CHAPTER-2

Kids wearing Bihu dress
Source: The Telegraph

TOURISM AND NORTH EAST INDIA-POTENTIAL UNLIMITED
India is land of contrasts where rural tranquility rubs shoulders with metropolitan bustle, austerity with pomp and show and pageantry with simplicity.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

2.0 Introduction:

India is a land of contrast from tropics to snow. It is a vast, varied and strikingly beautiful. It is the second most populous and 7th largest country in the world. Lying entirely in the northern hemisphere, it covers an area of 32,87,590 sq. km. The much vast and far more varying landscape of India, stretching spatially 8°4" to 37°6" north latitudes and 68°7" to 97°25" longitude, and spanning 5,000 years of history has much to offer to the tourists’ world. It measures about 3,214 kms from North to South between the extreme latitudes and about 2,933 kms from East to West between extreme longitudes. It has a land frontier of 15,200 kms and a coastal line of 6,100 km (Singh, 2000). The population size of India is estimated to be 1.12 billion in 2007 and is expected to be most populous country by 2040. 70 % of Indian people reside in rural area. Indian economy has grown steadily over the last two decades. With the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 9.4 percent in 2006-07, the Indian economy is among the fastest growing in the world (Wikipedia, 2007). The labour force of the country is estimated to be 509.3 million, out of it 60% is employed in Agriculture and related sectors, 28% is employed in Service and related sector and 12% is employed in Industry.

India is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia. Bounded by the Himalayan range in the north and surrounded three side by sea, the country offers a wide array of places to see and things to do. India being a vast and diverse country has many things to offer to everyone. Some of the most attractive resources of the country include its beautiful ancient monuments, the beat and rhythm of its folk and classical dances, snowcapped mountains tops, beautiful beaches in its entire coastline, the world famous Taj Mahal, the curved Temples of Khajuraho of Orissa, the Dravidian temples of south, frescoes of Ajanta and Ellora, white water rafting on the Ganges, trekking in the Himalayans and the rich bio-diversity, particularly of the North East India. The biodiversity of India is one of the richest in the world. “India harbours some 47,000 wild species of plants and over 81,000 wild species of animals, that is, about 8 percent of the
world's known wildlife” (Dey & Dey, 2003). Above all of these, its well charming fascinated variety of people makes the country a paradox for discerning tourists. India is a melting pot of variegated cultural mosaic of people and races extending over thousands of years. Indeed the country is a virtual paradise for travellers, searching for continuous joy in pilgrimage, adventure, culture, nature, heritage, wildlife and many more. It has rich resources with sufficient enough to attract domestic and foreign tourists in large numbers. In fact, only few other countries in the world offer such a wide variety of sights, landscapes, cultures or heritage. The WTO has recommended the country by saying “India has possibly more to offer the tourists than perhaps any other country in the world. The most important motivation of visitors to India has been to see a country with an ancient civilization rich in monuments, temples, arts and culture. Its’ main attraction seems to be its culture, even though the country’s natural resources, encompassing all types of nature, provide an excellent setting for any type of tourism.”(As cited by Bezbaruah) India offers the inbound tourists another considerable attraction, namely, favourable rate of exchange. A trip to India is less expensive than to many other destinations. Besides, the tourism industry of India has become highly significant by rich cultural tradition of the country. ‘Atithi Devo Bhaba’( Guest is God), ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ (World is one), ‘Welcome a tourist and send back a friend’ etc., represent the rich social and cultural behaviour of the Indian people.

As a cultural and religious centre India has attracted tourists from earliest times. The wealth of Indian wisdom and philosophy attracted Hieuen Tsang, It Singh, Fa Hien and other scholars from different parts of the world.

2.1 Tourism and India:

Since the eighties of last century, tourism has remained to be a priority sector in India. The tourism policy is in force since 1982. However, inspite of varied attractive resources of the country many prospective visitors bypass India. Though travel and tourism constitute the largest industry in the world today, India seems to be falling off the global tourism map. Its rank in global tourism has now dropped to 31 in the year 2000 from 17 in six years ago.
For a country of India's size and variety with its beaches, hill resorts, historical monuments, temples and religious centers, this share is negligible. Govt. of India recognized tourism as an industry in 1986 and declared a priority sector for foreign investment in July 1991. In May 1992, a national plan for tourism development was drawn up incorporating a set of strategies for achieving a quantum jump in tourist arrivals, forex earnings and employment generation. Subsequently, the state governments were also instructed to prepare master plans for the development of tourism. Ironically, the growth of tourism actually suffered a setback in 1993. Even the smart recovery seen in 1995 proved short lived. Tourist arrivals declined in subsequent years. Against the target of five million tourists by end of 2000, the actual arrivals may not exceed even half of that number (2.65 million). This is in spite of the fact that the Government has formally declared the year 2000 as 'Explore India Millennium Year'. Further, the performance of tourism industry for the year 2001 and 2002 remained dismay for India tourism. The table 2.0 shows the tourists arrival in India in last few years. It is reflected by the fact that foreign tourist arrivals declined by 1.2 % and 6.0% respectively in the year 2001 and 2002 respectively. This is though to be direct result of the 7/11 in the United State. However, the situation reversed and become favourable with the beginning of the year 2003. Foreign tourist's arrival to India increased by 14.8 percent by the year 2003. The increasing trend was also seen in the year 2004 & 2005.

