



## Prospects and problems of tourism industry in Karbi Anglong district of Assam

Mintu Tokbi

M. Phil Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra, India

### Abstract

Tourism Industry plays a very important role in economic development of any region. It increases the employment opportunities, better communication facilities and reduces the poverty of any region. Karbi Anglong district is rich in natural and forest resources. The district is surrounded by the several hills and natural water falls which have an ample scope for the growth and development of tourism industry. In this district most of the tribal people practices jhum cultivation but in the jhum cultivation people are getting employed only for 3 to 4 month but remaining month of the year they are getting unemployed. So, with the development of tourism industry in the district, it can increase the employment opportunities of the local tribal people which will help to reduce the poverty in the district.

**Keywords:** development, employment, poverty, resources

### 1. Introduction

Man has an innate urge to explore new facts and travelling for exploring of new exciting destinations. From the very earliest period of time, man has cherished the desire to discover the unknowns to explore new and strange places to seek changes of environment and to enjoy new kinds of experiences. Travel is an old concept but tourism in modern sense is relatively new concept. Travel is not a synonym of tourism although travel is an essential of tourism (Singhal, G.D and others 2006). Though, travel is a pleasure activity but in the past it was not so. The traveler of the past was a merchant, a pilgrim, a scholar in search of ancient texts or even a curious wayfarer looking forward to new and existing experiences (Bhatia, A.K. 2003). The development of modern transport system has changed the earlier concept of tourism. Tourism is the activity of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or any other purpose. Tourism is a very important source of income for many countries. Its importance was recognized in the Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980 as "an activity essential to the life of nations" because of its direct effects on the Social, Cultural, Educational and Economic sectors of the nation's societies and on their international relations. Tourism industry is a fast growing industry among all the industries. It needs a less expenditure and earns a huge amount of money. This industry provides an ample scope for the development of any region or area.

### 2. Review of Literature

The following studies have appreciated the prospects of Tourism Industry-

1. Bhatia A.K. (1982) <sup>[1]</sup> explores some important concepts of tourism and emphasized on the contribution of tourism as an important factor in the prosperity of any Nation. It also deals with planning,

organization, marketing, research etc on tourism in India.

2. Niranjana Das and Syiemelieh (2004) <sup>[3]</sup> in their study "Ecotourism in Assam" explain that Assam has tremendous potentiality for growth and development of ecotourism. Assam forms a part of global biodiversity hot spot with varieties of flora and fauna which can provide a sound base to start ecotourism ventures.
3. According to Usha Bande (2005) ecotourism stands for the management of tourism in such a manner that man derives maximum benefits from nature without disturbing its innate balance. It seeks to restore man's communication with nature and to ensure the fulfillment of the need of the local cultures and traditions remain undisturbed and intact.

### 3. Area of the Study

Karbi Anglong or the land of the Karbis may well be called the heart-beat of Assam. This beautiful large sprawling district lies in the centre of Assam. This enchanting hills district with its diversity rare flora and fauna has remained untouched and undiscovered. Mother Nature has indeed been very generous to Karbi Anglong but yet its potentialities for tourism remain sadly untapped. At present Karbi Anglong district is divided between West Karbi Anglong district and East Karbi Anglong district. Hamren is the district Headquarter of West Karbi Anglong district with its rolling hills, dense forest, waterfalls, rivers and streams. Diphu is the district Headquarter of East Karbi Anglong district Diphu with a combine flat paddy land, green hills interspersed with blue meaning rivers. The undivided district is covering 10434 sq. km, is the largest district in Assam, which is about 13 percent of the state's total area.

In the Karbi Anglong district summer can be hot and humid and generally lasts from June to August, the remaining parts of the year are pleasant and bracing. The

peak season for tourists to visit the district is October to March.

#### 4. Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from various government sources, Assam Statistical handbook, newspaper, various journals, internet etc.

