Chapter 7

Positioning Strategies for North East India
Some of the segments of tourists are having negligible or small difference between their perception on NE and preference levels in relation to the two principal factors, External Influence and Infrastructure. From the discussions in Chapter 5 few such segments can be identified. Feasibility of targeting these segments and some strategies to achieve these targets are discussed below.

7.1 Easily Accessible Segments for Positioning

The groups of tourists, which are discussed below are most easily accessible. This is because the gaps between the level of groups’ preference and perception on NE are comparatively narrow. However, in case of all the groups the levels of perception are almost always lower than their expectations in a destination.

7.1.1 Positioning Based on Age of the Tourists:

The groups “Below 25 Years” of age and “Above 50 Years” of age have been found to possess the smallest gaps among the segments based on Age. Figure 5.5 in Chapter 5 clearly depicts that these two groups are having close comprehensive scores on perception and preference. Particularly, in case of the group “Above 50 Years” of age is having very negligible gap between perception and preference for External Influence. However, the gaps for the principal factor Infrastructure is huge.

As both the groups are having low gaps for at least one principal factor (External Influence), efforts in positioning NE can be concentrated in improving the level of perception on Infrastructure. The comprehensive scores of the two targeted groups for the principal factors are redrawn in Figure 7.1.

The positioning map at Figure 7.1 clearly shows that to achieve the desired target, the perception regarding the principal factor Infrastructure must be improved. As it was derived in paragraph 4.4.2, Infrastructure includes the variables like Transport to the Destination, Transport within the Destination, Availability of Suitable Accommodation, Cost of Accommodation and
Transportation, Safety, Area of Interest, Infrastructure, Surrounding Places and Time. Improvement must be made on these variables to reduce the gaps in the values of Y-axis of the map. Since the loading are evenly distributed, improvement in only one or two variables may not provide for a significant shift of the perception. Nothing much is to be done in case of the other principal factor, External Influence.

The perceptual position of NE regarding Infrastructure is not exactly representing the facts. Therefore, a campaign to reduce the misconception about the infrastructure in NE may be launched without delay. At the same time corrective measures should be started at the product level for the variables found responsible for the misconception. Safety may be one of such variables, which needs urgent attention from the NTOs. Improvement in the law-and-order situation in NE may do wonders as far as perceptual position of NE is concerned.

Tourists at their “full nest” stage of the life cycle (usually more than 50 years of age), and the students (usually less than 25 years) may be targeted for positioning.

Effective media for communication to these groups can be identified from the findings of the study. As found in paragraph 4.6.5 of Chapter 4, one of the most influential Media Types for both the age groups is Word-of-mouth. Therefore, proper care must be taken to offer the tourists an unmatched experience at the destination. Print Publication and Electronic Media can also be used for the promotional campaign. However, as Overall Knowledge occupies the most
important role, long term measures to increase the knowledge base of the tourists about NE may also be adopted.

7.1.2 Positioning Based on Idea of Perfect Vacation:

Idea of Vacation indicates the purpose of travel of the tourist. Purpose may also indicate the underlying philosophy of travel. Therefore, Idea of Vacation may provide with the most feasible position for NE as a destination. Figure 7.2 offers the feasible alternatives with perceptual and desired positions of NE based on Idea of Vacation.

![Figure 7.2: Positioning by Idea of Perfect Vacation](image)

As seen from the Figure, three groups based on Idea of Vacation may be targeted for positioning NE. These groups are Missionary, Mass Tourist and Conservationist. Interestingly, for the groups Missionary and Mass Tourist the scores on External Influence are more in case of perceptual position than the desired position. This is very encouraging, and if proper care is taken, positioning these two groups should not be difficult. However, the situation in case of Infrastructure needs improvement and for this, campaign in media should be initiated among other measures.

The following media types may perform the task of communication to the respective groups most effectively. (*Appeared in order of effectiveness.*)
Missionary:
- Overall Knowledge
- Word-of-mouth
- Print Publication

Mass Tourist:
- Overall Knowledge
- Word-of-mouth
- Print Publication

Conservationist:
- Overall Knowledge
- Tour operator
- Print Publication
- Electronic Media

It is seen that the groups Missionary and Mass Tourist can be reached through the same kind of media, though the comparative effectiveness of these media types will be more in case of the group Mass Tourist.

