

Potentiality Of Tourism In Morigaon District, Assam

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Abstract: Tourism has major contribution towards the economic development and social welfare. Morigaon district of Assam has immense potentiality for the development of tourism. Its natural beauty, religious historical places, culture and tradition can easily make it a very important tourist spot. Moreover, wildlife sanctuary in the district can attract the tourists from all over the state as well as from the country. Though it has the potentiality for tourism development, but due to lack of required infrastructural facility, other challenges as well as government funding made available to tourism sector, its contribution is not much satisfactory. To develop tourism industry in the district, proper infrastructure facility, cooperation, help of public and private sector is needed.

Index Terms: Tourism, fair and festivals, potentiality, problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Holiday taking is an established in our society, which is also big business. Increasing real incomes, longer holidays with pay, improving mobility and rising education levels all serve to increase the demand for holidays. Tourism is therefore a growth industry (Goodall, 1978). The concept of tourism is new with tremendous potentiality for sustainable development for nature based tourist resources includes beautiful forest, wildlife and landscape (Das, 2012-13). Tourism is travel for recreation, leisure, religious, family or business purposes, usually for a limited duration (Borah and Ahmed, 2015). Tourism is the fast growing service industry and economically very important in the present day. Tourism is regarded as leading sector in the 21st century due to its significant share in global economy (Khound, 2017). But its role in economy varies from country to country depending on the stage of development as well as the degree of tourism infrastructure and attractions (Krishnan, 2017). Tourism is considered as an employment generator that has the capacity to create large scale employment both directly and indirectly; from the most specialized to unskilled workforce. Morigaon is endowed natural and cultural resources such as exotic wildlife, awesome scenic beauty, colorful fair and festival, age old historical monuments for which Morigaon can become one of the tourist destinations of Assam. Hence, an attempt has been in the paper to analyze the potentiality of tourism industry and its related issues in Morigaon district. Different scholar has done their research work in the field of tourism. Such as Akihito (2017), Chutia, S. (2015), Das (2017), Das (2012-13), Borah and Ahmed (2015), Gogoi (2017), Goodall (1978), Goowalla and Neog (2011), Kalita (2017), Kaplan (2004), Krishnan (2017), etc.

2. STUDY AREA

Morigaon district is located on the southern bank of river Brahmaputra of middle Assam between 26°9'0" and 26°30'0" North latitude and between 92°0'0" and 95°30'0" East longitude. The district is divided into five revenue circle and occupied a total area of 1551 sq. km. representing about 1.98 % of the total geographical area of Assam.

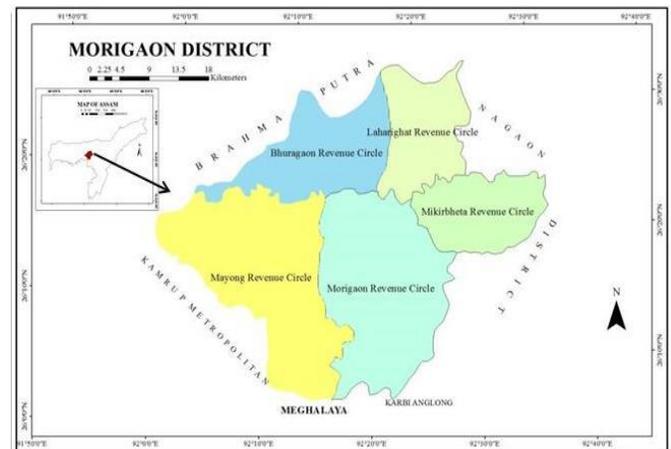


Fig 1: Location map of Morigaon District

The natural topography of the district is a belt of flooded land. The great part of the district is an alluvial plain crisscrossed with number of river and waterway and dotted over with beels and marshes. Agriculture is the predominant occupation of the people of the district.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is carried out on the basis of primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources of information have been collected from field observation and investigation while secondary sources of information has been collected from published records, book, magazines etc. The data and information so acquired has been systematically organized and in order to analyze them various cartographic techniques has been used, where necessary. For showing the location of various tourists' place in the district Google Earth Pro and Arc GIS 10.3 software were used.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 POTENTIALITY OF TOURISM

Tourism in the district has immense potentiality and is primarily based on wildlife, natural beauty, holy shrines, vibrant and colourful cultural festivals. Tourism in the district can be categorized into three types- natural tourism, religious tourism and cultural tourism.