#### 5. Objectives

The present study is based on the following objectives-

1. To know the various tourism spots in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam.
2. To know the Prospects and Problems of tourism industry in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

#### 5.1 Tourism Spots

There are various tourism spots in the Karbi Anglong district (undivided) of Assam which has a tremendous potential for tourism industry. They are-

##### A) Wildlife Tourism Spots

There are four wildlife Sanctuaries and one proposed Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Karbi Anglong District which provide an ample scope for tourism industry. These are-

##### i) East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary

East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary covers an area of 221.81 sq. km. On July 27<sup>th</sup> 2000, the Government of Assam notified the forest area of Karbi Anglong Reserve Forest and its adjacent forest land as the East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary. This Sanctuary is at a height of 80-100 from sea level. Animals commonly found here are Elephant, Tiger, Bison, Bear, Sambar, Capped Langur, mongoose etc. In addition to these animals, this sanctuary is an ideal habitat for many species of reptiles and amphibians which includes Brown Tortoise, Python, King Cobra, Monitor Lizard etc. This Sanctuary is also rich in faunal diversity too. So far about 260 species of different birds have been identified from this sanctuary. It is estimated that this total count could be more than 350 like Hornbill, Green Pigeon, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rackettailed Drongo, Jungle Myna, Black Headed Oriole, Minivet, Eagles, Woodpecker etc. The vegetation of this forest is a mix of tropical semi evergreen and moist deciduous forest. Some of the prominent tree species found here are Holokh, Khokon, Bhelu, Nahor, Poma, Hilikha etc. Best time to visit East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary is in the month of October to March. Dokmoka is the nearest town situated just 37 km away from this sanctuary.

##### ii) Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary

Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary covers an area of 451.00 sq. km located in Karbi Anglong district. On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003 it was officially declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary is hilly and shows the presence of swamps and water pits. Jamuna River flows besides this Sanctuary. Many other streams and rivulets also run through this Sanctuary that dries up during the winter. This Sanctuary is home to a variety of species of animals, birds and reptiles that attracts tourist and nature

lovers from different places. Different mammal's species that are seen in this Sanctuary are Elephant, Tiger, Lesser Cat, Barking Deer, Wild Pig, Slow Loris, Porcupine, Pangolin and others. The Sanctuary also provides shelter to the World's most venomous snake King Cobra. Other species of reptiles are found here are Branded Krait, Rock Python, Monitor Lizard, Brown Hill Tortoise etc. The Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary is also home to Woodland birds. Some bird species commonly found in this Sanctuary are Green Pigeon, Hornbill, Barbets, White Winged Duck and others. This tropical hill Sanctuary is rich in its floral compositions. The forest is full of many species of large trees, Climbers, Orchids and Bamboos. The Sanctuary is about 60 km away from Dimapur Airport and from Diphu railway station it is at a distance of 8 km. The best time to visit the Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary is during the months of November to March.

##### iii) Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary

The Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary covers an area of 37 sq. km situated in Karbi Anglong district. The Government of Assam recognized Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary as a Sanctuary in 27<sup>th</sup> July 2000. It is situated amidst an oasis of idyllic green and dotted by sylvan water bodies that glitter like a mirage of quicksilver. This Sanctuary is a haven for wild animals like the regal elephants and the majestic predatory Royal Bengal Tigers, etc. The Sanctuary houses numerous varieties of exotic and variegated migratory as well as domestic birds. This Sanctuary is rich in terrestrial woodland birds. Some other birds mostly commonly seen in this Sanctuary are Great Pied Hornbill, Hill Myna, Imperial Pigeon, Green Pigeon, Jungle Fowl, Pheasant, Quail, Whistling Teal, Cotton Teal, Plover, Hawk, Magpies, Parrot, and Rock Dove etc. Some rare species of orchids are also found here. Some of the mammals found in this Sanctuary are Elephants, Leopards, Tigers, Deer, Golden Langur, Hoolock Gibbons, Sambar, Gaur (Indian Bison), Porcupine, Jackal, Otter, Honey Bear etc. The Sanctuary is about 55 km away from Dimapur Airport and from Diphu it is a distance of 92 km. The best time to visit the Sanctuary in the month of November to April.

##### iv) Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary

Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary is a 6.05 sq. km Wildlife Sanctuary located in Karbi Anglong District. It was established in 1952, one of the oldest Sanctuary containing hot water spring and waterfalls. The Sanctuary is full of rare and endangered flora and fauna. The climate of this Sanctuary is moist tropical. The Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary provides habitat to a wide variety of wild animals and birds. The mammals population of the Sanctuary include the Tiger, Leopard, Clouded Leopard, Leopard Cat, Barking Deer, Sambar, Asian Elephant, Gaur, Hoolock Gibbon, Capped Langur, Indian Fox, Mongoose etc. Common reptiles in the forest include the Python, Cobra, Monitor Lizard and varieties of amphibians. The common bird species in the forest include- Red Jungle Fowl, Kaleej Pheasant, and different species of Hornbill, Green Pigeon, and Brown Fish Owl etc. The Vegetation of the Sanctuary is predominantly

tropical semi-evergreen. Trees like Holokh, Hollong, Bhelu, Nahar, Poma, Uriiyam, Hilikha etc are some of the species seen in the Sanctuary. Best time to visit this Sanctuary in the month of November to April and the distance from Diphu to this Sanctuary is 92 km.