7.1.3 Positioning Based on Frequency of Visit:

As derived in earlier Chapters, Frequency of Visit plays important role in determining tourists' behaviour. Therefore, the positioning alternatives on the basis of Frequency of Visit are discussed in the following section. The tentative positioning map is offered in Figure 7.3.
The perceptual position for the groups "Up to 3" and "4 to 7" are encouraging as the scores for principal factor \textit{External Influence} are higher than the desired position for the respective groups. Demarketing is not necessary at this stage, as higher perceptual scores on \textit{External Influence} may not adversely affect the overall desirability of the destination. At the same time, serious efforts must be made to improve the perception on \textit{Infrastructure}. The most influential media types to reach the desired groups are mentioned below in order of effectiveness against respective groups.

Groups with "Less than 3 Visits" and "4 to 7 Visits":
- Overall Knowledge
- Print Publication
- Word-of-mouth

Group with "8 to 12 Visits":
- Overall Knowledge
- Print Publication
- Electronic Media

Efforts for achieving the position would be more or less same for all these groups, as the distances to be covered on Y-axis are almost same in case of all the three variables. A discussion on individual vehicles of communication is offered later in this Chapter.
7.1.4 Positioning Based on Income:

Tourists are having different levels of perception and preference on the basis of their Income level. The following positioning map depicts the most feasible income groups for positioning NE.

It is seen that the income groups "Less than Rs. 5000/-", "Between Rs. 8000/- and Rs. 10000/-", "Between Rs. 10000/- and Rs. 15000/-" and "Above Rs. 15000/-" can be targeted for positioning NE as a tourist destination. In case of the group "Above Rs. 15000/-" the perceptual position (denoted by red colour) for the factor *External Influence* is higher than the preferential position. For all other groups the scores on *External Influence* are just below the preferential level. However, as usual, the scores for the other principal factor *Infrastructure* is lower than the preferential scores.

From the analyses in Chapter 4 it is found that the media types *Word-of-mouth, Electronic Media* and *Overall Knowledge* do not have significantly different effects over the income groups. Hence all these media types can be used with equal effectiveness to communicate the desired position. However, for the group "Between Rs.8000/- and Rs.10000/-" *Tour Operator* plays important role. The effectiveness of *Tour Operator* for that group is significantly higher than the other groups, particularly compared to the group "Between Rs. 10000/- and Rs. 15000/-". Hence, more emphasis should be put on *Tour Operator* for the group "Between Rs.8000/- and Rs.10000/-" while communicating the position.
It has been proved beyond doubt from the analyses at Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 that foreign tourists may be targeted by NE without much difficulty. The per capita expenditure of foreign tourists is found to be more than their domestic counterpart and thus per capita revenue from such tourists may be significantly high. As found out in paragraph 5.3.1, the gap between preference level and perception on NE of the foreign tourists is huge and hence the efforts needed to bridge the gap will also be more. This problem does not arise in case of the domestic tourists. Also, the unlimited potentials of domestic tourism in India indicate the lucrative position. The segments indicated for targeting above may also be taken up for domestic tourists also.

7.1.5 General Position for NE:

From the above discussions it is evident that NE should be positioned at the middle of both the two most important factors tourists consider while evaluating a destination. This position, which can be determined at around point-6 for Infrastructure and at about point-5 for External Influence, in the 0-9-point scale would be able to attract tourists from all the segments found feasible of targeting. This position would give NE the coverage to all the groups found to be feasible for targeting while positioning NE. The Figure 7.5 depicts the most suitable position for NE.

