



## An Analytical Study of Ecotourism And its Prospects in Manipur

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### ABSTRACT

Manipur Ecotourism is a unique and competitive destination for the tourist both in domestic and international. Though small in area and population, the state is well known for its landscape, green valleys, blue hills and mosaic of a rich cultural heritage. There are many tourist centers and sites in Manipur, which can result in a variety of natural ecotourism and a huge potential of the state. These resources includes natural sites, wildlife & garden sites, cultural and historical sites, lake sites, archeological sites, dam & project sites, adventure sites and waterfall sites. So it would be a responsible travel to such natural areas that safeguard the integrity of the ecosystem and produces economic benefits of local community and to encourage conservation. This study proposes to analyze the tourist potential of the state of Manipur and the scope for improvement.

### KEYWORDS

ecotourism, landscape, blue hills, conservation, tourist potential

### INTRODUCTION

Manipur is a state located in the north-east corner of India. This little corner is a paradise on Earth where Mother Nature has been extra generous in her bounty. An oval shaped valley is surrounded by blue green hills, rich in art and tradition with its cascading rapids, tripling rivers, varieties of flowers exotic blooms and lakes. The people of Manipur includes Meitei, Nagas, Kuki-chin-Mizo and Gorkhas group and Muslims and other colorful communities which have lived in complete harmony for countries.

Manipur tourism beckon tourist with its breathtaking beauty, scenic lakes, soaring hills, refreshing waterfalls, and exotic orchids and amazing heritage. Tourist in Manipur is growing day by day. The Manipur Tourism Department is taking major initiatives to develop Manipur, a prime tourist destination of north east India. Manipur tourism India has tourist information centers within several states that provides information about Manipur travel and offer a wide range of services that includes accommodations booking services, information on places to visit, places to eat and events. Amongst the wide range of information on Manipur tourism centers, a variety of local maps, Manipur tourism guides and books are also available.

Ecotourism means management of tourism and conservation of nature in a way so as to maintain a fine balance between requirement of tourism and ecology on the one hand and need of the local communities for jobs, new skills, income generating employment and a better status for women.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY

Manipur is a beautiful state having various wonderful places. The Department of Manipur tourist development has many rules about tourism. It is also about uniting conservation of many types, communities and sustainable travel, and those who implement, participates in the market ecotourism activities should adopt with some principles. This can be improved when people build respect to environment and cultural awareness and provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts by generating financial benefits for both people and industry, designing, constructing and operating low- impact facilities. The rights and spiritual beliefs of outsiders in our country should be recognized and working together in partnership with them to create empowerment. This is beneficial as it can improve tourism system and conservation of environment to make a better society.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study about Manipur Ecotourism.
- To study and examine all the necessary things needed.
- To study the potential of Manipur tourism places.
- To study and analyze the different aspects of Manipur Ecotourism.
- To help the government of Manipur to take up policy for development and to improve the tourism industry in Manipur.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted two types of data in the form of primary & secondary. The primary data has been collected through field experiment, personal interview and questionnaires. The secondary data has been collected from the concerned department, published book & journals, botchers, magazine, pump lets and from various related websites etc.

The data so collected have been analyzed with the help of statistical tools like SPSS and other relevant tools. The data were also analyzed through questionnaires and the relevant inferences were drawn.

### GROWTH OF ECOTOURISM IN MANIPUR

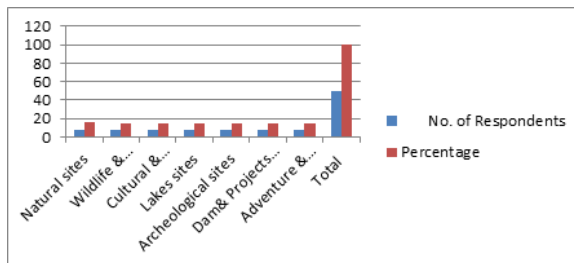
Ecotourism flourished as a worldwide phenomenon in India, as in rest of the World. The term "Eco-tourism" was first coined by Hector Ceballos Lascurian in 1983 and was initially used to describe the nature- based travel to relatively undisturbed area with an emphasis on education. It is the harmonious co-existence of tourism and ecological principles without destroying the ecological balance or rather encouraging eco-development through mass-education and people's participation, Ecotourism flourished as a worldwide. The state of Manipur is a tiny land-locked hilly region covering an area of 22,327 sq.km and having four valley districts as well as five hill districts with a population of 27.2 lakhs (census 2011).

