PART - THREE
DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN MANIPUR
CHAPTER - VI

TOURISM STRATEGY FOR MANIPUR
There is unlimited potential for the development of tourism in Manipur. If properly conceived and executed such a development will prove not only financially viable but also prove to be of immense benefit to the state. Tourism is still in a discovering stage in Manipur. Many sites are still lying untapped. Not only the natural scenic and historic sites, but also a huge reservoir of traditional and cultural heritage still remains to be unearthed. Government of Manipur is fully keen to explore it all for marketing it in the hope of economic growth of the state as a whole. But the exploration work is hampered by state's socio-economic and political problems.

The national policy put forward by the government of India has been the development of tourism in the exotic states like Manipur as the key to all economic and social development in the area. It accepts the concept that economic development can be brought about only through robust tourism industry. This approach towards economic development is new in India. While some other state or region will try to reap economic prosperity through traditional industrialisation. Manipur should take steps to develop tourist industry which would be the key for all economic development of the people of the region.

Till now, we have fully explored the tourist potentials of the state in the previous chapters. It was observed that Manipur has the potential. A magical change is sweeping the state. There is a quest, like never before to turn the state into a tourist destinations.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to study the present status of tourism, to examine the problems coming in the way of development of tourism and finally to chalk out certain strategies for the development of tourism in Manipur. This chapter is based on field surveys, personal observations and secondary sources of data.

6.1 Present Status of Tourism

In Manipur, tourism was established in 1972, it was upgraded in 1973 under a separate director and it was only in 1987 that the government of
Manipur declared tourism as an industry. The tourism industry is still in infancy stage and has to go a long way. The government has taken up many development plans for tourism industry. In 2002-03, the budget allocation of the state Tourism Department was Rs. 19.1 millions.

6.1.1 Number of Tourist Sites

So far, only 29 tourist sites having some tourist amenities have been explored by the government. A perusal of Table 6.1 shows that during the years 1988 to 1996 there were 29 tourist sites. An increase in the number of tourist sites was recorded during the years 1997 to 1999. There were 31 sites. Again, a decrease was recorded and at present there are only 29 sites. This is due to coincidence of places. The sites have been further categorised on the basis of their particulars like historical sites, religious sites, scenic beauty sites hill stations, wild life centres, important towns and museums (Table 6.2, Fig. 6.1).

Table 6.1: The Number of Tourist Sites in Manipur (1988-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>From 1988 to 1996</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>From 1997 to 1999</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>From 2000 to 2002</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2003, Department of Statistics, Manipur.

6.1.2 Number of Tourists

The number of tourist visiting Manipur is very sluggish. There were only 6,000 tourists including foreigners in 1976-77 and the economic returns amounted to Rs. 6,944.30 only. In 1978-79, the number of foreign tourists increased to 108 and the revenue collected also increased to Rs. 1,92,002 (Annual Administrative Reports, 1980). In 1979-80, 3,769 tourists visited including foreigners, revenue collected was Rs. 193,189. Collection of revenue increased to Rs. 240, 935.29 in 1980-81 (Annual
### Table 6.2: Category-wise Classification of the 29 Tourist Sites of Manipur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Name of the sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.    | Historical  | 1. War cemetry (Indian and British)  
                   2. Shaheed Minar  
                   3. Langthabal  
                   4. Red hill  
                   5. Moirang and INA  
                   6. Khongjom  
                   7. ANDRO*  
                   8. Bishnupur  
                   9. Khangkhui cave |
| 2.    | Religion    | 1. Shree Govindajee Temple  
                   2. Kaina  
                   3. Koubru Lekha  
                   4. ANDRO* |
| 3.    | Scenic      | 1. Loktak lake and its isles  
                   2. Waithou lake  
                   3. Kangchup and Singda dam  
                   4. Loukoipat  
                   5. Phubala |
| 4.    | Hill Station| 1. Tengnoupal  
                   2. Ukhrul  
                   3. Tamenglong  
                   4. Mao |
| 5.    | Wild Life   | 1. Khonghampat orchidarium  
                   2. Manipur zoological garden  
                   3. Keibul Lamjao National Park |
| 6.    | Important Town| 1. Khairamband bazar  
                   2. Moreh  
                   3. Churachandpur |
| 7.    | Museum      | 1. Manipur state museum  
                   2. Andro*  
                   3. INA museum  
                   4. Sekta archaeological living museum |

**Note**: *the site which counted more than one aspect.

**Source**: Modified from a official document of Manipur state Tourism Department, 2002, Government of Manipur.
MANIPUR
Tourist Sites and Dzuko Valley

Source: Tourist Map. 2001 Directorate of Tourism. Manipur
Administrative Report, 1982). This increase in revenue collection was due to increase in amenities at the sites. Due to the increase in economic returns from tourism sector, the Government of Manipur declared Tourism as an industry in the state in 1987. Hence, construction work also accelerated. Upto 1990, the growth pace of tourist traffic had been maintained. Then, there has been lot of fluctuations (Table 6.3 and 6.4). The year 2002-2003 was considered industry to be worst year for the tourism. The arrival of foreign tourists and domestic tourist upto 31st Oct., 2002 was 94 and 51,638 respectively. The total number of tourist was 51,732 and the revenue collected was only Rs. 50,577.