![Figure 7.5: General Position for NE](image-url)
7.2 Perception on Infrastructure:

It is evident that the perception of *Infrastructure* on NE is very poor for all the groups to be targeted. If the physical evidence of all the variables under principal factor *Infrastructure* is collected, it is obvious to notice that for most of the variables the situation in NE is yet to be satisfactory. The transportation front is weak, as the roads are not of national standard, basic minimum facilities in the destinations are absent and decent accommodation is scarce near the places of attraction. Even then the situation is not as bad as the tourists perceive. This brings in the lasting debate on whether infrastructure should be built first or to bring in tourists first. If the facilities are not available the tourists will have bitter experience which will further create unfavourable word-of-mouth. If infrastructures are built huge capital expenditures are to be made without any guarantee of return on investment (as the number of tourists visiting the place in future is totally uncertain). In this situation no non-governmental commercial firm would come forward to invest in the accommodation or other facility sectors.

To analyse this situation a causal loop diagram is offered in Figure 7.6, which indicates that as the inflow of tourists increases to a particular destination, facilities in the destination would improve as the market forces would start intervention automatically. This would happen due to increase in the inflow of private participation in facility building, as the investors are more or less sure about their return.

This model indicates that even without huge investment in infrastructure, growth in this sector can be obtained as the number of tourists visiting the place increases. Thus, inflow of tourists helps in building infrastructure without direct investment from the NTO or from any other sector. Therefore, the risks (and the problem of getting and motivating initial investors) associated with heavy investment may not exist in the tourism sector.

However, it must be noted that the diagram does not suggest unlimited growth in the sector as a result of operation of market forces. The negative loop
associated with the increase in tourists will start working as the tourist inflow reaches a particular level. This would result in a slowing down in the growth rate.

![Diagram](Image)

Figure 7.6: Effects of Tourists Inflow on Infrastructure

7.3 Strategies for Communication:

The most effective communication media for each group of tourists decided to be targeted are mentioned above. However, the individual vehicles of communication and their application may be different for segments. Brief suggestions are offered below on the proposed vehicles of communication in the light of the characteristics of the individual segments.

7.3.1 Media Type: Word-of-mouth

For *Word-of-mouth*, sheer experience of the visitor is responsible. And the marketer has hardly anything to do to influence *Word-of-mouth* after the visitor receives a particular experience. Level of satisfaction of a tourist is a function of his/her level of expectation and the actual experience received at the destination. It is an established fact that every
group of tourists possesses different levels of expectation from a destination. The expectation may be formed from the purpose of the visit, the level of earlier experience of the visitor, and the reference of earlier visitor or the tour operators (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

Therefore, the destination manager does not have any alternative but to study the expectation levels of the tourist segments and to offer hospitality and destination attractions accordingly. As the perception on NE for Infrastructure is low, if reasonable facilities can be offered against the variables under this principal factor, a particular level of satisfaction of the tourists may be achieved.

7.3.2 Media Type: Travel Brochure Travel brochures do play an important role in formation of initial opinion about a particular destination. The availability and the presentation of the brochure can give the distant evaluator an idea about the destination. Travel brochure may be made available in two distinct broad forms: a) in print format and b) in electronic format mainly in the Internet. Possible steps that can be taken up in this regard by the NTOs of NE are discussed below.

The establishment of a matrix type of apex organisation to handle all publicity matters of the entire NE region is the first step to be taken up in this regard. This may be in the style of Garhwal Mandal Vikash Nigam or Kumayun Mandal Vikash Nigam, with the difference being that the new organisation will work in a macro level rather than the exemplified micro organisations. All publicity to be carried out must be routed through the new organisation, which in turn would decide about the target audience and would design the campaign accordingly. For performing this responsibility the apex body should have clear-cut policy guidelines about the groups to be targeted and the theme to be promoted to such groups. Though a relationship between the response of the sample as the best fit for NE and Idea of Vacation could not be established in the study (reference paragraph 5.1.1), the best fits as shown by the respondents may be promoted without delay. Especially the first three (in order of responses) themes of Natural
Beauty, Wildlife, and Heritage Tourism should be promoted vigorously. Also niche marketing can be done for the themes Pilgrimage, and Adventure Tourism. Details of destinations to be promoted for each of the themes are discussed later in this chapter. However, Natural Beauty may be promoted as the general theme for undifferentiated promotion of NE.