The fact is that tourism in India is still in infant position. The share of India tourism to the global tourism is too small. It is estimated that the share of India in tourism receipt to global tourism receipt is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals (In Million)</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>+7.7</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>+5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2.73</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>+23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>+13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.incredibleindia.org
below 1 percent. In 2005 the global tourism receipt was estimated at US $ 682 billion. But tourism receipt in India in that year (2005) was only US $ 5.7 billion (0.49 %).

It is realised that the tourism resources in India can be regarded as an instrument of employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development, apart from earning foreign exchange for the country. The World Travel and Tourism Council have predicted that Indian tourism will contribute 12 per cent of the country's total exports and 6.6 per cent of the economy's GDP by the year 2010 (Businessline, 2000).

Proper planning, direction and a better co-ordination between different agencies and authorities may be helpful in deriving maximum benefit from the tourism industry.

2.2 North East India and Tourist Arrivals:

There are ample resources in the North East sufficient to attract the attention of tourists. NEDFi, the premier financial institution of the region briefed up the beauty of the North East India as 'North-East part of India is almost another world. It is a place of magical beauty and bewilderling diversity. A land nestled in myths and mysteries, lore and legends and in many tender dreams. A land where summer rains drench the hills meeting the misty plains, where exotic wildlife haunts the jungles, where the mighty river like Brahmaputra flows and where the trains whistle into dark tunnels only to open out to breathtaking landscapes. With more than a hundred and fifty tribes speaking as many languages, this region is a melting pot of variegated cultural mosaic of people and races, an ethnic tapestry of many hues and shades. The folk culture is still vital in this region. The primitive culture now co-exists with the modern and post-modern lifestyle. Well integrated with life and nature, the folk artworks have a common element of tune and tone. Indeed it's a virtual paradise for travelers, searching for continuous joy in Pilgrimage, Adventure, Culture, Nature, Heritage, Wildlife, Golf, and Polo and many more. All these make a rich panorama. It's a land in the twilight of imagination and reality. It's a tourists' delight, anyway.'

Tourists are normally divided into two obvious categories of Domestic and Foreign tourists. This division helps the tourism promoters to find out avenues for
attracting tourists in adequate numbers. It is seen that the number of domestic and foreign tourist visiting the North East India has been increasing over the years.

Table 2.1: State-wise Tourists Arrival Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2195</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2318</td>
<td>-116.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4740</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>5009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3005</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>3294</td>
<td>-34.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>215675</td>
<td>6610</td>
<td>216325</td>
<td>-116.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2288093</td>
<td>7285</td>
<td>226093</td>
<td>+6.15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2467652</td>
<td>10782</td>
<td>257547</td>
<td>+7.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>92923</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>93180</td>
<td>+0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>93476</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>93725</td>
<td>+0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>94299</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>94615</td>
<td>+0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>371953</td>
<td>6304</td>
<td>378257</td>
<td>+15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>433495</td>
<td>12407</td>
<td>445902</td>
<td>+15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>5099</td>
<td>381000</td>
<td>-14.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>35129</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>35408</td>
<td>+9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>38598</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>38924</td>
<td>+15.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>44715</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>44988</td>
<td>+15.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5605</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>6348</td>
<td>-75.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>1084</td>
<td>11140</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17470</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>18353</td>
<td>-17.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>257331</td>
<td>3196</td>
<td>260527</td>
<td>+1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>3171</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>216330</td>
<td>2677</td>
<td>219007</td>
<td>-17.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The figure released by Govt. of India, Ministry of Tourism shows a steady increase in the tourist arrivals to this part of India. According to figures available in the official web-site, a total of 35,07,958 domestic and foreign tourists visited the North East India in the year 2005. Tourist arrivals in 2005 registered an increase of 3.2 percent over the previous year. The state-wise breakup shows an uneven increase in the number of tourist arrivals. The number of tourist arrivals in three states of the region during the same period is seen to be fall. The number of tourist arrivals in the state Arunachal Pradesh declined drastically in the year 2005. In the year 2004, the state witnessed an increase of 116.09 percent of tourist arrivals over the previous year. However, the number of tourist arrivals...
has decreased by 34.29 percent in the year 2005. The next state registering decline in the
number of tourists flow in the 2005 is Tripura. The number of tourists flow to this state is
decreased by 17.07 percent over the previous year. Another state to which tourist arrival
has decreased in the year 2005 is Meghalaya. The number of tourist arrivals to this state
is decrease by 14.56.

On the other side, four states registered an increase in the number of tourist
arrivals. These states are Assam (+7.97%), Manipur (+0.94%), Mizoram (+15.58), and
Nagaland (+67.74%). It is seen from the figures in the brackets that the increase in the
number of tourist arrivals to Nagaland is very encouraging. The state-wise break up of
tourist arrivals in other North Eastern India are reproduced in the Table 2.1.

