The term 'Tourism' is a phenomenon of the 1945 period when we entered into a common usage, especially in English language. Though genesis to 'Grant Tour' was meant exclusively for affluent section of the society, the term 'Tourist' is said to have derived from the word 'Tour' that means a journey at which one returns to the starting point; a circular trip usually for pleasure or education. With the advent of industrialization, people started moving in large numbers to places away from their usual residence and work with a view to seek change. This trend continued until tourism became a great mass phenomenon which is a visible outcome of the great technological developments that have changed the social geography of the world. In the beginning, it were the railways, responsible for opening up the continents, carrying the people, material and food which made possible the formation of great nineteenth-century industrial towns and cities. Then came steamships making it possible for people to cross continents to be qualified as international travelers. It was followed by the introduction of motor car which gave great freedom of mobility to people. Finally, it was the aero plane which, when invented with rising affluence, coupled with free time and motivation, led towards an entire new era - the 'Mass Tourism' which today is one of the world's fastest growing sectors and a finest industry. It represents 6-7% of the world's economy with a global growth rate of around 50% per annum. Statistics reveal that in universe, approximately 20 crore people are engaged in this industry making it to be a highly labour-intensive business offering employment to both semi-skilled and unskilled personnel. Besides, providing employment to a large number of people, tourism can be an instrument of regional policy aimed at achieving an equitable balance between major industrial areas and rest of the country. It exercises a very healthy influence on international understanding and appreciation of other people's style of life too. As such, all these aspects become
vital in a developing country like India where this sector ranked as second largest foreign exchange earner with a growth rate of 25-30% per annum. Number of visitors to India (Inbound tourists) per year are around 28-30 lacs and number of tourists going out of India (Outbound tourists) are around 35-40 lacs. Tourists traveling within the country are estimated roughly to be 3.15 crores at present. Major contributors in inbound tourists are UK at 16.6% followed by US and Germany at 14.1% and 7.7% respectively. Thus, tourism is no doubt, an economic bonanza the overall purpose of which is usually fun, pleasure and enjoyment. However, in modern times, due to era of globalization and liberalization, new dimensions are being added to it, namely-Eco Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Wild Life Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Rural Tourism, Convention Tourism and Health Tourism and the like. This new epoch of a tourism based economy has opened up door of the landlocked Sikkim Himalaya as well along with other Northeastern states of India. Small but beautiful, Sikkim, being situated in eastern Himalaya, is spread below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world and is revered by the Sikkimese as their protective deity. Amidst the grandeur of mountain peaks, lush valleys, fast flowing rivers and hills, it offers her visitors a rare and singular experience. Within a matter of hours one can move from sub tropical heat of the lower valleys to cold of the rugged mountain slopes that reach up to an area of perpetual snow. The state is wrapped in mists and clouds with an incredible variety of orchids, rhododendrons, gladioli and a host of other flowers along with tumbling streams, torrents and monasteries. Thus, owing to its richness in resources, Sikkim is incredibly a significant part of India in so far as tourism is concerned. But what is evident is not perceived. This seems to be a case with Sikkim. From being treated as a mountainous hot spot for quite a few years, the unique tourism resources of this beautiful land have yet to be explored to the fullest extent. May be because of improper planning, dearth of scientific approach, lack of inventive promotional campaign and poor accessibility, this wonderful part could not adequately focus itself in tourism map of the country. If, even a part of those surplus tourism resources could have been
explored in an optimal manner, it would boost economy of the state tremendously and enhance overall competitiveness of its tourism activities. A few studies have been carried out on an organization level in this field. But the same proved to be inadequate to proceed with the present project which is an attempt against such a backdrop to examine the state of affairs in an evaluative perspective. Accordingly, preparing and compiling the current thesis seems to be a tricky exercise as it involves consideration of diverse issues at different levels. The very first concern has been with bringing the material up-to-date as tourism continues to mature rapidly. This, however has not necessarily meant non-consideration of previous information. Again, the aptitude and urge of the researcher for carrying out this assignment has mostly been stimulated by his magnificent exposure of visiting foreign nations as well as several striking tourism destinations in India. Consequently, it originated an idea to go ahead with the present study which covers an empirical analysis of tourism scenario with reference to the tiny state of Sikkim in eastern part of the country. The researcher considers it as a relevant theme as tourism has special significance and become backbone of the Sikkimese economy at present. It may, therefore prove to be of immense help to the tourism planners and policy makers in the state gazette. The present researcher is also privileged enough to space out few articles on his selected area of research in reputed publications and proceedings at national and international level. The responses received from the reviewers in that regard have further enriched his perception and the matters ventilated in it are duly incorporated in the present thesis.

