

## Tezpur: A Historical place of Tourism in Assam

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**Abstract:** The 21<sup>st</sup> century make its development in all sphere i.e., industry, craft, education, science and technology, literature so on. In the sense of eco-tourism, the Government of India as well as Government of Assam has taken some very positive plan and programme to emphasis on the particular sectors. The development of tourism industry can contribute lots of hope to our socio-economic development especially in the North East Region. In Assam, the government has laid foundation to promote eco-tourism with the programme 'atulaniya asom'. In recent period tourism is becoming a very profitable industry than other industry. By the eco-tourism development the socio-culture, socio-economic life of the people has also gradually changed. Tourism is popularly considered as travel for recreation, leisure or business purposes. Tezpur is a very beautiful tourist place of development in the concern of eco-tourist site in Assam. Historically, Tezpur has own identity and present days it become the centre place of tourist. Therefore, the attempt of the paper is to find positive way to extend our eco-tourism in the side and corner of the globe.

**Key Words:** eco-tourism, tourism, industry, travel, leisure, tezpur.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Development of a nation is influenced by a number of interrelated factors viz. economic, social, human resource, environment, tourism, et.al. Each one of these parameters is crucial in itself. Most of the developing nations face different challenges as a result of different combinations of these factors. Economic development has to go hand in hand with social development. The eco-tourism is like a very good sector for development our national economy in recent era. Like agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, irrigation, transport, power resource etc. The tourism has a worldwide improvement to promote our economic growth. Many of the recent programmes and policies of the government have sought to reach out to the common man at the bottom most level.

India has very much rich in natural beauty and resources. It has plenty of natural resource like socio-cultural heritage, bio-diversity, mountain areas, archaeological site, historical ruins, religious site and also eco-tourism places by which the tourism resource has increasing in numbers in the recent period. In present days the government of India has launched new eco-tourist site in the country for development of tourism. North East India has also tremendous eco-tourist site to promote tourism in recent years, Assam has too immense potentials fields for upgrade our tourism culture. Tourism is based on some essential natural heritage, therefore natural parks and sanctuaries, lakes, warm water spring, rivers, forest, wildlife are the principal components of tourist attraction. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the development of transport system, railways, airports and improvement in economy is wellbeing the demand for tourism sector.

In Assam, there are several important tourist spot but an attempt has been made to study on the problems and prospect of the eco –tourism in the region and a historical outlook on the Tezpur which is situated in Sonitpur district of Assam. The development of tourism industry can contribute lots of hope to our socio-economic development especially in the North East Region. The meaning of the tourism is to be as travel for recreation, leisure or business purposes. The very term “tourism” means to ‘travel’ and its related activities. The word tourism is derived from ‘*tornus*’ which means a circle or turner’s wheel. In Sanskrit it is called ‘*prayatan*’, which means going to a different place away from home. Simultaneously another two words used with this word are ‘*Deshatan*’ and ‘*Trithatan*’. *Deshatan* means travel for economic purposes while *Trithana* means travel for religious purpose. Tourism remains a term that is subject to diverse interpretation with a wide variety of definitions proposed in the literature. The world Tourism Organization defines tourists as people “travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”

Tourism may be classified on the basis of nature and purposes of travel. The important tourism are as two types i.e., domestic and foreign or international tourism. Eco- tourism is also a part of tourism. This type of tourism is nature based tourism which is managed to be ecologically sustainable. To be a sustainable tourism need to be related to an appropriate return to the local community and a contribution to the long term conservations of the resources. The region of north east India is one of the important destinations for eco-tourism place.

## 2. OBJECTIVES:

The proposed study is a concerned of major quarries for the present status of the eco-tourism industry in Assam as can be observed in all aspects from their contribution to the development of economy in a state. The basic objective of the proposed study is to study

- the historical site of Tezpur
- to examine the tourism spots of the area
- to find the generation of employment in tourism sector.

The rapid expansion of local, national and international tourism have led to significant increase in generation of employment in our educated youth. Therefore, the attempt of the paper is to find positive way to extend our eco-tourism in the side and corner of the globe.

## 3. FIELD & METHODOLOGY:

The field of the study is to be basically in Tezpur as well as Assam. The paper has attempted to find out historical sites of Sonitpur district. Methodologies adopted in the present work are obviously historical, analytical and descriptive. The primary and secondary data are collected and used in the paper. The primary sources and investigations are supplemented by the secondary sources, i.e. books, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, research papers and different types of collections.

