rising sun, dawn lit mountains and a garden of different variety of flowers. Indeed the 'Arunachal- mini India' because of its huge cultural & natural diversity.

A Unique Habitat With Glaciers, high Altitude meadows, Sub-Tropical forests and an Amazing array of flora and fauna, all this are more strewn generously with glistening water bodies and gushing rivers. Its dense forest, snow-clad peak towering mountains and roaring rivers offer numerous opportunities for rafting, hiking, mountaineering or simple basking in all its beauty. Arunachal Pradesh has more than 550 rare Species of orchids and hundreds of species of rare plants, covering more than 60% of the total area. The wildlife is equally rich and varied, which includes Elephants, Tiger, Leopard, Jungle Cats, and also White Gibbons, Red Pandas, the Musk and the 'Mithun' (*Bosforntalis*).

In the state we found 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub tribes which are distinct in from another in their lifestyle, rituals, and in other cultural practices.

Arunachal Pradesh is divided in 20 districts with the capital city Itanagar. In every district we will find a different tribe, which are inhabitant there with preserving and practicing the distinct beautiful indigenous culture.

This paper seeks to find out the potential of cultural tourism and eco tourism in Arunachal Pradesh. We this paper I would like to highlight the factors and resources of nature and culture which are having immense potential for tourism sustainable tourism development in the state.

1.1 FACTS AND FIGURES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

CAPITAL: Itanagar.

AREA: 83,743 SqKms.

LATITUDE: Between 26 Degree 30sec North and 29 Degree 30sec North.

LONGITUDE: Between 91Degree 30sec East and 97 Degree 30sec East.

POPULATION: 1.255 million (2012)

RELIGION: The Dony Polo is the ancient religion of these peoples, still followed by many communities; Buddhism and Christianity are the other major religions. There are also minorities of Hindus in the State.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: Many Tribal Languages are spoken in the State. English, Assamese, Bangla, and Hindi are also spoken by a large Section of the people.

LITERACY RATE: 66.95% (2011)

BEST TIME TO VISIT: All year around (Except Rainy Season).

RAINFALL: 1000mm in the higher reaches to 5750mm in the foot Hills, Spread over 6 to 8 month of the year.

STATE BIRD: Hornbill.

STATE ANIMAL: Mithun (*Bosforntalis*).

STATE FLOWER: *Rhynchostylis Retusa* (Foxtail Orchid)

2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

1. Study to highlight the tourism resources of available in study area.
2. Study to find out the barriers of tourism in potential area.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research paper is the form of a descriptive study in analyzing and highlighting the potentiality of Tribal tourism resources in the states which can be a bright source and prospect of economic development in terms of tourism industry in the Arunachal Pradesh. The present study is based on secondary data collection. The secondary data was collected by various published sources like books, journal, magazine, reports, publications, etc. The findings were discussed in the light of published literature.

4. TRIBAL CULTURAL TOURISM:

Tribal Cultural tourism is an interesting trip to a relatively exotic world where one can experience to a culture quite different from own. It is far less modern gadget based, but more reliant on the nature and the surrounding environment in the rawest form. Tribal tourism is no longer an anthropologist's area of interest. The appeal of this form of tourism is on the rise and infectious. It is one of fastest drawing the attention of common tourists to an exotic culture which is very unique and beautiful. Tribal tourism can be an eye-opener, an experience of extreme delight and it could be educative for the present world. Tribal Tourism enhances the path of sustainable tourism. Because of its nature not only protect the unique cultural heritage of the region but, also promote the sustainable tourism Growth.

Tribal tourism in Arunachal- Arunachal has large habitat of tribal people, who were very distinct from one and other. In Arunachal you find 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub tribes. Every tribe is unique in their culture, rituals, practices and lifestyle.

4.1 NYISHI (TRIBE):

The Nyishis, also called Nishangs in the upper areas are believed to belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock. All Nyishis trace their descent from legendary ancestor, ABOTANI, whose sons are believed to have been the fore father of three groups of clans known as DOPUM, DODUM and DAL respectively. The Nyishis, inhabitants of the western half of the district, are migrated from northern area beyond Khru and Kime River.

The Nyishis observe lots of ceremonies in the villages. The important community festival is known as NYOKUM, performed once in a year in the month of February. During this festival the priests devote days together to pray the Supreme Being. Men and women express joy by dancing, singing and feasting as part of the ceremony. The Nyishis too have a number of songs and dances for different socio-religions festivals.

