



A study on role of tourism as a major source of income in Manipur: North East India

¹Rajkumari Jenny Devi, ²Laishram Guni Devi

Department of Economics

^{1,2} T. S. Paul Manipur Women's College, Mongshangei

Abstract : Manipur the land of natural beauty, there are so many tourist places created by nature. There are many tourist centers and sites in Manipur, These resources includes natural sites, wildlife & garden sites, cultural and historical sites, lake sites, archeological sites, dam & project sites, adventure sites and waterfall sites. In spite of these potentialities in Manipur, the handlooms and handicrafts items are sought after souvenirs for tourists. It is an indispensable aspect of the socio-economic life. There is a saying that every woman of Manipur is a born weaver. The different communities in the State have imprinted upon their handloom products, exquisite designs peculiar to their communities. Manipur pottery is crafted without a potter's wheel. It is an enthralling experience to an unbelievable range of earthenware. Beautiful pieces of art made of cane and bamboo form an important part of handicrafts. Tourists would like to take home a lifan, phak, phiruk, Manipuri Dolls and a host of other beautiful carvings from various rare and exotic varieties of timber. Here this paper shows the benefits of tourism as source of income in Manipur.

IndexTerms - Tourism, Manipur, handloom, Culture, income.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has acquired an important utmost position in the field of geographical research for bringing prosperity and sustainable of socio development in the country, India. At a global level the phenomenon of tourism since 1950 has been remarkable in terms of growth, spread and diversification, its spread not only result the globalization of people's movements as never before but also contributed in creating a vibrant industry and opportunities for millions of people. Tourism is the world's largest and fastest-growing industry (Das, 2013). Traveling and Tourism has been an integral part of Indian Culture and Tradition (Leena and Sapna, 2012). Tourism industry today is the most vibrant tertiary activity and a multibillion industry in India (Patel, 2012). Tourism is an ever expanding service industry with latent vast growth therefore, becomes one of the crucial concerns of not only the country but also of international community as a whole. For many developing countries like India, tourism has become one of the major contributors to social and economic development but it is the prime source of foreign exchange revenue.

In the country, Manipur is well-blessed state by Nature and it to be one of the richest bio-geographic areas in the world. Because of the God gifted beauties of the state many great scholars gave different names of the state "Manipur". Indian first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the Manipur as "The Land of Jewels" in the extreme north-eastern border of India (Arun's G.K., 2011). Manipur is also named as "A Little Paradise on Earth and Switzerland of India" by Lord Irwin and certain Japanese soldiers had known the name of the state as "A Flower on Lofty Heights" (Sangai Express Newspaper, 18/03/2011). Manipur has rich cultural and ethnic diversities that can easily make it a tourist destination.

The more than 33 different communities in the State have imprinted upon their handloom products, exquisite designs peculiar to their communities. Manipur pottery is crafted without a potter's wheel. It is an enthralling experience to witness the potters of Andro, Thongjao and Nungbi deftly moulding an unbelievable range of earthenware. Beautiful pieces of art made of cane and bamboo form an important part of handicrafts. Tourists would like to take home a lifan, phak (weed mat), phiruk, Manipuri Dolls and a host of other beautiful carvings from various rare and exotic varieties of timber. To the Manipuris, festivals are the symbols of their culture, social, ethnic and religious aspirations.

Tourism plays a key role in socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs, enterprises, and revenue and the Planning Commission has identified tourism as the second largest sector in the country in providing employment opportunities for low-skilled workers.

Area of Study

Manipur is one of the seven sister states of northeast India, covering a total geographic area of 22,327 Sq. KM. The state lies between latitudes 23.80°N to 25.68°N and longitudes 93.03°E to 94.78°E and shares border with Nagaland in north, Mizoram in south, Assam in west and with Myanmar in the east as well as south. An oval shaped valley is surrounded by blue green hills, rich in art and tradition with its cascading rapids, tripling rivers, varieties of flowers exotic blooms and lakes. Major communities in the region consist of the Meites, Nagas, Gorkhas, Meitei Pangals, Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups and other colorful communities which lived in complete harmony. Ecotourism in Manipur is growing day by day. The Manipur Tourism Department is taking major initiatives to develop Manipur as a prime tourist destination of north east India. The state has a strategic importance in India's Look East Policy, thereby enabling itself to become the gateway to South East Asia and subsequently an important tourist destination in future.

