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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HILLSIDE HUSTLE: QUANTIFYING THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF TOURISM IN TRIPURA

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to highlight the economic aspects of the tourism industry in Tripura. Further, it discusses on the prospects and challenges of the tourism industry in Tripura. It has been observed that absence of tourism promotion marketing packages, lack of attention from tourism business sector and poor service quality are the basic challenges for development of tourism industry in the state although it has immense potentiality to be realised. The state has many heritage, religious, archaeological, eco-tourism, adventure, and rural tourism sites of late the government have prioritised the promotion of tourism sites through public private partnerships and weekend cultural programmes have been regularly conducted in many places to attract more tourists. The data have been collected from the primary and secondary source. The researcher to arrive at any conclusion has used descriptive and inferential statistics like regression and ANOVA. The major finds of the study recommend that the GDP of the state depends on the tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has a long history and it is an integral part of human life. It basically means movement of people from one place to another for human refreshment (Alipour *et al.*, 2013). It is considered as a temporary movements of people to outside from their respective home place. Millions of people are now involved with this industry (Bigano *et al.*, 2007). There are two components in this industry, one is the visitor and the second is the person who supplies various services and products. Such industry is playing a vital role for the socio-economic development (Dieke, 1991, Mishra & Chhatoi 2017 a & b). It is providing livelihood to the millions of families globally. People from various section of the society are involved in this industry (Okello *et al.*, 2012). It is generating both the public and private income. Government earning income through various taxes and the seller through selling various items (Mazimhak, 2007). Tourism industry is a place of employment for millions of unemployed youths. It is generating jobs in hospitality sector, service sector, hotel industry, and transportation industry (Kruger & Douglas, 2015, Chhatoi & Mishra., 2018). It encourages for infrastructure development in and around the tourist spots. It is more useful to cultural exchanges (Saayman *et al.*, 2001, Mishra & Chhatoi 2020). The economic development and growth of various countries are more dependent on this sector (Mutsena, & Kabote, 2015).

India is a popular tourist destination since a long period. Economy of the states, like Jammu and Kashmir, Goa, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan are more dependent on the tourism sector (Rogerson, 2015). Although North-eastern states are least known for tourist footfalls, but its unique natural beauty can entice the nature lovers (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). This region has more potentiality for tourism sector due to its unique landscape, rich biodiversity, charming climate, simple people etc. (Scheyvens, 2007). Tripura is a small hilly state in the north-eastern region of India. It has a long history of migration of thousands of people. The tribal and Bengali communities are living peacefully in the state. Tripura Tourism Development Corporation Limited was established in 2008 for development of tourism sector in the state. The objectives of this paper are to examine the economic indicator and to study the prospects and challenges of tourism sector in Tripura.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area Description: Tripura is in the North-eastern region of India. It is surrounded by Bangladesh in north, west and south and in the eastern side by the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram. The state covers a total area of 10486 km². More specifically, the data for this study have been collected from the major tourist destination towns of the state. These towns are Agartala and Udaipur, the two religious and

pilgrimage fortresses. Agartala is the capital city and Udaipur is the second largest city of the state.

Design and Approach: This study is descriptive in its design and has utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study relied upon both primary and secondary data. Secondary data are related to tourist flow, GDP of the state, and facilities available. The primary data have been collected through questionnaires from the tourists. The data are related to the constraints and challenges of tourism in Tripura. A direct personal interview method has been adopted for data collection from 200 respondents. The respondents are domestic as well as foreign tourists. The secondary data have been gathered from archives, tourism statistics bulletins, books, and prior studies. The said samples have been selected from the two major tourist destinations of the state namely Agartala, and Udaipur by adopting convenience sampling.

Method of Analysis: To reveal the domestic tourism practices in general and the trends, potentials, promotions, and challenges of domestic tourism in particular, different methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis comprising of descriptive analysis, content and text analysis have been performed. Table and graph were formed by using excel software. Content and text analysis method have also been used for analysing the qualitative data. For the present study, the researcher has used Linear Regression analysis to authenticate the hypotheses. Data analyses have been done on the following hypotheses:

- There is no relationship between the number of tourist inflow to the GDP of Tripura; and
- There is a relationship between the number of tourist inflow to the GDP of Tripura;

RESULTS

Tripura is abounding with heritage tourism, religious tourism, archaeological tourism, eco & wildlife tourism, nature & adventure Tourism, and rural tourism. The state is enriched in cultural diversity and tourist sites. Unakoti, Pilak, Chhabimura, and Bhubaneswari Temple are the key archaeological sites while Damboor Lake, Rudrasagar Lake, Jampui Hills, and Chhabimura are the well-known adventure tourism sites in the state. There is growing scope for eco-tourism in Sepahijala Sanctuary, Trishna, Rowa, Baramura eco-park, and Tepania eco parks etc. Tripurasundari Temple, Jagannath Temple, Umamaheswar Temple, Kasba Kalibari, and Benuban Mahamuni Pagoda are the distinguished religious sites of the state. There is enough opportunity for rural tourism in Durgabari, Debipur, Kalapania, Banabithi. Ujjayanta Palace, and Neermahal Palace are the best known heritage sites in the state. There is immense possibility for the growth of home stay sites like Jampui Hills, Darchoi, and Debbari.

