

Tourism in North East India : From Management's Perspectives

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««« Abstract

Tourism as an industry is a modern concept but it is now the second largest industry of the present super industrialized world. Its development is considered to be essential because of its anticipated economic benefits of income and employment; as statistics show that it provides jobs to one in every, sixteen workers throughout the world. Tourism is defined as the sum of the relations and services connected with a temporary and voluntary change of residence for non-commercial or non-professional reasons. It is further defined as the sum total of the operations, mainly of an economic nature, which is directly related to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region. Tourism is an industry composed of a group of firms that are engaged in the business of selling to or serving tourists Hotels, restaurants, transportation and amusements are examples of the types of firm that collectively constitute the Tourism industry. The north east tourism is very rich in all aspect but is unexplored. To make it a vibrant one, the attitudinal change is required. The seven sisters and one brother state can jointly play an active role in promoting tourism in this area. The states are homogenous in character and thus, it will be easy for them to cooperate and reduce cost. For this, an effective organization structure and proper management is required. The paper deals with the same.

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Tourism, as such, can be defined as the sum of the relations and services connected with a temporary and voluntary change of residence for non-commercial or non-professional reasons. As an industry, tourism is composed of a group of

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Developing of tourism industry in a particular area, region or nation depends on a number of factors. These factors are nothing but the endowments to fulfill the tourist motives associated to the travelers. Depending on the travel motivations, there may be at least six types tourism. Viz.

- ▶ Recreational Tourism, which is offered by a place by its unique way of providing scope for change of mind.
- ▶ Cultural Tourism, which is offered through folklore, art, music etc.
- ▶ Historical tourism, Involving heritage locations, museums, temples etc.
- ▶ Ethnic tourism, Involving unusual customs. life styles etc.
- ▶ Environmental tourism or Nature tourism, which is offered by the geographical factors like flora and fauna, sea beach, rivers, deserts, wild life etc.
- ▶ Adventure tourism, geared to promote activities like mountaineering, trekking, skiing etc.

Tourism industry can be developed in a particular area, or nation depending on any of the above factors. However, development of tourism will call for the of five main sectors or components. These five sectors, as shown in figure, are :

1. Accommodation Sectors
2. Attraction Sector
3. Transportation Sector
4. Travel Organization Sector
5. Destination Organization Sector

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Tourism has major potential for India at the stage of transformation and development. It put equal value on our untouched natural resources and culture. It celebrates our birthright as a nation and has huge potential for speeding up economic empowerment and transportation.

The economic liberalisation of India, have made the Indian Tourism industry a highly structured one with the potential to earn revenues. It offer high value-added markets with considerable returns on investments.

Tourism has a multiplier effect on the people involved in transportation industry, hotels and hospitality industry, travel agencies, shops and other industries supporting the Tourism Industry. This becomes a boon for the areas where industrial development is less.

Components of Tourism Industry

Attraction Sectors
 Theme Parks
 Museum and Galleries
 National Parks
 Wildlife Parks
 Gardens
 Heritage Sites & Centres
 Sports Activities Centre

Travel Organisers Sectors
 Tour Operators
 Tour Wholesalers / Brookers
 Retail Travel Agents
 Conference Organisers
 Book Agencies (e.g.)
 Accommodation)
 Incentive Travel Organiser.

Accommodation Sectors
 Hotels / Motels
 Guest Hours / Bed & Break fast
 Farm Houes
 Apartments / Villas / Cottages
 Time Share Resorts
 Vacation villages / Holiday Centres
 Vonference / Exhibition Centres
 Caravan / Camping Sities Marinhs

Destinatio Organisation Sectors
 National Tourist Officers (NTOs)
 Regional / State Tourist Officers
 Local Tourist Officers
 Tourist Associations

Transportation Sectors
 Arilines
 Shipping Lines / Ferries
 Railways
 Bus / Coach Operators
 Car Rental Operators

The paper is divided into four parts, the first part will introduce tourism, the second part will discuss on the tourism of North East India, the third part will put emphasis on the special nature of eight states and the management of tourism and the fourth part will discuss the important of cooperation between the north eastern states and the organisation of the cooperative.

The northeastern part of India has the same position with that of India. The industrial development is low here but the Goddess Nature is kind enough to give the place with abundance of natural beauty. North east India is the land of Blue Mountains, Green Valleys, Red Rivers with plenty of wild life, flora, fauna and, of course, its colourful people. Once Tony Howard remarked, "if India was the jewel in the Crown of British Empire, the remote North East of that country is its Hidden Jewel". If one want to find the hidden jewel, then he will surely have to explore North East India.

The Northeastern part of India comprises of eight states consisting of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Sikkim. All these places have some common aspects.

When we talk of north east India, the colourful people of the eight states always come to our mind. The ethnic groups of this region have rich cultural heritage and each group differing from the other on the basis of culture. Each society or tribe have a special character and known by their specific rituals, songs, dances, handloom, handicraft etc. The manifold performance of the tribes Call also attract tourists within the country and abroad.