It is seen that tourist flow to this region has been increasing year by year.
However, the matter of dismay is that compared to national average the proportion of
tourist flow to this region of India is very negligible. In the year 2005, 3.92 million
Foreign tourists visited India and as against to this only 20,319 tourists visited the N.E
India. The state wise breakup of foreign tourists shows that 10,782 tourist visited Assam,
289 visited Arunachal Pradesh, 316 tourists Manipur, 5099 visited Meghalaya, 273
visited Mizoram, 883 tourists visited Nagaland and 2677 visited the state Tripura in 2005.
The statistics also show that tourist flow to the states Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and
Meghalaya has declined.

2.3 **North East India-A Paradise Unexplored:**

The North East India constitutes seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam,
Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The economy of
Northeast India has got its definite identity due to its peculiar physical, economic and
socio-cultural characteristics. It covers a geographical area of 2,55,095 sq. km(except
Sikkim). Geographically the region lies between 89°46' E and 97°30' E longitudes and
21°57' N and 29°30’ N latitudes. The region is surrounded by the international
boundaries. The countries surrounding the region include: Myanmar in the East; China
in the North; Bhutan in the North-west and Bangladesh in the South-west. The western
side of the North East India is connected to the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent by
a narrow land corridor, sometimes referred to as the Siliguri Neck or ‘Chicken's Neck'.
The corridor is a narrow strip of land with the width of 33 km only. Thus, the region geographically shares 98 percent of its border with four neighbouring countries. As per 2001 census the total population of the region stood around 3,84,95,107 (except Sikkim). The lives of the people have been shaped by the major rivers like the Brahmaputra and the Barak, its ancient mountains and the thick tracts of impenetrable jungle. Topographically the region is a mixture of hills and plains. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland are almost entirely hilly, eighty percent of Assam is plain and Manipur and Tripura have both plain areas and hilly tracks. The physical features of the region are characterized by the lofty mountainous terrains and moderately high hill interspersed with plateaus and river-fed valleys. About 54% of the total geographical area of the North Eastern Region is covered by forests although there are inter-state variations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
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<td>864558</td>
<td>1091117</td>
<td>26.21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
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<td>22414322</td>
<td>26638407</td>
<td>18.85</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>22327</td>
<td>1837149</td>
<td>2388634</td>
<td>30.02</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>22429</td>
<td>1774776</td>
<td>2306069</td>
<td>29.94</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>21087</td>
<td>689756</td>
<td>891058</td>
<td>29.18</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>16579</td>
<td>1209546</td>
<td>1988636</td>
<td>64.41</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>7096</td>
<td>406457</td>
<td>540493</td>
<td>32.98</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
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<td>2757205</td>
<td>3191186</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>255095</td>
<td>31547314</td>
<td>38495107</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Except Sikkim

The percentage of forest area is highest in Mizoram (75.59%) and lowest in Assam (39.15%). The percentage of forest area in other North East India is: in Arunachal Pradesh 61.55%, Manipur 67.87%, Tripura 60.00%, Nagaland 52.02%, and in Meghalaya 42.34% (NER data bank).

It is the homeland of a rich variety of ethnic communities. Each community has very special feature distinct from the other. The distinctive cultural resources of each community produce a juxtaposition of racial, linguistic, and cultural varieties. Apart from the well known temples and shrines the region is fortunate to have a number of...
magnificent places of scenic beauty, a wide variety of flora & fauna and avian bio-
diversity with potential to attract domestic and foreign tourists in large numbers.

The region is characterized by inequality in altitude coupled with abundance of
rainfall. This has eventually given birth to variation in climatic conditions within the
region. The rainy season of the region is March to October (middle). The principal crop
of the region is Rice and the major plantation is Tea.

The region is melting pot of the population belonging to different Religions
commonly including Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, and Sikhism.
The largest (area wise) state of the region is Arunachal Pradesh while the smallest one is
Tripura. In terms of population, the largest state is Assam and the smallest state one is
Mizoram. The major spoken languages of the region are Assamese, Bengali, English,
Garo, Hindi, Bodo, Khasi, Jaintia, Mizo, Manipuri, Nagamese, Nepali, etc. Thus, the
amazing diversity of the region makes it a holiday-destination for all seasons. A brief
description is given below about the North East India and available tourism resources.

2.3.1 Arunachal Pradesh: Arunachal Pradesh lies between 97° 30' E and 97°30'
longitudes and 26°28' N and 29°30' latitudes. Area wise, it is the largest (83,743 sq km)
state in the entire North East India. Earlier it was known as the North Eastern Frontier
Agency (NEFA).The total population of the state is 10,91,117 and the rate of literacy of
the state is 54.74 percent (as per 2001 census). It received the present status of statehood
on 20th Feb, 1987. The state shares borderlines with Myanmar in the East, Bhutan in the
West, China in the North and the states of Nagaland and Assam in the South. The official
language of the state is English. The major crops grown in the state are the Rice, Wheat,
Millet, Pulses, Sugarcane, and Maize while the major plantation is Rubber and Tea. The
maximum and minimum temperature of the state varies between 40°C and 5 °C. The
state is unique from mythological point of view. It is believed that Beda Vyasa
meditated here. The remains of the bricks structure in the northern hills of Roing is
believed to be the palace of Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna. The sixth Dalai Lama
was also born on the soil of this State. Arunachal Pradesh is also known as the land of the
rising sun. Almost 80 percent of the state is under forest cover which is enriched with
amazing plethora of flora and fauna making it one of the World's 17 bio-diversity
heritage site (ITDC, 2003). The state is blazed with its natural beauty, tribal culture, craft traditions and splendid wildlife. Thus, the state is a unique holiday destination for visitors.