The printed Travel Brochures must be made available to all middlemen operating in the tourism sector like the Tour Operators, Travel Agents including Airlines Agents, NTOs of different places – foreign and domestic, and in the Tourism Fairs. In fact, the apex body should participate in every national and international tourism fair. These Fairs can be used for niche marketing for the themes mentioned above. The tour operators from different regions (from within and outside the country-- especially from the largest tourists generating countries) should be targeted for such niche marketing of NE. The publication of these brochures must be of international standard and the layout and copy should be eye catching. The competitiveness among the destinations must be remembered while generating these brochures.

As the region is not yet frequented by tourists and thus the natural balance of the environment is not lost, unlike the crowded destinations, the Unique Selling Proposition for NE may be the Unmatched Virginity of its nature and landscape. Serenity may also be promoted along with virginity. This USP may be promoted keeping the Missionary, and Conservationist groups of tourists in mind. It is found out in paragraph 5.8.3 that the above two groups look for modest type of accommodation and other facilities. As mentioned earlier, these two groups and Mass Tourist are found to be feasible for positioning from the preference and perception analysis. As seen from Annexure X, above three groups’ levels of preference towards various raw variables under Infrastructure are lower compared to other groups, which is also reflected in the comprehensive scores for the principal factor. Hence, as suggested earlier, achieving the desired positions should not be difficult.
7.3.3 Media Type: Print Publication  Printed publicity materials play a very important role in generating influence regarding a particular destination. This also works as a free publicity material, which in turn increases the Overall Knowledge level of the tourist. As found out from the study Overall Knowledge plays the most crucial role in influencing tourists.

To gain publicity in reputed newspapers and travel related magazines, the Editors of such magazines and reputed Travel Writers should be invited to visit NE as the guests of the apex body mentioned above. The costs incurred thus should be treated as marketing expenditures. These writers should be taken into confidence and in some cases should be motivated to promote NE as a tourist destination. Any such publicity has to have trickle-down effects, which in turn would affect the Overall Knowledge and Word-of-mouth regarding NE.

7.3.3.1 Post Card as a Vehicle for Print Publication: The marketers of destinations have traditionally used Post cards as successful print publication for image building. Post Card is an art by itself and accepted by the mass without much resistance. Post Cards have been used by the tourists to signify their visit to a particular destination. However, Post Cards are easily commodified for commercial reasons by agencies other than the marketer. This helps the marketer from the point of view of saved costs, efforts and other resources. However, as these agencies are guided purely by commercial motives, commodification of Post Cards may not achieve the objectives desired by the concerned NTO. Nevertheless, independent bodies publishing Post Cards do help the destination managers in communicating the image of a destination to the tourists and prospective tourists.

As pointed out by Stefanou (2000) Post Cards can be related to the landscape of the destination in two ways.

- The Post Card chooses a landscape because it is famous.
- Landscapes are famous because Post Cards diffuse their image throughout the world.
The same author also observed that if the Post Card distribution system changes, the movement of tourists change as well, which implies that Post Cards play an important role in bringing tourists in to a particular destination. Stefanou also mentions that the buyers of the Post Cards pay special attention, during the selection process, to buy an image, which is full of references to the real characteristics of the destination as well as to its symbolic, emotional and ideological dimensions.

Post Cards do follow an evolution process, which was found in a study conducted at Greece. The landscapes that appeared in post cards in general at different phases of destination life cycle are depicted below.

Phase I: "Innocent Intents". Ancient monuments, Sea, the Sun and the Natural Beauty of Greece were depicted in the Post Cards with the intention of catching the tourists' attention.

Phase II: Neo classical buildings, Statues and small local monuments were added to the earlier themes to be depicted on the Post Cards.

Phase III: Large hotel complexes, Luxurious beaches, cosmopolitan environment appeared in the cards indicating a shift towards luxury.

Phase IV: The element of Luxury is merged with romanticism and natural beauty of the region.