6.2 Problems in the Development of Tourism

There are many problems than beauty in Manipur. Its isolation from the outside world, insurgency, political instability which is being witnessed even today, ruggedness of the topography, inaccessibility, lack of transport and infrastructured facilities and tribal population are some of the important impediments coming in the way of development. The problems are multi-dimensional. During field surveys, various opinions and feedbacks regarding the development of tourism were collected from policy makers of the state government officials, politicians, environmental activists, academicians, media persons, sports persons, social workers, businessmen and security personnel etc. The following factors have been identified as major impediments in the development of Tourism in Manipur.

1. Isolation: Manipur is a land of promise but due to its isolation from the rest of the country it has not developed. It is virtually landlocked, isolated, hill girt having a distinct entity. It consists of an oval shaped beautiful valley in the centre which is surrounded on all sides by hills. The first need is to open up this area to the rest of the country as well as to interlink the various territories within the region itself by developing efficient road network.

2. Insurgency: Due to lack of intermingling not only with the rest of country but also among different tribal groups has led to lack of national
### Table 6.3: Tourist arrivals in Manipur (Foreign and Domestic) (1988 to 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Tourists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>121,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>119,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>90,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>91,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>62,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>72,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>82,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>84,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>87,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>91,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>89,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>121,369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2003, Statistical departments, Manipur.

### Table 6.4: Percentage of Increase and Decrease of Tourists (1988-1989 to 2001-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of Tourists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1998-99-2001-02</td>
<td>75.51</td>
<td>35.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2003, Statistical departments, Manipur.
consciousness and insurgency. Many outlaw groups called insurgents operate in the state. Their anti-social activities are the main reasons for the installation of many army battalions who have occupied tourist homes. Due to insurgency in the state the number of check points have been increased which delay communication.

3. **Political Instability**: Due to instability of the Government, any developmental work or plans cannot be taken up very sincerely in any sector. Due to this, development in Tourism sector has been hampered.

4. **Law and Order**: Ban, general strikes and road blockades are very frequent in this state. This is in fact due to the consequences of general moral degradation, rampant corruption, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, student unrest etc. These social movements and unrest have hampered the growth of tourism in the state.

5. **Entry Permits**: Foreign tourists are required to obtain Restricted Area Permit from Ministry of Home Affairs or Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Moreover, Inner Line Permit (ILP) is necessary for those domestic tourists who would like to come to Manipur via Nagaland by N.H. 39. Moreover, foreigners are permitted only 10 days stay including coming and going in Manipur. They have to form a group of not less than 5 persons. This is also one of the main constraint for the foreign visitors.

6. **Rugged topography**: About 91 per cent of the total area of Manipur is hilly and is characterized by rugged topography. The tourists find the journey which passes through rugged hills long and tiresome. Construction work in such rugged topography is not only expensive but also needs a huge workforce. This is one of the reasons why, railway line is yet to touch Manipur.

7. **Transportation**: Interlinking of various parts of Manipur is essential from the point of tourism development. Internal and interstate communications are poor. Roads are bumpy and very narrow both the internal and interstate roads viz. the two National Highways, N.H. No. 39
and 53 and the internal roads. The two National Highways, which connects with the rest of country are also sometimes blocked due to landslides in monsoon season. There are no rail connections in Manipur. Rail comes up to Guwahati and from there is a National Highway and air link to Imphal. The frequency of flight is negligible and airfare is exorbitant. The problem of accessibility has been one of the main hurdles in boosting tourism activities in this part of the country.

8. **Tribal Population**: Ninety one percent of total area of Manipur is hilly. This is the home of tribal communities. Most of the communities are living in primitive life style. Any development work in hilly area needs consent of the tribal chiefs and confrontation is also sometime associated. There is always an ordeal to break ice between planners and tribal chiefs. *Jhum* cultivation is also their main economic activity. So, many pristine lush forests have been cut down for the expansion of *jhum* area causing great loss in aesthetic value of scenic beauty.

9. **People motivation**: More than 70 per cent of population lives in rural areas and they are mainly engaged in agriculture. In such condition of sedentary life, people's participation in the growth of tourism industry is far to visualize. Tourism industry needs a holistic supports from all the sides.

10. **Policy vision**: The state Government does not have any proper policy documents for tourism planning. Tourism industry in the region is directionless and hence its development activities are also sluggish.

