

## GROWTH, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN NORTHEAST INDIA

**Dr. Bina Sarkar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. C Barna Naidu<sup>1</sup> & Prof. Ayushi Choudhary<sup>1</sup>**

Assistant Professor, School of Management, Ajeenkya D.Y.Patil University, Pune, India

### **Abstract:**

In Northeast India, one of the booming industries is tourism. The beauty and the diversity of each state makes the tourism industry more relevant in the context of industrial growth. Entire Northeast India is blessed with salubrious weather and plenty of flora and fauna. In terms of industrialization, the states in Northeast India have received less attention. Sustainable tourism is a bridge for filling the gap of development in the states. In context of physical and human diversity the Northeast India has highest potentiality to contribute in the globally growing tourism sector. Government of each these states has been actively taking up all the measures required for the growth of this sector. This part of India is home to rich wildlife sanctuaries, mighty rivers, dense forest, snow covered winters and more. Finest of traditional handloom and handicrafts of each state makes the region richer. The growth of sustainable tourism will enable the growth of allied industries as well. It was a hard time for the industry to sustain during the COVID period specifically (2020-2021). It was Lockdown in almost entire world, India too witnessed complete lockdown for more than 5-7 months consecutively and slowly it started opening but complete movement was restricted. This Industry has faced its toughest time during Lockdown. The paper has made an attempt to study the growth trend of sustainable tourism industry in the NE region of India with a detailed investigation of the problems and prospects of the sector. This is a secondary study conducted with the Government reports and other published sources available. Time bound limitations may have an impact on the universality of the study as it skipped primary verification. Furthermore, this study will be relevant to all stakeholders who wish to gain knowledge and access information for the growth of sustainable tourism in northeast India.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable, Tourism Industry, North east India, Growth, Development, Problems and Prospects.*

### **1. Introduction:**

#### **1.1. The North-East India:**

India's North East is comprised of eight states that are blessed with stunning natural scenery, temperate weather, a wealth of biodiversity, rare wildlife, historic sites, and a wide range of cultural and ethnic groups. With a rich history and friendly neighbors, the area offers an unforgettable trip for tourists interested in wildlife, ethnic tourism, golf, river cruises, religious, cultural, and among other things. The region also offers plenty of opportunities for mountaineering, trekking, river rafting and adventure travel.

The NER of India: AP, Imphal, Nagaland, Tripura, Assam, Aizawl, Gangtok and Meghalaya. The states boast diverse biodiversity and abundant natural resources, which have remained untapped and undeveloped. Unlike other regions in the country, these states have a slow process of industrialization. North East India has several startups with huge growth potential, including e-commerce, tourism, agritech, local resource utilization, media and entertainment.

### **1.2. Geographical Location of India's northeast:**

Approximately 70% of the north-eastern part is hilly, terrain varies from state to state. The Brahmaputra Valley, Barak Valley, and Tripura Plain make up the majority of the plains in Assam. The hilly terrains are generally steep and inaccessible to large areas. The area has a diverse flora and fauna and is also blessed with pleasant weather throughout the year, excluding only the tough rainy season. The northeast is also considered one of the seven most species-rich regions. Endangered species such as one horned Asian rhinoceros, white-winged wood duck, with golden Langurs are found in protected forests, NER National Park. The region also owns over 550 species of orchids, which is 70% of the worlds identified orchids. As a convergence zone of various ethnic groups, the area is definitely a showcase of cultural diversity.

### **1.3. Famous Destinations:**

Northeast India is home to famous national parks such as Kaziranga National Park, which is renowned for its one-horned rhino, as well as Manas National Park, Nameri, Orang, and Dibur Saikowa in Assam. Additionally, there are Namdapa in Balpakulam in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Intanki in Nagaland, Keibur Namjao in Manipur, and numerous flora and fauna sanctuaries. Kanchen Dzongha in Sikkim. The region has plenty of water resource sources which keep it at risk of being flooded during the raining season. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows from Assam and falls into Bay of Bengal is the broadest river of the Nation and 2<sup>nd</sup> broadest river in the World. It is recognized that India's tourism resources can be regarded as a tool Job creation, poverty reduction, and sustainable human development to obtain the country's foreign currency. World Travel and Tourism Council predicts that Indian tourism will account for 12% of his total in the country. By 2010 he will reach 6.6% of the economy's GDP (Business line, 2000).

### **1.4. Tourism an overview:**

The tourism industry is activity oriented and consists of trips from corners of the world on the other hand (Cianga, 2017) it is business, education, medical care, leisure (Woton) and Stevens, 1995. Cooper and Shepard, 1997. Popova, 2019. Villa, 2016. Cohen, 2010. This sector accounts for millions of jobs worldwide (Sofronov, 2018). As stated by UNWTO sector poised for growth and will continue to grow should be investigated (UNWTO, 2019). Northeast India remained savage, unlike all other parts of India. Due to their wealth and developing infrastructure, many nations around the world consider their economies to be based on tourism. India has states such as Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal and Rajasthan. Poduchery attracts to some extent the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and

Mecharaya. Tourists from home and abroad. Recognize the significance of the tourism industry for profitable growth, Government Formulates Tourism and Connected Guidelines development management. In this moment of slowing growth, these governance Links to tourism in these states require critical sensors.

## 2. Review Literature:

Travel Literature Review & Conceptual Background, 2010. The innovation of creating sustainability and tourism must be considered in relation to changing states or conditions. The initial criteria used to measure the change will determine if the transition is positive or negative. The tourism industry is activity oriented and consists of trips from corners of the world (Cianga, 2017) includes business, education, medical care, leisure (Koeing Nicole, 2004). This sector accounts for millions of jobs worldwide (Sofronov, 2018). According to UNWTO sector is poised for growth and will continue to grow should be investigated (UNWTO, 2019). Northeast India remained untapped, unlike all other parts of India. Development of infrastructure is inevitable for the development of sightseeing. Recognising the importance of the sightseeing sector for economic trajectory, government formulates tourism and connected guidelines development and management of this sector. Ample steps were taken during Covid-19 Pandemic to reduce the negative impact on the Sector. The idea of sustainable development has been a top political priority since the publication of "Our Common Futures" (WCED, 1987), and the UK Government has shown its commitment to "Agenda 21" to guarantee the steady growth of sustainable tourism. Bringing the world's major industries into this context is necessary to ensure that sustainable development goes beyond mere rhetoric. In order to ensure widespread participation and the development of a consensus, sustainable tourism requires the informed engagement of all relevant stakeholders and strong political leadership. Sustainable development, have the freedom to adopt different "shades of green" when it comes to sustainable tourism. From a light green approach with tourism development and visitor and operator satisfaction as the main objective, to a dark green approach that emphasizes the precautionary principle and the concept of sustainability (Hunter, 1997). The environmental impact of tourism has prompted study into sustainable tourism expansion. The results outline the development of sustainable tourism research in terms of collaboration, impact, knowledge base and thematic scope (Shen, Law & Qian 2018). The pursuit of tourism should not be seen as a goal in and of itself; rather, it is important to consider community life in a "balanced" framework of indicators, rather than in isolation. To achieve overall development of tourism, the main objective is to work within the four elements of visitors, industry (business/economy), environment, and ultimately community (Singh & Goyal, 2014). The two main policy challenges in the development of global tourism have been achieving sustainable development and safeguarding tourism assets for over 20 years. Recent arguments suggest that associative and cooperative forms of governance are becoming increasingly important. The study by Chand and Dubey shows that tourism stakeholders in India differ significantly in their perceptions of the various aspects of sustainable tourism development. (Chand & Dubey, 2013). Additionally, sustainable tourism upholds high levels of visitor satisfaction, guarantees a positive visitor experience, increases visitor awareness of sustainability issues, and maintains sustainability. Eco-friendly tourism methods must be encouraged. Due to the interdependence

of all development factors, the issue of sustainable tourism development needs to be addressed. (Organization, 2001).