#### **v) North Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary**

North Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary is a proposed Wildlife Sanctuary located in Karbi Anglong district is extremely important for the survival of Kaziranga National Park as it is strategically located to the south of Kaziranga National Park and provides shelter to most of the animals of the park while migrating during annual floods. The mammals found in the Sanctuary are- Tiger, Lesser Cats, Elephant, Gaur, Sambar, Bears, Barking, Hoolock Gibbon, Slow Ioris etc. The Sanctuary is 205 km away from Diphu and the best time to visits in the months of November to April.

#### **B) Natural Tourism**

There are various Natural Tourism spots in the Karbi Anglong district. This are-

##### **i) Amreng Tourist Centre**

Amreng tourist centre is located at 120 kms from Diphu; 30 kms from Lanka (Nagaon District). Amreng is a river cape situated between Kapili River and its tributary "Amreng River" surrounded by mystic blue hills and evergreen forest, it is famous for unique natural beauty. The tourist map had referred to it as Panimur, Koka hills or Amreng, all the same area. Tourist Lodge is on the river bank.

##### **ii) Khanduli Tourist Centre**

Khanduli is situated from 26 kms from Humren headquarter of West Karbi Anglong district on Jowai-Sillong road and 70 kms from Jowai Meghalaya. It is surrounded with extensive grassland with undulating moulds which looks like desert sand dunes in the clear moonlight. This location is suitable for pensive study trip, family holidays throughout the year.

##### **iii) Umwang Tourist Centre**

Umwang is temperate grassland, having characteristic similar features with Khanduli. The entire area of 35 sq. km is high table land with natural grassland more or less flat surface and surrounded by one big river and one small perennial river on three sides. It is situated at just 15 kms from Umroi Airport (Meghalaya).

##### **iv) Silbheta**

It is a favourable picnic spot located at a distance of 37 km from Diphu. The place is surrounded by rain forest. A nature built stone bridge is also there.

##### **v) Akashiganga**

Akashiganga is 65 km away from Diphu. In Akashiganga a divine stream of water flows from the high hill. In front of it there is a great Siva temple.

##### **vi) Dikrut Waterfall (Paklongkam)**

It is a famous tourism spot in Karbi Anglong District. It

is famous for waterfall located into the bosom of mountain. It is about 100 km far away from Diphu. The nearest town is Dokmoka town.

##### **vii) Kathilangso Waterfall**

It is a waterfall located in Kanthi village around 12 km from Denarong (Dengaon) at National Highway 36.

##### **viii) Longsokangthu(Siloni)**

Longsokangthu earlier known as Siloni is a picnic spot on the bank of a river, surrounded by hills and greenery.

##### **ix) Botanical Garden**

Botanical Garden is situated at a distance of 5 km from the district head quarter of Diphu town. The garden is exquisitely set combining nature conservation with the beautiful development surroundings, various rare and uncommon species can be sighted while on a stroll along its expanses. Facilities for boating are available at a semi-natural water body inside the garden.

##### **x) Educational-Cum-Recreation Park**

This park is situated in the middle of the Diphu to Manja road. This park is a projected to develop small but scientifically built Disney Land with varieties of activities. This is a small world of difference within the heart of the town open for 12 months.

#### **C) Cultural Tourism**

Taralangso is a rare spectrum of cultural centre with amphitheater and open auditorium artistically designed and blended with natural landscape and beauty. Devised for regular display of varieties of dances of all tribal communities at once place. Maintained by the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), there is regular annual cultural fete and fare, the festival is held at the every year in the month of February. The nearest town is Diphu located at a distance of 6 km.

#### **D) Adventure Tourism**

Singhason hill is the highest peak in the Karbi Anglong district. It is surrounded by rainforest, reverie, rocky hills with enchanting sight and sound. The expeditions will have additional thrill while evaluating with varieties of birds and animals including barking deer, pygmy hog, spotted deer, and varieties of monkeys, langurs, birds of unspecified and specified varieties including Himalayan Horn Bills in their natural abode. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War the British had developed the hill top into an Army Air-Strip which remains in its original form and now provides a pleasant camp site for further development. This spot is also a natural watch tower of the entire Brahmaputra Valley, the snow Cladded Himalayan ranges, the Patkai and Barail ranges as far as the eye permits.