Phase V: This corresponds the tourism recession phase. The motive is to sell out every theme. And in the process all the elements covered in the earlier phases were put into a single post card so that all the landscapes can be sold in the price of one post card.

The communication through Post Card for NE should be started with Innocent Intent. Till today, not a single Post Card depicting the landscape of any of the NE attractions has been published by any agency. Therefore, the apex body responsible for communication (as suggested earlier) should take up the matter immediately so that precious little can be started towards creating an image of NE. However, the landscape to be covered in the first phase of post cards should have
mass appeal and must be related to the three broad themes *Natural Beauty, Wildlife, and Heritage Tourism*.

Souvenirs depicting desired image can also be produced and marketed to the mass people. Some private agencies have been doing this on commercial basis. They are producing mementos depicting mainly the rhino and other handicrafts. NTOs’ involvement in this regard may give this the much needed direction, which may be helpful in creating a position for NE.

7.3.3.2 Special Tourism Events: Special tourism events can be used to receive free publicity among the media. If the electronic media like the TV can be associated with such events, the nature of publicity can be moulded towards intended image.

Government of Assam has been organising *Tea Tourism Festivals* since 1996 to promote tea gardens as one of the attractions in Assam. However, the event is not as successful as it should have been. Publicity in print media should also be supplemented by the electronic media to get the desired exposure among the mass outside the region.

*Brahmaputra Beach Festival* is another upcoming event being organised during winter every year. However, the exposure of this among outside tourists is still limited, as this event also is not receiving desired publicity. NTOs should actively consider ways and means to publicise the events outside the region.

*Bihu of Assam* is another festival which can be organised and promoted vigorously. Fortunately, one of the three *Bihus* is celebrated in the month of January, the peak season for tourism in the plains of NE. This festival can be organised in the ancient *Ahom* kingdom at Sivasagar. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the ruins of the palaces of *Ahom* kings are preserved in and around Sivasagar. As a part of the festival the *Rang ghar* and the *Talatal ghar* may be decorated as a palace and dramas on the royal lives be enacted there. The *Bhogali Bihu*, which is
celebrated during January 13 and 14 every year should be arranged extensively keeping the cultural conventions intact. As a part of the Bihu, various traditional games like the elephant race, buffalo fight, bird fights be arranged as done in the Ahom era in the yard of the Rang ghar. These games are arranged now-a-days also in a amateurish way. However, in the proposed festival everything must be arranged in a professional way, so that the tourists get real entertainment participating in the festival.

This festival should be given high publicity in the national and international media. If need be, advertisements can be issued in the prestigious national and international print media to gain publicity. Tour operators should also be involved in marketing this festival.

7.3.4 Media Type: Electronic TV and Radio play important roles in promoting and sustaining a particular image of a destination. The Travel programmes beamed by most of the TV channels, specially channels like Discovery and National Geographic have been taken by the viewers seriously. These TV channels have access to the international viewers also. From the survey conducted in connection with the study it has been established that the TV and Radio are more influential than Word-of-mouth, Travel Brochure, and Print Media as far as destination image building is concerned. Therefore, the producers of such programmes may be motivated to produce programmes on NE. The smaller groups like the adventure tourists may also be targeted through this type of publicity.

The same can be done in case of radio also. As the All India Radio is controlled by the Government itself, the NTOs of the region or the proposed apex body should not find it difficult to get special programmes aired for the listeners of the country. Doing so locally, which has been done intermittently within the region may not yield desired results. Widely heard international radio stations like the BBC, VOA etc. may also be approached for production of publicity materials to promote the desired position of NE.
The recent revolution in Information Technology has brought in drastic changes in the way tourists look for information regarding a destination. The Internet brings in changes in dissemination and collection of information. Therefore, maximum importance should be put on creating and maintaining NE related web sites on NE. Some independent agencies apart from the Department of Tourism of some State Governments (in NE) like the www.nerdatabank.nic.in, www.assamcompany.com, www.assam.org, www.indianvisit.com, etc. have launched portals in the Internet on the States of NE. However, in the absence of a policy document on positioning of the region, individual efforts are not yielding a definite position for the NE. The need of the hour is, therefore, to adhere to a policy statement on positioning of NE and start a comprehensive effort to launch a web site in macro level.