### 3. Objective of the study:

In recent years, tourism has become a significant industry worldwide. It contributes significantly to the growth of the economy. Not only that, economies that lack better infrastructure services plus financial benefits are possible develop with the help of tourism development. If it is difficult to begin any other forms of development in a certain location, the goal of economic growth can still be achieved through the development of tourism there. Sustainable tourism is an engine of growth of the less develop regions with diverse scenic beauty and ample untapped resources. Governments of respective states need to take targeted and professional action measures to boost sustainable touristy and its growth. The researchers from different fields plus dissimilar country started studying touristy in modern times due to its increasing importance and great links with diverse related and interrelated fields. In India different states have different types of geographic and sociocultural environments and resources, Northeast India is evident of that. Therefore, to attract more visitors, different types of programs or schemes are needed. Both from National and International Level. As India and Government of these eight states have started recognising tourism as an important sector for the overall development this research paper has made an attempt to understand the growth trend of the sustainable development in Northeast India with a detailed investigation of its problems and prospects.

The study's objectives:

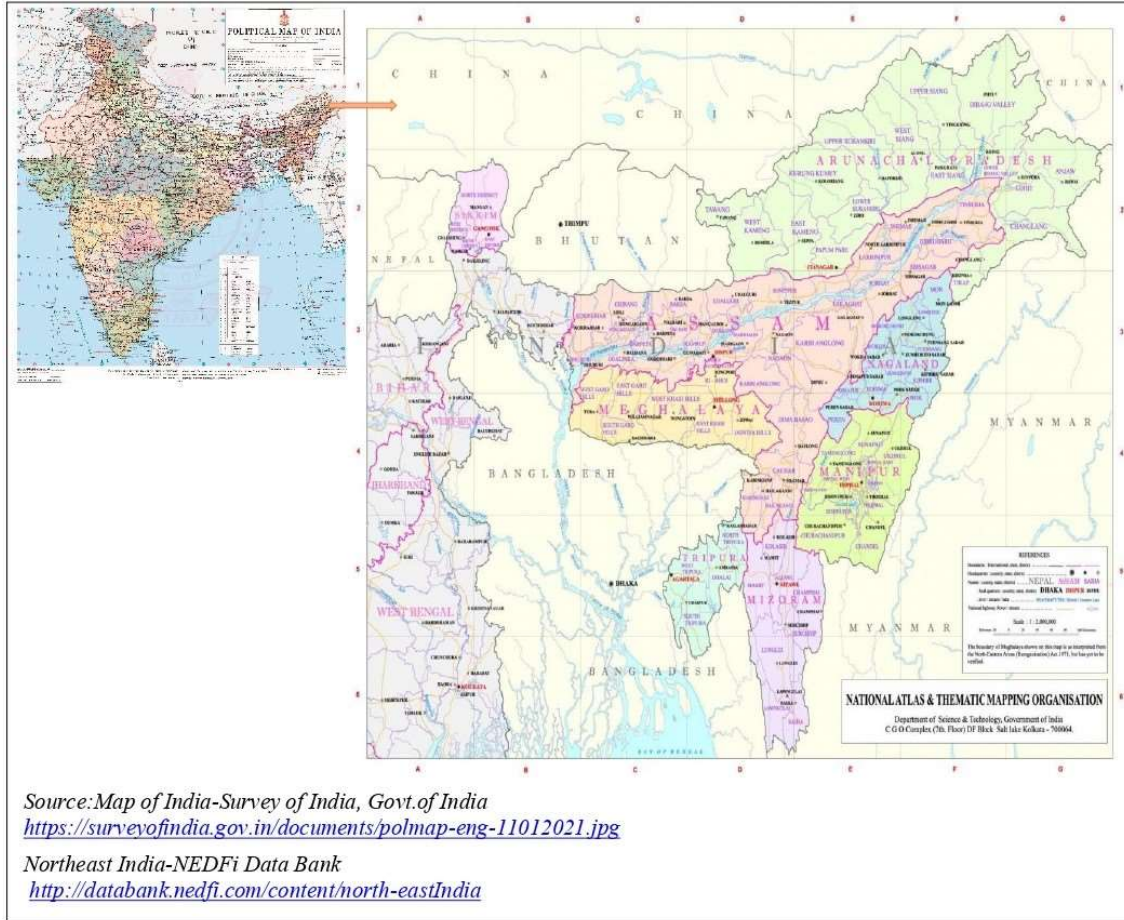
1. To study the growth trend of sustainable travel in NEI.
2. To study the different problems faced by the sector for its growth.
3. To understand the prospects of the industry in the region.

### 4. Methods and Tools:

**4.1. Area of Study:** The area of Study comprises of India's eight northeastern states. It includes Meghalaya, Sikkim, Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, and Nagaland in addition to Arunachal Pradesh. Each of these states has vast and distinct scenic beauty with blessed flora and fauna of its own. Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have mighty rivers which is not only helpful for the generation of hydropower but it provides highly fertile land for vegetation. Meghalaya with the world of world's highest rainfall is not behind in its beauty and resources, other states too have ample resources and cultural diversity which makes them different from one another and helps in the promotion of the tourism in their respective regions. The detail of the states with its population, resources and different tourist attraction are listed below with the help of diagrams.

