



# A Study on Scope for Development of Rural Tourism in Villages of Small Towns with Special Reference to Hailakandi District of Assam

## KEYWORDS

Rural Tourism, Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, Continuous Monitoring

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**ABSTRACT** *Rural tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business. This type of tourism enhances the revenue of government of a country as well as earnings of the rural community. The government at present introduced four rural tourism projects at four resourceful villages of Assam. The present study makes an attempt to search the potentials that are available even in the villages of small towns of Assam with special reference to Hailakandi district. The study observed that the district is rich in its cultural, historical and natural beauty with Forts, temples, rivers and wet lands etc. There lies huge potential in the district to attract tourists from all around the world and if the spots are recognized by the Government and if needy steps are being taken with cooperation from the Ministry of Tourism and State Government then it could help in the development of the region.*

## 1. Introduction

Rural tourism simply means a form of tourism takes place in rural areas, provides employment and income to local people and offering individualized holiday products to consumers. Rural tourism is based on accommodation service which is complemented by additional services and facilities relying on the local social, cultural and natural resources, which are exploited according to the principles of sustainable development. Rural tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists. According to Rätz & Puczko, it seems to be simple to define rural tourism as 'tourism that takes place in the countryside', but this definition does not include the complexity of the activity and the different forms and meanings developed in different countries. According to a broader definition, 'rural tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business'. If this broader concept is accepted, rural tourism covers not only farm tourism, which is what rural tourism means for most people, but also special interest nature holidays, touring in rural areas, and the services include accommodation plus events, festivities, gastronomy, outdoor recreation, production and sale of handicrafts and agricultural products.. However, it is impossible to find a concrete universal definition of rural tourism. It can be different from country to country and time to time, but it has many potential benefits for including employment growth, an expanded economic base, repopulation, social improvement, and revitalization of local crafts.

## 2. Statement of Problem

In almost all the countries the general trend is people of rural area shifted towards urban area due to lack of employment which leads to increase the different problem like housing, slums, transport, water supply, sanitation, water pollution, air pollution, and inadequate provision for social infrastructure. Again, travelling in different places can increase the knowledge and ideas of the tourist. It has been observed from the different study that the trend of rural tourism is increasing in developed countries resulting into increase the rural economy as well as the knowledge and taste of tourist. In this treatise, the present study is

illuminate to investigate the scope of rural tourism in the Hailakandi district of Assam since the state has abundance of natural and forest resources with different diversified culture and tradition.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are

- To identify the places and merchandise of different place of Hailakandi district of Assam to attract the tourist
- To examine the problems associated in developing tourism
- To make possible recommendation and suggestion which help to make a platform to initiate the concept of rural tourism in the district of Hailakandi

## 4. Research Methodology

The present study is empirical in nature. The study is conducted based on mainly primary data, which is collected through field survey. The information gathers by using snow ball sampling method from the respondents who have knowledge of history of the different rural places of Hailakandi district. Besides, secondary data and pertinent literature was compiled from published and documented sources. Such sources are Government Report on Tourism, Local Tourism Centre, Government offices of Tourism and from the different websites.

## 5. Profile of Hailakandi District

Hailakandi is one of the oldest subdivision is the state of Assam. The place was originally constituted as a civil subdivision on 1st June 1869 but later on it was upgraded to district in 1989. The total area of the district is 1326.10 square km, out of this; more than 50% is reserve forest. There are total of two reserve forests in Hailakandi district viz. Inner line reserve forest and Katakhal reserve forest. The district has got inter-state border with Mizoram on its south having a length of 76 km besides inter district border on other sides with Karimganj and Cachar districts. It comprises of two notified towns viz. Hailakandi (district headquarters) and Lala and one industrial town ship viz. Panchgram. A Municipal Board governs Hailakandi town & a town Committee governs Lala. It has five development blocks viz. Algapur, Hailakandi, Lala, Katlicherra & south Hailakandi development Block. There is a Mahkuma Pari-

shad named Hailakandi Mahkuma Parishad covering these 5 Development Blocks. There are total of 62 Nos. of Gaon Panchayat under these five blocks. The district is divided into four revenue circles comprising of a total of 393 villages (including 27 forest villages). Nearly half the district consists of forests. Out of the remaining half, 33.2% is under cultivation. The main language of the District is Bengali. In the organized sector, Tea is the main Industry of the District. It has 17 Tea estates with 5570.38 hectares under Tea plantation.

**6. Places to Visit**

The district has only two spots where people can visit. The visiting spots are

Hailakandi	Siddiyashar Bari Sibmandir
	Cachar Paper Mill

Source: Developed from Field Survey

**Siddiyashar Bari Sibmandir**

It is the famous temple in Hailkandi, located in Bandarpur Ghat region. This temple is always flocked by countless of devotees throughout the year. The devotees coming from different parts of the Barak Valley comprising of three districts offer prayer to the god.

**Cachar Paper Mill**

Cachar Paper Mill is located in the Barak Valley of Assam, in bank of river of Barak near. The Mill is producing paper in a hill named as Pachgram industrial estate. The place Pachgram is 350 KM from Lumding, connected rail through meter gauge and 350 KM from Guwahati by road via Shillong (through Meghalaya). The mill produces quality paper by collecting bamboo from the local areas. A large number of people have been working in this mill since long back, residing in the quarter of the Mill.

