

AN EVALUATIVE STUDY ON SCOPE AND CHALLENGES OF ECO TOURISM IN SELECT DESTINATIONS OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT: Eco-Tourism has emerged as a new concept in the Tourism Industry. North-East is blessed with various natural resources. It has rich cultural diversity, landscapes, forests and rivers. States of North East has the potential to be developed as Hotspots Eco Tourism. Assam is fast evolving state with responsible and sustainable tourism products. Assam is blessed with deep & dense forests, rivers, mountains, hills, Tea Gardens and exotic wildlife. The Present study is carried out in Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong of Assam. This study gives a clear picture on the Scope of Eco tourism in all three destinations of Assam which are to be developed as an Eco Tourist sites and its challenges. It also depicts the benefits of the employment opportunities and increase in the economy of the areas because of eco tourism activities in the three destinations. Multistage Sampling Method has been used by the Researcher. Both Primary and Secondary Data were used for data collection purpose from both local Residents and Tourists of the three selected destinations.

KEYWORDS: Eco Tourism, Scope, Potential, Challenges, Employment.

1. INTRODUCTION ON TOURISM:

India's glorious traditions and rich cultural heritage are linked with the development of Tourism. Its magnificent monuments attract large numbers of visitors from all over the world. Besides, its cultural heritage, India also enjoys geographical diversity. The wealth of Cultural Traditions extending over thousands of Years, the natural surroundings, the architectural masterpiece, the music, dance, paintings, customs, languages-all these makes India a Tourist paradise. In Nehru's words- India is a land of Contrasts. India is more remarkable for her extreme diversity of physical features. Nature and History have made India a rich Tourist attracted country. It offers a rich variety in mountains, hills, beaches, rivers, valleys, highest picks, landscape, scenic beauty, Tradition, art, dance, festivals and music. India has a rich and varied tourist potential.

1.1 Eco Tourism: The term "Eco Tourism" was coined by a Mexican environmentalist named Hector Ceballos Las Curain in 1983. The term was used to explain ecotourism as a travel to naturally undisturbed areas with the aim of education. Slowly the term got developed and described as planning, management and development of sustainable activities were required in this segment of Tourism. Eco Tourism is also referred as green, conservative and sustainable tourism. Any nature based tourism which aims at conservation and preservation of natural resources is ecotourism. It aims at protection of forests, wildlife and marine life. Eco Tourism focuses on waste management by using eco friendly practices of adopting natural sources or materials for construction purpose. It also aims at providing financial benefit to the local people both directly or indirectly by providing employment which is a way of self sustaining in today's world.

1.2 Eco Tourism in India: Eco tourism was developed in 1970's and 1980's with the aim of natural conservation and sustainable development. Sustainable tourism and responsible tourism are the inter-related segments of Ecotourism. India is blessed with natural endowments. It has many mountain ranges, which provides an arena for ecotourism. Our country has mega biodiversity hotspots, rich in wildlife. It not only makes travelers enjoy the visit but also rejuvenate them. There are some places like Himalayan region, Kerala, North East India, Andaman and Nicobar Island and Lakshadweep Island are some of the areas which are rich in natural resources.

1.3 Eco Tourism in Assam: Assam is one of India's unspoiled treasures, where land is rich in biodiversity and Culture. The region is filled with forest dense, hills, lakes and rivers. It offers plenty of Eco Tourism hotspots which are rich in natural and cultural beauty. It is a land with great flora and fauna, mesmerizing scenic beauty, tea gardens which are really breathtaking. The simplicity and loving nature of tribal people inspires visitors to choose various eco tourist destinations to relax and enjoy, so that the next generation along with the present ones can feel and enjoy the nature together. Assam is one of the purest places for eco Tourism. Eco tourism

destinations of Assam attract domestic and International visitors who love to visit naturally green places and watch exotic and colorful wildlife of the State. Assam has five National Parks, a number of wildlife Sanctuaries and two bird Sanctuaries.

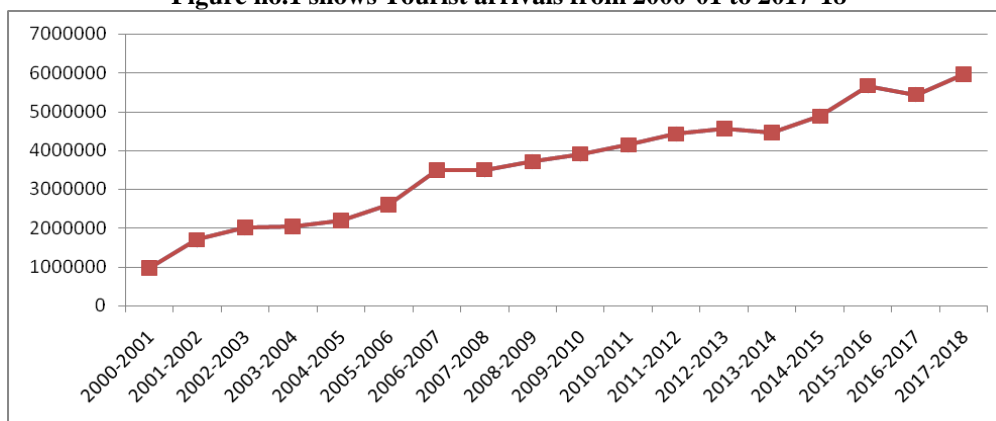
Table no. 1- Tourist Arrivals in Assam from 2000-2001 to 2017-2018

Tourist Arrivals in Assam from 2000-2001 to 2017-2018		
Year	Total	% Percentage (%) change over Previous Years
2000-2001	968444	
2001-2002	1695882	75.11
2002-2003	2009483	18.49
2003-2004	2036952	1.36
2004-2005	2195605	7.78
2005-2006	2594737	18.17
2006-2007	3493527	34.63
2007-2008	3503613	0.28
2008-2009	3713239	5.98
2009-2010	3910224	5.38
2010-2011	4143080	5.95
2011-2012	4424996	6.8
2012-2013	4562374	3.1
2013-2014	4463479	-2.16
2014-2015	4883831	9.41
2015-2016	5669270	16.08
2016-2017	5441575	-4.01
2017-2018	5966130	9.63

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Assam

Table no.1 indicates that the inflow tourist in Assam show a fluctuating trend. Tourist arrivals in Assam have seen an increasing trend from 2000-2001 to 2012-2013 but again showed decrease in the domestic tourist arrivals in 2013-2014 in India and then trend increases u to 2015-2016 and again declines in 2016-2017 due to demonetization in India because of which Tourism Sector has suffered a lot and then finally rises in 2017-2018. Assam records highest Tourist arrivals in the year 2017-2018 with an increase share of 5966130 lakhs. It indicated that Assam has great potential for tourism sector.

Figure no.1 shows Tourist arrivals from 2000-01 to 2017-18



The trend line in figure 1 shows fluctuations between years in tourist arrivals to Assam. In these eighteen years from 2000 to 2018, foreign tourist visit is high in 2017-18 and low in 2000-01.

1.4 Eco Tourism Products of Assam:

➤ **National Parks & Wildlife Sanctuaries:** National Parks and Wildlife sanctuaries of Assam have a variety of species, plants and natural scenery. Assam has ten national Park & wildlife sanctuary are Manas

wildlife sanctuary, Orang National Park, Laokhowa wildlife sanctuary, Kaziranga National Park, Hologapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary, Dibrugarh-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Bura Chappori Wildlife Sanctuary, Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary, East-Karbi Wildlife Sanctuary, Nambor Wildlife Sanctuary, Nameri National Park.