Map:1

Location of Northeast India in India Map



**Table No.1**  
**Basic Details of the North Eastern States of India**

| Items/Components   | Reference Period | Unit     | Arunachal Pradesh | Assam       | Manipur   | Meghalaya | Mizoram   | Nagaland  | Sikkim   | Tripura   | NER         | All India      |
|--------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| 1                  | 2                | 3        | 4                 | 5           | 6         | 7         | 8         | 9         | 10       | 11        | 12          | 13             |
| Geographical Area  | 2011             | Sq. Km   | 83,743            | 78,438      | 22,327    | 22,429    | 21,081    | 16,579    | 7,096    | 10,486    | 2,62,179    | 3,32,87,263    |
| Total Population   | 2011             | Nos.     | 13,82,611         | 3,11,69,272 | 27,21,756 | 29,64,007 | 10,91,014 | 19,80,602 | 6,07,688 | 36,71,032 | 4,55,87,982 | 1,21,01,93,422 |
| Population Density | 2011             | Nos.     | 17                | 398         | 115       | 132       | 52        | 119       | 86       | 350       | 174         | 382            |
| Literacy Rate      | 2011             | Per Cent | 65.38             | 72.19       | 79.21     | 74.43     | 91.33     | 79.55     | 81.42    | 87.22     | 74.48       | 74.04          |

*Sources: Basic Statistics of Northeast India, North Eastern Council Secretariat, Govt. of India, 2015*

The total area of the Northeast India is 2,62,179 sq.km, with a population size of 4,55,87,982 people. Assam has the highest population among all the states whereas Arunachal Pradesh has the biggest land holdings. Sikkim has the lowest population number but Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest density rate. In terms of the Literacy rate Mizoram tops the list with 91.33% among all the states of NE India.

**4.2. Sources of Data-** The data for this study has been collected from secondary methods, which mostly includes the government Annual reports and other online reports published from time to time. It also includes the data from another research and thesis which has been conducted in the same field. The bulletins and information's of Tourism Industry are one of the major parts of this study.

**4.3. Type of Study-** The research is descriptive in nature as it was conducted mostly with secondary literature available in various forms. Furthermore, the research is empirical in nature as it analyzes the information using various methods.

**4.4. Sample design-sampling method and sample size-** In order to comprehend the growth trend of the sustainable tourism the government data which are available in their published format has been taken for this research. Convenient samples have been considered to keep the paper simple and easy to understand. The data from 2017 to 2021 has been taken into consideration to complete the study at the same time to see the trend of the sector during COVID 19.

**4.5. Analytical Framework-** The research is about the growth trend of the tourism with its problems and prospects, hence the data of different tourist attraction with number of air travels and tourist visits have been considered. The analysis for the same has been done with simple percentage method, bar and line graphs. MS office excel has been used for the data analysis.

**4.6. Limitation-** Every researcher tries to keep their research free from limitations but few facts which cannot be ignored as limitations remains acceptable. Some of such limitations of our research are listed below-

1. This study only represents eight North Eastern Indian states and therefore does not represent the entire universe.
2. The time limitation with non-conduct of primary research makes it relevant to correlate with data of government sector and existing researches conducted only and no other primary field data.

## **5. Results & Discussions:**

### **5.1. North-East India, its Resources and Tourist Attractions:**

The North East India is famous for its natural and fabulous beauty. It is the region of multi-cultural diversity. Untapped resources, rivers, dense forest, variety of orchids, extreme scenic

beauty of mountains. NE is the land of diverse reserves like natural gas, coal, petroleum and tea gardens. It is characterized by inadequate exploitation of natural resources, including forests and potential for energy production, as well as low private and foreign direct investment. In addition, a lack of an industrial sector and high unemployment among those with higher levels of education are prominent issues. Consequently, sustainable tourism plays a crucial role in the economic growth of the region. India has the potential for utilizing the industry to create jobs and set an example for other countries. As a multisectoral activity, tourism has the potential to benefit various economic sectors. In highly developed states and nations, tourism offers enormous chance for poverty reduction, income creation, as well as financial development. Since it creates numerous employment opportunities, it requires a lot of labor. Tourism can also contribute to environmental preservation, cultural enrichment, rural development, and women's empowerment. In the Northeast, tourism is one of the most promising industries today. Below is a table listing tourist destinations and itineraries in NE India.

**Table No.2**  
**Tourist Attractions and Circuits**

| State             | Tourist Attraction   | Tourist Circuits  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Arunachal Pradesh | <p><b>Tawang</b>– This is one of Arunachal Pradesh's most stunning locations. In Tawang, there are numerous breathtaking locations to explore.</p> <p><b>Ziro</b>– Beautiful Ziro Valley in the state is also on the preliminary list of World Heritage Sites.</p> <p><b>Mechuka</b>- Mechuka is another name for Mechuka, which is densely forested with pine trees.</p> <p><b>Pasighat</b>- This district, traversed by the powerful river Siang, is the oldest town in the state.</p>             | <p>Tezpur-Bhalukpong-Bomdila-Tawang<br/>Itanagar-Ziro-Daporijo-Aalo-Pasighat<br/>Pasighat-Jengging-Yingkiong-Tuting<br/>Tinsukia-Tezu-Hayuliang<br/>Margherita-Miao-Namdhapa-<br/>Vijayanagar<br/>Roin-Mayudia-Anini<br/>Tezpur-Seijosa-Bhalukpong<br/>Ziro-palin-Nyapin-Sangram-Kolorian</p> |
| Assam             | <p><b>National Park of Kaziranga</b> - This place of Assam is famous for hosting two-third of the magnificent one-horned rhinoceros of the world.</p> <p><b>Kamakhya Temple</b>- It is a famous Hindu temple of Mother Goddess Kamakhya, also known as 51st Shakti peeth.</p> <p><b>Bhramaputra River</b>– It is the second mightiest river in the country.</p> <p><b>Sivsagar</b>- It used to be Ahom Kingdom's capital is noted for its Shiva Temples, widespread tea Garden and oil industry.</p> | <p>Guwahati-Kaziranga-Nameri-Dirang-<br/>Tawang-Bomdila-Tezpur<br/>Guwahati-Jorhat-Kaziranga-majuli-<br/>Shivsagar<br/>Dibru-Saikhowa-Dehing Patkai-<br/>Dibrugarh<br/>Guwahati-Hajo-Sualkuchi-Manas</p>  |

|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| Manipur   | <p><b>Loktak Lake-</b> With floating weeds, Largest freshwater lake is the one in the NER.</p> <p><b>Moirang-</b> It is the main centre if early Meiti folk culture.</p> <p><b>Khwairamband Bazar-</b> It is the market of Women, where 3000 women participates to sell vegetables, fruits, fishes, groceries etc.</p>  | <p>Guwahati-Kaziranaga-Kohima-Impahl-<br/>Moreh<br/>Kolkata-Imphal-Moreh</p>              |
| Meghalaya | <p><b>Shillong-</b> It is the capital of Meghalaya and started frowing since 1864 with civil station of Khasi and Jantia Hills.</p> <p><b>Cherrapunji-</b> Is famous for waterfalls.</p> <p><b>Mawsyram-</b> It is the worlds wettest place.xxxx</p> <p><b>Mawlynmong-</b> It has been awarede with Asia's most pristine village in 2015 by central Government of India. It also shares border with Bangladesh.</p>   | <p>Guwahati-Kaziranga-Shillong-<br/>Cherrapunji Guwahati-Tura-Balkram-<br/>Manas</p>      |
| Mizoram   | <p><b>Aizwal-</b> The capital city of the state. The thriving city is perched on the ridges of high hills.</p> <p><b>Thenzawl-</b> Tropic of Cancer runs through this picturesque village and is famous for mizo handloom and rice.</p> <p><b>Hmuifang-</b> It is covered with virgin forests reserved.</p> <p><b>Vantawang falls-</b> It is the highest and most spectacular of all waterfall in the State.</p>  | <p>Kolkata-Aizwal-Thenzawl-Reiek<br/>Kolkata-Aizawl-Champhai-Rih Dil</p>                  |
| Nagaland  | <p><b>Khonoma-</b> It is recorded to have resisted British rule in the region from 1839 to 1880 and etched its name into history if Indian resistance to the colonial invasion.</p> <p><b>Wokha-</b>Known for Land of beautiful Mountains and rivers with vibrant dances and flok songs.</p> <p><b>Pfutsero-</b> This is the highest altitude town and the coldest inhabited place in Nagaland.</p> <p><b>Mokokchung-</b> This is the Ao tribe's home and the center of the Naga cultural nervous system.</p> | <p>Dimapur-Kohima-Wokha-Zunheboto-<br/>Mokukchung<br/>Dimapur-Kohima-Khonoma-Pfutsero</p> |