**7. Potentials of the Spot:**

- The Siddeshwar temple is located at the bank of Barak River and large number of devotes visit the place mainly because of offering prayer to the god especially at the time of Baruni Mela. This site is situated at the middle of Cachar and Karimganj district near the Cachar industrial estate. So, a tourism project can be developed with a facility of staying of visitors and devotees.
- The site of Cachar Paper Mill is very nice and beautiful but management of the mill imposed restriction to make an entry into the mill for general public. The management of the mill can make an arrangement for tourist to visit the site and production unit by charging entry fee which could help to increase the profit of the organistaion and to maintain the obligations of social responsibility smoothly.

**8. Problems Associated in Connection with the Development of Tourism**

The main problems that become the hurdle of development of tourism are mentioned below:

- **Problems of Communication:** The condition of road communication of the district is terrible. All the villages are well connected with the district head-quarter by road but all types of vehicle could not pass through because of either the poor condition of the road or narrow space of the road. For developing tourism in any rural area we not only

need all-weather roads but should also have arrangement for safe drinking water, electricity, telephone, safety and security, etc.

- **Language problem:** The contribution of the local community in developing or maintaining a tourism spot is very important. The maximum numbers of people of this area are very much frequent with only their local language and have problem in speaking English, Hindi or even Assamese which create problem for them to communicate with the tourist coming from national or international locations.

- **Corruption:** The government have launched various schemes from time to time for the welfare of the citizen of the nation but in practice very few schemes and its benefits reached to the hands of the actual beneficiary because of practice of corrupted activities by different officials.

- **Lack of Trained Manpower:** The trained people in hotel management may not be interested to go to the rural area to work. The rural people who will be appointed are required to be trained for discharging their duties. Decorating the cottages or suites and maintain them. The success of rural tourism totally depends on the quality of service provided to the tourist.

**9. Recommendations and Suggestions**

- At first, the government must conduct some awareness program among the local people of the district and to aware them about rural tourism.
- The district has resources in natural, cultural, historical and location advantage (border between India and Bangladesh), so with the help of public private participation some model village can be created to attract the tourists.
- The district has very poor connection with the other places of India and even with capital of the state. The proposed broad gauge railway connection between Gauhati (Capital of the State) and Hailakandi should be finished without delay which would help the tourist to come and visit the place.
- The place has high potential for launching rural tourism project. But the project should have facility for cottage, gardens, play ground, boating facility, community hall and dining hall and also well communication with all sight seeing facility.
- If some NGO or institution is preparing to start a project for rural tourism, the villagers should participate in developing and implementing the project, otherwise it will not be able to generate much benefit to the rural people.
- Advertisement and sales promotion will play a very significant role in creating awareness and attracting the customers.

**10. Conclusion**

The district has potential to develop an avenue of tourism spots. Hailakandi district has its own significance because of availability of famous temple and Cachar Paper Mill. It is suggested to the government that with the cooperation of management of paper mill a tourism project having facility of dinning corner, cottage, playground, and garden could be launch at the center of the hill of cachar paper mill and develops some tourism activities to attract the tourist.

Annexure:



Front of Mandir



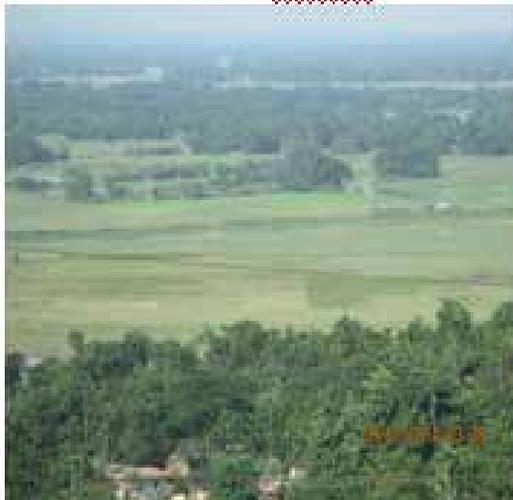
Kapila Muni



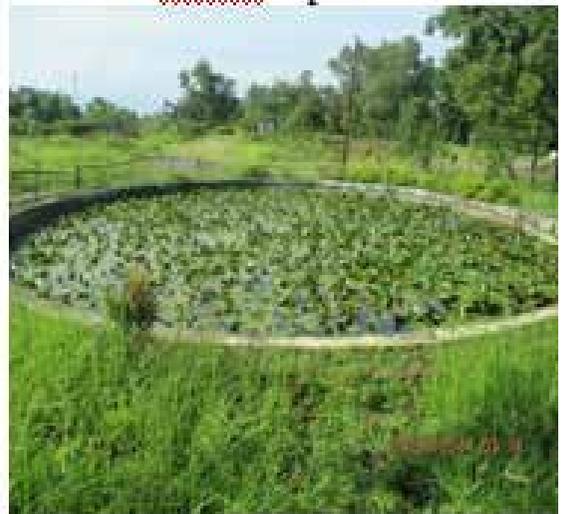
Inside of Mandir



Site of Cachar Paper Mill



Site of Cachar Paper Mill



Site of Cachar Paper Mill

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