➤ **Historical and Religious Places:** Assam is a famous destination for Historical and Religious Beliefs. It has a variety of Temples and historical monuments. Kamakhya Temple is one of the most religious and famous temple of Assam. Kamakhya, Navgraha, Ugratara, Umananda, Sukhreswar, Rudreswar, Hajo, Lankeshwar and many more. There are all together 55 Historical monuments of Assam approved by archaeological Survey of India in the State of Assam. Tourist can enjoy and have a great sense of Assam's rich Literature by visiting the Historical Places.

➤ **Lakes and Rivers:** Assam has a great structure of River. Assam is blessed with natural waterfalls, streams and rivers. Brahmaputra is the most famous and important River. Rivers are mainly Pollution free and have crystal clear and pristine water. Festivals named "Namami Brahmaputra", "Namami Barack" also takes place in the name of these rivers. Chandubi lake, Deepor Beel, Haflong Lake, Son Beel, Subanshri, Kopili, JoySagar, Barack River. Tourist can enjoy River Rafting, Boating, fishing and Swimming.

➤ **Forest:** Long, dense, Green and Deep forests are located in Assam with a variety of plants, birds and other species. Major Types of Forest are Tropical Wet Evergreen, Tropical Semi Evergreen, Tropical Moist Deciduous, and Sub Tropical Broad leaved Hill, Sub Tropical Pine and Littoral, Swamp Forest.

➤ **Mountains and Hills:** Assam is a state blessed with natural resources and scenic beauty. Surrounded by small hills and mountains. There are many hill stations in Assam such as Haflong, Jatinga, Maibong, Umrangshu. Tourist can enjoy trekking and adventure in these areas.

➤ **Tea Gardens:** Assam is the largest Tea growing state of India. Beautiful tea estates of Assam covers 2, 16, 200 hectares of land. Tourist can observe Tea Plucking of workers and they can even have a walk on these Tea Estates. They can enjoy the natural calm and peace environment. There can be exchange of culture between tea growers and tourist. Tea Gardens are located in Jorhat, Tezpur, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar.

1.5 Top Eight Eco Tourism Destinations of Assam:

Majuli: Majuli is the biggest River Island. Majuli is a cultural heritage site of Assam. Majuli is not only a favorite spot for Eco Tourism in Assam but also for the worldwide. This island has been the hub of neo-Vaishavite culture since the 15th century for which foundation was laid by Srimanta Sankardeva. The island is a good learning center for neo-Vaishnavite philosophy and dance, music, art and literature. There are around 22 Satras where many people learn writing, playwriting, acting and performing. There is a Majuli Festival which is enjoyed by people.

Nameri National Park: Nameri National Park is located at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas in Sontipur district of Assam, about 40 kms from Tezpur. Nameri is the home for largest group of Asian elephants. Nameri is a home for 300 bird species. It also has more than 600 varieties plants in this area.

Manas National Park: Manas National Park is located at the foothills of the Bhutan- Himalayas in Assam. This is a World Heritage site which has got its name from Manas River. It has a lot of Royal Bengal Tigers and one of the richest biodiversity in the world. It has water Buffalos, golden langur, roofed Turtel. It is named as National Park in 1990.

Mayong: Mayong known as the land of Magic. It is few kilometers away of Guwahati. It has derived its name from the Sanskrit word Maya which means Illusion. There are four famous temples such as Kechikhiti Shrine of Burha Mayong, Narashinha Ashram of Hiloikhunda, Ganesh Temple of Hatimuria and Shiva Shrine of Kachashiila.

Karbi Anglong Hills: It is also called as Heart of Assam. Karbi Hills or Karbis are called as Eden of Assam. It has a lot of Flora and fauna. It is perfect destination for Eco Tourism. It is divided into two parts: Western part includes dense forests, rivers, waterfalls and Eastern part includes paddy fields and hills.

Orang National Park: It is situated on the north bank of the River Brahmaputra. It attracts tourist from worldwide. It is also famous for migratory birds and includes animals like elephants, one-horned Rhinos, leopard, Sambar. There are around more than 50 species of fish found here.

Sasoni Mebil : It is situated in Nahorkotiya, Dibrugarh. Merbil Lake and Merbil Village is the hottest spot of Eco Tourism in Assam. Tourist can explore staying inside a Chang Ghar made of Bamboos surrounded by a Lake and can experience the traditional culture and food of the local people. Assam Tourism Development Corporation and Oil India Limited has taken certain efforts for promoting and developing eco tourism in this spot of Assam.

Chandubi Lake: It is 64 kilometers away from Guwahati. Away from city life and noise, it is a place full of natural Flora and Fauna. The lake is unique and Beautiful in itself. It is a home of many Aquatic plants and wildlife. The lake includes Boating and Fishing activities. It is a very rich eco tourism spot for the state. This place also holds a “Chandubi Mela”.

1.6 Scope of Eco Tourism in Assam:

1. Assam has dense Forests, wildlife and Hills: The recorded forests area of Assam is 26,382 sq km accounting for 34.21 of its geographical area. There are around five forest types groups such as Tropical wet evergreen, Tropical Semi Evergreen, Tropical Moist Deciduous, Tropical Dry Deciduous and Sub Tropical Pine Forests. There are many wildlife species such as wild boar, hog deer, one- horned Rhinos and the Sambhar. Assam is termed as “the State of eternal Blue Mountains”. Haflong and Diphu are some of the beautiful hill stations in India.
2. Enjoys Favourable climate: Assam has favourable and pleasant Temperature. Neither too hot nor too cold. Tourist can enjoy beautiful weather which is not only suitable to the domestic tourist but also for international tourist.
3. Mighty Brahmaputra River and its tributaries: Brahmaputra is one of the largest river with a drainage area of 5,80,000 km in India. Its basin is shared by Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and West Bengal. Brahmaputra River is the fourth largest river of the world in terms of its discharge. Brahmaputra is considered as a lifeline for the people in the state. Because of the popularity of Tourism, people are spending on water related recreational activities worldwide. A lot of Activities like Sport Fishing, Underwater diving, Kayaking, boating are the activities done in river water.
4. Wildlife Sanctuaries & National Parks: Assam has 18 wildlife Sanctuary and 5 National Parks. Manas National Park is one of the most exotic Wildlife Surrounding in India. Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary plays important role in conservation of Animals. Kaziranga National Park which is famous for one- horned Rhinos. Nameri National Park which is considered as the richest among all for rare flora and fauna.
5. Rare Bird Species: Assam has certain rare flora species such as Orchids and Fox tail Orchids are the most remarkable ones in the state. Kaziranga National Orchid and Biodiversity has more than 500 species, estimated 1314 orchids found in India. One- horned Rhinos are also conserved in Assam. State also has the largest population of wild water buffalo and largest diversity of Birds around 820 with sub species of 920. The mammal diversity is around 190 in the state.
6. Free from Industrial Pollution: Assam is a non- industrial state. It does not have big industries or factories which may emit harmful gases. It is free from hazardous air pollution, water pollution and Sound pollution. Therefore, tourist from various places can visit Assam and can relax from their hectic busy city life & feel or have fresh breath in the greenery of the State.
7. Ethnic Tribes and their lifestyle, dress, dance, music and Food Habits: Assam has many ethnic tribes. The tribes have their unique Culture, tradition, music, art forms, dance and food habits. They are the sons of soils. They make their own traditional and local hand made products which is very popular among the tourist.
8. Central Government Initiative- Look East Policy: India’s Look East Policy developed during the time of Narshima Rao and Pursued by Dr. Manamohan Singh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken it to the next level i.e. “Act East Policy”. India has been developing better connectivity with ASEAN nations and it will promote trade & industrial development. Through North-East is a backward state it has a lot of potential to be developed as a tourism hub for the country. Modi Ji, said that connectivity needs to be improved for North Eastern States in order to promote tourism and have good number of foreign tourists in this region for its growth and development.
9. State Tourism Policies: Assam Tourism Development Corporation has undertaken various sustainable eco tourism projects in Majuli and Chandhubi which has been well received by the tourists. Livelihood linked tourism Schemes have been undertaken by the ATDC. Schemes like “Aamar Alohi- Rural home stay Scheme” and “Punyadham Yatra- A Pilgrimage Scheme For Senior Citizens” have been the fruitful initiatives taken by the state Government.
10. Better Connectivity through Airways, Railways and Roadways: The state is bordered by Bhutan and State of Arunachal Pradesh to the North; Nagaland and Manipur to the East, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Bangladesh to the South and West Bengal to the west via Silliguri Corridor that connects the state to the whole of India. Assam has good connectivity through Railways and Airways. It has 6 major Airports which covers all regional, domestic and international destinations. Assam is well linked to major cities in the country through Railways. It has 112 stations across the state.