Table 1. Recognized Tourist Spot in Tripura

Name of the Tourist spot	Sub – Division	District
Banabithi	Khowai	Khowai District
Baramura Eco Park	Teliamura	Khowai District
Benuban Bihar	Sadar	West Tripura District
Bhubeneswari Mandir	Udaipur	Gomati District
Boxanagar	Sonamura	Sipahijala District
Brahmakunda	Mohanpur	West Tripura District
Chabimura	Amarpur	Gomati District
Chaturdash Debata Bari	Sadar	West Tripura District
Damboor lake	Gandacharra	Dhalai District
Gedu Mia Mosque	Sadar	West Tripura District
Jampui Hill	Kailashahar	Unakoti District
Jagannath Mandir	Sadar	West Tripura District
Kalapania Nature Park	Sabroom	South Tripura District
Kamalasagar	Bishalgarh	Sipahijala District
Maharaja Bir Bikram College	Sadar	West Tripura District
Mahamuni Pagoda	Sabroom	South Tripura District
Neermahal Palace	Sonamura	Sipahijala District

Pilak	Santirbazar	South Tripura District
Saibaba Temple	Sadar	West Tripura District
Shipahijala	Bishalgarh	Sipahijala District
Tepania Eco Park	Udaipur	Gomati District
Tripureswari Temple	Udaipur	Gomati District
Trishna Wild Life Sanctuary	Belonia	South Tripura District
Ujjayanta Palace	Sadar	West Tripura District
Unakoti	Kailashahar	Unakoti District

Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2020-21, p.211-12.

The above table shows that Tripura has many well-known tourist sites. These sites are well scattered in more or less in every district. Week end cultural programs are being organised in many places to attract more tourists. Government is promoting public private partnerships for developing these tourist hubs.

Table 2. Tourist Destination in Tripura

Destination	Explore
Heritage Tourism Sites	Tripura State Museum, Agartala, West Tripura District
	Ujjayanta Palace, Agartala, West Tripura District
	Neermahal Water Palace, Melaghar, Sepahijala District
	Bhubaneswari Temple, Udaipur, Gomati District
Religious Destination Sites	Akhaura Integrated Check Post, Agartala, West Tripura District
	Tripura Sundari Temple, Matabari, Gomati District
	Chaturdash Devta Temple, Khayerpur, West Tripura District
	Kasba Kali Temple, Kamalasagar, Sepahijala District
	Gedu Mia's Masjid, Agartala, West Tripura District
	Mahamuni Pegoda, Manubankul, South Tripura District
Archaeological Tourism Sites	Venuban Vihar, Agartala, West Tripura District
	Unakoti Archaeological Site, Kailashahar, Unakoti District
	Pilak Archaeological Sites, Jolaibari, South Tripura District
	Buddhist Stupa, Baxanagar, Sepahijala District
	Gunabati Group of Temples, Udaipur, Gomati District
Eco & Wildlife Destination Sites	Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary & Clouded Leopard National Park, Bishalgarh, Sepahijala District
	Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Belonia, South Tripura District
	Rowa Wildlife Sanctuary, North Tripura District
	Gomati Wildlife Sanctuary, Between Gomati & Dhalai District
	Baramura Eco Park, Teliamura, Khowai District
	Kalapania Nature Park, Sabroom, South Tripura District
	& Jampui Hill, North Tripura District
Nature & Adventure Tourism Spots	Chabimura, Gomati District
	Dumboor Lake, Dhalai District
	Sanaiya Waterfalls, Dhalai District
Rural Tourism Sites	Durgabari, Mohanpur, West Tripura District
	Debipur, Kamalasagar, Sepahijala District
	Kalapania, Sbroom, South Tripura District
	Banabithi, Khowai District

Source: Website of Tripura Tourism (<https://tripuratourism.gov.in/destination>)

The above table discusses the tourist destination in Tripura. Tripura has many heritage tourism, religious tourism, archaeological tourism, eco & wildlife tourism, nature & adventure tourism, and rural tourism sites. West Tripura and South Tripura district have more tourist places than the other districts.