The northeastern states are culturally rich. The colourful life of the people will attract tourists. The different songs and dances of the people of this area is really beautiful. The need is to host fairs and carnivals that will attract tourists.

The major theme of north eastern tourism industry should be our land and people. The tourism industry should not exploit the people but make others know and enjoy the rich cultural heritage of

the region. Glimpses of the people and its culture should be shown to the public of the World with a slogan that more is awaiting for you and this more will attract tourists. The researchers of Anthropology and folk-lore will always visit these places to perform their research activities, this is an added advantage. These researchers will again attract more tourists in these areas. The Tourism Industry markets the tourist places and the hospitality associated with the place. Tourism being in the service sector, offers intangible product to the customers, which is very difficult to market. The intangible nature of services makes quality control difficult but crucial, it also makes it more difficult for potential customers to evaluate and compare service offerings. In addition, instead of moving the products to the customers, the customers has to travel to the products. For all these peculiar conditions, the Tourism Business should adopt an efficient marketing strategy.

The Tourism business must set the business objective properly, which should be reasonable enough to achieve and based on the available resource of the organization. The objective should be the guidelines for performing the job efficiently. The North Eastern States of India have all the potentiality of tourist attractions.

First, the recreational tourism is available ill Northeast region. The various lakes, mountains with snow falls are there. The Loktak Lake at Manipur or Borapani at Meghalaya are some of them. The mountains of Arunachal Pradesh enjoys snowfalls and are really beautiful. The mountains and the plantations of Sikkim will also attract the tourists from India and abroad.

Secondly, the North Eastern States are the centres of Art and Culture. Various tribes are there who perform many types music, dance and are actively engaged in handlooms and handicrafts. The muga and endi silk of Assam, the Silk of Manipur and the bamboo and reed items of Tripura are some of them.

Thirdly, historical places are also found in these areas. The Poa Makka and the Modan

Kamdev temple situated side by side at Hazo in Assam is a wonderful site of secular culture. The Kamakhya temple at Guwahati, the Parashuram Kunda at Arunachal Pradesh and the various forts and palaces of Ahom and Manipuri Kingdom & are places for visit. The Buddhist monastery of Sikkim are again the place of tourist attractions.

Fourthly, various tribals are found in North Eastern States. The tribals have their own culture which is a unique one. Their life style is totally different not only from that of ours but amongst themselves as well. The Angamis, AOs of Nagaland, the Doleys, Pegus, Moms, Bodos, Kacharis of Assam are some of them.

Fifthly, the North Eastern States are rich in natural beauty. The mountains, rivers, and roads in between them are marvelous. The Pobitora, Kaziranga, Manas of Assam, Keibul Lamjao, the floating National Park at Manipur, the Orang sanctuary of Arunachal Pradesh are some of the wild life with enormous flora and fauna. Actually, the train line between Lumding and Badarpur in Assam, along the Borail range of mountains is another experience, especially in the full moon nights.

Sixthly, the scope for adventure tourism is there in North East, like Rafting along the river Brahmaputra in Umrangshu in Assam or tracking and mountaineering in Pakinl Palatine and Gangtok in Sikkim, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Lushai Hills of Mizoram. The Nathula Pass in Sikkim, leading to China is another adventure.

The geographic and cultural heritage of the eight states of North east India are almost the same. Tourist visiting one state will deprive the seven other states. So what is needed is co-operation between the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. To be more specific, there should be a strategic alliance between the states. The Tourism Industries of these eight states should merge and form an integrated organization that will operate throughout the region. This will have the following advantage:

First, the eight states will not compete against each other.

Secondly, the states will help each other in attracting tourists.

Thirdly, at the national and the international level, this Integrated organization will only participate and branches at the different cities will be opened and operated by this organization only. This will reduce the cost factor.

The strategic merger between the tourism departments (either Tourism Development Council or Tourism Ministry) can help each of the state as the gateway of Northeast India, Guwahati, which is linked nationally or internationally by different modes of transport. The need is to link Guwahati with the different Tourist Centres of the region. After the strategic alliance the next step is to market the tourism properly.

Moreover, the Tourism Industry requires proper management. The managerial function of Planning Organising, Directing, Staffing and Controlling is also essential. Without the proper functioning of all these managerial functions it is not possible to move forward.

The Marketing function is also very essential for the Tourism Industry. The proper marketing planning should be made, market segmented, proper promotional activities are considered, advertisements prepared and displayed through electronic and other media, and of course, the ultimate selling. All these require proper marketing experts who can manage the tourist and create demand in the minds of the customers.

The operation of tourism requires that certain associate organizations be formed, like the Hotels, Transports. It means the operation Management will have to look into the matters that associate tourist industries. For this a professional Operation management Team is required.

The services provided by tourism industry depend to a great extent on the quality of services provided by the service providers. The quality is

required. This means that proper recruitment, training and development, compensation and motivation to the employees is required to be provided. This required a specialist human resource team.