11. Availability of Manpower: Abundant Manpower is available in the state. Youth of Assam can be given training to be well trained Guides and in order to bridge up the gap between Local People and Tourist and to develop entrepreneurship skills to encourage them for sustainability. Availability of Manpower is also a prospect for the growth of the State.

1.7 Challenges of Eco- Tourism in Assam

1. Absence of Proper Eco- Tourism Policy: State has initiated only two projects on Eco tourism i.e, on Majuli and Chandhubi Lake. But there is many such destinations where Government can take necessary initiative to prosper the growth of Eco Tourism. There is no Reservation of land for Eco-Friendly Practices such as Gardening, Harvesting etc.

2. Restricted Area Permit: The Restricted Area Permit to the North-Eastern region was enforced in 1955 in the backdrop of alleged missionary involvement in the Naga rebellion. Under this a foreigner intending to visit North-East including Assam had to undergo a long arduous procedure of obtaining permission from the Home Ministry.

3. Insurgency Problem: Assam has been experiencing violent movements, extortion, theft, kidnapping, and murder. Therefore, Domestic and Foreign Tourist consider visiting this place risky. Deteriorating law and order, political disturbances have created a negative impression about the state in the minds of tourist.

4. Lack of Infrastructural Facilities: Certain Tourist Destination lacks infrastructure such as Cottages, Resorts, Home-stays, Rest Rooms, Hotels and Restaurants which are easily accessible and affordable. Only Guwahati is the place where luxurious hotels are located. Proper fooding and logging, Clean Environment are the infrastructural requirements for domestic and Foreign Tourist.

5. Lack of Transportation facilities in Remote Areas: Adequate transportation facilities are lacking in certain destinations of Assam. Certain destinations are not well connected with nearby railway stations or airports. Conditions of Roads are also not proper due to heavy flash floods. Affordable and To and Fro cab services are challenge for domestic and foreign tourist.

6. Lack of Communication facilities i.e PCO's, Mobile networks: Adequate Communication Facilities are also not available. Remote areas like Chandubhi where Assam Government has taken the initiative of establishing Eco projects suffers from the problem of Mobile Network congestion. Domestic and Foreign Tourists are suffering from this issue. Even ATM's are not available in certain tourist destination which has the potential to be developed as world famous sites. Tourist suffers from the problem of transferring, depositing, withdrawing & exchanging the currency notes. And If ATM's are available also doesn't operate properly shows issues like link failure, non availability of cash.

7. Lack of Private- Public Partnership: Lack of Willingness from various Departments associated with Tourism Sector. Public and Private Partnership or collaboration between many players are lacking which is creating a barrier in the growth of tourism.

8. Ignorance of Local People: As Assam does not accord full Literacy Rates That's why many people living in remote areas are educationally backward and their thinking level are not standardized that they can accept the concept of Tourism and its benefits towards the Economy of the place, state and Country. So, Because of Their Ignorance, They are not fully aware about the various segments tourism and their own participatory role which is important for the growth and development of the tourist Destinations.

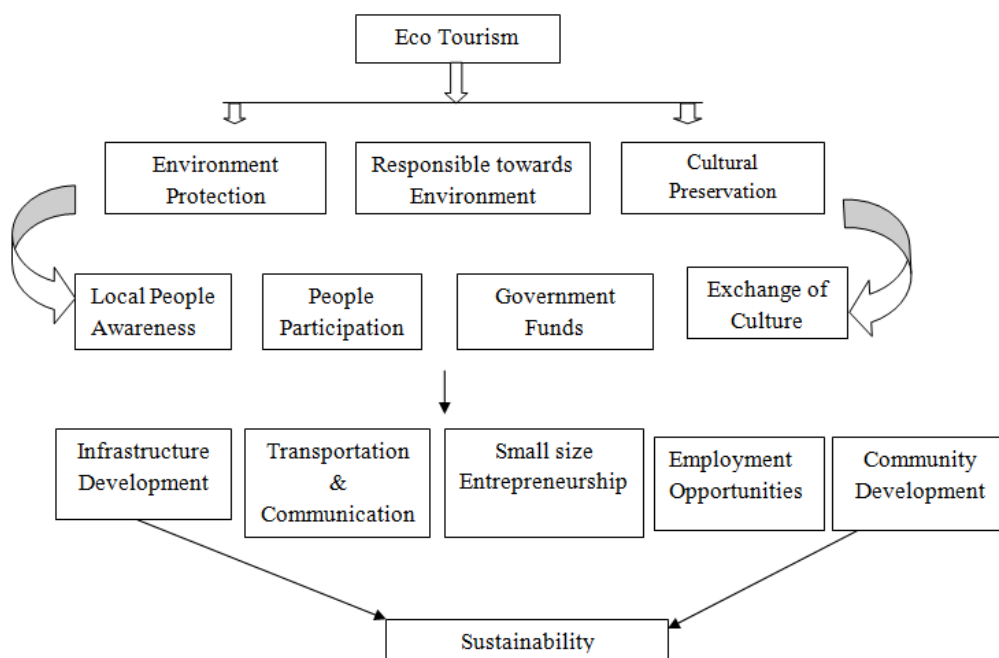
9. Heavy Floods: Assam suffers from the problem of Heavy Flash floods during the months of April to July. Heavy floods washes away the homes, paddy fields, gardens, livestock's of local people living nearby certain tourist destinations. Majuli the River Island which is a world heritage site always suffers from the problems of heavy floods.

10. Lack of trained Tourist Guides: Assam does not have well trained tourist guides who can communicate well with the Domestic and Foreign Tourists. They should have good command over Foreign Languages and ideas to handle tourist Guests. State has young bunch of youths whom can be trained well and can make specialized Guides.

11. Frequent Power Cuts: Lack of Power & Electricity is also a challenge for the state's tourism Sector. Electricity is not available for 24*7. Certain Tourist destinations are still not having adequate power supply.

On view of the above discussion a research model was developed on Relationship between Eco Tourism and Sustainability.

Fig no.2 Research Model on Relationship between Eco Tourism and Sustainability



(The Model was Developed by Abhilasha Mazumdar and Research Guide Dr. Parbin Sultana)

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

It is aimed to address the following objectives through this study.

