



अतुल्य! भारत
Incredible India

WHITE PAPER ON BORDER TOURISM

HIGHLIGHTING THE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM
IN BORDER DISTRICTS OF INDIA



PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



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**PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
2022**

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जी. किशन रेड्डी

संस्कृति, पर्यटन एवं
उत्तर पूर्वी क्षेत्र विकास मंत्री
भारत सरकार



सत्यमेव जयते



G. Kishan Reddy

Minister of Culture, Tourism and
Development of North Eastern Region
Government of India

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) is releasing a **White Paper on Border Tourism on 23rd December 2022 in New Delhi.**

India is the largest country in South Asia having a long border with different countries. The border destinations of India, that are famous for their historical monuments, mountain peaks, scenic beauty, wildlife, local cultures, food etc., have a great tourism potential.

Border Tourism has immense potential. If promoted and marketed well, it can boost the local economy of these areas which are otherwise far off from urban centres.

My compliments to PHDCCI for compiling this report which will give a new direction for promotion of Border Tourism in India and I wish this initiative all the success.

(G. Kishan Reddy)

Date : December, 2022

Place : New Delhi

अरविंद सिंह, भा.प्र.से.
Arvind Singh, IAS



सचिव
भारत सरकार
पर्यटन मंत्रालय
नई दिल्ली

SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM
NEW DELHI

MESSAGE


I am pleased to learn that PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) is releasing a **White Paper on Border Tourism** on **23 December 2022** in **New Delhi**.

Border Tourism is of immense interest to the Government of India and the Ministry of Home Affairs is taking keen interest to develop this segment. Border Tourism is also crucial for strengthening national security while establishing a strong foothold at India's border areas.

The Union Budget 2022-23 has announced that villages on the northern border will be covered under the new **Vibrant Villages Programme**. The activities will include construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralized renewable energy, direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels and support for livelihood generation. The programme aims to enhance infrastructure in villages along India's border in states/UTs including Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh.

Ease of access to zero line; ensuring last mile connectivity; creating economic activities around border areas will be the key drivers for promoting Border Tourism in the country.

I believe that this Report will successfully draw a roadmap for the sustainable development of Border Tourism in the country.


(Arvind Singh)
12.12.2022

Message from President Desk, PHDCCI



Saket Dalmia
President, PHDCCI

With a view to explore the tourism potential in the border districts of India and to create awareness about the lesser-known destinations across the country, PHDCCI with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and respective State Tourism Boards had launched the Border Tourism Webinar Series in June 2021.

There are gaps found often in knowledge and information about how a border area can become a tourist destination. There is also lack of expertise, existing networks and experience in collaborating between stakeholders in border areas, non-availability of transport and economic infrastructure that are required to supply quality products and services in tourism in the border areas.

In this context, the Knowledge Sessions on Border Tourism appeared to be one of the significant approaches to address the tourism industry feasibilities of those border districts as well as to build strong business and cultural understanding about these places.

As a result of our initiatives on Border Tourism, the Government of India has recognized the importance of this subject and has introduced Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) which envisages coverage of border villages on Northern border having sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure, which often get left out from the development gains.

PHDCCI which has a legacy of 117 years representing 150,000 industries and businesses from across the nation has created a niche for itself across the country through the excellent work done by its Expert Committees, State Chapters, International Affairs Committees and Foundations on various subjects of importance.

This White Paper on Border Tourism by PHDCCI highlights the challenges of each border destination and provides ample scope and opportunities towards promotion of Border Tourism in the country.


Saket Dalmia



Message from CEO & Secretary General Desk, PHDCCI



Saurabh Sanyal
CEO & Secretary General, PHDCCI

The concept of Border Tourism refers to the notion of visiting border areas in order to experience diverse cultures, acquiring knowledge for trade, or even meeting local communities who are living in border region. There are several world famous tourist attractions on borders of different nations that are visited by millions of tourists every year.

