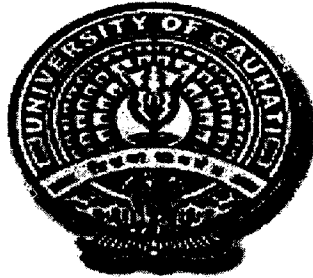


TOURISM IN SIKKIM AN EVALUATIVE STUDY



A Thesis Submitted

To

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

For Award of The Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

By

BEDANTA BORA

B.Com (Hons), MBA

Under Esteemed Guidance of

Dr. SUJIT SIKIDAR

M.Com, Ph.D

Department of Commerce

Gauhati University

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY, GUWAHATI-781014, ASSAM

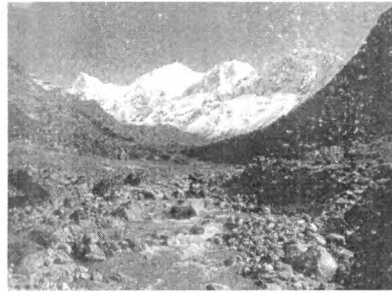
2009



ATITHI DEVO BHAVA



TOURISM - A GREAT WAY



TO GREET TOMMOROW



Ref. No.

Date: 24/06/2009

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work embodied in this thesis entitled "TOURISM IN SIKKIM-AN EVALUATIVE STUDY " is a bonafide project taken up by **Mr. Bedanta Bora** under my supervision and guidance as fulfillment of the requirement for awarding the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)** in Faculty of Commerce under the **University of Guwahati, Assam**. It has not been produced in part or full for award of any degree of the same University or any other University / Institute of Learning. Needless to say that Mr. Bora has fulfilled all criteria under existing norms for submission of current Ph.D. thesis which is found to be of original in kind and based on his own findings and close observations.

(S. Sikidar)
Research Guide
Department of Commerce
Gauhati University
Guwahati-781014, Assam

Bedanta Bora

Ph.D. in Commerce, MBA, Dip in Adv & PR

Pub Sarania, Bye lane
House No. - 4
P. O. Silpukhuri,
Guwahati - 781003, Assam (India)
Dial : (0361) 2541026 (R)
(O) 9864014268 (M)
E-mail : bedanta75@rediffmail.com
bedanta1@yahoo.co.in

DECLARATION

I do hereby proclaim that the research work embodied in this thesis entitled "TOURISM IN SIKKIM-AN EVALUATIVE STUDY " is accomplished under esteemed supervision of Dr. Sujit Sikidar, Department of Commerce, the University of Gauhati, Assam as fulfillment of the requirement for awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Faculty of Commerce under the same university. I further declare that this thesis is original in nature and based on my own research investigation. The same or a part thereof has not been submitted for award of any research degree either in the aforesaid University or in any other University / Institution of Learning.

Place : Guwahati, Assam

Date : 24/06/2009



(Bedanta Bora)

①



PREFACE

The term '**Tourism**' is a phenomenon off the 1945 period when we entered into a common usage, especially in English language. Though genesis to 'Grant Tour' was meant exclusively for affluent section of the society, the term 'Tourist' is said to have derived from the word 'Tour' that means a journey at which one returns to the starting point ; a circular trip usually for pleasure or education. With the advent of industrialization, people started moving in large numbers to places away from their usual residence and work with a view to seek change. This trend continued until tourism became a great mass phenomenon which is a visible outcome of the great technological developments that have changed the social geography of the world. In the beginning, it were the railways, responsible for opening up the continents, carrying the people, material and food which made possible the formation of great nineteenth-century industrial towns and cities. Then came steamships making it possible for people to cross continents to be qualified as international travelers. It was followed by the introduction of motor car which gave great freedom of mobility to people. Finally, it was the aero plane which, when invented with rising affluence, coupled with free time and motivation, led towards an entire new era - the 'Mass Tourism' which today is one of the world's fastest growing sectors and a finest industry. It represents 6-7% of the world's economy with a global growth rate of around 50% per anum. Statistics reveal that in universe, approximately 20 crore people are engaged in this industry making it to be a highly labour-intensive business offering employment to both semi-skilled and unskilled personnel. Besides, providing employment to a large number of people, tourism can be an instrument of regional policy aimed at achieving an equitable balance between major industrial areas and rest of the country. It exercises a very healthy influence on-international understanding and appreciation of other people's style of life too. As such, all these aspects become

vital in a developing country like India where this sector ranked as second largest foreign exchange earner with a growth rate of 25-30% per annum. Number of visitors to India (Inbound tourists) per year are around 28-30 lacs and number of tourists going out of India (Outbound tourists) are around 35-40 lacs. Tourists traveling within the country are estimated roughly to be 3.15 crores at present. Major contributors in inbound tourists are UK at 16.6% followed by US and Germany at 14.1% and 7.7% respectively. Thus, tourism is no doubt, an economic bonanza the overall purpose of which is usually fun, pleasure and enjoyment. However, in modern times, due to era of globalization and liberalization, new dimensions are being added to it, namely-Eco Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Wild Life Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Rural Tourism, Convention Tourism and Health Tourism and the like. This new epoch of a tourism based economy has opened up door of the landlocked Sikkim Himalaya as well along with other Northeastern states of India. Small but beautiful, Sikkim, being situated in eastern Himalaya, is spread below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world and is revered by the Sikkimese as their protective deity. Amidst the grandeur of mountain peaks, lush valleys, fast flowing rivers and hills, it offers her visitors a rare and singular experience. Within a matter of hours one can move from sub tropical heat of the lower valleys to cold of the rugged mountain slopes that reach up to an area of perpetual snow. The state is wrapped in mists and clouds with an incredible variety of orchids, rhododendrons, gladioli and a host of other flowers along with tumbling streams, torrents and monasteries. Thus, owing to its richness in resources, Sikkim is incredibly a significant part of India in so far as tourism is concerned. But what is evident is not perceived. This seems to be a case with Sikkim. From being treated as a mountainous hot spot for quite a few years, the unique tourism resources of this beautiful land have yet to be explored to the fullest extent. May be because of improper planning, dearth of scientific approach, lack of inventive promotional campaign and poor accessibility, this wonderful part could not adequately focus itself in tourism map of the country. If, even a part of those surplus tourism resources could have been

explored in an optimal manner, it would boost economy of the state tremendously and enhance overall competitiveness of its tourism activities. A few studies have been carried out on an organization level in this field. But the same proved to be inadequate to proceed with the present project which is an attempt against such a backdrop to examine the state of affairs in an evaluative perspective. Accordingly, preparing and compiling the current thesis seems to be a tricky exercise as it involves consideration of diverse issues at different levels. The very first concern has been with bringing the material up-to-date as tourism continues to mature rapidly. This, however has not necessarily meant non-consideration of previous information. Again, the aptitude and urge of the researcher for carrying out this assignment has mostly been stimulated by his magnificent exposure of visiting foreign nations as well as several striking tourism destinations in India. Consequently, it originated an idea to go ahead with the present study which covers an empirical analysis of tourism scenario with reference to the tiny state of Sikkim in eastern part of the country. The researcher considers it as a relevant theme as tourism has special significance and become backbone of the Sikkimese economy at present. It may, therefore prove to be of immense help to the tourism planners and policy makers in the state gazette. The present researcher is also privileged enough to space out few articles on his selected area of research in reputed publications and proceedings at national and international level. The responses received from the reviewers in that regard have further enriched his perception and the matters ventilated in it are duly incorporated in the present thesis.

Keeping in mind the nature of the study, a multi pronged methodology has been planned. The approach, adopted here takes the project through literature review along with a structured primary investigation and is also based on secondary information, the sources of which follow government publications/records, state tourism statistics, periodicals, reports, and relevant plan documents. Primary information is governed mostly by the questionnaires distributed amongst the respondents. Moreover, personal visit has been made to different unique tourist

spots of the state in orders to gain hands-on exposure. The research, as a whole, has not been conducted on the basis of any pre-determined hypothesis. Rather, an open mind to the possibilities of information and perspectives of the subject is ensured for data accumulation and interpretation. The key objective behind the project is to undergo an evaluative study on Tourism Industry in Sikkim in terms of few well defined criterions the fulfillment of which is spread over six individual episodes. The first chapter entitled ***Introduction and Overview*** is an enthusiastic start and spells out parameters of the study in both theoretical and practical framework. It has reviewed empirical literature on tourism in general, and Northeast India and Sikkim in particular, highlighting objectives, methodology and layout of the assignment. An outline description of the unique tourism spots of eastern paradise Sikkim and a brief about existing support in the form of infrastructure and facilities are presented in second chapter entitled ***Sikkim – A Himalayan Paradise***. Chapter three entitled ***Tourism in Sikkim – An Analytical Perspective*** assess tourism sector in the state in an analytical perspective in the context of a sustainable tourism economy. It presents a significant interpretation of the filed observation besides performing a SWOT Analysis from diverse directions. The present constraints and impediments to growth of tourism in Sikkim and probable reforms for the same along with the hidden potentials are sketched out in fourth episode entitled ***Potentials, Constraints and Reforms***. The action plan for tourism development and role of different stake-holders in implementing the same has been diagnosed and incorporated in fifth chapter entitled ***Strategy for Development***. The concluding episode entitled ***Concluding Observations*** yields significant inferences emerging out of our close observations and highlights pragmatic suggestions which are implementable at various levels.

Three Appendices are affixed that include copy of Questionnaires designed for inbound tourists, accommodation units, tour operators and concerned officials as Appendix A; Abstracts of present researcher's few research-based publications as Appendix B; and a few Institutions that are directly or indirectly associated

with the process as Appendix C. Reference is appended at the end of each episode wherever necessary.

Last but not the least ; as no research project is out of limitations, the same have happened with this assignment too. Further, the prevalence of equipment's devil could not be ruled out for the purpose. Nevertheless, the researcher has made all possible attempts to minimize magnitude of the errors and, single-handedly bears moral responsibility for any unattended shortcomings in accomplishment of the study.

Guwahati, Assam
June, 2009

BEDANTA BORA



LEST I FORGET

No doctoral study should be considered as a singular compilation of the researcher whose name is usually apparent on title sheet of the thesis. Every compilation seems to be a co-operative outcome and unnamed contributors towards the same are legion. As such, the job of such a nature and magnitude is likely to be undoable sans seeking support and encouragement from diverse angles. Right from genesis of the very idea to work on the theme to its meaningful end, I have incurred both intellectual and moral debts to few personalities. It is indeed, an extremely pleasant privilege on my part to articulate deepest gratitude to all who were straightforwardly or in certain way associated with accomplishing this task.

When the project was decided upon, I was naturally hesitant and unsure, for the reason that had sheer enormity and complexity of the job. The passionate beginning was then, when I initially approached **Prof.(Dr.) Sujit Sikidar** in Department of Commerce, the University of Guwahati, Assam with a hearty appeal to be my pathfinder for this doctoral research study. His gentle persona, clear vision and conceptual clarity about the same endowed me with boundless hopes and confidence. Now, on its proud ending, I am wholeheartedly indebted to him for his incessant supervision and esteemed guidance to instigate an inventive study and turn it into a reality.

I feel infinitely to be owed to **Dr. Padmalochan Hazarika, Dr. Nagen Chandra Das, Dr. Nayan Barua, Dr. Hem Chandra Gautam, Dr. Amrit Pal Singh, Mr. Santosh Kumar Mahapatra, Dr. Aparajita Borkakoty, Dr. Bhaskarjyoti Borah, Dr. Debabrata Das, Dr. Prasanta Sarma** and **Ms. Angana Borah**, Department

of Commerce, the University of Guwahati, Assam for their continuous boosting and dynamic advice. Their emphasis on a job of value-added nature enriched my inducement which seemed to have paid dividend in long run. With all humility, I thank the distinguished academicians for their words of wisdom and knowledge they parted me with.

I extend my earnest gratitude to **Dr. Ghanashyam Nath**, Principal, Gauhati Commerce College, Assam for kindly imbuing a sense of unflinching purpose in me which got passably reflected in turn.

May I now enormously bank upon **Prof (Dr.) Ajeya Jha**, Head, Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Sikkim for reinforcement of positive sprit and imparting invariable blessings at every moment of my professional attachment with him. His extremely liberal attitude and approach had seemed to be primarily instrumental in winning execution of this project. So immense had been his moral boosting that it is virtually hard to convey appreciation. Yet, I do express my humble thankfulness to him.

The job would not have been considered accomplished without unlethargic aid from different **stake-holders** and **officials from concerned departments**. I do owe a lot to these personnel for magnifying my familiarity with the subject through relevant database available at their kind disposal.

I am indebted again to all of the **respondents** who selflessly participated in the process by optimistically reacting to various queries and offered pragmatic suggestions which may be implemental in due course of time.

Compilation of the current thesis parts its credit with **Ms Kalpana Sharma**, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, **Mr. Hiren Kumar Deva Sarma** and **Ms. Prativa Rai**, Department of Information Technology, **Mr. Santanu Sovapandit** and **Mr. Biswajit Dey**, Department of Mathematics, and

Ms Anindita Adhikary, Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Sikkim , whose meandering association with the project perhaps demands a singular acknowledgement.

My heartiest thanks proceed particularly towards the **departmental colleagues** for sharing my official obligations and parting time to time with my entrusted responsibilities. I appreciate them once again for extending a generous inspiration.

The zeal towards carrying out the study would not have emerged meaningful outcome sans encouragement and a boosting confidence infused by **Mr. L. Dorendro Singh**, School of Management Studies, Nagaland University, Nagaland and **Mr. Biju Phukan Bhagawati**, Assam Electronics Development Corporation Ltd, (AMTRON), Guwahati at frequent intervals. **Mr. Alok Roy**, Department of Commerce, the University of Guwahati, Assam, **Mr. Bipin Kalita** and **Mr. Tarini Roy**, Ph.D Section, the University of Guwahati, Assam do also deserve a particular gratitude for their administrative support towards successful execution of the project.

I would be failing in appreciation if **Ms.(Dr.)Utpala Sikidar**, being true and benevolent better half of Prof. (Dr.) Sujit Sikidar, is not gratefully acknowledged. The flavored Annapurna, she used to serve during my numerous visits to their residential block, was found unquestionably delicious.

Endeavor of this nature draws insights from resourceful findings of different **intellectuals**. I am privileged enough to have learnt immensely from their enriched knowledge and significant interpretations. I honestly admire their inferences which are suitably documented at concluding sheets of every episode of the study.

I am beholden and appreciative towards my revered ***parents, parents-in-law, beloved members of my family*** at large, and ***all relatives*** in particular, for their supreme moral support and warm wishes that have been proved unspeakably crucial for proud and happy ending of this assignment.

Last, but not the least, my intuition gracefully offers thankfulness to ***those names*** which might have escaped inadvertently from my confined memory, and who have unwaveringly let me seek any sort of liberty both at personal and professional level during my preoccupation with the project.

Guwahati, Assam
June, 2009

BEDANTA BORA



CONTENTS

Certification by Research Guide	
Declaration by Candidate	
Preface	i-v
Lest I Forget	vi-ix
Listing of Tables	x-xi
Listing of Figures	xii
CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	1-33
1.1 Tourism – A Conceptual Framework	1
1.1.1 Nature of Tourism	3
1.1.2 Forms of Tourism	4
1.1.3 Indian Tourism Industry – A Thrust Sector	6
1.1.4 Incredible India	7
1.2 Tourism in Sikkim – A Socio Cultural Perspective	8
1.3 Review of Empirical Literature	11
1.3.1 Gap in the Existing Literature	18
1.3.2 Significance of the Study to meet the Gap	19
1.4 Objectives of the Study	19
1.4.1 General Objectives	20
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	20
1.5 Research Query	20
1.6 Methodology and Design	21
1.6.1 Source of Data	21
1.6.2 Composition of Universe	22
1.6.3 Sampling Frame and Technique	23
1.6.4 Framing of Questionnaire	24
1.6.5 Tools of Analysis	25
1.6.6 Inferences	25
1.6.7 Periodicity of the Project	25
1.7 Limitations of the Study	26
1.8 Conclusion and Measures for Course of Action	27
1.9 Chapter Planning	27
References	28-33

CHAPTER 2 – SIKKIM : A HIMALAYAN PARADISE	34-56
2.1 Sikkim – The Land of Mystic Splendour	34
2.1.1 Significant Attractions	35
2.1.2 Unique Tourism Interest	43
2.2 Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities	45
2.2.1 Accommodation Units	45
2.2.2 Public Transportation System and Connectivity	47
2.2.3 Power	49
2.2.4 Current Institutional Support towards Tourism	52
2.2.5 Miscellaneous Facilities	55
References	56
CHAPTER 3 -TOURISM IN SIKKIM:AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE	57-122
3.1 Sikkim Himalaya – Towards Sustainable Tourism	57
3.1.1 Socio-Economic Impact	60
3.1.2 Eco Tourism – A Conceptual Significance	62
3.1.3 Sikkim – Fast Emerging as an Eco Tourism Paradise	63
3.2 Performance of Sikkim Tourism – An Objective Evaluation	65
3.2.1 Tourism Traffic Volume – Pattern and Trend	65
3.2.2 Revenue Generation	77
3.2.3 Projects Implementation	84
3.2.4 Employment Creation	91
3.3 Field Observations	95
3.3.1 Field Observation of Inbound Tourists	95
3.3.2 Field Observation of Accommodation Units	105
3.3.3 Field Observation of Tour Organizers	109
3.3.4 Perception of Officials and other Stake-Holders	112
3.4 Sikkim Tourism – A Multidimensional SWOT Analysis	116
3.4.1 Strengths	116
3.4.2 Weakness	117
3.4.3 Opportunities	119
3.4.4 Threats	120
References	121-122

CHAPTER 4 – POTENTIALS, CONSTRAINTS AND REFORMS 123-158

4.1	Sikkim Tourism and Economic Integration-Potentials beyond Borders	123
4.1.1	Silk Route Trade and Tourism via Nathu La – Towards Better Reconciliation	128
4.2	Potential Tourism Products	130
4.2.1	Eco Tourism	130
4.2.2	Adventure Tourism	131
4.2.3	Wild Life Tourism	134
4.2.4	Pilgrim Tourism	135
4.2.5	Cultural Tourism	136
4.2.6	Convention Tourism	136
4.2.7	Garden Tourism	137
4.2.8	Village Tourism	137
4.2.9	Himalayan Tourism	137
4.2.10	Ethno Botanical Tourism	138
4.3.	Constraints and Barriers	139
4.3.1	Poor Connectivity	139
4.3.2	Problems of Entry Restrictions	140
4.3.3	Dearth of Adequate Amenities and Infrastructures	140
4.3.4	Visa Formalities	141
4.3.5	Lack of Coordinated Efforts	141
4.3.6	Political Instability in Surrounding Areas	142
4.3.7	Locational Constraints	142
4.3.8	Lack of Effort for Organizing Cross-Border Tourism	143
4.3.9	Shortage of Trained Manpower	143
4.3.10	Other Constraints	144
4.4	Reforms	144
4.4.1	What has been done	144
4.4.2	What needs to be done	149
	References	158

CHAPTER 5 – STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT	159-185
5.1 Proposed Best Practices	159
5.1.1 Focus on High Potentials	160
5.1.2 Capacity Building of Host Population	163
5.1.3 Tourism Education	164
5.1.4 Computerization and Networking	166
5.1.5 Public-Private Partnership (PPP)	166
5.1.6 Establishment of Inter-state Linkage	171
5.2 Marketing Strategy	173
5.2.1 Strategy in terms of Tourism Products	173
5.2.2 Strategy in terms of Information Literature	174
5.2.3 Strategy to attract Visitors	175
5.2.4 Strategy to attract Investment	177
5.2.5 Strategy in terms of Publicity	178
5.2.6 Learning from Other States	183
5.3 Development Plan and Role of Stake-Holders	183
References	185
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS	186-210
6.1 Pragmatic Suggestions	186
6.1.1 Suggestion from Inbound Tourists	187
6.1.2 Suggestion from Tour Organizers	190
6.1.3 Suggestion from Administrative Officials	191
6.1.4 Overall Suggestion	192
6.1.5 Suggested Approach towards Eco Tourism	199
6.1.6 Recommended Model for Tourism Optimization	204
6.2 Conclusion with Significant Inferences	206
References	210
APPENDICES	a-s
Appendix A	a
Appendix B	k
Appendix C	s
ABBREVIATION	t
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	u-v

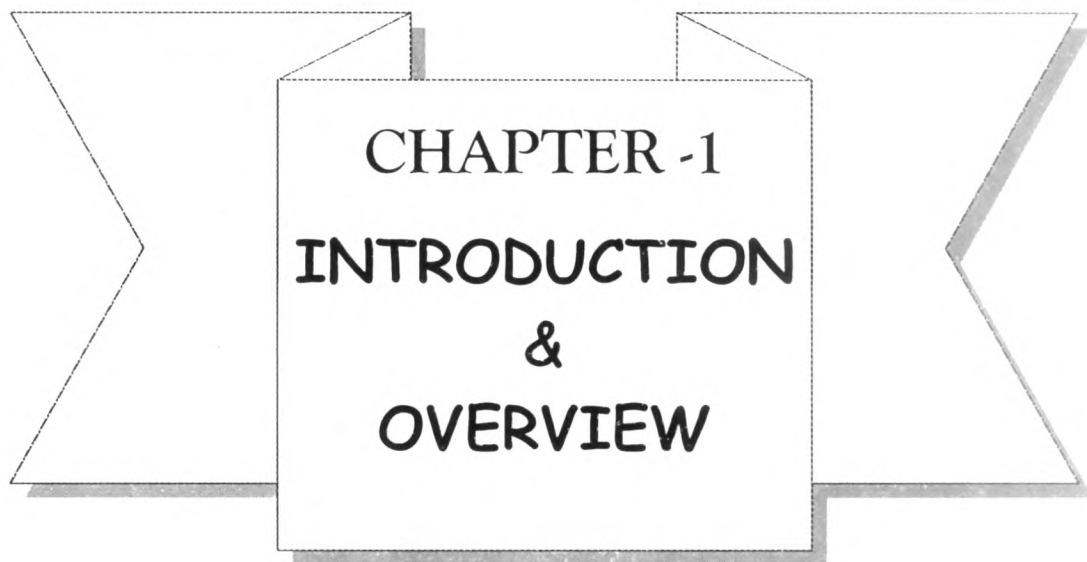
LISTING OF TABLES

<u>NO</u>	<u>TABLE TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
Table 1.1	Forms of Tourism	5
Table 2.1	Number of Hotels and Bed Capacity	45
Table 2.2	Average Stay of Tourists	47
Table 2.3	Road Connectivity in Sikkim	48
Table 2.4	Installed Capacity in Power Projects (Mw)	49
Table 2.5	Proposed Projects of SPDC	50
Table 3.1	Tourist Inflow to Sikkim (1994-2007)	66
Table 3.2	Nationality-wise Foreigners Inflow to Sikkim (1999-2007)	70
Table 3.3	Projected Tourist Arrivals in Sikkim (2007-2022)	75
Table 3.4	Break-up of Projected Tourist Arrivals (2007-2022)	76
Table 3.5	Revenue Generation (1990-2007)	78
Table 3.6	Straight Line Trend (1999-2007)	80
Table 3.7	Projected Revenue from Sikkim Tourism (2008-2022)	81
Table 3.8	Tourism Traffic and Revenue Receipts (1999-2007)	82
Table 3.9	Brief Review of Few Significant Tourism Projects (1999-2007)	85
Table 3.10	Generation of Direct Employment (1999-2007)	92
Table 3.11	Tourist Inflow according to Place of Stay	95
Table 3.12	Tourist Inflow according to Type of Stay	96
Table 3.13	Tourist Inflow according to Education Level	97
Table 3.14	Tourist Inflow according to Occupation Level	98
Table 3.15	Tourist Inflow according to Age	98
Table 3.16	Tourist Inflow according to Sex	99
Table 3.17	Percentage of Respondents availing Package Tour	100
Table 3.18	Percentage of Respondents according to Tour Arrangement	101
Table 3.19	Percentage of Respondents according to Night Stay	101
Table 3.20	Visitor's Perception on Existing Facilities	102
Table 3.21	Visitor's Perception in terms of Cost and Financial Parameter	103
Table 3.22	Type of Surveyed Accommodation Units (In Numbers)	105 x

Table 3.23	Tariff Variation per Night- (Starred Category)	105
Table 3.24	Tariff Variation per Night- (Non-Starred & Other Category)	106
Table 3.25	Distribution of Accommodation Unit according to Facilities	107
Table 3.26	Average Occupancy Ratio of Accommodation Units (2007)	108
Table 3.27	Employment in Accommodation Units (2007) (In Numbers)	108
Table 3.28	Distribution of Tour Organizers according to Services Offered	110
Table 3.29	Distribution of Tour Organizers according to Linkage	111
Table 3.30	Distribution of Tour Organizers with Government Support	111
Table 3.31	Comments and Ratings on Individual Parameters	113
Table 5.1	Tourist Places	162
Table 5.2	Tourism Products	163
Table 5.3	Action Plan and Role of Stake-Holders	184

LISTING OF FIGURES

<u>NO</u>	<u>FIGURE TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
Figure 3.1	Total (Domestic & Foreign) Seasonal Traffic	68
Figure 3.2	Key Source of Domestic Visitors in Sikkim	69
Figure 3.3	Major and Potential Source of Foreign Visitors in Sikkim	73
Figure 3.4	District wise break up of Tourist Arrivals	74
Figure 3.5	Revenue Receipts of Sikkim Tourism (1990-2007)	78
Figure 3.6	Linear Trend of Revenue by the Method of Least Square	80
Figure 3.7	Correlations between Number of Visitors & Revenue Generation	84
Figure 3.8	Number of Visitors and Employment Generation	92
Figure 3.9	Distribution of Tourist Inflow according to Place of Stay	96
Figure 3.10	Distribution of Tourist Inflow according to Type of Stay	97
Figure 3.11	Distribution of Tourist Inflow according to Sex	99
Figure 3.12	Distribution of Tourist according to Purpose of Visit	100
Figure 3.13	Distribution of Tourist Inflow according to Night Stay	102
Figure 3.14	Distribution of Tourist according to Willingness for Re-visit	104
Figure 3.15	Distribution of Employment in Accommodation Units	109
Figure 6.1	Tourism Optimization Model	205



CHAPTER -1
INTRODUCTION
&
OVERVIEW

"We need only travel enough to give our intellects an airing"

- Henry David Thoreau

CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This episode, being an enthusiastic beginning, is exclusively devoted to an introduction to Tourism and its Conceptual Framework, Indian Tourism Industry and Socio-cultural profile of Himalayan Sister Sikkim, Review of Existing Literature along with Significance and Objectives of the Study Further, it highlights the Methodology followed during the process, and Chapter Planning of the thesis thereof.

1.1. TOURISM – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The term 'Tourism' is a phenomenon of the 1945 period when the word 'Tour' entered into the common usage, especially in English language. Though we find its genesis to 'Grand Tour', which was meant exclusively for affluent section of the society, the term 'Tourist' is said to be derived from the word 'Tour' which it means a journey at which one returns to the starting point; a circular trip usually for pleasure or education. Thus, 'Tourism' is a travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes or the provision of services to support this leisure travel. The WTO defines tourists as people who "Travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Tourism has now become a popular global leisure activity and is vital for many countries, due to the revenue generated by the consumption of goods and services by the visitors, the taxes levied on businesses, and the opportunity for employment in service sector associated with it. However, before people are able to experience tourism they usually need disposable income (i.e. money to spend on non-essentials); time off from work or other responsibilities; leisure time tourism infrastructure like transport and accommodation; and legal clearance to travel. Individually,

sufficient health is also a condition, and of course the inclination to move. Furthermore, in some countries there are legal restrictions on traveling, especially abroad. Certain states with strong governmental control over the lives of citizens may restrict foreign travel only to trustworthy traveler. The United States prohibits its citizens from traveling to few countries, for example Cuba. Of course, in India, the trend seems to be liberalized to an extent. Thus, at this instant, it is essential to have an in-depth idea of the concept of 'Tourism' given by different experts and institutions. To begin with, one of the earliest definitions of 'Tourism' provided by an Austrian Economist in 1910 follows as "Bob total of operators, mainly of an economic nature, which directly relate to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or a region." Hunziker and Krapf, in 1941, defined 'Tourism' as "The sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity." In 1976, Tourism Society of England defined it as "The temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movement for all purposes." Again in 1981, International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism defined tourism in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. The UN classified three forms of tourism in 1994 in its recommendations on tourism statistics : 'Domestic Tourism' which involves residents of the given country traveling only within this country; 'Inbound Tourism' involving non-residents traveling in the given country; and 'Outbound Tourism', involving residents traveling in another country. The UN also derived different categories of tourism by combining 3 basic forms : 'Internal Tourism' which comprises domestic tourism and inbound tourism; 'National Tourism', which comprises domestic tourism and outbound tourism; and 'International Tourism' which consists of inbound tourism and outbound tourism. Recently, the tourism industry has shifted from the promotion of inbound tourism to the promotion of intrabound tourism, because many countries are experiencing tough competition for inbound tourists.

Some national policymakers have also moved their priority to the promotion of intrabound tourism to contribute to the local economy. Examples of such campaigns include "See America" in United States, "Get Going Canada" in Canada, and "Guseok Guseok" (corner to corner) in South Korea. As such, it is clear from the above that the motive behind a travel may be diverse which creates different needs at different points of time and at different levels. Of course, it may be narrowness in the concept that necessitated inclusion of societal or social considerations as well.

1.1.1.NATURE OF TOURISM

Tourism is an economic bonanza which is a temporary and short-term movement of people that is outside the place where the so-called tourists live, work and stay. It has been a major phenomenon of the societies all along and motivated by the natural urge of every human being for new experience, adventure, education and entertainment. The motivations for tourism include social, religious and business interests. The US study to travel finds it a pleasure activity and considers it as a totality of relationship. It is the stay of strangers and more so, it is a part of temporary establishment which is not with the purpose of undertaking any remunerative activities. It is an activity involving a complex mixture of material and psychological elements. It is an activity concerned with the utilization of leisure hour. Many feel that if leisure of time and recreation embraces the activities undertaken during that time, then tourism is simply one of those activities. The Intercontinental Consultants catch it as a composite industry consisting of a variety of segments. Thus, the valued opinions of different experts put together make it clear that a transformation in the concept is against the background of emerging new trends in the motives coiled behind travel. The experts not only evince interests in identifying tourism as a multi-segment industry in which both human and economic aspects get due places, the holistic approach thus assigned due weight age to the development of this industry in the best interest of living beings in which all possible efforts are made to minimize the harmful side effects or the negative impacts. So, tourism's importance, as an

instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas, has therefore been well recognized the world over. It is the largest service sector globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings. As such, it can be assumed that the tourism has a pivotal role to play in upliftment of all types of economic activities, elimination of poverty, ending up unemployment, creating new skills, enhancing status of women, preserving religious heritage, encouraging arts and crafts, maintaining ecological balance, protecting environment, and last but not the least, facilitating growth of a fair and social order.

1.1.2. FORMS OF TOURISM

Tourism can be grouped into different categories where we find several bases for its classification. Notable amongst these are purpose of travel, region and the number of visitors. More often than not, we may have various forms of tourism products like ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, pilgrim tourism, rural tourism and so on depending upon the choice and preference of the visitors as tourists. But in recent times, particular forms of tourism, offering travelers an opportunity to enrich their tourism activities by attending specialized programmes like religious tourism, ecological tourism, agro tourism, business tourism, education tourism, incentive tourism, health tourism, sports tourism, shopping tourism etc have been developing more systematically in global scenario. Consequently, a region has become a popular destination not only for holidays of a traditional type, but also for people interested in alternative tours who, apart from relaxing and sightseeing, wish to enjoy a unique experience offered by a tourist spot. The under mentioned chart portrays a conceptual sight into diverse forms of tourism activities in this regard.

Table 1.1
FORMS OF TOURISM

CLASSIFICATION	FORMS	CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE
<i>On the basis of Purpose</i>	Recreational Tourism	Leisure hour at hills, beaches for mind refreshment
	Cultural Tourism	Satisfying cultural curiosity of the tourists
	Adventure Tourism	Opportunity to visit adventurous spots
	Health Tourism	Availability of unique health fitness arrangement like massage, yoga, spa etc
	Sports Tourism	It can be combined with sport events, or training e.g. sailing, cycling, competitions
	Conventional Tourism	Meant for organizing conference, international exhibition
	Incentive Tourism	Offering holiday trips as performance incentives
<i>On the basis of Region</i>	Domestic Tourism	Meant for the tourists belonging to normal domicile or to areas in their own country
	World Tourism	Meant for traveling to other countries and requires documents to cross the frontiers
<i>On the basis of Number</i>	Individual Tourism	Tourists move individually depending upon his/her means and requirements
	Group Tourism	Tourists travel as members in a group
<i>On the basis of Arrangement</i>	Independent Tourism	Tourists make tour arrangement independently
	Inclusive Tourism	Package tours are arranged as member of the inclusive groups and tourists buy a trip
<i>Others</i>	Social Tourism	Meant for weaker sections of the society having limited means and the government offers subsidized traveling facilities to low income group tourists
	Mass Tourism	Participation of a large number of tourists
	Community based Tourism	Occurs when decisions about tourism activity are driven by the host community
	Pro-poor Tourism	Emphasizes on unlocking opportunities for the poor within tourism, rather than expanding overall size of the tourism business. This approach will extend tourism opportunities for people living on less than a prescribed earning for realizing poverty reduction through it.

Source : Self Compilation from relevant references

Thus, table 1.1 reflects the key forms of alternative tourism that are exercisable based on market demands at different points of time.

1.1.3. INDIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY – A THRUST SECTOR

Tourism is one of the economic sectors in India that has a potential to grow at a faster rate which will ensure country's success in the service segment and provide sustainable models of development. Another important feature of the tourism industry, which is of particular significance to India, is its contribution to national integration and preservation of natural as well as cultural environments along with enrichment of social lives of the people. Over 382 million domestic tourists visiting various parts of India every year return with a better understanding of the people living in different regions of the country. They have a better appreciation of cultural diversity of India. Coming into a global perspective, it has been considered as the fastest growing industry in the world with an average growth of 5 % and having about 1000 million travelers around the globe. It claims a largest share of the global economy with more than 10 % of the world GDP and 8 % of the world trade employment as indicated in WTO and WTCC statistics. Likewise, tourism's impact on Indian economy reflects an impressive growth of 9.7 % in all economic activities of the country [*India Economy Review (2004)*]. It is India's one of the finest export industries which has already emerged as a crucial instrument for generating employment and earning foreign exchanges even with a comparatively low levels of international tourism traffic. Apart from its direct contribution to the economy, tourism has significant linkages with several other sectors like agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts and allied areas. In 2004, tourism industry earned a respectable Rs.55 billion and recorded a 3.3 million arrivals. While there was a 27 percent growth in number of tourist inflow, the growth in terms of revenue was 36 percent. As per estimates of the department of tourism, total direct employment in this sector in India was about 20 million during 2003-04. The indirect employment multiplier is also fairly high and is estimated at 1.36. The Tourism Ministry now plans to give a fillip to this industry by developing additional infrastructure and through continuous promotional activities along with fruitful collaborations with Railway Ministry. The Ministry plans to develop special 'Buddhist Tourism Circuit' and to promote medical tourism through easy visa norms. The Confederation of Indian Industry

in its vision paper (2020) envisages that the sector would provide employment to 50 million persons associated with it. Its contribution to GDP has been envisaged at 7%. Tourism has a very strong association with socio-economic progress of the country, a multiplier effect on the economy. India's cultural heritage and eco-tourism potentials are major consumer preferences of the international visitors. The overall fund allotment for tourism industry in 10th five year plan was Rs.2900 crores as against Rs.750 crores in 9th five year planning period. Globally, India is known for its modernity, historical legacy, cultural diversity, natural splendour, wildlife, spiritualism along with Yoga and Ayurveda. Tourism serves as a second highest net foreign exchange earner to the economy. It is estimated that, by 2010, this industry will generate 7 million new jobs, contribute Rs.1,30,000 crores in capital investment and may have 7% share in GDP [*India (2004), Economic Survey*]. Thus, it is quite obvious that there is a wide scope for developing countries like India to promote tourism. If India overcomes the challenges by enriching its present strategies, it will certainly emerge as a finest tourist destination and yield considerable foreign revenue to its exchequer.

1.1.4. INCREDIBLE INDIA

India, a land so vast and diverse in culture, heritage, language and people is bestowed with an equally rich and vast treasure of natural beauty. Towering and as if blessing, this land is the world's youngest and largest East to West mountain chain, known as the Himalayas, stretching some 2560 kilometers in an across the top of the Indian subcontinent. These mountains were formed about 50-60 million years ago. India has a rich architectural legacy dating to an ancient past with a great philosophical thought. Timeless monuments, magnificent temples, breathtaking beaches, nature-majestic mountains, wonderful wildlife..... India never ceases to lure the travelers [*Hand Book on Incredible India (2004); Hand Book on Incredible India (2006)*]. The country has 572 nature-endowed areas, 89 national parks, 483 wildlife sanctuaries apart from 3,606 protected monuments. With this backdrop of history, heritage and new-fangled opportunities along with richness of our destinations, the General Conference of

UNESCO has already declared 16 cultural and 5 natural sites of India as World Heritage Sites. But a question arises..... how to explore this land of stupendous dimensions - colorful, exotic, recreational and cultural varieties ? Of course, the best answer to this is -TOURISM which is undeniably having a catalyticall role to play in furtherance of all economic activities in different corners of India to a self-sustained path of growth. As such, presented hereunder a case study of Sikkim Tourism-a tiny Himalayan state in India, spread over few episodes in an evaluative perspective.

1.2. TOURISM IN SIKKIM – A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

A visit to Sikkim - “The Land of Peace and Tranquility”, with the grandeur of her mountain peaks, terraced hills, verdant valleys, fast flowing rivers and lush tropical forest, brilliant with richness of vivid flowers, birds and butterflies, simple tilted villages and colorful monasteries, is a rare and



unique experience. Sikkim is a land of abundance beauty and adventure, whether passion is long treks or short walks in ever-changing landscape; white-water rafting or mountaineering amongst the world's highest peaks; photographing nature's diversity; or just hanging out, meeting people of other cultures, and enjoying festivals [*Hand Book on India's North-East, Paradise Unexplored (2003)*]. Communities, cultures, religions and customs of different hues intermingle freely here to constitute a homogeneous blend. Hindu Temples coexist with Buddhist Monasteries and there are even few Christian Churches, Muslim Mosques and Sikh Gurudwaras. Although the Buddhists with Monasteries all over the state are the most conspicuous religious group, they are in fact a minority constituting only 28 percent of the population [*Sikkim-A Statistical Profile (2004-05)*]. The majority, 68 percent profess Hinduism. The predominant communities are the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis. In urban areas

many plainsmen - Marwaris, Biharis, Bengalis, South-Indians, Punjabis - have also settled and they are mostly engaged in business and government services. This beautiful tiny hill state of Sikkim joined Indian Union in 1975 as its 22nd state. The state lying on eastern tip of Himalayas bordered by Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet is considered to be one of the bio-diverse hotspots in the world whose main comparative advantage lies in tourism sector [*Indigenous Herald, Face of North-East India (2006)*]. If comprehensively developed, tourism could be a key source of both income and employment in the state and bring in a major shift in the social mobilization process. Sikkim is famous for Kanch-Endzonga, at 28,208 ft, which is third highest mountain in the world. Being second smallest state in India, it covers 7,096 sq kms and measures 110 kms from north to south and 64 kms from east to west. The state encompasses the upper valley of Teesta river, a tributary of the Brahmaputra. The watershed forms the borders with Tibet and Nepal. Rangit and Rangpo rivers border with West Bengal. It is broadly divided into four districts. The east district with capital city of Gangtok is the hub of all administrative activity. The famous Rumtek Monastery, the Dharma Chakra Centre and the seat of his Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, all are located here. Other places of interest include Tsomgo Lake and Nathu la Pass. Sikkim is also a land of monumental mountains that seem to touch the sky. The mountains form a part of long and mighty Himalaya Kanchanjunga, the third highest peak in the world, which crowns the top with its rugged outline. The flora and fauna naturally covers a wide spectrum as no where else in the globe. In such a small area one can find 4000 varieties of flowering plants, orchids (some 600 varieties) and rhododendrons. Naturalists have catalogued over 550 species of birds and over 600 species of butterflies [*Sikkim Info Book (2005)*]. Animals to be found are Himalayan bear, musk, barking deer, red panda and the blue sheep. The state has a population of about three lakhs, made up of Lepchas, Nepalese and Bhutias as already indicated above. Lepchas are the oldest inhabitants of Sikkim. Thus, one can find a harmonious blend of diverse culture and religion in the capital town of Gangtok itself which has emerged into mainstream travel destination with more and more tourist coming to this little Himalayan state every

year. Sitting on lap of the majestic Himalaya, the capital has developed into a cosmopolitan delicacy where old-world charm and hospitality exist along with the modern age of information technology. It is accessible by air from Delhi or Kolkata (Calcutta) to Bagdogra followed by a 5 hour drive or by road from Pelling, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Phuntsoling (Bhutan) and Samth. The people, here have a strong bonding with their age-old traditions and customs. Despite of these, Gangtok is certainly not behind rest of the world in terms of well designed roads, flyovers, posh markets, state-of-art hospital, educational institutes, fast food outlets, discotheques, and all other basic amenities that the heart can desire for. The town has a high Buddhist and tribal population. Not really exploited by the British, it boasts fascinating monasteries and some of the finest views of Kangchendzonga Mountain to be found. The foreign guests intending to visit Sikkim must hold a valid Indian visa and Inner Line Permit which is issued by all Indian Missions abroad for 15 days with a few days of extension as per the norms. So, owing to its richness in resources and being focused as a Himalayan destination for several years, the tiny state of Sikkim has emerged as picturesque valleys that can meet the expectation of every discerning national and international visitor. The warmth hospitality of the people welcome tourists with open hearts and pleasing smiles. However, a glimpse on the statistics reveals that the unique tourism resources of this beautiful land have not yet been optimally explored regardless of unparalleled advantages bestowed by natural beauty and other endowments. For many decades, may be because of poor planning, unscientific management, lack of innovative promotional campaign and access restrictions, the state could not capture a higher share in national tourism market of the country. Hence, the tourism industry in Sikkim is proved to have an exceptional interest and universal value, the encouragement of which, should be a preconceived priority of all concerned stakeholders.