1. To study about the prospects of Eco tourism in select destinations of Assam.
2. To study the challenges of Eco tourism in select destinations of Assam.
3. To study the Employment status of the Local Residents in Eco tourism activities of the selected destinations of study.

III. HYPOTHESES:

The following hypotheses are formulated on the basis of the above mentioned objectives:

H₀₁: All Aspects of the study does not provide scope for Ecotourism in Assam.

H₀₂: Lack of Communication Facilities is not a Challenge for Eco Tourism in Assam.

H₀₃: There is no significant increase of economy of the area of eco-tourism.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Suwakhon, Butsakoran, Dr. Chalard Jukpin (2019) attempted to study the Impact of Eco Tourism Development in Nong Han Lake, Thailand through Factor Analysis.6 factors were considered for the study such as Training and Knowledge Transfer, Economics Management, Environment and Conservative Resources, Community Participation, Impact Assessment, Mentoring and Coaching. Nong Han Lake is the largest freshwater Lake in the northeast of Thailand and second largest in Thailand. It is a wetland which is rich in both Physical and biological characteristics. **Mahmud Shahed Md, Afroz Nushrat Nahida (2018)** discussed about the problems, prospects and present scenario of Eco-Tourism in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is not considered as a tourist destination worldwide. Eco tourism includes attractions like wildlife & adventure. It is an extension of Mass Tourism. Eco Tourism has a great impact on economic, social and environmental aspects. Economically, jobs would be created directly in hotels, Restaurants, shops, entrepreneurship, Infrastructure development, poverty elimination, improving the standard of living. Social Impact would be learning through exchange of art and artifacts. Environmental impact would be preservation or conservation of resources. There are problems also which exit as there is No promotional activity, No properly trained manpower, Weak Brand Image as a tourist site, unplanned development. Long term collaborations with Government for plans and Policies, arrangement of Awareness and motivational Programs by Bangladesh Government and more investment in tourist spots may make Bangladesh a eco tourist Hub. **Sewnet Tesfaye (2018)** stated the challenges and opportunities of Community based Eco Tourism in Ethiopia. A lot of challenges were found such as poor infrastructure, conflict over usage of resources, lack of awareness and less participation, lack of cooperation

among stock holders and lack of trained manpower creates hurdles in flourishing of Community based Eco Tourism development in Ethiopia. Presence of abundant natural resources is the potential for developing community based eco tourism in Ethiopia. **Samrat Bharadwaj (2018)** evaluated the competitive advantage of Lalimou Camp situated in Nameri National Park. He studied about the promotional strategies of the Eco Camp. Camp is serving the needs and requirements of the tourist by being a solar powered eco camp and by providing good quality services. **Mahi Puri, Krithi k. Karanth and Brijesh Thapa (2018)** argued that mass tourism has destroyed the protected areas and evaluated many success stories of eco tourism and highlighted its potentialities. Conservation of biodiversity and socio-economic development are the primary motivation for eco tourists in India.

V. STUDY AREA:

➤ Majuli is a River island in Brahmaputra River, Assam. Majuli is known as the Cultural Capital of Assam. Majuli was earlier known as Majoli as it lies between two rivers ie. Brahmaputra in North and Buridihing in South It covers 352 sq kms. Majuli is the world’s largest River Island listed in Guinness Book of World Record. It is the habitant of Neo Viashnavite Culture. Viashnavism is one of the demoniations like Shaktism, shaivism and smartisim. It considers Lord Vishnu as their supreme power. And its followers are known as Vaishnavites and Vaishnavas. Srimanta Shankardev was the founder of Vaishnavite Culture and started many monasteries, later on which were known as Satras. Population of Majuli includes Tribal’s, non-Tribal’s and Schedules Castes. Tribals include Missing, Deori, Sonowal Kachari. Non- Tribals include Kalitas, ahoms, chutia’s. Scheduled Castes are Kaivartas, Brittial Baniyas etc. It has a population of 150,000 people and has 144 villages. The Main Tourist attractions are Vaishnava Satras founded by Shankardeva, Colourful Culture of Tribes, Migratory Birds, Pottery Making, Mask Making, Paal Naam Festival, Ali –ai- Ligang Festival. It enjoys Sub Tropical monsoon climate. The Average Annual Rainfall in this Region is 215 cms.

➤ Nameri is a National Park in the Foothills of Eastern Himalayas in the Sonitpur District of Assam. It is 35 kms away from Tezpur. It is situated in the Eastern Border of Assam Valley and Arunachal Pradesh. It shares its boundary with Pakui Wildlife Sanctuary of Arunachal Pradesh. It was declared as a forest Reserve on 17th October 1978. On 15th November 1998 it was officially declared as a National Park. It covers an area of 200 kms. There are around 600 bird species. Attractive tourist attractions are River Rafting and Bird Watching. It is the second Tiger Reserve in Assam. Nameri National Park is reserved for the betterment, development and conservation of wildlife like Tigers, Elephants. Some of the commonly found wild species in this area are are Tigers, Elephants, Leopards, Deer, Langurs, Jackels, Black Bears. Main Habitants of this area are Assamese and Missing people. This area is drained by River Jia Bharali. It is Famous for “Golden Masheer”. It enjoys Tropical Monsoons.

➤ Haflong is a town located in Dima Hasao of Assam, India. It is the Headquater of North Cacher Hills Autonomus Council. It has a population of around 43000. The Local language which is spoken there is Dimasa. In Dimasa language, Haflong means Ant Hills. It covers total area of 12.79 km. Haflong has a humid subtropical climate, falling tropical savanna climate. It is only a hill station in Assam. Population of Haflong comprises of various tribes having various dialect, Culture and Customs. Some of the tribes are: Dimasa kachri, Zeme Naga, Kuki, Karbi, Bodo. Some of the Tourist attractions in Haflong are: Haflong Lake, Jatinga Bird Observatory, Hill View from Circuit House, Hill View from Moulpong, Fiangpui Church, Fiangpui Garden, Borail Mountain, Zion Village.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive Research Method was used. Data is collected through both Primary and Secondary data with the help of a structured questionnaire, observation and personal interviews with both tourist and local residents of the three destinations of Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong. Secondary data is collected from Journals, Magazines, Published Thesis, Newspapers and Websites etc. Total Sample is 770 (390 Local Residents and 380 Tourist), drawn from both Tourist and local residents of above mentioned destinations. Cochran’s sample size formula was used to determine the Sample size. Data is selected through Multistage Sampling method. Stratified Sampling is used in the first stage and Random Sampling has been used in the second stage by the Researcher in a systematic way. Statistical tools which are used for data analysis are Garrett Ranking, Z score, ANOVA, Percentage Method, Growth rate.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table no.2- Demographic Profile of Tourist :

Parameters		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	252	66.3
	Female	128	33.7
Age	18-25	114	30

	26-35	114	30
	36-45	125	32.9
	46-55	27	7.1
Educational level	College	208	54.7
	Professional	169	44.5
	Others	3	0.8
Income	less than 20000	149	39.2
	20000-40000	64	16.8
	40000-60000	75	19.7
	Above 60000	92	24.2

Source: Field Survey.

It has been found that, in case of local residents 72 % Respondents are male and 28% are females. This depicts higher percentage of male Respondents. 87% belongs to college level, 8% belongs to School level and 5% belongs to Professional level of Education. This clearly depicts that the Majority of the local residents are educated up to the college level. In case of local residents 42% are earning below Rs5000, 10% are earning income between Rs. 5000- Rs 10000, 33% are earning income between Rs.10000-Rs.15000 and 155 are earning above Rs.15000. This clearly shows that the Majority of the local residents is earning well and has a good Income level.