The problem of border districts and tourism development is recognized as an important challenge for local communities along the border. Although institutional environment and security barriers remain the stumbling block for entrepreneurial cooperation; conditions for Border Tourism enhancement can be enabled through setting up of frameworks for easier cooperation of public, private and civil actors.

Through the series of 18 webinars continued for more than a year, panelists explored the possibilities for development of Border Tourism in different States/ UTs and discussed various issues (connectivity, synergies between tourism and technology sectors, public-private partnerships, proactive community participation, skill building etc.) which could underpin Border Tourism in these areas.

Within the scope of the present document, those deliberations were reflected in almost intact fashion and attempts were made to come up with a way forward for every focus district. The prolonged knowledge intervention was a significant attempt to bring about a sustainable solution for the tourism industry in borderlands of India where this report shall provide it with a base literature for that.

Saurabh Sanyal



TABLE OF CONTENT

List of Abbreviations, Tables, Figures	10
Executive Summary	11
INTRODUCTION	23
1. Borderlands of India	20
1.1 Name of the Bordering Countries and Length of the Border	20
1.2 NITI Aayog Aspirational District Programme and its stake in Border Tourism	21
1.3 Aims and Objectives	22
1.4 Nature of the Document	22
INDO-PAK BORDER TOURISM	26
2. Border Tourism in Punjab (Ferozepur)	27
3. Border Tourism in Rajasthan (Jaisalmer)	36
4. Border Tourism in Gujarat (Kutch)	46
5. Border Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir (Jammu)	56
INDO-CHINA BORDER TOURISM	63
6. Border Tourism in Ladakh (Leh)	65
7. Border Tourism in Himachal Pradesh (Lahaul & Spiti)	74
8. Border Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh (Anjaw, Anini, Mechuka)	82
INDO-MYANMAR BORDER TOURISM	91
9. Border Tourism in Nagaland (Kiphire)	93
10. Border Tourism in Manipur (Chandel)	100
INDO-BHUTAN BORDER TOURISM	105
11. Border Tourism in Assam (Baksa)	107
INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER TOURISM	117
12. Border Tourism in Mizoram (Mamit)	119
13. Border Tourism in Tripura (Dhalai)	127
14. Border Tourism in West Bengal (Murshidabad)	132
15. Border Tourism in Meghalaya (East Khasi Hills)	138
INDO NEPAL BORDER TOURISM	145
16. Border Tourism in Bihar (Sitamarhi)	147
17. Border Tourism in Uttar Pradesh (Shravasti)	153
18. Border Tourism in Uttarakhand (Udham Singh Nagar)	159
19. Border Tourism in Sikkim (West District)	166
20. Conclusion & References	173
21. About PHDCCI	176
22. Border Tourism Webinar Calendar with YouTube Links	177



List of Abbreviations:

- ADM: Additional District Magistrate
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- BGB: Border Guards Bangladesh
- BOP: Border Observation Post
- BSF: Border Security Force
- BTAD: The Bodoland Territorial Area Districts
- CMACC: Chief Minister's Advanced Certificate Course
- CMPSY: Chief Minister's Paryatan Shiksha Yojna
- CMPVY: Chief Minister Paryatan Vikas Yojna
- DC: Deputy Commissioner
- GOI: Government of India
- HRAEI: Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India
- HRIDAY: National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana
- IATO: Indian Association of Tour Operators
- ICP: Integrated Check Post
- ITBP: Indo-Tibetan Border Police
- LAC: Line of Actual Control
- LOC: Line of Control
- MEA: Ministry of External Affairs
- MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs
- MOT: Ministry of Tourism
- NIMAS: National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports
- NITI Aayog: National Institution for Transforming India
- PRASHAD: Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive
- RCS: Regional Connectivity Scheme
- SSB: Sashastra Seema Bal
- TAAI: Travel Agents' Association of India
- UDAN: Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik
- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- WHS: World Heritage Site