1.3. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Referring to literature on travel and tourism, a number of studies are being carried out time to time to analyze its problems and prospects at national and international level and also its impact on the economy along with the strategic planning for development. Taking into consideration of Sikkim, tourism sector here has immense potential significance which can not be overlooked in any manner. But the research on this area has been somewhat new and seems to be in a negligible shape. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made here for a brief review of available research-based findings on travel and tourism in general and that of literatures on Northeast tourism in particular with a partial focus on Sikkim state. For this reason, the present literature review on which the current research project is based may not seem to be affluent and exclusively Sikkim-centric in its nature. Even then, the present researcher, being stationed in Sikkim, is in an advantageous position to have a possible access to few tourism related issues in the state. As a close-participant observer, he has undertaken an exploratory review in respect of specific tourism related schemes as been proposed by the policy planners and executed by the concerned stake-holders at different levels. To begin with, *Karan (1989)* in his research based study discusses the problems of environment and development in Sikkim Himalaya. Two features of the state, the fragile mountain environment and the very rapidly growing population, seem to be crucial in formulating future tourism development plans. He suggests an integrated approach to development and environmental conservation in the Sikkim state. *Bonn, Furr and Susskind (1998)* emphasize upon using internet as a pleasure travel-planning tool and examine the socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics amongst the internet users and non-users. *Lewis and Semeijn (1998)* assess the impact of information technology on travel and tourism sector and advocate that the IT initiative is a must for creating tourism boom. *Werthner and Klein (1999)* justifies that there bears a positive and challenging relationship between information technology and tourism sector. *Maharana , Rai and Sharma (2000)* opines that although monetary valuation of natural ecosystem is difficult, such valuation helps to draw attention to their

importance and highlights conservation needs, especially in a developing state. *Jacob (2000)* says that the whole of Northeastern region is a home to one of the richest varieties of flora and fauna on the globe. Cultural, pilgrimage and conference tourism have very attractive possibilities in this part. But it requires a great deal of investment, which, unfortunately, has not been forthcoming so far. *Verbole (2001)* argues that an effective communication with tourists is a useful tool in managing negative impact of tourism, as it may change, shape and reinforce attitudes, perceptions, emotions and people's behavior, and thus, can contribute to sustainable tourism in mountain areas. *Geetika (2001)* observes that the ecotourism with its focus on environmentally sound practices such as improving garbage management, tree plantation, checking anthropological activities like mining, construction of dams and providing training to local inhabitants offers a timely opportunity for Sikkim to protect its unique cultural heritage. *Rice (2001)* looks at how holiday television programmes could better reflect local concerns. *Bezbaruah (2001)* says that the inflow of foreign visitors in India has registered a 6 per cent growth in fiscal 2000-01. Foreign tourists fetched \$3 billion to the union exchequer making tourism the second highest net foreign exchange earner in the country. However, North-eastern states do not present a happy picture in this regard-he further opines. Only 0.22 percent of the foreign tourists visiting India in 2000, made Northeast their destination. *Dong (2001)* highlights the socio-economic impact of tourism in Sikkim and recommends immediate future needs for development of eco-tourism in the state. *Kalisch (2001)* extends an overview of issues in international trade and tourism and provides NGOs with suggestions that could lead towards more sustainable and equitable tourism planning. *Ryan (2001)* is primarily concerned with holidaymaking and recreation, not tourism policy nor other aspects of the wider field of tourism. He indicates more about the complexity of tourism experience than tourism's nature as a critical field of analysis. *Buhalis and Laws (2001)* clearly present the subject of distribution channels within tourism industry. They bring together a range of case studies on the structure, theory and practice of management of distribution channels in tourism sector, providing a

multiplicity of viewpoints and geographical examples. *Jha and Jha (2001)* attempt to define tourism prospects in Sikkim in its entirety, suggest precautions that must be observed and propose creative and innovative methods, particularly by utilizing information technology to optimally explore its potential. *McKercher and Cros (2002)* make an attempt to find out how key stakeholders can work together to blend the identification, development and promotion of cultural tourism into a seamless process. They thoughtfully examine cultural tourism from the perspectives of heritage management. *Staiff and Russel (2003)* points out that there continues to be a substantial gap between tourist-centered thinking about cultural and heritage tourism and the thinking that is characteristic of those who are from within the cultural and heritage industries. Their study analyses these as a way of articulating the need for a much better understanding, by the tourism industry, of the significant and complex issues facing cultural and heritage site managers. *Ryan (2003)* seeks to provide a latest thinking on tourism worldwide and to push back the frontiers of tourism knowledge. He contributes to a variety of series by focusing on leisure and resort tourism within destinations in a cohesive and reflective manner. *Hudson (2003)* argues that the ages, the lure of sporting activities and the quest for adventure have proved to be great motivators for modern travel and tourism industry. Indeed, positive benefits derived from sport tourism, including increased economic receipts, increased host city profile and improved infrastructure, augment sport and adventure tourism as increasingly significant component of the tourism sector-he further appends. *David and Kevin (2003)* reviews the underlying theory of tourism multipliers, and from this review it is proposed that the tourist multipliers will tend to significantly overestimate the impact of tourism on an economy. *Franklin (2003)* has written a lively and distinctive book that opens up a new trance of literature to tourism students and researchers. He focuses particularly on the anthropological and sociological literature, but ranges widely across other aspects too like conceptual framework of tourism, its foundation and traces in modern world. *Buhalis (2003)* reveals an innovative concept called e-Tourism and stresses upon the need of utilizing information technology for strategic

T 577

management of different tourism services. *Singh and Mishra (2004)* indicate how green tourism in mountain areas can reduce vulnerability and promote a people focused development. They carry out their study with special reference to the Himalayan region. *Hannam (2004)* endeavours to find out the interface between Tourism and Forestry and highlights the role of concerned stake-holders in restricting tourism growth in India. *Thakur (2004)* brings out the fact that the much of the credit for welcome development regarding recent speedy flow of tourists to Northeast goes to the initiative of the private sector, which is having an increasing role for the last couple of years or so. He points out that the government's off-repeated pledges to promote tourism are no more than mere lip-service which is evident from the bureaucratic apathy and departmental wrangling that have stifled the future of this industry. *Bhattacharya and Kumari (2004)* suggest few application criteria for sustainable eco-tourism development in global scenario. *Gorman and Kevin (2005)* in their article presents a summary of findings from a continuing investigation into the historical origins of hospitality in ancient and classical worlds, focusing mainly on the Greek and Roman civilizations. *Taylor (2005)* advocates a new concept called 'Film-induced Tourism' which is innovative, viable, affordable and a potentially effective strategy for third world and developing countries with limited fiscal resources and/or marketing acumen to promote tourism. Thus, future research should be conducted into various strategies to initiate or grow film-induced tourism-he insists again. *Trivedi and Dixit (2005)* foresee the prospect of village tourism as a potent tool for balanced rural development. *Baruah (2005)* empirically points out that tourism has not flourished as an industry to solve the burning unemployment problem. It is, therefore, extremely necessary to strictly adhere to the restructuring measures for developing tourism to open up avenues for self employment and also an attractive and profitable market for indigenous handicrafts, home made silk and other colourful textile products. *Bhattacharya (2005)* believes that the successful development and operation of tourism sector requires better management at local government level to guide, facilitate and co-ordinate the process. According to him, it is more important in Northeast, where

in true sense, tourism sector is not well understood and private sector is yet to develop. *Aneja (2005)* highlights the pattern and growth of tourism in India and indicates different aspects of planning for its faster augmentation. *Ray (2005)* speaks out that a comprehensive answer has to be found out to the question why tourism has not developed in north eastern states in spite of its huge natural resources. He observes that there is a vital need for an integrated approach to resolve the problem of tourism development as an important input for economic acceleration of the region. *Raghavulu and Sathyanarayana (2005)* attempt to find out the potentials of tourism as an industry in unexplored and backward areas and also identify the constraints thereof. They state that the development of tourism in backward region primarily depends on adequate hotel accommodation, improved transport facilities and better medical and communication arrangement. *Dwaipayana (2005)* argues that if tourism sector has to emerge as one of the major sources of much-needed revenue in Northeast, an integrated plan to market the region globally and evenly share the benefits of built-up tourist inflow is urgently needed. *Sarma (2005)* justifies that it is only the travel and tourism which enable us to savour the mysteries, gauge unknown depth, acquire understanding and experience the world in its fullness, at some point of our life. *Jennings & Nickerson (2006)* find that the quality experiences are core elements of tourism. They address the various dimensions, diversities and practical implications associated with quality tourism experiences. *Chamling (2006)* talks about the need for service sectors to promote eco-tourism in Sikkim as a part of long-term sustainable economic activity. He also calls for signing of free trade agreements with Southeast Asian countries where the state can be a key region in market integration process. *Bora (2006)* considers tourism as the engine of growth and affirms that the same can play a significant part in balanced sustainable development and generates benefits for the poor. *Kazi (2006)* hopes that the Asian Highway will increase flow of tourist to Northeast states by making overland travel cheaper. Besides, the region would become a gateway of rest of India for the traffic coming to and from Southeast and East Asia. *Bora, Adhikary and Sikdar (2006)* observe that the reopening of famed Silk

Route Trade via Nathu la in Sikkim to Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China on 6th July, 2006, is likely to have a wider scope in terms of tourism services. This is because of relatively easier proximity and more developed physical and institutional infrastructures in and around the trading points. This reopening would provide a major boost to tourism industry in the tiny state of Sikkim. *Bhattacharya (2006)* puts forward his view that there is an inherent relationship amongst tourism, conservation and environment. In the domain of tourism, environment conservation is basically viewed in terms of planning for parks and recreational areas for tourist. The park movement popular today is the outcome of a social concern-he articulates again. *Bora and Adhikary (2006)* aim in exploring at micro level the potentiality of 'Northeast Tourism' as a 'Gateway to Southeast Asia' linking across borders and multicultural nations. They chart out its implication too in terms of the 'Look East Policy' initiated in 1990s. *Das (2006)* supports consideration of the green issues in management of tourism industry in Northeast. *Biju (2006)* examines the global, national and regional evolution of tourism sector and unfolds the recent issues and facets in it. *Seema, Jojo, Freeda, Santosh, Sheetal, Gladwin, Suman, Samuel and Sidharth (2006)* preach that the ecotourism in Indian context has significant implications for nature and cultural conservation, rural livelihoods and education. They briefly review the existing documents on ecotourism policy to draw insights for the Indian context. *Bhatia (2006)* evaluates the subject of tourism from the perspective of a social science. He also scrutinizes the service dimensions to assist the professionals in understanding and managing tourism industry. *Ayres and Helen (2006)* focus on careers and employability in tourism industry. They argue that the careers in tourism sector are relatively new phenomena and have not yet been a subject of extensive research. *Bora, Adhikary and Sikdar (2007, a)* intend to reconcile the growth of tourism industry with the process of knowledge management-an IT enabled trend and attempt to develop a 'Tourism-Knowledge Management Reconciliation Model' for optimization of tourism sector in the country. *Sharma, Gupta and Manhas (2006)* suggest internet marketing strategies for various heritage sites in India and indicate its benefits to be derived from the use of

digital technology. *Passah (2007)* explores the giant possibility of tourism as an industry in Northeast region of India. He feels that the administrative and infrastructural machinery have to be revamped in order to attain a sustained tourism growth in the region. *Lyngdoh (2007)* conducts a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of the Northeast region in tourism development perspective and suggests measures for its speedy upliftment. *Bora, Adhikary and Sikdar (2007, b)* believe that the integration of Northeast Tourism with ASEAN warrants a major highlight in terms of the highly acclaimed 'Look East Policy'. They further anticipate the tremendous potential of promoting Sikkim as a major tourism hub through integrating Trade and Tourism via Nathu la Route in East Sikkim. It is believed that a proper reconciliation of Nathula Trade with Tourism will certainly bring in an extra synergy in generating cross border tourism opportunities in the state. *Vohra and Handa (2007)* review various factors that contribute to India's strength as a preferred destination for medical and health tourism. They then outline diverse challenges that need to be addressed for Indian medical tourism industry to realize its potential. *Hauzel (2007)* regards forgotten Northeast as unspoilt realms and hottest new destination for intrepid travelers. *Sheaba Rani (2007)* proposes innovative strategies for marketing of tourism services in Andhra Pradesh. She emphasizes upon compilation, collection and dissemination of different tourism information in the state. *Law (year-unknown)* presents an overview of urban tourism development in large cities clearly defining diverse concepts like large cities, tourism, urban tourism, and a tourism system. *Duval (2007)* extends a thorough examination of various modes of transport and types of tourism services and investigates the complex relationship between available transport provision and the tourism sector. *Renganathan (2007)* validates that an effective positioning strategy offers a competitive edge to a destination that is trying to convey its attractiveness to the target market. *Raj (2007)* concludes that the times are changing and so are the demands and expectations of the 'New' travelers; the search for different experiences, different adventures, different lifestyles has paved the way for an innovative concept called 'New Tourism'. Attention is being

turned to exploring new frontiers or daring to go where traditional thought did not allow. She further substantiates that a new era has arrived; and a new kind of tourism is emerging, sustainable, environmentally and socially responsible, and characterized by flexibility and choice. A new type of tourist is driving it : more educated, experienced, independent, conservation-minded, respectful of cultures, and insistent on value for money too.

1.3.1. GAP IN THE EXISTING LITERATURES

The present literatures, publications and research based findings as reviewed and appraised above have made remarkable contributions on various aspects of tourism industry in modern era. Few of them have come to conclusions, put forward warm suggestions and recommendations for speedy promotion of this fastest growing sector in diverse corners of the economy. But many of them are not centered upon Sikkim in its fullness and are primarily based on some sort of common judgments and views as a whole. It seems that their contributions might have failed to incorporate several significance issues related to tourism sector in Sikkim. They may suffer from limitations like non-availability of authentic data from the potential areas, lack of adequate support from the institutional agencies in gathering relevant information, environmental problems and other hidden agenda. Thus, the existing studies and researches have not been able to bring forward any concrete outcome for quick augmentation of tourism industry in the Himalayan land Sikkim and thereby generating a huge gap in same perspective. The media in recent times has been giving adequate publicity highlighting the importance of tourism in economic development of a particular region. Most of the leading periodicals have been spacing out a good number of articles at frequent intervals pinpointing different aspects of tourism and its potentiality in sustainable development of all sister states of Northeast India. Therefore, the ideas on this subject are getting generated time to time, but the same is yet to be crystallized and institutionalized in full extent and as a result, the gap created so far, remains unfilled.

1.3.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY TO MEET THE GAP

Tourism is a backbone of Sikkim Himalaya and proves to be a prime mover of its emerging economy. It is not only vital for untapped and unexposed areas of this sector but also for furthering existing attractions of the state. Being an independent land till 1975, Sikkim, after its association with Indian union as a last inclusion, is yet to come out in terms of its sustainable tourism growth and development. During the initial years of its getting united with India, the state could hardly focus its tourism potentials, as there was a pre-determined priority for political establishment rather than any emphasis on economic front. Socio-economic status of the people have started humanizing after a couple of years they achieved their statehood and tourism as an industry have been able to find a space in national tourism map of India only during 1990s. Consequently, the research and studies on tourism in the Himalayan state of Sikkim becomes relatively a new phenomenon and have been on a marginal line considering the importance attached to it. It is getting due weightage merely in recent times due to which there exists a huge gap as already indicated above. As such, the study under consideration proceeds at a micro level to minimize the said gap. It makes an effort to critically evaluate the tourism sector in the state and suggests probable reforms to be implemented phase by phase at different levels. It puts an endeavor to vitally re-look at the mechanism of tourism promotion and growth as well as at functioning of the concerned authorities on the issue.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study have been framed and identified by taking methodical approach into account. In the process of identification, the area and scope of the study and its significance, the research queries thereof have been taken care of. Accordingly, the study encompasses a few broad objectives categorized into two basic groups as indicated below.

1.4.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- (i) To undergo an evaluative study on tourism industry in Sikkim Himalaya
- (ii) To design probable reforms in order to focus Sikkim as a unique destination in the country

1.4.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- (i) To explore Sikkim as a Himalayan Paradise and have a glance at the current infrastructural mechanism (*Chapter 2*)
- (ii) To assess tourism industry in the state in an analytical perspective (*Chapter 3*)
- (iii) To identify existing barriers and constraints towards growth of tourism in Sikkim and highlight its untapped potentials (*Chapter 4*)
- (iv) To find out ways and means to utilize unexplored opportunities and indicate role of the stake-holders in implementing action plans (*Chapter 5*)
- (v) To conclude the project with few pragmatic suggestions and frame a model for optimization of tourism services in the Himalayan province of Sikkim (*Chapter 6*)

1.5. RESEARCH QUERY

In order to carry out the project, certain queries have been formulated to diagnose different hidden issues. These are of self demonstrating in nature and appended underneath one by one.

- (i) Whether or not Sikkim is emerging as a unique tourist destination in the country
- (ii) Whether or not major statistical indicators of tourism in the state signify a welcome growth
- (iii) Whether or not there exist significant barriers towards development of tourism in Sikkim
- (iv) Whether or not existing policies, reforms, measures and infrastructure are adequate to stimulate tourism in the state
- (v) Whether concluding observations of the study envisage a new era for tourism in Sikkim Himalaya

1.6. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Any research-based study lays emphasis on methodology in the absence of which thoughts would not be arranged in a rational manner. Keeping a range of research parameters in view, a precise methodology has been designed here in order to meet the objectives of the study. It is based both on primary and secondary sources of data. Attempt has also been made to detect what factors are responsible for what problems which will, in turn, provide a basis for suggesting likely courses of action and recommendations.

1.6.1. SOURCE OF DATA

There are basically two types of data available to a research investigator, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data are collected by the researcher himself, whereas secondary data are those accumulated through earlier investigations and are of some use for the current study. Presently, the researcher has made use of both primary and secondary data and has gathered extensive information from diverse sources. Attempts are made to represent the same in a logical manner in order to understand the frame, components and parameters of the subject defined in the study.

► PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary data comprise of information and responses gathered from a number of respondents selected from different groups as under :

- (i) Visiting tourists - both domestic and foreign
- (ii) Concerned officials from different establishments
- (iii) Tour organizers and travel agencies
- (iv) Prominent accommodation units located in different parts of the state
- (v) National/multinational organizations, if any, engaged in travel/tourism business

► SECONDARY SOURCES

There are several sources from which secondary information have been accumulated. They are of the following types -

- (i) Government publications/records, data bank and state tourism statistics
- (ii) Periodicals, reports and relevant plan documents
- (iii) Documentary evidence telecast in Audio-Visual Media
- (iv) Web publications
- (v) Public libraries, research and development institutions
- (vi) Published and unpublished reports of study carried on similar areas

1.6.2. COMPOSITION OF UNIVERSE

The universe or population for a study is used to describe the totality of items or objects falling under purview of statistical investigation. It may be finite or infinite according as the number of its members (called the population size) is finite or infinite. In view of this, the universe of the present research project has both finite (definite number of individuals) and infinite (extremely large number of individuals) population and is being divided into two basic groups. The first group comprises of all inbound tourists (almost infinite population) from different parts of the globe and the second group includes the non-tourists (finite population) i.e. concerned stakeholders from various government departments, tour organizing firms and major accommodation units in the state. Both tourists and non-tourists form the 'elements' of the study spread over four districts as 'units' during the periodicity of 1999 to 2007 representing 'time' in the state of Sikkim as a geographic 'extent'. As far as size of the population is concerned, there are about 336 accommodation units, 120 registered travel agencies and near about 100 officials engaged in different segments of tourism sector in the state. (indicated in the publicity documents for 2006-2007). Sikkim has 3,00,000 (approx) inbound tourists (both domestic and foreign) visiting the state at present. As such, the total universe here composes of 336 accommodation units, 120 travel agencies, 100 officials along with an infinite population of inbound tourists both from within the country and abroad.

1.6.3. SAMPLING FRAME AND TECHNIQUE

The sampling frame for this research investigation consists of four basic groups, where the first category includes visiting tourists from different parts of the globe; the second being the tour organizers and tour operators; the hotels and accommodation units form the third group; and the fourth category includes officials from concerned departments and establishments.

► SAMPLE SIZE

Keeping in view the extent of population defined for the study, it is estimated that the required sample size should be around 465 units. Out of these, 300 samples have been chosen from the first group i.e. inbound tourists/visitors (both domestic and foreign in two clusters) to the state. But this group represents an infinite population and hence, taking into consideration of time and resource constraints faced by the researcher in undergoing the study (*being the one and sole investigator*), it insists upon a convenience sampling technique to be utilized for the purpose. Rest 165 samples are drawn from other three groups namely, tour organizers, accommodation units and officials representing around 30% of the defined population in different strata. Again, during the course of data accumulation, it is encountered that out of the selected sample lot, a percentage of elements did not respond. As a result, the actual responses for the project limit to 400 elements (who actually responded) in the following break up-

● Inbound Tourists/Visitors (Domestic-200 & Foreign-100)	300 respondents
● Travel Agencies/Tour Organizers	25 respondents
● Hotels/Lodges/Guest Houses	50 respondents
● <u>Officials/Stakeholders</u>	<u>25 respondents</u>
Total Sample Size for Primary Data Collection	400 respondents

► REASON FOR SELECTING THE SAMPLES

The population of the study is wide spread with its both infinite and finite members. As such, it is not feasible to begin a census enquiry to examine the defined problems. No doubt, the findings obtained from a census enquiry is likely to be more authentic than that obtained from a sample survey. But, it is apparent that for the present study, because of severe time, financial and geographical constraints along with a group of infinite population, census enquiry is not at all a viable approach, and consequently sampling method is the only alternative left with the researcher. Yet utmost care has been exercised to determine a feasible sample size which might not, in fact, seem to be exactly proportionate to the units in total population.

► SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A method of judgment and stratified random sampling has been deemed appropriate for selection of sample units for the present study. The initial stratification is done according to tourists visiting the region, tour organizers, officials as well as hotels and lodges located in different parts of the state. All these categories of respondents form different strata based upon the purpose and requirement of the study. From amongst the defined strata, random selection of units is done keeping in view a representative sampling frame. The purpose of stratification is to increase the efficiency of sampling by dividing a heterogeneous universe of visitors, tour organizers, officials and accommodation units in such a way that there is a greater homogeneity within each stratum and heterogeneity amongst the strata.

1.6.4. FRAMING OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The success of primary investigation depends on strength of the questionnaire utilized. Questionnaire designed for the present research study is in both open-end and close-end form. Close-end questions have alternatives or request specific information whereas open-end questions do not pose alternatives. The same gives the respondents freedom of comment. Different sets of questionnaire

as enclosed in Appendix A have been designed for different groups of respondents. Adequate care has been taken in formulating the questionnaire so that the relevant information could be gathered in a legitimate way.

1.6.5. TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

The data accumulated from documented sources and that gathered from field observation needs to be analyzed and interpreted to draw out meaningful conclusions. Thus, in order to testify the objectives stated earlier in this chapter, the present researcher has carried forward a few statistical tests namely, Cross Tabulation, Trend Analysis, Measures of Dispersion, Forecasting and Projection, Correlation Analysis and Graphical Interpretation which also helped him in analyzing the accumulated information. Use of software tools like Ms-Excel, Ms-Words and SPSS too find a significant place in the process of analysis and interpretation.

1.6.6. INFERENCES

Inferences are put forward on the basis of observations, analysis and findings from a research-based endeavor. The present research project portrays some meaningful inferences as incorporated in Chapter 6 of the thesis which are being justified as logical process of passing from one proposition to another proposition and which may, also act as guidelines in framing future tourism agendas.

1.6.7. PERIODICITY OF THE PROJECT

The periodicity of the research primarily covers the tourism scenario and its development in Sikkim over the post liberalization era i.e. 8 years from 1999 to 2007 in the perspective of a globalized economy. Though liberalization process started in India in 1991, its real impact on the economy was found during second half of 1990s. (Say 1997 onwards). As a result, the present research project demands its periodicity beginning with the year 1999 in order to have a pragmatic observation.

1.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any research based endeavor should never be positioned in absence of limitations. Despite best efforts of the researcher to minimize the same, the job suffers from a range of limitations and restraints which could not be avoided. These are being encountered during the process and enlisted here under :

(i) Absence of relevant statistics has been a major hindrance for an objective analysis of the study

(ii) Authenticity of data gathered from documented sources couldn't be accurately established. Moreover, primary data through questionnaires has its own limitation.

(iii) The official statistics emanating from different establishments at different levels, lack in comparability. In some cases, there seems to be a complete mismatch amongst the same statistics maintained by more than one department.

(iv) Besides, it seems that there is lack of systematic maintenance of information relevant for carrying out the project. Data are not arranged in an orderly fashion due to which it leads towards extrapolation of statistics at different stages.

(v) There is an infinite group of population in the sampling frame and a few non-respondents too. Hence, although utmost care has been exercised to determine a feasible sample size, the same might not, in fact, seem to be exactly proportionate to the units in total population.

(vi) Though primarily, the sample size was more than considered in the study, the actual respondents turned out to be 400 units which are treated as total sample lot for primary data collection. As a result, the opinions and views of the non-respondents could not be embodied.

(vii) Physical visit could not be done in all prominent tourist spots spread over four districts of the state due to time and resource constraints.

(viii) Researcher is the one and sole investigator because of which the field observation could not be made intensive.

(ix) Statistical interpretation of data accumulated through primary and secondary sources might not have been fully indicative of the status of tourism in the state.

(x) There remains a possibility of biasness of the researcher in gathering required information and same is the case with respondents too (in responding queries).

(xi) The study is carried out at a micro level only. As a result, its findings and suggestions may not be fully implementable by the concerned policy planners.

(xii) In few cases, data have been considered from pre-periodicity of the study that might (probably) have resulted in non-uniformity in the process. However, the same has helped the researcher in order to have an objective comparison of statistical information.

(xiii) There might have been a few compilation errors in the thesis. Repeation in furnishing information, syntax and factual incorrectness, and citation inaccuracy in some cases could not (perhaps) be fully avoided.

(xiv) The present research investigation couldn't embody the happenings and changes that have taken place beyond its periodicity.

1.8. CONCLUSION AND MEASURES FOR ACTION

Speedy augmentation of the tourism prospect is a vital issue as it has become backbone of the Sikkimese economy at present day time. The various circles of tourism deficit as well as lack of adequate reforms prevail in the state. To bridge the gap, a techno-economic study and general tourism awareness amongst the masses have to be gravely cultivated, which is undoubtedly, a major hopeful area for amplifying economic status of this set aside corner of India. As such, after analyzing the present status/condition of this fast emerging industry in Sikkim Himalaya, the study ventures into concluding and suggesting several courses of action that are implementable phase by phase for improving the state of affairs.

1.9. CHAPTER PLANNING

Last but not the least, it is indispensable to have a proper table of contents to present the research report in an informative, structured and methodical way. It is nothing but chapter planning which takes the following sequence in the thesis.

Chapter 1 : Introduction and Overview

Chapter 2 : Sikkim – A Himalayan Paradise

Chapter 3 : Tourism in Sikkim-An Analytical Perspective

Chapter 4 : Potentials, Constraints and Reforms

Chapter 5 : Strategy for Development

Chapter 6 : Concluding Observations

REFERENCES



► BOOKS

Bhatia A.K., 2006, Tourism Development-Principles and Practices, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, pp-56-78

Buhalis D., 2003, e Tourism - Information Technology for Strategic Tourism Management, Pearson Education, Harlow, pp-97-111

Buhalis D. and Laws E., 2001, Tourism Distribution Channels- Practices, Issues and Transformations, London, Continuum London, RRP US\$41.95, ISBN 0-8264-5470-4

Duval Timothy David, Sept, 2007, Tourism and Transport -Modes, Networks and Flows, Paperback , ISBN 1-84541-063-7, p-336

Franklin Adrian, 2003, Tourism-An Introduction, London, Sage, ISBN 0-7619-7232-3

Hudson S, 2003, Sport and Adventure Tourism, The Haworth Press, New York, ISBN 0-7890-1275-8, pp-197-203

Lyngdoh F. Benjamin, 2007, Tourism as an Industry in North-Eastern Region in Ahmed Jaynal Uddin, Edited Volume, Industrialization in North-Eastern Region, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, pp-193-196

McKercher Bob and Du Cros Hilary, 2002, Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management, Haworth Hospitality Press, US\$69.95 Hardback, US\$39.95 Paperback, ISBN 0-7890-1105-0, www.google.com

Passah P.M., 2007, Tourism as an Industry in North-Eastern Region in Ahmed Jaynal Uddin, Edited Volume, Industrialization in North-Eastern Region, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, pp-27-34

Ryan Chris, 2001, The Tourist Experience, 2nd ed., London, Continuum London, RRP US\$39.95, ISBN 0-8264-5763-0, www.google.com

Ryan Chris, 2003, Recreational Tourism-Demand and Impacts, 2nd ed., Clevedon-Channel View Publications, US\$79.95, Hardback, ISBN 1-873150-57-1, US\$35.95, Paperback, ISSN 1-873150-56-3, pp-69-98

► JOURNALS

Aneja Puneet, June, 2005, Tourism Growth in India-Challenges Ahead, Kurukshetra, Vol-53, No-8, Ministry of Rural Development Publication, New Delhi-110011, pp-11-14

Bonn M.A., Furr H.L. and Susskind A.M., 1998, Using the Internet as a Pleasure Travel-Planning Tool- An Examination of the Socio-Demographic and Behavioral Characteristics among Internet users and non-users, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research, 22(3), pp- 303 –317

Bora B., Adhikary A. and Sikdar S., Sept, 2006, Northeast Tourism-The Market Beyond Border, Kurukshetra, No.9, Ministry of Rural Development Publication, New Delhi, pp-18-23

Bora B., Adhikary A. and Sikdar S., Oct-Dec, 2007,a, Tourism and Knowledge Management- Towards Better Reconciliation, JIMS 8M, The Journal of Indian Management and Strategy, Vol-12, No-4, ISSN No- 0973-9335, JIMS Publication, New Delhi, pp-4-9

Bora B., Adhikary A. and Sikdar S., Oct, 2007,b, Northeast Tourism and ASEAN-Gaining Momentum in terms of Sustainable Development, Focus, The International Journal of Management Digest, Vol-3, No-2, ISSN No- 0973-9165, IFIM Publication, Bangalore, pp-7-20

David J and Kevin, 2003, The Economic Impact of Tourism--A Critical Review, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, www.google.com

Gorman O, and Kevin D, 2005, Modern Hospitality- Lessons from the Past, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, www.google.com

Helen and Ayres, 2006, Career Development in Tourism and Leisure- An Exploratory Study of the Influence of Mobility and Mentoring, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, www.google.com

Kalisch Angela, 2001, Tourism as Fair Trade-NGO Perspectives, Tourism Concern, p-46

Karan Pradyumna P., June, 1989, Environment and Development in Sikkim Himalaya : A review, Human Ecology, Vol-17, Number 2 / June, Springer Publications, Netherlands, pp- 257-271

Kevin Hannam, Aug,2004, *Tourism and Forest Management in India-The Role of State in limiting Tourism Dev.*, *Tourism Geographies*, Vol-6, No-3, www.google.com

Lewis I. and Semeijn J., 1998, *The Impact of Information Technology on Travel Agents*, *Transportation Journal*, 37(4), pp-20-26

Maharana , Rai S.C. and Sharma E., 2000, *Valuing Ecotourism In a Sacred Lake of the Sikkim Himalaya*, *Journal of G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Sikkim Unit*, www.sikkimtourism.org

Raghavalu M.V. and Sathyanarayana G., June, 2005, *Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Backward Areas*, *Southern Economist*, Southern Economist Publication, Bangalore – 560001, pp–13-15

Rice Alison, 2001, *Tourism in Television- A Programme for Change*, *Tourism Concern*, pp-24

Sheaba Rani D.M., Feb, 2007, *Marketing of Tourism Services*, *Indian Journal of Marketing*, Vol – XXXVII, No 2, IJM Publication, New Delhi, pp-32-39

Singh R.B. and Mishra D. K.,2004,*Green Tourism in Mountain Regions - Reducing Vulnerability and Promoting People and Place Centric Development in the Himalayas*, *Journal of Mountain Science*, Vol-1, No 1, ID: 1672-6316 (2004) 01-0057-08, pp –57-64

Staiff and Russell, 2003, *Cultural and Heritage Tourism-whose Agenda?*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, www.google.com

Taylor Peter, Dec,2005, *Film-induced Tourism-An innovative Alternative Tourism Marketing Strategy for Developing Countries*, *Journal on International Strategic Management and Business Re-Engineering*, Vol – 1, No-1, Amity University Press Publication, New Delhi, pp-9-15

Vohra Anupam and Handa Meenakshi, June, 2007, *Medical and Health Tourism- Opportunities and Challenges for India*, *Prabandh*, *Journal of Management Education and Research*, Vol-23, Faculty of Management Studies, Mohanlal Sukhadia University Publication, Udaipur, pp-98-105

Werthner H. and Klein S., 1999, *Information Technology and Tourism-A Challenging Relationship*, *Springer-Verlag, Newyork*, www.google.com

► PERIODICALS

Baruah Tiluttoma 2005, Developing Tourism in North East, The Assam Tribune, 7th March

Bhattacharya P, 2006, Tourism, Conservation and Environment, The Assam Tribune, 30th Dec

Bhattacharya Prasanta, 2005, Tourism Development in Northeast, The Assam Tribune, 17th Sept

Bora Amar, 2006, Tourism- The Engine of Growth, The Assam Tribune, 27th Sept

Chamling Pawan, 2006, Markets Beyond Borders, The Telegraph, 28th April

Das Moitreyee, 2006, Management of Tourism Industry, The Assam Tribune, 19th July

Dwaipayan, 2005, Promoting Tourism in North East, The Assam Tribune, 9th Sept

Hauzel Hoihnu, 2007, Unspoilt Realms, Graphiti, The Telegraph Magazine, 22nd Dec

Kazi M.R., 2006, Asian Highway and India's North East, The Assam Tribune, 18th July

Ray Dutta, B, 2005, Tourism in North East-Prospects and Problems, The Assam Tribune, 30th May

Sarma Nilmoni, 2005, Travel and Tourism in 21st Century, The Assam Tribune, 27th Sept

Thakur Sivasish ,2004, Pvt Players' Role leads to rise in Tourist Flow to State, The Assam Tribune, 12th July

► CONFERENCES/SEMINARS AND PROCEEDINGS

Bezbaruah M.P., Dec, 2001, Speech at Conference on Tourism in Assam - Status and Prospects-2001, New Delhi

Bhattacharya Prodyut and Kumari Smriti, August, 2004, Application of Criteria and Indicator for Sustainable Ecotourism-Scenario under Globalization, IASCP Bi-Annual Conference on the Commons in an Age of Global Transition: Challenges, Risk and Opportunities, Oaxaca, Mexico

Bora B. and Adhikary A., Nov, 2006, Northeast Tourism as a Gateway to Southeast Asia-Connecting Across Borders & Cultures, International Conference on Strategic Thought in the New Age Management, University of Jammu, Jammu.

Geetika Mekhala, Jan, 2001, Environmental Management and Ecotourism in Eastern Himalayas, Postgraduate Research on Tourism in the Mountains, Session 1, Module 3 :14.30-16.00, University of Bristol

Jacob M.M., July, 2000, Speech at GOPIO Convention–2000, Zurich, Switzerland

Jha Ajeya and Jha Sangeeta, Dec, 2001, Information Technology and Creativity to Develop Enterprises : A Case Study to Tourism in Sikkim, National Seminar on Creativity and Innovation for Entrepreneurial Development, under the auspices of Deptt. of Scientific and Industrial Research, Govt. of India, Raipur Institute of Technology, Raipur.

Sharma Keshav, Gupta Deepak Raj and Manhas S. Parikshat, Nov, 2006, Online Marketing Strategies for Heritage Sites in India, International Conference on Strategic Thought in the New Age Management, University of Jammu, Jammu.

Trivedi Manoj Kumar and Dixit Pankaj Kant, July,2005, Rural Tourism in Globalizing World- A Scope for Rural Development, 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Stockholm, Sweden

Verbole Patricija, Jan, 2001, Promotion of Environmentally Responsible Tourist Behavior in Mountain Areas, Postgraduate Research on Tourism in the Mountains, Session 1,Module 3:14.30-16.00, University of Bristol

► REPORTS AND HAND BOOKS

Incredible India, May-June, 2004, Vol-2, Issue-3, India Tourism Publication, Govt. of India, New Delhi

Incredible India, April, 2006, Vol-IV, Issue-04, India Tourism Publication, Govt. of India, New Delhi

Incredible India, Eco Tourism and Environment Hand Book, Dec, 2004, India Tourism Publication, Govt. of India, New Delhi

India, 2004, Economic Survey, Govt. of India Publication, New Delhi

India's North-East, Paradise Unexplored, Traveler's Companion, March, 2003, India Tourism Publication, Govt. of India, New Delhi

Indigenous Herald, 2006, Face of North East India

Sikkim-A Statistical Profile, 2004-05, Government of Sikkim Publication, Gangtok

Sikkim Info Book, 2005, La Parouse, DPH, Gangtok

The India Economy Review, Feb, 2003-2004, IIPM Think Tank, New Delhi

The India Economy Review, June, 2004, Vol-2, Quarterly Issue, IIPM Think Tank, New Delhi

► WEB SOURCE

Dong P.K., 2001, Development of Eco-Tourism in Sikkim-A Case Study, www.google.com

Raj Aparna, May, 2007, The New Age of Tourism - And the New Tourist, www.indianmba.com

► WEB SITES

www.incredibleindia.org

www.indianmba.com

www.google.com

www.pataindia.com

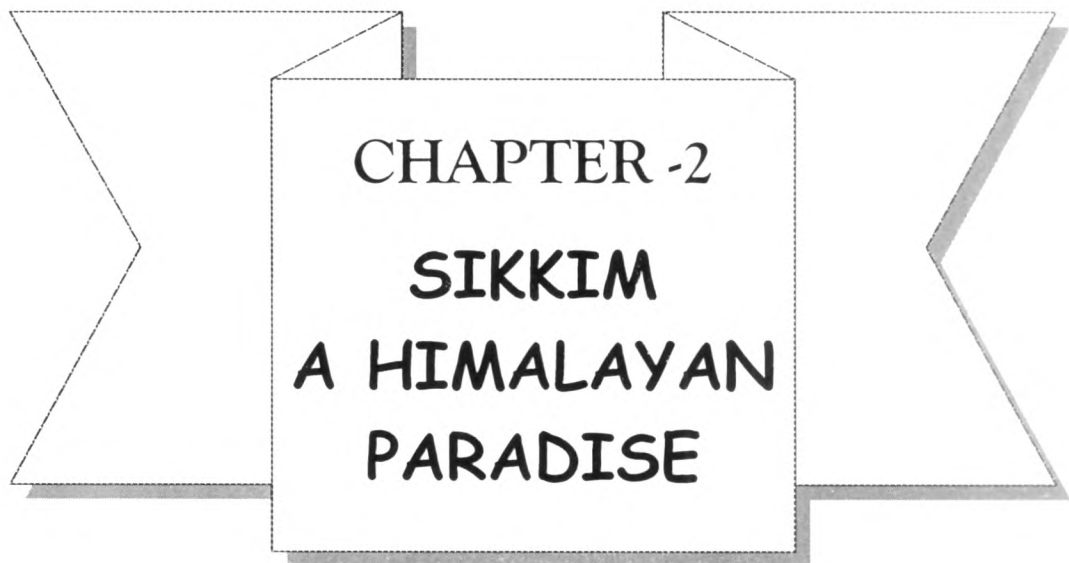
www.sikkim.gov.in

www.tourismofindia.com

Tsomgo Lake



Tsomgo Frozen Lake at an altitude of 12,210 ft
in East Sikkim



CHAPTER -2
SIKKIM
A HIMALAYAN
PARADISE

"Of journeying the benefits are many : the freshness it brings to the heart, the seeing and hearing of marvelous things, the delight of beholding new cities, the meeting of unknown friends, and the learning of high manners"

- Sadi Gulistan

CHAPTER - 2

SIKKIM – A HIMALAYAN PARADISE

In this chapter, the researcher provides an outline of the unique tourism spots of Eastern Paradise Sikkim, a brief about available Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities, and Current Institutional Support and Mechanism towards Tourism Services in the state.

2.1. SIKKIM – THE LAND OF MYSTIC SPLENDOUR

Tourism is the most viable and feeding industry in Sikkim in view of its abundant natural and cultural resources. The government has recognized the importance of tourism and has declared it a thrust sector in its policy documentation. The state, for its spectacular natural reserves, unique cultural and historic amalgamation has



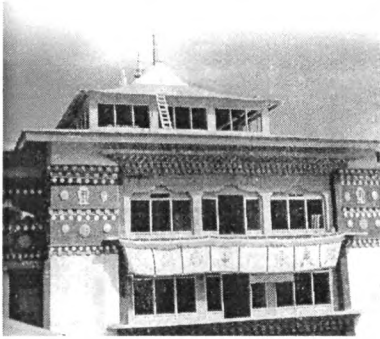
tremendous potential for promotion of tourism as a promising industry. Over the past few years, the tourist traffic in this Himalayan state has enlarged manifolds, thereby attributing immense benefits in the private as well as public sectors. The upsurge of tourists in this hilly region has definitely contributed to a major extent in socio-economic upliftment of the locals at large. The natural attractions like panoramic mountain viewpoint, mountainous ranges, valleys, waterfalls, natural lakes, alpine vegetations, historic caves, ethnic villages etc., are the places of special interest for the visitors [Bora and Bora (2005)]. That's why, the accessibility to such attractions including requisite infrastructure building would become imperative for overall promotion of tourism activities in the area. Apparently, the creation of infrastructures at various tourist destinations is a keynote for implementing different tourism strategies and therefore, the engineering cell of the department of tourism formed for the purpose, has been actively involved in overall planning and implementation of specific projects scattered in different parts of the state.

MAP OF SIKKIM



2.1.1. SIGNIFICANT ATTRACTIONS

► GANGTOK – THE CAPITAL TOWN



Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, with its captivating architectural beauty radiates with pagoda-like wooden houses, painted turquoise roofs and gay bazaars. Undoubtedly, modern times have wound their way into this picturesque town, but the gently swaying and elegant costumes of Sikkimese people, their smiling faces, the unhurried pace of their life-style and the towering beauty of Kanchenjunga

all cast a magic spell on this delightful location in foothills of the grand Himalayas. Perched atop a ridge at a height of 1520 mts lies Gangtok, that serves as a perfect base for exploring the entire state of Sikkim. Endowed with a wealth of exquisite beauty and magical mystery, the host of walkways and delightful sights make it all the more irresistible. The town provides the tourists with possible basic amenities for comfort and pleasure and is reachable by air from Delhi or Kolkata to its nearest airport Bagdogra. It has road connectivity from its adjoining towns of Pelling, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Phuntsoling (Bhutan) and Samthar. Two nearest railway stations are at Siliguri (114 km) and New Jalpaiguri (125 km) stabilizing link to Kolkatta, Delhi, Guwahati, Lucknow and other important cities in India. The major points of attractions in Gangtok are Tashi View Point, Ganesh Tok, Sa-Ngor-Chotshog Centre, Enchey Monastery, Permanent Flower Show, Handloom and Handicrafts Centre, Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Saramsa Garden and Hanuman Tok to name a few [*Hand Book on Sikkim-The Hidden Paradise*]. The best time to visit is March to late May and October to Mid-December with a temperature range between 21°C and 0.48°C. Accommodation is readily available in Gangtok. One may have different varieties ranging from hotels, tourist lodges, tourist resorts, guest houses to tourist cottages in different parts of the town. It is to be noted that foreigners have to obtain Inner Line Permit to visit Sikkim. The same can be obtained from all Indian Missions, Sikkim Tourism Offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Siliguri and Rangpo Tourist Lodge on the spot, on fulfillment of documentary requirements. [*Sikkim Info Book (2005)*]

► EAST SIKKIM

Enchey Monastery

An important seat of Nyingma order, the Enchey Monastery meaning the Solitary Temple, was originally built with the solace that no other construction would be allowed near it. It is built on the site blessed by Lama Druptob Karpo, a tantric master known for his flying powers. This 200-year-old Monastery has in its premises images of god, goddesses and other religious objects. Every year around January 'Chaam' or religious masked dance is performed with great fanfare for two days. It is situated adjoining the Sinolchu Tourist Lodge, 3 kms from Gangtok Town.

Tsomgo Lake

Tsomgo lake is only 40kms, from Gangtok town and is situated at an altitude of 12,210 ft. The drive from Gangtok takes about 2½ hours by bus. The lake is about 1 km long and oval in shape, 50ft. deep and is regarded extremely holy. It is also a home of Brahmin ducks besides stopover for various migratory birds.

Handloom and Handicrafts centre

It is now known as the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handlooms and Government Institute of Cottage Industries as well. Started during the time of Chogyals of Sikkim, as a venture to protect and propagate the craft and skills of local and village artisans, the centre has become a major attraction for the people visiting Sikkim where traditional handicrafts, furniture, handloom carpets and other products are easily viewable.

Permanent Flower Show

White Hall, close by the White Memorial Hall and just below the Palace Ridge Park is the Flower Show Hall. In recent years, this show has become quite popular and famous as there are flower exhibitions throughout the year in accordance with the seasons and the flowers in bloom.

Do-Drul Chorten (Stupa)

The Do-Drul Chorten or Stupa was built by the Venerable Trulshi Rimpoche, head of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism in 1945. Inside this stupa, there are complete mandala sets of Dorjee Phurba (Bajra Kilaya), a set of Kan-gyur Relics (Holy Books), complete 'Zung'(mantras) and other religious objects. Around this Chorten, which is one of the most important stupas in Sikkim, are 10 Mani-Lhakor (Prayer Heels). These prayer wheels are turned by the devout Buddhist while chanting "Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus", to invoke the Bodhisattva. The Chorten is surrounded by Chorten Lakhang, where there are two huge statues of Guru Rimpoche (Guru Padmasambhava).

Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology (SRIT)

Formerly known as Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, after the Late Chogyal of Sikkim, Palden Thondup Namgyal whose brainchild it was, the Sikkim Research Institute of Technology(SRIT), has since become one of the most prestigious depository of Tibetan literature, rare manuscripts, paintings, thangkas, statues, religious objects and other works of art and history. Today, it is a renowned worldwide centre for study of Buddhist philosophy and religion.

Water Garden

Water Garden at Martam Khola is on the 31-A National Highway, some 16 kms South of Gangtok. It is an ideal spot for picnic with a small swimming pool for children.

Tashi Viewpoint

This place is around 8 kms from Gangtok and one has to be here by 5 a.m. to see the magnificent Kanchenjunga. This mountain, the third highest in the world, lies across Sikkim on its western border with Nepal and visitors have to be lucky enough that there is no fog across the state to have a view of the same.

Saramsa Garden

About 14 kms from Gangtok is the Saramsa Garden, the home of Sikkim's most exotic orchids and other rare tropical and temperate plants. Established and maintained by the department of forest, it is an excellent recreation and picnic spot.

Rumtek

About 45 minutes drive from Gangtok and 24 kms away, is the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Centre, the seat of Kagyu order, one of the 4 major Tibetan Buddhist sects. Since late 1960s, after the arrival of His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, the centre houses some of the world's most unique religious scriptures and rare objects. Traditional in design, it is almost a replica of the original Kagyurpa Monastery located in Tsurphu, Tibet.

Sa-Ngor-Chotshog Centre

It is a Tibetan refugee monastic institution established in 1961 by his Eminence Luding Khen Rimpoche, Head of Ngorpa, sub-sect of the Sakya Order, with the blessing of His Holiness Sakya Trizin and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This is the only monastery of Sakya Order of Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim. It is located on a beautiful hill-top, just 5 kms away from Gangtok

Ganesh Tok

It is a very small temple of Ganesh, a God worshipped by Hindus. It is on a hillock on Gangtok-Nathula Road. A Sikkim Government Nursery is just nearby.

Nathula

56 kms from Gangtok is a 'Nathula' Pas at an altitude of 14,200 ft. bordering between India and China in the Tibetan Plateau. It is one of the highest motorable roads and richly covered by varieties of alpine flora and fauna. A tranquil place to visit. Nathula is open only for Indian nationals on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The visitors have to get a permit to visit the place by applying to the tourism department through a registered tour operator.

► WEST SIKKIM

Pemayangtse Monastery

Pemayangtse Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries in the state. Originally established by Lhatsun Chempo, one of the revered Lamas to have performed the consecration ceremony of the first Chogyal (Religious Monarch) of Sikkim. This ancient monastery belongs to Nyingma Buddhism and has been considered as one of the premier monasteries in Sikkim, having been entrusted with the task to carry out all religious functions of the erstwhile monarch. The monastery, located on a hill top at an altitude of 6840 ft. commands a magnificent panoramic view of the Himalayan ranges with surrounding hills and country-side.

