

Tourism and Economy: A Discussion in the context of Karbi Anglong District

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Abstract: Tourism plays a vital role in the development of a region or state. With the development of tourism in a particular region, there is ample scope to boost the earning source of individual as well the govt. revenue. This is exemplified by the countries like Singapore or some states of India like Kerala, Sikkim etc. Karbi Anglong is a hill district of Assam which is renowned for its natural scenic beauty as well as habitat of diverse cultural tribes. So, it must be a region of tourist attraction and emphasis on development of tourism here is sure to be a source of revenue. However, the district is not free from problems especially the terrorist activities. But proper concentration with honest motive of the authority concerned on development of tourism in this area might be a way to minimize terrorist activities.

This paper looks at discussing the prospect of tourism as a source of economic development of a region with statistical data in support of the statement. It will stress on the point that the proper effort and honesty of the authority concerned will help to develop the tourism in Karbi Anglong District which will not only contribute to its economy but also help minimize the terrorist activities and above all disseminate its rich cultural diversity. It also tries to examine the problems in respect of tourism development in this district and recommends ways to overcome it.

Key Words: *Tourism, Economic Development, Karbi Anglong District.*

Introduction: Tourism has recently emerged as a key sector of the world economy. It has been playing a significant role on the world economic scenario that tourism is considered as a major industry. It contributes immensely to the economic development of a country and helps “balanced regional

development". The impact of tourism is seen in various spheres- social, cultural, political as well economic. It has been proved to be a vital source of revenue for the government as a consequence of which there is remarkable impact on the socio-economic life of a region. This surely generates employment, investment and welfare activities too. Thus the growth of tourism registers assured growth of economy of the society as well as individuals which leads to socio-cultural change. The impact of tourism on the economic development of India is remarkable particularly as it succeeds in some of the states like Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim etc. The development of tourism industry may make unbelievable progress of a region in its social, cultural and economic spheres.

Objectives:

- . To look at the contribution of tourism to the economy of a country.
- . To find out how tourism impacts upon the socio-cultural and economic lives of people.
- . To discuss on the prospect of tourism in the NE states and particularly in Karbi Anglong District of Assam.
- . To discuss on the development of tourism in Karbi Anglong that may be a measure to decrease terrorist activities.
- . Recommendation regarding the development of tourism in Karbi Anglong.

Methodology: Information and data have been used from secondary sources such as books, journals, reports and websites. Primary source includes observations from field visit and discussion/conversation with local people.

Impact of Tourism on World Economy: It has been proved that the impact of tourism on the world economy is noteworthy. The World Trade and Tourism Council (WTTC Report 2016) states: 'The WTTC World 2016 Economic Impact Report shows Travel & Tourism's contribution to world GDP grew for the sixth consecutive year, with notably high growth in T&T investments. Travel and Tourism forecasts over the next ten years also looks extremely favourable, with predicted growth rates that continue to be higher than growth rates in other sectors.'#

The facts of Singapore: The data prepared by WTTC in its Report 2016 reveals the following facts regarding the impact of tourism on the economy of Singapore as below.#

Singapore 2016 ANNUAL RESEARCH: KEY FACTS¹

GDP: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION:

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was SGD19.2bn (4.8% of total GDP) in 2015, and is forecast to rise by 2.8% in 2016, and to rise by 3.5% pa, from 2016-2026, to SGD27.9bn (5.2% of total GDP) in 2026.

GDP: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION:

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was SGD39.5bn (10.0% of GDP) in 2015, and is forecast to rise by 3.7% in 2016, and to rise by 3.4% pa to SGD57.2bn (10.6% of GDP) in 2026.

EMPLOYMENT: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION:

In 2015 Travel & Tourism directly supported 158,500 jobs (4.3% of total employment). This is expected to rise by 3.6% in 2016 and rise by 1.0% pa to 182,000 jobs (4.3% of total employment) in 2026.

EMPLOYMENT: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION:

In 2015, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 8.5% of total employment (310,500 jobs). This is expected to rise by 2.3% in 2016 to 317,500 jobs and rise by 0.6% pa to 336,000 jobs in 2026 (7.9% of total).

VISITOR EXPORTS:

Visitor exports generated SGD22.8bn (3.3% of total exports) in 2015. This is forecast to grow by 1.0% in 2016, and grow by 3.0% pa, from 2016-2026, to SGD30.9bn in 2026 (3.1% of total).

¹All values are in constant 2015 prices & exchange rates

#Source: <http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2016/singapore2016.pdf>

INVESTMENT:

Travel & Tourism investment in 2015 was SGD19.8bn, or 19.9% of total investment. It should rise by 5.4% in 2016, and rise by 5.3% pa over the next ten years to SGD34.9bn in 2026 (21.5% of total).

Impact of Tourism on Economic Development of India: The contribution of tourism in the development of Indian economy is remarkable. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir etc. earns remarkable amount of revenue from tourism industry. Activities related to tourism have been contributing immensely to the development of socio-cultural and economic status of the

regions. As a consequence of development of tourism specialized and need based tourism like eco-tourism, medical tourism etc. have come into existence in specific regions. Thus tourism in India is taking new turns with the passage of time. Data regarding the impact of tourism on the economy of India as prepared by WTTC in its Report 2016 may prove the importance of tourism as an industry in the country. The Report is presented below.[#]

INDIA: 2016 ANNUAL RESEARCH: KEY FACTS¹

GDP: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was INR2,668.3bn (2.0% of total GDP) in 2015, and is forecast to rise by 7.1% in 2016, and to rise by 7.9% pa, from 2016-2026, to INR6,115.5bn (2.4% of total GDP) in 2026.