Table no.3- Demographic Profile of Local Residents:

Parameters		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	280	71.8
	Female	110	28.2
Age	18-25	155	39.7
	26-35	38	9.7
	36-45	120	30.8
	46-55	57	14.6
	Above 55	20	5.1
Educational level	College	32	8.2
	Professional	340	87.2
	Others	18	4.6
Income	<5000	165	42.3
	5000-10000	39	10
	10000-15000	130	33.3
	15000 above	56	14.4

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows that majority of the respondents (66.3%) are male compared to women. It can be observed that women’s participation is less in the survey. It seems that they don’t have much knowledge or information about the potentialities, challenges, employment status of the local people area wise in the present study. Majority (40%) of the respondents are from the age group of 18-25 years. They are young people who are at the stage of being energetic, challenging and productive. Majority of the respondents were educated up to College level which means that Respondents are well educated. It has been found that majority of the respondents opinioned that they earn more than Rs 5000/- on monthly basis.

First Objective: To study the Scope of Eco Tourism in select destinations of Assam.

Table no.4- Percentage Distribution of Tourist on the basis of Scope for Eco Tourism in Assam:

Items	Ra nk1	Ra nk2	Ra nk3	Ra nk4	Ra nk4	Ra nk6	Ra nk7	Ra nk8	Ra nk9	Ra nk 10	Sc ore	Aver age	Gar rett Ran k
Geographical diversity and Natural beauty	0	0	1	4	14	54	78	65	117	47	13470	35.45	1
Friendly Climate	0	0	0	3	3	33	75	155	92	19	1365	35.93	2

												4		
Better Infrastructure facilities	0	0	1	0	5	131	124	98	18	3	15923	41.90	5	
Better Accommodation Facilities	0	0	1	2	8	90	186	81	10	2	15969	42.02	6	
Low cost of living	0	0	0	3	5	172	93	84	21	2	16265	42.80	7	
Social, Political Security and Peace	0	0	0	2	11	163	133	64	5	2	16583	43.64	8	
Hospitality Manners and Good Behavior	0	0	0	3	12	87	152	80	36	10	15462	40.69	4	
Tourist Village	0	0	0	1	13	74	96	132	47	17	14739	38.79	3	

Source: Field Study

With the help of Garrett Ranking, Scope of the Area is ranked from most important to least important one accordingly. There are all total 8 factors for determining the Scope of the select destinations which have been identified by the Researcher. Social, Political Security and Peace is the highest factor to determine the Scope of the destinations with the rank 8th which is the highest one among the others. Low cost of Living is the second highest Scope factor to be found by the researcher which ranks 7th. Better Accommodation Facilities is the 3rd highest factor with the rank of 6th. Better Infrastructure Facilities is the 5th important factor. Then, Hospitality, Manners and Good Behavior are the 4th factor. Tourist Village is the 3rd least important factor to be found. Friendly climate is the 2nd least important and Geographical Diversity & Natural beauty ranks 1st as it is the least important factor to determine the Scope of the destinations. Therefore, it can be said that the select tourist destinations have Social, political Security and Peace as the most important Scope for Eco-Tourism. Geographical Diversity and Natural beauty of the destination needs to be more enhanced and encouraged. Natural sites need more improvement and development for Eco Tourism.

Table no.5- Percentage Distribution of Local Residents on the basis of Scope for Eco Tourism in Assam:

Items	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Average	Garrett Rank
Geographical diversity and Natural Beauty	71	122	129	44	20	4	0	0	0	0	26273	67.37	8
Friendly Climate	23	82	193	58	30	4	0	0	0	0	24901	63.85	7
Better Infrastructure Facilities	6	24	124	185	43	5	2	0	1	0	23303	59.75	4
Accommodation Facilities	7	29	78	207	61	8	0	0	0	0	23080	59.18	2
low cost of Living	8	35	106	169	56	1	5	1	0	0	23224	59.55	3
Social, Political Security and Peace	6	33	56	74	207	1	2	1	1	0	22040	56.51	1
Hospitality, Manners and Good behavior	7	73	218	58	25	4	3	0	1	1	24447	62.68	5
Tourist Villages	13	11	157	76	26	3	3	0	1	0	24786	63.55	6

Source: Field Survey

The above mentioned table presents the Scope of the Area for local Residents from Highest to lowest with the help of Garrett Ranking method. There are 8 items to assess the Scope of the Area found by the Researcher. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Geographical diversity and Natural beauty is the highest opinioned among other items and ranks 8th. Friendly climate is the second highest item and ranks 7th. Tourist villages are the third highest item and ranks 6th. Hospitality, Manners and Good Behavior stands at the 5th. Better Infrastructure Facilities ranks 4th. Low cost of living ranks 3rd least Potentiality. Accommodation Facilities rank 2nd least item

regarding the Scope. Social, Political Security and Peace ranks 1st which means it is the least opinioned item of the Area for local Residents. Thus, Geographical diversity and natural beauty is the item with highest Scope according to local Residents. It is the most attractive item.

Table no.6- Distribution of Local Respondents on their opinions based on the levels of Scope Area Wise:

	Basis of Levels	Majuli		Nameri National Park		Haflong		Total	
		No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	Total no. of Respondents	%
Zscore(Total_Scope)	High	56	27.3	28	21.5	8	14.5	92	23.6
	Moderate	104	50.7	80	61.5	33	60	217	55.6
	Low	45	22	22	16.9	14	25.5	81	20.8
	Total	205	100	130	100	55	100	390	100

Source: Field Survey

The Z score (Total_Scope) represents the levels of Scope Area wise. In majuli out of 205 total respondents, the scope of this place are found to be high by 56(27.3%) respondents, moderate by 104(50.7%) respondents and low by 45(22%) respondents. In Nameri, out of 130 total respondents, Scope is found to be high by 28(21.5%) respondents, moderate by 80(61.5%) respondents and low by 22(16.9%) respondents. In Haflong, out of 55 total respondents, Scope is found to be high by 8(14.5%) respondents, moderate by 33(60%) respondents and low by 14 (25.5%) respondents. Therefore, it can be said that the Scope of Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong are moderate.

Table no.7- Distribution of Tourist on their opinions based on the levels of Scope Area Wise:

	Basis of Levels	Majuli		Nameri National Park		Haflong		Total	
		No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	Total no. of Respondents	%
Z(Total_Scope)	High	38	19	23	17.7	17	34	78	20.5
	Moderate	115	57.5	86	66.2	20	40	221	58.2
	Low	47	23.5	21	16.2	13	26	81	21.3
	Total	200	100	130	100	50	100	380	100

Source: Field Survey

The Z score (Total_Scope) represents the levels of Scope Area wise. In Majuli out of 200 total respondents the Scope of this place are found to be high by 38(19%) respondents, moderate by 115(57.5%) respondents and low by 47(23.5%) respondents. In Nameri out of 130 total respondents the Scope of this area are found to be high by 23(17.7%) respondents, moderate by 86(66.2%) respondents and low by 21(16.2%) respondents. In Haflong, out of 50 respondents the Scope of this place are found to be high by 17(34%) respondents, moderate by 20(40%) respondents and low by 13(26%) respondents. Therefore it can be said that Scope of Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong are moderate.