List of Tables

- Table 1.1.1: Name of the Bordering Countries and Length of the Border (in KM)
- Table 1.1.2 Name of the Border States/Union Territories of India
- Table 1.2.1: Name of the Aspirational Districts selected for PHDCCI Border Tourism Webinars
- Table 2.2.2: Punjab: Key Thematic Areas in Tourism
- Table 7.2.3 Promotional Themes of Himachal Pradesh
- Table 8.2.1 Tourism Circuits of Arunachal Pradesh
- Table 10.2.1 District wise Tourist Spots in Manipur
- Table 11.2.1: Exploring Assam through Different Product Based Circuits
- Table 12.2.1: Specific Unique Tourism Circuits for Mizoram
- Table 17.2.1 Tourism Circuits of Uttar Pradesh
- Table 18.2.1: Theme-wise Major Destinations of Uttarakhand

List of Figures

- Figure 2.2.1: Punjab Government Initiatives to Provide Thrust to Tourism Sector
- Figure 3.2.1: Tourism Circuits of Rajasthan

Executive Summary

Challenges in Border Tourism

Every border has its own peculiarities and challenges to deal with. However, some generic factors have been identified for all the border regions and the common challenges which are categorized here:

Geo Political Constraint

- Much of the international boundary lines due to security reason are restricted and/or prohibited zone. Thus much of India's borders and tourism resources available there both natural and cultural in terms of border villages are yet to be explored. As a result of the restrictions, investments in these border areas have remained quite low.
- Border villages across India are not yet unlocked and thus, the potential of Border Tourism is yet to be tapped fully. Majority of Border districts come under Aspirational District Programme where overall developmental challenges and lack of proper exposure have a limiting effect in the areas' overall tourism development process.
- Some of the areas in Kutch fall under the 'notified area' by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). To visit these areas permission is required, not only in border areas but also in cultural or heritage sites. Till 2009 there was a 'Single Window Permission' system given by the DoT which is no longer available. Current permissions are obtained in different places for the East, West and Northern part of Kutch. Such scattered permission process requires whole day and hampers border visits.
- Disparity in permission (to visit Dholavira archeological site needs no permission while visiting to the Dholavira village needs permission) or No Permit process in Dharamshala Shaheed Smarak point which was earlier under BSF and presently handed on to the local police and since then no permit system is available to visit that place.

- Sparsely populated border regions of Ladakh witness constant human migration from periphery to centre, result in weakening of borderlands geopolitically. The opening up of Siachen Base Camp is yet to be notified by the MHA in writing, which makes thing a limbo. The clarity in opening up the border region in Indo-Pak or Indo-China border is a critical factor. Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime is a barrier to have smooth access to the region which results in lack of tourist footfall.

Geo-climatic Condition

- Connectivity is the chronic and categorical problem in most of the border areas in the country. Majority of the border districts have grossly been affected by the poor connectivity which poses primary challenge to the Border Tourism Development in the region.
- Border districts in trans-Himalayan region across the country have geographical remoteness. All major villages and border roads are remotely located in very high altitude and cold area.
- The terrain features in Sikkim are not suitable for all kinds of transport which restricts integrated and sustainable mobility in the region.
- Rainy season lasts over 7-8 months in many North Eastern Border areas. This climatic condition could result in severe seasonality in tourism. Due to geo-climatic condition and difficult accessibility, business ventures and investments are lacking in the region like Kiphire.
- The terrain features pose challenges to the digital connectivity in many border areas of the country. Digital divide is a critical factor to tap full potential of the border regions since the stakeholders are unable to create their presence in any e-marketing platforms of tourism and can't even make use of online bookings etc.
- High capital maintenance in border districts; cost of infrastructure such as roads, amenities (toilet, café, electricity and hotels are much higher than usual.
- Availability of good accommodation is a major deficit in almost every border destination.