2.3.2 Assam: Assam is the heartland of Northeast India. It lies between $89^\circ 49'$ E and $97^\circ 26'$ E longitudes and between $24^\circ 10'$ N and $27^\circ 58'$ N latitudes. The area of Assam is 78,438 sq.km and its total population stood at 2,66,38,407 as per 2001 census. The rate of literacy of the state is 64.28 percent (as per 2001 census). The average maximum and minimum temperature of the state is $33^\circ$ C and $6^\circ$ C respectively. The official language of the state is Assamese. The major crops grown in the state are Rice, Wheat, Jute, Coconut, Sugarcane, Cotton, etc while the major plantation are Rubber, Coffee and Tea. The state is the highest timber producer of the country and also crowned with producing over half of India's tea. Asia's first and India's oldest oil refinery is also located in this state. Nestled with scenic beauty, enchanting hills and the alluvial plains, the state enjoys an abundance of natural riches. Its rich bio-diversity supports an immense range of rare and endangered flora and fauna. In addition, she is also endowed with many places of religious and historical importance. Assam with its diverse ethnic and cultural streams is a repository of amazing wealth of noble tradition.

2.3.3 Manipur: Literally "Manipur" means 'A jeweled land'. The state is described as the 'Jewel of India'. It lies south of Nagaland and North of Mizoram between $93^\circ 03'$ E and $94^\circ 78'$ E longitudes and $23^\circ 80'$ N and $25^\circ 68'$ N latitudes. Its geographical area is 22,327 sq.km and total population is recorded as 23,88,634 as per 2001. It received the status of statehood on 21st Jan, 1972. The rate of literacy of the state is 68.87 percent as per 2001 census. The average maximum and minimum temperature of the state is $36^\circ$ C and $1^\circ$ C respectively. The official language of the state is Manipuri. The major crops grown in the state are the Rice, Wheat, Oil seeds, Maize etc while the major plantation is Rubber and Coffee. It shares the international boundary with Myanmar in the Western and Southern side. Manipur is a mosaic of traditions and cultural patterns, myth and legends, martial art and indigenous games. Almost 70 percent of the land of the state is under forest cover sustaining a host of rare animal life including
the dancing deer, the snow leopard & world’s rarest orchids and endemic plant. She is also reputed for the tradition of skilful weaving art done by the women.

2.3.4 Meghalaya: Geographically the state lies between 89°49’ E and 92°52’ E longitudes and between 20°01’ N and 26°05’ N latitude. The state is spread with an area of 22,429 sq km. The total population of the state is 23,06,069 and the rate of literacy of the state is 66.14 percent as per 2001 census. The average maximum and minimum temperature of the state is 28° C and 2 ° C respectively. The Sanskrit word ‘Meghalaya’ means the ‘Abode of Clouds’. Since the areas were proverbially associated with clouds and rain, the word Meghalaya was adopted for naming the state. True to its name, from late April to September rain bearing clouds envelop the land. The hilltops are generally covered by dense but beautiful clouds making them almost inseparable and indistinguishable; clouds from a veritable part of Meghalaya befitting the poetic name of the state. She is also endowed with the world’s highest rainfall site ‘Mawsynram’. Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya is known as the ‘Scotland of the East’. The state had received the present status of statehood on 21st Jan.1972. The official language of the state is English. The major crops grown in the state are the Sunflower, Soya bean, Groundnut, Maize, Jute, etc while the major plantation is Cashew nut and Orange. She is known for a wide variety of orchids, scenic beauty, caves, and also wildlife.

2.3.5 Mizoram: The state Mizoram lies between 92°15’ E’ and 93°29’ E longitudes and between 21°58’ N and 24°35’ N latitudes. The state is spread with an area of 21,087 sq. km. The total population of the state is 8,91,058 as per 2001 census. The rate of literacy is 68.5 percent as per 2001 census which is the highest within the region and second within the country after the state Kerela which has the register record of having a literacy rate of 90.92 percent. Mizoram received the status of statehood on 20th Feb, 1987. The word ‘Mizo’ is used to mean hill men or highlanders. Thus, ‘Mizoram’ is a collective name given by their neighbours to a number of tribes which settled in the areas. The official language of the state is Mizo and English. The major crops grown in the state are Rice, Sugarcane, Maize, Tapioca, Cotton, etc. while the major plantation is Rubber and Orange. The average maximum and minimum temperature of the state is 30°
C and 11° C respectively. It is predominantly a Christian populated state. Mizoram is a sylvan and scenic land where clumps of bamboo flower grow periodically. She has great natural beauty and endless variety of landscape and is very rich in flora and fauna. The State has also thick bamboo forests. With its galaxy of festivals and dances, natural beauty and ancient traditions, the state is perfect destination for the discerning visitor.