Table 3. Inflows of Tourist in Tripura

Years	Number of tourist visited			Revenue Collection*
	Foreign	Domestic	Total	
2009-10	4,763	3,20,931	3,25,694	1.0568
2010-11	5,290	3,54,006	3,59,296	1.6458
2011-12	6,550	3,59,731	3,66,281	1.8445
2012-13	7,817	3,58,625	3,66,442	1.6988

2013-14	15,376	3,59,995	3,75,371	1.8927
2014-15	29,086	3,61,581	3,90,667	2.0347
2015-16	35,619	3,63,828	3,99,447	2.0716
2016-17	34,834	3,50,984	3,85,818	2.2941
2017-18	80,094	4,03,394	4,83,488	3.0099
2018-19	1,12,955	4,16,860	5,29,815	3.4573
2019-20	1,54,993	4,31,142	5,86,135	NA.
2020-21	01	74,344	74,345	NA.

Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2020-21, p.210. (* Rs. in Crores)

The above table shows the inflows of tourist in Tripura. Number of domestic and foreign tourist are increasing continuously during 2017-2020. Largest number of international tourist came from Bangladesh, and others countries like Thailand, Myanmar, China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan also contributing substantial numbers. But number of tourist were decreased since 2020 due to the corona virus pandemic. Arriving of domestic tourist is nearly three time higher than the arriving of the arrival of foreign tourist.

Table 4. Package & Conducted Tours of TTDCL

Packages	Duration
Archaeological Tour	4 days / 3 Night
Conducted Tour – 2 nos.	1 day
Eco Tourism Package	5 Days / 4 Night
Explore Tripura	8 Days / 7 Night
Pilgrim Tour	4 Days / 3 Night
Weekend Package Tour	3 Days / 2 Night

Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2020-21, p.211.

The above table reflects the package & conducted tours undertaken by Tripura Tourism Development Corporation Limited. These tour packages that were introduced to attract more tourists. Tourist Information Centres have been established to assist inform the tourists about various packages and conducted tours.

Table 5. Registered Tourist Accommodation in Tripura

Name of Tourist Lodges	Address
Comilla view Tourist Lodge	Kamalasagar, Sepahijala Ph. 03812916014 (L), 9089288637 (M)
Dakhinayan Tourist Lodge	Sabroom, South Tripura Ph. 9436794787, 03823270940 (L)
Dhalai Tourist Lodge	Ambassa, Dhalai Ph. 9856778988 (M)
Eden Tourist Lodge,	Vangmun Jupui Hills, North Tripura Ph. 03824290888 (L)
Geetanjali Tourism Guest House	Kunjaban, Agartala, West Tripura Ph. 0381 241 -0009, 241-0016 (L),
Gunabati Yatriniwas	Matabari, Gomati Ph. 03821- 267939 (L)
Gomati Yatiniwas	Udaipur, Gomati Ph. 03821- 223478 (L)
Juri Tourist Lodge	Dharmanagar, North Tripura Ph. 03822-231921(L)
Longtarai Paryatan Niwas	Manughat, Dhalai Ph. 9436123098 (M), 03824211962 (L)
Muhuri Parjatan Niwas	Belonia, South Tripura Ph. 03823-222032 (L)
Pilak Tourist Lodge	Jolaibari, South Tripura Ph. 9862175899(M), 03823263836(L)
Pilak Pantha Niwas	Bagafa, South Tripura Ph. 9862642130(M)
Sagarika Paryatan Niwas	Amarpur, Gomati Ph. 9856071270,7308025441(M)
Sagarmahal Tourist Lodge	Melaghar, Sepahijala Ph. 0381- 2524418 (L),
Saima Tourist Lodge	Gandachara, Dhalai Ph. 9436555861(M)
Unakoti Tourist Lodge	Kailashahar, Unakoti Ph. 03824- 223635 (L)

Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2015-16. p. 235.

The above table depicts the registered tourist accommodations available in Tripura. These listed accommodations are owned by the government and running under the department of Tourism, Govt. of

Tripura. There are also various private owned lodges near or around the tourist sites.

Table 6: Activities performed by Tourism Organizations and Businesses to promote Tourism in Tripura

Activities performed to promote the tourism	Hotel/Resorts	Tourism Dept.	Travel and Tour agency	Total
Arranging diversified tourism activities	30 (15)	130 (65)	40 (20)	200(100)
Delivering promotions through media	10 (05)	110 (55)	80 (40)	200(100)
Delivering quality services /priority	20 (10)	90 (45)	90 (45)	200(100)
Friendly treatment	70 (35)	60 (30)	70 (35)	200(100)
Providing discounted price	10 (05)	50 (25)	140 (70)	200(100)

Source: Field survey (Number within bracket indicates the percentage of respondents)

The above table depicts the activities performed by tourism organizations and businesses to promote tourism in Tripura. Most of the responded think that Tourism Department and Travel & Tour agency were more involved in activities performed to promote the tourism.