Environmental Concern

- Fragile mountain lands of Himalayan States have major ecological concerns.
- Fragile environment and geo-climatic conditions are common challenges especially for North Eastern Border States.
- Tough terrain is not suitable for all kinds of transport in Sikkim; hence, there are lacks of integrated and sustainable transport system.
- Sustainability issue and carrying capacity is becoming one of the major challenges for the Border Tourism in Ladakh.
- Most of the areas remain snow bound during winters and the temperature goes down as low as minus 20 degree Celsius in border districts of Himachal Pradesh.
- Raising geo-conservational awareness is a critical factor especially in border regions having national parks and protected areas.

Carrying Capacity/ Over Tourism

- Over tourism is another major concern for mountain states like Sikkim or Uttarakhand where tourist influx get concentrated into hill stations of the states and cause major environmental depletion and negative impact due to over tourism.
- Due to opening of Atal Tunnel, tourists outnumbered local population in Lahaul and Spiti of Himachal Pradesh. With exponential rise in the inflow of tourists in the region, there have been many incidents where local communities have expressed their concerns.
- There are major capacity constraints in many border regions where working season is limited and with limited numbers of hotels and cafes in the region, carrying capacity needs to be fixed.

Unskilled Human Resources

- Unskilled labour is one of the major challenges in hospitality and tourism development of almost all the border districts of the country.
- Integration of local population to create tourism security and safety is one of the critical issues in some of the border areas of north India.
- Lack of local entrepreneurs.
- There is a dominant demography of untrained and unemployed youth in most of the border regions who lack awareness about conservation of wildlife and employment opportunities through tourism.

Market Linkages

- Mainly due to the locational disadvantages, the border districts lack successful market linkages.
- The market size is usually very small in most of the border districts.
- Lack of stable economic activities in the aspirational districts of border regions across the country.
- Digital divide is another factor for not having proper market linkage in the border destinations.

Destination Image/ Branding

- Overall misperception that Nagaland is not safe is a critical issue for developing sound tourism activities in Nagaland.
- Negative destination image of Manipur associated with perceived threat is a critical factor for the growth of tourism in the region.
- Border population of North East India tends to be sensitive. Thus, any outside intervention through tourism may unsettle the community unless otherwise sensibly approached.
- Murshidabad is largely underrepresented as a heritage destination of India.
- Once vibrant place like Ferozepur had taken the burn of partition and become abstracted from the limelight which gives it a challenge to reinvent as a tourist destination.
- Lack of proper information about border areas create lot of perceptions about those marginal places which may or may not be entirely truthful and thus, becomes a challenge to create proper destination image of border districts.

Key Areas for Mitigation

Border Management is of immense interest taken by the Government of India. Prime rationale of Border Tourism has therefore, to be connected with the issues of 'connectivity' for the borders regions have always remained abstracted from the 'mainland' of India and thus off the tourism development so far. Therefore, the key areas for mitigations can be characterized in following ways:

Hard Infrastructural Development

- One of the thrust areas for the Government of India is the road as well as air connectivity. RCS-UDAN Scheme puts huge focus on the North East India and other parts of the country.
- ALGs need to open for flights in many far flung border regions. Some of the ALGs also need to be taken into active consideration for domestic flights/ civil aviation.

- Non-functional air strips need to be functional again across the country to shorten up travel time.
- Heli services can be opted by all the States.
- Last mile connectivity to both new and old destinations of Border States also comes to the importance to fully mitigate the connectivity issue.
- Development of budget Hotels and Homestays will further enhance the image of the destination.

Digital Connectivity

- Along with hard infrastructural development, digital part of connectivity, too, holds a great importance. It has been identified as a key 'Confidence Creator' for tourism.
- The role of ICT has already captured much attention into tourism industry operation where tourist needs to remain connected with their own place. Role of Virtual Reality in destination promotion has been talked heavily in industry discourses.
- To deal with 'Digital Divide' is the common fate of any geographically marginal location.
- Border districts need to address the issue of internet and cellular connectivity with top priority.
- Making of Digital Highway is crucial to Border tourism.