#### **5.2 Prospects of Tourism Industry**

There is an ample scope for the development of Tourism industry in the Karbi Anglong district. Karbi Anglong district is best known for unique natural beauty with flora and fauna, pilgrim centre, tea gardens and its colorful cultural festivals. Although the whole North Eastern

region has tremendous tourist potential, the tourism industry in the area is still miles to go to exploit the proper potentialities. The tourism in Karbi Anglong District is mainly based on natural tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, ethnic cultural heritages etc. Therefore, Sanctuaries, rivers, lakes, warm water springs, forests, wild life are the principal components of tourist attraction in the district. In the Karbi Anglong district most of the people practices Jhum cultivation for their livelihood but in Jhum cultivation they are getting employed only 3 to 4 months, the remaining months of the year they are getting unemployed. But if the number of tourists visits in the Karbi Anglong district increases it will increase the employment opportunities of the local people. The whole tourism potentialities in the district can be grouped together under the following categories: (a) Wildlife Tourism (b) Natural Tourism (c) Eco-Tourism (d) Cultural Tourism (e) Adventure Tourism, which can be shown with the help of the Fig-1.

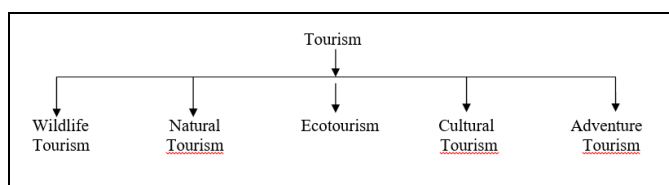


Fig 1: Tourism in Karbi Anglong

**Wildlife tourism**

An attractive feature of the Karbi Anglong forestry is its colourful wildlife. There are various type of endangered species found in the district are hollock 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 Karbi Anglong district as one of the best destination of the tourists. There are four wildlife sanctuaries and one propose wildlife sanctuaries in the district, they are East Karbi Anglong wildlife Sanctuary, Morat Longri wildlife Sanctuary, Nambor wildlife Sanctuary, Garampani wildlife Sanctuary and the proposed wildlife Sanctuary is North Karbi Anglong wildlife Sanctuary.

**Nature tourism**

Nature tourism understood in terms of wildlife sanctuaries constitutes the core of tourism in the Karbi Anglong district. The Karbi Anglong district as well as the North-Eastern region of India falls in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot. With its dense forests, uneven topography, flora and fauna, snow-clad Himalaya, Blue hills, crystal clear streams, majestic waterfalls, and wildlife sanctuaries etc. offer tremendous opportunities for development of nature tourism. Many rare species of animals & birds are found in Karbi Anglong district. From one end to the other, the district offers to the tourists so many places of natural beauty with wide variety that very few places in the world can compete with it. The tourists, both domestic and foreign, are likely to find these places attracting, provided a well-definite programme of action is evolved. An internationally reputed consultancy firm 'Cooper & Lybrand' submitted a report to the Govt. of Assam in the year 1996, which

stated that if the vast tourism potentials of NE India are fully developed within twenty years, the region will receive more tourist than the Singapore and Bangkok. Because almost all the western and Japanese tourists visiting South East Asian region would drive a few hundred kilometers more to enjoy the scenic and cultural beauties of north east region. This alone can boost the economy of entire NE.

**Eco-tourism**

Karbi Anglong district has immense scope for eco-tourism, as its scenic natural beauty and favourable climatic conditions. The district is virtually free from industrial pollution. Its green forests, blue hills, enchanting rivers are the basis on which eco-friendly tourism can be developed. In this respect, some primary infrastructural facilities as like- development of good approach road to the spots, good quality tents with provisions for food and other logistics, river cruising and water sports, bird watching towers etc. have to be developed. These facilities are likely to attract eco-tourists.

**Cultural tourism**

Karbi Anglong district is a home land of various ethnic tribes and groups, each having its own cultural heritage. As per 2001 census, there are 14 Schedule Tribe in the Karbi Anglong district. Each of these tribes possesses some unique features in its socio-cultural life including customs, religious belief, language, culture, way-of-life, festivals, food habits, songs and dances which are different from others.