NEED OF THE STUDY.

Manipur is a beautiful state having various wonderful places. The Department of Manipur tourist development has many rules about tourism. It is also about uniting conservation of many types, communities and sustainable travel, and those who implement, participates in the market ecotourism activities should adopt with some principles. This can be improved when people build respect to environment and cultural awareness and provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts by generating financial benefits for both people and industry, designing, constructing and operating low- impact facilities. The rights and spiritual beliefs of outsiders in our country should be recognized and working together in partnership with them to create empowerment. This is beneficial as it can improve tourism system and conservation of environment to make a better society.

Benefits of Tourism

Manipur, the land of jewel is famous for its salubrious climate, exotic greenery, rich flora, the wildlife sanctuaries and floating Nation park of the state, the treasure houses given a huge potential economic resource for generating income in nature scenic tourist spots, rich culture and ethnic heritage because of its natural assets, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos of hosts, tourism holds high potential of the state.

Some of the benefits of tourism are

1. Economic benefit

- i. Helps to diversity the local economy, employment directly in the tourism sector and in support management sectors.
- ii. Generates foreign exchange for the country and injects capital and new money into the local economy.
- iii. Stimulates profitable domestic industries, hotels and other lodging facilities, restaurants and food services, transportation system, handicrafts and guide services.
- iv. Generates foreign employment, directly in the tourism sector and in support and resource management sectors.
- v. Improves road system and infrastructure that contributes to the entire destination can be justified and supported by the benefits from the tourism development.
- vi. Increases tax revenues from tourism.

2. Natural Environment Benefits

- i. Parks and natural preserves may be created and ecological preservation supported as a necessity for natural based tourism.
- ii. Increased awareness and concern for the environment can result from natural-based tourism activities and development.
- iii. Improved waste management can be achieved.

3. Social Benefits

- i. Enhances local community's esteem and provides an opportunity for greater understanding and communication among peoples of diverse backgrounds.
- ii. Public spaces may be developed and enhanced through tourism activity.
- iii. The quality of life of a community can be enhanced by economic diversification through tourism.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is based on secondary data collection which was obtained from the published literature, legal documents, official statistics, reports, articles, publications and other documents, reports of self-government bodies and organizations websites. The findings were discussed and analysed through the published literature and portrait in the form of maps and graphs.

Tourist attractions in Manipur

Manipur is one of the loveliest spots with her charming physical features, tradition and history. It is encircled by nine hill ranges with a small central valley. Manipur scores low in terms of security and infrastructure but has the potential to show a turnaround if proper efforts are put in this regard. In fact both the hill ranges and valley region of Manipur are the abode of Nature's Gift. The major hill ranges of Manipur have a great power of tourist's attraction with consisting of various scenic beauty of the region like blue-green mountains of high elevation viz. Tenipu (2,994m), Siroi Hill (2568m), Koubru (2561.54m); waterfalls viz. Khayang waterfall and numerous Barak waterfalls, etc. Good and mild climate of the region plays a vital factor for the fulfilment of tourist's visits. Overall the climate of these ranges is salubrious and mild ranging tropical to temperate due to of its elevation. Like the hilly region, the central valley also occupied by a lots of scenic beauty with various species of floras and faunas. The region of great potentiality of tourism with bad and dull climatic activity always discourage to tourists inflow. Then the sub-tropical monsoon climate of the valley offers made it a tourist's heaven. In the part of valley region, there are various small blue and green hill ranges and various small waterfalls viz. Nongmaijing hill, Red Hill, Twin waterfall of Nambol, Artificial waterfall of Singda dam, etc. The World's unique floating Loktak Lake and Sendra islands and Keibul Lamjao National Park plays a major role for the fulfilment of visitors. In spite of these potentialities in Manipur, the handlooms and handicrafts items are sought after souvenirs for tourists. It is an indispensable aspect of the socio-economic life. There is a saying that every woman of Manipur is a born weaver.