Manipur Eco-tourism was deep rooted since the pre-historic period. During the time of Luwang Ningthou Punshiba the 'Cheirao-ching' of the Langol sacred hill ranges as the first traditional eco-tourism centre. Since then various eco-tourism centers has been established in different parts of the kingdom. Some of the important traditional eco-tourism centers are Nongmaiching-Ching, Kroubu-Ching, Thangjing-Ching, etc. It signifies for aesthetic, good health and longevity of life by preserving the ecological balance of the earth.

The modern trend of growth of eco-tourism in the State was come up only when the Tourism Department of Manipur came

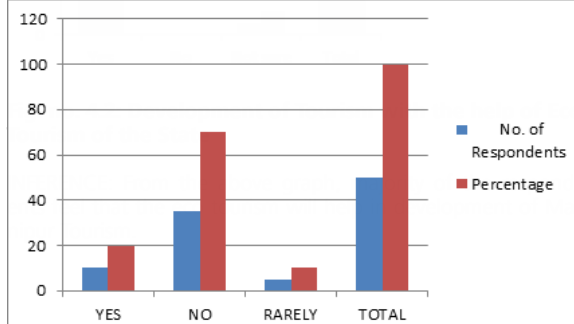
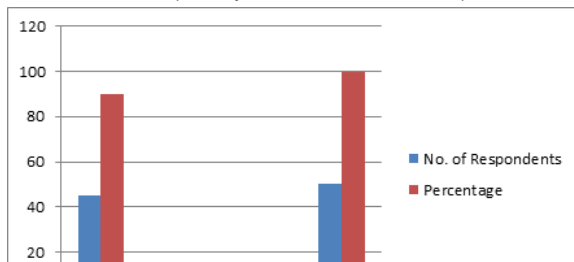
into existence since 1972. The main function of Tourism Department of Manipur is to develop eco-tourism spots and infrastructural facilities for the visiting tourists--- both foreign as well as the domestic. Under the guidelines of National Tourism Policy, Government of Manipur has also taken steps for tapping huge potentials of eco-tourism under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The National Tourism Policy focuses greatly on development of tourism with a holistic approach and giving thrust to development of nature-tourism or eco-tourism for elevation of creating employment. Following the guidelines of National Tourism Policy, Tourism Department of Manipur intends to work out strategies in consultation with other related departments for eco-tourism development in the State. The Tourism Department of Manipur aims at to generate economic surplus without causing irreparable damage to the environment, conflict to the individuals, sentiments and ethos of the host population to ensure the lasting development of tourism industry in Manipur while protecting the fragile ecology of the State. Tourism sector plays a vital role in creating employment opportunities in rural as well as urban areas leading towards sustainable livelihood generation systems and cohesiveness between various cultural as well as racial groups. Cutting across the social strata, this industry benefits with parity and empowers the have not. The State Government of Manipur had declared Tourism as an industry for taking novel measures for the development of tourism related sectors.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**



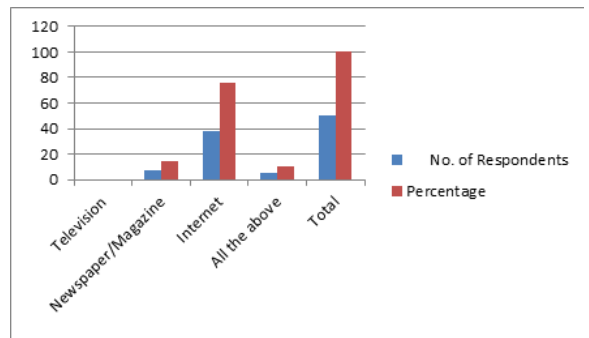
**Fig. No.4.1: Spatiality in Eco Tourism**

INFERENCE: From the above graph, majority of the respondents said that Natural sites, wildlife & gardens sites, Cultural sites, Lakes sites Archeological sites, Adventure sites and waterfall sites is the speciality in Eco Tourism of Manipur.



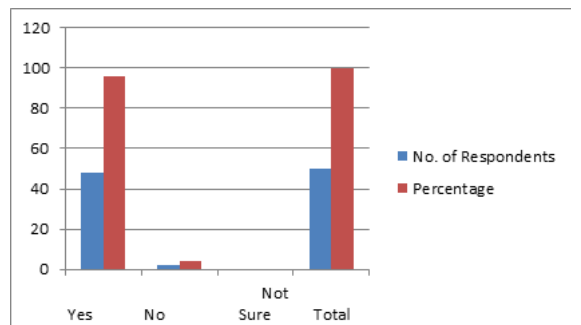
**Fig. no. 4.3 Issuing of Brochure about Eco Tourism**

INFERENCE: From the above graph, more than half of the respondents have not seen brochure describing about eco tourism of Manipur.