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4.1.1 NATURAL TOURISM

Nature based tourism in the district includes Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary, which is situated in the flood plain of Brahmaputra River in the western part of Morigaon District. The main attraction of Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary is the world known one horned Rhino. Beside this, wild pig, buffaloes, migratory bird as well rare species of birds are found in the sanctuary. Apart from this, Sivakunda in Amsoi hill is a beautiful picnic spot for tourists and local inhabitant during the winter season.

4.1.2 CULTURAL TOURISM

It includes Junbeel Mela of Morigaon. It is a folk festival of Tiwa-Lalung Community of Morigaon district of Assam which is centered on ancient barter system. The Junbeel Mela is a festival of communal harmony and integrity. It is held for three days just a week after Makar Sankranti in month of January. One of the important cultural events to visit in Morigaon is Komiti Bhawna of Charibahi. The trinomial komiti Bhawna of Charibahi is observed here once after a gap of three years with great enthusiasm and gaiety. There are sixteen Ankia Bhawnas in total are

performed by sixteen different Khels (group of people) at the place in a single day. Various communities of Charaibahi area like Nath (Yogi), Tiwa (Lalung), Karbi, Kalita, Ahom, Chutia, Hira etc. participate in the festival with cooperation and love. On the other hand, Morigaon district is also well known for buffalo's fight. The fight is conducted after Magh bihu in the month of January and February. One of the cultural festivals of Morigaon district is Gosain Uliwa Mela (God bringing out festival). This is held within Bohag Maah (from 14th April) to 2nd week of Jeth Mah (May) in different places at different dates within the above period. It has been observing in different places like Barapujia, Charibahi, Jarabari, Habibarangabari, Mayang, Bashnaghat, Manipur, Gasarguri, Ahatguri, Tetelia Barangabari, Doloichuba etc. of Morigaon District. On the day of Mela, the religious book "The Bhagawat" with Ashan bring out with religious function from the Namghar to open place. Nam-Kritan is performed during the day and in the evening the religious book "Bhagawat" with Ashan is taken back to Namghar.