2.3.6 Nagaland: Nagaland is one of the amazingly beautiful states of Indian union. It is predominantly a tribal state with a geographical coverage of 16,579 sq km. It lies between 93°20’ E and 95°15’ E longitudes and 25°06’ N and 27°04’ N latitudes. The total population of the state is 19,88,636 and the rate of literacy is 67.11 percent as per 2001 census. It received the state status on 1st Dec, 1963. The average maximum and minimum temperature of the state is 35° C and 7° C respectively. The official language of the state is English. The major crops grown are the Rice, Wheat, Cotton, Grams, Mustard, Maize, etc while the major plantations are Rubber, Coffee and Tea. She is bound by Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Assam in the North; Manipur in the South; Myanmar (Burma) on the East and Assam in the West. There are 16 major tribes along with other sub-tribes inhabiting in the State. Each of the tribes has their own languages, customs and traditions and they can easily be distinguished by their colourful dresses, ornaments and beads that they wear. The traditional ceremonial attire of each tribe is also very colourful and attractive. The state is known for its song and music, where one can hear not only folk songs but also the gospel songs and modern tunes. The humbleness and simplicity of the tribes add a grace to the musical beauty. Its blue-hued mountains and emerald expanses comprise an intriguing world of ancient rituals. High mountains, slushy grassy plains, meandering streams, majestic rivers, rarest variety of flora and fauna, natural resources are the most enchanting features of the state. The state is also known as the 'Switzerland of the East' amongst local people.

2.3.7 Tripura: Tripura is the smallest state of North East India. It lies between 90°09 E’ and 92°10 E’ longitudes and 22°56’ N and 24°32’ N latitudes. Area wise the state is spread with 10492 sq.km, and the total population of the state is 31,91,186 as per 2001 census. The literacy rate of the state was found 73.66 % in 2001 census. It received the
status of statehood on 21st Jan. 1972. The official language of the state is Bengali & Kokborak. The major crops grown in the state are the Jute, Sugarcane, Cotton, Mestas etc. while the major plantation are Rubber, Coffee and Tea. The state is largely inhabited by the Tripuris, Bengalis, Manipuris and few tribes. Tripura's tribal and non-tribal cultural blend magnificently has mingled into a single whole giving birth to a unique cultural genre. Its verdant expanses and rich forestlands offering plethora of delightful attractions of historical places, rock cut carvings, stone sculptures, wild life sanctuaries and tribal people, have been a great attraction for visitors. Thus its vast tracts of natural beauty, ancient temples, cross cultural ethnic diversity and its rich tradition of handicrafts serve as driving force to draw attention of discerning visitor.

2.4 Tourism Resources and North East India:

Tourism resources come in all shapes and sizes, and most features of an area can be considered as part of the overall tourism resource base of a destination. They include elements of the natural and man-made environment, festivals and events, activities, purpose build facilities, hospitality and transport services etc. Some of the resources are described below:

2.4.1 Flore and Fauna: These include aspects of land and landscape such as mountain or other geographical phenomena, wildlife species, birds or rear plants and water features such as a lakes, rivers or waterfalls. India's North-East is known for its biographic richness. Dense forests, uneven topography, numerous flora and fauna, the majestic rivers and its tributaries, wild life sanctuaries, and many are species of animals etc., attract attention of the visitor from all over the world. This region’s virgin forest and untouched rain forests is the habitat of a great veracity of plant, animal and birds. Some of species found in this region are endangered or rarely seen elsewhere in the world. Certain much endangered bird species of the region include the White winged wood duck, sclater monal, temminck's tragopan, Bangal florican etc. The National Parks
and Wild Life sanctuaries are the habitat of rare and endangered flora and fauna. The Kaziranga National Park of Assam is famous for one-homed Rhinoceros and rare reptiles while the Namdapha National Park of Arunachal Pradesh is the habitat of four great cats i.e., Tiger, Leopard, Clouded Leopard and Snow Leopard. The other wild animals found in various parks and wild life sanctuaries of the region include Asiatic water buffalo, Sloth bear, Gibbon, Elephant, Golden langur, wild Buffalo, Sambhar, Tiger, wild Pig, wild Horses, Leopard, Serow, Goral Blythe’s tragopan, Himalayan black Dear, Jungle Cat, wild Dog, Marten, the Pigmy hog, Hillock gibbon, the Stamped tailed macaque, Golden masher fish, the Capped langur, the Golden cat etc. The birds found include are the Snake Bird with turtle, Black Necked Stork, Red Jungle Fowl, Bar-Headed Goose, Whistling Teal, Bengal Florican, Pelican, White winged Wood Duck, Aquatic bird etc. Further, the region is also an ornithologist’s delight as many migratory birds make their home here during the winter. Among the National Parks of the region, the Namdapha National Park is the biggest in terms of geographical coverage of 1,985.23 sq.km. “The park has around 73 species of Lichens, 59 species of Bryophytes, 801 species of Angiosperms in terms of flora and in terms of fauna it has around 50 species of reptiles, 453 species of birds and 96 species of mammals.” (Singh et al., 2000).