2nd Objective: To study the Challenges of Eco Tourism in select destinations of Assam.

Table no.8 - Percentage Distribution of Tourist on the basis of Challenges for Eco Tourism in Assam:

Items	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Rank 9	Rank 10	Total	Average	Garrett Rank
Lack of Proper Safety and Security	1	1	3	7	12	14	14	44	20	5	165	43.52	4
Lack of Proper Communication	0	0	1	6	14	92	14	79	39	5	166	41.23	1

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Lack of Proper Road and Transportation Facilities	0	0	2	7	25	70	148	97	22	9	15700	41.32	2
Highly Expensive	0	0	2	22	29	152	101	64	10	0	17042	44.85	6
Lack of Hygienic Fooding and logging	3	4	6	11	28	145	113	52	15	3	17065	44.91	7
Disturbances of local people	2	3	6	10	32	173	93	45	14	2	17268	45.44	8
Accumulation of waste garbage's	2	1	4	14	18	106	150	73	11	1	16587	43.65	5
Threat of Animals	5	7	11	10	45	141	95	55	7	4	17526	46.12	10
Lack of Proper Publicity	3	1	3	5	74	72	88	63	64	7	16045	42.22	3
Others	1	0	0	69	21	124	91	54	15	5	17419	45.84	9

Source: Field Survey

With the help of Garrett Ranking, Challenges of the area opinioned by the tourist have been ranked from most important to the least important one. There are about ten challenges of the Area faced by the tourist which are found by the Researcher. Threat of Animals is the highest challenge faced by the tourist with the rank of 10th. Other's such as ATM, Bank, Money Transfers, Hospitals is ranked 9th which means it is the second highest challenge faced by the Tourist. Third Highest challenges is Disturbances by the local people which is ranked 8th. Lack of Hygienic Fooding and Lodging is ranked 6th. Accumulation of Waste Garbage's is in 5th Rank. Lack of Proper Safety and Security is the fourth least challenge faced by the tourist who ranks 4th. Then it has been also observed that Lack of Proper Publicity is ranked 3rd. Lack of Proper Road transport facilities with 2nd Rank is the second least challenge and Lack of Communication is the least challenge faced by the tourist as it ranks 1st. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Threat of Animals is the most important challenge faced by the Tourist in the select destination. Even Tourism sector is also a victim of Man-Wildlife Conflict. And Tourists are the sufferers. Lack of Communication Facilities is the least one as there are improvements done in case of communication such as mobile towers, internet connectivity.

Table no.9- Percentage Distribution of Tourist on the basis of Scope for Eco Tourism in Assam:

Items	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Average	Garrett Rank
Lack of Proper Safety and Security	9	121	132	69	47	7	0	2	3	0	24465	62.73	10
Lack of Proper Communication	7	16	47	74	125	29	83	3	3	5	20596	52.81	2
Lack of Proper Road and Transport facilities	6	36	59	72	193	8	2	7	5	2	21842	56.01	6
Highly Expensive	3	17	51	79	142	25	10	5	5	3	20414	52.34	1
Lack of Hygienic fooding and lodging	3	110	152	69	39	9	2	3	2	1	24252	62.18	9
Disturbance of local people	5	21	47	80	207	21	1	2	1	5	21486	55.09	4
Accumulation of Waste Garbage's	2	20	59	88	185	25	8	1	0	2	21613	55.42	5
Threat of Animals	2	10	92	72	101	11	4	3	3	1	23367	59.92	8

Lack of Proper Publicity	9	17	44	69	19	1	3				212		
					7	6	4	2	1	1	61	54.52	3
Other's	7	22	77	20		1					227		
				0	61	3	6	3	0	0	21	58.26	7

Source: Field Survey

The above mentioned table presents the Challenges of the area from highest to lowest with the help of Garrett Ranking. There are 10 items to assess the Challenges of the area found by the researcher. Lack of safety and security ranks 10th and it is the highest challenge for the local residents of the place. Lack of Hygienic fooding and lodging is the second highest challenge and ranks 9th. Threat of Animals is the third highest challenge and ranks 8th. Others rank 7th. Lack of Proper Road and Transport facility ranks 6th. Accumulation of Waste Garbage's ranks 5th. Disturbance of local People ranks 4th. Lack of Proper Publicity is the third least opinioned challenge for local residents and ranks 3rd. Lack of proper Communication is the second least challenging item. Highly expensive is the third least challenge according to the local residents and ranks 1st in the list of ranking. They feel that the select destinations are not expensive. Thus, Lack of Safety and Security is ranked as the highest challenge. Providing security from Political disturbances, Bandhs, Natural calamity such as Floods, Earthquake is a challenge for them.

Table no.10- Distribution of Tourist on their opinions based on the levels of Challenges Area Wise:

	Basis of Levels	Majuli		Nameri National Park		Haflong		Total	
		No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	Total No. of Respondents	%
ZScore(Total Challenges)	High	62	31	26	20	18	36	106	27.9
	Moderate	77	38.5	71	54.6	18	36	166	43.7
	Low	61	30.5	33	25.4	14	28	108	28.4
	Total	200	100	130	100	50	100	380	100

Source: Field Survey

The Z score (Total_Challenges) represents the levels of Challenges Area wise. In Majuli out of 200 total respondents the challenges of this place are found to be high by 62(31%) respondents, moderate by 77(38.5%) respondents and low by 61(30.5%) respondents. In Nameri out of 130 total respondents the challenges of this area are found to be high by 26(20%) respondents, moderate by 71(54.6%) respondents and low by 33(25.4%) respondents. In Haflong, out of 50 respondents the challenges of this place are found to be high by 18(36%) respondents, moderate by 18(36%) respondents and low by 14(28%) respondents. Therefore it can be said that Challenges of Majuli and Nameri National Park are moderate. Challenges in Haflong are both high and moderate.

Table no.11- Distribution of Local Respondents on their opinions based on the levels of Challenges Area Wise:

	Basis of Levels	Majuli		Nameri National Park		Haflong		Total	
		No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	No. Respondents	%	Total no. Respondents	%
Zscore(Total - Challenges)	High	52	25.4	30	23.1	20	36.4	102	26.2
	Moderate	64	31.2	77	59.2	33	60	174	44.6
	Low	89	43.4	23	17.7	2	3.6	114	29.2
	Total	205	100	130	100	55	100	390	100

Source: Field Survey

The Z score (Total_Challenges) represents the levels of Challenges Area wise. In Majuli out of 205 total respondents the challenges of this place are found to be high by 52(24.4%) respondents, moderate by 64(31.2%)

respondents and low by 89(43.4%) respondents. In Nameri out of 130 total respondents the challenges of this area are found to be high by 30(23.1%) respondents, moderate by 77(59.2%) respondents and low by 23(17.7%) respondents. In Haflong, out of 55 respondents the challenges of this place are found to be high by 20(36.45%) respondents, moderate by 33(60%) respondents and low by 2(3.6%) respondents. Therefore it can be said that Challenges of Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong are moderate.

3rd Objective: To study the Employment status of local Resident’s in the Eco Tourism of the selected destinations of study.

Table no.12- Distribution of Respondents on the basis of their Employment in Eco Tourism Area wise.