**Adventure tourism**

The difficult terrains, valleys, pristine hill and forest, high current rivers etc. offers ideal opportunities to the adventure lovers to go for adventure sports, trekking, rock climbing, rafting etc. The enchanting blue hills and speedy rivers of Karbi Anglong district provide an enormous scope for the development of adventure tourism. Recently, some of the adventure sports activities like rock-climbing, trekking, Para-sailing, water sports, river rafting and angling are promoted by the Department of Tourism.

**5.3 Problems of Tourism Industry**

There are various problems for the development of Tourism industry in the Karbi anglong district. This are-

**A) Insurgency**

The problem of Insurgency has become the stumbling block in the course of development of Karbi Anglong district. Kidnapping, extortion, killing, bandh, strikes and curfew have become common problem of the district. The foreign and domestic tourists consider it risky to visit Karbi Anglong district in view of the prevailing law and order situation.

**B) Lack of Infrastructure**

To attract tourists, there must be dissemination of information, infrastructural facilities like good hotels and tourist lodges, affordable and reliable communication

network, clean and hygienic food and accommodation, availability of water sports equipment etc. Most of the places of tourist attraction are not by the side of the National Highways and approach roads are in bad condition in the district. This is a strong discouraging factor which works against a good inflow of the tourist in the district.

### C) Absence of trained Tourist guides

In the Karbi Anglong district virtually does not have any trained guides in important places of tourist attraction. Consequently, as the tourists arrive at such a place there is hardly anyone to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the tourists. The Department of Tourism initiated a programme to train tourist guides but the effort does not yield good result.

### D) Lack of Coordinated Efforts

For proper development of tourism industry, there should be proper co-ordination among the all agencies related to the industry. Special emphasis should be given on public and private partnership to tap the unexploited potential opportunities. But in the Karbi Anglong district, there is no tangible and effective coordination among the agencies associated with the tourism industry with the public

## 6. Suggestions

- a. The problem of insurgency and violent political movements which stands as the stumbling block to the development of Karbi Anglong district has to be resolved at earliest. The security scenario has to be improved to make Karbi Anglong district absolutely safe for all tourist.
- b. Government should provide the basic infrastructure facilities to develop the various tourism potential spots.
- c. Effective methodology has to be evolved and implemented to forge coordination of various departments and organizations directly and indirectly associated with tourist.

## 7. Conclusions

Tourism is a multi-dimensional activity and it covers a large number of economic activities. The spread effect of tourism therefore is much wider than any other economic activity. It not only provided employment opportunity of the people of any area or region but it also provided an ample scope for the development of that region. A study by NEDFI found that every domestic tourist creates employment for three persons and every foreign tourist seven persons. It was also estimated that every million rupees invested in tourism creates 47.9 direct jobs besides many indirect jobs. It is generally believed that tourists both domestic and foreign visit different places in search of specialities which include a variety of things such as beauties of nature, architecture, peace of mind and fulfillment in religious places, new and different variety of food, culture of the people and uncommon adventure. In the midst of so many varieties tourist make certain common demands and these are- clean, hygienic and comfortable living accommodation, good transport

system to take them from one place to another, decent shops particularly catering to ethnic art, entertainment representing cultural heritage of the place etc.

Karbi Anglong district is richly endowed by nature to become a spotlight to tourism, but mere having a good number of attractive tourist spots is not enough unless all the minimum requirements are not readily available. Thus for the development of tourism industry in the district of Karbi Anglong, there should be create a proper co-ordination between public and private organization.

## 8. References

1. Bhatia AK. Tourism Development, Principles and Practices, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1982.
2. Usha Bande. Eco-Tourism and Mountains, Yojana, 2002; 24(15):20-24.
3. Niranjana Das, Syiemlieh HJ. Ecotourism in Assam. Yojana, 2004; 8(4):29-31.
4. NEDFI Data Bank Quarterly 2005, 5.
5. Surjya Chutia. Prospects and Problems of Tourism Industry in Assam, International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology, 2015; 4(2).
6. Gourab Bera. A Brief Account of Tourism Potentiality in Shillong and Its Surrounding, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science IOSR-JHSS 2015; 20(9):29-34.
7. District Tourist officer, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
8. www.assaminfo.com
9. www.indianetzone.com
10. www.Karbianglong.gov.in
11. www.wikipedia.org