|                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| <b>Sikkim</b>  | <p><b>Gangtok-</b> It gives an amazing view of Khangchendzonga. It is a cosmopolitan city.</p> <p><b>Changu Lake-</b> It is a beautiful lake and remains frozen during winter.</p> <p><b>Rumtek-</b>It is a gateway and home to Rumtek Monastery, which is the largest monastery in Sikkim and beautifully demonstrate the best of tibetian architecture.</p> <p><b>Aritar-</b>It is again famous for Monastrys' and natural beauty.</p>  | <p>Pemayongte-yuksam-kewzing-<br/>Ravangla-Timitarku-Namchi-<br/>Nayabazar-Gangtok Singtam-Rangpo-<br/>Teesta-burmiok-legship-tatopani-ikip-<br/>Namch-Chakung-Soreng-Buriakhop-<br/>varse-Hilley-uttarey-Dentam-</p> |
| <b>Tripura</b> | <p><b>Ujjayanta Palace-</b> It is located in Agartala, the state capital of Tripura, and was once the royal palace of the state. Maharaja Radha Kishore Manikya, the king of Tripura, constructed the palace between 1899 and 1901. The palace is situated on the banks of a small lake and is surrounded by Mughal gardens.</p> <p><b>Tripura Sundari temple-</b> Known for one of the shaktipeeth out of 51.</p> <p><b>Rudrasagar Lake-</b> It is famous for lake called as Neermahal.</p> <p><b>Unakoti-</b>This place is famous for rock-carved and stone images.</p> | <p>Agartala-Sipahijala-Neermahal-<br/>Udaipur-Matabari-Pilak-Mahamumi<br/>Agartala-Dumbook Lake-Unakooti-<br/>Jampui Hills</p>  |

*Sources: Northeastern Council Government of India*

The above table taken from the NE Council, provides the information about the various tourist attraction with the tourist circuits available in various Indian states of the North Eastern region. Tourism department along with the interest groups in these states tries their best to keep the all-relevant data available for the visitors to NE states. There are number of Tourism agency started by both Government and Non-Government to provide proper travel guide to the Foreign as well as Domestic Tourists. Travel guides have considered all the natural calamities in the region and try to make it more convenient for the tourist to make them visit in the favorable weather. The information of the tourist attraction with the weather condition is must as NE has record of natural disasters in terms of landslides and floods every year. The above Table no. 2 and Table No. 3 below shows the glimpse of the beauty of the NE which increases the importance of the Sustainable Tourism in the region.

### **Table No.3**

#### **Famous Tourism Attractions available in North-East India**

| NATIONAL PARK IN NORTHEAST INDIA | WATERFALLS  | RESERVED FOREST  | HILLS               | HILLS STATIONS  | MONASTERIES           | LAKES             | MONUMENTS AND OTHER TOURIST SPOTS |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Namdapha                         | MEGHALAYA: Nohkalikai Falls, Cherapunjee, Nohsngithiang Falls, Langshiang Falls, Kynrem Falls, Elephant Falls, Bishop Falls | Kakoijana reserved forest                                  | Kangchenjunga Hills | Tawang          | Pemayangtse Monastery | Khecheopalri Lake | Living root bridges               |
| Kaziranga                        | Assam: Panimur Falls, Chmapawati Kunda, Akashiganga Falls, Sivakunda Falls  | Mawphlang Reserved forest in East Khasi Hills in Meghalaya | Naga Hills          | Majuli          | Tawang Monastery      | Gurudongmar Lake  | Madan Kamdev                      |
| Orang                            | MIZORAM: Vantawng Falls   |  | Patkai Hills        | Umananda Island | ZangDhokPalriPhodang  | Lake Tsongmo      | Meghalaya Caves                   |
| Manas                            | ARUNACHAL PRADESH: Nuranang Falls   |  | Khasi Hills         | Cherrapunji     | Rumtek Monastery      | Loktak Lake       |                                   |
| Dibru-Saikhowa                   | MANIPUR: Sadu Chiru waterfall at Leimaram, Telly/khayang waterfall in ukhrul district.                                      |  | Lushai Hills        | Darjeeling      | Enchey Monastery      | Lake Shilloi      |                                   |
| Nameri                           |   |  | Assam Himalaya      | Kalimpong       | Tashiding Monastery   | Umiam Lake        |                                   |
| Balphakram                       |   |  | Garo Hills          |                 | Dubdi Monastery       |                   |                                   |
| Nokrek                           |   | Sela Pass  | Ralang Monastery    |                 |                       |                   |                                   |

Note: Table is in image format

### 5.2. Trends of Sustainable Tourism in Northeast India (2017-2021)

**Table 4**  
**North Eastern State Wise Domestic and Foreign Tourist Visit (2017-2021)**

| State/Year        | 2017    |       | 2018    |        | 2019    |        | 2020    |       | 2021    |       |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
|                   | D       | F     | D       | F      | D       | F      | D       | F     | D       | F     |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 444005  | 7147  | 512436  | 7653   | 555639  | 7825   | 42871   | 961   | 102915  | 182   |
| Assam             | 6052667 | 21760 | 5856282 | 36846  | 5447805 | 26878  | 1266898 | 7285  | 1409161 | 536   |
| Manipur           | 153454  | 3497  | 176109  | 6391   | 167560  | 13608  | 49669   | 3139  | 49371   | 648   |
| Meghalaya         | 990856  | 12051 | 1198340 | 18114  | 1245633 | 25813  | 24734   | 2311  | 154409  | 411   |
| Mizoram           | 67772   | 1155  | 76551   | 967    | 163762  | 2249   | 30890   | 265   | 87232   | 234   |
| Nagaland          | 63362   | 4166  | 101588  | 5010   | 125949  | 5577   | 10979   | 518   | 23968   | 325   |
| Sikkim            | 1375854 | 49111 | 1426127 | 71172  | 1421823 | 133388 | 316408  | 19935 | 511669  | 11508 |
| Tripura           | 398669  | 69899 | 414388  | 102861 | 437201  | 154405 | 127815  | 31877 | 177816  | 5     |