Table 7. Calculating linear regression between Gross Domestic Product of Tripura's Tourist Inflow

Year	GDP (In Crores)	Revenue from tourist (In Crores)
2009-10	15402.70	1.0568
2010-11	17867.73	1.6458
2011-12	19,208.41	1.8445
2012-13	21,663.20	1.6988
2013-14	25,592.83	1.8927
2014-15	29,533.46	2.0347
2015-16	35,937.73	2.0716
2016-17	39,479.40	2.2941
2017-18	43,715.80	3.0099
2018-19	49,823.32	3.4573

Source: Economic Review of Tripura 2015-16

Table 7. (a) Summary Output

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.933474881
R Square	0.871375354
Adjusted R Square	0.855297273
Standard Error	4521.890748
Observations	10

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 7 (b) Coefficients and t-statistic

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	-3991.70258	4810.614772	-0.8297697	0.430731371
Revenue from tourist	16097.22871	2186.581059	7.36182574	7.90354E-05

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 7 (c). AVOVA Analysis

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	1108182267	1108182267	54.19647816	7.90354E-05
Residual	8	163579967.5	20447495.94		
Total	9	1271762234			

Source: Compiled by the authors

The Linear Regression has been run taking Gross Domestic Product [as Y] as dependent variable and Domestic Tourist Inflow [as X] as independent variable. The R square is found to be 0.871375354, showing, thereby that there is quite a significant degree of relation between the dependent variable Y, i.e. Gross Domestic Product and dependent variable X, i.e. Inflow of tourists. Thus, the researchers reject the null hypothesis. The value of t-stat has come out to be -0.8297697 and the P-value has come out to be 0.430731371 respectively. The value of t-stat is less than the p-value and, therefore,

the null hypothesis has been rejected and it can be said that the number of tourist inflow and Tripura's GDP are significantly correlated. The F-test statistics of the above table is 54.19 with a p-value of less than 0.01 indicates that, the null hypothesis has been rejected and it can be said that the number of tourist inflow and Tripura's GDP are significantly correlated.

Table 8. Constraints that hinder tourism participation of individuals in Tripura

Constraints	Tourists			Constraint
	Frequency	Percentage	Rank	
Ethnic Politics & related problems	50	25	6	Structural
Health related problem	40	20	8	Intrapersonal
High cost of living at destinations	130	65	1	Structural
Large family size	30	15	9	Structural
Lack of transportation (accessibility)	70	35	5	Structural
Lack of awareness about destinations	90	45	3	Intrapersonal
Low disposable income (poverty)	100	50	2	Structural
Poor attitude towards visitation	80	40	4	Intrapersonal
Travel hindering government policy	46	23	7	Structural

Source: Field survey

The above table illustrates the constraints that hinder tourism participation of individuals in Tripura. High cost of living at destinations low disposable income (poverty), and lack of awareness about destinations are the basic constraints that hinder tourism participation in the state.

Table 9. Challenges of Tourism Development in Tripura

Challenges	Tourists		
	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Absence of domestic tourism development and marketing policy and strategy	140	70	1
High cost of services at destinations	70	35	8
Lack of domestic tourism promotion marketing packages	130	65	2
Lack of attention from tourism business sectors	120	60	3
Lack of attention from the government	78	38	7
Low per capita income of the country	80	40	6
Poor service quality	110	55	4
Poor attitude of the government bodies towards domestic tourism	90	45	5

Source: Field survey

The above table depicts the challenges of tourism development in Tripura. Absence of domestic tourism development and marketing policy and strategy, lack of domestic tourism promotion marketing packages, lack of attention from tourism business sectors, and poor service quality are the basic challenges of tourism development in Tripura.

CONCLUSION

Tripura has enormous prospects for developing tourism as a major sector of the economy. It has more prospects in religious, medical, educational, adventure, rural tourism, sports, and heritage tourism. The number of domestic and international tourists are in rise in Tripura because for its natural beauty, culture, architecture, monuments and festivals. Tripura Sundari Temple attracts the largest number of domestic as well as foreign tourists in the state. This sector has more potential for increasing income, reducing unemployment, and improving the standard of living of the poor.

Hospitality sectors like Transportation, hotels, food, shopping, entertainment etc. industries are also benefited from this sector provided the government focused to mitigate the problems like shortage of transportation facilities, infrastructure safety and security. Tourism sector is one of the largest employment generators and plays a very significant role in promoting inclusive growth of the less-advanced sections of the society as well as of eradication poverty. The Government of Tripura, under the stewardship of the present Chief Minister is rigorously working for the development of this sector in its all manifestations to attract more and more visitors from home and abroad. The government is already working on the master plan for improving the existing infrastructure at major tourist destinations. There is exists relationship between the number of tourists' inflow to the GDP of the state.

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