Khecheopalri Lake

Khecheopalri Lake is considered to be one of the sacred lakes of Sikkim both by the Buddhist and the Hindus. The lake remains hidden in rich forest cover. It is believed that birds do not permit even a single leaf to float on the lake surface. There is a motorable road from Pemayangtse right up to the lake area. For those interested in spending a night or two in the peaceful environment, a trekker's hut has been provided by the tourism department. The hut is presently managed by a local person and provides comfortable stay with a taste of local Sikkimese-Nepalese cuisines. There is also a pilgrim's hut managed by the department for providing accommodation to the people who come on pilgrimage tours.

Pelling

A three-and-a-half hour drive to the west of Gangtok lies Pelling. Though it is not as lively or happening as Gangtok, Pelling is a quiet little town with a rustic feel, magnificent views and pleasant walks all around. The views of Kanchenjunga from Pelling are simply magnificent and on a clear day one can see this peak and many others towering high above the town. But over the last few years, Pelling has developed into a hub of tourism activities in west Sikkim. Till as recently as 1996, it was a non-descript village with a few houses which has undergone a sudden metamorphosis. Up class hotels and fast food centers offering continental, Sikkimese and South Indian dishes have mushroomed in the town.

Soreng

Soreng is a picturesque village with beautiful landscape which is about 3 hrs drive from Pelling and 4 hrs from Melli. A trek to Jhandi Danra from Soreng is a must to see the various species of flowers and birds.

Yuksam

This was the first capital of Sikkim, where according to historical records, the first Chogyal of the Kingdom of Sikkim was consecrated in 1641 AD by three learned lamas. The evidence of the consecration ceremony is still intact in Norbugang Chorten in the form of stone seats and a foot print of the Head Lama on the stone. Since the history of Sikkim began from this place, these areas are now considered sacred by the people of Sikkim. Yuksam is served by all weather road from Pemayangtse, which is at a distance of 32 kms. The trek to Dzongri and to the base camp of the famous Mt. Khangchen-Dzonga begins here.

Sanga-Choling Monastery

This monastery is situated on a ridge above Pelling. Built in 1697 AD, it is considered to be the oldest monastery in Sikkim. In order to reach this, one has to be prepared to spend at least 40 minutes walking up the steep hilly slope that leads through rich forest covers.

Tashiding Monastery

This monastery is constructed on top of a heart shaped hill with the back drop of sacred Mt. Khangchen-Dzonga. According to Buddhist scriptures, Guru Padma Sambhava blessed the sacred land of Sikkim in 8th century AD from the spot. The monastery, however, was built in the 18th Century AD by Ngadak Sempa Chempo, one of the three lamas who had performed the consecration ceremony of the first Chogyal. Tashiding is also famous for the most holy chorten known as 'Thong-Wa-rang-Dol' which literally means 'Saviours by mere sight'. It is believed that the mere act of beholding it is supposed to wash away all the sins of the devotees. Another important feature in tashiding is the sacred water festival popularly known as 'Bhumchu'. Every year, on 14th and 15th day of the first Lunar month, the Bhumchu Ceremony is celebrated.

► NORTH SIKKIM

Guru-Dongmar Lake

Guru-Dongmar Lake is considered as one of the sacred lakes of this state both by the Buddhist and the Hindus. The lake remains milky in color throughout and it is believed that Guru Padmasambhava had touched the lake while he visited Tibet from this area.

Yumthang

Yumthang, at an elevation of 11,800 ft and 140 kms from Gangtok is a paradise for nature lovers with a fascinating blend of flora and fauna and breathtaking scenic grandeur. The valley is also the home of Singha Rhododendron Sanctuary with 24 species of Rhododendrons. Yumthang 'Tsa-Chu' or the hot spring of the left bank of Lachung Chu is immensely popular for its curative properties and healing power.

Phensang Monastery

This monastery is situated on the gentle slope stretching from Kabi to Phodong with perhaps one of the best landscapes in the region. The Phensang Monastery, under the Nyingmapa Buddhist Order, was built in 1721 during the time of Jigme Pawo. It was gutted by fire in 1947 and rebuilt in 1948 through the efforts of the lamas. The annual festival of Chaam is performed on 29th day of the tenth month of the Lunar Calendar (Tibetan Calendar).

Lachung

A Bhutia village with a unique local self-governing body called Zumsa that substitutes the Panchayat. Lachung has emerged as a tourist destination with the soaring popularity of Yumthang Valley which is just 25 kms away. The village, spreads out on either side of Lachung Chu, has managed to retain its unique culture and tradition. The Lachung Monastery on the slope opposite to the highway is a focal point of all religious function of local inhabitants. To get a glimpse of religious functions performed on auspicious occasion, a visit to the monastery should form part of the tour itinerary.

► SOUTH SIKKIM

Namchi

Namchi, meaning 'Sky High', nestled among the hills at an elevation of 5,500 ft commands panoramic view of the snow-capped mountains and vast stretches of valley. A top Samdruptse hilltop near Namchi, recently erected is the world's tallest statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the patron saint of both Hindus and Buddhist.

Temi Tea Garden

The one and only tea garden existing in the state produces one of the top quality teas in international market. The tea garden is spread out on a gently hill slope originating from the Tendong Hill and provides a magnificent view of the surrounding villages. The visit to the factory could be an eye opener for those wanting to know more about tea processing methods.

Ravangla

At the base of Menam Hill is Ravangla, a small township and transit to various tourist destinations in South and West Sikkim. It is also an upcoming tourist spot and transit point for trekkers to Menam Hill and Borong. There are accommodation facilities and numerous short nature trails. A trek down to the sacred cave 'Sher Chok Bephu', one of the four holiest caves in Sikkim, would be a memorable experience.

Menam Hills

Menam Hill towers above Tendong Hill on the other side over looking the Ravangla Bazar settlement. Situated at an altitude of 10,300 ft the scenic view from this height is, perhaps, unmatched in this part of the world. Mt. Khangchendzonga and its surrounding ranges looms above the dwarf the richly forested and rugged hill. On a clear sunny day, it is possible to see the plains of Bengal spanning across Kalimpong and Darjeeling Hills in the south, right across the Indo-China border towards the north. A short distance away is the legendary Bhaley Bhunga, a kind of rocky spur which juts out from the ridge top and remains suspended in air above Yangang village.

2.1.2. UNIQUE TOURISM INTEREST

► HELI SERVICE AS A HEIGHT OF LUXURY

For the more discerning traveler, Sikkim Tourism is proud to have Helicopter Service from Gangtok in Sikkim to Bagdogra in West Bengal and back. The five-seater Helicopter offers an exclusive mode of transportation not merely to enable connecting flight, but also to see Sikkim from an entirely new view. One can watch the majesty of Himalayan peaks from close up like never before. Special mountain flights are also conducted over West Sikkim and North Sikkim for a bird's eye view of the monasteries and exotic valley of flowers. All passengers on these sight seeing flights are awarded official certificate of participation by Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) as souvenirs.

► GANGTOK ROPEWAY

It takes the passengers to the highest point of the city of Gangtok covering distance of about one kilometer in only seven minutes. One can truly enjoy the panoramic view and thrilling rise as the Ropeway goes over the city.

► TREKKING

Trekking is adventure in the Himalayan state of Sikkim. There are a variety of trekking routes in four districts of the state. Notable amongst them are Monastic Trek, Rhododendron Trek, Khang-Chen-Dzonga Trek, Singalila Trek, Samartek Trek, Kosturi Orar Trek, Phambongla Short Trek and Central Pendam Gari Trek.

► DANCES OF SIKKIM

Folk dances and songs are an ingrained part of Sikkimese culture. Most of the dances relate to the beauty of natural surroundings, some depict the harvest season and others are performed for good luck and prosperity. Many of the musical instruments that accompany the dances are unique to Sikkim. The popular dances in this regard include Nepali Folk Dance Maruni, Nepali Folk Dance Tamang Selo, Lepcha Folk Dance Zo-Mal-Lok, Bhutia Folk Dance Tashi Sabdo and Tibetan Yak Dance etc. Again the state's famous mask dances

provide a spectacle, perhaps nowhere to be experienced in the entire world. Performed by lamas in Gumpa courtyard to celebrate religious festivals, these dances demonstrate perfect foot work and grace.

► THE KALCHAKRA PUJA

The ultimate aim of attaining Nirvana or Buddhahood is known as the Kalchakra Puja. The Dalai Lama is presently the ultimate authority in teachings of Kalchakra Puja, which His Holiness performs to initiate the disciples. His Holiness holds the Kalchakra Mass Initiation Puja usually once in three years attracting devotees from all over the world.

► IMAGES AND SYMBOLS

Monasteries and many buildings in Sikkim are richly decorated with symbols and icons. These symbols are painted or embossed on the walls or on Tankas. These paintings may depict the life of Buddha or some Tibetan saint, the Wheel of Life or a deity surrounded by lesser deities.

► WHEEL OF LIFE

The wheel of life is one of the purest Buddhist emblems. This emblem can be seen in the entrance of almost all monasteries in the state. This emblem is also widely depicted on Thankas or religious scrolls. The circular form of this wheel symbolizes the ceaseless worldly existence. This wheel is held in the clutches of a monster with its claws and teeth and signifies passionate clinging of the people to exist in this world. The hub of the wheel contains a cock, a snake and a pig. The cock signifies lust or desire, the snake signifies anger and the pig symbolizes ignorance and stupidity. These are shown in center of the wheel as it is said that they are the root cause of the trouble on earth.

Now, having clue about the wonderful attractions as depicted above, the study will proceed to have an overview of tourism infrastructural facilities available in the state.

2.2. TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

2.2.1. ACCOMMODATION UNITS

The number of accommodation units in Sikkim particularly that of budget category has been increasing at a speedy rate. The field visit done by the present researcher indicates a total capacity of 1934 beds in 93 hotels and 269 beds in 119 guesthouses. However, the data received from Sikkim Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHRA) which may be treated as more authentic since 90% of the establishments, operating hotels or restaurant business, are members of this association and thus signify that there are at the moment 267 hotels, providing 7569 beds in Sikkim. Out of these, about 55% are located in the capital town of Gangtok. The break-up of hotel accommodation in the state is given in Table 2.1

Table 2.1.

NUMBER OF HOTELS AND BED CAPACITY

TOWN / AREA	NUMBER OF HOTELS	NUMBER OF BEDS
East Sikkim Gangtok, Mazitar, Rangpo	158	5499
West Sikkim Pelling, Yuksom, Gayzing	52	1380
North Sikkim Lachung, Chungthang, Singhik	29	288
South Sikkim Rabongla, Namchi, Jorthang	23	402
Total	267	7569

Source : Self compilation through field visit

► STAR HOTELS

Out of the above, the number of hotels which have officially received Star Categorization are five. Namely, Hotel Norkhill (4*), Hotel Tashi Delek (4*), Hotel Royal Plaza (4*), Hotel Tibet (3*) and Central Hotel (3*). The other hotels which are also of star category standard are Chumbi Residency in Gangtok and Hotel Mount Pandim in Pemayangtse, West Sikkim.

► HOTEL TARIFF RANGE

The price range of hotels in Sikkim during peak season varies as follows :

Price range per night	% of Hotels in the range
Rs. 150 to 200	40%
Rs. 250 to 400	30 %
Rs. 500 to 800	20 %
Rs. 900 to 3000	10 %

Source : Sikkim Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHRA)

The above ranges shall vary in recent times considering the inflationary tendencies in the economy. The researcher, therefore considers it just a mere estimate only. Again, the peak season months for East, West and South Sikkim has been assumed as 150 days corresponding to the months of mid-March to mid-June and September and October. For North Sikkim, peak season months are March to April and September to October translating into 120 peak season days.

► OCCUPANCY RATE

The occupancy rate of accommodation units varies from hotel to hotel depending on individual unit's management efficiency, particularly in the area of marketing. For instance, hotels which are managed more professionally are reportedly having average occupancy rate of more than 40%, but hotels which depend purely on tourist season and have no marketing programme are reported to have an average annual occupancy of 25 %. Table 2.2 reflects the average stay of tourists in four districts of the state.

Table 2.2.
AVERAGE STAY OF TOURISTS

DISTRICT	DOMESTIC TOURISTS	FOREIGN TOURISTS
East	4-5 days	3 days
West	1-5 days	1-5 days
South	1 day	1 day
North	2-3 days	2-3 days

Source : Sikkim Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHRA)

2.2.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND CONNECTIVITY

Sikkim depends entirely upon the road transportation system for movement of goods and people from one place to another within or outside the state. There is no other means of transport like railways, waterway except helicopter service, which is also based on weather conditions. The road network is the sole medium of transportation in the state whose importance needs no further emphasis. But the state was in dearth of an adequate public transportation system till 1944 when a Truck department was created which was subsequently renamed as Sikkim Nationalized Transport (SNT) in 1955. Presently, the bulk of passenger and goods traffic in Sikkim are being carried by SNT which has 12 depots-cum-ticket booking offices within the state and one at Siliguri (West Bengal). In addition, there are four private ticket booking agents at other places in the state and one at Kalimpong (West Bengal). As on 31 March 2005, as been reported to the present researcher that SNT had 101 buses and 114 trucks of which 86 buses and 108 trucks were on road. Coming to the highways and roads, at the time when first seven five year plan was launched well before Sikkim became a part of India, there were only 19kms of rough road from Rangpo to Gangtok and ten kilometers of road around the capital. Apart from these, there were mule tracks, which served as trade routes to Tibet. With the advent of developmental works and the increase in population, the need for wider roads with smooth curves was necessary so that heavy vehicles can also ply on it for transportation of essential commodities and people could travel from one place to another at reasonable rate. The achievement of this objective involved widening of narrow

roads and the construction of new ways to bring about inter village connectivity and to reach remote and inaccessible corners of the state. The importance of road communication for all round development along with augmentation of tourism industry in the state is second to none. Road communication is directly linked with the growth of tourism and overall development in other fields as well. The following table presents an overview of the existing road connectivity in Sikkim.

Table 2.3
ROAD CONNECTIVITY IN SIKKIM

EAST DISTRICT	WEST DISTRICT
Gangtok – Siliguri	Gyalshing – Uttarey
Gangtok - Gyalshing via Rabong	Gyalshing – Jorethang
Rangpo - Rorathang via Damthang	Gyalshing - Tashiding via Legship
Gangtok – Namchi	Soreng – Sombaria
Makha – Lingmoo	Nayabazar – Sombaria
Singtam – Yangyang via Mangley	Gyalshing - Tashiding via Yuksom
	Nayabazar - Uttarey via Kaluk
	Nayabazar - Rinchenpong via Reshi
NORTH DISTRICT	SOUTH DISTRICT
Mangan – Chungthang	Rabong – Yangang
Mangan - Dikchu via Dzongu	Jorethang – Melli
Chungthang – Lachen	Namchi - Rabong via Damthang
Mangan - Singtam via Dikchu	Namchi - Melli via Kitam

Source : Self compilation from official information

Having regard to the importance of road network in overall economic development of the state in general and the need for connectivity for the augmentation of tourism in particular, it is of the considered view for allocation of adequate funds and timely release of the same will go a long way in improving construction / replacement / repair of roads at various stages and locations as been reflected in Table 2.3.

2.2.3 POWER

The sustained and quality supply of power is an important element in tourism development. Frequent power failure, fluctuations etc. lead to irritation to the tourists and visitors. An attempt has been made here to examine the power situation in the state and the future plans to expand the capacity as well as improving the distribution network. The state now has an installed capacity of 39.20 MW as shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4
INSTALLED CAPACITY IN POWER PROJECTS (MW)

S. NO	PROJECTS	INSTALLED CAPACITY (MW)
1	Ronglichu (Stage-I) Jali Power House	2.10
2	Lower Lagyap Hydel Project	12.00
3	Ronglichu (Stage- II)	2.50
4	Rimbi (Stage-I)	0.60
5	Rimbi (Stage-II)	2.50
6	Rohtak Micro Hydel Scheme	0.20
7	Lachen Micro Hydel	0.10
8	Lachung Micro Hydel	0.20
9	Mayongchu HEP	4.00
10	Upper Rongnichu	8.00
11	Kalei Khola HEP	2.00
12	Diesel Power House, Gangtok	4.00
13	Diesel Power House	1.00
	Total	39.20

Source : Department of Power, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok

Though the power sector has consistently received relatively higher share in the plan outlay i.e. 9.2% in the First Plan (1954-61), 10% in Fifth Plan (1974-9) and 19.4 % in Ninth Plan (1997-2002) amounting to Rs 2840 million in last 24 years, the rate of increase in power output has not kept pace with rapidly increasing demand which at present is of the order of 15-20 percent per year. The estimated peak shortfall has increased almost three fold from 5.7 MW in 1988-99 to 14.03 MW in 1997-98. The annual growth rate

of this shortfall (12.32%) has been almost double (6.85%) that of installed capacity. Coming to the Tenth Five Year Plan, the various schemes spilled over for implementation were Peurey Micro-hyder Scheme (2x100 K.W), Lachungchu Stage-II (2x1.5 MW) and Mangley Hydrel Project (2x500 K.W). Again, the proposed new generation schemes to be developed with subsidy support for the capacity addition in Tenth Five Year Plan were Reli chu, RongE chu, Ringyang chu, Chatten chu, Rongli chu-II, Taram chu and Roy Chu micro hydrel projects. Some of them have already been executed and few are in the process of implementation as been reported to the researcher.

► **SIKKIM POWER DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION INITIATIVES**

Projects proposed to be developed by Sikkim Power Development Corporation (SPDC) are of the following kinds (Table 2.5):

Table 2.5
PROPOSED PROJECTS OF SPDC

S. NO	PROJECTS	CAPACITY (MW)
1	Rolep HEP	25
2	Kalong HEP	25
3	Chakhungchu HEP	25
4	Tolungchu HEP	15
5	Lower Chuchachen	15
6	DliupiDanra	12
7	Bakchacliu	08
8	Ka1cz-II	03
	Total	126

Source : Sikkim Power Development Corporation, Gangtok

► RENOVATION SCHEMES

The researcher observes that the department is not in a position to attend to the routine maintenance and periodical renovation on all the installations owned by it due to the reasons like unproductive expenses on wages and salaries and huge pending liabilities. The existing power stations are not generating even partly due to inadequate funds for purchase of spares and carried out repairs and renovations. Accordingly, the government has issued instruction to the department to complete the ongoing works speedily together with renovation and re-strengthening of the power stations in operation. The scheme aims at restoring the installed capacities of generating units and in some cases maximizing the capacities of old power plants through renovation, modernization and strengthening of structures. The department has to take up renovation of some old power plants like Lower Lagyap Hydel Project (2x6 MW), Power stations on Rongnichu Cascade (13 MW), Mayongchu Hydroelectric Project (2x2MW), Lachung Micro-Hydel (2x100 KW), Chatten Micro-Hydel Scheme (2x50 KW) that are in operation for a couple of years in depreciated capacities. As such, the concerned authorities in Sikkim has drawn up well-conceived plans for (a) augmenting power generation and distribution (b) proper maintenance of the system (c) regional balances in power generating and distribution. The present researcher is inclined to suggest that the utmost priority should be given to up-gradation and modernization of old plants. He also feels that a timely and effective implementation of various schemes will certainly help in creating a sustainable tourism base in the state of Sikkim. Any slippage will have a very deleterious effect on economy of the state and its efforts on promoting tourism in long run.

2.2.4. CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TOWARDS TOURISM

For promotion and growth of tourism, many associations/institutions seem to be playing a vital role in Sikkim. Parent unit amongst these is the department of tourism which is the administrative authority for development of a viable tourism base in the state. It is headed by a principal secretary and a team of officials and staff as is the practice elsewhere in the country. The department is responsible for planning and formulating overall policy, implementation of different schemes and execution of projects for sustainable tourism development at various levels. When interacted with the officials, it has been found that the department at present is having the under-mentioned institutional arrangement [*Several Issues of Annual Reports (2000 to 2007)*]

► ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

The administrative set up has its head office at Gangtok and out-station offices at Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kolkatta and New Delhi. Tourist Information Centers are located at Namchi, Pelling, Jorethang, Melli, Rangpo, Ravangla, Lachen, Badgora and New Jalpaiguri. A new Tourist Information Centre has also been opened at Darjeeling in West Bengal. There is total decentralization of power for effective administration of tourism activities in the state. The overall job in this regard has been divided amongst the following sections :

- (i) Administrative Section
- (ii) Accounts Section
- (iii) Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) Section
- (iv) Statistical Section
- (v) Tours and Travel Section
- (vi) Civil Aviation Section

- (i) The Administrative Section deals with general office administration and personnel management of the department besides the policy matters.
- (ii) The Accounts Section deals with financial management of the department.
- (iii) The Centrally Sponsored Schemes Section deals with all schematic plans under the normal state budget and CSS project.
- (iv) The Statistical Section of the department looks after collection and dissemination of statistical data and information.
- (v) The Tours and Travels Section deals with No Objection Certificates (NOC) for registration of hotels and travel agencies and their recognition and also issue of permit to tourists visiting some protected areas in the state.
- (vi) The Civil Aviation Section manages the Helicopter Service introduced in the state in November 1998.

► INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY WING

The Information and Publicity Wing has a crucial role to play to project Sikkim as a unique destination. This objective is slowly but surely being achieved through the dissemination of information, promotional activities and marketing campaign. The department has produced different brochures on various tourist attractions in the state. Improving and updating of information carried by these brochures is another important function of the concerned cell in the tourism department. This is being done each year in order to provide up to date information to the visitors.

► ADVENTURE WING

Sikkim is a popular adventure destination. The existence of the world's third highest peak along with a host of yet virgin peaks lure many adventure seekers to the state. Most of the visitors come to Sikkim to enjoy adventure activities like trekking, mountain biking, white water rafting, para gliding and lot more. The number of domestic adventure lovers are also rising by leaps and bounds particularly trekking and white water rafting. Heard adventure activity like Bunji Jumping in Sikkim is also on the pipeline. Thus, the activities of this wing include review of existing facilities and introducing new and interesting routes / trails besides maintaining and upgrading services like Trekkers Huts and Trails.

► SIKKIM TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD (STDC)

Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) was set up in 1998-1999 to promote a new thrust to tourism development activities in the state. The primary objective behind formation of STDC inter alias was to create, take over and manage different tourist facilities like hotels, restaurants, helicopter service and surface transport. Currently various properties are being managed by STDC, important amongst which are Hotel Mount Pandim, Siniolchu Tourist Lodge, Rangpo Tourist Lodge, Blue Sheep Restaurant, Bagdogra Guest House, Movables of Hotel Mayur and the Helicopter services operating in the state.

► INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT

The Institute of Hotel Management, Gangtok was set up in the year 1990 by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in association with Government of Sikkim with the aim of expanding and promoting hospitality education and also to fill the manpower requirement in Hotel and Hospitality sector. The institute provides job-oriented and professional higher education to the students of Arts, Science & Commerce according to demand of the industry. At present the institute is running from a rented building at Tadong and it will be shifted soon to its own campus at Sajong, Rumtek which is under construction. The institute has produced more than 1500 professionals till date and they are well placed in different hospitality sectors all over the country and abroad.

► COMMUNITY BASED ESTABLISHMENTS

There are a number of local / small community based organizations actively involved in providing support services and preservation of tourism destinations in the state. Many of the tourists visiting Sikkim seek help of the experts of these establishments for availing various tourism related services. To name a few amongst these are All Sikkim Monasteries Association (ASMAN), Sikkim Hotel and Restaurant Association (SHRA), Travel Agent's Association of Sikkim (TAAS), Dzongu Ecotourism Committee (DETC), Green Circle (GC), Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS), Human Development Foundation

of Sikkim (HDFS), Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC), Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee (KHLWC), Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLCA) and Sikkim Development Foundation (SDF). Time to time, they organise number of activities like training the tourist guides, preservation of bio-diversity, accommodation arrangements and escorting visitors visiting different adventurous spots of the state.

2.2.5. MISCELLANEOUS FACILITIES

The capital town of Gangtok is considered to have the basic amenities in the form of Clubs, Cinema Halls, Banking arrangement and the medical facilities as well. At present, the town is in possession of four clubs, one cinema hall and branches of major scheduled commercial banks along with 3 health care units. Though these can fill in basic needs of the visitors into the state, there is increasing demand for expansion of these facilities in near future.

As such, the aforesaid discussion with a glance over current infrastructural mechanism clearly portrays Sikkim as a Himalayan Paradise and consequently, the specific objective (i) as indicated in Chapter 1 is getting fulfilled.

REFERENCES



► BOOKS

Bora Shiela and Bora M.C., May, 2005, The Story of Tourism-An Enchanting Journey Through India's North-East, UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi

► REPORTS AND HAND BOOKS

Annual Report, 2000-2001, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2001-2002, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2002-2003, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2003-2004, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2004-2005, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2005-2006, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2006-2007, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Sikkim Info Book, 2005, La Parouse, DPH, Gangtok

Sikkim-The Hidden Paradise, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

► WEB SITES

www.google.com

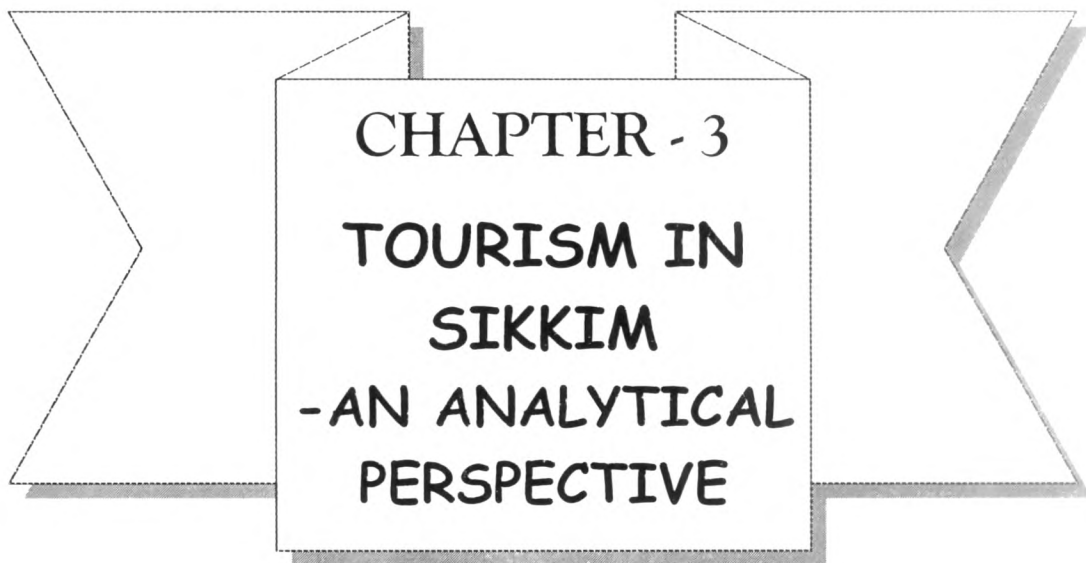
www.sikkim.gov.in

www.sikkimtourism.org

www.tourismofindia.com



Rumtek Monastery in East Sikkim



CHAPTER - 3
TOURISM IN
SIKKIM
-AN ANALYTICAL
PERSPECTIVE

"To get away from one's working environment is, in a sense, to get away from one's self; and this is often the chief advantage of travel and change"

-Charles Horton Cooley

CHAPTER - 3

TOURISM IN SIKKIM—AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter portrays an overview of Sikkim Himalaya in view of Sustainable Eco-Tourism, an Objective Evaluation of Tourism Sector in Sikkim in terms of few pre-decided parameters along with Findings and a Meaningful Analysis with relevant statistical indications. Further, it presents a Hands-on Filed Observation of the state of affairs besides performing a Multidimensional SWOT Analysis at the end.

3.1.SIKKIM HIMALAYA – TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

There has been a paradigm shift in the focus of tourism in recent times. Although seen as a means for sustainable development, tourism has larger role to play, given the dictums of the changing times. The Sikkim government has been actively planning to focus on sustainable tourism development for poverty alleviation



[Final Report on 20 Years Perspective Plan]. The need for development of tourism in Sikkim is strategically much more important than in case of many other states where development of other industries is also equally feasible. Tourism is one sector which has been unanimously identified by all concerned - economists, development planners, social scientists, environmentalists, politicians, government and the people - as one of the most significant, one of the most suitable and one of the most viable industries for Sikkim Himalayas - with tremendous potential for growth. Because of its geo-physical location, it is practically not feasible to develop any sort of heavy or medium industries in the state. Only service-oriented and lighter industries that will not cause damage to

local fragile geo-physical and cultural environment will fit in a mountainous environment .There is abundance of natural and cultural resources that are suitable especially for a service industry like tourism, hotel and restaurants and cottage industries too .The people of Sikkim make it a natural tourist destination because of their friendly and hospitable nature, peace and tranquility and the recent impetus given by the state government to promote Sikkim as a dream destination. However, what is striking as well as challenging to a tourism planner is that the whole of Sikkim, except its capital Gantok, is virtually a virgin and unspoiled territory for tourists, thus creating an aura of mystery around it. Sikkim has a natural setting for eco-tourism. The state is predominantly rural in nature. Approximately 40% of the total land area comprises of fixed land and another 30% is under snowcapped mountains, glaciers and rivers. Perhaps, it is one of the rare places in the world where one can travel from almost a level of 300 meters at Jorethang to 8598 meters above mean sea level at Khangchendzonga in a space of 110 kms. The sharp variation in altitude naturally provides tremendously rich bio-diversity in the state. That is one primary reason why Sikkim Tourism has been thinking to give thrust on sustainable tourism. If sustainably developed, it could be a key source of both income and employment in the entire state. Tourism not only creates jobs in tertiary segment, but also encourages growth in primary and secondary sectors of the economy. It could also bring major shift in the social mobilization process and inject a substantive change in entire sustainable development outlook and orientation of the state. Located on the lap of mount Kanchanjunga (world's third highest mountain), the unparalleled beauty of the state and very friendly and hospitable people are its competitive and comparative advantages. Sikkim is famed for its lush green vegetation, verdant forests, scenic valleys, majestic mountains and a range of rich and magnificent cultural heritage all of which provide a safe haven for visitors for long. It also draws thousands of pilgrims to its holy shrines and monasteries. For many decades however, because of poor planning, unscientific management, lack of imaginative promotional activities and access restrictions tourism could never pick up despite unparalleled advantages bestowed by natural

beauty and other endowments. Even as late as the seventh plan period, the planners allocated as meager as one percent of the total plan outlay to this sector which could act the single most industrial venture in Sikkim. One of the reasons for this negligence of tourism sector had been the inner line permit system required by the foreigners. Equally distressing aspect has been the disinterest shown by the domestic visitors. However, it was in mid 1990s when the tourism sector really started picking up in the state both because of a conscious tourism development plan of the government and also politically disturbing situations in other hills including Darjeeling and Jammu and Kashmir. Besides emphasizing on Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), the state government has been consistently trying to create a spirit of Private-Public Partnership while developing and promoting sustainable tourism in Sikkim. Its mission has been to create friendly atmosphere for visitors, develop human resources and generate synergy amongst all players like government, local administration, local people, media, private developers, operators of facilities, tourists and NGOs. The abiding principle is to regulate tourism so that the negative social, economic and environmental impacts are minimized. A few studies have been conducted to provide dynamism to tourism sector in the state. The Tata Economic Consultancy Services prepared a Tourism Master Plan for Sikkim in 1998 which has made a projection of 3,71,743 visitors by 2011. On the other hand, the tourist arrivals have already recorded an annual growth rate of almost over 20 percent in last couple of years. The total number of arrivals have increased from a mere 21,854 in 1981 and 67,547 in 1991 to 3,21,064 in 2007 both domestic and foreign visitors inclusive. (Table 3.1) Most of these increases have been recorded in the last decade or so. The number of foreign tourists has also increased sharply. This increase will be further accelerated when some major ongoing tourism sector projects and facilities are completed. Enchanted by its natural beauty, ancient heritage and new modern amenities, the composition of tourist arrivals is itself likely to undergo changes as the state targets more higher value tourist arrivals from within the country and abroad in near future.

3.1.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Today, tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows actively affect various sectors of the economy, which positively contribute to social and economic development of a country as a whole. Most highly developed western nations, like Switzerland, Austria and France have accumulated a big deal of their social and economic welfare on revenue earned from tourism sector. According to recent statistics, tourism provides about 10% of the world's income and employs almost one tenth of the global workforce. All considered, tourism's actual and potential economic impact is astounding. Many people emphasize positive aspects of tourism as a source of foreign exchange, a way to balance foreign trade. But there are a number of other aspects too for local communities that are not always considered by advocates of tourism perspectives. Socially, tourism has a great influence on the host societies. Social contacts between tourists and local people may result in mutual appreciation, understanding, tolerance, awareness, learning, family bonding, respect and liking. Residents are educated about the outside world without leaving their homes, while their visitors significantly learn about a distinctive culture. Local communities are benefited through contribution by tourism to the improvement of social infrastructure like schools, libraries, health care institutions, internet cafes and so on. Besides, if local culture is the base for attracting visitors to the region, it helps to preserve local traditions and handicrafts which may be were on link of the extinction [David and Kevin (2003)].

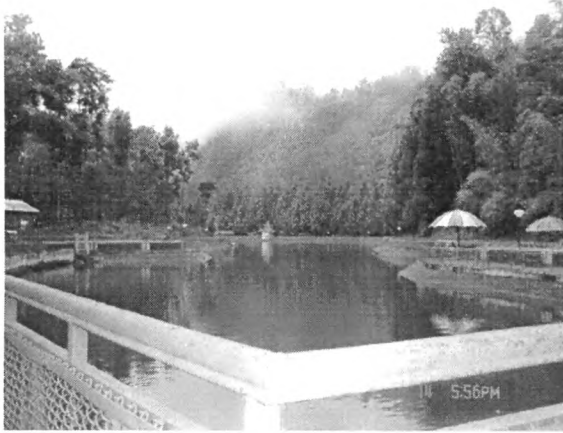
On the other side, tourism can increase tension, hostility, and suspicion. Claims of tourism as a vital force for peace are exaggerated. In this context, economic and social impacts on local community depend on how much of the incomes generated by tourists flow to the host communities. In most all-inclusive package tours more than 80% of travelers' fees are consumed by airlines, hoteliers and other international companies, not by the local businessmen and workers. Again, large hotel chain restaurants often import food to satisfy foreign visitors and

rarely employ local staff for senior management positions, preventing local farmers and workers from reaping the benefit of their presence. Further, it is often apprehended that with the influx of tourists, an adverse impact on local culture may also be created. The local people may be influenced by food habits and dressings of the visitors and may start adopting them, and gradually neglecting their own cultures. Thus, tourism has a tendency to affect cultural change. While presenting a culture to tourists may help preserve the traditions, it can also dilute or even destroy it. Hence, the point is to promote tourism in such a way that it would both give incomes and create respect for local customs and traditions. In conformity to this, our experience over the study area has revealed that the inflow of tourists to Sikkim has in fact helped revival of interest of local community in their society. Sikkim Tourism has been organizing tourism festival for last several years where local traditional dance and music are displayed through main thoroughfare of the Gangtok town. Various ethnic groups participate in these cultural carnivals with great enthusiasm and gusto and it has created revival of interest and pride among local people on their cultural heritage. It is reported to the researcher that of around 3,00,000 tourists who visit Sikkim at present, they spend about Rs 30 crores per year in the state. This is a real money brought in from outside by the visitors and spent in Sikkim on accommodation, food, transport, entertainment, purchase of souvenirs and so on. Such expenditure of the tourists has generated direct employment of above 10,000 persons engaged in hotels, transport and travel agency sector. But indirect economic benefits in the form of multiplier effects are much more. For example, the commercial activities amongst the suppliers of vegetables, eggs, meat, etc. to hotels and restaurants during the peak season period. Film studios also thrive on tourists arrivals. So, in this context, it can be opined that tourism has played a pivotal role in bringing the people of Sikkim in close inter-face with the mainstream and thereby furthering national integration.

3.1.2. ECO TOURISM - A CONCEPTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Only a few years back, the word 'Eco-Tourism' didn't exist in the dictionary. There have been some natural travelers for quite a long time in the history. But their experiences were meager to produce any significant socio-economic benefits to the places they visited, nor their activities seem to be intended as a tool for conserving natural area, native culture or endangered species. Nevertheless with the advent of technology, the popularity of nature and travel documentaries on television, and the interest in conservation and environmental matters, eco-tourism is becoming a phenomenon characteristic in the beginning of 21st century. The root of eco-tourism lies in nature and outdoor tourism. It is an amalgamation of interest arising out of environmental, economic and social concern. The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual place of residence for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes constitute tourism. Such visits for being close to nature to enjoy its enormous creations in a most environment-friendly manner, without any adverse impact on ecosystem, is particularly known as 'Eco-Tourism'. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), "Tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified objectives of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both of the past or the present) found in these areas is defined as Eco-Tourism". Thus, the key elements of eco-tourism include a natural environment as the prime attraction, an optimum number of environment friendly visitors, activities which do not have any serious impact on the ecosystem and the positive involvement of local community in maintaining ecological balance. Eco-tourism, therefore, incorporates both a strong commitment to nature and a sense of social responsibility. It is not only the fastest growing branch of the travel industry; but has also been hailed as a hopeful new approach to both preserving fragile and threatened wild areas. The enormous opportunities and awesome risks of nature tourism lie in the heart of eco-tourism mission.

3.1.3. SIKKIM – FAST EMERGING AS AN ECO,TOURISM PARADISE



Sikkim has a culture and a tradition of holding every form of life in esteem. Indeed, even the nonliving aspects of nature, the rivers and the lakes, the mountains and the forests, are imbued with divine significance. The inhabitants of Sikkim are rooted in a tradition, which has always been in harmony

with nature. The tradition and sustainable modes of life have nourished the life of people for long. Tourism is one of the mainstays of the mountain and hill economy and Sikkim is second to none in this regard. The mighty Khangchendzonga offer brilliant mountain scenery, healthier and invigorating climate. The snowy winter and cooler summer serve to invite many visitors to this tiny hilly state. Sandwiched in the hills and mountain, Sikkim has now started gaining importance as a major eco tourism destination. It has everything which a tourist can dream of as a land of fairs and festivals, snow-clad mountains, holy lakes and peaks, religious centers, hot springs, trekking, water-rafting, pleasant valleys, flora and fauna and many more [Maharana and Rai (2000)].

Ecotourism in Sikkim began way back in 1995-96 when Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project, a venture in collaboration of the mountain institute, the G.P.Pant Institute, the Green Circle and the Travel Agents Association of Sikkim began. Sikkim became the first state to have started the concept of ecotourism and sustainability in India [Dong (2001)]. Project covered the training of stakeholders, marketing and helping the government to frame policies which could enhance the movement of sustainable practices of tourism. Green movement started during this time of the year when Travel Agents Association of Sikkim created code of conduct for ecotourism in Sikkim for its members and the visitors

alike. The immediate impact of training fell in the trekking agent's ways of handling groups specially in Dzongri Area. Timber wood used for cooking and heating was substituted to alternative fuel. People at the base camp were sensitized to properly safeguard the environment of the area. More income generating activities were conducted through human resource developmental programmes. Government of Sikkim adopted a policy of ecotourism and conservation of rich biodiversity in the region through specially created cell in the forest and environment department. Government started framing new rules without affecting the tourism industry. Nowadays, the conservation has become the buzz word in tourism sector. Not only the environment was given top priority but also the cultures of the region became a focus of discussion in high level policy makers meetings and conferences [Karan (1989)]. Various NGOs were established by the like minded people to help the community level training in ecotourism and village tourism. Consultancy services were provided for marketing and infrastructure development of the region where most tourists frequented. Now there are Home Stays that provide ample opportunity to the travelers to experience daily life of the different ethnic communities. New rules for the protection of environment and cultures have come up and umpteen numbers of institutions in town and villages have sprung up to cater to the needs of the people for sustainable eco-tourism.

Thus, the foregoing discussion clearly positions tourism in Sikkim in a sustainable development perspective. The study, at present, prudently proceeds to encompass a performance review of the same in terms of certain pre-defined criteria as decided upon by the researcher. It is reflected in subsequent elaborations and indicated hereunder.

3.2. PERFORMANCE OF SIKKIM TOURISM

- AN OBJECTIVE EVALUATION

Performance can be defined as an act of carrying into execution of a pre-decided assignment. It is that which is performed or accomplished and can be considered as a recognized achievement. Authors from different management disciplines tend to categorize various performance indicators like competitive advantage, flexibility, financial performance, quality of service, resource utilization, innovation and so on. As a close-participant observer, the present researcher also endeavors to set a few objective criteria for measuring and evaluating performance of the tourism sector in Sikkim in compliance with the specific objective (ii) cited in Chapter 1. These criterions are primarily grouped into four and comprise of 'Tourism Traffic Volume', 'Revenue Generation', 'Project Implementation' and last but not the least, 'Employment Creation' in the state. Following is a comprehensive elaboration on these issues.

3.2.1. TOURISM TRAFFIC VOLUME – PATTERN AND TREND

Tourist arrivals in Sikkim, both domestic and foreign, have witnessed a substantial increase in recent years. This could be because of an enhanced promotional campaign done by the tourism department time to time. From 92,435 in 1994, the domestic tourist arrival has gone up to 3,02,693 in 2007 (Table–3.1) registering an average growth rate of 9.87 % p.a during the said period. It may however be noted that there have been year-to-year fluctuations in traffic volume. From 92,435 in 1994, it went down to 92,159 in 1996, shot up sharply to 1,12,869 in 1997 and sharply went up to 1,38,785 in 1999. Since then a constantly upward trend has been registered. It is to be noted that though the periodicity of the study begins from the year 1999 to 2007, availability of the data makes possible it to be considered effecting the year 1994.

Table 3.1
TOURIST INFLOW TO SIKKIM (1994-2007)

YEAR	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	% VARIATION (Domestic)	% VARIATION (Foreign)
1994	92435	6888	N.A.	N.A.
1995	98555	5866	6.62 %	-14.84%
1996	92159	8642	-6.49%	47.32%
1997	112869	9952	22.47%	15.16%
1998	133158	6854	17.98%	-31.13%
1999	138785	8554	4.23%	24.80%
2000	143105	8794	3.11%	2.81%
2001	146923	7757	2.67%	-11.79%
2002	160789	8539	9.44%	10.08%
2003	191161	10926	18.89%	27.95%
2004	230719	14646	20.69%	34.05%
2005	251697	16827	9.09%	14.89%
2006	261107	16972	3.74 %	0.86%
2007	302693	18371	15.93%	8.24%
AVERAGE YEARLY GROWTH RATE			9.87 %	9.88 %

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok

Coming to the international arrivals too, it has not shown any steady trend during the period 1994-2002. From 6888 in 1994 it went down to 5866 in 1995, climbed up to 8642 in 1996, rose to 9952 in 1997 further down to 6854 in 1998 but went up sharply to 8554 in 1999 and further up to 8794 in 2000, going down again to 7757 in 2001. Since 2003 only an upward trend seems to be reflected. The average annual growth rate has been around 9.88 % during the period 1994 to 2007. Thus, it portrays that although there is a growth in arrivals, the state of Sikkim has not been able to maintain consistency in its inbound tourism traffic. We will now, try to map the same separately for domestic and foreign arrivals with the help of dispersion method.

► MEASUREMENT OF DISPERSION (COEFFICIENT OF VARIATION)

Table 3.1 reflects that there are continuous variations in inflow of visitors into the state during the period 1994 to 2007. The same may be highlighted with the help of dispersion that measures the degree to which numerical data tend to spread about an average/mean value in a series. In view of this, an attempt shall be put

here to measure the degree of dispersion of the tourist inflows from the average value with help of statistical device of mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation. Coefficient of variation is the most commonly used measure of relative variation. The series for which coefficient of variation is less is said to be less variable or more consistent. Thus, presented below a statistical measurement of the same in respect of both foreign and domestic tourist inflows as depicted in Table 3.1. On the basis of data contained in the table, and by applying the 'Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Variation Method', we proceed to calculate the Variation Coefficient (CV) in the following manner [Gupta (1994)] :

$$CV = \frac{\sigma}{X} \times 100$$

Where -

CV = Coefficient of Variation

X = Arithmetic Mean

σ = Standard Deviation of Series

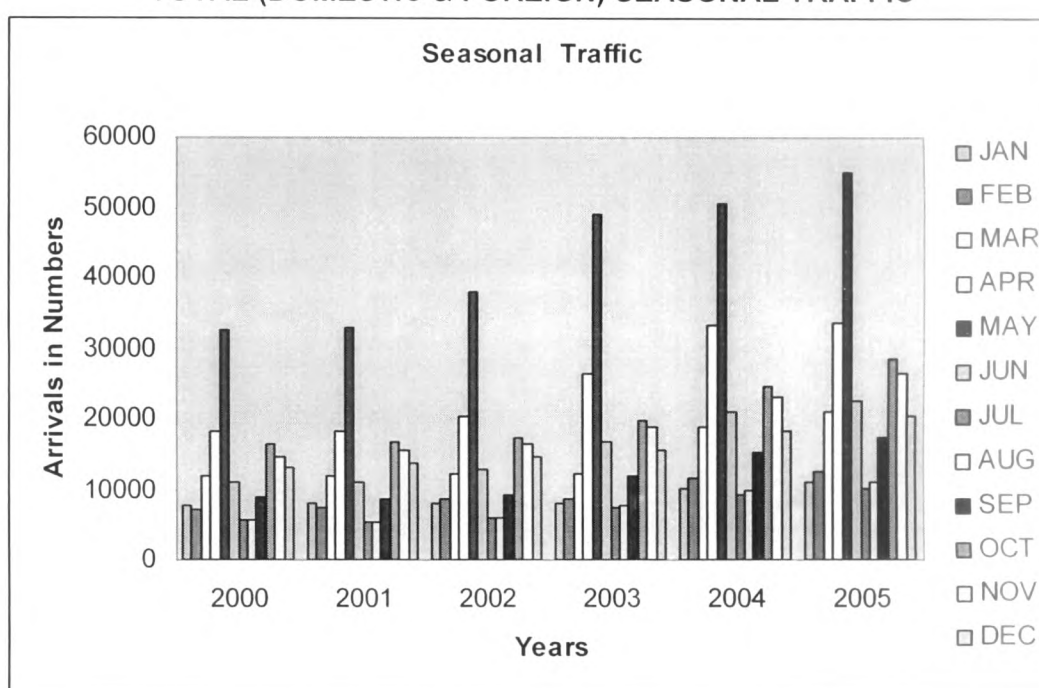
Accordingly, by applying the formula we get -

CV = 41% in respect of **domestic tourist inflow** and **39 %** in case of **foreign tourist inflow**.