Sources: India Tourism Statistics, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21

**Diagram 1**  
**State Wise Foreign Arrivals (2017-2021)**

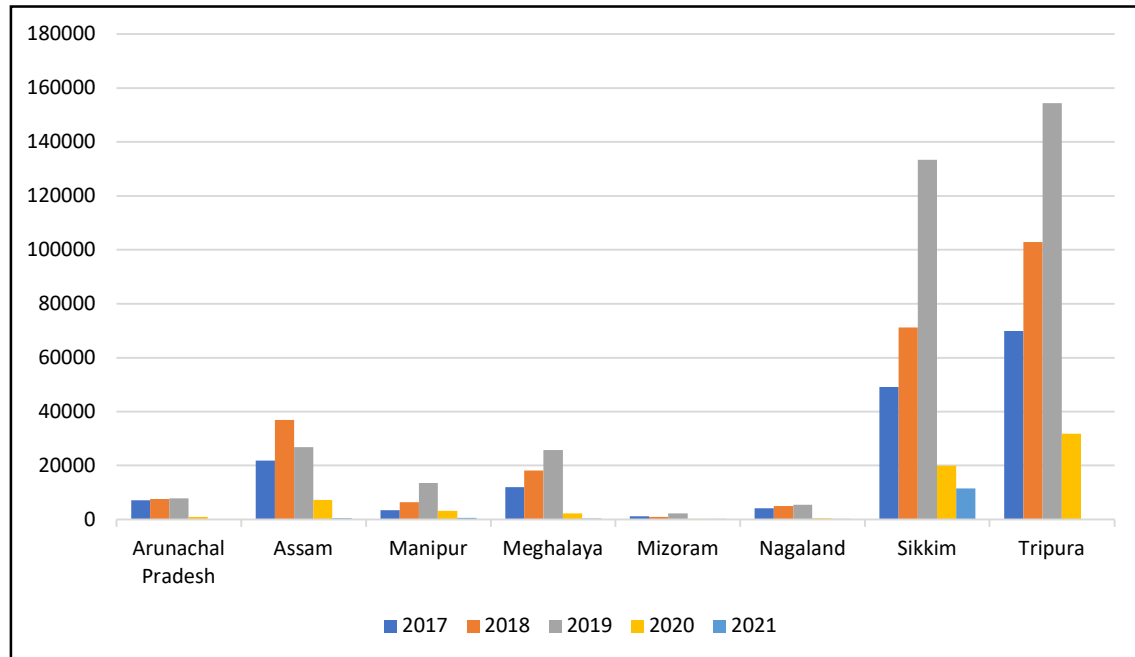
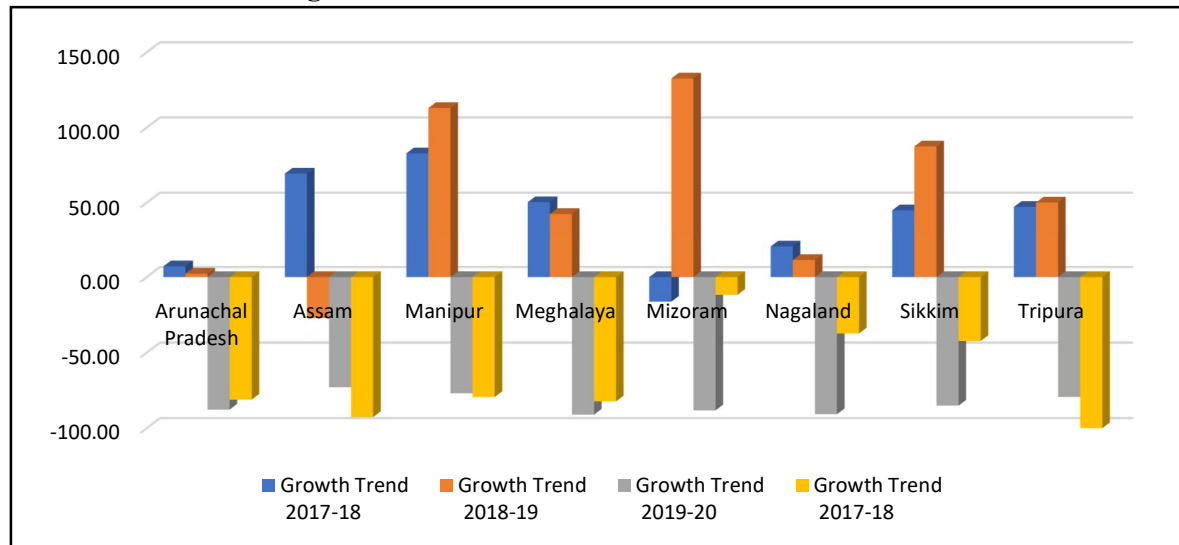


Table 4 presents the total number of domestic and international visitors to each state of Northeast India from 2017 to 2021. Various diagrams have been created using the data to support the relevant content.

The Diagram 1 demonstrates the quantity of foreign visitors who visited North East India during the research period. The study shows that Sikkim and Tripura have recorded the highest number of foreign tourists as compare to other states of the region. Each of the States were witnessing the growth in number of tourists from 2017 to 2019 but the pandemic COVID 19 has affected the sector with its worst condition. Each of these states have not only faced a downfall in the tourist visit but marked the negative index at its peak. The situation in the states of Sikkim and Tripura were relevantly better as it still managed to get countable tourist from abroad even during pandemic. The negative visits not only have given a setback to this industry in this part of the Country but to the entire World, where everything was kept shut to avoid the spread of the COVID 19. The data reveals that there was a loss of US \$ 910 million to US 1.2 trillion during pandemic in the Tourism sector (Tourism and Covid 19 Unprecedented Economic Impact-UNWTO).

The Diagram 2 furthers explains the growth trend of the FTA during the study period, which has been explained below after the diagram 2. The Growth trend of the Foreign Tourist Arrivals has been calculated with the simple percentage method to understand the year wise growth trend of this sector, which also includes the negative growth which has been recorded during pandemic.