7.3.5 Media Type: Tour Operator As mentioned in the paragraphs above, for certain groups of tourists Tour Operator plays the most important role in influencing their behaviour. Even though Tour Operator cannot be classified as a media, they can influence the behaviour of tourists as other traditional media types. In case of tourism, tour operators are more than just middlemen, as they play important roles in creating opinion about a destination among the prospective tourists. Therefore, Tour Operator is treated as one of the traditional media types.

Apart from the local tour operators within the region, the perception levels of tour operators from outside the region on NE is hazy and therefore, one should not expect them to recommend NE for visits. The study also found out negligible instances of recommendation of NE by the tour operators.

Hundreds of tour operators are functioning in India, though only a handful of them are working at the national level. Some international tour operators are also operating in India. Large tour operators, specially the members of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and Indian Tourist Transporter Association (ITTA) may be invited to NE as guests of the destination managers, and they
should be made acquainted with the attractions of NE. They may also be offered incentives to promote the smaller destinations within NE to the tourists, based on specific micro level positioning objectives. International tour operators may also be contacted with the same purpose.

7.3.6 **Media Type: Overall Knowledge** As reported in the earlier Chapters, Overall Knowledge of the tourists plays the most important role in influencing the image of a destination. However, the overall image cannot be created overnight. This is to be built up slowly in favour of the image of the destination. The feedback the tourists receive from various sources help in building the Overall Knowledge. Therefore, the long-term promotional policies may be used to affect the knowledge level of the tourists and prospective tourists. As a destination becomes famous over the years, it goes on affecting the knowledge-base of more number of people. This in turn influences the image of the destination among the tourists.

7.4 **Details of Destinations to be Promoted for Each Theme of Positioning:**

Individual destinations may also be positioned against different segments of tourists depending upon the theme of positioning. Some such destinations are matched against the five themes of positioning proposed to be promoted.

7.4.1 **Natural Beauty:** As discussed in Chapter 2, whole of NE is endowed with unmatched natural beauty. Some of the destinations within NE are mentioned below as examples with their different promotable USPs and possible competitions.

a) Tawang: **USP:** Himalayan Tourism with Tibetan connections. Snow and trekking. **Virginity** of the environment.

**Competition:** Destinations in Himachal Pradesh, (particularly from Manali), Kashmir (particularly from Leh and Ladakh), Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh, and Sikkim.
b) **Shillong**: *USP*: Hill resort with Cherrapunjee nearby. Virginity in the environment with unexplored limestone caves and waterfalls. *Competition*: From Shimla, Ooty etc. But none of these destinations is bestowed with so many exciting options of nearby attractions.

c) **Ukhrul**: *USP*: Hill station full of unexplored hills nearby full of *Siroi* Lily. Surrounded by *Khangkhui* Cave, Zailad Lakes and Barak Waterfalls. *Competition*: Same as Shillong

### 7.4.2 Wildlife

Individual destinations of NE offer tremendous opportunities for the tourists looking for exotic flora and fauna. Some such destinations promotable on the basis of wildlife are mentioned below with their possible USPs. It should be noted that these mentions are made only as examples, and therefore, these are not exhaustive. NE itself can be promoted as one of the world’s 16 most bio-diverse places, which is bound to attract lot of wildlife enthusiastic.

a) **Kaziranga**: *USP*: Only place in the world where Asiatic one-horned rhinos can be spotted in abundance. *Competition*: None

b) **Manas**: *USP*: Only Tiger project in NE *Competition*: Sunderban, Corbet National Park etc.

c) **Tipi**: *USP*: Orchid garden with more than 500 species

### 7.4.3 Heritage Tourism

Many destinations, which can be promoted as heritage sites, including famous pilgrimage sites are in NE. Some examples of positioning such sites are mentioned below.

a) **Majuli**: *USP*: Largest river island in the world, full of 15th century Vaisnavite culture. Declared World Heritage Site.