Since the co-efficient of variation of foreign tourist inflow is less than that of domestic tourist inflow, the international arrivals in the state of Sikkim seems to be little more consistent when compared with the domestic arrivals. The department of tourism in Sikkim may, therefore, focus in designing adequate strategy to have a consistent domestic traffic so that the unenthusiastic impact of mass tourism could be avoided.

Figure 3.1

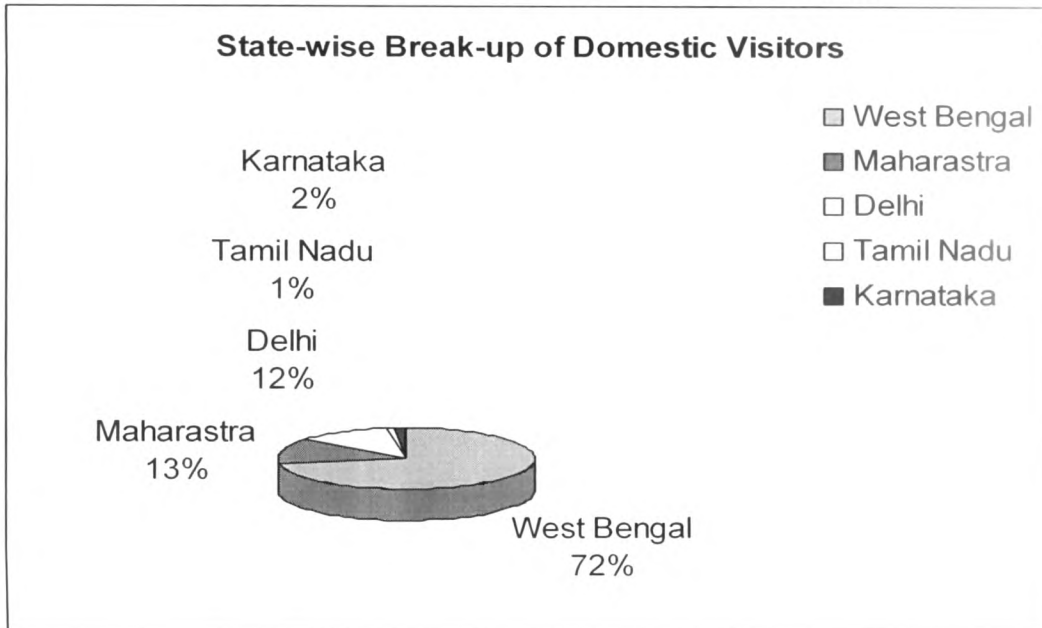
TOTAL (DOMESTIC & FOREIGN) SEASONAL TRAFFIC



Further, Figure 3.1 reflects the month wise arrivals during the period 2000 to 2005 where it indicates that **March, April, May and October** appear to be a peak season for the visitors in Sikkim. There have been reasonably satisfactory inflows during the months of Nov and December as well. During the said months the state seems to be virtually free from any sort of seasonal impacts like rains, landslides, freezing, wintry and so on. The period (2000-2005) has been considered here to reflect the seasonal traffic as month-wise-break up of data for pre 2000 year and post 2005 year is un-available with the concerned section.

Figure 3.2

KEY SOURCE OF DOMESTIC VISITORS IN SIKKIM



Present source markets for domestic visitors in Sikkim are **West Bengal**, **Maharashtra** and **Delhi** as being reflected in Figure 3.2. Percentage-wise share keeps West-Bengal at 72% followed by Maharashtra at 13%, Delhi 12%, Karnataka 2% and Tamil Nadu being the least at only 1%. The state has not yet been able to attract adequate tourists from rest part of India which appears to be very marginal at present. As reported to the present researcher that the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Northeastern region could also be a potential source if state-wise marketing campaign can be effectively implemented.

Referring to nationality-wise break-up in Table 3.2, Sikkim usually restricts visitors from certain nations. Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan and China are amongst them. As a result, it primarily attracts tourists from **United States of America (USA)**, **Germany**, **France** and **United Kingdom**. (Figure 3.3) The countries like Algeria, Fiji, Chile and Ghana occupy a bottom position in this regard. As far as cross border tourism is concerned, **China**, **Nepal**, and

Hongkong (Figure 3.3) can be a potential source of international passage if the respective governments are concerned about it. China's and Nepal's position as a source of foreign traffic is yet to be exploited in full as the flow of visitors from these nations is at marginal level which is clear from the Table 3.2. It also reflects that during the period 1999 to 2007, USA generated a highest inflow of 2310 in 2006 followed by Germany at 1677 in 2005, France at 1637 in 2005 and UK at 1197 in the year 2000. The inflow from Algeria, Fiji, Chile and Ghana along with some other nations as disclosed in the table can be considered to be almost negligible during the aforesaid period. Again, Sikkim's share in total international arrivals in India is considered very insignificant and still **less than 1 percent**. As reflected in National Tourism Statistics, domestic arrivals also could not be considered satisfactory if compared to other states of India. These facts bring into a sharp focus that should be given to attract more foreign visitors into the state in order to position itself in 'Global Tourism Map' in days to come.

Table 3.2

NATIONALITY WISE FOREIGNERS INFLOW TO SIKKIM (1999-2007)

COUNTRY	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 *	2005	2006	2007 #
South Africa (Negligible)	4	0	0	121	27	0	0	0	0
Algeria (Negligible)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
USA	933	39	1020	860	0	128	2024	2310	1278
Argentina	21	76	33	24	32	32	34	19	20
Australia	638	527	505	491	346	398	1074	1085	436
Austria	2	21	72	113	49	32	220	0	0
Bahrain	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bangladesh (Restricted)	0	38	0	31	3	0	0	0	0
Belgium	226	220	190	154	95	99	270	279	151
Brazil	2	0	19	5	9	40	51	41	37
Britain	1120	1197	710	1127	999	151	0	0	0
Bulgaria (Negligible)	5	0	17	4	0	14	13	14	1
Bhutan (Potential Source)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canada	316	298	273	241	246	316	478	563	405

Chile (Negligible)	3	4	3	1	2	5	6	1	1
China (Potential Source)	13	15	4	0	0	0	0	21	3
Croatia (Negligible)	0	8	2	1	1	1	6	5	0
Czechoslovakia	92	108	134	126	58	21	139	208	73
Denmark	101	111	106	77	93	152	187	154	79
Fiji (Negligible)	0	2	1	0	0	2	6	1	0
Finland	57	14	21	57	23	0	40	120	73
France	862	1055	873	1041	699	426	1637	1573	691
Germany	1366	1191	888	770	685	857	1677	1631	698
Ghana (Negligible)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Greek	3	20	4	0	3	8	24	32	13
Hong kong (Potential Source)	4	8	7	0	5	22	34	24	26
Hungary	9	12	6	22	12	0	51	73	55
Indonesia	0	7	4	0	3	15	38	66	2
Iran (Negligible)	11	8	5	0	1	9	12	0	2
Ireland	52	54	49	0	36	153	223	203	73
Israel	218	240	234	241	335	450	501	528	283
Italy	342	269	274	273	340	446	536	635	207
Japan	490	462	331	391	331	245	626	890	358
Kazakistan (Negligible)	1	2	7	8	0	0	5	21	0
Kenya	2	7	4	3	0	0	0	6	5
Korea	77	85	136	141	61	37	223	221	193
Lithuania (Negligible)	3	2	5	2	1	8	17	4	9
Luxemburg (Negligible)	1	1	1	0	5	12	12	12	13
Malaysia	56	93	62	92	83	67	181	172	69
Mauritius	42	14	18	27	3	0	38	8	1
Mexico	28	11	10	30	30	14	26	27	15
Mongolia (Negligible)	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Namibia (Negligible)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nepal (Potential Source)	0	36	1	9	23	52	169	231	126
Netherlands	96	310	201	365	260	96	610	481	252
Newzealand	84	113	98	0	96	281	206	165	92
Nigeria(Restricted)	1	0	3	0	6	19	23	26	1
Norway	40	32	30	58	27	0	78	84	65
Ostoria (Negligible)	5	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	0

Others	125	1451	431	517	832	1077	2417	2896	10543
Pakistan (Restricted)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Peru (Negligible)	2	2	0	3	0	0	1	3	0
Philippines	4	4	2	42	1	0	21	26	7
Poland	59	99	50	117	40	0	179	156	135
Portugal	10	9	43	11	8	50	51	34	45
Romania (Negligible)	1	0	0	0	4	6	2	13	3
Russia	26	33	43	69	70	67	142	216	121
Saudi Arabia (Negligible)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Singapore	47	122	59	139	108	16	206	304	96
South Africa	7	0	37	0	27	96	54	58	31
Spain	97	0	187	0	107	453	356	501	154
Srilanka	18	14	10	18	1	0	22	12	2
Sweden	12	116	155	210	185	129	218	259	83
Switzerland	228	299	181	263	173	83	547	577	211
Taiwan	179	0	101	181	97	26	247	354	203
Thailand	11	39	70	88	149	261	445	646	553
Turkey (Negligible)	1	1	6	3	1	27	78	9	5
Ukraine (Negligible)	2	0	0	2	1	7	34	40	0
Venezuela (Negligible)	0	1	0	0	2	3	3	8	2
Zambia (Negligible)	0	2	0	1	4	4	0	0	0

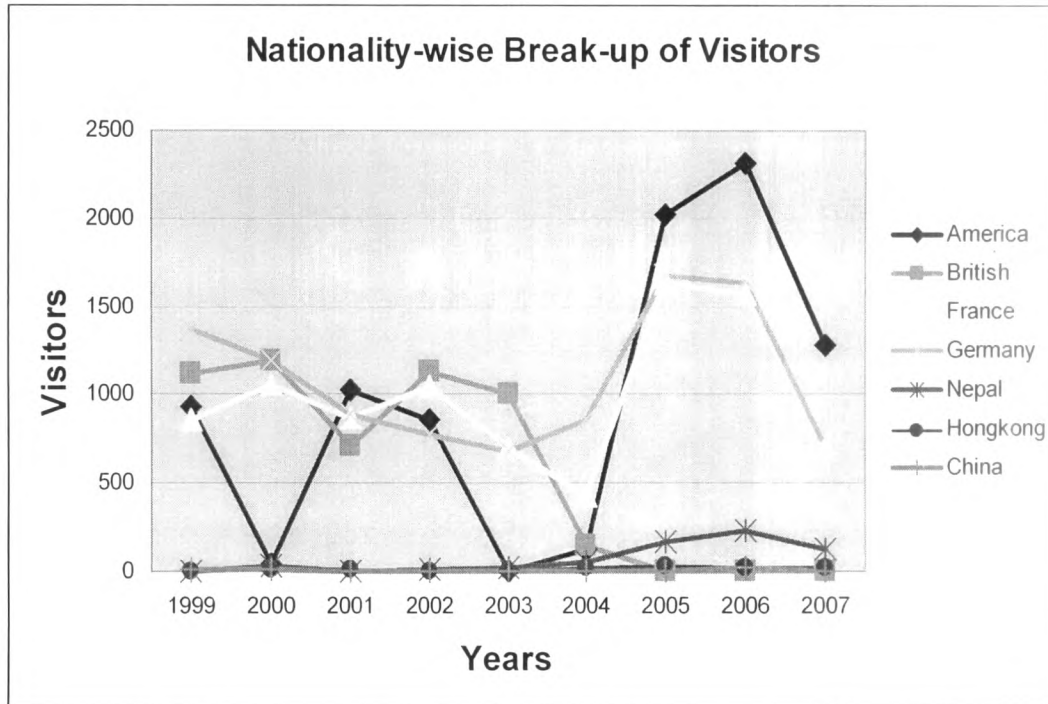
Source: Department of Statistics, Monitoring & Evaluation, Govt of Sikkim, Gangtok

* Estimated with the help of 'Lagrange's Formula of Interpolation'

Figures up to June, 2007 only

Figure 3.3

MAJOR AND POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FOREIGN VISITORS IN SIKKIM

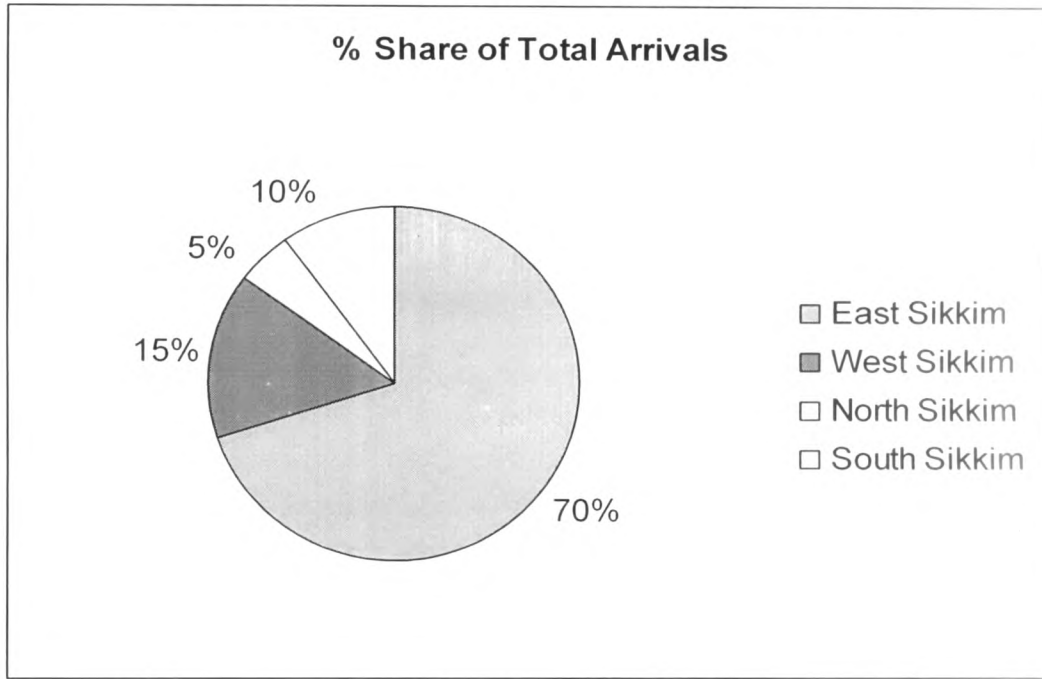


► DISTRICT- WISE ARRIVALS

During course of the study, the present researcher had a series of interactions with different stakeholders in tourism sector like tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers as well as officials of the department of tourism, Govt. of Sikkim. It is understood that due to speedy urbanization of the area with availability of basic amenities, almost 70% of the vacationers visit East Sikkim particularly Gangtok town while the rest is distributed amongst other three districts of the state more or less in uneven proportion as been reflected in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

DISTRICT WISE BREAK UP OF TOURIST ARRIVALS



► PROJECTED TOURIST ARRIVALS (2007-2022)

On the basis of past growth rate in tourist arrivals, the incremental tourist inflow due to various development schemes (which are being formulated / under implementation) as also the promotional efforts to develop tourism in the state (based on the reforms, development strategy and suggestions that may be taken up for implementation as highlighted in Chapter 4, 5 and 6 of the current thesis), an attempt has been made here for a 15 years projection of tourism traffic taking 2007 as the base year. (Table 3.3). Since periodicity of the study ends at 2007, it was felt necessary by the present researcher to have the projection beyond the said periodicity taking into consideration of 'Sikkim Tourism Vision 2022'.

Table 3.3
PROJECTED TOURIST ARRIVALS IN SIKKIM (2007-2022)

YEAR	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	TOTAL	
2007	302693	18371	321064	10 %
2008	332962	20208	353170	
2009	366259	22229	388487	
2010	402884	24452	427336	
2011	443173	26897	470070	
2012	487490	29587	517077	15 %
2013	536239	32545	568784	
2014	589863	35800	625663	
2015	648849	39380	688229	
2016	746177	45287	791464	
2017	858103	52080	910183	15 %
2018	986819	59892	1046711	
2019	1134842	68876	1203717	
2020	1305068	79207	1384275	
2021	1500828	91088	1591916	
2022	1725952	104751	1830703	

Source: Self Compilation as per current growth rate and trend

It is seen in the above projection that from 2007 to 2015, a growth rate of 10% is assumed, while 2016 to 2022, a higher growth rate of 15% is assumed. The average annual growth rate during the period 1994-2007 in domestic tourism traffic is 9.87% and the same stands at 9.88 % in case of international traffic (as indicated earlier) which justifies a growth rate of 10% p.a.(Table 3.3) in both domestic and foreign arrivals respectively. Again, it is a conviction of the present study that the marketing and promotional drive should generate results and tourist inflow will be accelerated after the take off when all development efforts, connectivity etc. are in place. Hence, the growth rate of 15 % could be considered valid.

► **DISTRICT- WISE DISTRIBUTION (2007-2022)**

Based on the assessment of spread of tourist attractions, assumptions have been made regarding the district wise distribution of tourist's visits that is likely to emerge given our strategy for dispersal. The share of different districts in traffic as mentioned earlier (Figure 3.4) changes over time and can be depicted as follows :

Table 3.4
BREAKUP OF PROJECTED TOURIST ARRIVALS (2007-2022)

YEAR	EAST	WEST	SOUTH	NORTH
2007 (Actual)	2,24,745 (70%)	48,160 (15%)	16,053 (5%)	32,106 (10%)
2015	5,50,583 (80%)	1,37,646 (20%)	68,823 (10%)	1,03,234 (15%)
2022	15,56,097 (85%)	5,49,210 (30%)	3,66,141(20%)	4,57,675 (25%)

Source: Self Compilation from Official Information

It may be noted here that the percentage of tourist visits for all four districts taken together may be greater than 100 in the years 2015 and 2022. It is assumed that few tourists might be visiting more than one district, and their visits would be counted in both districts as against the current distribution break-up of the year 2007. At this point, percentage increase in distribution of visitors has been considered based on the researcher's personal interaction with the tourism officials, and hence the same may be treated as a judgmental view only.

3.2.2. REVENUE GENERATION

The financial benefits accrued from tourism sector in Sikkim is indirect. The lease rent of trekkers' hut, hotel Norkill, wayside amenities/cafeterias, Nathula environmental fees, issue of no objection certificates and other miscellaneous receipts have been the major sources of revenue for Sikkim Tourism. The trend of receipts from this sector (both domestic and foreign) has witnessed a quite fluctuating pattern in the period 1990 to 2007 though in past few years it has been upward as observed in Figure 3.5. From Rs.19 lakhs in 1990, the revenue receipts have gone up to Rs.79.56 lakhs in 2007 (Table-3.5) registering a sharp growth of 318.74 %. But the year-to-year fluctuation in it concludes that there had not been a steady growth of the same during the said period. From Rs.19 lakhs in 1990 it went down to Rs.18 lakhs in 1998, shot up sharply to Rs.87.01 lakhs in 2006 with an estimated decline of Rs.79.56 lakhs in 2007. As a close observer, the present researcher tried to find out the reasons for variations in generation of revenue in the above mentioned years and it was found that the lackadaisical approach of few of the officials has caused the government a negative growth in revenue receipts in several years. The various lease agreements could not have been made effective with enhanced lease rent from the date of expiry of the agreement, where leasing constitutes a major source of revenue for tourism sector in the state. Moreover, there was delay in timely completion of various schemes meant for tourism development as being noticed by the researcher. When interacted with the officials, it was revealed that the delay was due to time taken in completing different official formalities relating to calling of tenders, obtaining legal advice etc. and it is not reasonable to accept as it had ample time to anticipate these requirements and take timely action. The department's further reply was that the increase of revenue in past few years (2002-2006) was itself remarkable and the government exchequer gained several percent more than it was earlier and thus it cannot be accepted as a convincing reason for its lapse in initiating timely action. As such, it seems to be a debatable issue as felt by the researcher so far as the revenue generation in tourism is concerned. It may be noted here that the data have been considered from pre-periodicity of our study effecting from the year 1990 in order to have a meaningful year-to-year comparison in that regard

Table 3.5

REVENUE GENERATION (1990-2007)

YEAR	REVENUE RECEIPTS (Rs in Lakhs)	% VARIATION
1990	19.00	NA
1991	41.00	115.79 %
1992	16.00	-60.98 %
1993	23.00	43.75 %
1994	20.00	-13.04 %
1995	32.00	60.00 %
1996	18.00	-43.75 %
1997	25.00	38.89 %
1998	18.00	-28.00 %
1999	40.39	124.39 %
2000	38.72	-4.13 %
2001	67.00	73.04 %
2002	53.36	-20.36 %
2003	70.69	32.48 %
2004	75.86	7.31 %
2005	81.40	7.30 %
2006	87.01	6.89 %
2007	79.56 *	-8.56 %

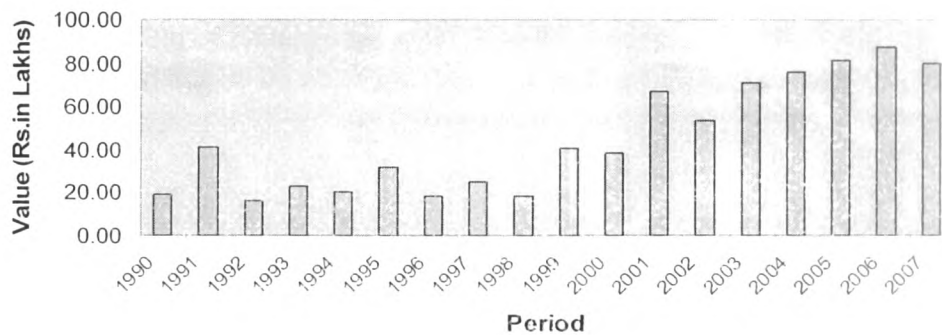
Source : Department of Tourism, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok

* Estimated with the help of 'Binomial Expansion Method of Extrapolation'

Figure 3.5

REVENUE RECEIPTS OF SIKKIM TOURISM (1990-2007)

Revenue Collection



► TIME SERIES ANALYSIS AND PROJECTION OF REVENUE TREND

Time series is an arrangement of recording statistical data with its time of occurrence. The analysis of time series is of great significance in case of projecting and evaluating a variable as one can easily understand what changes / variations have taken place over a period of time. As such, to study the trend and project the revenue receipts of Sikkim tourism during and after periodicity of the study, one of the most accepted methods 'Least Squares' has been adopted. It is a mathematical tool that helps us to fit a trend line in such a manner that the following two conditions are satisfied :

$$(a) \sum (Y - Y_c) = 0$$

i.e. the sum of deviations of the actual values of Y and computed value of Y is 0.

$$(b) \sum (Y - Y_c)^2 = 0$$

i.e. the sum of squares of deviations of the actual and computed value is least from this line and hence the name 'Method of Least Square'. The line obtained by this method is known as the 'Line of Best Fit' [Khan (2004)].

The straight line trend represented by this method is denoted as

$$Y_c = a + b X$$

where 'Y_c' is used to designate trend values to distinguish them from the actual 'Y' values, 'a' is the 'Y intercept' or the computed trend figure of 'Y' variable when 'X' = 0. 'b' represents slope of the trend or the amount of change in 'Y' variable that is associated with a change of one unit in 'X' variable. The 'X' variable in time series analysis represents time.

Consequently, we get a straight line trend as shown in Figure 3.6 depicting trend values in Table 3.6 for the said periodicity.

Table 3.6
STRAIGHT LINE TREND (1999-2007)

PERIOD	REVENUE	TIME	XY	X ²	TREND VALUE
	Y	X (Period-2003)			Y _c (a + bX)
1999	40.39	-4	-161.56	16	42.47556
2000	38.72	-3	-116.16	9	48.35639
2001	67	-2	-134	4	54.23722
2002	53.36	-1	-53.36	1	60.11806
2003	70.69	0	0	0	65.99889
2004	75.86	1	75.86	1	71.87972
2005	81.4	2	162.8	4	77.76056
2006	87.01	3	261.03	9	83.64139
2007	79.56	4	318.24	16	89.52222
N=9	593.99		∑XY 352.85	60	

Source: Self Compilation

Where -

$Y_c = a + bX$ being the equation of the straight line trend

$a (\sum Y/N) = 65.998889$

&

$b (\sum XY / \sum X^2) = 5.8808333$

It is further represented below in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6
LINEAR TREND OF REVENUE BY THE METHOD OF LEAST SQUARE

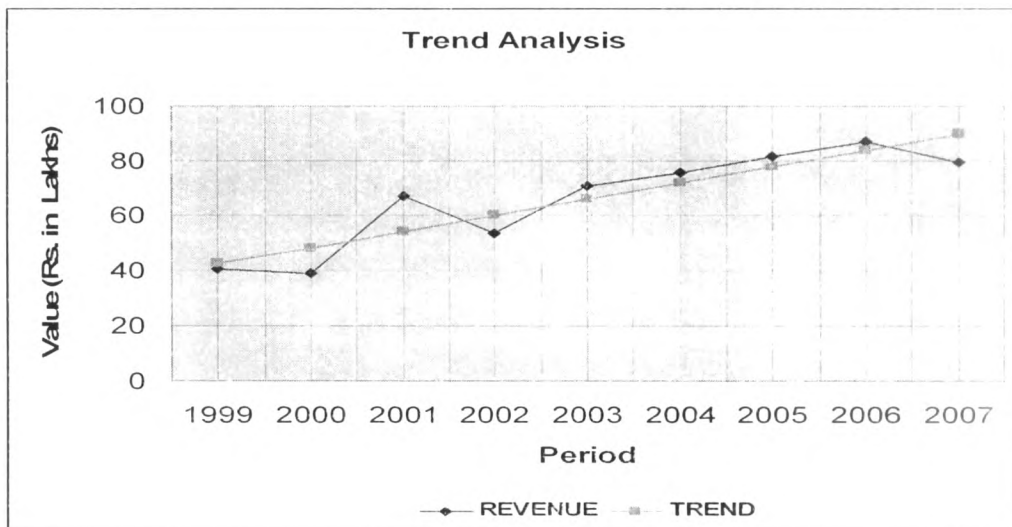


Figure 3.6 shows a linear trend of revenue receipts of the state of Sikkim for the period 1999-2007 represented by pink line whereas the actual revenue is symbolized by the blue line. It also reveals an upward trend for the coming years in spite of having year-to-year fluctuations in its receipts. Therefore, the outcome of the time series analysis makes us realize that as a natural sequence with the passage of time, the volume of revenue has grown but the growth is neither same nor in uniform direction. Instead, there have been serious ups and downs. However, the present researcher now makes an attempt to have a 15 years projection of the volume of revenue from the end of periodicity of the study keeping in mind of the 'Sikkim Tourism Vision 2022'. By relating the same method of least square as highlighted above, we do have the following projections as reflected in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

PROJECTED REVENUE FROM SIKKIM TOURISM (2008-2022)

YEAR	REVENUE RECEIPTS (Rs in Lakhs)	% GROWTH
2008	95.4	NA
2009	101.28	6.16%
2010	107.16	5.81%
2011	113.05	5.50%
2012	118.93	5.20%
2013	124.81	4.94%
2014	130.69	4.71%
2015	136.57	4.50%
2016	142.45	4.31%
2017	148.33	4.13%
2018	154.21	3.96%
2019	160.09	3.81%
2020	165.97	3.67%
2021	171.85	3.54%
2022	177.73	3.42%
PROJECTED AVERAGE YEARLY GROWTH = 4.24 %		

Source: Self Compilation

The above estimate shows that from the year 2008 to 2022, a positive trend is indicated with a projected average growth rate of 4.24 % p.a. Though the trend is somewhat consistently upward, it is evident in Table 3.7 that the growth is in diminishing pattern which is not a healthy sign. Thus, if this trend happens to continue, the concerned authority shall have to take adequate measures on the issue. The present study thus, believes that the ample promotional drive in future along with speedy improvement in basic amenities, revenue growth shall pick up the pace and tourism may be a sustainable industry in the state.

► ANALYSIS OF CORRELATION

A correlation analysis refers to a technique used in measuring closeness of the relationship between the variables. It is a statistical device which helps in analyzing co variation of two or more variables [Panneerselvam (2007)]. Accordingly, the present project will now make an attempt in analyzing the degree of relationship between the tourism traffic and the amount of revenue generated by Sikkim Tourism during the study period of eight years beginning with 1999. It shall also try to test whether the said relationship is significant or not.

Table 3.8
TOURISM TRAFFIC AND REVENUE RECEIPTS (1999-2007)

YEAR	TOURIST INFLOW	% GROWTH	REVENUE RECEIPTS (Rs in Lakhs)	% GROWTH
1999	147339	NA	40.39	NA
2000	151899	3.09 %	38.72	-4.13 %
2001	154680	1.83 %	67.00	73.04 %
2002	169328	9.47 %	53.36	-20.36 %
2003	202087	19.35 %	70.69	32.48 %
2004	245365	21.42%	75.86	7.31 %
2005	268524	9.44 %	81.4	7.30 %
2006	278079	3.56 %	87.01	6.89 %
2007	321064	15.46%	79.56 *	-8.56 %

Source : Department of Tourism, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok

* Estimated with the help of 'Binomial Expansion Method of Extrapolation'

Table 3.8 holds tourist inflow and the amount of revenue generated by tourism department of Sikkim for the period 1999 to 2007. On the basis of data mentioned in the table and by applying the 'Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation Method', we proceed to calculate the Correlation Coefficient r which is determined as follows [Ghosh (2003)] -

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{N\sigma_x\sigma_y}$$

Where -

$$X = (x - \bar{x})$$

$$Y = (y - \bar{y})$$

σ_x = Standard Deviation of Series X

σ_y = Standard Deviation of Series Y

N = Number of Pairs of Observations

r = Correlation Coefficient

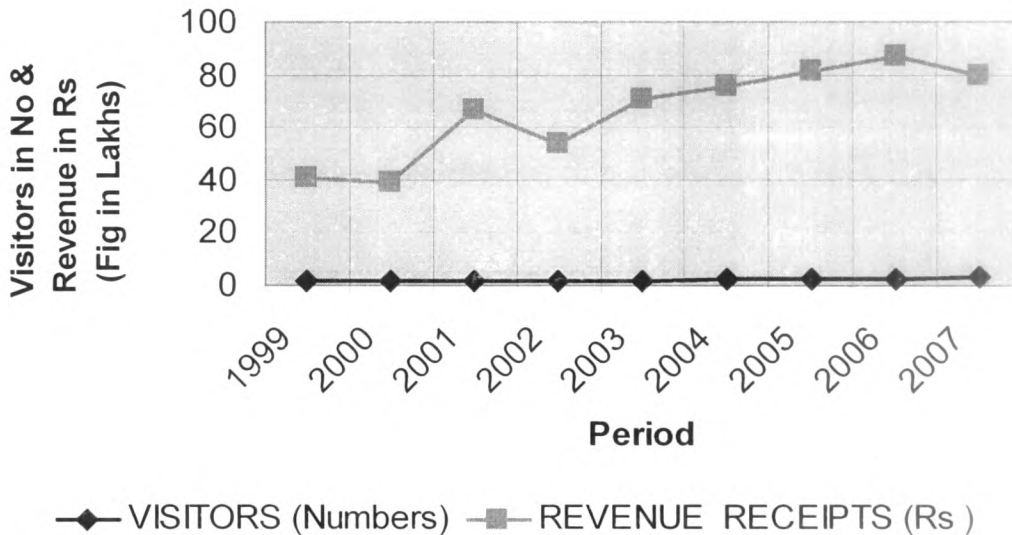
Accordingly, by using the formula we get -

$r = + 0.845366$ which indicates that the Correlation between the tourist inflow and the revenue receipts is positive, but not perfectly positive. The said relationship seems to be non-linear in nature. Because in Table 3.8, it is evident that % growth in tourist inflow does not tend to bear proportionate % growth in revenue receipts. Hence, the correlation between the concerned variables could not be considered significant in this regard. It is further validated in the Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7

**CORRELATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF VISITORS & REVENUE GENERATION
(A Graphical Representation)**

Correlation Graph



3.2.3. PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION

Tourism is a mild adventure in Sikkim with a high potential to grow it as a prominent feeding industry. Due to geographical location of the state, there is no wider scope for other industrial activities, but the richness of natural resources makes it an ideal place for promotion of tourism and desired socio-economic development with equity and social justice. It was mentioned elsewhere, that the high Himalayas including Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, the rich flora and fauna blended with biodiversity, monasteries and distinct culture of the three ethnic communities, are some of the unique attractions that require an optimum mix of marketing and promotional appeal. The government of Sikkim has recognized the importance of tourism in socio-economic development of the state and has accorded a high priority for its faster augmentation. The state has been the recipient of National Award from the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India as 'Best Tourism Performing State' in Northeast for past several years. The

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr. Pawan Chamling, was conferred with an award of 'Green Chief Minister' by the Environmental Association of India. The state is known for peace and tranquility and tourism is being developed with a long-term vision. As such, the creation of infrastructures at various tourist destinations is a keynote for promoting a tourism environment and thus, the engineering cell of the department created for the purpose, has been actively involved in overall planning and implementation of various tourism specific projects spread over different districts of the state. A number of related schemes have already been completed and many more programs under destination development of tourist interest are in progress and that have already received the Central Financial Assistance (CFA). At this instant, the present researcher wisely proceeds to have a status of few significant schemes and projects taken up by the state during the periodicity of the study.

Table 3.9

BRIEF REVIEW OF FEW SIGNIFICANT TOURISM PROJECTS (1999-2007)

SL NO	PROJECTS/SCHEMES	STATUS AS ON 31ST DEC,2007
1	Development of Tourist Spot at Samdruptse	Completed.
2	White Water Rafting in Teesta River	The project is in operation
3	Preparation of Feasibility Report for Development of Tsomgo Lake	Completed.
4	Wireless Communication System	Ground station installed. Ministry of Telecommn. Clearance awaited.
5	Circuit Development in West Sikkim	The project is 90% complete
6	Flower Show at Gangtok	Completed.
7	Village Tourism at Damlakha, Pakyong, East Sikkim	Proposed.
8	Development of Recreational Park near Hanuman Tok, Gangtok	Implemented through forest department.
9	Construction of Flower Show Pavillion at Gangtok	The site is supposed to be shifted to Namchi due to land problem.
10	Fencing & Tourist Spot around Ravangla Lake Area in South Sikkim	Completed.
11	Eastern Himalayas Tourism Festivals	The project has been in operation time to time.
12	Production of Tourism Film	Completed.
13	Integrated Development of Pilgrim Tourism	Sanctioned in Feb,2007, Under tendering process.

14	Restoration of British War Memorial at Gnathang	Completed.
15	Construction of an Observatory Tower at Damthang	Under progress.
16	Development of Trekking Trail in Tendong	Dropped.
17	Construction of Adventure Centre at Chemchi	The project is 90% complete in physical terms
18	Development of Uttarey Lake	Completed.
19	Development of Tourist Facilities at Changey Water Fall in West Sikkim	Implemented through forest department.
20	Expansion of Tourist Lodge at Bengal-Sikkim border town of Rangpo	Completed & additional rooms have been added to the lodge.
21	Development of Website on Sikkim Tourism	Completed.
22	Construction of an Observatory Tower at Tashi View Point	Completed and the project is in operation.
23	Development of Tourist Infrastructure at Rumtek	Completed.
24	Beautification and value addition to Underground Wonder at Rangpo (Gateway to Sikkim)	Proposed.
25	Development of Trekking Routes in Sikkim	Proposal has been submitted by the state government to the Ministry of Tourism. Release of fund under CSS awaited.
26	Development of Waterfalls at Jaleshwar, (Niya/Bhaley Khola) at Yangang in South Sikkim	Completed.
27	Development of Buddhist Site at Tashing Ding	The project is 95% completed.
28	Circuit Development in West Sikkim	The project is expected to be complete in March, 2008.
29	Destination Development in West Sikkim	80% of the total project is completed.
30	Development of Nathula-Memencho-Kupup-Ganathang Circuit, East Sikkim.	Proposed.
31	Destination Development at Saramsa in Sikkim	Sanctioned in Dec, 2006 Under tendering process
32	Construction of View Tower including the Statue of Lord Ganesh at Ganesh Tok in East Sikkim	Completed.
33	Wayside Cafeteria at Bengal-Sikkim border town of Rangpo	30% completed. Civil works are in progress.
34	Construction of Eco-Lodge at Pentong in North Sikkim	Completed.
35	Development of Community Park at Bojey and Water Garden at Hee Pul under Integrated Development of Tourism, West Sikkim	Under Progress.
36	Village Tourism at Darap, West Sikkim.	Prioritized
37	Village Tourism at Tingchim, North Sikkim.	Prioritized

38	Integrated Development of Hee Bermiok Village	Prioritized
39	Development of Lake and its surrounding at Gufa Dara Hee Bermoik in West Sikkim	Prioritized
40	Development of Recreation Park at Sirwani in South Sikkim	Prioritized

Source: Self Compilation from Several Issues of Annual Reports (2000-2007)

Table 3.9 portrays a brief overview of some significant tourism projects taken up by the department time to time to uplift the prospect in the state. It reflects that most of the schemes have already been implemented, few will be functional in due course of time and certain schemes have been additionally proposed. But as a close observer, it is in view of the present researcher that a lot of proposals (not indicated in Table 3.9) remain unimplemented and there is some sort of delay in implementation of few other projects prioritized earlier. If looked in 9th Plan in-retrospect (which partially falls in the periodicity of our study), against Rs. 60 crore outlay proposed by the state tourism department, only an amount of Rs. 40 crore was approved. Of this, actual disbursement was Rs.17.33 crores i.e. 43% (approx) of the approved outlay. Since the fund received did not match the projects proposed, almost 50% of the projects had to be postponed. During the said planning period, the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, sanctioned a total of 95 schemes with an estimated cost of Rs 1467.33 lakhs. Three schemes namely, Construction of a Statue of Guru Padma Sambhava at Samdruptse, Development of Lake at Tsomgo and Feasibility Study of Ropeway from Namchi to Samdruptse at a cost of Rs 193.90 lakhs were projected under state plan. It is reported to the researcher that the projected cost of Rs 1467.33 lakhs stated above and duly sanctioned by the Government of India is exclusive of the projects prioritized during 2001-2002 for Rs 7.00 crores. This means that the department was left with only Rs 767.00 lakhs of Central Component of fund for actual implementation. The schemes mainly consisted of construction of Wayside Amenities, Tourist Lodge, Tourist Information Centre, Tourist Conveniences, Purchase of Adventure Sports Equipment, Fairs & Festivals, Development of Waterfalls and Development of Trekking Trails etc. Thus, as against the anticipated central fund of Rs 687.00 lakhs, the department could execute

schemes to the extent of Rs 258.24 lakhs only. Similarly, as against the 95 schemes sanctioned, only 9 schemes could be completed. As such, the performance of the state for achieving physical and financial target in this regard does not seem to be fully satisfactory. Coming to the 10th Five Year Plan, the outlay proposed by the tourism department for development of Attraction Centers and Infrastructures is Rs.3537.33* lakhs of which Rs.2392.84* lakhs is central component and Rs.748.21* lakhs is required under plan fund to meet up the state share. (**Collected from plan documents and % share is not matching*)

The tourism projects implemented during the planning period were financed as under:

Central Component (CSS)	- 75%
State Government (Plan Fund)	- 25%.

The strategy in 10th Five Year Plan for implementation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme was therefore, to identify the tourism projects like TIC, Tourist Lodge, Yatri Niwas, Public Conveniences, Wayside Amenities, Trekking Trails, Water Sports Activities, Publicity Brochure, Adventure Sports Equipment and Tourist Circuits etc in order to fill in the requirement and need of the visitors. The basic objective of the plan was to recognize the South and West district as the tourism destinations so that a gradual dispersal of the visitors could take place. The average duration of tourist stay in Sikkim is usually for a short period of 2-3 days only. Hence, for extension of their stay, the development of an adequate tourism infrastructure is justified in relation to the plan proposal. As far as the implementation of C.S.S. projects are concerned, 57 projects were incomplete and being spilled over to the forthcoming Five Year Plan for completion as they are useful to provide basic amenity to the tourists during their visit to different destinations. The major projects in this regard were Tourist Lodge - Chungthang, Yatri Niwas-Tashiding, Gateway Scheme-Temi, Upgradation of Siniolchu Tourist Lodge-Gangotk, Trekkers Hut at Yuksom Base Camp-Yuksom, Base Camp-Ravongia, Tourist Lodge-Namchi and Hot Spring-Yumthang to name a few.

► REASONS FOR DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

An attempt has been put forward by the researcher to sort out the causes for delay in implementation of schemes proposed at different points of time and the reasons are found to be of the following kinds :

(i) In several cases, the central assistance received and credited to the state exchequer was not released to the implementing agencies for execution of schemes in time.

(ii) It is needless to mention that for construction of tourism assets and infrastructure within four districts of the state, the department of tourism has to entirely depend upon its sister organizations like department of forest & environment, urban development & housing department and other institutions functioning in the state. Besides, the private holdings also need to be acquired for arrangement of few basic amenities.

(iii) The diversion of forest-land for non-productive sector is not permissible under the Forest Conservation Act. The laws are extremely stringent and the tourism department has to go through a long process to get the forest land for the purpose. Even for utilization of the private holdings, the local landowners are very rigid and consequently the acquisition procedure becomes cumbersome for issuing notifications and ultimate acquisition.

(iv) The urban towns are congested and adequate spaces are not available for creation of amenities like tourist toilets. To get a suitable land at different towns to meet the requirements of visitors, the concerned department has to undertake an exhaustive survey to identify the same. Apart from this, even in case of ongoing projects, the district forest officials do have interference in the work in progress obstructing the agencies to stop the job as long as they do not receive specific instructions from their concerned hierarchies.

(v) One of the major hindrances in development of tourism in Sikkim is the connectivity. Sikkim is a land-lock mountainous state. The nearest airport and railhead are located at 120 kms away from Gangtok which is about 4 (four) hours drive. Besides the distance, the roads often get disrupted due to frequent landslides and adverse weather condition, especially during monsoon season,

thereby cutting off the state from rest of the country. Further, many of beautiful spots in remote areas are not easily accessible by roads. As a result, the completion of specified tourism projects in time are greatly hampered.

(vi) Lying on eastern tip of Himalayas bordered by West Bengal, the state has been experiencing lot of difficulties from its neighboring hill town Darjeeling on various political grounds. Frequent bandhs and strikes called on fulfillment of unusual demands in the town are greatly hampering tourism activities in Sikkim as most of the entry and exit points in the state share with Darjeeling district in West Bengal. Consequently it has an indirect impact in delaying the implementation of tourism projects in the Himalayan state.

► PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

The factors quoted above makes us feel that, coming to a full-fledged implementation of the respective projects in overall interest of development of tourism in the state, a liberal attitude should be adopted by the Govt. of India with regard to this beautiful Himalayan land Sikkim and sufficient funds should be allocated to avoid time and cost overruns. However, the state government may be held responsible and accountable in this regard for timely implementation of the projects and for financial discipline to adhere to schedules and other conditions stipulated by the concerned central government agencies. Appropriate coordination and cooperation of concerned state government departments is very crucial to complete various programmes and projects in time. As such, the present researcher is in a position to propose that a high level committee under the chairmanship of chief secretary and consisting of secretary-equivalent rank official of the associated departments, and principal secretary cum commissioner-tourism as member secretary of the said committee, may be constituted for monitoring of projects for their timely completion to avoid pit falls observed during the earlier planning periods. The committee should monitor the progress of CSS Projects as well. Its recommendations/observations should be put before the cabinet from time to time for information and guidance, as the cabinet may deem necessary in overall interest of tourism promotion and growth.

3.2.4. EMPLOYMENT CREATION

There are about 336 accommodation units in the form of hotels, lodges and guesthouses and 120 registered travel agencies in entire state of Sikkim, as per the data contained in the publicity documents (2006-2007) prepared by the department of tourism, Govt. of Sikkim. The field investigation undertaken by the researcher reveals that on an average, 10-15 persons are directly employed on a regular basis in each accommodation unit and 2-3 persons are engaged in each travel agency/tour operator's firm located in different parts of the state. Moreover, 5000 tourist vehicles are commercially plying on the road which means about employment of 5000 drivers and may be 2000 cleaners. Again, approximately 100 persons are engaged in tourism department in the whole state. Thus, the total direct employment at present can be estimated to be about 11000 persons in various segments of tourism sector in the state of Sikkim. At this moment, the present project will make an attempt to see the pattern and trends of employment generation taking into consideration of periodicity of the study.