Keeping in mind the nature of the study, a multi pronged methodology has been planned. The approach, adopted here takes the project through literature review along with a structured primary investigation and is also based on secondary information, the sources of which follow government publications/records, state tourism statistics, periodicals, reports, and relevant plan documents. Primary information is governed mostly by the questionnaires distributed amongst the respondents. Moreover, personal visit has been made to different unique tourist
spots of the state in orders to gain hands-on exposure. The research, as a whole, has not been conducted on the basis of any pre-determined hypothesis. Rather, an open mind to the possibilities of information and perspectives of the subject is ensured for data accumulation and interpretation. The key objective behind the project is to undergo an evaluative study on Tourism Industry in Sikkim in terms of few well defined criterions the fulfillment of which is spread over six individual episodes. The first chapter entitled Introduction and Overview is an enthusiastic start and spells out parameters of the study in both theoretical and practical framework. It has reviewed empirical literature on tourism in general, and Northeast India and Sikkim in particular, highlighting objectives, methodology and layout of the assignment. An outline description of the unique tourism spots of eastern paradise Sikkim and a brief about existing support in the form of infrastructure and facilities are presented in second chapter entitled Sikkim – A Himalayan Paradise. Chapter three entitled Tourism in Sikkim – An Analytical Perspective assess tourism sector in the state in an analytical perspective in the context of a sustainable tourism economy. It presents a significant interpretation of the filed observation besides performing a SWOT Analysis from diverse directions. The present constraints and impediments to growth of tourism in Sikkim and probable reforms for the same along with the hidden potentials are sketched out in fourth episode entitled Potentials, Constraints and Reforms. The action plan for tourism development and role of different stake-holders in implementing the same has been diagnosed and incorporated in fifth chapter entitled Strategy for Development. The concluding episode entitled Concluding Observations yields significant inferences emerging out of our close observations and highlights pragmatic suggestions which are implementable at various levels.

Three Appendices are affixed that include copy of Questionnaires designed for inbound tourists, accommodation units, tour operators and concerned officials as Appendix A; Abstracts of present researcher's few research-based publications as Appendix B; and a few Institutions that are directly or indirectly associated
with the process as Appendix C. Reference is appended at the end of each episode wherever necessary.

Last but not the least; as no research project is out of limitations, the same have happened with this assignment too. Further, the prevalence of equipment's devil could not be ruled out for the purpose. Nevertheless, the researcher has made all possible attempts to minimize magnitude of the errors and, single-handedly bears moral responsibility for any unattended shortcomings in accomplishment of the study.

Guwahati, Assam
June, 2009

BEDANTA BORA
No doctoral study should be considered as a singular compilation of the researcher whose name is usually apparent on title sheet of the thesis. Every compilation seems to be a co-operative outcome and unnamed contributors towards the same are legion. As such, the job of such a nature and magnitude is likely to be undoable sans seeking support and encouragement from diverse angles. Right from genesis of the very idea to work on the theme to its meaningful end, I have incurred both intellectual and moral debts to few personalities. It is indeed, an extremely pleasant privilege on my part to articulate deepest gratitude to all who were straightforwardly or in certain way associated with accomplishing this task.

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