**Fig. no. 4.4: Prospective Media for Promotion**

INFERENCE: From the above graph it is clear that the respondents have rated internet as the prospective media for promotion of Eco Tourism of Manipur.



**Fig. no.4.5 Need of Publicity**

INFERENCE: From the above graph almost all the respondents said that Eco Tourism needs more publicity.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS GIVEN BY THE ECOTOURISM OF MANIPUR**

Manipur, the land of jewel is famous for its salubrious climate, exotic greenery, rich flora, the wildlife sanctuaries and floating Nation park of the state, the treasure houses given a huge potential economic resource for generating income in nature scenic tourist spots, rich culture and ethnic heritage because of its natural assets, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos of hosts, tourism holds high potential of the state.

**Economic Benefits**

- Helps to diversify the local economy, employment directly in the tourism sector and in support management sectors.
- Generates foreign exchange for the country and injects capital and new money into the local economy.
- Stimulates profitable domestic industries, hotels and other lodging facilities, restaurants and food services, transportation system, handicrafts and guide services.
- Generates foreign employment, directly in the tourism sector and in support and resource management sectors.
- Improves road system and infrastructure that contributes to the entire destination can be justified and supported by the benefits from the tourism development.
- Increases tax revenues from tourism.
- Natural Environment Benefits
- Parks and natural preserves may be created and ecological preservation supported as a necessity for natural based tourism.
- Increased awareness and concern for the environment can result from natural-based tourism activities and development.
- Improved waste management can be achieved.
- Social Benefits
- Enhances local community's esteem and provides an opportunity for greater understanding and communication

- among peoples of diverse backgrounds.
- Public spaces may be developed and enhanced through tourism activity.
- The quality of life of a community can be enhanced by economic diversification through tourism.
- Cultural Benefits
- Can exchange local cultural awareness.
- Can generate revenue to help pay for the preservation of archaeological sites, historical buildings and districts.
- Despite criticism about the attention of culture to unacceptable levels, the sharing of cultural knowledge and experience can be beneficial for hosts and guests of tourism destinations and can result in the revival of local traditions and crafts.

### SUGGESTION

1. Flexibility regarding time, site, schedule, programmed and should be maintain by the Department.
2. The Department of Tourism should organized Nature sites excavation programmers outside the state where they can highlights Manipur Eco Tourism and Natural sites.
3. The Department of Tourist should conduct promotional campaign like making of Documentary Films for showing the Natural Eco Tourism sites of Manipur.
4. If the Department of Tourism advertises through Television, Magazine, Internet etc and publicizes Manipur Eco Tourism Natural sites to the World, they can attract more tourist to the destination.
5. If there will be separate page describing in detail about Manipur Eco Tourism and Natural sites in the brochure published by the department, then the tourist will have much knowledge about Manipur Eco Tourism which will in turn helped the Department of Tourism.
6. The Tourism Department should highlight Manipur Eco Tourism sites globally by using diverse techniques such as advertising, posters, and display boards.
7. Publicity of Manipur is highly suggested and recommended not only through words of mouth by friends and relatives as it the most effective marketing tool of all.
8. The Tourism Department can encourage and educate the villagers host about tourism and how to behave towards the tourists.
9. The Tourism Department along with the Government of Manipur can join hands with the hotels entrepreneurs by providing hospitality during the stay at the destination.
10. It will be highly beneficial to the Tourism Department as well as the state if they change the venue of Sangai Festival to other districts of Manipur every year so that the tourist can see and reached the beautiful and unexplored areas of the state.
11. It is high time that the Department should adopt various plans and policies for the development of Eco Tourism.
12. The Department can use the speciality of the Eco Tourism to attract the tourist to the state.

### CONCLUSIONS

The state of Manipur has a variety of natural eco-tourism potential. The state has huge biodiversity resources as well as tourism resorts and other various exotic landscapes, as the beautiful green valley is surrounded by nine hill ranges. Moreover the blue lake of Loktak in the central valley, enchanting waterfalls in Sadu Chiru and rich cultural heritage enhance the state has a huge beauties of the Manipur untapped ecotourism potential hot spot for the growth and development of eco-tourism ventures. Throughout the studies, it was found that the Tourism Department and Government of Manipur require additional measures and promotional strategies to improve the prospects of ecotourism in the state. I have also suggested that they should take up some plans and policies for the development of Manipur Tourism. If, properly developed, eco-tourism in the state of Manipur will generate employment opportunities especially to the unemployment youths and economic surplus without causing inseparable damage to the environment, conflicts to the individuals, senti-

ments and ethos of the host population but also it could gear up the economic growth of the state of Manipur.

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