**Diagram 2**  
**Growth Trend of Foreign Tourist Arrivals**

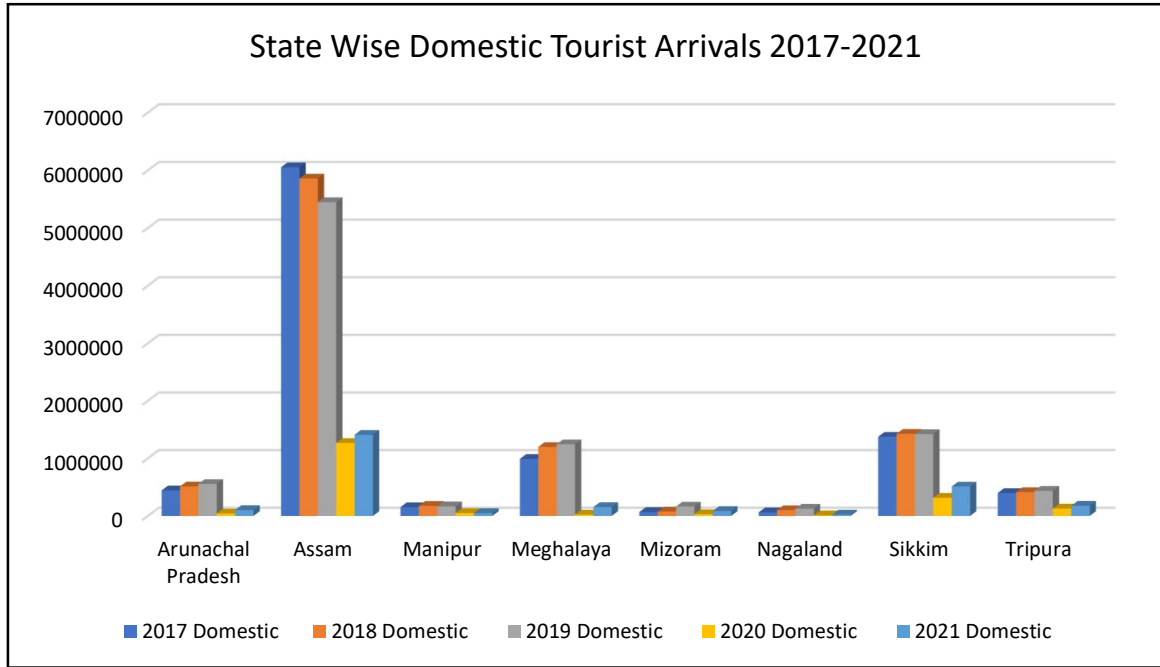


The above Diagram 2 shows that Arunachal Pradesh had a 7.08 % growth in 2018 as compare to the previous year 2017, the growth had a decline in 2019 2.25 % growth of tourist visit. 2020-21 had marked the disastrous year due to COVID 19 Pandemic and complete lockdown for 6 months and partially lockdown thereafter with restrictions, 2020 data shows the decline in growth trend with -87.72% and 2021 with -81.06. Assam had witnessed growth of 69.33% in the tourist visit in the year 2018 as compare to 2017, it has a negative growth with -27.05% in the year 2019 as comparing with 2018. The downfall in the tourist visit was visible in the year 2020 and 2021 with -72.9 % and -92.64 % respectively with compare to their previous years. Manipur has gained 82.76% growth in tourist visit in 2018 as compare to 2017, 2019 had given an extra ordinary growth with 112.92%. Year 2020-2021 had marked a sharp decline of the FTA with -76.93% and -79.36% respectively in the state. Meghalaya had reported a growth of 50.31% in the year 2018 compared to 2017 and 42.5% growth in the year 2019. Pandemic had given a downfall in the FTA with -91.05% and -82.22% in the year 2020 and 2021 respectively. Mizoram had a negative growth with -16.28% in the year 2018 which had increased in 2019 with 132.57% in 2019. Yet in the year 2020 and 2021 the Pandemic has not left the state too with -88.22% and -11.7% fall in the FTA. Nagaland received a growth of 20.26% in 2018 compared to previous year which had an increase of 11.32% in 2019. The year 2020 and 2021 had -85.05% and -42.27% FTA in the State. Sikkim had 44.92% growth in 2018 and 87.42% growth in the Tourist visit in 2019. COVID period witnessed -85.05% and -42.27% fall in FTA in the year 2020-2021. Tripura had 47.16% and 50.11% growth in the year 2018-2019 in FTA and Pandemic period had given a fall in the trend with -79.35% and -99.98% in the 2020-2021.

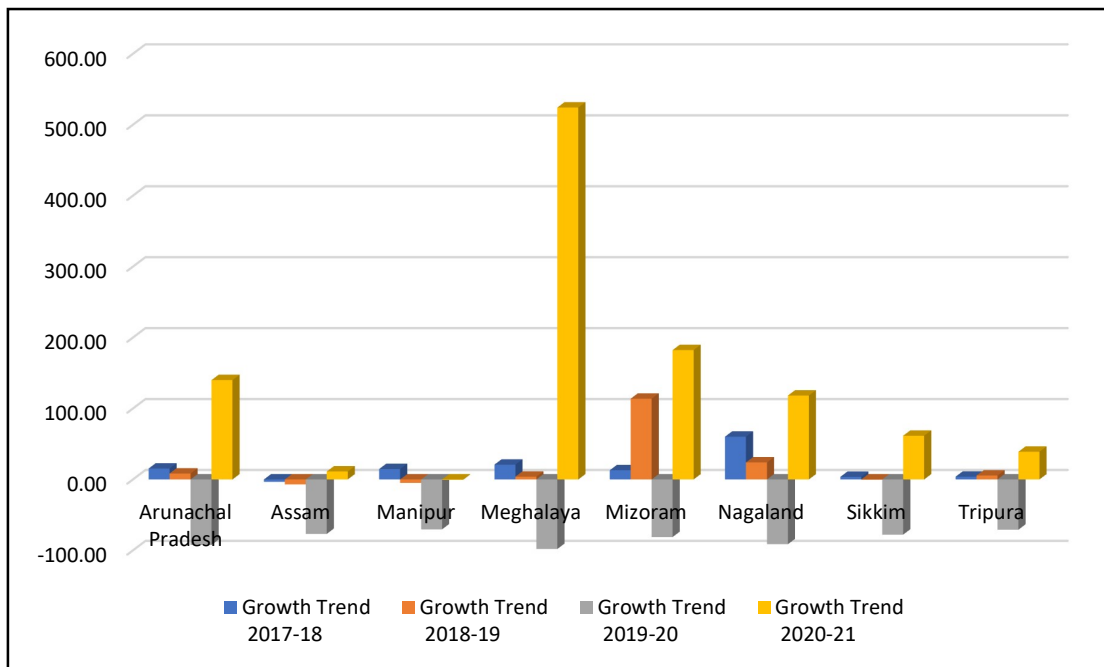
The Diagram 3 shows the number of Domestic Tourist Arrival in North East India during the study period. The study shows that Assam had the highest of DTA during all the study year. Meghalaya is in second number after Assam in terms of DTA during the study period. Mizoram Nagaland and Manipur had recorded the lowest Tourist visit in all these years.

Each of the States were witnessing the growth in number of tourists from 2017 to 2019 but the and a downfall in the visits during the pandemic COVID 19.