b) **Kamalsagar and Neermahal**: *USP*: 15th century architecture.

c) **Tourist Village Complex**, Nagaland: *USP*: Naga Tribal Culture.

d) **Ruins of Medieval Kachari Kingdom**: *USP*: Palace of 13th century.

e) **Moirang**: One of the main centres of Meitei folk culture.
7.4.4 **Adventure Tourism:** NE is full of spots where adventure tourism can also be promoted. Some of them are mentioned below.

   a) **Tawang:** Skiing, trekking and hand gliding.
   b) **Shillong:** Exploration of Caves and trekking.
   c) **Stillwell Road:** Exploration of the ancient road connecting India and Myanmar, developed during the world war II may be promoted for adventure tourism.

7.4.5 **Pilgrimage:** NE is also full of Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Some of the most promising ones are mentioned below.

   a) **Tripura Sundari Temple:** *USP.* Built in 1501 AD. It is regarded as one of the 51 Piths of Hindu pilgrimage.
   b) **Kamakhya:** *USP.* Legendary Hindu Temple
   c) **Parasuram Kund:** A sacred shrine for Hindus.
   d) **Gompa of Tawang:** Buddhist Monastery

7.5 **Tourist Circuits:** Few travel circuits within NE may be developed to cover the spots for individual themes. Some such circuits are mentioned below.

**National Circuits:**

   a) Guwahati——Kaziranga———Majuli——Sivasagar———
   Tezpur———Tipi———Tawang———Guwahati
   [Themes: *Wildlife, Heritage, Adventure and Natural Beauty*]
   *Restrictions:* Inner Line Permit to visit Tawang. Restricted area Permit for foreign tourists (in a group of 4 or more) for Tawang.

   b) Calcutta——Tezpur———Tawang———Kaziranga———Jorhat———
   Majuli——Guwahati———Calcutta
   [Themes: *Wildlife, Heritage, Adventure and Natural Beauty*]
   *Restrictions:* Inner Line Permit to visit Tawang. Restricted Area Permit for foreign tourists in a group of 4 or more for Tawang.
c) Calcutta--Guwahati—Shillong—Cherrapunjee—Shillong—Silchar—Calcutta
[Themes: Natural Beauty and Adventure]
Restrictions: None

d) Calcutta—Silchar—Agartala—Silchar—Aizwal—Silchar—Shillong—Guwahati—Calcutta
[Themes: Natural Beauty and Heritage]
Restrictions: Inner Line Permit for domestic tourists and Restricted Area Permit for foreign tourists in a group of 4 or more to visit Aizwal.

d) Guwahati—Kaziranga—Dimapur—Imphal—Guwahati
[Themes: Natural Beauty, Wildlife and Heritage]
Restrictions: Inner Line Permit for domestic tourists and Restricted Area Permit for foreign tourists in a group of 4 or more to visit Dimapur and Imphal.

f) Guwahati—Kaziranga—Sibasagar—Digboi—Guwahati
[Themes: Natural Beauty, Wildlife and Heritage]
Restrictions: None

International Circuits:

If NE can be linked with the neighbouring countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh, the gateway to the world tourists will be opened for NE. Specially, the tourists from Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand can visit India through the proposed international airport in Guwahati. Three international circuits are suggested so that the foreign tourists may find it easier to visit NE. The States included in the circuits do not need Restricted Area Permit (RAP) for the foreign nationals. Visa Rules, however, are applicable to all foreign nationals.
As discussed in this Chapter, efforts should be concentrated primarily on Promotion. While another important element of marketing mix, Product (the destination) may also be given importance. However, at this stage of marketing NE, other elements of the mix do not warrant urgent attention except in a piecemeal manner. It must be recognised that efforts for improvement of the product should receive due importance in promotion and vice versa. If products are not presented and promoted properly to the market, the desired stimulation in demand may not be achieved.


Results of exploratory study conducted by the students of the Department of Business Administration, Tezpur University, 1998.
Figure 7.7: National Tourist Circuits Proposed for NE