► METHOD OF ESTIMATION

Tourism is a labour intensive industry. Economic benefit and employment generation out of tourism is apparently related to tourist inflow. The publication of ESCAP on "The Economic Impact of Tourism in India" (as referred in the Report of Working Group on Tourism for Ninth Plan) indicates that 1.2 international visitors provide employment to one person while 17 domestic tourists generate one employment. Currently the share of domestic tourist in Sikkim is 94 % and foreign visitor's share stands at only 6 %. Since the foreign visitor's share is quite marginal, the researcher feels that the employment generation here, may fundamentally be based upon domestic tourists only which has been computed on the basis of accepted norms of 17 domestic tourists generating employment for one person. It is presented in the Table 3.10

Table 3.10
GENERATION OF DIRECT EMPLOYMENT (1999-2007)

YEAR	TOURIST INFLOW (DOMESTIC)	DIRECT EMPLOYMENT (17 for 1)
1999	138785	8164
2000	143105	8418
2001	146923	8643
2002	160789	9458
2003	191161	11245
2004	230719	13572
2005	251697	14806
2006	261107	15359
2007	302693	17805

Source: Self Compilation as per accepted norms

Figure 3.8
NUMBER OF VISITORS AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION
(Pattern and Trend)

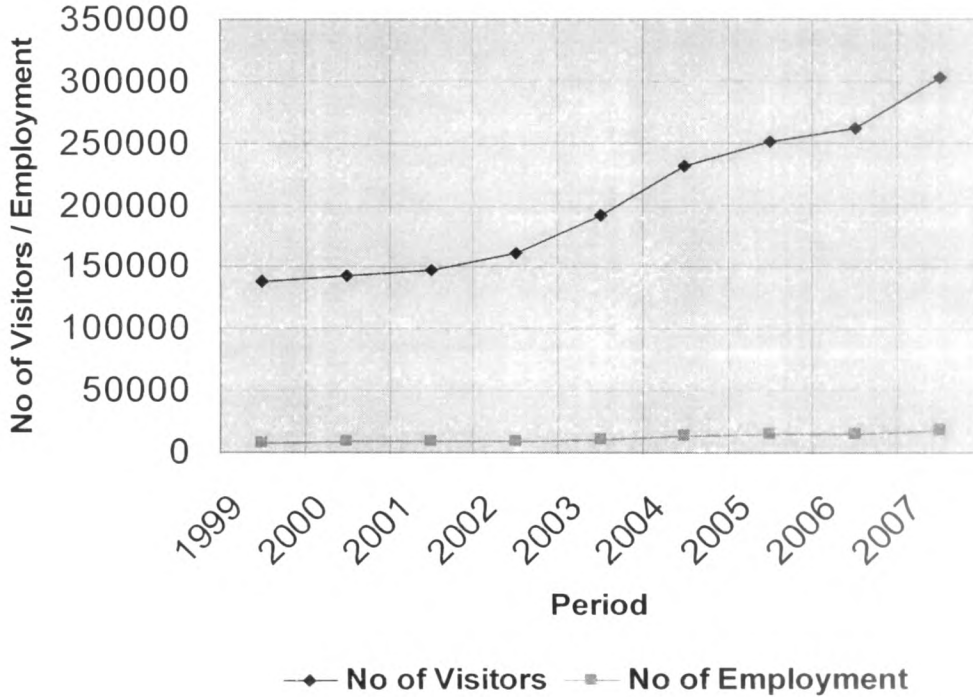


Table 3.10 represents the number of visitors (Domestic) and the level of direct employment estimated as per pre-established norms for the period 1999 to 2007. From the table it can be inferred that both employment generation and tourist inflow into the state are showing an upward trend which is further reflected in Figure 3.8. But the field investigation done by the present study shows the number of employment to be about 11000 persons at present (2007) as against the estimated figure of 17805 in the year 2007 (Table 3.10) which indicates a mismatch between the actual and the estimation. Thus, the generation of direct employment from tourism sector in Sikkim cannot be considered fully agreeable as there is large deviation between projection and actual. Of course, it should be noted that the projection should not always be accepted as totally accurate since it is based on some pre-established parameters only. When interacted with the tourism officials, it was discovered that many of the employment were indirect in nature and as far as direct employment is concerned, some of the participants in the tourism industry were in a position to carry out business without any valid license in hand. It infers that there had been want of strict control and regulations on that front. As a result, their engagement as direct employment in tourism sector had been out of official record of the concerned departments. However, the state government at present is trying to formulate policy to trace out those unauthorized dealings and take adequate steps in that regard as reported to the present researcher during the course of interaction. As such, it won't be overstated if it is inferred that the performance of tourism industry in Sikkim in generating direct employment falls below a targeted level.

Thus, the aforesaid elaboration on performance of tourism sector in Sikkim in terms of few objective criteria like 'Tourism Traffic Volume', 'Revenue Generation', 'Project Implementation' and 'Employment Creation' renders a contentious status of tourism in the state. As far as traffic is concerned, it is clear from the above analysis that although there reflects a growth in arrivals, the state has not been able to maintain consistency in its inbound tourism traffic. Further, seasonality in tourism traffic still prevails and the state's claim to have been devoid of any element of seasonality proves to be disagreeable. Again, the key

source markets for domestic visitors in Sikkim are being confined to few states of the country at present. The share of rest part appears to be very marginal one. Referring to Sikkim's share in total international arrivals in India, it is also proved to be quite insignificant which stands at less than 1 percent. The same seems to be restricted to few foreign nations only resulting in a partial presence of the Himalayan state in 'International Tourism Map' of the globe.

Secondly, the incremental revenue receipts in past few years (2002-2006) has been considered remarkable by the department of tourism in Sikkim. But the findings make us comprehend that as a natural sequence and with the passage of time, the volume of revenue has grown, but the growth is neither similar nor in consistent direction.

Thirdly, coming to a successful implementation of the projects proposed at different levels, it reveals that majority of the schemes have been executed, few will be operational on time and certain projects have been additionally planned. But as a witness, it is in observation of the researcher that a certain proposals remain still untouched and there is also a kind of delay in carrying out few other schemes prioritized before.

Last but not the least, Sikkim falls below a targeted level in generating direct employment in the state. It is further validated with the field investigation done by researcher which represents a mismatch between the actual and the projected employment.

On the contrary, the statistical growth, as pointed out in the foregoing discussion in terms of different parameters, may signify a welcome indicator for tourism industry in Sikkim. But the same may not be considered fully agreeable as far as performance of the state in achieving physical target is concerned. Therefore, it won't be over-emphasized if it is argued that Sikkim Tourism might have performed moderately well in some segments, but considered debatable in certain cases. As such, after having an objective evaluation of the performance of tourism sector in Sikkim, the study, at this instant, endeavors to portray below a field-based observation of the present researcher and share his hands-on-exposure in that regard.

3.3. FIELD OBSERVATIONS

A field investigation was undertaken by the researcher at few prominent tourist destinations in the state of Sikkim during the period Jan-Dec, 2007. The study was carried out separately for tourists, accommodation units, tour operators as well as for concerned officials and stake-holders on the basis of questionnaires and a semi-structured interview schedule. The basic objective of the exercise was to assess the overall perception of various respondents on tourism scenario in the state. A rational analysis has been carried out here under the following heads :

- Field observation of Inbound Tourists
- Field observation of Accommodation Units
- Field observation of Tour Organizers
- Perception of Officials and other Stake-Holders

Reflected underneath a sector specific representation of the same in an ordered fashion.

3.3.1. FIELD OBSERVATION OF INBOUND TOURISTS

This section will reflect the trends amongst the visitors distributed percentage-wise in terms of various parameters. The results are based on 200 domestic tourists and 100 foreign visitors into the state.

► PLACE OF STAY

Table 3.11
TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO PLACE OF STAY

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)			TOTAL
	Accommodation Units	Friends/Relatives	All	
Domestic	92.85	07.15	100	200
Foreign	88.00	12.00	100	100
All	91.35	08.65	100	300

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Figure 3.9

DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO PLACE OF STAY

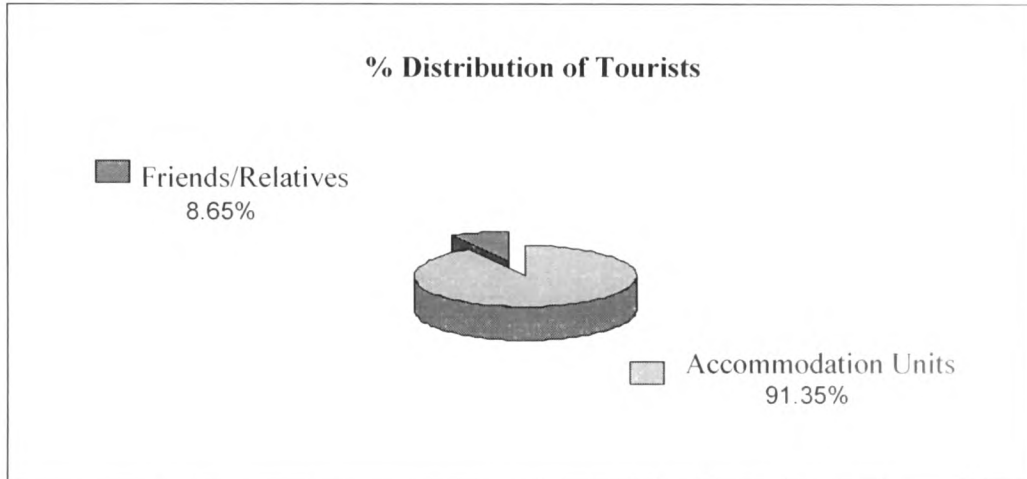


Table 3.11 depicts that the share of tourists staying in accommodation units was approximately 92.85 % and 88.00 % in terms of domestic and foreign visitors respectively and 91.35 % as a whole as reflected in Figure 3.9. It also gives us a clue that the majority of the respondents did not have friends and relatives out there due to which they had to avail of accommodation units in the state. Again, Table 3.12 reveals that the tourists, both national and international, preferred to stay in Guest Houses rather than spending more on Starred Accommodation. This is evident in Figure 3.10 where share of the visitors in Guest Houses stood at 48.14 % being the highest among all the accommodation units. It therefore, makes us feel that the government may insist on construction of more Economy Guest Houses in the state with hygiene and all basic amenities rather than focusing on Starred Accommodation.

Table 3.12

TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO TYPE OF STAY

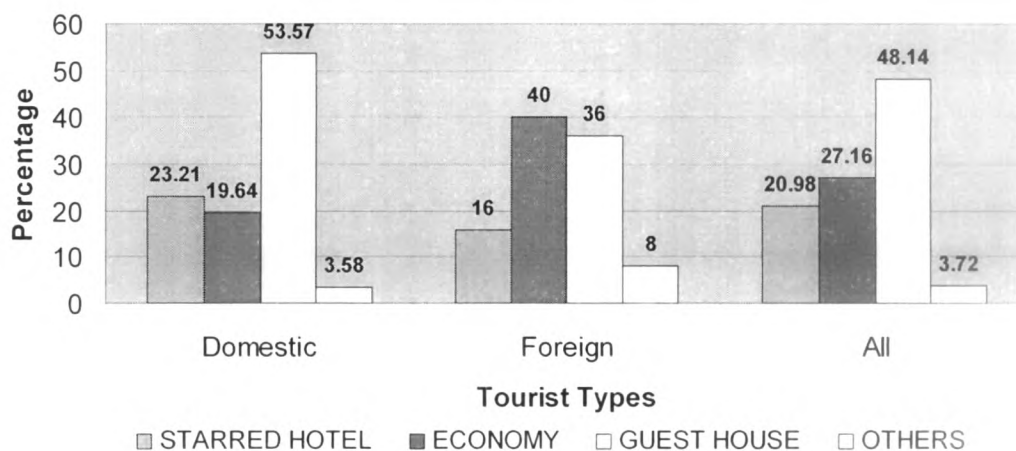
CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)			
	STARRED HOTEL	ECONOMY LODGE	GUEST HOUSE	OTHERS
Domestic	23.21	19.64	53.57	03.58
Foreign	16.00	40.00	36.00	08.00
All	20.98	27.16	48.14	03.72

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Figure 3.10

DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO TYPE OF STAY

% Distribution of Tourists



► PROFILE OF VISITORS

(i) EDUCATION

Table 3.13

TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO EDUCATION LEVEL

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
10 th Std.	08.92	0	06.17
Secondary	01.78	4	02.46
Graduate	71.42	32	59.25
Post Grad.	14.28	12	13.58
Professional	03.57	20	08.64
Higher	00.03	32	09.90
All	100	100	100

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

It is seen in Table 3.13 that most of the tourists visiting the state fell in the category of Graduate Level (59.25%) as a whole so far as their educational profile was concerned. Therefore, it's a time for the department of tourism in Sikkim to target its visitors in other educational segments too in order to have an adequate coverage of the tourist generating markets.

(ii) OCCUPATION

Table 3.14

TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION LEVEL

OCCUPATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
Service	50.00	40.00	46.91
Business	42.85	25.00	37.03
Student	03.57	32.00	12.34
Housewife	03.57	NA	02.46
Retired Person	NA	03.00	01.26
All	100	100	100

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

The dominant group amongst the tourists visiting Sikkim was Service Holders (46.91%) where Retired Person being the least (01.26 %) as disclosed in Table 3.14. It perhaps had not been able to attract retired and aged persons due to mountainous location and absence of adequate medical facilities in the state.

(iii) AGE

Table 3.15

TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO AGE

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
Up-to 25	12.50	32.00	18.51
26-40	60.71	44.00	55.56
41-60	26.79	20.00	24.69
Above 60	NA	04.00	01.24
All	100	100	100

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

The major player in this regard was in the age group of 26-40 in case of both domestic (60.71%) and foreign visitors (44.00%) respectively as been reflected in Table 3.15. The combined contribution was also coming out to be highest in the group of 26-40 standing at 55.56 %. It is evident from the survey that the age group of foreign tourist was comparatively lower than that of domestic visitors. The researcher further discovered that the majority of the tourists (combining both domestic and foreign) falling in the age group of 26-40 were attracted greatly because of scenic beauty of the state and wished to have a flavour of peace and pollution free environment away from the mechanical urban life. Few young couple considered it as an idle honeymoon place as well.

(iv) SEX

Table 3.16
TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO SEX

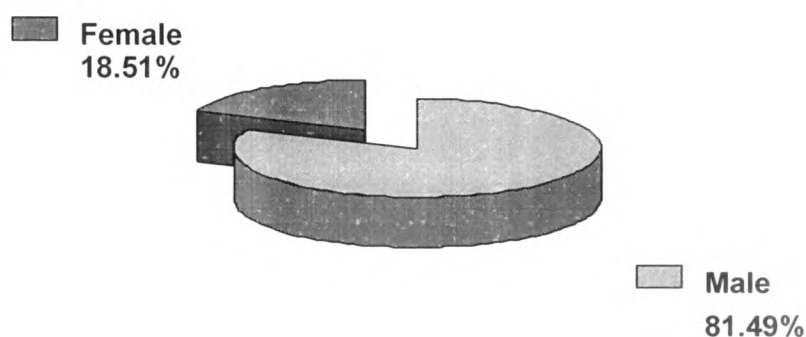
SEX	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
Male	87.50	68.00	81.49
Female	12.50	32.00	18.51
All	100	100	100

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

According to Figure 3.11, the percentage share of males was much higher than that of females both in case of domestic and foreign visitors. However, the contribution of foreign tourists (female) had been more than that of the female domestic visitors. (Table 3.16). The same gives us a hint that the state has not been able to attract visitors irrespective of the gender inequalities in spite of being a destination of peace and tranquillity. The concerned stake-holders should, therefore, keep this agenda in their respective policy proposal.

Figure 3.11
DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO SEX

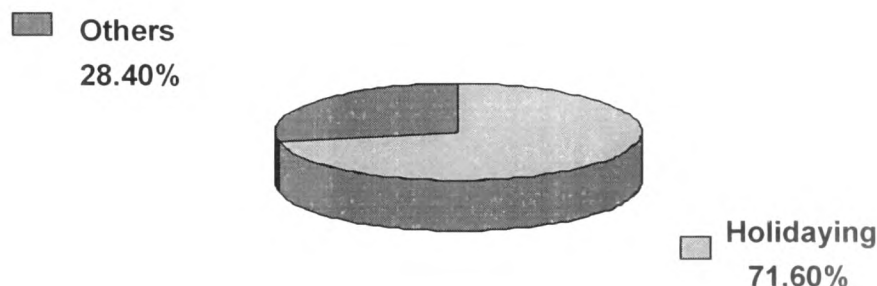
% Distribution of Tourists



► **PURPOSE OF VISIT**

Figure 3.12
DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST ACCORDING TO PURPOSE OF VISIT

% Distribution of Tourists



It is apparent from the Figure 3.12 that the most dominant reason with regard to visit into Sikkim was simply holidaying and sightseeing. The purpose of visit as holidaying had been same in respect of both national and international visitors (combined together) which stood at 71.60%. The other purpose of visit seems to be insignificant at 28.40%.

► **TRAVEL ARRANGMENT**

(i) **PACKAGE TOUR**

Table 3.17

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AVAILING PACKAGE TOUR			
RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
Availing Package Tour	8.93	8.00	8.64

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

It is observed in Table 3.17 that majority of the tourists had not availed of any package in order to holidaying in Sikkim. Out of total visitors, only 8.64% had taken a package tour. This perhaps, may be non-availability of specialized tourism package from the department side as been revealed by the visitors during the course of interactions with them. As such, it can be inferred that there is an urgent need for a well-defined tourism package from Sikkim Tourism. This should be in addition to the existing few packages offered by tour operators in the state.

(ii) TOUR DEAL

Table 3.18

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO TOUR ARRANGEMENT

TOUR ARRANGEMENT	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)		ALL (%)
	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	
Self	91.00	08.00	65.44
Travel Agents	09.00	92.00	34.56
All	100	100	100

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Table 3.18 depicts that with regard to both domestic and foreign tourists, only 34.56 % had arranged their trip through travel agents. Rest had made their own arrangement. It was reported to the researcher that most of the travel agents tried to mislead the travellers on various fronts due to which they had to make self arrangement. This was certainly on account of dearth of strict government control and accordingly, the visitors were deprived of adequate guidance and a tourist friendly environment.

(iii) NIGHT STAY

Table 3.19

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO NIGHT STAY

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)						
	1 NIGHT	2 NIGHTS	3 NIGHTS	4-5 NIGHTS	6-10 NIGHTS	ABOVE 10 NIGHTS	ALL
DOMESTIC	5.36	28.58	23.21	12.50	28.57	1.78	100
FOREIGN	0	0	0	33.00	14.00	53.00	100
ALL	3.71	19.75	16.04	19.51	23.48	17.51	100

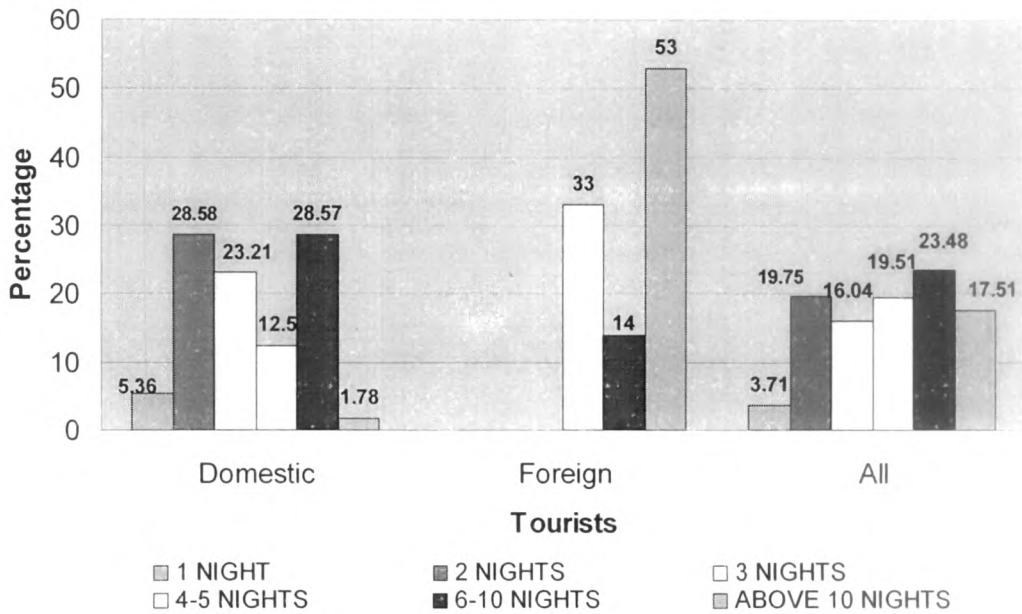
Source : Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

It is evident from Table 3.19 that in respect of domestic tourists, the maximum number of visitors accounting for 28.58 % stayed for 2 nights. But in case of international visitors, the scenario is somewhat different and accounted for 53 % by staying more than 10 nights in the state. As we are aware that foreigners usually want to experience a trip as less of a tour but more of an exploring. This perhaps could be one of the reasons which made the foreign visitors in Sikkim stay for a longer duration of time. But it can be understood that both domestic and foreign visitors combined together did not prefer to stay (on an average of) more than 10 nights and not even for a very short duration of 1 night in the state. All these are further visible in the Figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13

DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST INFLOW ACCORDING TO NIGHT STAY

% Distribution of Tourists



► EVALUATION OF FACILITIES

Table 3.20

VISITOR'S PERCEPTION ON EXISTING FACILITIES

FACILITIES	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (% OF ALL RESPONDENTS)			
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
Mode of Transportation to Sikkim	03.84	11.53	14.10	70.53
Local Transport within Sikkim	16.66	10.25	35.89	37.20
Road Condition & Connectivity	06.41	11.53	12.06	70.00
Air Link	01.28	02.56	35.89	60.27
Quality/Hygiene of Accommod.	03.84	56.42	39.74	-
Hotel availability in all tourist places	01.28	26.39	71.79	-
Quality/Hygiene of Food & Restaurant	10.25	64.10	25.65	-
Availability of variety of Dishes	07.69	07.69	12.82	71.80
Entertainment Facility	01.28	11.53	11.53	75.66
Shopping Arrangement	02.56	16.66	41.02	39.76
Hospitability of Local People	19.23	41.02	37.17	02.58
Sikkim as a Tourist Destination	53.84	39.74	06.42	-

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Table 3.20 portrays a clear picture where the respondents provided different ratings in terms of diverse parameters. It is visible that the most serious challenge for Sikkim Tourism lies on the improvement of transportation and connectivity along with arrangement of more entertainment facilities. They received a poor rating in respect of these parameters where above 70 % of the tourists (both domestic and international) were not in favour of providing a positive feedback. Availability of heterogeneous dishes also found a space in the said rating. As such, the matter seems to be extremely severe and a permanent solution to the same should be the name of the game in order to focus Sikkim as a dream destination where 53.84 % of the visitors offered an excellent rating.

► COST AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

Table 3.21

VISITOR'S PERCEPTION IN TERMS OF COST AND FINANCIAL PARAMETERS

COST INVOLVED (In Indian Currency)	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%) OF ALL RESPONDENTS			
	VERY HIGH	HIGH	REASONABLE	CHEAP
Transportation to Sikkim	02.56	06.41	91.03	-
Local Transportation within Sikkim	02.56	39.74	57.70	-
Accommodation Tariff Per Day	39.74	32.06	28.20	-
Cost of Food	37.17	06.41	56.42	-
Communication Expenses	01.28	47.43	51.29	-
Cost of Entertainment	01.28	03.84	94.88	-
Marketing and Shopping	44.88	39.74	15.38	-

Source : Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

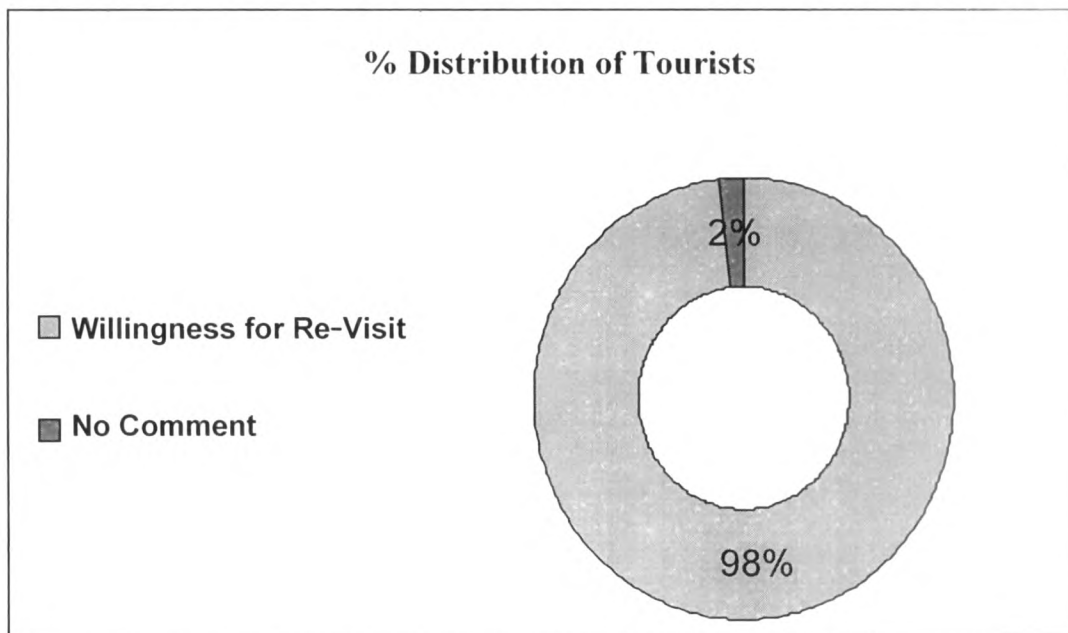
So far as cost and financial implication is concerned, we can infer from the Table 3.21 that Sikkim finds itself as an expensive state if measured in terms of Accommodation Tariff, Food and Shopping arrangement (Where above 37% visitors rated it on a very higher side).The researcher, during his time to time visit to other hill stations in India, finds a similar status where the said parameters usually lie on a high-priced end. However, if well regulated, it could be controlled to a considerable extent and the same, in long run, may contribute to the state exchequer in the form of enhanced turnover in totality.

► VISITOR'S WILLINGNESS TO RE-VISIT SIKKIM

The field observation of the present researcher helped him to conclude that almost 98 % of respondents had shown their willingness to visit Sikkim for a second time provided the existing tourism facilities are upgraded to a desired level. 2 % of the tourists did not comment anything on their re-visit. But none of the visitors expressed their unwillingness of re-visiting the state which is definitely a healthy indication. It is noticeable in the Figure 3.14 below.

Figure 3.14

DISTRIBUTION OF TOURIST ACCORDING TO WILLINGNESS FOR RE-VISIT



It's therefore, a need of the hour that Sikkim Tourism must entirely focus on augmenting tourism facilities to the best possible extent in order to attract a repetitive traffic in days to come.

3.3.2. FIELD OBSERVATION OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS

As a part of research investigation of the study, 25 accommodation units were surveyed during the period Jan-Dec, 2007 in different locations of the Sikkim state. Except in capital town Gangtok, there is acute shortage of standard accommodation in various parts of the state. Therefore, effort was made to represent standard hotels and lodges in diverse category in the form of Starred, Un starred, Guest House and Economy Lodges spread over the entire state of Sikkim. Presented below a tabular depiction of the same in different perspectives.

► CATEGORY OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS SURVEYED

Table 3.22
TYPE OF SURVEYED ACCOMMODATION UNITS (IN NUMBERS)

LOCATIONS	STARRED	UN-STARRED	GUEST HOUSE/OTHERS	LODGE	ALL
East Sikkim	5	7	1	3	16
West Sikkim	3	2	-	-	5
North Sikkim	-	1	1	-	2
South Sikkim	-	2	-	-	2
Total	8	12	2	3	25

Source : Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

At the state level, 25 standard accommodation units were visited out of which 8 were Starred units, 12 Un-starred, 2 were Guest Houses and rest fell in the category of Economy Lodges (3.22). With regard to the percentage distribution amongst surveyed units (Not displayed above), un-starred units formed 48 % and starred, guest house and lodge combined together accounted for 52 %.

► VARIATION IN TARIFF

Table 3.23
TARIFF VARIATION PER NIGHT- (STARRED CATEGORY)

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION	MAXIMUM TARIFF (Rs) (Inclusive of Taxes)	MINIMUM TARIFF (Rs) (Inclusive of Taxes)	% VARIATION (Between Max & Min Tariff)
Single Occupancy	7,350	1,595	360 %
Double Occupancy	7,375	1,660	344%
Suit	10,395	2,640	294%

Source : Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

For every category there is tremendous variation within the groups (Table 3.23). In other words, in starred accommodation unit, there are significant differences in tariff rates. The percentage variation is maximum for Single Occupancy (360%) and minimum for the Suit (294 %). Thus, it reflects that there is lack of uniformity in tariff rates within the same category of accommodation. When interacted with the authority, it was disclosed that there had been absence of adequate policy level intervention as far as tariff fixation of accommodation units is concerned. The scenario is same in respect of other category units too as been reflected in Table 3.24.

Table 3.24

TARIFF VARIATION PER NIGHT- (NON-STARRED & OTHER CATEGORY)

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION	MAXIMUM TARIFF (Rs) (Inclusive of Taxes)	MINIMUM TARIFF (Rs) (Inclusive of Taxes)	% VARIATION (Between Max & Min Tariff)
Single Occupancy	2,090	330	533 %
Double Occupancy	2,585	440	488%
Suit	4,070	2,200	85%

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Here also, the variation within the group is maximum for Single Occupancy (533 %) and Suit being the minimum at 85%. Hence, it gives us a clue that the tariff rates of accommodation units greatly vary according to location factor in the state backed up by its seasonal demands. The same sort of accommodation finds itself on a higher tariff zone in the capital town of Gangtok if compared with other non-urban areas of Sikkim. Nevertheless, it was reported to the researcher that the government is shortly framing out a uniform tariff fixation procedure for standardizing it in interest of the incremental tourism traffic into the state.

► FACILITIES AVAILABLE AMONGST ACCOMMODATION UNITS

Table 3.25

DISTRIBUTION OF ACCOMMODATION UNIT ACCORDING TO FACILITIES

FACILITIES	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%)	
	STARRED	NON-STARRED & OTHER CATEGORY
Banquet Hall	50.00	0
Conference Hall	50.00	29.41
Health Club	25.00	05.90
Massage Centre	25.00	0
Live Concert	100.00	52.90
Forex Service	12.50	0
Business Centre	25.00	11.70

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

It was found that 50 % of the surveyed Starred Category units had Conference and Banquet Hall, followed by 25 % accounting for Health Club, Business Centre and Message Centre, and Live Concert facility being at 100 %. Forex Service facility was reported to be insignificant at only 12.50 %. Again in respect of Non-starred and other category, 52.90 % was having Live Concerts and 29.41 % was in the possession of Conference Hall. Availability of other facilities amongst them was very minimal as been reflected in Table 3.25. During the course of interaction, the researcher discovered that most of the non-starred accommodation units were under lease agreements in the hands of outside parties on some pre-decided terms and conditions. For this reason, expansion of existing facilities and diversification of the same needed renewal of the existing contracts (on fresh terms and conditions) which the leaseholders hesitated to step in. Further, there was severe shortage of matching space required for expansion due to which the proposals remained in the domain of adhocism. On the other hand, in case of starred accommodation, addition of new amenities and expansion of the existing ones were under consideration and would become operational in due course of time as been reported to the researcher.

► OCCUPANCY RATIO

Table 3.26

AVERAGE OCCUPANCY RATIO OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS (2007)

STARRED	NON-STARRED & OTHER CATEGORY
50-80 %	40-70%

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

It is observed in Table 3.26 that the average occupancy ratio ranges between 50-80 % for starred accommodation units and 40-70 % for non-starred category. It was detailed to the researcher that the occupancy ratio was entirely dependent on seasonal variation and had been on a higher side during March, April, May and October being the peak season. The researcher, in this regard, feels that the hoteliers should insist on proving attractive schemes to the tourists in order to maintain a stable occupancy ratio throughout the year.

► EMPLOYMENT

Table 3.27

EMPLOYMENT IN ACCOMMODATION UNITS (2007) (IN NUMBERS)

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	STARRED	NON-STARRED & OTHER CATEGORY	ALL
Regular	41	85	126
Temporary	117	147	264
Total	158	232	390

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec, 2007

Table 3.27 shows more employment to be reported in non-starred accommodation units (232). This could be so that the number of starred units in the state were less than the non-starred units. For all the surveyed accommodation, the percentage contribution of regular employees in total employment was around 32 %. But the temporary category occupied a larger share (68%) in total employment which is evident in Figure 3.15.

Figure 3.15

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ACCOMMODATION UNITS

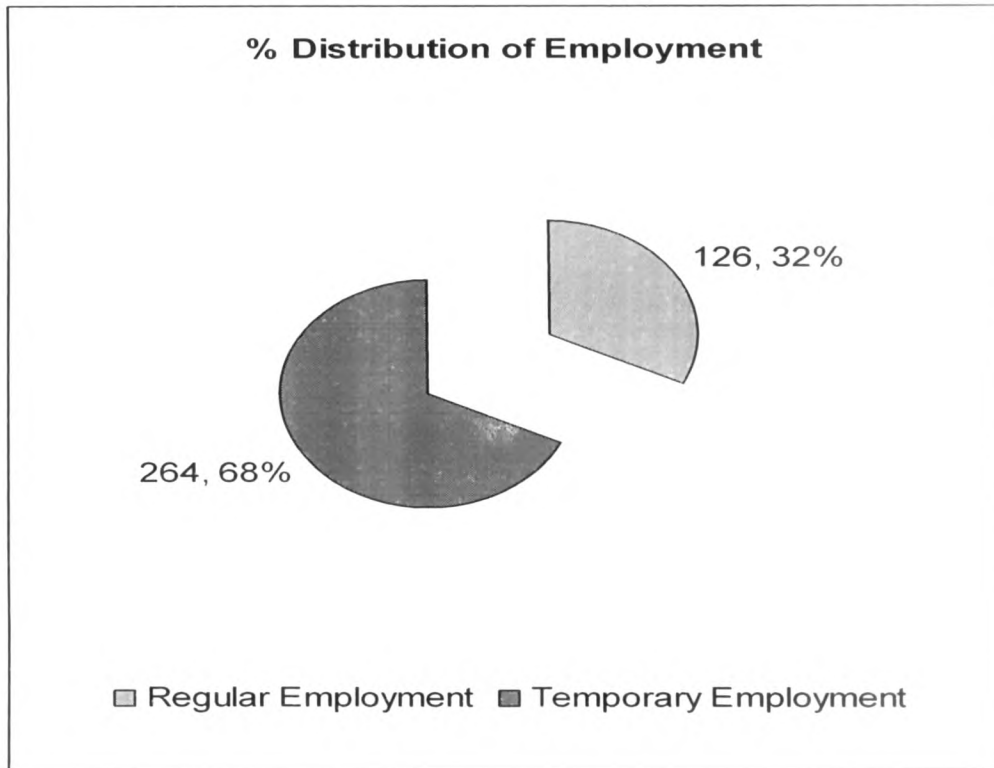


Figure 3.15 hints that the accommodation units in Sikkim may not be considered as a key contributory element as far as regular and direct employment in the state is concerned. Though the researcher concludes it at a micro level, it seems to be a representative of majority of the accommodation units available in the state.

3.3.3. FIELD OBSERVATION OF TOUR ORGANIZERS

The study will proceed now to analyze field observation of the present researcher on few travel agencies and tour organizers engaged in tourism services in Sikkim state. The result is based on a face-to-face interaction of 25 prominent units located mostly in the capital town of Gangtok.

► **TOURISM SERVICES OFFERED BY THE TOUR ORGANIZERS**

Table 3.28

DISTRIBUTION OF TOUR ORGANIZERS ACCORDING TO SERVICES OFFERED

TYPE OF SERVICES	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%) OF ALL RESPONDENTS		
	AVAILABLE	NOT AVAILABLE	MAY BE AVAILABLE
Entry Permit Arrangement	85 %	15%	-
Sight Seeing	95 %	5 %	-
Package Tour	100 %	-	-
Customized Tour	60 %	35 %	5 %
Forex Service	15 %	80 %	5 %
Visa/Passport Arrangement	25 %	70 %	5 %
Air Bookings	30 %	55 %	15 %
Mountain Flight Provision	15 %	75 %	10 %
Railway Ticketing	30 %	70 %	-
Hotel Booking	100 %	-	-
Surface Transport	85 %	15 %	-

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

Table 3.28 reflects the percentage-wise respondents having varied tourism services to cater to the needs of varied visitors. It is observed that 100 % of the respondents offered Package Tour and Hotel Booking Services and only 15 % of them were having Mountain Flight Provision and Forex Services. 5 % of the tour operators were planning to have few services in near future. Air Bookings and Mountain Flight Provisions were under consideration of 15 % and 10% respondents respectively. The researcher, as an active stake-holder in the process, tried to find out the reasons for absence of specialised services amongst few travel agencies in the state. It was found that some of the travel agencies were functioning without a valid licence from the government. They were seemed to be operating as sub-agents of other dominant tour organizers in the market. When tried to interact with the departmental officials, it was reported that the licence is usually given to those tour operators who fulfill pre-decided terms and conditions. Since few of the agencies were offering services at a small scale, they did not fall in the list of approved tour organizers. Moreover, they also used to serve as vital links between visitors and the major tour organizers in exchange for a pre-fixed commission for their involvement. Thus, it infers that the tour operators had been somewhat casual in approach in offering value added services to the tourists visiting the state.

► **TOURISM LINKAGES**

Table 3.29

DISTRIBUTION OF TOUR ORGANIZERS ACCORDING TO LINKAGE

DOMESTIC & FOREIGN LINKAGE	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%) OF ALL RESPONDENTS		
	SUFFICIENT LINK	SOME LINK	NO LINK
	40 %	30 %	30 %

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

It is apparent above (Table 3.29) that only 40 % of the tour operators had sufficient linkage with travel agencies in India and other foreign nations. 30 % of them did not maintain any kind of tie up with other agencies while another 30 % do have some sort of link with few travel organizers. This could be one of the reasons which makes Sikkim's share in total international arrivals in India stand at less than 1 %.

► **GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION**

Table 3.30

DISTRIBUTION OF TOUR ORGANIZERS WITH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION (%) OF ALL RESPONDENTS	
	SUPPORT FROM THE GOVT	NO SUPPORT FROM THE GOVT
	45 %	55 %

Source: Self Compilation through Field Survey during Jan-Dec,2007

During the course of interaction, it was revealed to the present researcher that there had been dearth of active government support towards the tour organizers in promoting tourism activities in the state. Only 45 % (Table 3.30) of the respondents had some sort of collaboration with government and rest fell in the category of independent operators. When the govt officials were contacted to find out the reasons, they disclosed that the 'Public-Private Partnership Scheme' was in priority list of the department which had already been getting implemented in different functional areas and as such, tour operators would soon get the benefits in various forms in due course of time.

3.3.4. PERCEPTION OF OFFICIALS AND OTHER STAKE-HOLDERS

A field interaction amongst the government officials and few other stake-holders was carried out by the present researcher to understand the inherent opportunities, challenges and constraints to promotion of tourism in the Himalayan state of Sikkim. The study, being strategic to the entire planning process, was aimed at highlighting vital areas and providing clear direction to the planning efforts. It was desired that the investigation be carried out by involving knowledgeable stake holders from the tourism industry to view tourism development in a holistic manner. Since major investment and project promotion efforts would primarily originate from these stakeholders, the selected respondents basically included government officials, NGOs, tourism planners and concerned personalities totaling 25 in numbers. The methodology adopted by the researcher for carrying out the study was through a self designed approach, called ETOP model (acronym for Environmental, Threats and Opportunities Profile). In this model various parameters, which affect tourism development, were first evolved based on the consultants' own experience and the researcher's discussion with various people and stake holders in tourism sector. The parameters were generated as part of a semi structured interview conducted during the period Jan-Dec, 2007 and were carefully worded so that they do not by themselves, hint at being a Strength or Weakness. The respondents had to give their opinion on a rating scale for each parameter, identifying it to be a Major / Minor Strength or Major / Minor Weakness. In addition to such identification, they had to express their opinion on a degree of relevance, the parameter had in relation to the study objective (they could assign each parameter as 'Very Important' and 'Not so Important'). In case the respondents felt that a particular parameter was neither a Strength nor a Weakness, that parameter would be assigned 'Nil' marks. Thus, as per the ETOP model, a parameter, that is rated as a 'Strength' or as a 'Weaknesses', can get a maximum score of +10 and -10 respectively. Indicated below an exhibition of perception of the stake-holders on individual parameters in Table 3.31.

Table-3.31

COMMENTS AND RATINGS ON INDIVIDUAL PARAMETERS

SL NO	PARAMETERS	RATINGS AND OPINION
1	Historical Importance of Sikkim	This parameter was rated as a 'Strength' by all the respondents with some qualifying it as a 'Major Strength' and others as a 'Minor Strength'. However, all the respondents were unanimous that the factor is 'Very Important' from perspective of the study. It got an overall rating of +7.4 which translates it into a key strength that must be taken into account while planning a strategy for tourism promotion.
2	Mix of Tourism Resources in Sikkim	The respondents had unanimous views on this parameter. All the respondents thought of it as a 'Major Strength'. Some respondents thought that though Sikkim had a good mix of tourism resources, they were not fully exploited/ promoted yet. The parameter got an aggregate score of +10, implying that it was a 'Significant Aspect'.
3	Cultural & Traditional Assets including existing festivals, events etc.	This factor has been rated as a 'Major Strength' by most of the respondents. It is a fact that there are many significant traditional festivals and events that could be exploited for promotion of tourism in the state. Most of the Sikkimese festivals / events were part of tradition during earlier days of Buddhism and still continue to observe. The parameter received an overall rating of +8 on the rating scale and is viewed as a 'Major Strength' which must be addressed.
4	Accessibility & Connectivity	This parameter has been rated as a 'Major Weakness' by most of the respondents except a few who considered it as a 'Minor Weakness'. Half the respondents were of the opinion that the factor was 'Very Important' for tourism development whereas others thought of it as 'not so important'. Overall, it received a rating of -9.52
5	Proximity to Nepal / Bhutan / China	This factor was rated as a 'Major / Minor Strength' by most of the respondents. A few respondents however rated it as a 'Minor Weakness'. This is because, Sikkim is a gateway to Nepal, Bhutan and China

		and also legal hurdles / restrictions / permit requirements hamper the free flow of goods and services including tourists both the ways.
6	Existing Accommodation Infrastructure	Most of the respondents were of the opinion that there are good 'value for money' accommodations available in Sikkim. The cost of accommodation is cheaper than comparable accommodation in other holiday destinations. Therefore, it is a 'Strength'. A couple of respondents have however rated this factor as a 'Minor Weakness' as they felt that quality of accommodation of up market leisure tourists was not available. Overall, this factor received a rating of +3.94 on the rating scale. Though the factor was perceived as a 'Strength', it was not considered significant to tourism growth and promotion in the state.
7	Seasonality / Climatic Factors	Most of the respondents believed that the state has either strong summer or winter seasons. The tourist arrival pattern shows some variation in traffic in certain months, these were primarily on account of climatic factors of Sikkim which is a 'Strength' and has been rated so by the respondents. The parameter received an overall score of +6 on the ETOP model. However, most of the respondents believed that this factor was 'Very Important' for the purpose of tourism promotion and growth.
8	Infrastructure in terms of Roads, Shopping facilities, Transportation & Civic Amenities	This factor received a mixed response from the respondents. It received an overall score of -8.75 and was perceived as a 'Major Weakness' and a significant deterrent to tourism development in the state.
9	Dominance of Monasteries & Cultural Centers of Historical Importance	The respondents were unanimous on this parameter. Overall, the factor received a score of +9, thereby implying it as a 'Major Strength'.
10	Existing Tourism Trail connecting Sikkim as a Buddhist Circuit / Asia Pacific State	Interestingly, this parameter was viewed as a felt need by majority of the respondents with many of them categorizing it as a 'Strong Point'. The general view of the

		respondents was that once tourism attractions got developed, Sikkim could best be sold as a 'Stand Alone Buddhist Center' in Asia Pacific Region.
11	Existing Tour Packages connecting Sikkim	Do
12	Perception as a Weekend/ Day Visit Destination	All the respondents agreed that this perception was a 'Weakness' with majority of them considered it to be a 'Major Weakness'. The factor received an overall score of -7.75 and needs to be effectively addressed in future tourism development ventures of the state.

Source: Self Compilation with relevant references and field interactions

Based on perception of the stakeholders as evident above, the critical factors (both Strength and Weakness) that should be addressed while designing tourism planning have been identified. All the factors which received an aggregate score of more than (+) 5 (on rating scale of 0-10) for 'Strength' and less than (-)5 (on rating scale 0-10) for 'Weakness', have been categorized as critical factors and need to be considered on priority basis in future tourism promotion endeavors of the state.

Thus, the hands-on field exposure of the present researcher puts before the tourism planners and executors a broad spectrum of issues (as highlighted in the foregoing parts) that have not yet been crystallized, or that, which might have been partially considered upon. It signifies that the whole matter needs to be re-addressed in long-term perspective in view of a changing tourism era. The study, at this concluding section of the chapter, now makes an attempt to perform a multidimensional assessment of the tourism scenario in eastern Himalayan paradise Sikkim in terms of a well accepted management terminology called 'SWOT Analysis'.