Variables	Area							
	Majuli		Nameri		Haflong		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
You/Your family Yes member’s involvement in eco tourism	204	99.5	130	100.0	54	98.2	388	99.5
	1	.5	0	.0	1	1.8	2	.5
	205	100.0	130	100.0	55	100.0	390	100.0
If engaged - Full time/Part time	168	82.0	109	83.8	47	85.5	324	83.1
	36	17.6	21	16.2	7	12.7	64	16.4
	1	.5	0	.0	1	1.8	2	.5
	205	100.0	130	100.0	55	100.0	390	100.0

The above table shows the Employment status of the Local residents in different areas of the study. Employment status is shown at the time tourist season. Local Resident’s Engagement or their involvement is described above. In Majuli, 204(99.5%) respondents reported that they or their family members are engaged in eco tourism activities. Only 1(.5%) respondent reported that they are not involved. In Nameri 130 (100%) respondents reported that they or their family members are engaged in eco tourism. In Haflong, 54 (98.2%) respondents reported that they or their family members are engaged in eco tourism. Only 1(1.8%) respondent reported that they are not involved.

The above table shows local Resident’s engagement in full time/ Part time. In Majuli, 168(82%) respondents reported that they are engaged full time in Mask Making, Eco Camps, Home stays, Hotels, Resorts, Ferry Services, Food Suppliers, Pottery Making, Traditional Dress Making (Eri, Muga, Missing Mekhala Sador). And 36(17.6%) reported that they are engaged part time as Cooks, Cleaners, Laundry Services, Waiters, Drivers, Photographers, Gardeners and in Entertainment as Actors in Plays (“Bhawona- Krishna leela” at the time of Raas Mahatsova). In Nameri 109(83.8%) reported that they are engaged in Full time in Home stay, Eco Lodges, Eco Resorts, Mahouts, Jungle safaris, Rafting activities, Security Guards. 21(16.2%) respondents reported that they are engaged in part time as Cooks, Waiters, Cleaners, Electricians, Plumbers. In Haflong 47(85.5%)

respondents reported that they are engaged in full time during the tourist Season as drivers, Hoteliers, Food Suppliers. Only 7(1.8%) reported that they are engaged in part time as Waiters, Cleaners, Helpers.

VIII. TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS:

Hypothesis-1: H₀₁: All Aspects of the study area does not provide scope for Eco Tourism in Assam.

To test the Hypothesis Oneway Annova was conducted to examine whether the scope for Eco Tourism depends on all the Aspects of the study area. The results show that the Scope for Eco Tourism depends on all the Aspects of the study area.

Analysis on the Tourist Data:

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	67.145	2	33.572	4.791	0.009
	Within Groups	2642	377	7.008		
	Total	2709.15	379			

Post Hoc Test:
Multiple Comparisons
Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Area	(J) Area	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Total	Majuli	Nameri	0.567	0.298	0.14	-0.14	1.27
		Haflong	1.205*	0.419	0.012	0.22	2.19
	Nameri	Majuli	-0.567	0.298	0.14	-1.27	0.14
		Haflong	0.638	0.441	0.317	-0.4	1.68
	Haflong	Majuli	-1.205*	0.419	0.012	-2.19	-0.22
		Nameri	-0.638	0.441	0.317	-1.68	0.4

Total of all Aspects. $F(2,377) = 4.791, p = .009, P < 0.05$. Here, Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Therefore Post hoc test has been conducted to look for the differences between the groups testing each possible pair of groups. The mean difference is significant at 0.05 levels. Tukey HSD test was conducted to observe the differences between different Areas of the study. Multiple Comparisons were conducted. When Majuli is compared with Nameri, $p = .140$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Haflong, $p = .012$ Statistically Significant Differences Exist. When Nameri is compared with Majuli, $p = .140$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Haflong, $p = .317$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. When Haflong is compared with Majuli $p = .012$ Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Nameri, $p = .317$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Therefore, it can be concluded that the all Aspects of the study Area has significant effect on the Scope of Eco tourism in Assam. Thus, Null Hypothesis is rejected. All Aspects of the study area provides scope for Eco Tourism in Assam.

Hypothesis-2: H₀₂: Lack of Communication facilities is not a challenge for Eco Tourism in Assam.

To test the Hypothesis Oneway Annova was conducted to check whether Lack of Communication facilities is a challenge for Eco Tourism in Assam.

Analysis on Tourist Data:

Descriptive

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
					Lack of Proper Communication	Majuli			200
	Nameri	130	7.2	1.278	0.112	6.98	7.42	4	10
	Halflong	50	6.8	1.443	0.204	6.39	7.21	4	10
	Total	380	7.08	1.144	0.059	6.96	7.19	3	10

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lack of Proper Communication	Between Groups	5.812	2	2.906	2.237	0.108
	Within Groups	489.82	377	1.299		
	Total	495.632	379			

Post Hoc Test:

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Area	(J) Area	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Lack of Proper Communication	Majuli	Nameri	-0.13	0.128	0.57	-0.43	0.17
		Halflong	0.27	0.18	0.293	-0.15	0.69
	Nameri	Majuli	0.13	0.128	0.57	-0.17	0.43
		Halflong	0.4	0.19	0.089	-0.05	0.85
	Halflong	Majuli	-0.27	0.18	0.293	-0.69	0.15
		Nameri	-0.4	0.19	0.089	-0.85	0.05

Lack of Proper Challenges. $F(2,377) = 2.237, p = .108$. $P > 0.05$. Here, No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Therefore Post hoc test has been conducted to look for the differences between the groups testing each possible pair of groups. The mean difference is significant at 0.05 levels. Tukey HSD test was conducted to observe the differences between different Areas of the study. Multiple Comparisons were conducted. When Majuli is compared with Nameri, $p = .57$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Haflong, $p = .293$ Statistically Significant Differences Exist. When Nameri is compared with Majuli, $p = .57$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Haflong, $p = .089$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. When Haflong is compared with Majuli $p = .293$ Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Being compared with Nameri, $p = .089$ No Statistically Significant Differences Exist. Therefore, it can be concluded that lack of Communication facilities has no significant impact on the challenges of Eco tourism in Assam.

Thus, Null Hypothesis is accepted. Lack of Communication facilities is not a challenge for Eco Tourism in Assam.

Hypothesis-3: H₀₃: There is no significant increase of economy of the area of eco-tourism.

Both t-test and z-test has applied to test the hypothesis that there is significant increase of economy in the study area.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	t	df	P	Mean Rank	Z	P
Positive	224	38.53	2.029	4.623	21.996	388	.000	278.50	-17.048	.000
Negative	166	33.90	2.084					83.50		
Total	390	36.56	3.072							

From above table it can be seen that the respondent of local resident reported as agreement in ten different statements relating to development of economy in the study area. Where the mean scores divided into two parts of agreement from overall agreement of the statements. There are positive agreement and negative agreement. 57.4 % of respondent agreed that the economy in the study areas are increased while 42.6 % agreed no development occurred as much as expected. The positive agreement mean score is 38.53, SD=2.029 and negative agreement mean score is 33.90, SD = 2.084, overall mean=36.56, SD=3.072. The mean difference is 4.623.

Both t-test and z-test has applied to test the hypothesis that there is significant increase of economy in the study area. The t=21.996 at df =388 and p=0.000 reveals that the difference is significance at 1% level. Z-value also (-17.048, P=0.000) reveals the same. Thus it can be accept the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the growth of economy in study area.