Thus, this part of India is rich in biodiversity. This region is the part of great Himalayan range and is part of the 25 biodiversity hotspots of the Globe (Dey & Dey, 2003). The biodiversity resources of the region are well known for being hub of pitcher plant and several unique varieties of ferns and a spectacular collection of orchids. The region is also famous for its wide variety of orchids which is found very commonly here. In Arunachal Pradesh only, there are more than 500 (Khound & Khound, 2003) different
The North-East India is fortunate to have the second richest forest reserves in the world in terms of plant diversity after Sumatran forests in Indonesia (Goswami, 2005). These natural wonders lure traveller particularly the eco-tourists to enjoy the natural beauty, recreation and inspiration that they provide.

2.4.2 Archeological Delight: Man made attractions such as Rang Ghar, the historical ruins of Tezpur, Kareng Ghar & Talatal Ghar in Assam; the War Memorial in Nagaland & the ruins of Medieval Kachari kingdom of Nagaland; the Ujjayanta Palace & Neer Mahal in Tripura; Malinithan of Arunachal Pradesh are the main sites of archeological delight of the region. The Rang Ghar of Assam is a two storied oval shaped pavilion from which Ahom royalties watched elephant fights and other sporting events. It is the Asia’s first amphitheatre. There is another seven storied palace called Kareng Ghar in Sibsagar. Two floors of this Kareng Ghar lies above the ground and rest are in the underground. It was built by King Rajeshwar Singha. At Rangpur of Sibsagar, there is another palace called Talatal Ghar built in 1699 AD by King Rudra Singha. The Tezpur of Assam is also known for its historical ruins. There is mythological belief that Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva fought there. Tezpur town is also known as ‘City of Blood’. The 'City of Blood' conjures up images of the romantic legend of Usha and Aniruddha. The ruins and remains of Agnigarh where the immortal romance blossomed still bear mute testimony of this legend. The remains of 5th-6th century stone temples have also been discovered in the Da Parbatia of Tezpur. The carving of the rock has the similar characteristic of the style of early Gupta School of sculpture. Kohima War Cemetery is a symbolic memorial commemorating the memories of the officers and men who sacrificed their lives during World War II. The ruins of Medieval Kachari kingdom was established before the 13th century AD. The monoliths represent the elaborate rituals of the cult of fertility. The Ujjayanta Palace of Agartala is a famous royal house and an ideal palace. Built in 1901, it
covered an area of 1 (one) sq. km. Its interiors are embellished with magnificent tiled floors, delightfully curved wooden ceiling and beautifully crafted door. The Malinithan of Arunachal Pradesh is a unique site of the 10th and 12th century A.D. It has ancient temple housing sculptures of Gods and Goddesses. These man made objects are the perfect spots for historical tourists.

2.4.3 Anthropological Delight: North East India is also a hub of anthropological delight. It is the homeland of a rich variety of ethnic communities. The region enjoys the proud privilege of being the inhabitant of 28 main ethnic groups. Out these ethnic group 110 subgroups exist in Arunachal Pradesh, 78 in Tripura, 25 in Nagaland, 23 in Meghalaya, 17 in Mizoram, 13 in Manipur and more than 20 in Assam (Khound & Khound, 2003). Adi, Apatani, Nocte, Bugun, Galo, Hrusso, Khamba, Memba, Sherdukpen, Mishis, Tagin, Singpho, Miyor, Tangsheng, Mompas of Arunachal Pradesh; Reangs, Jamatias, Noatias, Kukis, Mogs, Chakmas, Halams of Tripura; Khasi, Garo, Jaintias, of Meghalaya; Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kabui, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Lotha, Zelion, Sema, Sangtam, Khiamniung, Yimchungru, Konyaks of Nagaland; Hmars, Raltes, Paites, Lushais of Mizoram; Meitheis, Gante, Kabui, Maram, Mao, of Manipur; Bodo, Sonowal, Cacharis, Chutiyas, Lalungs, Rabhas, Mishings, Karbis, Dimasas of Assam are some of the chief tribal communities of the region. The oral traditions of different genres are rich and varied and the repertoire of traditional music, dance, and other performances of the local people are unique viewfinders to look at the world. They have got their own languages having their own grammar and alphabets and have also got various cuisines that have been the testimony of culinary arts. The handicrafts and local textiles as done by the localities are very wondering. Assam is reputed for its silk and the most prominent variety of Muga cloth while carpets and shawls made by Manipuri’s command huge demand in the local market. The distinctive cultural resources of each communities of this region produce a juxtaposition of racial, linguistic, and cultural varieties. The region is absolutely a perfect destination for tourists interested in cultures and traditions.
2.4.4 Pilgrims Delight: The practice of travelling for religious reason was a well established custom since ancient time. Places of worship have been the biggest center of attraction of pilgrims from several parts of the world and especially in India. The North-East India has a very rich religious heritage. There are various temples and shrines for the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhist and Christian’s which serve as important tourist attractions. Tawang Monastery of Arunachal Pradesh with its dramatic background is eye-catching. The Buddhist monastery is the second oldest monastery in Asia, built in 1681 A.D. A stunning 8 meter high gilded statue of Lord Buddha dominates the sanctum. The Kamakhya Temple of located on the Neelachal Hill (Guwahati) is another greatest shrine of the Hindu. This temple offers grandstand views of the river Brahmaputra and the town ‘Guwahati’. Thousands of devotees from all over the country throng the temples daily. The reigning deity of the Kamakhya temple is Goddess Parvati. The Largest cathedral in the North East is the Catholic Cathedral of Nagaland. The Cathedral of Mary of Christians of Shillong is most famed for its stained glass windows and lofty arch. There are some others religious places of tourists’ attraction. Mahabhairab temple of Tezpur, Barpeta Satra and Kirtan Ghar, Vashista Ashram & Umananda of Guwahati, Poa-Mecca of Hajo, Tripura Sundari Temple, Shre Govindajee Temple of Manipur are the mentionable. These temples and shrines provide great motivation to travel to this remotest comer of India.