3.4. SIKKIM TOURISM– A MULTIDIMENSIONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

The overall SWOT analysis (acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of tourism sector in Sikkim was based on a detailed interaction with the visitors, concerned departmental officials, tour organizers, accommodation units and other private sector stake-holders in the state. Along with the interaction, field survey and field visits of selected tourist spots and destinations were also considered. Accordingly, the key 'Strengths', 'Weakness', 'Opportunities' and 'Threats' have been synthesized by the present study and recognized here in the below-mentioned order.

3.4.1. STRENGTHS

- (i) Sikkim as a 'Land of Peace & Tranquility' with the grandeur of her mountain peaks, terraced hills, verdant valleys, fast flowing rivers and lush tropical forest, brilliant with richness of vivid flowers, birds and butterflies, simple tilted villages and colorful monasteries, is a rare and unique experience for any kind of visitors
- (ii) Famous for Kanch-Endzonga, at 598 mtrs, which is the third highest mountain in the globe
- (iii) Rich cultural heritage where communities, cultures, religions and customs of different hues intermingle freely here to constitute a homogeneous blend
- (iv) The state can generate a variety of tourism activities like – Eco-Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, Rural Tourism, Pilgrim Tourism, Culture Tourism, and Festival Tourism to suit varied needs of varied visitors
- (v) A place of abundance beauty and adventure-whether passion is long treks or short walks in ever-changing landscape; white-water rafting or mountaineering amongst the world's highest peaks; photographing nature's diversity; or just hanging out and enjoying festivals
- (vi) Tourism has been recognized as a prominent feeding industry in the state

- (vii) The flora and fauna naturally covers a wide spectrum as no where else in the earth. In such a small area one can find 4000 varieties of flowering plants, orchids (some 600 varieties) and rhododendrons
- (viii) A rich Buddhist Culture / Ambience as a tourist attraction. The famous Rumtek Monastery, the Dharma Chakra Centre and the seat of His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa- all are located here
- (ix) Himalayan attraction of Tsomgo Lake and Nathu-La-Pas bordering China
- (x) Rich Historical Significance of the state
- (xi) Status of Biosphere Reserve
- (xii) Cool weather makes it an ideal location for get-away holidays for Indian nationals living in plains and cities
- (xiii) Sikkim has been a recipient of 'Best Tourism Performing State' award amongst all the Northeastern states for several consecutive years

3.4.2. WEAKNESS

- (i) Extremely poor connectivity and pathetic road conditions
- (ii) Expensive travel costs due to absence of adequate public / private transportation
- (iii) Entry restrictions for foreign nationals
- (iv) Limited awareness of tourism products in major tourism generating market
- (v) Distance from main stream – time and psychological distance
- (vi) Awful approach roads to majority of the tourist destinations
- (vii) Absence of Air Connectivity from rest parts of the globe except a Heli-Cab service
- (viii) Accommodation and transport facilities at few tourist places like Lachen, Lachung, Yumthang, Pemayangtse, Yuksam are inadequate resulting in regional imbalances
- (ix) Seasonal weather patterns dictate months available for tourism
- (x) Most expensive and unregulated accommodation compared to other parts of India and abroad
- (xi) Dearth of indoor activity oriented facilities

- (xii) Absence of sufficient resort type accommodations away from the crowded capital town Gangtok
- (xiii) Fast food restaurants do not emphasize on hygiene and food quality
- (xiv) Non-availability of dishes like Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Himachali to suit varied tastes of varied tourists
- (xv) General transportation from Gangtok to major tourist attractions is fully sub-standard
- (xvi) Fully congested parking facilities in terms of increasing number of vehicles in the state
- (xvii) Absence of entertainment facilities in the capital town Gangtok as per need
- (xviii) Want of rescue operation, escorts, interpreters and path finders in adventure tours
- (xix) Dearth of clean and hygienic public convenience facility at major tourist attractions
- (xx) Geo-physical disadvantage of the state causing landslides, road blockades at very frequent intervals
- (xxi) Absence of sufficient Public-Private Synergy
- (xxii) Limited capacity of existing institutional mechanism for implementing of plan, projects and schemes at a faster level
- (xxiii) Quality of publicity literature seems to be of average standard
- (xxiv) Absence of Interpretation Centers at Wildlife areas and Archeological sites
- (xxv) Absence of a full-fledged Airport till date (it is under construction at Pakeyong)
- (xxvi) Lack of professional management of tourist facilities and improper maintenance of existing infrastructure
- (xxvii) Dearth of a strong brand image.

3.4.3. OPPORTUNITIES

- (i) Sikkim could be a real gateway to China and other Asian nations in terms of reopening of the famed Silk-Route-Trade on 6th July, 2006
- (ii) Government of India has accorded special attention to Northeastern region for economic development. Thus, the time is ripe for speedy tourism development
- (iii) The state is a center of attraction in entire panorama of Buddhist Circuit Tourism amongst Bhutan, Nepal, Tibbet and Myanmar. This could undoubtedly be a most fascinating tourism hub and heritage site on the globe
- (iv) There is ample scope for positioning Sikkim Tourism as a unique brand in relation to ther parts of the country
- (v) The state has the wealth and resources to become a stand-alone destination in entire Northeast region of India
- (vi) Development and diversification of Eco Tourism products will attract new clientele
- (vii) The opening of a proposed airport at Pakyong will herald a quantum improvement in connectivity to other major Indian cities and international markets
- (viii) Private sector is ready to participate single handed and in Public-Private Participation too
- (ix) The Himalayan state of Sikkim has ample tourism opportunities beyond its borders if networking of the tourism related institutions in Sikkim, Tibbet, Nepal, Bhutan and China are initiated including starting of Gangtok-Lhasa Bus Service
- (x) There is certainly a giant possibility for marketing Sikkim Tourism across its bordering nation China in terms of the highly acclaimed 'Look East Policy' of the Govt. of India initiated in post globalization era.

3.4.4. THREATS

- (i) Image of an in-secured area as Sikkim falls in Northeast part of India
- (ii) Frequent bandh and strike due to political instability in adjoining states
- (iii) Political disturbances in neighboring Tibet and other states of Northeastern region could affect the tourism image
- (iv) Unrestrained growth in tourists can result in environmental degradation
- (v) Commoditization of tribal and folk performing art
- (vi) Demonstration effect of tourists on rural and tribal population
- (vii) Increase in biotic pressure due to increase in tourism
- (viii) Political threat from neighboring China of considering Sikkim as a part of their mainland
- (ix) Possibility of unauthorized and illegal flow of visitors into the state as a result of Indo-China Trade Agreement via Nathu-La-Pas in East Sikkim
- (x) Continued popularity of regional destinations (e.g. Nepal and Bhutan) can sideline Sikkim

Last but not the least; it's simply an earnest endeavourer of the present researcher to evaluate tourism industry in Sikkim Himalaya in an analytical perspective. This episode, thus, justifies the specific objectives (ii) as indicated in Chapter-1 of the study to be valid and the same eventually getting fulfilled.



REFERENCES

► BOOKS

Ghosh B.N., 2003, Scientific Method and Social Research, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi

Gupta S.P., 1994, Statistical Method, Sultan Chand and Sons, New Delhi

Khan Priyotosh, 2004, Statistics for Management, Economics and Computer, Everest Publishing House, Pune

Panneerselvam R.,2007, Research Methodology, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi

► JOURNALS

David J and Kevin, 2003, The Economic Impact of Tourism--A Critical Review, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, www.google.com

Karan Pradyumna P., June, 1989, Environment and Development in Sikkim Himalaya : A review, Human Ecology, Vol-17, Number 2 / June, Springer Publications, Netherlands, pp- 257-271

Maharana , Rai S.C. and Sharma E., 2000, Valuing Ecotourism In a Sacred Lake of the Sikkim Himalaya, Journal of G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Sikkim Unit, www.sikkimtourism.org

► REPORTS

Annual Report, 2000-2001, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2001-2002, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2002-2003, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2003-2004, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2004-2005, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2005-2006, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Annual Report, 2006-2007, Sikkim Tourism Publication, Gangtok

Final Report on 20 Years Perspective Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the State of Sikkim, Nov, 2002, Horizon Consultancy Services, New Delhi

Sikkim Tourism Vision-2022

► WEB SOURCE

Dong P.K., 2001, Develop. of Eco-Tourism in Sikkim-A Case Study, google.com

► WEB SITES

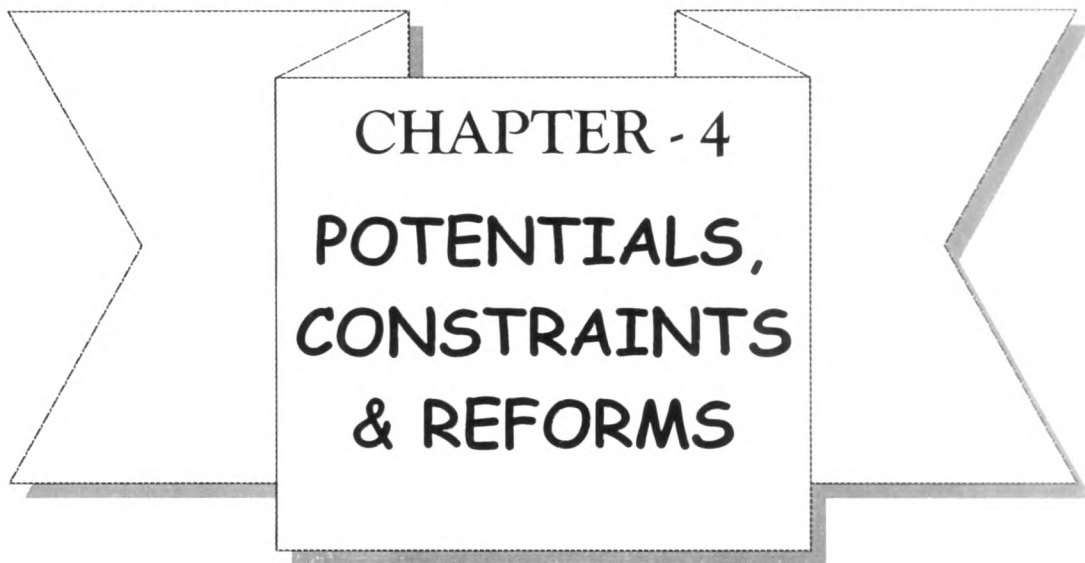
www.google.com

www.sikkim.gov.in

www.sikkimtourism.org



Water Garden in North Sikkim



CHAPTER - 4
POTENTIALS,
CONSTRAINTS
& REFORMS

"The traveler sees what he sees, the tourist see what he has come to see"

-Gilbert K. Chesterton

CHAPTER - 4

POTENTIALS, CONSTRAINTS AND REFORMS

This episode is fanatical to Cross Border Tourism Opportunities for Sikkim in terms of Economic Integration, Reconciliation Process of Silk Route Trade with Tourism, and Potentials of developing Unique Tourism Products and Services. In addition, it examines the existing Constraints and Impediments to growth of tourism in the state and puts forward probable reforms for improving the state of affairs.

4.1. SIKKIM TOURISM AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION - POTENTIALS BEYOND BORDERS



Nestled in the lap of Himalayas and bounded by some of the highest mountain peaks, amidst spectacular terrain, pristine lakes, luxuriant forests, roaring rivers and gentle streams, Sikkim is a veritable paradise flanked by Bhutan on the East, Nepal on the West and China (Tibbet) on the North. This land is criss-crossed by harmony, hospitality and tranquility with negligible crime rate and it is now open for international and cross-border linkage too with a free market rules which follow the proven philosophy of mass capitalization that dominates the international political scene over governing ideology. The 1990s was a period seeing rapid economic transition of Asian countries, especially South East Asia and Indian economy. After successful commencement of liberalization era, it was a strategic decision taken by the Union Government towards looking east in its foreign policy. Accordingly, the Indian leadership came up with an idea called 'Look East Policy' of India, an active economic proposal of engagement with South East Asian nations to be

implemented as an official initiative in achieving two objectives, namely, the encouragement of business links with individual partners and providing foreign employment for India's own expanding manpower [Fernandez(2007)]. The highly acclaimed 'Look-East Policy' mooted in 1992 was given an initial thrust with the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visiting China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore and India becoming an important dialogue partner with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) at the same time. Since beginning of the globalization, India has put a huge stress on this policy through active involvement in some regional initiatives namely the BBIMSTEC (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation) and the Ganga Mekong Cooperation and now becoming a Member of the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005. In fact, 1991 was a turning point in India's economic integration due to its new framed 'Look East Policy'. Coming to Northeastern region perspective, it is only with the formulation of this policy in last decade (1992), India had started giving this region due weight-age in its international strategy. Before 1990, India's main focus was on Soviet Union because of which ties with other major Asian powers like China, Japan were not well-built. India's inward-looking orientation disconnected it from neighborhood to the east, kept it apart from the economic growth of East Asia. By the turn of 1990s, India had totally marginalized itself. The first phase of 'Look East Policy' launched by the Narasimha Rao Government in early 90s focused on renewing contact with a region that India had drifted away from. Now it has entered into second phase of this policy which has a new dimension — the development of India's isolated Northeast in general and landlocked Himalayan state of Sikkim in particular with special emphasis on cross border trade. Experts believe that enhancing the level of economic partnership with Asian nations should form an important part of the strategy to increase Sikkim's stand in globalizing world. The neighboring Asian superior China has an abundance of natural resources and significant



technological skills. These provide a natural base for integration between China and Sikkim both in trade and commercial sense. The new breed of Indian migrants in China that include economists, software engineers, financial analysts, management professionals, technical consultants are likely to play a significant role in promoting Indo-Asian ties and more specifically Indo-China economic relations with primary focus on Sikkim state. Again, India's long standing recognition of English as official language breaks down the communication barriers, and in theory, accelerates business opportunities. This is the advantage that India's Look East Policy has over China and should be exploited in full to gain an edge. On the other hand, the reopening of famed Silk Route Trade via Nathu la in Sikkim to Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China on 6th July, 2006, is also likely to have a wider scope both in terms of trade and tourism services. This is because of relatively easier proximity and more developed physical and institutional infrastructures in and around the trading points. This reopening may provide a major boost to tourism industry in the tiny Himalayan state of Sikkim. In long run, its impact may reap a rich harvest in religious tourism too. The people who undertake a pilgrimage to holy Manas Sarovar in Tibet will now opt for Sikkim as the first destination. For not only does this route from Nathu la to Sarovar reduces the distance, it is a less expensive option as well. Moreover, the state is a center of attraction in entire panorama of Buddhist Circuit Tourism amongst Bhutan, Nepal, Tibbet and Myanmar. Thus, this could undoubtedly be a most fascinating trade and tourism hub and heritage site on the globe. As a result, a number of memorandum of undertakings and border trade agreement have recently been entered into between China and Sikkim. If the concerned governments, particularly that of India and China and local authorities of these countries are serious about their declared intentions, these new initiatives would indeed rediscover, renew and rejuvenate the age-old cultural and historical ties amongst the people of Sikkim and China. In turn, greater interaction would

unquestionably heighten tourism prospects in the state across its bordering areas [Bora, Adhikary and Sikdar(2006)]. But what is seen is not perceived. This seems to be the case with Sikkim. The new thrust in the foreign policy of 'Looking East' has been found wanting in pace of framing some sort of Tourism Agreements between the state



and the Chinese authorities. The importance of East Asia for Indian tourism industry, particularly Sikkim tourism at cross border level needs no emphasis after considering its growing potentials in terms of global tourism scenario. Of late, there is a tendency to ride on the wave of information technology in Sikkim's relations with the neighboring countries. The India-ASEAN partnership should energize this process to move it closer to the shared goal of promoting it over its geographic boundaries [Bora, Adhikary and Sikdar(2007)]. India and in particular Sikkim, has a wherewithal for this vision to materialize but what is needed is a concerted action at all levels. That's why, there is certainly a giant possibility for marketing Sikkim tourism across its bordering nation China where looking east provides an opportunity to overcome the problems of time and psychological distance. The new generations of travelers who are 'money rich and time poor' are increasingly looking for unique experiences. More and more people are looking at tourism as less of a journey and more of an experience – due to which cross-border tourism has been booming and future projections show that this trend will continue for an extended time. For these new and growing breed of visitors, the state of Sikkim with its variety and uniqueness holds immense attraction. Therefore, the strategy in this regard is now identifying new market for tourism and this search should be aligned with the look east trade policy. Such a policy shift is particularly relevant and important for the state of Sikkim. Because, it is situated far away from main entry points of visitors and is also somehow at a disadvantage in attracting foreign tourists from the west. Hence, looking to east is fortunately a natural marketing option for Sikkim tourism. China is already

vigorously developing tourism in its southern provinces to take advantage of outbound tourist market. These areas have cultural, historical and ethnic links with Sikkim in India. The tourism marketing strategy for the state should focus on these links to establish a natural flow of people within the area. The Nathu la Trade Study Group has by now recommended integration of trade with tourism between Sikkim and Tibet Autonomous region of China by 2012. The trade-tourism integration will call for signing of a separate treaty / protocol between India and China. The Government of Sikkim in concert with other northeastern states and West Bengal should put forward proposals for integrating tourism with trade to the Union Government at an appropriate level so as to achieve the goal by 2012. The state government should also initiate discussion with the Union Government on lifting restrictions on the entry of tourists from mainland China, Bangladesh and Myanmar into Sikkim. Networking of the tourism related institutions in Sikkim and other states of India and in Nepal, Bhutan and China may be initiated including starting of Gangtok-Lhasa Bus Service. It essentially requires a comprehensive road map that clearly defines roles for all the government agencies involved, as well as for private service providers, industry associations like Travel Agents Association of Sikkim (TAAS), Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association, and the representatives from eco-tourism projects, NGOs working with local communities and local communities themselves. Accordingly, if the tiny state of Sikkim is to live up to the promise of putting itself in Global Tourism Map, it must imagine a world where border-crossings are not thought of as a primarily issue and in that sense, it demands an adequate and better border management. For this, a fresh bilateral legal basis needs to be concluded to facilitate movement of tourists across the border. The research on the same has suggested that by 2018 onwards this tourism linkages should be extended to SAARC nations and thereby integrating tourism activities of third countries of the region including Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. This means opening of all SAARC visitors to cross the border through Nathu la in Sikkim and it seems to be a realistic visualization. Thus, the present researcher argues with firm belief that the much acclaimed 'Look East Policy' certainly has some hidden potentials in transforming India's Himalayan beauty-Sikkim into a 'Gateway to China' bonding through bilateral trade and tourism services.

4.1.1. SILK ROUTE TRADE AND TOURISM via NATHU LA

- TOWARDS BETTER RECONCILIATION

On July 6, 2006, Nathu La, a mountain pass connecting Tibet's Yadong County and Sikkim, was unusually busy, attracting much attention from the world media. On that day, Sino-Indian Silk Route Trade, halted for as long as 44 years, was formally re-opened. This re-opening of Nathu La mountain pass symbolizes a new beginning for both China and India in their



steadily improving relationship [Mohanty (2006)]. 'Nathu' meaning 'Sky High' and 'La' implying 'Pass' is located on the border between Yadong County in Tibet's Shigatse district and Indian Himalayan state of Sikkim. It is at a height of about 14500 ft and 460 kms from the Tibetan capital Lhasa and 2 hrs ride from the Sikkimese capital Gangtok. The same once served as a major land-route trade passage between China and India and was part of the ancient Silk Rout. Thus, Nathu La could be Sikkim's major tourism strength and has the potential of acquiring a status of the backbone of Sikkimese economy and society. Therefore, a conscious attempt may be made to gradually integrate trade through Nathu la with the movement of tourists across the border. Historically also trade was done alongside tourism, mainly pilgrimage. Presently, a significant exchange of tourists takes place between Nepal and Tibet through the land route of Kathmandu-Kodari highway. In this line, tourists are likely to make beeline to watch how trade actually takes place between India and China at the Nathu La trading point. One can expect the proposed Nathu La museum to be rather a prime attraction for the visitors in Sikkim. Equally a large number of tourists can visit from the Chinese end as well. The Tibet tourism is on a developing stage. It was only in post 1980 period that Tibet was opened up to foreigners. Globally known as "Roof of the World", Tibet lately has focused on 'Eco-tourism'. Annually there are over 6000 pilgrims who make their way from India to this region via the Nepal China border town of Khasa (Tatopani). Nathu La, also in this regard.

would be logistically more economic, and culturally a better port of entry [Adhikary and Bora (2006)]. The income effects on roadside hotels and restaurants, transport and communication, handicrafts and many other backward and forward linkages are likely to be immense. Besides, Sikkim could be a hub connecting all major Buddhist destinations in India and neighboring nations like Bodh Gaya in Bihar, Rumtek in Sikkim, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, Lumbini in Nepal and Taktsang in Bhutan to Jokhang and Potala in Lhasa. This is going to be further strengthened by the proposed air link between Bagdogra and Kathmandu. The other most attractive areas of interest for the people of Tibet Autonomous Region and nearby areas will be the health and educational facilities which are available in and around Sikkim. The entire Sikkim-Darjeeling belt has been famed for educational institutions and the quality of education they impart. The huge surge in demand for English speaking students and professionals in China could in fact trigger a beeline for educational institutions in Sikkim and surrounding places. Further, a modern museum that would house all the artifacts, archival materials, memoirs and other objects related to various missions, agreements, physical exchanges regarding Nathu La trade may be set up at Nathu La introspect. However, the present diplomatic arrangement does not allow the use of Nathu La route as a transit point to visit various parts of Tibet and mainland China. For this reason, as already mentioned above, it essentially demands a separate international protocol which needs to be in place at an earliest. Thus, it is apparent from the aforesaid paragraphs that the tourism sector in Sikkim has global potentials that is yet to be exploited. Moreover, in general, there are other prospects too as noticeable below along with the constraints and hurdles for speedy promotion of the state of affairs. The current study, now makes an attempt to find out the same based on the filed observation followed by an evocative investigation.

4.2. POTENTIAL TOURISM PRODUCTS

Small but beautiful, Sikkim, situated in eastern Himalayas, offers an ample scope to grow tourism as a promising industry with its diverse endowments of tourist interests. In addition to the cross border opportunities highlighted above, the state is having tremendous potentials as regards the following unique tourism products.

4.2.1. ECO TOURISM

Eco Tourism as tourism product is very innovative and a new phenomenon, developed around the idea of travelling to places of natural beauty, moving around and staying with nature for a couple of days. It has twin objectives of conserving the environment and improving welfare of the local people. Countries like Kenya, Costa Rica and South Africa have already successfully promoted eco-tourism. In India, Kerala presents a unique success story of eco-tourism in the country. On this line, the Himalayan province of Sikkim has immense scope for the same, as its natural scenario and climatic condition resemble other hilly places of major attractions in India. The concept of eco-tourism in Sikkim began way back in 1995-96 and became the first state to have started it in the country. The state is virtually free from industrial pollution and an excellent sitting for eco-tourism which has been gaining importance in present day times. Sikkim is gifted with a multitude of lakes, green forests, blue hills and rivers that are unexpected on such a rugged terrain and are imbued with divine significance and thus can be considered as major ingredients of eco-tourism. As such, it attracts attention of visitors and the scholars alike and consequently creating a greater demand for an eco-friendly environment. For that, a host of matters needs to be properly addressed, including : (i) development of good approach road to the tourist spots (ii) creation of well equipped infra-structural facilities like good quality tents with provisions for food and other logistics and (iii) river cruising, water sports and bird watching towers to name a few.

4.2.2. ADVENTURE TOURISM

Adventure Tourism is one of the key tourism products of Sikkim. About 80% of the foreign visitors come to the state with their prime motivation being to go for trekking and biking on the mountains and for water sports in Teesta and Rangit. Among domestic tourists too, the number of youths interested in adventure tourism has been increasing every year. Thus, one can wander up lush green mountain trails in the very footsteps of early travelers marvel at the Stupas, Monasteries and Temples. Acquainted with a culture that is at once bizarre and fascinating with its endless intriguing rituals and festivals, Sikkim offers a holiday which is more than a dream - a voyage of adventure and discovery in the following forms.

► MOUNTAINEERING

Sikkim Himalayas, the epitome of the world's mountains, encompass a wonderland, which for sheer beauty and magnificence remains unbeaten elsewhere in the globe. In southwestern part of Sikkim, in the main Himalayan range, lies the majestic Khangchendzonga, rising to a staggering height of 8,585 m (28,169 ft) above sea level. Beside this third largest peak, other famous mountaineering peaks in the state include- Kabru, Kirat Chulior Tent Peak (7,365 m) and Sinolchu (6,887 m). Mountaineering expeditions, unlike trekking, require more planning and paperwork as clearance is needed from the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi. The best season to climb in Sikkim is May to October. Foreign expeditions have to book a peak along with a peak fee.

► MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain Biking is another adventure that has been recently introduced in Sikkim. Most of the roads in Sikkim are negotiable by mountain bikes. This sport is definitely poised to become popular in Sikkim in the near future and is being promoted in most parts of North Sikkim & West Sikkim. The popular routes for Bikers starting from Gangtok are Phodong - Rangrang - Dikchu - Makha - Singtam and Lingdum - Rumtek - Martam - Sang - Makha - Singtam - Singchuthang - Temi Tea Garden - Ravangla - Dentam – Sombarey.

► RIVER RAFTING

Getting ready to trip! The Teesta and Rangeet rivers sparkle and beckon. Some white water rafting action with every bend of the river revealing new panoramas—gorges with vegetation covered vertical wall soaring from the swift waters, luxuriant waterfalls and tranquil lakes. White water rafting is a later entrant of adventure sport in Sikkim. Only the Teesta and Rangit rivers offer long stretches which are ideal for safe rafting. Teesta has been graded on the International Scale at Grade 4. The icy cold waters of the rugged Teesta have a series of rapids with varying intensity and character. It offers one of the finest rafting stretches in the world. Rangit, a tributary of the Teesta, has more turbulent waters and offers a challenge to more experienced rafters. On both the rivers, the riverbanks have deep forests, with some patches of terraced cultivation and small villages. Plenty of white sandy beaches exist, offering good campsites. Rapids of classification 2 to 4 are interspersed with placid floats, making rafting an enjoyable experience. Facilities for overnight river beach camping is available. Beginners as well as experienced adventurers can seek assistance from department of tourism and travel agents for arranging river rafting trips.

► YAK SAFARI

Yak Safari is an unforgettable and unique experience organized in different areas of the state. Popular trails are Dzongri area and Tsomgo lake. One will get to ride the yak in Tsomgo lake and in various trekking points like Dzongri in West Sikkim.

► ANGLING

Angling is also a wonderful adventure which can be experienced over Teesta and Rangeet river.

► PARA GLIDING

Para Gliding can be a good choice for those who like to have the joy of flying over the sky.

► MOUNTAIN MARATHON

Mountain Marathon is an extended form of fell running, usually over two days and often with a strong orienteering element. Competitors usually participate in teams of two and have to carry their own food and tent. There are various classes of events like Karrimor IMM - Elite, A, B, C, Long Score and Short Score depending upon the choice. "The Himalayan 100 Mile Stage Race is the most spectacular running course in the world!" said a past winner. During the Race, views of Mt. Everest and Kanchenjunga (4 out of 5 of the world's highest peaks) are visible. Regardless of the level of ability - whether a 10 Km marathon, or ultra marathon runner – one can run at his own pace. There are no age limits or stage cutoff times. Five daily stages of 24 - 20 - 26 - 13 - 17 miles are designed for middle distance runners. Alternating running and walking, one can easily take in mountain views of Sikkim Himalayas , catch a glimpse of national park and wildlife and chat with villagers at fully stocked aid stations every few miles. The trip sets a comfortable pace allowing acclimatization days to relax at eco camp, visit monasteries, tea gardens and enjoy spectacular views of Kanchenjunga. Rural roads allow runners to enjoy Himalayan culture and scenery. Following mountain trails, one have time to stop in hill villages and monasteries along the way, yet have dinners and overnight with the villagers. Walkers have plenty of time to enjoy the cultural diversity of Hindu and Buddhist religions, colonial charm of Sikkim state and scenery during the running events. All abilities and ages supported. As such, more and more routes should be identified in the state to make it more fulfilling.

► TREKKING

Trekking is one of the most significant adventurous tourism products in the state of Sikkim which can fill in the expectation of any kind of visitors into the state. It is a mild adventure and thus people of all kinds and all age groups can participate in it. The existing routes available are Monastic Trek : (March-May/October-December)-Pemayangtse-Sangacholing-Khecheopalri-Dubdi-Sinon-Tashiding-Ralang, Rhododendron Trek : (March-May)-Naya Bazaar-Hilley/Soreng- Varsey-

Dentam-Pemayangtse, Khang-Chen-Dzonga Trek : (Mid March-Mid June/October-December)-Yuksom-Bakhim-Tshoka-Dzongri-Thangsing/Bikbari-Zemathang/Chaurigang-Goechala/Rathong glacier and back, Singalila Trek : (Mid March and October)-Uttarey-Chewabhanjang-Dhor-Sikkim megu-Dafey bhir-Gomanthan/Boktok pandga-Theshyapla-Bikbari-Dzongri-Tsoka-Yuksom, Samartek Trek : (Mid March-Mid June/October-December)-Kodong-Dokshing-TsenKhong-Lenchok-Samartek-Pakchong-Kungo-Kuling Nae (Cave) Gungramgampo- Singhik Dak Bungalow, Kosturi Orar Trek : (Mid March-Mid June/October-December)-Yuksom-Dzongri-Thangsing-Kostori Orar-Labdang-Sinon-Tashiding, Phambongla Short Trek : (April-June/October-December)-Gangtok-Tashi View Point-Pangthang-Tinjurey, and Central Pendam Gari Trek : (Mid March-Mid June/October-December)-Pakyong-Zandidara-Central Pendam. The probable areas which can be developed as trekking routes are : Rinchenpong/Soreng Trek : (April-June/October-December)-Kaluk-Rinchenpong Dak Bungalow- Rigsum Gumpa- Kaluk-Sribadam- Zhandi Dara-Soreng, Coronation Trek : (October-December)-Rumtek-Sang-Yangang-Ravangla-Tashiding-Yuksom, Khedi Trek : (October-December)-Assam Lingzey-Pa-Shing Teng Kha 1425m (Base Camp)-Chaukri Kharka-Do Bato-Khedi (7710m)-Sela Pass (3150m)- Do Basto-Tal Kharka-Nubang-Passang Teng Kha and Himalaya Trek : (April-June/October-December)-Namchi(Basecamp)-Tendong-Damthang-Ravangla-Maenam-Bhaley-Dhunga-Yangang- Sinchuthang- Bermoik- Parbing-Namchi to name a few.

4.2.3. WILD LIFE TOURISM

The dense forests, uneven topography, flora and fauna, the majestic Kanchenjunga, and national parks having many rare species of animals, have made Sikkim a nature-centric destination. An attractive feature of Sikkim's forestry is its colourful wildlife. The diversity in plant world is complemented by a similar variety in the animal kingdom. As if this wasn't enough 600 species of butterflies and 600 species of birds adorn the forest with colour and song. Among the more commonly found animals in alpine zone are yaks. They are

domesticated and reared in North Sikkim mainly for their economic productiveness. The musk deer, found in upper temperate region, is today a species in the endangered list. A common denizen of Sikkim is the muntjac, or the barking deer. It is so called because of the barking noise it makes when alarmed. Among more exotic mammals is the Red Panda which lives mostly on treetops. It is found at altitudes ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 feet. The snow leopard is an almost mythical animal. It has rarely been sighted and to date, only two field zoologists have succeeded in photographing this elusive animal in its habitat which can vary from 5,000 feet to as high as 18,000 feet. Most of this beautiful and virgin area comes under the Kanchenjunga National Park. Sikkim also has large cardamom, orange and tea plantations. The rivers of Sikkim have trout, salmon and carp. Fishing is allowed with a valid permit.

4.2.4. PILGRIM TOURISM

Sikkim's near about 200 monasteries or Gompas namely Pemayangtse Monastery, Rumtek Monastery, Enchey Monastery, Phensang Monastery, Tashiding Monastery, Ralong Monastery, Namchi Monastery etc belonging to Nyingma and Kagyu order have not only been influencing the cultural heritage and lifestyle of the people, but also demonstrates the ancient rituals in practice. Devoted Lamas robed in red, chant ancient mantras to the rhythm of drums and trumpets while soft lights flicker from decorative lamps placed before statues of the great Guru Padmasambhava. Feel the peace and quiet of being one with nature and close to the almighty as sacred words mingle with whirring prayer wheels. The Gompas are adorned with life-like frescoes of hoary Buddhist legends, rare silk and brocade Thangkas. Also preserved here, are ancient Tibetan manuscripts, exquisitely carved wood work and icons of silver and gold. Pilgrims come for pilgrimage from different places of India as well as from abroad. But most of these places do not provide adequate infrastructural arrangement, for which they fail to attract a large number of visitors.

4.2.5. CULTURAL TOURISM

Sikkim is a conglomeration of different ethnic groups like Bhutias, Nepalis, Lepchas each having a distinct language, culture, way-of-life, festivals, songs and dances. Most of these people have their spring festivals. The songs and dances, display of colourful dresses, tasting of innumerable varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes mark these festivals. The state's famous mask dances provide a spectacle, perhaps nowhere to be experienced in the entire world. Performed by lamas in the Gompa courtyard to celebrate religious festivals, these dances demonstrate perfect foot work and grace. Costumed lamas with gaily painted masks, ceremonial swords and sparkling jewels, leap and swing to the rhythm of resounding drums, trumpeting of horns and chanting of monks. The festivals like Saga Dawa, Phang, Lhabsol, Kagyat, Dasain organized at different intervals symbolize a victory of good over evil and represents communities, cultures, religions and customs of different hues intermingle freely in the state. Thus, all these could be a big tourism attraction in Sikkim.

4.2.6. CONVENTION TOURISM

With an airport in Bagdogra in neighbouring North Bengal having air connectivity with almost all the important places of India, the state has the potential to develop Conference and Convention Tourism. Conferences and conventions bring in bulk tourism which results into economic benefits and wide publicity. This is also an upmarket tourism, because conferences are attended by delegates from corporate houses, govt. bureaucrats, political representatives who prefer high quality and first class amenities in an eco-friendly environment. Hence, the convention centres should have all basic facilities, modern equipments as well as ancillary services for the concerned delegates.

4.2.7. GARDEN TOURISM

Truly a naturalist's delight. The hillsides and mountain slopes of Sikkim are strewn with bright patches of myriad colours. The lower mountain slopes are abundant with lush green bamboos and ferns. And the northern valleys are draped with wild cherry, oaks, chestnuts, pines and white magnolia. The higher altitudes are ablaze with a carpet of rhododendrons by way of a splendor of their own. Sikkim's 600 varieties of orchids are a feast for the eye. The International Flower Festival is celebrated during March-May, when most of the state's 600 species of orchids, 240 species of trees, 240 species of ferns, 150 kinds of gladioli, 46 varieties of world famous rhododendrons, equally varied species of magnolias and many other foliage plants are in full bloom. Major categories are orchids, gladioli, annuals, roses, alpine plants, pot plants, cacti, succulents, creepers, climbers, ferns, herbs and even wild flowers. Lectures and seminars are organized by the experts in each field in order to attract a huge tourism traffic.

4.2.8. VILLAGE TOURISM

Sikkim is an ideal Village Tourism destination. Tourists can breathe fresh air, relish local food, and get exposed to rich culture of ethnic communities in green locals. Boarding and lodging are available in all four districts of the state. Community efforts are being supplemented and improved upon with the help of NGO's. To promote 'Village Tourism', 30 model villages having all basic modern facilities are being constructed in different parts of the state. All these will enable tourists to get a first-hand experience of the rural life of the people of Sikkim.

4.2.9. HIMALAYAN TOURISM

The Himalaya is at present one of the main tourist attractions in South Asia. A regional analysis reveals considerable difference in intensity, forms and traditions of tourism as well as in origin and activities of the visitors. While in Sikkim tourism is a recent phenomenon, it has long historical roots in entire Himalaya. The state, covering an area of 7096 km with a population of 5,40,493 is recognized as

biodiversity 'Hot Spot' of global significance. The Sikkim Himalaya is an area of high biodiversity and cultural heterogeneity with distinctive ethnic groups, mountain peaks, flora and fauna, snow hills, handlooms and handicrafts, ecological scenic beauty, sacred lakes and Buddhist monasteries making it an attractive destination for any kind of visitors. Sacred lakes attract visitors and pilgrims from all over the world for their aesthetic, cultural and spiritual importance. The aesthetic and ecological benefits of lake ecosystems have been recognized for over a century, yet rarely quantified. Recreational and economic values of some sites have been estimated in both developed and developing countries in past few years. A detailed research work has been done by the Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project under the supervision of G.B.Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Sikkim Unit, in areas which are considered to be significant for promoting Himalayan tourism in the region.

4.2.10. ETHNO BOTANICAL TOURISM

Sikkim is a land predominantly alpine in character offering almost all possible mountain panorama. The altitude here ranges from 300 to 8580 mts. That Sikkim is very well endowed with rich biological heritage can be established in present context from the existence of 4,500 flowering plants, 450 odd orchids, 36 species of Rhododendrons, 158 species of reptiles and 19 species of amphibians as well. Thus, it can be opined that the possibilities to promote ethno botanical tourism in the state are immense.

4.3. CONSTRAINTS AND BARRIERS

It is needless to say with its dense green forests - home to thousands of species of exotic plants, shrubs and flowers - mighty rivers, pretty streams and deep valleys, all under the benign gaze of the majestic Himalayas, Sikkim is a unique tourist's destination. It is not just nature at its most breathtaking grandeur that one hopes to find there, but also a rare combination of different cultures and traditions, historical and religious centers long grown in isolation and still untouched. Statistics in Chapter 3 indicates a rising trend in the flow of tourists to the state over last couple of years. As far as revenue collection too is concerned, the tendency is somewhat upward for the same period. The state has been begging best performing state in the entire Northeastern region of India in terms of tourism promotion and its development. But even then, it does not present a happy picture if compared with the stiff examples shown by other destinations in rest part of India. The reasons are manifold and are highlighted below one by one.

4.3.1. POOR CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity has been a stumbling block in bringing tourists to Sikkim. The state is completely dependent on the road transportation system for movement of tourists from one destination to another within or outside the state. Other means of connectivity like airways, railways and waterways do not have any significance in the state. Hence, the road network is the sole medium of transportation whose importance does not need further emphasis. But the state of Sikkim is still in dearth of an adequate road linkage till date. The national highway 31A, the most significant inter-connecting road between West Bengal and Sikkim, is not well developed. Similarly, accessibility to some other central tourist spots of the state is in quite awful condition and time consuming due to which visitors have to drop some of the most beautiful spots from their itineraries. Presently, Sikkim lacks an airport of its own and relies on the nearest airport Bagdogra in West Bengal, which is three and half hours' drive from Gangtok, as the exclusive airways of

flow of foreign visitors. A helicopter service also operates between Gangtok and Bagdogra, which takes around 20 minutes. But it is also subject to good weather conditions. As such, the poor connectivity is playing as a significant barrier to the desired growth of tourism in the state.

4.3.2. PROBLEMS OF ENTRY RESTRICTION

Sikkim is saleable as a tourist destination as any other place on the earth. But it is a sensitive border state. Security concerns make it imperative to put in place special protection. Hence the obstructions to flow of visitors specially foreign tourists are many, like problems of Inner Line Permit (ILP), Protected Area Permit (PAP) etc. All these are posing a big threat to the flow of international tourists into the state. Under ILP requirement, a foreigner intending to visit Sikkim has to undergo a long queue for obtaining permission from all Indian Missions, Sikkim Tourism Offices in New Delhi, Kolkata and Siliguri on the strength of an Indian Visa. Long queue is also visible in main entry point at the Sikkim-West Bengal border town of Rangpo. In the mean time, initiative has been taken by the state government to ease the Inner Line Permit (ILP) issued to a foreign tourist. ILP was initially issued for 15 days, can now be extended for a total period of 45 days. A single window clearance system has been adopted for the easy flow of tourism traffic to prime destinations like Tsomgo and Nathu La in East Sikkim. But even then, the ghost of entry permits still continues and efforts to disabuse the false apprehension in the minds of foreign visitors are minimal.

4.3.3. DEARTH OF ADEQUATE AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The most important challenge comes from the infrastructure sector. To attract tourists, there must be dissemination of information, infrastructural facilities, adequate railway network, affordable and reliable communication, clean and hygienic food and accommodation, availability of adequate power and lightings and the like. As mentioned in Chapter 2, majority of the places of tourist attractions are not by side of the national highways and approach roads are in quite unpleasant condition. Frequent power failure, fluctuations etc. lead to

irritation to the visitors. The existing power stations are not in a position to generate adequate power due to fund crunch and carried out repairs and renovations. Moreover, hygienic and cost-effective accommodation also seems to be lacking in many parts of the state. There is still no strict regulation/control over hotel tariff rates from the government side. This is a strong discouraging factor which works against a good inflow of visitors into the state. Though Sikkim is consciously emphasizing on non-mass tourism so as not to exceed the carrying capacity of various amenities in the state, it is unfeasible to restrict the flow of tourists to a limited number. The only alternative available is to enhance the level of infrastructure facilities and drastically improve upon the quality of existing amenities. This is where the state is lacking much behind to reach to a targeted level.

4.3.4. VISA FORMALITIES

Coming into the international perspective, the visa formalities need to be rationalized urgently. Stringent requirements and cumbersome procedure put off many international visitors from visiting India. One of our major policies restrictive to growth of tourism is 'reciprocity' where India provides visa to those nations who grant to Indians. But countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong, Thailand, Maldives and Taiwan have Visa-on-Arrival policy without reciprocity as a condition. Accordingly, the flow of tourist from some specific foreign nations to India is restricted to a great extent and consequently visit to the tiny Himalayan state of Sikkim is getting hampered.

4.3.5. LACK OF COORDINATED EFFORTS

As far as government initiative is concerned, it can be opined with firm belief that the approach is somewhat 'disjointed'. Effective linkages are not established amongst various government departments or with local bodies. There is a palpable lack of coordination between several agencies like department of tourism and department of archaeology in handling demands of tourists in places of both historic and religious importance. As a result, partial fulfilment of target has been a striking mark of the status of tourism in the state.

4.3.6. POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN SURROUNDING AREAS

Sikkim and for that matter most part of eastern region of India has been experiencing violent movements since beginning of the year 1984. There has been an ongoing demand for a separate state-hood for neighbouring Darjeeling district in West Bengal for past twenty years or so after formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in 1989. A memorandum of understanding was signed amongst the central government, state government and the regional party to hand over all functional areas to the council except law and order, higher education and revenue department which are in direct control of the state government till date. But the demand for a separate state ship as Darjeeling Gorkha Land still continues and paralyses the political stability in the area. Since Sikkim lies on eastern tip of Himalayas bordered by West Bengal, it has been encountering lot of complexities from its neighboring Darjeeling on the aforesaid political grounds. Repeated strikes and bandhs called on fulfillment of pre-conceived demands in the town are greatly hampering the flow of tourists into Sikkim as most of the entry and exit points in the state share with Darjeeling district in West Bengal. As a result, the situation plays as a direct barrier in smooth flow of visitors into the Himalayan state. The tourists consider it risky to visit this part of the country in view of the prevailing law and order situation. The general impression has been that any foreign or domestic visitor could be a soft target and thus, they are reluctant to undertake an adventurous journey with a calculated risk in hand.

4.3.7. LOCATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Sikkim is a remote and land-lock mountainous state. It is someway at locational disadvantage in attracting visitors from rest of the country and even from abroad. The nearest airport and railhead are at 120 kms away from the capital town Gangtok which is about a 4 (four) hours drive. In addition, to distance, the road is entirely dependent on the weather condition. During monsoon season it often gets disrupted due to frequent landslides and adverse climatic condition. There are instances of the state being cut off from other parts of the country for several

months. The urban towns are highly congested and adequate spaces are not available for creation of basic amenities. The situation seems to be very pathetic and greatly hampers the flow of tourists into the state. Further, some of beautiful tourist spots are still in remote location and accessibility thereof is quite limited.

4.3.8 LACK OF EFFORT FOR ORGANIZING CROSS BORDER TOURISM

As civilizations progress and with rationalization in economic regulations of the government through initiation of LPG policy in 1991, Indian economy welcomes to widening the area of operation from all fronts. But, Northeastern region seems to be an exception to this. Referring to the state of Sikkim, as already mentioned in beginning of this chapter that the state has tremendous potentials to organize cross-border tourism with the eastern neighbour China. The re-opening of Nathu La trade-rout can provide a big boost to this. The state shares international boundaries with China, Bhutan and Nepal paving a way to market it across the borders. But unfortunately, there is no any direct road connectivity between Sikkim and Bhutan and Nepal as well and also the effort to organize cross-border tourism along Nathu La border remains in the domain of adhocism till date.

4.3.9. SHORTAGE OF TRAINED MANPOWER

It has been increasingly realized that the training facilities for development of manpower, especially for improvement of managerial skills, needs to be given more emphasis in tourism development programme of a state. With this avowed objective in mind, the state government of Sikkim has accorded top most priority on developing skilled manpower with adequate policy and financial support in the form of annual grant. Besides these, training courses and capacity building programmes for Guides, Taxi-Drivers and Travel Agents are also organized time to time. But the effort did not yield a remarkable result for the purpose. During interaction with the concerned respondents, it is found that there is acute shortage of trained manpower related to tourism sector and adequate exposure of the local people to tourism business is extremely limited. As such, it can certainly be considered as a serious hurdle for speedy upliftment of the prospect in the state.