## 4. TOURISM IN ASSAM:

Development of tourism industry can therefore be aptly linked up with the socio-economic activities of North East India. This proposition can be studied in two ways. One can study the impact that development of tourism can have on socio-economic scenario of the North East India. Secondly one may also take up the socio-economic activities of north east India and examine their possibilities in the development of tourism in north east India. Assam is very beautiful place with its luscious green exotic animals, migratory birds and Ahom architecture. It is like a paradise on earth. Assam, the land of Eastern light and of 'No parallels'; It has bestowed with a very rich bounty of nature. A multi cultural rainbow cultural canvas of Assam adds more attraction to this 'land of unparallel'. It has some of the finest wildlife sanctuaries at Manas, Kaziranga, Nameri, Itinga, Dibru-choikhuwa, Orang etc. This sectors a variety of exotic fauna including the great Indian one horn rhinoceros. The state has also having the tradition of art craft, music and dance. In Assam tourism is considered as one of the fastest growing industry which relates our economy.

Tezpur is a sub-division of Sonitpur district of Assam. In Tezpur, there are several tourist spot having its nice religious places of historical background and importance. The entire region has several positive aspect of eco-tourism and it has some shortcomings. The tourism gives cultural assimilation in the region. Sonitpur has been covering 5280.58 sq K.M. It has three subdivision, eight town, 1876 village, 14 blocks and 158 Gaon Panchayots. Tezpur is the district head quarter of Sonitpur. This place is known by various other names in ancient times that include Harupeswar, Purapur, Tizopur, Kanyapur, Hatteswar etc. According to Dr. Banikanta Kakoti noted that the Ausiatic word 'Tizu' means reptile and this place derived its modern name Tezpur from the fact that it was once full of snakes and reptiles. The Sanskrit words 'Teza' meaning 'Blood' and 'Pura' meaning 'City' and the combined word Tezpur is signifying a mythological ware "hari hara yuddha" between the armies of Lord Krishna and Mahadev Siva, that took place in this area and flooded with blood, as Lord Krishna came to rescue his grandchild Aniruddha who was kidnapped and held captive in the 'Agnigarh Fort' by Chitrlekha a friend princess Usha, the daughter of demon king Banasura, a great Siva Bhakta for whom Mahadev served as a protector. From this evidence the Sonitpur and Tezpur was well known from the past. Some of the important tourist places in the historical site Tezpur are the following:-

**Bharabi or Maithan:** The Bhairabi Devalaya dedicated to Goddess Durga is situated 7 KM away from Tezpur in the Bamuni Pahar, another name of this holy place is Mohabghah or Maithan. It also known that legend artist Chitrlekha got sixty- four branches of creative arts by worshipping the Goddess Bhairabi here. In present days animal and bird sacrifice regularly in the Maithan.

**Mahabhairab Mandir:** This temple was known as the Siva Temple. The Siva linga of this temple is the biggest and highest in south-East Asia. The secret marriage between Usha and Aniruddha celebrated here. As per mythology a Rajkareng for Usha was built by Banasur in the temple. It is situated near Darrang College, Tezpur.

**Da-Parbotia:** It is located at 10 KM away from Tezpur. This shrine is famous for the sculpture of Goddess Ganga and Jamuna. The stone to this shrine gate was built in 4<sup>th</sup> century in Gupta period. The place is beautifully decorated by Architecture department of India.

**Agnigarh or Usha Aniruddha Udyan:** In 1992 the then Chairman of Tezpur town and the founder president of Assam Sahitya Sabha Padmanath Gohain Baruah built this park in his own name Padama Park. Agnigarh is a part of Bamuni hill which was newly built for tourist in 2000-2001 and renamed as Usha-Anirudha Udyan. The monuments of this park were built by artist Joy Das,

**Kanaklata Udyan:** This Park is dedicated on the brave name Kanaklata Baruah died in British bullets at Gohpur P.S under Sonitpur in 1942. It is one of the beautiful natural park built on the pick of Dhenukhana and Ouguri hills located in the western part of the town. The British named this hill as ‘Tiger Hill’.

**Chitrallekha Udyan:** The Park was first established in the memory of British Deputy Commissioner Captain HWG Cole in 1909 that died at Tezpur. Later the park is renovated by Mr. Bhanu, DC with the help of Tezpur Environment Society in 1996. It also a very good tourist park at Sonitpur district.