11. **Management**: The management for the development of tourism in state departments is in the hands of bureaucrats, directors and secretaries of state tourism departments. They are civil service officers and hence they are frequently transferred from one department to another. Frequent changes of top management authorities and lack of committed leaders and work force have been one of the hindrances in the development of tourism.

12. **Information**: Information about various tourism centres and cultures is not disseminated at the right time. Use of new information technology is almost neglected.
13. **Promotion**: The effort of marketing and promotion of tourism in the state are not satisfactory. The propaganda on various occasions could not be handled effectively and hence the state does not successfully project a palatable image of the region. Tie-ups with other well established travel agents and tour operators are also lacking and hence traffic in the region is sluggish.

14. **Interstate co-ordination**: Inter state problems in the region are very prominent. No coordinating effort has been taken up to work for development and growth of tourism in Manipur. Co-ordination among various departments of the states is also lacking and as a result, holistic view in solving the problem is absent.

15. **Accommodation**: There are no five star hotels. There are some luxurious hotels at Imphal. Hotels at the tourist sites far away from the city centres like Moreh, Ukhrul, Moirang etc. are negligible. Hence, tourists may find difficulties in getting accommodation in tourist centres far from the main town.

16. **Fooding**: Lack of standard hotels in the state except in the capital and wayside amenities, good and suitable food as per tourists wishes can not be catered at all sites.

17. **Tourist guide**: It is not wrong to say that proper guide is needed for the foreign and domestic tourists who are strangers in this state. Tourist guides are available.

18. **Trained employees**: Lack of proper training facilities to the employees working in the tourism organisations is another hurdle in dealing with tourists satisfactorily. As such, it leads to sending back unsatisfied customers. Most of the people running tourism organisations take up the business not by choice. They do not have professional knowledge and expertise.

### 6.3 Strategies for the Development of Tourism in Manipur

The success of any development programme, completely depends on the efficiency and grit displayed by the government. The Ministry of
Tourism has recently rediscovered the beauty of Manipur. The untapped potential of this state should be fully utilized. The state will sell as an attractive natural and cultural destination. It is the people, their cuisine and the traditions that will attract tourists. The cultural angle will sell in the foreign markets but the state's natural beauty, salubrious climate, flora and fauna will attract the domestic tourists.

A specific development strategy has to be evolved for the tourism industry of Manipur. The focus should be on,

- the development of its infrastructural facilities like transport, accommodation etc.
- development of package programmes
- development of locales.

The first need is to open up Manipur to the rest of the country. Intermixing with different people would not only bring prosperity but will also bring peace and stability to Manipur.

The transport and communication network needs to be created and improved. Manipur suffers from poor connectivity problem not only with the other parts of the country but also within the state itself. Guwahati (Assam) is well connected by air, rail and road with different parts of the country. From Guwahati there is a national highway and air link to Imphal but no rail connections. Manipur does not have any rail routes. Imphal is well connected by air link with important centres like Shilcher, Dibrugarh, Guwahati of north-east and of country like Kolkata, Delhi etc. The frequency of these flight is negligible and the air fare is also exorbitant. For the promotion of tourism air fares should be subsidized and there should be regular flights. Recently a direct flight has been introduced from Guwahati to Bangkok to boost international tourism.

Development of transport network and transport facilities is vital for the promotion of tourism. Road connectivity with the different parts of the state is in dilapidated condition. So, priority should be given for the planning of transport network. All the places of attraction should be well
linked with good motorable roads. This will make the journey a comfortable one. Both the government and private agencies should come forward in providing transport vehicles. Buses, luxury coaches, mini buses, vans, jeeps, gypsies etc. should be made easily available on hire. Private entrepreneurs, travel agencies provide the transport vehicles while the Tourism Department should co-ordinate with the facilitating agency. The Manipur Tourism Department has already started tour programmes on every Sunday in a Tourist Delux coach for sight seeing at some selected sites in the central valley. This programme should be extended to other places of attraction.

Accommodation is another basic component of tourist strategy. Suitable accommodation facilities like hotels, dormitories, youth hostels, camping sites, tourist homes, bed and breakfast establishments, *yatris niwas*, should be constructed. Plans for the upgradation or improvement in the already existing ones should be taken up to make the place a comfortable one. Focus should be on making optimum utilization of the already existing accommodation facilities. Priority should be given for the development of wayside amenities for taking food and rest. Recently tourist homes have been constructed at Tamenglong, Jiribam, Nungba, Sendra, Phubala, Moirang, Churachandpur, Khongjom and Kaina. Construction of a tourist home at Shiroy is nearly completed. Plans should be initiated for the construction of tourist homes in other places of attraction. Recently wayside amenities have been constructed at Litan, Kangpokpi and Shanting. Two more wayside amenities are proposed to be taken up at Pallel and Khonghampat. These will provide tea, coffee and snacks. A cafetaria has been constructed at Mao gate.