4.3.10. OTHER CONSTRAINTS

Absence of cost effective transportation system, delay in implementation of tourism projects proposed at different stages, problems of fund crunch, dearth of ample publicity at national and international level, absence of skilled tourist guides, psychological distance towards the region, the existing bracket of taxation, untimely release of the central assistance, lack of rescue operation for the adventurous sports and more specifically Sikkim's low visibility on 'Domestic Tourism Map' if compared with other states of India are some of the major impediments for a targeted promotion of tourism sector in the region.

Thus, we have seen above in different perspectives what ails tourism in Sikkim. The study will, at this instant, proceed to point out few probable reforms for improvement of the prospect in the state.

4.4. REFORMS

Tourism industry is a complex and multi-disciplinary phenomenon. As a logical component of development, it requires a multi-dimensional approach, careful planning, strict guidelines and regulations that will guarantee sustainable operation. Governments, private enterprises, local communities and non-governmental organizations, all have a crucial role to play in improving the state of affairs. As such, in terms of tourism industry in Sikkim, first we will try to examine what has already been done for upliftment of the prospect before venturing into probable reforms.

4.4.1. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

Tourism is one sector which has been unanimously identified by all concerned - economists, development planners, social scientists, environmentalists, politicians, government and the people - as one of the most significant, suitable and viable industries in Sikkim - with tremendous potential for growth. Prior to become a part of India, this tiny Himalayan state, practically perched on the lap of Mount Kanchenjunga, was a protectorate under the Government of India and ruled by the Chogyal dynasty. Under the Pawan Chamling Government, the

tourism sector in Sikkim has enjoyed an unprecedented boom with various initiatives and opening up of new destinations that were earlier unexposed to outside world.

► As such, the first initiative taken by the state government is to ease the Inner Line Permit (ILP) issued to foreign tourists. The ILP, initially issued for 15 days, can be extended for a total period of 45 days. The ILP is now readily available. A single window clearance system has been adopted for the easy flow of visitors to prime destinations like Tsomgo and Nathu La in East Sikkim.

► Stress is being laid on creation of more basic infrastructure for the visitors. Apart from the existing tourist lodges, one more is under construction in Chungthang, North Sikkim, which is a transit point for tourists visiting Yumthang, the Valley of Flowers. A lodge is being built in Tashiding village for visitors to the famous monastery there. The department has refurbished many of the heritage Dak Bungalows for accommodating tourists. Dak bungalows and rest houses have been upgraded and wayside amenities were being set up in all four districts of the state. With regard to improving the transportation system, emphasis is given on widening the Siliguri-Gangtok-Nathu La Road (National Highway 31A) and opening an alternative parallel route and connecting it to the Golden Quadrilateral with Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai

► Recreational parks have also been set up in various parts of the state. During different financial years, the government prioritized different projects under Centrally Sponsored Schemes, incorporating the proposals as been mentioned in Chapter 3.

► The Tsomgo lake in East Sikkim, situated at an altitude of 12,400 feet (3,720 metres), is on the route to Nathu La. The lake gets its waters from melting snow of the surrounding mountains. Legend goes that *lamas* could forecast the future by studying colour of the lake's water. This is a very popular tourist destination, and for that reason the tourism department has constructed a massive parking area and undertaken an ambitious project of beautifying the place, complete with a cafeteria and other facilities.

► To involve the local people, the Tsomgo Lake Development Committee has been constituted for upkeep and maintenance of the place. Sikkim tourism takes views, opinions and feelings of all stakeholders including tourists into account while planning development of tourism in the state. For this, a close contact is being maintained with NGOs like Travel Agents Association of Sikkim, Sikkim Hotels and Restaurants Association, Kangchendzonga Conservation Committee, Sikkim Development Foundation, and Green Circle etc:

► Again, around 12 km further up, at an altitude of 14,000 feet (4,200 m), is the Nathu La, opened for the first time to domestic tourists in September 1999. Traders and porters crossed this gateway to Tibet in the days of fabled Silk Route. The landscape is stark alpine with occasional blossoms of primulae and the Himalayan rhubarb. A tourist is treated to a hot cup of tea by the Indian Army and can walk up to the view point and look beyond into China, and even shake hands with the green-uniformed Chinese Army personnel guarding on the other side.

► While North Sikkim is known for its natural beauty and South Sikkim for some of the oldest monasteries in the region, the western part of the state is a preferred destination for the adventurous. From white water rafting down the Teesta to treks through beautiful, dense rhododendron forests, this district offers a rarely experienced encounter with nature. A number of trekking routes ranging from a height of 300 feet (90 m) to 16,500 feet (4,950 m) have been identified and all well-maintained and complete with camping spots. The state has invested in buying equipments needed for adventure tourism activities like trekking, river rafting and mountain biking. These would be leased out to adventure sports facilitators in private sector. To protect the environment and ecology, garbage bins have been provided along the routes and kerosene is made available to dissuade trekkers from cutting trees for firewood.

► Further, a helicopter service, connecting the state capital Gangtok to Bagdogra in West Bengal from where regular flights to New Delhi and Kolkata are available, has greatly benefited the tourism industry in Sikkim. This service also conducts chartered flights to all four districts of the state. Eleven more helipads

are being constructed, which will link all subdivisions of the state. An airport is under construction at Pakyong in East Sikkim.

► On the other hand, the mountain flights operated from Gangtok have gained popularity among the visitors. A ropeway at Gangtok linking Deorali with the Tashiling Secretariat is already commissioned and another linking Namchi, the headquarter of South Sikkim, with Samdruptse, where a 135-foot statue of Guru Padmasambhava is installed, is under execution.

► Till recently, the tourism department has installed a number of touch-screen kiosks at many places, including government offices and guesthouses, both within the state and outside. The department has actively participated in tourism fairs in Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and New Delhi to promote Sikkim as a viable eco-tourism destination. The state government's tourism policy is driven by the single aim of making Sikkim a "Number 1 Eco-Tourism Destination in India". With this affirmed aim in place, the government has made special efforts to develop tourist villages, trekking routes, adventure activities, biodiversity parks and cultural centers in different parts of the state.

► The 'State Green Mission' has been launched to convert Sikkim into a 'Garden State' by 2009. This is a part of the government's efforts to sustain, maintain and enrich the state's environment and ecology and also to develop eco-tourism.

► To promote 'Village Tourism', 30 model villages having all basic modern amenities are being constructed in different areas of the state. All these will enable tourists to get a first-hand experience of rural life in Sikkim.

► Moreover, to make visits to old temples, monasteries, churches and other religious destinations in the state comfortable, the government is promoting pilgrim tourism in a big way. The Buddhist Circuit has been identified as one of the priority areas in Tourism Policy of the Government of India. Sikkim could well be the hub connecting all major Buddhist destinations in India and neighboring countries.

► As already mentioned in beginning of this chapter, the Nathu La trade route, if opened to tourist traffic, can integrate tourism industry of the Himalayan States in

Northeast India with regions having similar features in the neighboring nations of China, Bhutan and Nepal.

►As far as private initiative is concerned, a 15-year Tourism Master Plan and a 20-year Sustainable Development Plan prepared by the state takes into account a greater role for the private sector in hotels and hospitality industry in Sikkim. Private industry is all set to play a bigger part in tourism sector of the state with the government deciding to restrict its role to that of a facilitator in this regard. Agreements have been entered into with two private players for setting up of a five-star eco-resort — at a place, which is a 45-minute drive from Gangtok — and a three-star hotel in the capital. It was not disclosed at the moment the parties who would take up the initiative for the same.

►All projects that are taken up would have to be eco-friendly. For this, there is a close co-ordination between eco-cell of the forest department and the tourism department. The projects in this sensitive bio-diversity areas are cleared through eco-cell of the forest department. Thus, it is ensured that the tourism development projects do not infringe on the environmental laws. Government has declared ecotourism as an industry and lot of emphasis is given on the infrastructure development. New rules for the protection of environment and cultures have come up and umpteen numbers of institutions in town and villages have sprung up to cater to the needs of the people for sustainable tourism. Besides, in this regard, to address the issue of the educated unemployed, employment would have to be provided to locals as well.

►In addition, the tourism department and STDC have started conducting orientation program for all those involved in providing service to the visitors. The objective is to make them aware of importance of tourism and need for following code of conduct for conservation and protection of the environment. Various NGOs were established by the like minded people to help community level training in ecotourism and village tourism. Consultancy services were provided for marketing and infrastructure development of the region where most tourists frequented.

Las but, not the least, tourist arrival in Sikkim has recorded an annual growth of almost 10 per cent during the period 1994-2007 as reflected in Chapter 3. This increase will be accelerated when some major ongoing projects and facilities are completed. The increase in tourist inflow is mainly on account of the state's participation in tourism fairs and festival programmes in various parts of India. Tourist arrivals at present have been devoid of any element of seasonality. Earlier tourists usually used to visit the state during summer months. Now, the hills have begun to beckon visitors even during winter. It's no wonder that the Union Ministry of Tourism has awarded Sikkim a 'Best Performing State' in Northeastern region of India for four consecutive years.

4.4.2. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Taking into consideration of the above facts, it can be inferred that Sikkim Tourism has committed itself to make it a premier dream destination in India. Because of its geo-physical location, it is not feasible to develop any heavy or medium industries in the state. Only light industries that will not cause damage to the local fragile geo-physical and cultural environment will be suitable in a mountainous region like Sikkim. However, what is striking as well as challenging to a tourism planner is that the whole of Sikkim, except its capital Gangtok, is virtually a virgin and unspoiled territory for tourists, thus creating an aura of mystery around it. With a backdrop of history, nature-majestic mountains, wonderful snowy hills, magnificent monasteries and new-fangled opportunities along with architectural legacy and richness of the destinations, it could have firmly spaced itself in 'Global Tourism Map'. But what is perceived is not actualized. It seems to have happened with tourism in Sikkim. There are still some issues emerging out of our observations which are not yet addressed resulting in prospects being untapped and unexplored to a great extent. Below follows an attempt to portray the same in this regard.

► REGULATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

In the absence of a well-connected bus service, the government should encourage the private taxi services, but should strongly regulate them. Bus services should be reliable, frequent and routes and timings should be planned so that they link all the villages, markets and towns. The transport system should be tailored to the growing needs of tourism and adventure sport travel. A luxury bus service connecting Gangtok and Bagdogra Airport could be timed to link with the arrival of flights to and from Calcutta and Delhi, to allow seamless travel into the state. A major reason why visitors prefer to visit Sikkim as part of organized tour is the lack of regulated and reliable transport options. It is seen that there is no strict regulation and control regarding the fare charged from the tourists by the private transporters depending upon the prevailing situations.

► AVIATION MANAGEMENT

As already indicated above, Sikkim still lacks an airport of its own. Until a full-fledged airport is built (which is at present under construction at Pakyong in East Sikkim), the existing Helicopter service between Bagdogra and Gangtok should be expanded to accommodate more people and more flights. The possibility of introducing small (50-seater) commercial plane services from Bagdogra to Gangtok should be explored at medium-term level. Coming to the national aviation scenario, it is encountered with myriad challenges for not having adequate access to scheduled international airlines. Following this, nearest Bagdogra airport in West Bengal needs an urgent modernization plan and should be declared international soon as it has already been proposed at the ministerial level. Again, another factor hampering tourism in Sikkim is the expensive airfares from other distant places in India.. It needs a special mention that the airfare from Cochin to Bagdogra and then to Gangtok via Heli service is much higher than a complete package of airfare and five nights of 3 * hotel stay in Malaysia or Thailand. Accordingly, a calculative domestic visitor from Cochin will definitely prefer to have an international exposure rather than coming down to Sikkim at the same financial involvement. Therefore, aviation authority should urgently have a rationalization of airfares in terms of international tariff regulation.

► UPGRADING ROAD NETWORK

Roads connecting major tourist destinations have to be ranked in priority and upgraded to international standard to provide all-weather access, an important pre-requisite to lengthening the tourist season. One method would be to invite private sector investors on a 'Build, Operate and Transfer' (BOT) basis, which has been successfully done in other states of India. New roads have to be carefully planned, particularly as the threat of landslides becomes exacerbated as more roads are built. Building the proposed second highway linking Darjeeling, Singla, Naya Bazar, Namchi and Singtam will increase mobility of people and goods, and bring down the cost too. Not only will it provide an alternative route to the NH31A, it will also form an important road link between several towns of the state. Thus, maintenance of hill roads is imperative as there are usually no alternate routes, nor can traffic be diverted. Repairs and removal of debris have to be done promptly, because if delayed they can snowball into major crises, with severe effects on the ecology and environment. Most of the roads lack an efficient drainage system, and this has further weakened their structure and resulted in distress. Effective drainage on both sides of the road is a way of drastically reducing maintenance costs. Therefore, the increased movement of goods and people have made it important that the major connecting links (many of which were built to handle a different type of traffic) are widened, the steep gradients and curves smoothed, and bridges strengthened and widened to handle heavier loads.

► CHANGING TOURISM SEASONALITY

Although tourist arrivals in Sikkim presently have shown devoid of any element of seasonality as indicated above, still it proves to be a major challenge to change the same so that it spreads over through out the year. As indicated in Chapter 3, traditionally most of the tourist arrivals are in the months of March, April, May and October. This is because of both the 'holiday season' months and also scorching summer in plains of India. There are very small number of visitors both during monsoon (July-September) and winter months (December – February). To

change this clustered seasonality is a daunting task. This would allow more efficient year-round use of tourism infrastructure, which would result in lower prices during the 'season months', as well as provide more regular income for those in the hospitality industry. It requires major policy interventions and investment in up gradation of existing facilities and creation of new amenities. This is also related to the average length of stay of visitors which are found to be rather quite short. Once the very nature of origin of tourists and seasons change, the experts believe that the length of stay will steadily improve.

► CREATION OF A UNIQUE BRAND

Another formidable challenge is to create a unique brand name for Sikkim as an ultimate eco-tourism destination and find niche for it in both India and overseas market. Tourism's importance, as an instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas, has been well recognized all over the world. It is a largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings and given Sikkim's low visibility on 'Tourist Map' of India, strong branding and marketing of the state's attractions is an utmost necessity. Though a few brands like "Sikkim- The Hidden Paradise", "Sikkim-Small but Beautiful", "Sikkim-The Ultimate Eco-Tourism Destination" exist, adequate promotion of the same is still lacking behind at present. In addition, a unique brand along the lines of "Incredible India" may be framed to promote the state in domestic level. And at international level too, particularly in Southeast Asian Tourism Market, the make like that of "Uniquely Singapore", "Malaysia-Truly Asia", "Discover Hongkong", "Thailand-The Land of Emerald Buddha", "Amazing Bali" etc may be a source of creating some superior brands to focus Sikkim in "International Tourism Map". Thus, branding of states has already been done successfully by the governments in Rajasthan, Himachal, Orissa, Goa, and Kerala, and the State Tourism Development Corporation of Sikkim could use a variety of media avenues to similarly highlight Sikkim's uniqueness as an ultimate paradise in eastern India.

► PROJECTS MANAGEMENT

As far as the management of projects at different levels is concerned, it is reflected that only local tenders have usually been floated. NH-31A is maintained by the Border Roads Organization, which is also responsible for any expansion activities on NH-31A. Following this, simply local tenders have been suggested for road and bridge building projects. Projects costing less than Rs 5 lakhs are tendered at the panchayat level, and usually contracted by a local resident. Accordingly, larger projects can be tendered at the national or even international level so that the state can have access to the latest technology and high-quality construction, which will mean better service and perhaps eventually lower costs.

► ADHERENCE TO MANAGEMENT PLANS

At present, physical plans are made for development of tourism facilities and infrastructure, but management plans are not prepared or followed. As a result, hotels are constructed but waste management is neglected. Maintenance of hygienic standards, sanitations, signboards, horticulture development around the attractions is not given any priority. Again, the program for creating public awareness about importance of conserving bio-diversity is also not executed on a continuous basis. This should be part of annual plan of forest, education, rural development and tourism department as well. In line with this, preparation and follow up of management plans in and around the places of tourist interests may be made obligatory.

► POLICY FRAME WORK

A master plan drawn up for the courses of action to be taken till the year 2022 envisages directions for sustainable tourism in Sikkim. Certain targets should be fixed among the concerned bodies in respect of tourist inflow, infra-structural development, commissioning of new projects, annual revenue to be earned and employment to be generated in order to create a tourism synergy in the state. The state policy of tourism has to be evolved on the line of National Policy of Tourism which incorporates broad guidelines to attract both domestic and foreign visitors. The general principles announced by the Ministry of Tourism as

Soosna (Information), Swagat (Welcome), Suvidha (Facilities) and Suraksha (Security) should form core of the strategy for Sikkim Tourism.

► FORMULATION OF TOURISM ACT

It is observed that the government regulation over different functional areas of tourism in Sikkim is somewhat lenient in nature. As been mentioned earlier that there is absence of strict guideline over the hotel tariff rates from the government side till date, control is also entirely missing as far as fixation of transportation fare in private sector is concerned. As a result, the hoteliers and transporters get tremendous opportunities of exploiting visitors, particularly during season period, by charging much higher than the stipulated limit prescribed by the government. Hence, to govern the various activities associated with tourism in the state, a separate 'Tourism Act' should be formulated which will equip the department to regulate and monitor the whole issue in a tourist friendly way.

► PUBLICITY DRIVE

Although Sikkim tourism has taken adequate steps towards marketing and publicity of the state through regular participation in all leading domestic tourism fairs and festivals as well as in prominent international fairs, like WTM London and ITB Berlin and releasing advertisements and articles featuring different aspects of tourism in leading travel and tourism magazines of the country, the effort still seems to be inadequate and is at a micro level only. Hence, there should be some sort of initiative to make tourist related information available in extensive manner in the embassies in New Delhi and diplomatic offices in major Indian cities. Colour pictures of large size depicting natural beauty of the state and its rich culture should be displayed in national and international airports and basic information about the points of tourist attraction and the facilities available should be kept in special corners in the places of major entry points. The tourism websites should be updated in regular manner giving all details of information on tourism related services. The existing publications in the form of brochures, posters, coffee-table books and other publicity materials should be distributed through its offices both in Sikkim and outside for generating ample publicity. On

the other hand, the media has been playing a significant role in promoting tourism in recent years. But, only a few national dailies have so far given coverage to the state of Sikkim. As such, the government should insist upon purchasing space in national dailies focusing on attractive spots of attraction in the region.

► **DESIGNING A COST-EFFECTIVE TOURISM PACKAGE**

Tourism in Sikkim cannot be viewed in isolation. Sikkim is the last inclusion in Northeast, which, as already stated, is a reservoir of natural beauty with great variety. But as found from the filed investigation where most of the visitors are of the opinion that the state is not cost effective so far as tourism services are concerned. They view that the accommodation in the state is extremely expensive along with fooding and transportation as well. As such, designing of an affordable tourism package is a need of the hour and State Tourism Development Corporation of Sikkim can play a vital role in this regard. There should be an integrated approach to promote tourism in the state with a cost-effective package of eco and adventure tourism. To that end also, there is a need to have a regional approach involving neighbouring Darjeeling in West Bengal in order to achieve a tourism synergy for the purpose.

► **FISCAL INCENTIVES**

Today's generation is the days of professionalism in all sectors of the economy. In tourism sector too, it is not an exception, which can only be achieved through an active private-public participation in most of the proposals and policies. In that front the government may offer fiscal and other incentives to private entrepreneurs to take up a host of tourism projects by making provisions for soft loan and reducing tax rates. In other words, transport, accommodation and other logistics of tourism should be left over to private sectors with adequate regulation making the way for a healthy privatization of the tertiary segment associated with tourism.

► PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

Perception of the tourists visiting Sikkim and especially Northeastern region of India is of great significance. It is observed that the visitors have a very negative perception about the region in various aspects and this is only because of a wrong focus made time to time. Thus, it is a time to create a lasting tourism impression about all the sister states, which will stimulate a positive perception of the visitors.

► MARKETING TOURISM IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT SEGMENTATIONS

Tourism marketing enables a state to invite guests spanning across different cultures, traditions, customs and countries to visit them to enjoy their rich heritage, sculptures, cuisines, hospitality, entertainment, arts and architectures by creating exiting experience through leisure and entertainment. Keeping this in mind, Sikkim should insist on marketing its adventurous destinations according to various segments viz. age, sex, income, class, nationality, and preferences of the visitors. The whole process has to be revitalized and a full-fledged marketing process is to be undertaken.

► UPGRADING COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF TOURIST GUIDES

It is already stated in the above that training courses and capacity building programmes for Guides, Taxi-Drivers and Travel Agents are organized time to time depending upon the prevailing demand of tourism sector. But what Sikkim Tourism needs urgently the guides who can converse in multiple languages like German, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese etc. As Sikkim attracts visitors from different parts of the globe, augmentation of tourism personnel with speaking skills of foreign languages can cater to the needs of varied visitors at different points of time.

► INVITING FOREIGN INVESTMENT

There are varied reasons why enterprises invest abroad. Investment in a foreign country is induced by a number of considerations—economic, financial and behavioral along with diverse strategic issues. Development of international activities of business enterprises has taken different forms with the passage of time. Globalization of markets, greater possibilities of setting up business in foreign nations, removal of exchange controls, new technologies have all stimulated the foreign direct investment sector. Taking into consideration of Sikkim state, the scarcity of resources, technological gap, inadequate infrastructure arrangements, dearth of research and developmental facilities can also contribute a lot for attracting foreign capital towards it. The state with huge geographical variations and diversities in different sectors and with rich natural heritage may certainly invite foreign investment for setting up new tourism projects and ventures and thereby contribute towards economic growth of the region. That is why, it can be argued that Sikkim must promote foreign direct investment for a faster augmentation of tourism industry-not just only permit it .

Thus, by now we have seen that there is an imperative need for improvement in infrastructure, making an enormous publicity and last but not the least a progressive analysis which might help in creating a viable tourism base in Sikkim Himalayas. Accordingly, the specific objectives (iii) as set in Chapter 1 justifies itself to have been fulfilled.



REFERENCES

► JOURNALS

Bora B., Adhikary A. and Sikdar S., Sept, 2006, Northeast Tourism-The Market Beyond Border, Kurukshetra, No.9, Ministry of Rural Development Publication, New Delhi, pp-18-23

Bora B., Adhikary A. and Sikdar S., Oct, 2007, Northeast Tourism and ASEAN-Gaining Momentum in terms of Sustainable Development, Focus, The International Journal of Management Digest, Vol-3, No-2, ISSN No- 0973-9165, IFIM Publication, Bangalore, pp-7-20

Mohanty Satyajit, June, 2006, Nathu La-The Road Ahead, China and East Asia, No-2054, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Publication, www.google.com

► PERIODICALS

Adhikary A. and Bora B., 2006, Nathula–The Market Across Borders, The Assam Tribune, 16th July

Fernandez Walter, 2007, The Look East Policy, The Assam Tribune, 5th July

► WEB SITES :

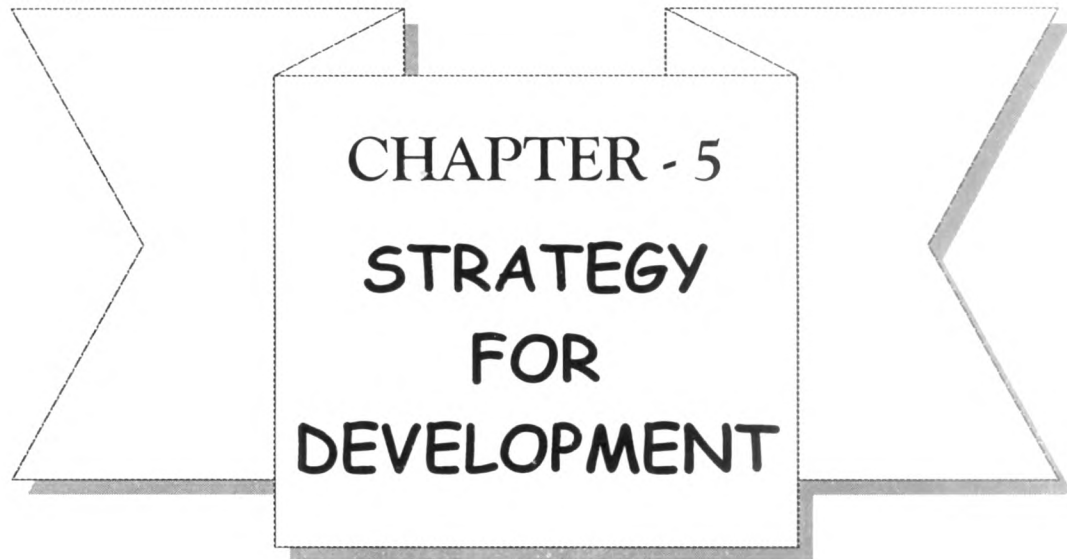
www.sikkim.gov.in

www.sikkimtourism.org

www.tourismofindia.com



Pelling village in West Sikkim



CHAPTER - 5
STRATEGY
FOR
DEVELOPMENT

"Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember and remember more than I have seen"

-Benjamin Disraeli

CHAPTER - 5

STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

This chapter proposes Best Practices for Tourism Development, Strategy for Marketing of various Tourism Products and Services, Media Planning and the Role of Stake-holders in implementing Action Plans. Momentarily, it keeps an eye too, on the Approaches adopted by other states of India for improving their individual State of Affairs at different levels.

5.1. PROPOSED BEST PRACTICES

Tourism today is a highly competitive industry. Every country and every region is vying with the other to draw as many tourists as it can. Even the oil rich countries of West Asia have recognized the economic value of tourism and are sprucing up their limited resources and building up-market facilities of accommodation, transport and entertainment. The phenomenal rise in international visitor's movement has not mellowed the severity of competition amongst the nations and regions. In our country every state and union territory, each having different kinds of tourism resources, are developing facilities to attract a larger number of visitors. In this atmosphere of cut-throat competition, the tourism planners have to devise practices, which will be different from others and stand out in eyes of the end user, i.e. the tourists. These are the Best Practices, which are developed to utmost perfection and should be easily discernible [Bhatia (2006)]. The tourists visiting the region should be able to make out a positive milieu generated by these practices, compared to other regions. A few of the states, which are forerunners in tourism, have adopted Best Practices and have considerably gained. But tourism in Sikkim is still in the process of transition and the mission is to make it one of the foremost destinations in India. There is more to Sikkim than just natural beauty. It provides a wide potential in tourism that has yet largely remained unexploited. The unique Buddhist connection, adventure, eco tourism

and scenic beauty blessed with flora and fauna have been perceived as a major strength of tourism attractions in the state. Sikkimese hospitality tangibly manifests itself in the intricately designed welcome gates with pagoda type roofs that are normally located at the entrances of monasteries and important public buildings. The other strength of the state is its multi-season potentiality. The perennially snow-capped mountains, lush green tropical and temperate forests, gurgling streams and the rich flora and fauna are all there for the visitors to savor. Besides, one can continuously behold many attractions as already mentioned in Chapter 2 of the present study. Thus, the development of infrastructure and facilities and an aggressive promotion through marketing would build up its image as a unique spot on the globe. But the real difference would be visible when tourists visiting Sikkim experience something new and an atmosphere dissimilar with other destinations. The tourists back home recount this experience; become opinion leaders, which results into word-of-mouth publicity for the state. As such, with this backdrop and after an in-depth analysis of the tourism scenario, the study probed into various practices and future strategies of tourism development in the Himalayan state of Sikkim. These are fundamentally based on our findings and field observations and getting reflected in successive discussions.

5.1.1. FOCUS ON HIGH POTENTIALS

Sikkim offers multiple choices of tourism places and products, but it does not have a strong positive image in domestic market and clear image for consumers in major international tourism generating markets. Few domestic and international visitors explore Sikkim in depth, daunted by long distances and inadequate facilities. Thus, for a comprehensive development of tourism in the state, there has to set the ball rolling by providing infrastructure and fulfilling basic needs of the tourist facilities and civic amenities. This will help in registering a constant growth in arrivals, which would prepare a ground for private sector to step in. Therefore, the focus would be on high potential tourism spots and products as engine of growth. Instead of spreading up the financial resources thin over a number of places and products, it

will be expedient to phase-wise prioritize them on the basis of potentials of tourism resources, accessibility and existing facilities. Those having high potential should be placed in Priority 1 and taken up for complete development within first two phases of the plan to register a speedy growth in tourist arrivals. Development of Priority 2 places should also start simultaneously with provision of basic facilities in the first phase. The process would pick up in the second phase and be completed in third one. Therefore, the role of the government in this regard would be to :

- (i) Develop infrastructure and provide facilities for budget tourists. These would be operated by Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) for one or two years and then leased out to private sector.
- (ii) Engage itself in mapping of vulnerable tourism areas.
- (iii) Develop new tourism spots and products after due assessment of tourism resources.
- (iv) Develop a package of incentives for attracting private sector participation. It will act as a facilitator to develop high quality facilities and new areas and products as well.
- (v) Undertake capacity building of the host population for professional handling of tourism services.
- (vi) Handle publicity and marketing of tourist spots and products at national and international level.

Based on the above, 33 tourist spots and 6 tourism products have been identified by the present researcher in consultation with officials of the department of tourism, Govt. of Sikkim and Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, where prioritization of the same has been done on the following basis :

- Potentials of the tourist spots
- Accessibility to the same
- Availability of tourist facilities or any other amenities
- Places not having accessibility or tourist facilities but have potential to attract visitors

In connection with this, the list of tourist places and products prioritized is reflected below :

Table 5.1
TOURIST PLACES

PRIORITY- 1		PRIORITY- 2	
S.NO	NAME OF THE SPOT	S.NO	NAME OF THE SPOT
East Sikkim		East Sikkim	
1	Flower Complex	1	Enchey Monastery
2	Cottage Industry	2	Pastanga Village
3	Chorten, Deorali	3	Angling at Ranikhola, Singtam
4	Nehru Botanical Garden		
5	Lingdum Monestry		
6	Water Garden		
7	Himalayan Zoological Park		
8	Fambong-Lho Wildlife Sanctuary		
9	Bakthang Waterfalls		
10	Nathula Pass		
West Sikkim		West Sikkim	
11	Pelling	4	Soreng
12	Rabdentse Ruins	5	Dentam
13	Khecheopalri Lake	6	Phamrong Waterfalls
14	Yuksom		
15	Dubdi Monestry		
16	Singshore Bridge		
North Sikkim		North Sikkim	
17	Seven Sister's Waterfalls	7	Yumthang
18	Lachung	8	Lachen
19	Phensang Monastery		
20	Guru-Dongmar Lake (17,800 ft)		
South Sikkim		South Sikkim	
21	Namchi		
22	Ravangla		
23	Tendong Hills		
24	Rock Garden		
25	Borong		

Source: Self Compilation

The tourist spots as identified above helps prioritization of tourism product as listed hereunder :

**Table 5.2
TOURISM PRODUCTS**

PRIORITY-1	PRIORITY-2
Pilgrim Tourism	Tea Tourism
Wildlife Tourism	River Tourism
Adventure Tourism	
Eco Tourism	
Garden Tourism	
Mountain Tourism	

Source: Self Compilation

Thus, Table 5.1 and 5.2 depicts a clear picture of tourism scenario in the state prioritized according to geographical demarcation. But as a whole, at present, Sikkim primarily has to be seen as a stand-alone destination offering a unique combination of different products of tourism interest. These include Pilgrim, Wildlife, Adventure Tourism and other products as reflected in Table 5.2. Pelling and Namchi are expected to emerge as stand-alone circuits in near future. The ultimate aim is to develop it as a part of Buddhist Circuit and an eco-tourism spot in the country. It is therefore suggested that all the benefits available to the Buddhist Circuit should soon be extended to Sikkim because of its strong Buddhist linkage and a number of well-known unique monasteries.

5.1.2. CAPACITY BUILDING OF HOST POPULATION

Capacity Building is one of the development parameters which is to be achieved by long and short duration courses/training programmes at different levels of management as per the changing market requirements. Given below a gist of the same.

► LONG DURATION COURSES

- Senior level management staff
- Middle level management staff
- Junior level management staff
- Supervisory staff

► SHORT DURATION COURSES

- Guides/ interpreters/ pathfinders
- Waiters/ cooks/ helpers/ cleaners
- Drivers/ conductors/ loaders

Institute of Hotel Management, Gangtok, community based organizations as stated in Chapter 2 of the study and Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medical and Technological Sciences to be associated with for organizing these sort of programmes and courses at regular intervals.

5.1.3. TOURISM EDUCATION

From a mere leisure for holidays and vacations, tourism has now grown into a massive adventure. It is already a largest service sector and is forging ahead to become a top global industry. The international tourist arrivals to our country has been growing with a steady pace. This has been supplemented by the growing number of middle class who have become affluent in post liberalized era. This segment has real disposable income and demands professional handling of tourism services. Both the foreign and domestic visitors claim quality services managed professionally by trained hands. So, human resource development at present has become an integral part of tourism development. Every sector of the industry like accommodation units, transporters, travel agents, tour operators, guides, escorts, interpreters, pathfinders, drivers and conductors need training to make them tourism friendly and visitor oriented. The states of Rajasthan, Kerala and Maharashtra, being major players, have given due emphasis on tourism education and training along with development of different facilities. From this point of view, tourism industry could broadly be divided into two parts. One is Hospitality and Hotel Administration sector, i.e. hotels and tourist accommodation establishments. The other one is Tourism and Travel Trade. The National Council of Hotel Management, the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, is the apex body, that regulates training of personnel for hospitality sector. In Tourism and Travel Trade sector, the parent institute for education is Indian Institute for Travel and Tourism set up by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

It has chapters located at Bhuvaneswar, Thiruvananthapuram and Lucknow. This institute conducts Post Graduate Diploma Course on Tourism Management and short term courses on Management Development, Airline Ticketing, Tour Packaging and Tour Escorts as well. More or less all the universities in India conduct Post Graduate Diploma Courses on Tourism and Travel Management, while a few have post graduate programme on Master of Tourism Management. With reference to this, the Himalayan state of Sikkim also has an Institute of Hotel Management, located at the capital town of Gangtok as discussed in Chapter 2 of the study. This institute has trained professionals in various segments of the tourism industry which has been able to fill in the market requirements of the state. Coming to the course of interaction of the present researcher with the consultants, they are of the opinion that tourism in Sikkim is at a take-off stage. Secondly, the face of travel plans of visitors is fast changing and they wish to have an 'Activity Oriented' tour programme that involves various community projects and interface with rural/local people as well. Thirdly, tourism facilities and services, provided by the government and private sector are going to augment in near future. These would need professional management of tourism services by trained staff at various levels. That's why, it will be prudent to initiate Tourism Studies at school level at the stage of 10±2. At this phase, it would also act as a vocational course and assist the students in choosing 'Tourism' as a career option instead of opting for other conventional academic programmes. Tourism should also be a subject in Bachelor Degree Courses as the University Grants Commission of India has already approved of it. The Sikkim Manipal University of Health, Medical and Technological Sciences, the only full-fledged university in the state of Sikkim (till date) should be encouraged to initiate tourism courses in its academic curriculum. For hospitality sector, the need would be to set up more Food Craft Institutes though this requirement at present is being partially fulfilled by the Institute of Hotel Management at Gangtok. The products of these institutes would be suitable for operation of the Tourist Lodges and budget category accommodation units located in different parts of the state.

5.1.4. COMPUTERIZATION AND NETWORKING

A large cross section of the budget and shoe-string travelers plan their visits with the help of information available on websites and get the prior reservations of tourist facilities through a Central Reservation System [Buhalis (2003)]. This fact has also been brought forth by the field visit undertaken by the researcher for this project. Presently, the computerization of Sikkim Tourism is at a limited stage. It needs to be expanded by creating special websites for integrated tourism related information and setting up a central reservation process for instant bookings. The tourist information should not only be restricted to the services provided by Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) and Department of Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim. It should also have information on the facilities provided by private sector as well so that the visitors are able to make a balanced choice. On the other hand, the Central Reservation System may be for the services provided by STDC. If private player wants to link with the same, they may have to share it according to a pre-defined financial norms. Referring to the development of websites, it could be of two types. One should be completely devoted to tourism information, which will have all major and minor details about the places and tourist services. The other one would be the plans and activities of the department of tourism, which will act as a source of information to private sector. Utmost care has to be exercised so that the website is updated with relevant changes occurring time to time. The Central Reservation System should be linked with all major tourist accommodation units and transport services operated by the tourism department in association with STDC. The other linkage would be the Tourist Information Offices within and outside the state.

5.1.5. PUBLIC- PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)

The recent years have seen a marked increase in cooperation between the public and private bodies for development and operation of infrastructure and facilities for a wide range of economic activities including tourism industry. Such Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) arrangements were driven by limitations in public hand to cover investments needs and also by efforts to increase the

quality and efficiency of public services. There are four principal roles (as indicated below) identified by the present study for the private players in PPP schemes :

- to provide additional capital
- to provide alternative management and implementation skills
- to provide value added services to consumers and the public at large
- to provide better identification of needs and optimal use of resources

However, while PPPs can offer a number of advantages, they are by no means the only or the preferred option, and could, then be considered if it can be demonstrated that they will add additional value compared with other approaches. Hence, it would now be worthwhile to have a glance over the benefits of a PPP scheme enumerated as under :

► **ACCELERATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION** - PPPs often allow the public sector to translate upfront capital expenditure into a flow of ongoing service payments.

► **FASTER IMPLEMENTATION**-The allocation of design and construction responsibility to the private sector, combined with payments linked to the availability of service, provides significant incentives for the same to deliver capital projects within shorter time frame.

► **REDUCED WHOLE LIFE COSTS**-For operational and maintenance service, the provision provides the private players with strong incentive to minimize costs over the whole life of a project, something that is inherently difficult to achieve within the constraints of traditional public sector budgeting.

► **BETTER RISK ALLOCATION** - A core principle of a PPP scheme is the sharing of risk with a party best able to manage it at least cost. The aim is to optimize rather than maximize risk transfer to ensure that best value is achieved.

► **BETTER INCENTIVES TO PERFORM** -The allocation of project risk should provide incentive to a private sector contractor to improve quality of service.

► **GENERATION OF ADDITIONAL REVENUES**-The private sector may be able to generate additional revenues from third parties, thereby reducing the cost of any public sector subvention required for the same.

► **ENHANCED PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**-Last but not the least, by transferring responsibility for providing public services, government officials will act as regulators and shall focus upon service planning and performance monitoring, instead of management of day to day delivery of public services. In addition, by exposing public services to competition, PPPs enable the cost of public services to be benchmarked against market standards in order to ensure that the very best value for money is being reached.

But PPP arrangements come in many forms and are still an evolving concept, which should not be regarded as representing a miracle cure or indeed a quick fix to infrastructure and service development. Several forms of PPP exist and are continuously being developed to suit project characteristics. Main defining feature is the degree of private control and involvement in financing. There is neither unique model nor are there any specific guidelines, which could be developed. Each project will define what is suitable and what is required. The overall aim of PPPs is, therefore, to structure the relationship between the parties, so that risks are borne by those best able to control them and increased value is added through the exploitation of private sector skills and competencies. In developed countries, it plays a dominant role in operation of transport, accommodation, travel agency, guiding and shopping facilities which the researcher experienced himself during his time to time passionate visit to foreign nations. One would

hardly find any govt. owned bungalows and tourist vehicles plying over the road. In other words, the commercial operation of tourism amenities in those countries are mostly in the hands of private sector, while the govt. facilitates by providing infrastructure and regulates the standards through rules and strict by-laws. But in case of Himalayan sister Sikkim, the participation of private sector in providing tourist facilities seems to be in restricted form. It is presently limited to hotels in major towns, adventure sports and transportation at a micro level. But it is believed that in due course of time, the infrastructure facilities would be made available at the tourist places and travel circuits, which will encourage private players to partake in different tourism related assignments. Keeping this in mind, the present study has made an attempt to identify few sectors in PPP scheme for Sikkim Tourism based on the field observation. Followings are the areas to name a few :

- (i) Hotels—Resorts, Starred Accommodation, Heritage Units and Economy Lodges
- (ii) Guest Houses, Pensioner & Paying Guest Accommodation
- (iii) Wayside Amenities and Eco Tourism Units
- (iv) Adventure and Sports Tourism
- (v) Bars, Restaurants, Eateries, Food Courts & Food Parlors
- (vi) Tourist Transport Services
- (vii) Package Tours and Conducted Tours
- (viii) Ropeways
- (ix) Amusement Parks
- (x) Recreation and Indoor Games Centers

In the states of Kerala, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the Public-Private Participation in tourism activities at the identified tourist circuits is backed by a package of incentives and concessions given by the government. The government acts as a facilitator and regulator and does not directly manage those services. Keeping tune in this line, the researcher feels that the Government of Sikkim may also undertake to provide following package of incentives to the approved projects :

- (i) Provide infrastructure facilities of roads, water, electricity supplies, telecommunication and garbage, sewage & solid waste disposal arrangement
- (ii) Provide suitable plots of land on lease at reasonable premium and lease rental
- (iii) Reduced stamp duty for registration of land
- (iv) Subsidy for preparation of Project Report
- (v) Interest subsidy on loans from financial institutions and nationalized banks. The subsidy could vary for different categories of accommodation units. Additional subsidy may be given to the entrepreneurs belonging to Schedule Caste/Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The entrepreneurs setting up hotels at the identified tourist places should get maximum subsidy, while those interested in major towns should get the minimum
- (vi) Investment subsidy to medium and small scale tourism projects
- (vii) Water and power supplies at reduced tariff for an initial period of at least 5 years
- (viii) Relief of sales and luxury taxes for a period of 5 to 10 years
- (ix) Expenditure made on Human Resource Development by the hospitality industry and travel trade to be subsidized for at least five years
- (x) Single window system of clearance of projects within a stipulated time frame

The above incentives should in no way restrict the entrepreneurs from availing of the concessions given by Govt. of India. These should form a part of the State Tourism Policy and should be given wide publicity to attract investment from within and outside the state. The funds required for the subsidies should be provided annually in the tourism budget because, declaring tourism as an Industry does not entitle the projects for getting subsidies from the department of industries. For tax concessions and reduced tariffs too, the concerning departments will have to be taken into confidence.

5.1.6. ESTABLISHMENT OF INTER-STATE LINKAGE

There is no denying the fact that Sikkim is one of the major tourist hotspots in eight adjoining states of Northeast part of India. In fact, the entire Northeast tourism scenario is getting focused in domestic tourism map of the country because of unparalleled attractions of the state. Thus, Sikkim has a pivotal role to play with regard to prompt development of tourism in the region. It has common border with the adjoining state of West Bengal and shares international boundary with Nepal, China and Tibet in different directions. The neighboring state West Bengal is well connected by a motorable road from the nearest towns of Siliguri and Bagdogra. Most of the movement of visitors is, therefore, by inter state road transport services, hired taxis and owner driven vehicles. Since Sikkim enjoys a comparatively more favorable political position than rest of the Northeastern states, it may provide a vital international linkage to the bordering nations as well. Further, the entire Northeast is principally a nature based region where the habitations are located in remote landlocked areas. Tourism is the only industry, that can transform the economic face of these areas by generating employment and self-employment opportunities. The ideal concept would therefore, be to develop a strategy for interstate coordination or regional tourism circuits with the adjoining states as well as with neighboring nations to sell the region and reap the benefits. The circuits could be founded on various themes or on an effective connectivity. The entire region based on the state of Sikkim could then be marketed and publicized as a single entity with multi destinations, travel circuits and tourism products. The present study observes that the same could be achieved by a set of measures in the following forms :

(i) Formation of a 'Northeast Regional Tourism Council'. It should be a high level Council that will solely devote its activities towards a planned and coordinated development and promotion of tourism in the region. It should also address the problems of inter state movement of tourists and visitors and advise the Central Govt. on liberalizing the entry restrictions

(ii) Siliguri in West Bengal, being a major gateway to neighboring Nepal and Bhutan, could be developed as a Tourist Hub for the region. A combined Tourist Reception Centre of all the sister states of Northeast in general and Sikkim and West Bengal in particular should be set up, which may provide services in the form of tourism information, central reservation of accommodation and transport, issue of entry permits, transit accommodation, handicraft and handloom shops, tourist utility shops, food court having kiosks of the states and other allied amenities.

(iii) An annual festival of Northeast should be organized every year at Siliguri to attract travelers from different parts of the region and bordering Nepal and Bhutan as well. The festival should be a forum to display the folk culture, rural sports, martial arts, handicrafts/handlooms and cuisine of the region. It would also act as a platform for mutual understanding and interaction amongst the Northeastern states, that could lead to a better co-ordination in planning and promoting tourism industry.

As such, keeping in view the recent priority of tourism development of Northeast region with the Ministry of DONER, the Govt. of India should soon consider formation of the proposed North East Regional Tourism Council. The projects of combined Tourist Reception Centre and annual North East Festival may jointly be funded by the Govt. of India and the respective state governments.

In this regard, the following practices of Inter-state Coordination adopted by other states of India can be referred to for a clear understanding of the issue.

- **KERALA** — Promotion of a Regional Tourism Circuit through effective coordination with Southern states
- **TAMILNADU** — A complete Regional Grid with Sri Lanka at an international level

- **RAJASTHAN** – Memorandum of Undertakings with Kerala for joint marketing and publicity of each other's tourism products and services
- **ANDHRA PRADESH** —Leave Travel Concession Package for visiting Goa. (*This has also recently been introduced for Central Employees by the Ministry of DONER ,Govt of India for visiting Northeastern States*)

5.2. MARKETING STRATEGY

Publicity and marketing of Sikkim Tourism is at an emerging stage, though the department and STDC had been participating in various trade fairs, travel marts and exhibitions at national and international level. It is, therefore, expedient that along with the development plan, a long-term strategy for marketing and publicity should be designed. Marketing of tourist places, travel circuits and tourism products of Sikkim have to go hand in hand with the development of infrastructure and tourist facilities. This will involve building up a strong tourism friendly environment, creation of a brand image, identification of unique selling proposition and selection of a proper media mix for an effective focus [Kulkarni (2005)]. The study will now make an attempt in these directions.