IX. FINDINGS:

Findings from Tourist:

➤ There are ample potentialities for Eco Tourism in the selected destinations of Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong. Social, Political Security and Peace is the highest Potentiality reported by the Respondents of the destinations. Tourists have opinioned that they feel peace of mind in the cool and calm environment and experience the serenity of nature in these destinations. They feel free to walk around the villages or rural areas of the sites. Social stability has been also felt by them as Society is helpful, cooperative and peace loving. And there are no communal and political disturbances, Rallies, protests which disturbs tourist arriving from different locations. Low cost of Living is also an important potentiality opinioned by the tourist. All three destinations have a unique touch of Rural Tourism too as away from concrete city life. Therefore, maintains a low cost of living. Eco Lodges, Eco Camps, Home Stays are all made up of eco-friendly materials just to provide tourist a feel of simplicity and local lifestyle maintained by the local residents. It is highly preferred by the tourist in all three destinations. Geographical diversity and natural beauty is the least preferred potential opinioned by the Tourist. Natural sites needs to be more developed. These destinations are blessed with many natural resources. Improvement and Maintenance is required to make these natural sites more popular and attractive in the eyes of the tourist. Overall Potentialities listed by the researchers are opinioned as moderate by the tourist.

➤ Threat of Animals is a great challenge faced by the tourist in these destinations. Majuli is a biodiversity hotspot, where more than 260 varieties of birds reside. There are many migratory birds in this River Island. Many poachers or people tend to kill the birds and sell them in market which is a real threat to the biodiversity of Majuli. Nameri National Park is known as the second Tiger Reserve after Manas national Park in Assam. Human animal conflict is the main threat. There are many issues on Elephant deaths due to which extinction of these animals in this National Park is a great concern for its rich wildlife. Wild Elephants keep destructing the paddy fields, agriculture and homes of local People in these areas. Sudden arrival of Wild animals in these places disturbs not only local people but tourist too. There are many cases reported daily by the local residents regarding hunting of animals like leopard, wild cats. Protection of wild animals is an issue in Haflong too. Many cases have been reported regarding the injuries caused by these animals to local people or to tourists in the forest department of this Area. Tourism sector is affected with Men- Animal conflict. Lack of Communication facilities is the least preferred Challenge opinioned by the tourist. Majuli is the first district with wifi connections. Nameri National Park has faces some network issues inside the Jungle after entering deep inside to some extent. Communication facilities have also improved in Haflong. Before few years BSNL was only the network which works without disturbances. But now, there are many mobile towers established in Haflong and there is no issue regard connectivity. Therefore, Lack of Communication facility is least problem/ challenge faced by the tourist. Challenges of all three areas are opinioned as moderate by the tourist.

Findings from Local Residents:

➤ According to the local Respondents of the three destinations, Geographical diversity and natural beauty is the most preferred potentiality. Majuli is blessed with the richness of natural resources. It is a land of cultural diversity and Natural beauty. Its unique characteristic is that it provides a feeling of staying in a river island. It is pollution free freshwater island. Majuli itself means a land in the midst of two rivers. Nameri National Park is rich in its biodiversity and wildlife. It has breathtaking natural beauty and diverse flora and fauna. Famous for Elephants, Tigers, leopards and sambars. It is characterized with dense & deep forest, loved by eco tourist or nature lovers. Haflong often known as Scotland of Assam. It has small hills, lofty terrains and a sparkling lake. Haflong Lake is good for fishing, boating and bird watching. And Friendly climate is the second preferred Potentiality. Assam is blessed with the onset of monsoons. Weather is neither cold nor humid. Local Residents opinioned that tourist may love to visit this region for its natural resources and endowments. Tourist may enjoy cool and calm climate of these three destinations as away from the concrete world, these destinations are full of greenery and rich biodiversity in Majuli, Nameri National Park and Haflong. Majority of the respondents opinioned that according to them; the potentiality of the destinations is moderate. It needs development in order to make the potentialities high for these places.

➤ Lack of Proper Safety and security is the highest challenge faced by the local Residents. Lack of Safety and security in regard of the natural resources and sites i.e. prime locations of tourist attractions are also suffering from the encroachment of tourist. Safety of the natural endowments is the prime concern of local residents. Natural resources like fresh water bodies, forest resources, Dairy products, fruits, flowers, local fresh fish and meat products are in use for serving tourist. For instance, water bodies like Fresh River and stream water is utilized for fishing, boating, adventure, water-sport activities, domestic purposes like washing, watering gardens, cooking, bathing etc. It has resulted sometimes in over-utilization. Arrival of tourist in Mass has resulted in the feeling of lack of safety and security for the natural attractions. Lack of Hygienic fooding and Lodging is also a challenge faced by the local residents. Maintaining proper cleanliness, Hygienic food services and lodging is a challenge as these destinations maintains local lifestyle at a very low cost. Therefore difficult to spend more expenses on hygiene and cleanliness up to the expectations of the Tourist from foreign and domestic locations. Highly expensive is the least preferred challenge in the opinion of the local Residents. As these destinations are known for its unique, rural & local lifestyle it offers low cost of living. Therefore, Highly Expensive is the least preferred challenge according to the local Residents.

➤ Majority of the respondents opinioned that they or their family members are engaged or involved with the eco tourism activities of the selected destinations. The employment status of the respondents was assessed at the time of tourist season. Majority reported that they are engaged full time with this sector for earning income and minority of the locals reported that they are engaged part time in various activities. For instance in Majuli. Some local Respondents are engaged as Guides on part time basis towards the tourist as they can speak France, Spanish etc only at the time of peak season and some local Residents are engaged in Mask making activity full time in “Samuguri satras”. They teach people from different foreign locations and also pass their knowledge to young children and locals of the place. In Nameri and Haflong they are engaged in different activities like cooks, cleaners, laundry, waiters, security guides, drivers, gardeners, artisans etc.

X. SUGGESTIONS

➤ It may be suggested that for better communication, mobile and internet connections may be made accessible in the River Island for the convenience of the tourist as well as for local residents. 24*7 electricity supply facility may be also improved. Solar energy may be used for generation of power. It would be an Eco friendly initiative.

➤ In order to maintain safety and security for the huge no. of tourist in Nameri National Park; more no. of Jeep Safari running on CNG, more no. of Elephant safaris with well trained elephants and security guards, mahouts may be provided. As Nameri is extended over a huge area, therefore, Anti poaching camps may be more and located after every 4-5 kms away in the forest. Security Guards may be appointed more by the Assam Government.

➤ Proper fencing with iron rods may be built in an around the areas of Haflong for better safety and security purpose for tourist and local people. Footpaths may be also built along with the Iron railing in the Roads as it is a hill station, roads are sloppy and hilly.

➤ It has been Observed from the study that Better medical facilities, hospitals also needs to be built up in the study areas for the better help of tourist. Few no. of Oil depots are also a necessary requirement for the tourist vehicles. ATM Services, Money exchange services are also a necessary requirement.

XI. CONCLUSION:

Eco Tourism means responsible travel to the naturally undisturbed places with the aim of conservation of environment and well being of the local people. The study explains both Scope and Challenges of Eco Tourism

in selected destinations of Assam. The results of the present study will be used to understand the areas which need more concern and development or up gradation. Therefore the concerned authorities would have to take necessary steps and measures to understand the areas for better improvement. This would enhance the quality of Eco Tourism in three selected destinations of Majuli, Nameri and Haflong of Assam. The results would help the Government and other concerned authorities in developing a plan for increasing the Tourist arrivals and also to monitor the work done by different players for its development. The study explains mainly two areas which are Scope and Challenges. The study proposes various suggestions and Recommendations on the parameters of Safety and Security, transportation and Communications, other facilities which are very basic for the tourist. The study made an attempt to understand the levels of scope and challenges in all three destinations to have a clear and insightful interpretation on Scope and Challenges of specific destinations.

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