2.4.5 Forest Resources: North Eastern Region (NER) was very rich in respect of forest resources. Out of the total geographical area of 2,55,083 sq kms of the region, about 65.17 percent is covered by forest and one-third of it is covered by reserve forest (Mitra and Chattopadhyay,2003). Besides valuable medicinal plants, these forests abound in a variety of birds and animals. Further, the discovery of tea in Assam in 1823, tea has become an integral part of the economy. The tea industry of N.E.India is the world’s largest tea growing region having 16 % share, and is the largest producer and exporter of tea in India (share 55 %). Tea Gardens are the treasure house of exotic natural beauty
with colourful people and their enchanting songs and dances, sprawling bungalows and excellent residential facilities. Tea gardens are an important tourist spot for many domestic, national and international visitors. Further, the region enjoys the proud privilege of having valuable trees, canes and bamboo. Various valuable trees like Sal, Teak, Bansom, Simul, Sishu, Gamari, Sarol, Halokh, bamboo, cane, valuable medicinal plants are found in plenty here. As per the NER databank, the forests of this region, on an average, provide 8 lakh cubic meter of ordinary timber, 70.5 lakh tones bamboo, soft wood for the production of 1.6 lakh cubic meter plywood, lakh cubic meter industrial hard wood, 5.6 lakh cubic meter pulp wood, 12.5 thousand cubic meter of soft wood for the production of match sticks and 2.5 lakh cubic meter of fire wood annually. On the basis of the forest resources of the NER, various types of forest based industries such as ply wood mills, paper mills, saw-mills etc. have been established. The state of Mizoram is well endowed with floral diversity comprising 21 different bamboo species (Jha et al, 1998). A wide range of decorative items made out of such bamboo, cane and wood are popular souvenir items.

2.4.6 Adventure Resources: One of the recent trends in international tourism is traveling for active participation in adventure sports. The North East India has a rich potential to emerge as major adventure tourism. Tourist services like trekking, river rafting, angling, boating, fishing, mountain biking, parasailing, and swimming can be adventured in most of the tourist spot of the region. The river Brahmaputra, Barak, Jia-Bhoreli, Kameng, Subansiri, Debang and the river Siang serve as an important resource for the tourists interested in rafting, boating, swimming and angling. The upper hill belt of the different part of the region particularly Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya is also suitable for trekking and other winter sports. In Manipur adventure sports have been promoted. The state has become world-renowned in the field of indigenous martial arts. Recently, ship is introduced in the river Brahmaputra especially for tourists. One can view the Kaziranga, Majuli, Sibsagar, Orang National Park, Dibru-saikhuwa National Park, Manas National Park, the silk weaving village of Sualkuchi by boarding the ‘MV Charaidew’, a cruise vessel jointly operated by Assam
Bengal Navigation Company—an Indo-British joint venture company and the Jungle Travels—the Indian partner operator (Bordoloi, 2003).

2.4.7 **Fairs and Festivals**: The event category presents a vast array of festivals, tournaments and business activities which serve both a tourist and separate business function. Many regular events become tourism resources of attraction. These may include competition in sport, recreation, music or arts. From the ancient time people moved from one place to other for attending different festivals, fairs, religious events, and exhibitions. The North East part of India is also famous for its unique festivals and religious events that lure the visitors from within and outside the country. A few of the traditional festivals include, Rongali Bihu festival of Assam, Tea festival, Ali-Ai-Ligang, Ambubachi Mela, Me-Dam-Me-Phi, Dihing Patkai festival of Assam; Raas Leela and Yaosang festival, Ningol Chakuba festival, Yaoshang of Manipur, Wangala festival, Ka Shad Suk Mymsiem festival of Meghalaya etc. There some other festivals celebrated in different part of the region. A few of these are Orange and Tourism festival of Tripura, Spring festival of Shillong, and Buddha Mahotsav of Tawang monastery, Brahmaputra Beach Festival of Guwahati, Tea Festival of Jorhat, Elephant Festival of Kaziranga National Park etc. Visitors from different parts of the country participate in these events to experience the colourful programmes.

2.4.8 **Other tourism resources**: Other important tourist’s destinations of the Northeast India include the followings:

2.4.8.1 **Majuli**: Majuli Island is situated in Assam. It is the largest inhabited reverine island of the world and is the home to the Mishing tribe. Since the days of religious leader Mahapurusha Shankardeva and his disciple Madhabdeva, Majuli is also known being for a focal point of Vaishnavite culture. Majuli is place offering variety of interests to the visitor-beginning from the traditional handicrafts, ethnic culture and dance forms, water sports, migratory birds etc.
2.4.8.2 Jatinga: Jatinga of the North Cachar district of Assam is reputed for the bizarre phenomenon of the annual mass suicide by birds. This hilly hamlet has been regarded as a mystery unsolved.