Opening up of Border Posts

- More border outlets need to be opened up in any border states for successful Border Tourism.
- Border Tourism needs to be drafted covering different border districts of any state and even interstate.
- Fortifications in strategic locations like Kishangarh Fort or Hindumol Fort need to be promoted as part of Border Tourism.
- More Retreat ceremonies need to be introduced across the borders of the country.
- Much of the borders of India remain restricted which contain huge tourism resources, attempts need to be taken to unlock border regions and ease up ILP process.

Tourism promotion

- Border Tourism requires special branding. Special Border Tourism itinerary needs to be created and recognized by the Tourism Department of any border state.
- New Border Circuit should be created connecting every Border States with their major destinations.
- Needs to evade from the cliched itineraries while designing border circuits. A fresh approach is required to incorporate all border tourism resources.

- Film Tourism in border locations could be promoted.
- Handholding process required for the local tourism entrepreneurs of border districts. State Tourism Departments could play a key role in that.
- A pan India Bloggers/Vloggers Meet to be organized in collaboration with Border District Administrations, Ministry of Tourism and other stakeholders of tourism industry.
- A Trekkers' Meet can be planned in collaboration with the Indian Army.
- Birding/ Butterfly Watching events in collaboration with Department of Tourism and Department of Environment and Forest.

Culture and Heritage Conservation

- Border regions are rich in versatile cultural heritage that require conservation on priority basis.
- Establishment of the Centre for Excellence for local musicians in places like Jaisalmer.
- Systematic inventory checks and documentation for all tangible and intangible cultural heritage of border districts across country is required.
- Systematic conservation process should start from the district level.
- Financial help/incentive required for local performers to continue their performances.

Role of the Indian Army and Border Guarding Forces

- Good civil-military cooperation is much needed to succeed in any Border Tourism project.
- The life and activities of the Border Guarding Forces are to be the prime aspect of border tourism itineraries to inculcate greater awareness of 'Nation' and national security through Border Tourism.
- Initiatives from the Border Guarding Forces to provide some amenities to tourist, to create viewpoints at Border Posts and mountainous terrains, to introduce several adventure activities are very much required.
- It is also significant to take care of the safety and security of tourists. Police stations to be put in place and wherever paramilitary forces are deployed, they need to be sensitized.
- Needs greater engagement of the Indian Army and Border Guarding Forces into Border Tourism initiatives in terms of opening up new border outlets, ease up permission procedures, creating content for delivering to tourists at the border and coordinating the Tourism Department of the respective border state.
- Several difficult trek routes in Indo-China border districts require collaboration with ITBP and the Indian Army.
- Post product development it needs to be taken to the Indian Army by the Ministry of Tourism so that if

a person's KYC is done then at-least domestic tourists should be able to allow access to different parts of border destinations.

Border Management and Border Tourism

- Border Tourism needs to be seen as part of greater Border Management process of border districts of India.
- Continuous dialogue to be initiated between State and Central Ministries of Tourism, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian Army, Border Guarding Forces, District Administrations, Other Civil Departments, Border Communities and Tourism Industry - all are to work together as stakeholders of 'Border Tourism'.
- Multi-Sectoral Approach (MSA) is required to develop a successful Border Tourism Project in any border region of the country.
- Border Tourism should be an integral part of the overall developmental agenda of any border district.
- Going into deeper areas and unlocking the villages with closer proximity to international border will automatically generate rural economy of any border area.
- NITI Aayog owing to its flexibility could play a crucial role in spearheading socio-economic development of border tourism destinations as part of the project of Aspirational District.

Destination Branding

- Border Tourism requires special branding in Incredible India campaign.
- Special Border Tourism itinerary needs to be created and recognized by the Tourism Department of every border state.
- Places like Ferozepur or Murshidabad once vibrant regions of the country despite all obliviousness of time have been able to retain their own legacy, pre-colonial and colonial heritage, history and social lives. The unique history of these places, thus, needs to be retrieved rigorously.
- Heritage Walk/ Heritage Trail/ City Tour in various border destinations need to be introduced.
- Establishments of high end properties and/or brand hotels in cases could attract affluent tourists into the region.
- Lot of signage on highway, destination information display, brand hotels and other promotional aspects required for destination branding.
- Branding should be extended to cross border tourism aspects by creating cross-country itineraries

or international trail like Ramayana Circuit connecting Nepal-India-Sri Lanka.

