



Challenges faced by the Kaziranga National Park: As a wildlife tourist destination of Assam

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Abstract

Tourism is the world largest industry and plays a vital role in the growth of an economy. It is a smokeless industry. Its contributions are primarily related to increase foreign exchange earnings, provide employment opportunities, fair return on investment, and conservation of resources. Tourism is a major economic activity for income and employment generation and essentially a labour intensive hospitality industry. It can provide room for a large number of unemployed youths of the state. Kaziranga National Park is situated in Assam state that famous for her unique natural beauty with rich in natural resources, historical monuments, pilgrim centers, tea gardens and its colorful cultural festivals.

Keywords: growth, employment, investment, resources

1. Introduction

During the early phase of human history people move from place to place to satisfy their biological needs. Traveling, during those days was very difficult because of the obsolete transport facilities, absence of safety and coziness in route. Management of time and cost were the other major basic constraints. With passage of time people started to travelled for the purpose of trade and commerce to earn money. Later on at present people started to travel for many purposes including pleasure, recreation, medical tourism, adventure tourism etc. The officially accepted definition of tourism is "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."

It's a well-known established fact that, tourism-based activities always play a major role in an economy of any state or nation. Assam is a state with rich potential tourist resources. It is an enchanting land with exotic flora and fauna, exquisite landscape and rich folk heritage. It has also sites of archaeological remains and monuments, dating back from 7th to 17th centuries AD, which can play an important role in attracting more tourists to the state in near future. As the economy of the state is mainly agro-based, the tourism industry needs comparatively lesser quantity of import content can help in capital formation in Assam.

2. Review of Literature

1. Bhattacharya (2004) makes a pioneering attempt to depict the background, growth, states problem, and potentialities of tourism in Assam. He also attempt to identify the tourist spots and culture of the state, the profit and trend of tourist arrivals backed up by statistics and figure.
2. Anand Singh (2005) had elaborately discussed the development of tourism in India. Tourism thrives on the history of the country. In fact, tourism can't be isolated from history, in a country like India whose cultural

heritage has a wealth of attraction. Its magnificent monuments attracted a large number of visitors from all over the world.

3. Anjan Bhuyan undertakes a study on "A study on the Development of Tourism Entrepreneurship in Assam, with special reference to Accommodation Industry", for his Ph. D. degree from Tezpur University, Assam, India, 2008. This study reveals that Assam is one of the prominent states of the North Eastern region of India and enjoys a scope of destination tourist place because of its diversity and uncharted mysteries.

3. Area of the Study

Kaziranga National Park is one of the National Park among five National parks in Assam. The Park is situated in the north eastern part of the country in the two district of Assam, namely Golaghat and Nagaon surrounded by Brahmaputra River on the North and the Karbi Anglong mounts in the South with an area of approximately 430 sq kms. The park was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1940 where national park in 1974 and world Heritage site in 1985 by UNESCO for its unique natural environment. The Park is host of two third of world's population of Indian one-horned rhinoceros and also other wildlife such as Indian Elephant, Indian Bison, Swamp Deer, Hog Deer, Tiger Leopard Cats, Jungle Cats, Hoolock Gibbons, Wild Buffalo, Pythons Monitor Lizard, and endangered Ganges Dolphins etc.

4. Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data collection. To collect secondary information many organization departments are approached; some of them are Assam Tourism Development Corporation, Assam statistical handbook, Newspaper, Journal, Internet etc. to provide requisite information.

5. Objective

Objectives of the Present study are:

1. To study the growth of tourists in the Kaziranga National park.
2. To study the present problems faced by the Wildlife in the park.
3. To suggest measures for the protection of wildlife.

6. Kaziranga as a tourist destination

As a tourist destination Kaziranga National Park is top in the tourist destination of Assam. The park is easily reachable place for all tourists. The park is about 239 km away from LGBI airport in Guwahati. It has several tourist lodges and resorts for tourists. The park offers Jeep Safari and Elephant safari for the tourists to explore the park conveniently. As a wildlife tourist destination the park has attracted many tourist. Best time for visiting in the park is from mid-November to early April month. The park is generating substantial revenue for the state as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Indian and Foreign tourist to Kaziranga National Parks of Assam and revenue earned from the tourists between 2009 10 to 2014-15

Name of National Park	Year	No of visitors		Revenue (in Lakh)
		Indian	Foreign	
Kaziranga National Park	2009-10	105264	7580	121.68
	2010-11	112392	7447	136.73
	2011-12	117308	7521	149.46
	2012-13	93747	7418	205.76
	2013-14	119289	6922	268.66
	2014-15	123360	7994	294.59

Source: Economic Survey Assam 2015-16

From the table1: it is seen that Domestic tourists is higher as compare to Foreign tourists from 2009-10 to 2014-15. However overall revenue increases from Rs. 121.68 Lakh to Rs. 294.59 Lakh both from domestic and internationally for the period of 2009-10 to 2014-15. Number of tourist and revenue earnings both from Domestic and Foreign tourists is higher in Kaziranga National Park as compared to other National Parks.

7. Problems

Though the park is oldest park in Assam, the park has been facing many problems even after various govt. initiatives. Some of the major problems of the parks are:

- Poaching of wildlife, mainly world famous one horned rhinoceros is the main target of poachers in the park. In Assam since 2015 altogether 74 rhinos were killed where 40 rhinoceros were from Kaziranga National Park.
- Annual flood is another serious problem face by the wildlife in the park. Lots of animals every year have to fall victim of premature death, shortage of fodder, malnutrition, highway accidents, communication interruption, damage to infrastructure etc.
- Human interference is also a major treat for the park that leads to the illegal livestock pasturage, illegal fishing, unplanned tourism infrastructure, highway traffic and encroachment of land near the park also increases the risk of wildlife poaching.

8. Suggestions

The following suggestions are forwarded to protect the national park:

- To check poaching and other related crimes against wild animals there must be proper training for the forest guards including uses of modern weapons to consciousness to tackle the matter.
- Artificial highlands including sufficient feeds have to be raised so that during flood season animals can take natural shelter at that place.
- The encroachment of land in the park or near the park should not be allowed and immediately evicted all existed encroach household. The border area of the park must be extended beyond the park area.
- Govt. should take initiative on enough awareness about conservation of biodiversity.

9. Conclusion

One horned rhinoceros - the breath of the park is the main attraction of both domestic and international tourists. Initiatives have to take both park authority and local people for preserving the rhino and other wildlife. The park authority alone cannot preserve the wildlife local people should also be involved for saving the wildlife. If we would not be able to save the rhino and other wildlife then the existence of the park will be exhausted in near future.

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