5.2.1. STRATEGY IN TERMS OF TOURISM PRODUCTS

The present status of the tourism products of Sikkim does not seem to be very encouraging. As evident in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of the present study that the negative aspects are overshadowing the vast potentials of tourism resources that could be marketed and publicized to get advantages of increasing tourism demands of our country. An informal awareness survey of tourist places of Sikkim, conducted by the researcher in a limited time frame, has indicated that a substantial percentage of surveyed population is aware of the tourist wealth of the state. But this awareness has not culminated into visits because majority of them feel Sikkim to be in a psychological distance with time constraint. Similarly, the field observation of the tourists indicated in Chapter 3 of the study revealed some pointers which could be born in mind while developing tourism products for the visitors. The most significant amongst them is 'Willingness to Visit Sikkim

Again' where almost 100 % of the respondents had shown their willingness to re-visit Sikkim provided some customized tourism products are developed as per their demand. It is a positive indication that none of the visitors expressed their unwillingness of re-visiting the state which was apparent in Figure 3.14 of Chapter 3.

5.2.2. STRATEGY IN TERMS OF INFORMATION LITERATURE

The information and publicity has a crucial role to play to project the state as a unique tourist destination. This objective is slowly but surely being achieved through the dissemination of information, promotional activities and marketing campaign. The department has produced several brochures on various tourist attractions and destinations. Improving and updating of information carried by these brochures, is another important function of the concerned cell in department of tourism in the state. At present, the Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Sikkim has a list of following publications :

- Tourist Guide Map of Sikkim
- Sikkim, Small but Beautiful, a Brochure
- Sikkim - The Hidden Paradise, a Brochure
- Sikkim, Small but Beautiful, a Coffee Table Book
- Sikkim- Ultimate Eco-Tourism Destination, a Brochure
- Brochure on Monasteries
- Brochure on Fairs & Festivals
- Brochure on General Tourist Information
- Yearly Calendar and Diary
- Mini VCD on — Capital Town Gangtok

In addition to above, India Tourism, the Regional Office of Govt. of India for Northeast, has published literatures on Northeast that has a write-up on Sikkim Tourism. But the researcher is in a position to feel that the above literatures should be comprehensive in kind and contain more objective data rather than subjective information. It could be categorized according to type of tourism products available in the state.

5.2.3. STRATEGY TO ATTRACT VISITORS

The SWOT Analysis carried out in Chapter 3 of the study has thrown up both strength and weakness of the tourism industry in Sikkim. The first one is a positive indication, while the second one is unenthusiastic, which is injurious to a healthy growth of tourism in the state. The negative parameters have to be countered by adequate reforms along with an aggressive publicity and planned marketing to portray a realistic and favorable image. Thus, a detailed marketing plan generally requires an adequate field research involving selection of marketing mix governed by well-defined objectives and a target market segment. This is a time consuming approach and shall demand additional funding. Further, as the development is in process, it will not be prudent to spend time and funds for such an exercise at present. That is why, the researcher has prepared a few guidelines based on the filed observation and a micro level survey undergone by him. The proposed strategy may involve the following basic issues :

► PRIORITIZATION OF DESTINATIONS

The prioritization of various destinations in the state can be for short, medium and long term as indicated below :

- **Short Term** — Tourist places, travel circuits and tourism products of priority one category that are in the process of development.
- **Medium Term** — Tourist places, travel circuits and tourism products that are being developed including quality tourist facilities provided by the private sector.
- **Long Term** - Aggressive marketing of tourist places, travel circuits and tourism products to position the state as one of the foremost destinations at national and international levels.

► CUSTOMER (TOURIST) SEGMENTATION

Target customers can also be identified according to location, income groups and purpose of travel for short, medium and long term like that of prioritization of destinations.

***TARGET CUSTOMER — LOCATION (FOREIGN/DOMESTIC/LOCALS/WEEKENDERS)**

- **Short Term** — During this period, the concentration should be on domestic market because tourist facilities would be limited to budget and economy class visitors
- **Medium Term** — Facilities of good standard with quality service would start operating during this period. Hence, along with domestic market, the foreign markets should also be tapped. Locals and weekenders would continue to remain in target
- **Long Term** — Foreign and domestic markets and the locals and weekenders from neighboring places would be the target

*** TARGET CUSTOMER — INCOME GROUP (HIGH/MIDDLE/LOW)**

- **Short Term** — Domestic tourists of middle (budget) and low income groups and local and weekenders should be focused in view of the available tourist facilities
- **Medium Term** — Foreign and domestic tourists of high-end and budget class and the locals and weekenders could be targeted.
- **Long Term** — Foreign and domestic visitors of all income groups to be concentrated

*** TARGET CUSTOMER — PURPOSE OF VISIT**

- **Short Term** — Tourists interested in Heritage, Pilgrimage, Eco, Adventure/Sports, Culture, Wildlife and River Tourism would be the target.
- **Medium Term** — In addition to above listed in short term, the visitors interested in Conventions, Business and Tea Tourism may be focused upon.
- **Long Term** -Tourists interested in all types of tourism activities should be focused.

► MARKET SEGMENTATION

The probable tourist originating markets to be tapped in this regard are :

- **Short Term** -In domestic sector, the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Orissa, Bihar and Northeastern states should be concentrated
- **Medium Term** – In international sector, the major Southeast Asian Nations and Fast European countries could be targeted.
- **Long Term**—For the foreign visitors, all tourist generating markets of Europe, America, West Asia, East Asia and the neighboring nations should be focused upon. Special efforts may be given to attract NRIs from different parts of the globe. Domestic sector would include all the states and marketing within the state.

5.2.4. STRATEGY TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT

Along with strategy to attract visitors, the tourism authorities of Sikkim will have to design action plan to attract investors as well so that the facilities for up-market and budget tourists are built in and operated on professional lines. This may involve liaison with the followings :

- (i) Industrial associations like Chamber of Commerce & Industries, Confederation of Indian Industries etc.
- (ii) National and state level associations of Travel Agents/Tour Operators and Hoteliers
- (iii) International and national funding agencies, like World Bank, IMF, ADB, State Finance Corporations, Tourism Finance Corporation, IDBI and the nationalized banks.

Some of the approaches to reach out to the prospective investors would be :

(i) Seminars, presentations and exhibitions showcasing the investment opportunities in Sikkim at international and national level

(ii) Presentations to various organizations in tourism sector, like Indian Association of Amusement Parks & Allied Industries, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association of India, Travel Agents Association of India, Indian Association of Tour Operators etc. The presentation should convey these organizations the prospective plan proposed by Sikkim Tourism.

(iii) Distribution of printed literature to potential investors stating :

- Information about tourist destinations
- Current tourist inflow and future forecast
- Projects identified and investments required
- Incentives and assistance given by the government
- Investment procedures
- Likely returns

5.2.5. STRATEGY IN TERMS OF PUBLICITY

The promotion of tourist attractions of the state through publicity serves the dual purpose of attracting visitors and also investment towards it. The advertisement campaign should promote selected destinations and activities depending upon the target audience and development priorities of that destination to optimize the resources. Some tourist destinations and tourism activities are proposed for medium term and long term development because of lack of infrastructure and priority attached to them. These destinations and activities should be promoted at an appropriate stage when the facilities would be developed. Therefore, before stepping into a media plan and media mix, three basic issues of publicity, like Friendly Tourist Environment, Brand Image and Unique Selling Proposition have to be dealt with on priority basis that may enhance the impact of media campaign in long run.

► DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURIST FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The steps to be taken in this regard are :

- (i) Spruce up the tourist sites with proper signage, civic amenities and environmental improvement. Host community and local service personnel should be trained and become tourism friendly.
- (ii) Prominent welcome signage at entry and exit corners like Airports (proposed), Railway Station (proposed), Bus Terminus and cross border entry/exit points should be incorporated in multiple languages.
- (iii) Encourage local people to welcome tourists. They should be made aware of the socio-economic benefits of tourism so that cheating and harassment could be avoided and the visitors are given warm welcome.
- (iv) Organize 'Road Shows' depicting tourism wealth, tourist facilities and the economic benefits to make visitors and travel industry conscious of tourism wealth of the state.
- (v) Set up 'Help Desks', 'Assistance Points' and 'Tourist Police Post' at each tourist spot to control exploitation, cheating and harassment. This will build confidence and goodwill amongst the visitors and breed a sense of safety and hassle free travel.
- (vi) Organize 'Tourist Weeks' at each of the tourist places with active participation of local people. Such celebrations will focus attention of host population on importance of a tourism friendly environment and help in augmenting arrivals.
- (vii) Focus attention of the state functionaries of concerned departments by involving them in tourism related seminars and special events. This will help getting better cooperation from them.

► CREATION OF A BRAND IMAGE

The marketing experts have opined that -

"Anybody can build a product but consistent branding makes it successful"

Thus, a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors; and brand image is

the total impression of a brand in an individual's mind, what it does for them and what it means to them. Image associated with a brand is a powerful purchase influencer. Consumers buy not only a product but also the image associated with the product. The brand is unlikely to have one brand image but several, out of which one or two may predominate. Good brand images are instantly evoked, are positive and are always unique among the competitive brands. The success of the brand image can be checked from a sample survey of the market. Sikkim has a brand with a logo of 'Dragon' with a cursive representation of 'Sikkim Tourism'. Thus, the concerned stake-holders should constantly focus in creating a lasting image of this brand which may, definitely have a positive impact on the tourism traffic.

► IDENTIFICATION OF A UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP)

For successful marketing, it is necessary to focus on what is special and different about a tourism product. The uniqueness of the product has to be expressed in a single statement though it does not necessarily mean a slogan or a phrase. At the same time, the message has to be unique in itself [Renganathan (2004)]. For framing out a unique message one has to keep in mind a few aspects, which are :

- What is unique about the tourism product ?
- Which of these factors are most important to the end user ?
- Which of these are not imitated easily by the competitors ?
- Which of these can be easily communicated and understood by the end user ?
- Can one construct a memorable passage of these unique qualities ?
- How will one communicate this message ?

The present USP slogan of Sikkim Tourism is "A Hidden Paradise". It is a catchy slogan but does not communicate unique features of the tourism scenario. Such slogans are being used by other states too. The need is to bring forth the unique characteristics of nature and culture through an well defined USP slogan. This has to be created on the basis of the framework mentioned above. The field investigation of tourism resources of the state has helped us to opine that Eco

Tourism and Pilgrim Tourism are the planks of Unique Selling Proposition of Sikkim supported by Adventure Sports Tourism, Himalayan Tourism and Heritage Tourism.

Therefore, the development of Brand Image and identification of USP are a part of the specialized field of marketing and advertising agencies. It is hereby suggested that a professional agency, with a good track record of tourism marketing, should be assigned this job.

► MEDIA PLANNING

Appropriate media-mix should be used depending on the destination, type of activity and the target audience. This is necessary to achieve targeted objectives and media effectiveness and will motivate and generate urge to visit in the minds of target market segment. It should be noted that a good promotion campaign is only successful if a sound distribution network acts as a back up. Similarly, in tourism industry, development campaign will attract visitors on a sustainable basis only if the accessibility, tourist facilities and services are up to the standards of tourist use. Portrayed below a few tools of media plan as proposed by the researcher which could be of use in this regard –

- (i) Comprehensive Printed Publicity Literature - Guidebooks, folders, tariff cards, posters, picture post cards and display photographs
- (ii) Display Material - Hoardings, welcome boards, signage at all entry points
- (iii) Audio Visual Media — Films, CDs, DVDs at special occasions, taped cassettes, radio and television
- (iv) Gift/Memento Items — Caps, T-shirts, bags, purse, key chains at tourist spots
- (v) Print Media — Newspapers, magazines, in-flight magazines, travel trade journals for advertisements and featured articles
- (vi) Exhibitions and displays in Travel Marts and Expos at frequent intervals
- (vii) Street Shows in tourist generating states of the country and within the state
- (viii) Special events like Visitor Weeks, Cultural Bonanza, Sikkim Tourism Year on regular basis

- (ix) Super Saver Schemes by tour operators and hoteliers during off seasons
- (x) Familiarization Tours of travel writers, travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers and investors
- (xi) Continuous Liaison with international and national airlines, travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers
- (xii) Creation of separate websites for tourist information and online reservations

The media mix based on these tools would be used according to need of the time, because timing would depend upon the development plans earmarked for each term. Due care will have to be taken to ensure that development of the product meets with demands of the media plan; else it might have adverse effects. Keeping in view these aspects, media mix for short, medium and long term is being suggested. But this plan is tentative and might need fine-tuning according to the progress of improvement of tourism facilities. Thus, it will not be out of place to repeat here that a good promotion campaign will certainly be able to attract visitors on a sustained basis, if it is backed by good accessibility to the destinations, facilities suitable to the standards of tourists and the related services are professionally managed. As such, the present study would be in a position to recommend (as already indicated above) that a national level marketing/advertising agency, with long experience of tourism marketing, should be assigned the job to plan a complete package of media and marketing campaign and manage it as per requirements on a turnkey basis. A few of the leading agencies in the country who can be consulted in this regard are :

- Lintas Advertising
- J. Walter Thomson Ltd
- Ogilvey & Mather Ltd
- Contract Advertising
- Grey Worldwide Advertising
- Percept Advertising
- Span Advertising

to name a few.

5.2.6. LEARNING FROM OTHER STATES

The state of Sikkim, in this regard, can follow similar pattern of marketing practices adopted by certain tourist friendly states of India as designated in the under-mentioned manner :

- **ANDHRA PRADESH** — Mobile Museum and Information Centre cum Souvenir Shop. 'Theme Based Literature and Audio-Visuals' on tourist places
- **GOA** — 'Go Goa 365 on a Holiday', a known brand in national and international market
- **GUJARAT** — Special thrust to 'Even Based Tourism'
- **KARNATAKA**—'Discover Karnataka', an innovative series of cultural events
- **KERALA** — Focused marketing and strong network with travel, tourism and trade in identified selected markets
- **ORISSA** — Golden Heritage Triangle of 'Puri-Konark-Bhubaneswar' and Diamond Triangle of Buddhist spots — 'Ratnagiri-Udayagiri-Lalitagiri
- **UTTARANCHAL**—Appointment of 'International Management Group' to promote tourism in potential overseas markets
- **WEST BENGAL** --- 'Bangla Dekho', an aggressive marketing and publicity campaign

5.3.DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

As a first step to an effective action plan, a survey of tourism gaps should be undertaken and thereafter, projects should be prioritized on the basis of their overall importance. The different stake-holders in tourism sector have a unique role to play in implementing different development plans on an unending fashion. For this reason, the current study, at this moment makes an endeavor to examine the matter with a clear cut road map focusing on roles and responsibilities of all the concerned.

Table 5.3

ACTION PLAN AND ROLE OF STAKE-HOLDERS

STAKE-HOLDERS	ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Directorate of Tourism, Govt of Sikkim	Coordination for infrastructure facilities, feasibility studies, scrutiny of private sector projects and creating database
Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation	Nodal agency for implementation of Master Plan at different levels
Public Works Department, Govt of Sikkim	Construction, up-gradation and maintenance of links and approach roads amongst the tourists destinations
Forest Department, Govt of Sikkim	Up-gradation of wildlife viewing facilities, Eco-tourism projects and camping arrangement
Home Department, Govt of Sikkim	Maintenance of security and safety at tourist spots and international travel routes
North Eastern Council	Provision for infrastructure at tourist places in North-eastern states, coordinating cross border tourism development
Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt of India	Upgradation of Bagdogra Airport to an international level, rationalization of visa formalities and more access to scheduled international airlines amongst SAARC countries
Reserve Bank of India	Restructuring of banking operations and foreign exchange facilities
Department of Information and Public Relation	Promotion of tourism products and making ample publicity in a global perspective
Leading Tour Organizers (SOTC, Thomas Cook, Jungle Travel, NCS Travel etc)	Developing new tourist circuits, designing unique tourism package between Sikkim and other places of Buddhist significance, transportation and marketing cross border tourism opportunities
Northeast Chamber of Commerce and Industries	Capacity building for guides and tour operators, creating a global tourism image, organising tourism seminars at national and international level
Northeast Development and Finance Corporation	Financing viable tourism projects with hassle free formalities
Northeast Tourism Board (<i>in process of being set up</i>)	Training in manpower, marketing and investment development, exploration of Buddhist linkages
Tourism Sub Committee-CII	Promotion of tourism amongst Northeast region and ASEAN, training programmes for hotels and tour operators

Source : Self Compilation

Therefore, the recommended strategies emerging out of our foregoing discussion leads towards attainment of the specific objective (iv) that positioned itself in Chapter 1 of the present study.



REFERENCES

► BOOKS

Bhatia A.K., 2006, Tourism Development-Principles and Practices, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, pp-219-271

Buhalis D., 2003, e Tourism - Information Technology for Strategic Tourism Management, Pearson Education, Harlow, p-68

Kulkarni M.V., 2005, Tourism Marketing, First Ed, Everest Publ., Pune, pp-120-261

► JOURNALS

Renganathan R., Sept, 2004, Positioning a Tourism Destination to Gain a Competitive Advantage, Indian Journal of Marketing, Vol – XXXIV, No 9, IJM Publication, New Delhi, pp-6-10

► WEB SITES

www.indianmba.com

www.google.com

www.sikkim.gov.in

www.sikkimtourism.org



World's tallest statue of Guru Padmasambhava
at Namchi, South Sikkim



A

APPENDIX

ANNEXURE- I : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS

ANNEXURE- II : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACCOMMODATION UNITS

ANNEXURE- III : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOUR OPERATORS

ANNEXURE- IV : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OFFICIALS

ANNEXURE- I : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS

Ph.D RESEARCH PROJECT

“Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study”

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOURISTS

Dear Respondent,

As a part of Doctoral Research Project on Tourism in the state of Sikkim, a study is being carried out on the topic ‘Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study’ in Faculty of Commerce under the University of Guwahati. As such, the undersigned is in need of relevant information and your esteemed views on the subject to accomplish the assignment. It is assured that the facts and information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and utilized for undergoing Ph.D project only and shall not be submitted anywhere else. It will be a matter of high appreciation if you kindly reply to the following queries and do the needful at your end.

Bedanta Bora

Senior Lecturer-Department of Management Studies
Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Rangpo, Majitar
East Sikkim-737132, India, Dial: 09832391333 (M)

Queries to be replied. (Kindly use separate sheet if necessary)

PART A : DEMOGRAPHY FACTOR

- Q.1. NameE-mail Id.....
- Q.2. Nationality State (in case of Indian tourist).....
- Q.3. Sex Male / Female (Please ✓).....Age (as on last birthday).....
- Q.4. Education:10th/Secondary/Graduate/Post Graduate/Technical/Professional/Higher. (Please ✓)
- Q.5. Employment Status: Govt / Pvt /Own Business/Professional Practice/Looking for Job.(Please ✓)
- Q.6. Occupation : Service / Business / Student / House Wife / Retired Person. (Please ✓)
- Q.7. Approximate Annual Household Income. Currency..... Income.....

PART B : TRAVEL DETAIL

- Q.1. Are you traveling Alone / With Family / With Friends / With Family & Friends ? (Please ✓)
- Q.2. Size of the travel group (if Single -01) Male Adults Children Total
Female
- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
- Q.3. Did you take **Entry Permit** in entering Sikkim at the entry point ? Yes/No. (Please ✓)
- Q.4. **Purpose of Visit** :Holidaying/Meeting Friends & Relatives /Business/Official/Others.(Please ✓)
- Q.5. If you are a Holiday Tourist, please indicate your primary interest. Sight Seeing/ Participation in Events, Fairs and Festivals/Winter Shopping/Pilgrimage/Enjoying Hills. (Please ✓)
- Q.6. How did you make your travel arrangement ?Self/ Office /Agent/Tour Operator/Others.(Please ✓)
- Q.7. If Tourist, how many **days of stay** do you have in Sikkim ?.....
- Q.8.Mode of Transport used to reach this destination:Air/Rail/Bus/Taxi/Self Vehicle/Helicopter (Please ✓)

Q.9.Mode of Local Transport used for Sight Seeing: Self Vehicle/Taxi/Ropeway/Bus. (Please ✓)

Q.10.Place of Stay :Starred Hotel/Economy Lodge/Guest House/Youth Hostel/Friend &Relative.(Please ✓)

PART C : TOUR EXPENDITURE

Q.1.If it is a Package Tour, what is the total package cost per person in Indian Rupees ?.....

Q.2.Please indicate the total expenditure in Indian Rupees incurred (also to be incurred during return) by you as well as your companion if any, in visiting to and returning from this destination.....

Q.3. Kindly provide the following **break-up of expenditure** in Indian Rupees :

- (a) Cost of Accommodation (Daily Room Rent).....
- (b) Cost of Daily Food in the place of accommodation.....
- (c) Cost of Daily Food in other places like Restaurant, Eating Places of various Tourist Spots.....
- (d) Cost of Hiring/Sharing of Vehicles for Sight Seeing during duration of your stay.....
- (e) Cost of Communication and Postage during duration of your stay.....
- (f) Cost of Recreation, Cultural Festivals and Adventure & Wildlife activities if any.....
- (g) Shopping (Handlooms/Handicraft/Paintings/Woolen Garments/Photographic Films/Others.
Please tick out the alternative and indicate the expenditure in purchasing the same.....

PART D : EVALUATION

Q.1. Please rate the following tourist facilities in the state of Sikkim

(Please ✓ the suitable alternative)

Facilities	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Remarks
Mode of Transportation to Sikkim					
Local Transportation within Sikkim					
Road Condition & Connectivity					
Air Link					
Quality/Hygiene of Accommodation					
Hotel availability in all tourist places					
Quality/Hygiene of Food & Restaurant					
Availability of variety of Dishes					
Entertainment Facility					
Shopping Arrangement					
Hospitality of Local People					
Sikkim as a Tourist Destination					

Q.2.Please rate the facilities at this tourist destination in terms of cost and financial implication.

(Please ✓ the suitable alternative)

Cost Involved (in Indian Currency)	Very High	High	Reasonable	Cheap	Remarks
Transportation to Sikkim					
Local Transportation within Sikkim					
Accommodation Tariff Per Day					
Cost of Food					
Communication Expenses					
Cost of Entertainment					
Marketing and Shopping					

Q.3. Kindly provide your valuable suggestions for improvement of tourism services in Sikkim and also indicate your willingness to visit Sikkim again.....

.....

ANNEXURE- II : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACCOMMODATION UNITS

Ph.D RESEARCH PROJECT

“Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study”

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOTELS/LODGES/GUEST HOUSES/RESORTS

Name of the Respondent :

Address with contact no :

Dear Respondent,

As a part of Doctoral Research Project on Tourism in the state of Sikkim, a study is being carried out on the topic ‘Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study’ in Faculty of Commerce under the University of Guwahati. As such, the undersigned is in need of relevant information and your esteemed views on the subject to accomplish the assignment. It is assured that the facts and information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and utilized for undergoing Ph.D project only and shall not be submitted anywhere else. It will be a matter of high appreciation if you kindly reply to the following queries and do the needful at your end.

Bedanta Bora

Senior Lecturer-Department of Management Studies
Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Rangpo, Majitar
East Sikkim-737132, India, Dial: 09832391333 (M)

Queries to be replied. (Kindly use separate sheet if necessary)

Q.1. Name & Address of the Hotel/Lodge.....

Q.2. Category: Non star/1 star/2 star/3star/4star/Guest House/Tourist Bungalow/Lodge. (Please ✓)

Q.3. Ownership details : Govt.owned /Single Owner/Trust/Partnership/Public Ltd/Private Ltd/Others (Please ✓)

Q.4. Does the hotel belong to a Chain / Group ?. Yes/No (Please ✓)

Q.5. Year of Commencement

Q.6. Please furnish the followings :

(a) Number of Rooms/Beds

Type of Accommodation	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds	Avg. No. of Nights Used by Tourists
Dormitory/Hall			
Single AC			
Double AC			
Suit AC			
Single Non AC			
Double Non AC			
Suit Non AC			
Others			

(b) Tariff Structure

Type of Accommodation	Basic Tariff Per Day (Rs)	Tax in Percentage (%)			Total Tariff Per Day (Rs)
		Luxury	Sales	Others	
Dormitory/Hall					
Single AC					
Double AC					
Suit AC					
Single Non AC					
Double Non AC					
Suit Non AC					
Others					

(c) Facility Available

Type of Facility	With A.C.		Without A.C.	
	Number	Sitting Capacity	Number	Sitting Capacity
Banquet Hall				
Conference Hall				
Health Club				
Massage Centre				
Shopping Stall				
Others (Specify)				

Q.7. Please indicate what other facilities do you provide to the tourists ? **(Please ✓)**

Air Booking, Sight Seeing, Package Tour, Live Concerts (classical/folk dance, music etc), STD, ISD, E-mail, Fax, Forex Service, Courier Services, Restaurant and others

Q.8. Number of staff employed during the following periods. *(Kindly provide)*

Period	Number of Employees	
	Regular	Casual/Temporary
1999		
2000		
2001		
2002		
2003		
2004		
2005		
2006		
2007		

Q.9.Kindly generate the following statistics regarding Average Occupancy of Rooms in a year.

Period	Average Occupancy Ratio(in%) i.e.(No.of Rooms Occupied –Total No.of Rooms) X 100
1999	
2000	
2001	
2002	
2003	
2004	
2005	
2006	
2007	

Q.10.Please rate the following countries in the scale of (0--+10) considering the country from which maximum visitors arrive as +10 and the country from which no visitors arrive as 0.

Country	Rating Scale (0-10)	Country	Rating Scale (0-10)
USA		Srilanka	
UK		Singapore	
Canada		Malaysia	
Australia		UAE	
France		Hongkong	
Germany		China	
Austria		Nepal	
Holland		Bhutan	
Belgium		Indonesia	
Switzerland		Egypt	
Italy		Vietnam	
Spain		Cambodia	
Israel		Laos	
Japan		South Africa	
Koria		Domestic(Other Places in India)	
Thailand		Others	

.....

ANNEXURE- III : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOUR OPERATORS

Ph.D RESEARCH PROJECT

“Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study”

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TOUR OPERATORS / TRAVEL AGENTS

Name of the Respondent :
Address with contact no :

Dear Respondent,

As a part of Doctoral Research Project on Tourism in the state of Sikkim, a study is being carried out on the topic ‘Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study’ in Faculty of Commerce under the University of Guwahati. As such, the undersigned is in need of relevant information and your esteemed views on the subject to accomplish the assignment. It is assured that the facts and information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and utilized for undergoing Ph.D project only and shall not be submitted anywhere else. It will be a matter of high appreciation if you kindly reply to the following queries and do the needful at your end.

Bedanta Bora

Senior Lecturer-Department of Management Studies
Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Rangpo, Majitar
East Sikkim-737132, India, Dial: 09832391333 (M)

Queries to be replied. (Kindly use separate sheet if necessary)

- Q.1. Name of the Tour Operator / Travel Agency.....**
- Q.2. Year of Commencement**
- Q.3. Type of Tourists you usually deal with : Indian/Foreign/Local/All (Please ✓)**
- Q.4. Kind of Packages you deal: Local Sight Seeing/Monastery Tour/River Rafting/Trekking/Angling Kayaking/Wildlife Tour/Paragliding/Mountain Biking/Mountaineering/Yak Riding. (Please ✓)**
- Q.5. Profile of the Visitors: Service Holder/Businessman/College Student/Retired Person. (Please ✓)**
- Q.6. Age of the Tourists you usually deal with : 10-15/15-30/30-45/45-60/60 + (Please ✓)**
- Q.7. Do you have linkage with travel agencies in Nepal, Bhutan and other places in India as well as in foreign countries ? Sufficient Link/Some Link/Infrequent Link/No Link. (Please ✓)**
- Q.8. What do you usually prefer to handle ? Individual Tour/Group Tour (Please ✓)**
- Q.9. Do you customize your itinerary schedule according to the client’s needs ? Yes/No (Please ✓)**
- Q.10. How do you market your services ? Advertisement in Media/Brochures/Direct Approach to Client/ Direct Contact with other agencies/Banner & Hoardings. (Please ✓)**

Q.11. Type of services you offer (Please ✓ the suitable alternative)

Type of Services	Available	Not Available	May be Available in future
Entry Permit Arrangement			
Sight Seeing			
Package Tour			
Customized Tour			
Forex Service			
Visa/Passport Arrangement			
Air Bookings			
Mountain Flight Provision			
Railway Ticketing			
Hotel Booking			
Surface Transport			
Others (Please Specify)			

Q.12. Do you get adequate support from the Government of Sikkim in handling tourism activities in the state ? If yes, please specify the type of assistance provided by the govt.

.....

Q.13. Do you have joint collaboration with Govt of Sikkim regarding promotion of tourism in the state ? If so, then how ? Please specify.

.....

Q.14. What is your views and assessment on Sikkim as a prominent tourist destination ?

.....

Q.15. Kindly provide your valuable suggestions for improvement of tourism services in Sikkim

.....



ANNEXURE- IV : QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OFFICIALS

Ph.D RESEARCH PROJECT

“Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study”

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OFFICIALS / CONCERNED PERSONNEL

Name of the Respondent :
Designation & Organization :
Address with contact no :

Dear Respondent,

As a part of Doctoral Research Project on Tourism in the state of Sikkim, a study is being carried out on the topic 'Tourism in Sikkim : An Evaluative Study' in Faculty of Commerce under the University of Guwahati. As such, the undersigned is in need of relevant information and your esteemed views on the subject to accomplish the assignment. It is assured that the facts and information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and utilized for undergoing Ph.D project only and shall not be submitted anywhere else. It will be a matter of high appreciation if you kindly reply to the following queries and do the needful at your end.

Bedanta Bora

Senior Lecturer-Department of Management Studies
Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Rangpo, Majitar
East Sikkim-737132, India, Dial: 09832391333 (M)

Queries to be replied. (Kindly use separate sheet if necessary)

Q.1. What, in your opinion, are the potential areas for speedy tourism development in Sikkim ?

Please Specify.....
.....
.....

Q.2. Do you think that the potential has been fully exploited ?.....

Q.3. Are the infrastructural facilities of Road, Accommodation, Telecom, Water, Power and Sanitation Systems **adequate to meet the tourist inflow** ?If not,what are the **organizational, infrastructural and institutional deficiencies** in its policy and functional areas ? Please Specify.

.....
.....
.....

Q.4. What steps, in your opinion, should be taken for aggressive marketing of tourism potential of the state ?

.....
.....
.....

Q.5. What, in your view, are holding back the **private sector** from active participation in building up infrastructural and tourist facilities in the state ? Please specify.

.....
.....
.....

Q.6. Please rate the following parameters in the scale of **(-10--0--- +10)** considering the same as Major Strength **(+10)**, Minor Strength **(+1)**, Indifferent **(0)**, Major Weakness **(-10)** and Minor Weakness **(-1)**.

- (a) Historical Importance of Sikkim.....
- (b) Mix of Tourism Resources in Sikkim.....
- (c) Cultural & Traditional assets including existing festivals, events.....
- (d) Accessibility & Connectivity.....
- (e) Proximity to Nepal /Bhutan / China.....
- (f) Existing Accommodation Infrastructure.....
- (g) Seasonality / Climatic factors.....
- (h) Infrastructure in terms of Roads, Shopping facilities, Civic amenities.....
- (i) Dominance of Monasteries and Cultural Centers of Historical Importance.....
- (j) Existing Tourism Circuits connecting Sikkim as a Buddhist Circuit / Asia Pacific State.....
- (k) Existing Tour Packages connecting Sikkim.....
- (l) Perception as a Weekend/Day visit destination.....

Q.7. What are the constraints and barriers for the present and future development of tourism ?
Please specify.....
.....
.....

Q.8. Are the obstructions like Inner Line Permit (ILP), Restricted Area Permit (RAP),Prohibited Area Permit (PAP) posing a big threat to the flow of international as well as domestic Visitors ? Please specify.....
.....
.....

Q.9. What do you think is the efficacy of various promotional measures taken up by the govt as well as that of annual development plans towards improvement of tourism facilities and awareness in the state ? Please specify
.....
.....
.....

Q.10. Could you suggest some tourist areas, which are still unaccessed/unused/unknown ?
.....
.....
.....

Q.11. Do you think the publicity literature is attractive and has necessary information for the visitors ? If not, what are your suggestions for its improvement ? Please specify
.....
.....
.....

Q.12. What in your opinion should be the unique selling proposition (USP) for Sikkim in terms of tourism development ? Please specify
.....
.....
.....



APPENDIX**ANNEXURE- I : ABSTRACTS OF CONCERNED PUBLICATIONS****ABSTRACT – 1****STRATEGIC MARKETING OF UNEXPLORED AREAS
- A CASE STUDY OF SIKKIM TOURISM ●**

Tourism has been for years one of the world's finest service industries having an average growth of 5 % with 1000 million visitors traveling around the globe. It accounts for highest portion of the world economy with more than 10 % of global GDP and 8 % of world trade employment as indicated in the WTCC statistics. Tourism has become vital in a developing country like India where this sector ranked as second largest foreign exchange earner with a growth rate of 25-30% per annum. This new epoch of a tourism based economy has opened up door of the landlocked Sikkim Himalaya in eastern part of India as well. Small but beautiful, Sikkim, being nested below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world, is endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity. Nevertheless, it is yet to wake up to its enormous marketing of untapped tourism potentials in a sustainable manner. Keeping this in view, the present study aims in designing at micro level a Strategic Marketing Plan for 'Sikkim Tourism' besides exploring it as a 'Green Paradise' on the earth. It highlights its semi-explored products too in order to create a tourism synergy in this regard. The methodology, adopted here is based on secondary review along with a semi-structured primary investigation carried out for the purpose. Findings reveal that the encouragement of tourism in Sikkim holds out an assured prosperity for the state and the concerned stakeholders have catalytical role to play in this regard. They will have to go out and sell instead of waiting for customers to come and buy. That's why, a strategic marketing approach, is undoubtedly a pressing need of the hour. The proposed project endeavours in modeling the same in a concise verbal presentation.

Key Word : Sikkim Himalaya, Green Tourism, Strategic Marketing and Semi-Explored Areas

● *To be Presented in an "International Conference on Tourism Development and Management" organized by The ICTDM Committee, Greece, at Kos Island, Greece, on 11th to 14th Sept, 2009.*

ABSTRACT – 2

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE INDUSTRY - A CASE STUDY OF SIKKIM TOURISM ‡

Tourism has been for years one of the world's finest service industries having an average growth of 5 % with 1000 million visitors traveling around the globe. This new epoch of a tourism based economy has opened up door of the landlocked Sikkim Himalaya as well. Small but beautiful, Sikkim, being nested below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world, is endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity. Nevertheless, it is yet to wake up to its enormous tourism prospect in a sustainable manner. As such, the present project aims in exploring at micro level the potentiality of 'Sikkim Himalaya' as a 'Green Tourism Paradise' and highlight its major impediments to growth and development. It suggests few probable reforms and endeavours at designing a comprehensive strategic management plan too for speedy augmentation of the state of affairs. The methodology, adopted here is based on secondary review along with a semi-structured primary investigation carried out for the purpose. Findings reveal that the encouragement of Tourism in Sikkim holds out an assured prosperity for the state and the concerned stakeholders have catalytical role to play to deliver on its promise of making Sikkim a unique destination in the globe. The various circles of tourism deficit prevailing in the state gives birth a huge gap, and a strategic management approach is undoubtedly a pressing need to bridge the same. The proposed study makes an attempt in this direction.

Key Words : Sikkim Himalaya, Green Tourism, Strategic Orientation and Tourism Optimization.

‡ Accepted for publication in an International Reviewed Journal of 'Management Research and Technology' ; Serials Publication, New Delhi.(Issue is in press and will come out by June, 2009)

ABSTRACT - 3

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SIKKIM HIMALAYA - AN IMPETUS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY ♦

Tourism has been for years one of the world's finest service industries having an average growth of 5 % with 1000 million visitors traveling around the globe. It accounts for highest portion of the world economy with more than 10 % of global GDP and 8 % of world trade employment as indicated in the WTCC statistics. Tourism has become vital in a developing country like India where this sector ranked as second largest foreign exchange earner with a growth rate of 25-30% per annum. This new epoch of a tourism based economy has opened up door of the remote landlocked Sikkim Himalaya as well. Small but beautiful, Sikkim, being nested below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world, is endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity. Nevertheless, it is yet to wake up to its enormous tourism prospect in a sustained manner. Keeping this in view, the present project aims in exploring at micro level the potentiality of 'Sikkim Himalaya' as a 'Green Tourism Paradise' and highlight its major impediments to growth and development. It suggests few reforms and endeavours at designing a comprehensive strategic development plan for ensuring a sustainable economy of the state. The methodology, adopted here is based on secondary review along with a semi-structured primary investigation carried out for the purpose. Findings reveal that the encouragement of Tourism in Sikkim holds out an assured prosperity and the concerned stakeholders have catalytical role to play to deliver on its promise of making Sikkim a unique destination in the globe. The various circles of tourism deficit prevailing in the state gives birth a huge gap, and a strategic development approach is undoubtedly a pressing need to bridge the same. The proposed study is an attempt towards this direction in a sustainable development perspective.

Key Words : Sikkim Himalaya, Tourism, Strategic Development and Sustainable Economy.

♦ Presented in a "National Seminar on Science, Technology and Development in the Himalayas" organized by The University of North Bengal, Raja Rammohunpur, Dist-Darjeeling, on March 23rd to 24th, 2009.

ABSTRACT - 4

NORTHEAST TOURISM AND ASEAN–GAINING MOMENTUM IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT *

There was a strategic shift in India's vision of the world and its place in evolving multidimensional economy with the successful commencement of globalization era in 1991. India's interaction with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was given a special thrust with the formulation of highly acclaimed 'Look-East policy' by the Union Government. The policy, directed towards linking Indian economy with ASEAN, can be driven through a better reconciliation of its Northeast region with the same bonding through 'Tourism' as a prominent feeding industry. It had a new dimension too in ensuring sustainable development of this remote landlocked part of India to facilitate stronger economic integration. Instead of setting Northeast aside, the government should now emphasize on marketing it across its bordering nations as a 'Gateway to Southeast Asia'. As such, the integration process of 'Northeast Tourism' with ASEAN warrants a major highlight in terms of the 'Look East Policy'. The proposed study is an attempt at micro level in this direction.

Key Words : Northeast Tourism, ASEAN, Look East Policy, Gateway to Southeast Asia, Sustainable Development and Global Integration.

**Published in an International Reviewed Journal- 'Focus'; IFIM Business School Publication, Bangalore, Nov, 2007, Pp : 7-20.*

ABSTRACT - 5

TOURISM AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT -TOWARDS BETTER RECONCILIATION •

'Knowledge' is now recognised by many organisations as a critical resource that underpins competitive advantage in 21st century. Increasingly it is being accepted that a nation's competitiveness in global market place depends on its ability to capitalize on its intellectual and knowledge based assets, as opposed to the more traditional resources. As a consequence, the diffusion and commercialization of research has emerged as a key issue for governments, higher educational institutions, research centres and private enterprises. These are recent developments that represent the recognition of knowledge as a key competitive tool for private sector and a determinant of economic growth for governments. Coming to service sector, tourism has been for years one of the world's finest industries having an average growth of 5 % with 800 million tourists traveling around the globe. It claims a largest share of the global economy with more than 10 % of the world GDP and 8 % of the world trade employment as indicated in World Tourism & Travel Council (WTCC) statistics. After a dramatic change in whole industrial scenario due to initiation of globalization policy, there has witnessed a remarkable focus towards application of latest management tools and techniques in various sectors of the economy and tourism too, is not an exception to this. This sector is gradually adapting to these changes and it is suggested that if tourism organizations are to remain competitive in this changing era, the adoption of a knowledge management approach will definitely be a good choice to transform tourism research into capabilities for this sector. Hence, the study and practice of different management terminologies have grown rapidly since 90s, driven by social, economic and technological trends. Accordingly, tourism as an industry has in part, integrated towards this management orientation to professionalize itself in order to achieve a competitive edge. But research on tourism supports the assertion that this sector is a leisurely adopter of the concept of 'Knowledge Management' due to a lack of gearing between researchers and tourism and a hostile adoption environment. Thus, if looked at a competitive level, its adoption would undoubtedly minimize the gap and provide both insights and potentials for tourism up gradation. As such, this paper is an attempt at micro level to provide a model for reconciling 'Tourism' with so called idea 'Knowledge Management' with a view to attain a synergistic effect in long run.

Keywords : Tourism, Knowledge Management, Reconciliation, Synergy, Knowledge Economy, Stock and Flow Approach.

• *Published in an International Reviewed Journal- 'JIMS 8M'; JIMS Publication, Delhi, Oct-Dec, 2007, Pp : 4-9.*

ABSTRACT - 6

NORTHEAST TOURISM AS A GATEWAY TO SOUTHEAST ASIA- CONNECTING ACROSS BORDERS & CULTURES ♣

Tourism has been for years one of the world's finest industry having an average growth of 5 % with 800 million tourists traveling around the globe. WTCC statistics indicate that tourism accounts for highest portion of the world economy with more than 10 % of global GDP and 8 % of world trade employment. In the context of development, it can play a catalytic role in lifting the economy to a self-sustained path of growth. After commencement of globalization policy, there has witnessed a remarkable focus towards 'Tourism' as an industry and accordingly, Indian economy has increasingly integrated to the world economy to develop tourism globally with removal of several restrictions. But India's Northeast, rightly called as paradise unexplored, though endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity, is yet to wake up to its enormous tourism prospect in a sustainable manner. The region, carrying borders with Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh, has been a plot of amalgamation of multicultural ethnic groups settling here from faraway places. Thus, it can certainly be an entryway to these places connecting across boundaries which will help rediscover 'the essential oneness and unity' bonding through 'Tourism'. As such, this paper aims in exploring at micro level the potentiality of 'Northeast Tourism' as a 'Gateway to Southeast Asia' linking multicultural nations. It charts out its implication too in terms of the 'Look East Policy' initiated in 1990s. The study is based on secondary review along with a primary research carried out for the purpose. Findings reveal that the encouragement of 'Northeast Tourism' holds out an assured prosperity for the region which will assist in crystallizing the process of global integration with Southeast Asia. The proposed paper makes an attempt in order to find out a synergistic effect in this direction.

Key Words : Multicultural Groups, Boundaries, Northeast Tourism, Gateway to Southeast Asia, Look East Policy & Global Integration.

♣ *Published in Proceedings of "International Conference on Strategic Thought" organized by The University of Jammu, Jammu in Nov, 2006, P-51*

ABSTRACT - 7

NORTHEAST TOURISM: THE MARKET BEYOND BORDERS ■

India's Northeast, rightly called as paradise unexplored, though endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity, is yet to wake up to its enormous tourism prospect and harness it in a sustainable manner. The region, comprising of eight sister states, is having international borders with Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh paving a way to market itself across Southeast Asia. There is a pressing need for exploring this cross border opportunities for Northeast tourism in terms of the 'Look East Policy', which is, undeniably, a major hopeful area for economic augmentation of this incredible part of India. The proposed study is an earnest endeavor in this direction.

■ *Published in a National Reviewed Journal-'Kurukshetra'; Ministry of Rural Dev., Govt. of India Publication, New Delhi, Sept, 2006, Pp : 45-48.*

ABSTRACT - 8

POST GLOBALIZATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR NORTHEAST TOURISM BUSINESS –THE SYNERGISTIC EFFECT ❑

Globalization has offered numerous opportunities bundled with many challenges to various fields of activities and 'Tourism Sector' too is not an exception to this. Modern times have witnessed a lot of focus towards 'Tourism' as an industry which is undoubtedly having a catalytic role to play in upliftment of any region to a self-sustained path of growth. It is proved to be a pre-requisite for augmentation of all economic activities, elimination of poverty, ending up unemployment, creating new skills, preserving cultural heritage, encouraging tribal arts and crafts and facilitating growth of a fair and just social order. But India's Northeast, rightly called as paradise unexplored, though endowed with immense natural wealth, unique cultural heritage, magical beauty and bewildering diversity, is yet to wake up to its enormous tourism prospect and harness it in a sustainable manner. Even in some significant corners of the region, tourism seems to be uncared for and neglected as a secondary issue. The government's off-repeated pledges to promote it are no more than mere lip-service and an apparent misconceived priority. So, it is undeniably unfortunate that this sector has not geared up for new emerging worldwide environment to put itself firmly on 'Global Tourism Map', if compared with the differences shown by the young neighboring nations like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia as well as rest part of India. It has still a long way to go and has to struggle hard to compete with these global players. As such, this paper seeks to identify the major areas of deficiency and hurdle of tourism sector in this incredible part of India besides pinpointing its post globalization opportunities. It is a vital necessity to have an experimental view on prevailing tourism scenario in terms of national policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) in order to document the process of global integration. The implication of 'International Tourism' in Northeast as 'Gateway to South East Asia' too warrants a major highlight as a synergy for economic growth. The proposed paper makes an attempt in this direction.

Key Words: Global Tourism Map, World-Wide Environment, LPG Policy, Global Integration & Synergy

❑ Accepted for Presentation in "Strategic Management Conference" organized by
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, Kozhikod in May, 2006

APPENDIX**ANNEXURE- I : INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED**

- Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring & Evaluation (Gangtok)
- Directorate of Tourism (Gangtok)
- Indian Tourism Development Corporation (Guwahati)
- Northeastern Council (Shillong)
- North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (Guwahati)
- Omeyo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (Guwahati)
- Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (Gangtok)