The more than 33 different communities in the State have imprinted upon their handloom products, exquisite designs peculiar to their communities. Manipur pottery is crafted without a potter's wheel. It is an enthralling experience to witness the potters of Andro, Thongjao and Nungbi deftly moulding an unbelievable range of earthenware. Beautiful pieces of art made of cane and bamboo form an important part of handicrafts. Tourists would like to take home a lifan, phak (weed mat), phiruk, Manipuri Dolls and a host of other beautiful carvings from various rare and exotic varieties of timber. To the Manipuris, festivals are the symbols of their culture, social, ethnic and religious aspirations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Flow of tourist in Manipur

As per new guideline issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, tourist considered are only those tourist who stayed overnight as tourist, by excluding daytime visitors. The volume of tourist's traffic and magnitude of revenue earnings in the state are presented in Table No.1 which indicates the continuous arrival of visitors from international and domestic tourists (2013-2019)

Table No.1 Progress of Tourists flow in Manipur (2013-2019)

Number of tourists flow in Manipur			
Year	Foreign	Domestic	Total
2013-14	2,588	1,43,059	1,45,647
2014-15	2,900	1,34,584	1,37,484
2015-16	3,102	1,32,013	1,35,115
2016-17	3,036	1,45,685	1,48,721
2017-18	3,787	1,64,483	1,68,270
2018-19	9,794	1,66,032	1,75,826
2019-20	12,102	1,66,839	1,78,941

*** Source: Directorate of Tourism, Manipur.

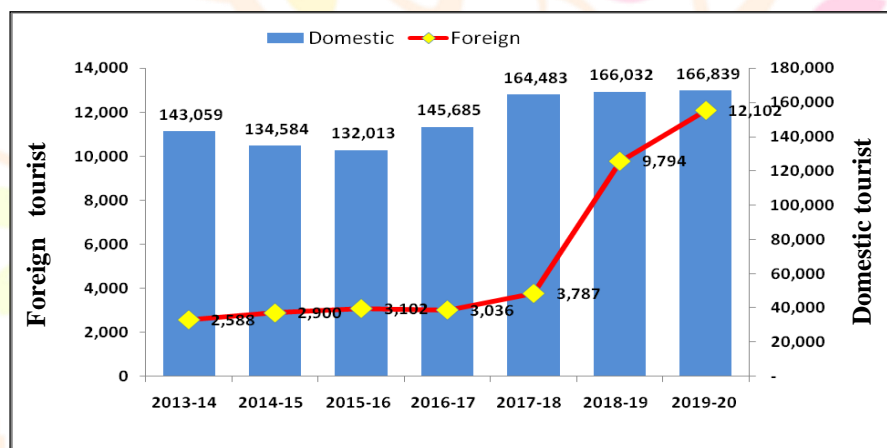


Fig No. 1: Graph of Progress of Tourists flow in Manipur

CONCLUSION

At present, Manipur has around 50 tourist spots with various historical, cultural, archaeological sites and Gifts of Nature. From the findings we know that, Manipur state holds high potential for tourism. Hilly districts like Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul, and Chandel districts and Thoubal district are having less potential for tourism. On the other hand, Imphal-West, Bishnupur and Churachandpur are grouped under the medium potentiality for tourist spots. But the trend of tourist arrivals in the state is fluctuating due to mainly of the political instability and then disturbs to travel by strikes, bandhs and blockades. This is due to mainly of the inadequate facilities of accommodation and other tourism infrastructures. Over and above of all these, tourists do not receive any helpful or welcoming attitude from the local public. They are not familiar with Hindi language because of which tourists face problem while communicating with the local people. Above all findings, the main constraints that are being discouraged the tourist's arrivals and development of tourism industry in the state can be identified are:-Lack of infrastructure, Communication bottlenecks, Geographical isolation, Political instability and insurgency, Lack of fund and Lack of a proper tourism development policy of the government etc.

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