**Diagram 3**  
**State Wise Domestic Arrivals 2017-2021**



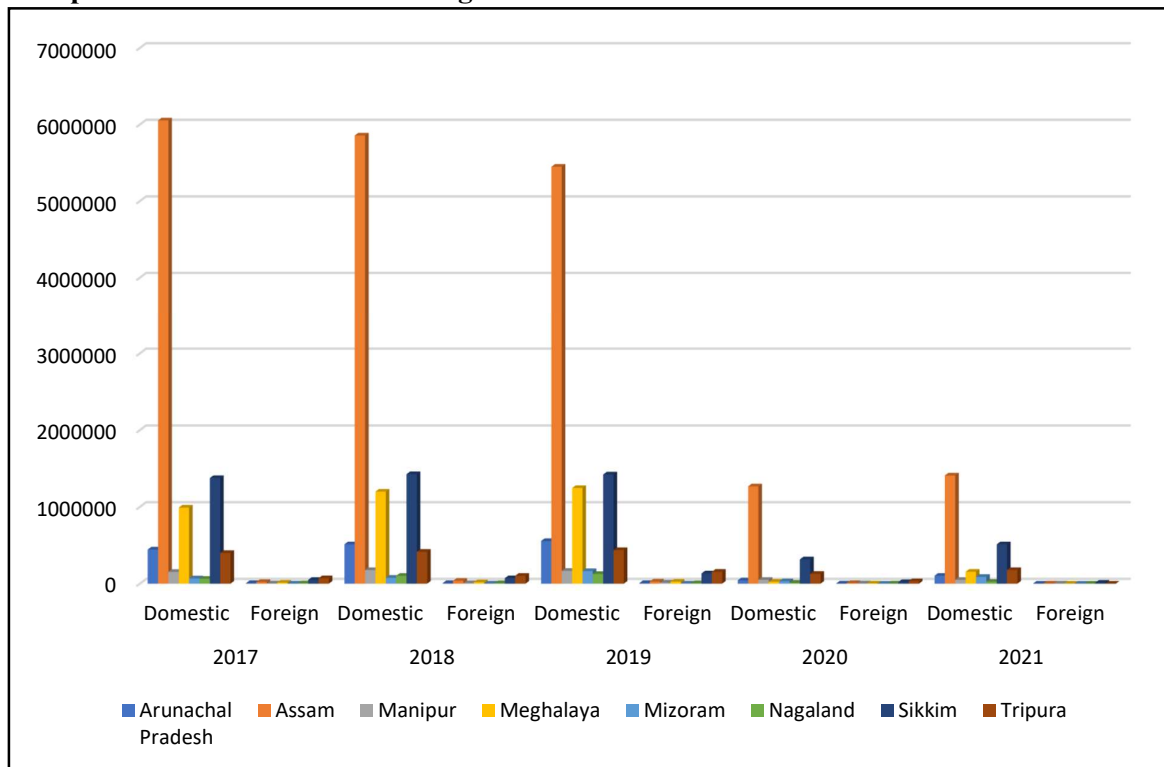
**Diagram 4**  
**Growth trend of State Wise Domestic Travels**



The above Diagram 4 shows that Arunachal Pradesh had a 15.41 % growth in 2018 as compare to the previous year 2017, the growth in 2019 was 8.43 % growth of tourist visit. 2020-21 had marked the disastrous year due to COVID 19 Pandemic and complete lockdown for 6 months and partially lockdown thereafter with restrictions, 2020 data shows the decline in growth trend with -92.28% and 2021 with 140.06. Assam had witnessed a negative trend with -3.24% in the in the tourist visit in the year 2018 as compare to 2017, it again has a negative growth with -6.98% in the year 2019 as comparing with 2018. There was a -76.74% downfall in the tourist visit was visible in the year 2020 and a growth of 11.23% in 2021. Manipur has gained 14.76% growth in tourist visit in 2018 as compare to 2017, 2019 had given a decline trend with -4.85%. The Year 2020-2021 had marked a sharp decline of the DTA with -70.36% and -0.6% respectively in the state. Meghalaya had reported a growth of 20.94% in the year 2018 compared to 2017 and 3.95% growth in the year 2019. Pandemic was worst as it given a downfall in the DTA with -98.01% and an exceptional growth of 524.28% was reported in the year 2020 and 2021 respectively. Mizoram had a growth with 12.95% in the year 2018 which had increased in 2019 with 113.93% in 2019. Yet in the year 2020 and 2021 the Pandemic has not left the state too with -81.14% and which increased to 182.4% in the DTA. Nagaland received a growth of 60.33% in 2018 compared to previous year which had an increase of 23.98% in 2019. The year 2020 and 2021 had -91.28% and 118.31% DTA in the State respectively. Sikkim had 3.65% growth in 2018 and -0.3% growth in the Tourist visit in 2019. COVID period witnessed -77.75% and 61.71% in DTA in the year 2020-2021. Tripura had 3.94% and 5.51% growth in the year 2018-2019 in DTA and Pandemic period had given a fall in the trend with -70.77% and -39.12% in the 2020-2021.