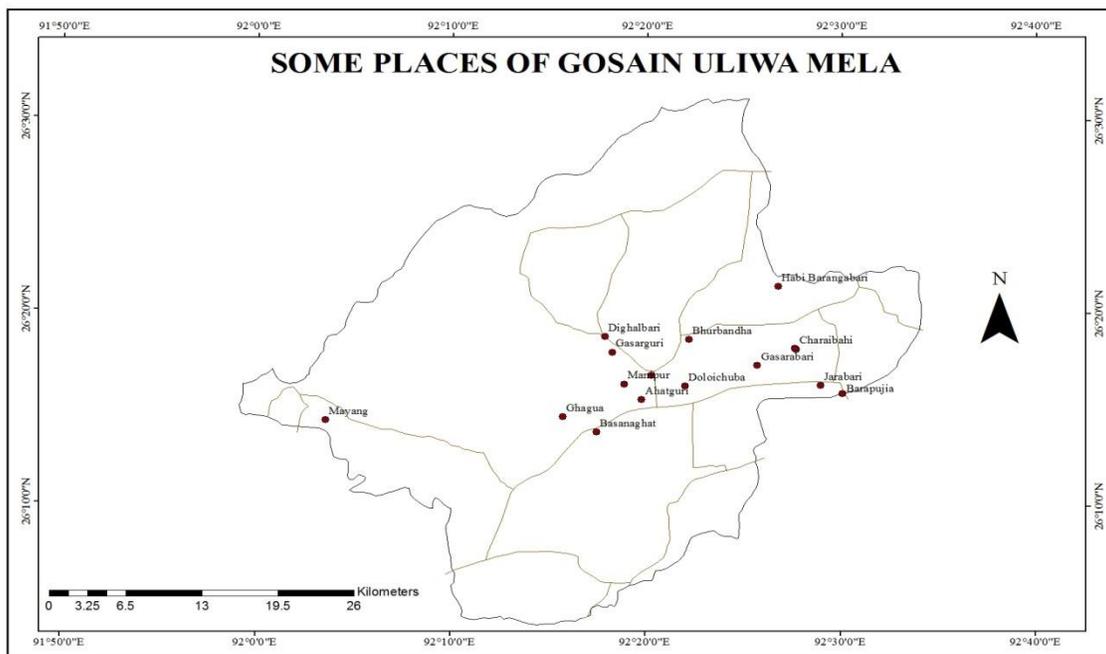


Fig 2: Places of Gosain uliwa mela (God bringing out festival) in Morigaon

4.1.3 RELIGIOUS AND ARCHEOLOGICAL TOURISM

As a part of religious tourism one of the very important places to be visit in the district is Alipukhuri/Patekibari, the birth place of Shri Sankaradeva, founder of Vaisnavite religion in Assam. A Satra was constructed in the birth place of Sankaradeva by giving the name Patekibari. The most important feature of Satra is that though is basically for Hindu religion but the satra was constructed by both Hindu and Muslim people of that locality. Sitajakhala is another tourist place in Morigaon. It is believed that Valmiki had cut the stone to form stairs so that Sita could reach the river Kiling from the temple. Apart from this, is the Deosal Siva temple, which is an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Siva. Here Siva ratri is held annually with lots of colour and mirth. Another important site to visit in Morigaon is

Kachasila, which is the house of ancient and beautiful temple, dating back to 9th century.

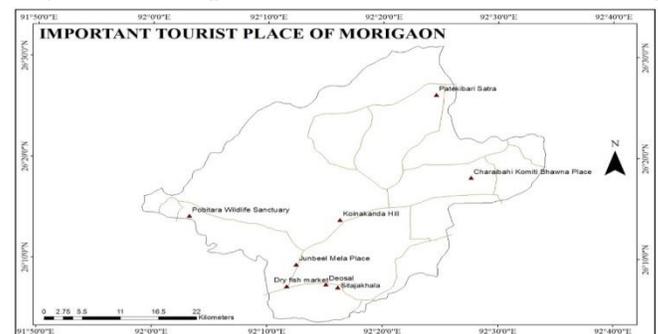


Fig 3: Map showing important tourist places of Morigaon

Mayang, the land occult practices is located in the west of the Morigaon district. The place is endowed with a variety of tourist attractions that can enable to satisfy the tourists of diverse interest.. There is ample number of ancient temples in and around Mayang. Mayang is also known as land of Pancha Devata which refers to five deities such as Dinsh, Ganesh, Vishnu, Siva and Parvati. Mayang is also known for its archeological ruins and monuments. There is a big stone inscription, dating back several hundred years located at a hilly village, Burha Mayang. Mayang is a land of Tantra-Mantra and famous for its practice of Black Magic. Age of tradition of Black Magic is also a source of tourist attraction. Besides these, one can also visit Asia's largest dry fish market of Jagiroad from where large amounts of dry fishes are distributed to several parts of the country.



Fig 4: A view of Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary



Fig 5: Buffalo fight in Morigaon



Fig 6: Dry fish market of Jagiroad



Fig 7: Waterfall at Sivakunda

4.2 PROBLEMS OF TOURISM

The organization of the tourism industry in destination areas is usually characterized by many, small independent eating places, amusement and sports facilities, etc. (Goodall, 1978). Though the district has immense potentiality of the development of tourism industry and employment as well as revenue generation, yet it is not up to the desired level because of several problems. Because- (1) Lack of proper infrastructure stands as barrier in utilizing the potentialities of the tourism sector in the district. Well-equipped infrastructure may lead to the development of sustainable tourism industry. (2) The accommodation sector also in the district is not up to the desired level. (3) In Morigaon most of the tourist places are not by the side of the national highway and those located in the remote area have been characterized by poor accessibility. This is very unfavorable factor contrary to the flow of tourist, (4) The lack of an adequately skilled local tourism workforce is one of the factors that hamper the development of a strong tourism industry in the district, (5) Insufficient focus on skill

development by the higher authorities, (6) Lack of coordinated effort; for the development of tourism sector it is necessary to have coordination among all the agencies related to tourism, (7) Absence of trained guides in the important tourist attraction, (8) lack of fund for the development of tourist spot, etc.

5. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is seen that there is lots of potentialities of tourism in district and hence, it can contribute various economic benefit to the economy of the district along with state as a whole. But the generation of employment through the tourism sector is not satisfactory and revenue earnings from tourist are also not encouraging in the district. Therefore, to unveil Morigaon to state, national as well as foreign tourist, various steps should be undertaken for infrastructure development and management for sustained growth of tourism industry in the district. In this case, an honest and strong will of the government coupled with people's cooperation will definitely

boost up tourism industry in the district along with the state as a whole.

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