The RIKAM-PADA is the most popular and important song and dance of Nyishi community. The significance of Nyokum festival is to ensure better cultivation, protect the grains from natural calamities and also for the prosperity of the villager's well being in general. The Nyishis women are adapt in weaving skill. Basketry is popular handicraft among the men-folk.

The Nyishis are agriculturists and they commonly practices shifting cultivation (Jhum). Permanent cultivation is also being progressively adopted, where ever it is feasible. Principal method of Jhuming consists of clearing of patch of jungle by cutting and burning after number of years called the "Jhum Cycle". Mithuns, cows, pigs, goats, and fowls. They hunt and chase by spears, traps, bows, and arrows.

4.2 APATANIS (TRIBE):

The Apatanis people are also belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid belt. All Apatanis trace their descent from one legendary ancestor, ABOTANI. They migrated to this magnificent valley from northern areas, beyond Khru and Kime rivers. This reveals from finding of three neolithic belts at Parsiparlo and Raga circle and historical remains at Tali Valley by Archoeological findings. It is, therefore, apparent that followed the path of Kime, Khru (now called Kamala) and Subansiri River. They are well built, fair in complexion and medium to tall in structure. The Apatanis live in fairly large villages, which are compact and permanent, although during recent years they have been persuaded to disperse to avoid damages caused by fire accidents.

Dree, Yapung, Myoko and Murung are the most important festivals of Apatani tribe. Dree festival is celebrated in the month of July of every year and Yapung festival celebrates in the month of September or October respectively. There is a great merry making and dancing during the Dree festival. The Myoko festival is celebrated each year in the month of March in a cyclic manner by forming three groups of villages. First group comprised of Hong village alone. Second group are Hari and Bulla (comprising Kalong, Reru, Tajang and Lempia villages). Third group are the villages of Hija, Dutta, Mudang-Tage, Michi and Bamin. Murung is celebrated every year in the month of January.

The importance of these festivals are primarily to ensure better cultivation, protection of the grains from hailstone, storms, insects and wild animals and well being of villagers in general and their livestock. The Apatanis people perform many traditional dances out of which the Daminda and Pakhu Ittu dances are very popular.

The Apatanis people are agriculturists. They practice permanent type of cultivation and their agricultural pattern is well developed and they use a well versed irrigation system for paddy cultivation.

4.3 ADI TRIBE:

The Adi, or Bangni-Bokar Lhoba people is also major tribe living in the Himalayan hills of Nyingchi Prefecture. They are found in the temperate and sub-tropical regions in the districts of East Siang, Upper Siang, West Siang and Dibang Valley.

The literal meaning of Adi is "hill" or "mountain top". They used to have well planned village council called 'Kebang'. The traditional dance of Adi tribe is called 'Ponung' is very popular in the entire of Arunachal Pradesh. Dances are much admired among them. Adi villages are situated generally on the spurs of hills. Adi men and women are very good weavers and craftsmen. Women they weave cloth with highly artistic designs.

The Adi people they celebrate a number of festivals, in particular Solung, in the month of September for five days or more. It is a harvest festival performed after the sowing of seeds and transplantation, to seek for future bumper crops. Ponung songs and dances are performed during the festival. At the last day of Solung, throne and indigenous weaponry are displayed along the passage of the houses, a belief that they would protect people from evil spirits.

Beside the above major tribes there are other tribes like Khampti, Mishmi, Momba (Monpa), Sherdukpen, Singpho also have very rich culture indeed.

5. CULTURE AND CUSTOMS:

Arunachal is one of such state in northeast which is not only naturally abundant but also it has rich cultural heritage. State is habitant of 26 major tribe and 101 sub tribes. All tribes are distinct because of their unique culture and customs. Culture and lifestyle of all tribes exhibits their tradition and customs.

As we know the Fair and Festivals are the inseparable part of culture and custom. People in Arunachal celebrate all Indian festivals besides their cultural festivals. Tribal traditional have a unique essences of pomp and gaiety. All the major traditional festivals of Arunachal Pradesh are basically agricultural festival. Every festival is related to celebration of cultivation of grains. Some of them are celebrated before the cultivation started and some are post harvesting festivals. Some of very popular tribal festivals are Nyokum celebrated by Nyshi tribe, Mopin celebrated by Galo tribe, Solung celebrated by Adi tribe, Si Donyi celebrated by Tagin tribe, Lossar celebrated by Monpa tribe etc. 'Arunachal celebrates 13 festivals in 12 months' In terms of tourism Arunachal has very huge potential of cultural resource that attracts lots of tourist, researchers, bag packers and travel writers to explore the cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh.