**Holeswar Devalaya:** An ancient Siva temple of Salastambha dynasty situated 10 KM away from Tezpur. The male God of the Salastambha dynasty was known by different names which include Haleswar, Happeteswar and Hadapeswar as per noted historian Dr. Banikanta Kakoti.

**Gupteswar Devalaya:** It is located at Singori on the bank of Brahmaputra away from Tezpur 15 KM from Dhekiajuli town. The king Banasur became very powerful in the Gupteswar where he worshiped the Lord Siva. This mandir was reconstructed by Ahom king Siva Singha. In the occasion of Siva rati a grand mela is annually organized by the people of the locality.

**Rock Inscription of ancient Tezpur:** The rock inscription of Tezpur is one of important historical place. The historian KL Baruah opined that the rock inscriptions of Harjara Verma porters to be an ordinance regulating the playing of boats on the Brahmaputra within certain boundaries. Another three number of rock inscriptions are at Somdhara Ghar around 8 KM east of the Tezpur town near Jiabharali river and Brahmaputra on Samodhara and Bhomoraguri Hill of Ahom king Pratap Singha.

**Nikamul Satra:** The inscription of the satra is unique features of Vaishnavism in Assam founded Mahapurush Sankardev. In 1805, this satra was established and it was developed by the famous freedom fighter Dharmaratna Gohain Chandra Goswami. The Satra is located in the northern part of the town.

**Pokhi Trithao (Samaguri Bill):** It is familiarly well known as Bird Udyan. It is far away from Tezpur town near about 42 KM. Pokhi-Trithao or Samaguri Bill is a tourist place for bird’s lover tourists. Migrated birds from different places came there every year in the winter season.

**Bhairab Pad:** An ancient Siva temple situated 4 KM away from Tezpur in the west. As mythological story at the time of the hari-hara yudha Lord Siva put one of his right foot at Bhairab Pad another at Bhomoraguri hill. So, historically Bhairab Pad is very important place of tourist site.

**Rudra Pad:** It is located in Bhomoraguri hill near Kalia Bhumura Bridge. A foot print of Lord Siva also found there, the temple also known as Kanyacharam. King Banasur first met Lord Siva in this place after his meditation.

**Nagsankar Temple:** it was built in 4<sup>th</sup> century AD by king Sar-sankar or king Nagakhya. It is about 60 KM east from Tezpur town. Nagsankar temple is like as Bileswar Devalaya at Nalbari. Nagsankar was an ancient educational centre as per the legendary concern.

**Barechahariya Bhowna Mahotsav:** It is a two hundred years old traditional cultural of Jamugurihat since 1797 held 5-6 years interval at Pakamura pathar near NH 52 which is 50 KM away from Tezpur. The village groups 20-30 collectively takes part and perform the Bhowna. Traditional Bhowna culture was developed by artist Sonitkumar Gajen Baruah to promote Sankardeva’s multi-dimensional arts and culture in our society.

There are some other historical site is located in Tezpur like Nameri National Park, Kashi Biswanath Temple, Khamakhya temple of Silghat, Ketekeswar Devalaya, Sukleswar Mandir, Kalia Gosai than and so on.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

These holy shrines of Tezpur appear to give a very impressive picture for promotion of religious as well as eco-tourism in the region. However, in practical sense tourism fails to flourish here in spite of its resources for a variety of reasons. As a matter of the discussion north eastern region has still remain or lagging far behind the rest of the country in terms of the development of the industry and socio-economic upliftment also limited. Still the eco-tourism sector hardly has an organisational base there. This study reveals that the same factors which are largely responsible for the under development of tourism in the north east are playing their part to obstruct the growth in Tezpur also. The main reason for under develop is to poor publicity, lack of infrastructure facility, financial drawback, natural problems, weak role of government, problem of insurgency, lack of preservation and poor role of private sector to promote the tourism industry.

In conclusion, there is no dearth of resource in the North East India specially in Assam. The tourism is such activities which contributing towards the mutual understanding and respect between the peoples and societies. It has been promoting the ethical value of humanity an attitude of tolerance in respect of diversified religious and philosophy as well as moral beliefs of the people or tourist. The Sonitpur district of Assam is endowed with some significant places of worship which can really help to develop eco- tourism and also religious tourism. Tourism is one of the important meaning of individual for achieving the self education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the culture and tradition of the society. We need a comprehensive plan to make use of these places so that they can contribute our socio-economic growth in the state. It is also a positive sign of hope to our future eco-tourism development by preserving our historical sites or cultural heritage.

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