2.4.8.3 The Loktak Lake: The Loktak Lake of Manipur is one of the most enchanting and biggest fresh water lakes in the region. In the southern part of the lake the Keibul Lamjao National Park is located. The lake, famous for the unique habitat of the rare Sangai deer is the world’s only floating National Park. Visitors get a bird’s eye view of the life on the lake from the Sendra Island.

2.4.8.4 Caves: Meghalaya is a treasure trove of nature with its beautiful silvery cascades and awe-inspiring caves. There are almost 200 caves in the state and many these are yet to be explored. Five among the already explored have the distinction of being the longest known caves in Indian subcontinent.

2.4.8.4 Dong: A pristine small village in the easternmost corner of Arunachal Pradesh is the place in India where the first rays of the sun kiss every fresh morning.

2.4.8.5 Tawang: Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh situated at an altitude of 11,000 feet above the sea level, is featured by dramatic setting of the snow-mantled peaks. Tawang is also ideal for trekking and hiking.

2.4.8.6 Parasuram Kund: Located 80 kms to the North-east of Tezu of Arunachal Pradesh. It was believed that after killing his mother, Parasuram washed away his sins in this place. During Makar Sankranti thousands of pilgrims from all over the country come here for a holy dip to wash away their sins. These natural wonders lure travelers to enjoy the natural beauty, recreation and inspiration that they provide.

2.4.8.6 Glory peak: The Glory Peak of Nagaland is also regarded as tourist spot of the region. One can view ‘Mount Everest’ from this peak.
2.4.8.7 Shillong peak: Situated at a point of 1965 meters above the sea level, Shillong peak offers breathtaking views of the Shillong town.

2.4.8.8 Sualkuchi: A village situated 32 km from Guwahati, Sualkuchi is one of the world's largest weaving villages. The village is often called the Manchester of the East and also known as the 'Silk Town of Assam. The place is a renowned centre of silk production of Assamese silk, muga (golden thread) and other varieties of silk. Sualkuchi is famous for particularly Muga-the golden silk of Assam, the kind which is not produced anywhere else in the world. The entire population here is engaged in weaving exquisite silk fabrics.

In addition of the resources discussed above, North East India is also visited by businessmen or traders from different corner of the country. The industrialists and business executives frequently visit this region to grab the business opportunities and also to attend seminars and conferences organised from time to time. The special economic package granted by the Government of India to different kinds of industries or manufacturing units has added value to the business and profession tourism of the region. Further, there is a good number health institutions of national and international repute scattered in different towns of the Northeast India.

Again, Access to educational institutions promoting skill development is a prerequisite for providing trained manpower. One can't deny the role of educational institutions of the region in promoting the tourism industry. The Assam Valley School located in the Sonitpur district of Assam is one amongst various educational institutions which lure visitors from different part of the country and even outside the country. Students especially from the Bangladesh come for study in this school. Guardians or parents of the students admitted to this school, visit their wards during leisure time.

Interestingly, of late, the importance of tourism to the economy and social life of the North East India is identified and there has been a continued thrust on the development and upgradation in various facilities to tourists. Reference may be made to report released by Ministry of DONER (Development of North Eastern Region) in its
The report states that government attaches great importance to the development of tourist infrastructure in the North Eastern Region in view of immense tourism potential of the region. Financial assistance has also been provided under the Central Financial Assistance scheme.

The Ministry of Tourism has taken steps in order to develop and promote tourism in the region.

Some of these are

a. The Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology have been set up at Shillong. This is in pursuance of PM's initiative for North East India.

b. The Food Craft Institute at Guwahati has been upgraded to the level of Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition and the existing infrastructure is being expanded.

d. Tourist Office of Guwahati has been upgraded from Director to Regional Director level by Government of India, Department of Tourism. This will facilitate in speeding up the work of classification/re-classification of 1-3 star function hotels located in the North Eastern States which were earlier covered by the Regional Director, Government of India Tourist Office, Kolkata.

e. A video film on tourist attractions for North East has been produced by Ministry of Tourism in order to give wide publicity to the region. This is being screened by Air India in their flights.

f. North Eastern States are given a free booth in the world's largest Tourism Fair, International Tourism Mart, Berlin.

g. North Eastern States are given a special focus in the Marketing Conferences of Overseas Offices of the Ministry of Tourism. All these overseas offices are giving due publicity to the North Eastern States for the promotion of tourism in the region.

The report further reveals that there has been adequate flow of funds to this region in past few years. During the year 2000-2001, Ministry of Tourism sanctioned an amount
of Rs.24.52 crore for new projects relating to development and promotion of tourism, out of which Rs.7.79 crore were released to North Eastern States and Sikkim. In addition, an amount of Rs.4.96 crore was also released for ongoing projects. For the year 2001-2002, 121 projects relating to development and promotion of tourism amounting to Rs.32.57 crores were prioritised for the North Eastern States including Sikkim.
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