6. TOURISM FESTIVALS:

Arunachal is pioneer in celebrating various kinds of tourism festivals. Some of them are very popular and gaining popularity day by day. The Government has also initiated steps with the local public to promote the tourism resources of the state. Government is trying to highlights the exotic natural resources to attract the tourism from all around the world in a way which will also impact the rural economy of the state.

Orange Festival at Dambuk, Lower Dibang Valley initiated by Arunachal tourism. It splash Colour of Orange and tune of local music every year in the month of December.

Similarly, **Siang River festival** at Aalo that provides an experience of water adventure sports in Siang River, **Pare river festival** at Yazuli, it also show case mixture of food, Music and adventure Sports. Adventure@ Mechuka at mechuka another initiative for Tourism by Arunachal Tourism department. **Ziro Festival of Music** at Ziro it's the largest music festival of Arunachal Pradesh falls in the month of September every year. Indigenous Artists as well bands from far land participate in this mega tourism festival.

There are so many others of same kind which are promoting the the cultural and natural heritages of Arunachal Pradesh

7. BARRIER TO TOURISM RESOURCES

Although it has been observed and found that from past few years the state has come up in the race of all-round development. But then, there are still a lot of obstacles that have prevented tourism from developing in a sustained manner. Poor Communication systems, especially transport as the region is landlocked and is connected to the rest of the country there is no states own airport. If an international tourist wants to visit the only nearest international airport is in Guwahati, which is a 350 Kms away. Though, the government has proposed some airports in the major cities of state. Which connect the state with the rest of country by air. Road connectivity within the state is also underprivileged. There are few exotic places which are far beyond the road communication as result. People of those areas are under privilege lacking behind in all aspect.

Laws and restrictions for travelers into the region are another impediment and the Govt. of India has certain permits such as the R.A.P (Restricted Area Permit), I.L.P (Inner Line Permit) and both Indian nationals and foreigners have to abide by them to gain entry into the states. Government Policy and general stability and security are a very important factor and stability in all the states and are necessary for any long-term sustainable eco-cultural-tourism plan in the region. Lack of proper awareness, advertising, marketing, networking and publishing of materials relating to the Arunachal Pradesh is yet another problem. Very few travelers, even in India, have little idea about the region.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF REGION

SWOT analysis of state in terms of tourism resources and its potentials in development of community and state as whole. This SWOT analysis is based purely on descriptive research and on some past experiences. This analysis might help the state to development tourism and to protect the heritages of state for sustainable tourism development.

STRENGTHS – Arunachal Pradesh has great essence of hospitality; Exotic Nature, flora & Fauna, scenic beauty; Diverse ethnic cultural and environmental heritage; moderate climate.

WEAKNESS – Lack of proper awareness of tourism being a sustainable livelihood; lack human resource development opportunities; lack of proper connectivity (road communication); Insurgency in a few areas.

OPPORTUNITIES – The Government of India has put special emphasis on North East Tourism development; State government has initiated so many projects related to development of tourist destination; Special Central assistance schemes related to Tourism; Investment by far-sighted entrepreneurs and local bodies;

THREATS – Tourism growth to adversely affect the cultural and social structure of destination societies; Ecological imbalances in environmentally fragile locations; Militancy in some regions.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GROWTH OF TOURISM INDUSTRY AND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITIES IN TOURISM SERVICES.

Awareness of Tourism -The public Awareness on tourism and its benefits are most important in districts as well as in the state for the development of tourism Industry. Improvement of Infrastructure- It is important to improve the scenery of the infrastructure like, road network, transportation network, medical facilities, accommodation facilities and the waste management in State as well as to improve the tourism scenario. Do attention and proper maintenance of existing attractions resources and heritage. Advertising & promotions of attractions on national and international level by the Government as well as by the indigenous private sector. Relax procedure of getting various permits related to tourist visit in the state.

Encouraging the local participation in tourism related services. Government support should be there for subsidiary services establishment for the tourist. Government should introduce Corporation system for better tourism infrastructure development and which will also open employment opportunities for the local people.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Arunachal Pradesh has immense potential to attract tourist from around the world. No doubt, its cultural heritage is so rich which doesn't have any comparison. Arunachal reflects its different image in tourism because of its ideal geographic location. Further, it is abundant of rich flora and fauna. Thought, the state has all the resources of tourism, the only thing is required right promotion and good infrastructure which make people to access Arunachal more and know more as well experience more the beauty. Today, the

government is giving opportunities to grow tourism in state and it has been found in results that; the state is growing day by day.

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