For attracting tourists cafetaria and dormitories within Moreh, Sendra and Phubala have been taken up. Measures are being adopted to improve and modernize Hotel Imphal like provision of good quality food both Indian and continental, telephone facilities, delux rooms, cable T.V. system etc. Construction of *yatris niwas* at Imphal is also planned to provide accommodation, food and beverages at a reasonable cost.
The locale with its attraction and amenities is most important as these are basic to tourism. The locale may offer natural attractions like sunshine, scenic beauty, sporting facilities, the climatic conditions, the scenery and landscape are of special significance. In this context the Loktak Tourist Complex is proposed to be developed. This would include the development of Sendra, Moirang, Phubala, Keibul Lamjao and also Ningthoukhong, Loukoipat, Bishnupur, Laimatak and Manipur Mountaineering and Trekking Association (MMTA) complex. Also proposed are the development of water sports facilities like snorkelling, water skiing, surfing, yatching, boating, sailing etc. Fishing is an added attraction. This would necessitate the development of cafetaria facilities, long-huts and cottages on the Sendra Island also at Leimatak, watch tower, boat gates/jetties would add to the beauty and attraction of the place. Loktak tourist complex should be developed as a Tourist Holiday village.

Strategies should concentrate on attractions which will lure the tourists to Manipur. They would include:

(a) Culture and music
(b) Scenic beauty like flora and fauna, mountains, rivers, lakes etc.
(c) Cultural events like fairs, exhibitions, festivals and games whether it is polo or martial art or boat race.

Destinations of similar interests should be grouped together like:

(a) Ukhrul, the attraction of Siroy Lily and the trek leading upto Khangkhui caves, Khayang water fall etc..
(b) Tharon caves in Tamenglong and trekking along the Barak river and its waterfalls.
(c) Lokchao, Kwakta, Moreh leading to Tamu and various monasteries of Myanmar.
(d) The Dzko valley and Tenipu trekking routes from Mao.
(e) The Loktak tourist complex including Sendra, Thanga, Karang, Thanjing hill, Phubala etc.
Added attractions like organization of a daily cultural show giving the tourists a chance to peep into the very rich art, culture, dance, drama etc. and the development of a heritage complex complete with a light and sound show.

Destinations cannot be marketed as individual proportions. It should first of all be an upmarket strategy for high returns from the low volume of traffic. Marketing emphasis should be in the form of packages like:

(a) Adventure tourism comprising of trekking, caving, rock climbing, wild life safaris etc.

(b) Natural tourism comprising of jungle trekking, wild life safaris, visit to hills, forests, national parks, wild life sanctuaries etc.

(c) Cultural tourism comprising of visit to religious places, historical places, monasteries, tribal areas, peep into the very rich art, culture, dance, drama and festivals.

(d) Sport tourism comprising of water sports, golf, polo, martial art etc.

Strategies should be evolved to develop all these packages which will provide a lot of attraction to the tourists.

Providing all there alone would not be sufficient. Attempts should be made to upgrade these facilities and all these should be accompanied by a publicity campaign. Publicity has to be aggressive, whetting the appetite of even the most unwilling to travel. Efficient tourism marketing is one which succeeds different socio-economic structures, having different needs, tastes, attitudes, expectations and behaviour patterns. The marketing and advertising strategy should include:

(a) Printed publicity material including brochures, booklets, folders, calendars, wall posters, picture post cards, view cards etc.

(b) Advertising publicity includes preparation and insertions of advertisements in newspapers, journals etc. and organisation of quizzes and essay writing contests.
(c) Projected publicity which would mean preparing films and slides.

(d) Structural forms of publicity comprises of all publicity measures which manifest themselves in constructions and structures for example in participation in fairs and exhibitions, in the preparation of showcases and window displays, organisation of festivals-cultural adventure, sports, flowers and food festivals etc.

(e) Personal publicity in tourism has various forms of application varying from the informational and sales talk to publicity travel. Also included in this are interviews, radio broadcasts, receptions etc.

These four sections then have to be the sectors of priority for the state’s Tourism Department, in order to exploit the untapped and unlimited tourism potential of Manipur.

The entire efforts should be to provide the basic infrastructural facilities like transport, upgradation and improvement in the existing accommodation facilities and their optimum utilization especially those at Imphal, Sendra, Phubala, Moreh etc. Development of a tourist complex at Loktak lake including water sport facilities, construction of log huts and cottages, watch tower etc. All these are to be accompanied by an aggressive publicity campaign.

Modernization and development is not easy in this area. All care has to be taken in this vital and sensitive area so that modern developments are gradually assimilated without losing their identity then only tourism industry will flourish and bring development to this state.

Strategies for the development of tourism in Manipur should be evolved in such a way so that tourists coming to Manipuri should get physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated and culturally enriched on their return.