Proper Financial management is always essential for managing the Inflow and outflow of funds, and to calculate the profit. The financial records are also required to be prepared and prior to that budgets are also to be prepared. All these functions will be required a professional team of financial expert.

On the other side, the Involvement of the local people are required to be made. They should be Involved in all the sectors. They are to maintain the Tourist spots and they are also required to meet the tourists in everyday life in and near the tourist spots. Moreover, it will be an employment generation scope of the local people as well.

The tri-dimensional nature of the situation of going for a strategic alliance, employing professionals to manage and involving the local people in tourism activity prompted us to think of an organisation structure based on co-operation.

The philosophy of co-operative organisation has been to serve the common man and to liberate him from the oppression the economically strong people and organisations. The principal theory of true cooperative organization is the elimination of

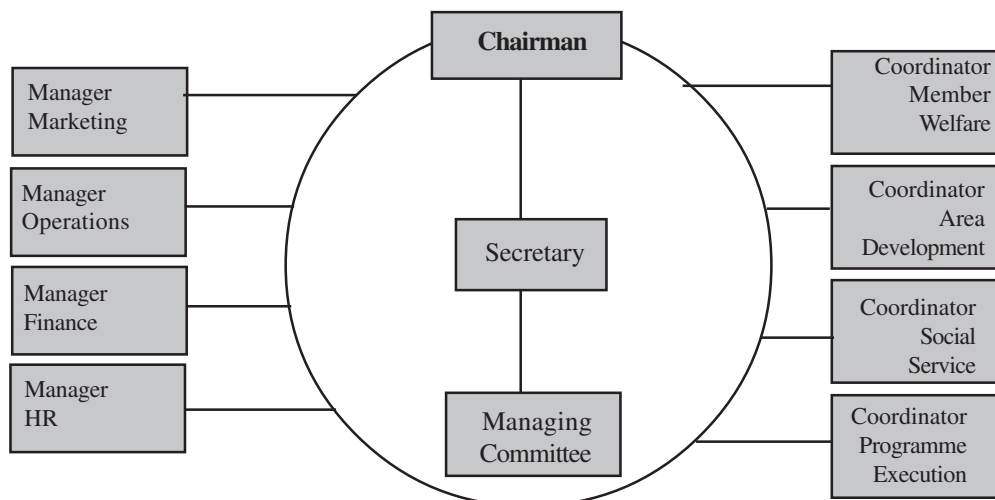
profit and provision of goods and services to members at cost. As a form of organization, it is an enterprise ordinarily set up by economically weak individuals to further their common economic and social interests, to eradicate capitalist exploitation, to eliminate middlemen, and to bring consumer and producer together.

The cooperative organisations can be set at the micro level without any shortage of capital, involving the local people and thus, there will arise a feeling of togetherness in the organisation. In this way co-operative organisations can pose a challenge to the largescale business houses and global organisations.

- ▶ The cooperative society attempts to the:
- ▶ First, solving the problem of unemployment;
- ▶ Secondly, development of the less developed areas.

The eight states will form a Managing Committee to manage the tourism of these state. There will be an appointed secretary amongst the representative of the member states and Chairman to head the body. The right side of the structure will be for the benefit of the people while the left side will have a professional look.

The well defined position will in no way disturb the functioning of the other position. The professional managers will look into the following functions.



Proposed circular organisation structure

1. Manager Marketing : Manager marketing will advertise, attract tourist and look into the betterment of the customers so that the customers satisfied.
2. Manager Operation : Manager Operation will manage the various operators and bring co-ordination amongst them.
3. Manager Finance : Manager Finance will manage the inflow and outflow of funds, alongwith financial planning and accounting.
4. Manager Human Resource : Manager Human Resource will recruit, develop, motivate and compensate the persons involved in the tourism activities.

The other side or the development managers will perform the following job :

1. Co-ordinator Member Welfare : He will look after the welfare and betterment of member states.
2. Co-ordinator Area Development : He will try to look into the development of the states, so that these areas become more and more tourist friendly and uplift the land.
3. Co-ordinator Social Service : He will try to solve the local problem by satisfying the local people, so that the tourist never face any problem. It is responsibility to make the local people more and more tourist friendly.

4. Co-ordinator Program Execution : He will excute the fairs, functions and cultural activities of the area.

The various managers and co-ordinators will have their offices at the various states and in the other areas, where ever necessary. They will operate on their own while co-ordination between themselves will be there. This continuation of professionals and amateurs will lead to better management of tourist places and tourism in North East India.

The circular organisation structure have been successfully brought in the commercial organisations. In this structure is adopted in the cooperative organisation then on the one hand, the social commitments of their members can be fulfilled and on the other, can operate like a private sector, then the cooperative organisation has to adapt itself to the changing economic environment of the country to pose a challenge to the large-scale business units and MNCs and can also find a bigger solution of developing the less developed areas and solving the problem of unemployment.

In the tourism front of North East India, the integration of the all the eight states and the forming a cooperative not only to promote tourism but to develop the area which will again promote tourism industries.

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