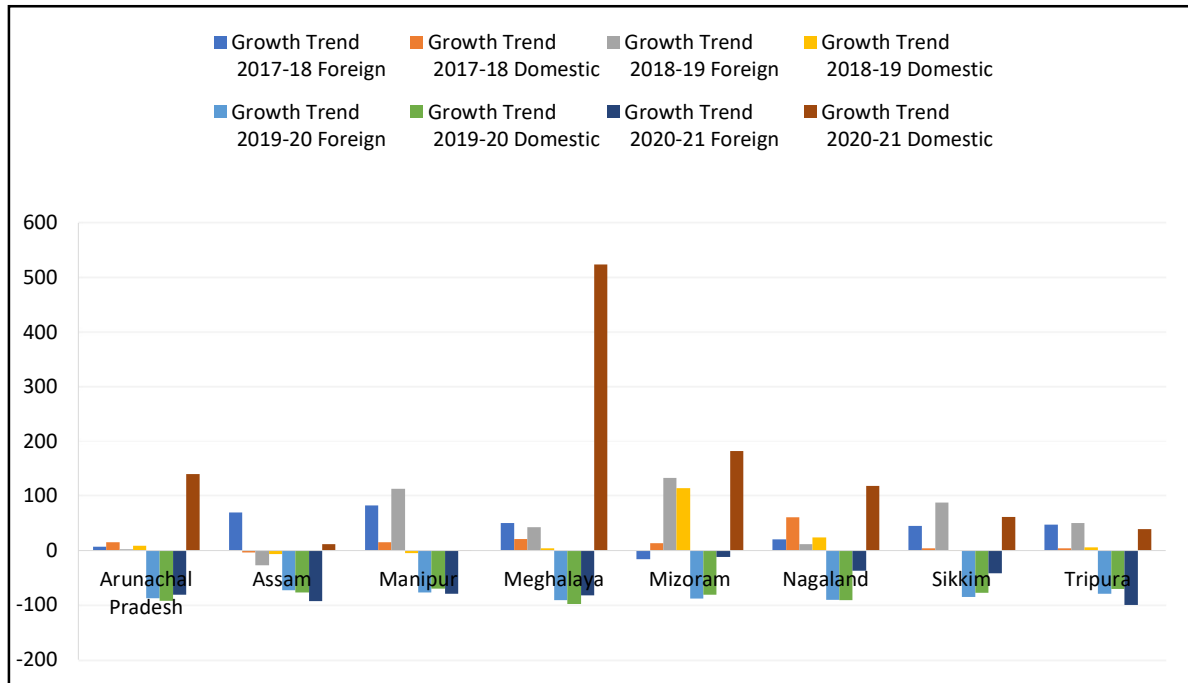
**Diagram 6**

**Comparison of Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrivals in NE States 2017-2021**



The Diagram 6 shows that the majority of domestic tourists are in Assam. Arrivals in all the years as compare to the other North Eastern States. Where as Sikkim and Tripura have recorded highest FTAs in all the years from 2017-2021. There is huge gap between other states receiving FTAs and DTAs among the different States of the Northeast. The basic reason of this is the infrastructural development of the states, various other tourism facilities and availability of variety of food can't be ignored too.

**Diagram 7**  
**Comparison of the Growth Trend of Foreign Tourist Arrivals Vs. Domestic Tourist Arrivals in NE States 2017-2021**



The Diagram 7 shows the comparison between the FTAs and DTAs during the study period. Which shows that in the year 2018 there is more growth rate in the DTAs with only one negative rate whereas the growth rate of FTAs is slow as compare to the DTAs. It is evident from the data that there was huge jump in the FTAs in NE region in growth trend but in total number of tourists the DTA remains high. The Pandemic which affected the Tourism sector with its worst time has proven that both DTAs FTAs have been worst affected. There was negative remark in the both arrivals. Each of the NE states has recorded its highest fall in tourist footfall in these two years.

**5.3. Problems of Sustainable Tourism in North-East India**

Although the region has great potential for ecotourism, there are still some problems. To get the most out of tourism, it is very important that the government pays close attention.

**Natural disasters:** Various natural disasters such as floods, landslides and flash floods are common in this region. They cause problems for tourists. Also, most of the tourist attractions such as Kaziranga and Povitala are affected by the flood. It is closed during high tide.

**Poor Transportation:** The situation of transportation and communication facilities in this area is extremely poor. Roads are damaged almost every year by natural disasters such as floods and landslides. There are government incentives to improve roads, but it becomes difficult to travel in bad roads.

**Geographical factors:** The north-eastern region is landlocked and is only connected by a 22 km long chicken neck. Additionally, natural disasters such as landslides and floods are very common in some parts of the region.

**Lack of Standardised Accommodation:** Infrastructure and hotels are rare and need to be improved.

**Security issues:** Government policies, generational stability and safety are very important factors for long-term sustainable ecotourism in the region. Various extremist groups such as ULFA and NDFB operating in the region pose a threat to various domestic and international tourists.

**Lack of funds:** Lack of proper promotion, marketing, networking, brand building, initiatives, market research, skill development and publication of materials related to the NE region are other problems in the development of ecotourism in this sector

**Rules and Regulation:** Various laws and restrictions present other obstacles in this respect. The Indian government has specific permit systems such as RAP (Restricted Area Permit), ILP (Inner Line Permit) which both Indians and foreigners have to follow to enter some states.

**Inadequate Public services and roadside amenities:** The region also faces problems with inadequate public services and roadside facilities. Public services such as, ATMs, banks and other financial services, gas pumps, toilets, and tourism roadmaps should be provided to increase tourist interest in the area.

**Poverty and illiteracy:** Per capita income and domestic production are very low in this region. Therefore, the standard of living is below average quality.

**Communication gap:** Language issues can create communication gaps between tourists and the general public. This can also be a source of confusion for tourists.

**Lack of green tourism:** Tourists are attracted by the hygienic and clean environment of the spot. However, some tourists refuse to come to the area due to the lack of proper management of the tourist area.

## **6. Findings and Suggestions**

### **6.1. Findings:**

The states have diverse biodiversity and abundant natural resources that remain untapped and undeveloped. The Tourism sector is the only sector which has more flexibility to grow in the region. The region is bestowed with plenty of scenic beauty, rivers, natural resources, wild life, national parks etc. The study shows that North East has the potential to grow in terms of Sustainable Tourism. This industry is more of human resource based and requires only better quality of stays and food with better connectivity. Following are some of the specific findings related to the study: -



1. North Eastern States are abundantly blessed with the natural resources.
2. It has different types of geographical location with their own specialities.
3. The Sustainable tourism is a growing industry in this region.
4. From 2017 to 2019, both domestic and international tourist arrivals in the region showed positive growth.
5. Pandemic period 2020-2021 had given a tough time to the industry as its existence become tough in the region with a drastic fall in the DTA and FTA.
6. There are lot of problems being faced by the industry in these regions due to the geographical, natural and developmental issues.
7. Proper advertisement, connectivity, infrastructural development is the need to maintain the growth chart of Sustainable Tourism in the region.

### **6.2. Suggestions:**

Some of the author's suggestions are mentioned to enhance the ecotourism status quo in Northeast India. It is necessary to meticulously improve the preservation and restoration of historical buildings, works of art, paintings, sculptures, etc., enhance the value of existing tourist areas and create new ones. Improve management of local natural and man-made resources. Establishing employment requirements in the sustainable tourism and hospitality industry. More attention to sustainable environmental protection and put more emphasis on green and sustainable tourism. Awareness campaigns on sustainable tourism are needed and community participation is needed. Institutions, business groups and individuals must adhere to ethical and other principles culturally relevant plus environment of the host district. Take advantage of the amazing gifts our ethnicity, culture and nature have brought to this region. Improving the legal and regulatory landscape.

### **7. Conclusion**

The resource endowments, levels of industrialization, and availability of infrastructure vary among the NER region. In other parts of the region, The commercial sector has primarily expanded around tea, oil, gas, mines, sawmills and steel fabrication facilities. India's tourism industry is expanding, and according to predictions from the World Tourism Organization, the country will be a pioneer in using tourism to create jobs. Given its enormous potential, Northeast India needs to be strategically positioned to benefit from its growth. As a multisectoral activity, tourism can boost various economic sectors, and in the Northeast, one of the most promising industrial sectors is tourism. Tourism has significantly impacted the growth of the NER economy, nourishing and stimulating its development process over the years. It is indisputable that tourism plays a crucial economic role. Grammatical errors have been fixed in the following revised version of the paragraph: The number of tourists is expected to increase further, with an estimated 1.8 billion foreign visitors per year by 2030. It is estimated that only 20% of all tourism activity is international, which puts the phenomenon of tourism in its entirety into perspective. The remainder is comprised of domestic travel. Therefore, one could argue that the world's largest economic sector currently is tourism. It is impossible to avoid the tourism industry's expansion and contribution. Furthermore, the detrimental effects of Covid-19 on the industry have been witnessed globally.

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