GDP: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was INR 8,309.4bn (6.3% of GDP) in 2015, and is forecast to rise by 7.3% in 2016, and to rise by 7.5% pa to INR18,362.2bn (7.2% of GDP) in 2026.

EMPLOYMENT: DIRECT CONTRIBUTION

In 2015 Travel & Tourism directly supported 23,454,500 jobs (5.5% of total employment). This is expected to rise by 3.2% in 2016 and rise by 2.0% pa to 29,629,000 jobs (5.8% of total employment) in 2026.

¹All values are in constant 2015 prices & exchange rates

#Source: <http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2016/singapore2016.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT: TOTAL CONTRIBUTION

In 2015, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 8.7% of total employment (37,315,000 jobs). This is expected to rise by 3.0% in 2016 to 38,441,000 jobs and rise by 1.9% pa to 46,422,000 jobs in 2026 (9.0% of total).

VISITOR EXPORTS

Visitor exports generated INR 1,249.3bn (4.2% of total exports) in 2015. This is forecast to grow by 5.3% in 2016, and grow by 7.2% pa, from 2016-2026, to INR 2,625.6bn in 2026 (3.8% of total).

INVESTMENT

Travel & Tourism investment in 2015 was INR 2,264.1bn, or 6.0% of total investment. It should rise by 4.8% in 2016, and rise by 6.3% pa over the next ten years to INR 4,356.7bn in 2026 (6.0% of total).

Tourism in the NE India: There is ample scope of the growth of tourism industry in NE India since the natural beauty, hills, rivers and forest cover a large geographical area of this region which have been always cause of tourist attraction. Again, the inhabitants of NE states include various colourful tribes having diverse cultural identities that have been always a cause of attraction for tourists of other places. Assam is famous all over the world for its tea industry, wild life sanctuary (Kaziranga), river island of Majuli, forest, river, hills, and its diverse cultural, racial, tribal identities which are sure to attract tourists from outside.

Scope of Tourism in Karbi Anglong District:

Karbi Anglong is the largest district of Assam in size covering an area of 10,434 sq. km. which is also famous for its natural beauty, landscapes, hills, rivers and streams and above all its diversity of culture, language etc. of the inhabitants who include different tribes and communities. There are many spots of tourist attraction in the District. Some remarkable tourist places here are- Amreng Tourist Centre, Umwang Tourist Centre, Botanical Garden, Marat Longri Wild Life Sanctuary, Garampani, and Sibheta. The activities related to tourism will generate government revenue, employment and facilitate to establish coordination with people of different regions which will open different opportunities for development of local economy. In fact, the



Photo above: KOKA FALLS AT PANIMUR
advancement of tourism in the district will surely pave the way for economic development of the people as well as strengthen cultural assimilation which will provide opportunity to expose its own culture leading to obtain further scopes of progress. It is a fact that the majority people of Karbi Anglong are financially weaker and living under BPL the impact of which is reflected in other fields like education, health etc. So, for all round development of the people, it is most essential to be financially

solvent. Since the District has ample scope for initiating tourism as a prospective industry,

there are ample scopes for strengthening the economy through it too.

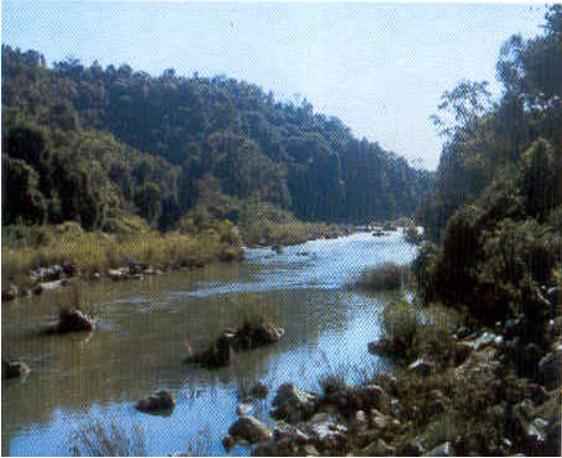


Photo above: WILD-VENTURE AT SILVETA



Photo above: A VIEW FROM TIKKA TOURIST COMPLEX

Problems concerning Tourism in Karbi Anglong: As per our observation, there are some problems in regard to the development of tourism in the District. Predominant amongst these are as follows:

- . Lack of mass awareness about the prospect of tourism as a means economic development.
- . Lack of proper transport facilities.
- . Lack of concentration by the govt. to consider tourism as a popular industry.
- . Existence of terrorist activities in the District.

Terrorist Activities & Tourism- Some Recommendations: Karbi Anglong is known all over for the existence of terror activities which is considered as one of the major hindrances to attract the tourists from outside. Due to the exaggerated reports of the media, many people belonging to other states or countries have a perception that the region is not a safe place for tourists. Thus the mass approach of tourist to such places is restrained. But interestingly, such terrorist activities can be minimized if tourism flourishes as a popular industry. This is possible through the following measures:

a) Development of roadways covering remote places in order to grow tourism as well as to strengthen security (so that police/para-military personnel have easy access to these places).

b) To set up more number of tourist spots to boost local economy so that youths could be provided earning opportunity.

c) To allot the tourist spots for management to educated unemployed youths on lease basis.

d) To introduce special schemes in the tourism industry i.e. clean village, eco tourist sport, cultural hub, water park, etc. and its allied enterprises in order to generate self-employment and offer opportunities to local youths.

Conclusion: The govt. authority concerned should give stress on the development of tourism and involve the youths, NGOs, and private firms in it through introducing various schemes. Development of tourism surely could contribute to the growth of economy of a region/country as well as will strengthen socio-cultural and economic relationship with the other parts of the world. Economic status of a society is one of the main causes for the growth of terrorist activities could be minimized through the growth of terrorism.



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