Capacity Building and Skill Development

- It is of extreme imperative to draw a specific plan for value creation. To create a benchmark for homestay owners as well as a generic protocols for hospitality industry.
- In present day tourism, things have graphed up that quality assurance tend to enhance visitor experience.
- Current domestic tourist profile in India seems to be more discerning traveller who tends to seek value for money.
- Thus round the corner operation must not be encouraged from the very beginning of the plan.

Carrying Capacity/ Sustainability

- Along with the emphasis on quality, there comes a question to rethink about the success indicator for tourism.
- Tourist footfall so far has remained the dominant indicator to measure the success of any tourism destination. The Ministry of Tourism deliberates to not take the 'number' of tourists as sole factor for measuring success.
- To ensure a right balance and not overstepping to the region's environmental and socio-cultural matter.
- Extreme caution to be exercised in tourism areas where IUCN endangered species has already been found (Anjaw) that unregulated tourist footfalls in this area may cause more harm than benefit.
- Destination Management and Planning require special attention. Setting up of DMO is important.
- Robust disaster management system to be in place in mountain regions of India's borderland.
- Need for developing new destinations across the region to divert tourists from getting concentrated in specific hill stations.
- Attempts should be made by all the Border States to create All Season Destination.

Authenticity

- Vernacular touch in every aspect of tourism operation should be implemented be it in accommodation, cuisine and customs so that tourism remains a medium for preservation of local culture.
- Promotion of each place's own USP; not to let the 'Border' dissolve into 'Centre' metaphorically, i.e. resist the over replication of tourism pattern existing in rest of India.



Destination Management

- There are gaps in knowledge and information about how a border area can become a tourist destination. To mitigate this knowledge gap, the industry perspective rather wants to see it through PPP Model.
- For Accommodation, village community might invite community cooperative agreement with private developer to come and create property which respects local architecture, local traditional building, water harvesting, solar power facilities, promotion and running of property by private agency while 75% of staff will be from local community.
- This is a good way to bring in local expertise to develop destination to run these facilities for some time till the locals become proficient in this matter and eventually step out of that leaving it with the local community to take it forward.
- Provide loan to homestays by the State Government under relevant scheme would be an optimum solution for encouraging community to step into tourism entrepreneurship.
- For Birding/Butterfly Watching and other similar special interest tourism, it needs to utilize the existing expertise that are there in the North eastern region to invite them to accompany the local youth, to train them about those species.
- In any desolate destination, the evenings tend to become much quieter. Need to use that time for local interaction with stories, legends and interacting with local children in small group, which can bring profound impact on visitor satisfaction level and enhance the experience. Direct interaction between host and guest to know different way of life.

Tourism Market in India and Tourist Profile

- Aspiring India's market for tourism has the ability to pay, thus number of footfall should not be the only way to benchmark for the success of the State.
- Covid-19 pandemic paused international travel which has opened up possibility to develop more Domestic Tourism.
- Promoting high end tourism in the sparsely populated border areas could be considered to focus on high end clientele and build high end tourism in the border areas with low-density population.
- High end tourism may help in restricting the number of visitors and invite pioneer investors in the region.
- Erstwhile outbound market of India tourism could be tapped as high end clientele.
- To promote the North Eastern States Borderland, it

needs alignment with 'Look East Policy' i.e. focus towards the East Asian countries as potential tourist market.

- Tourists' perception (especially those belonging to the urban centre of the country) about border regions/ stereotypes needs to be corrected through pan India efforts by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

'Tourism with a Purpose': From Leisure to Learning

- Tourism has perpetually been perceived by mainly its hedonistic nature and that has been practiced and accepted almost unquestionably in tourism industry.
- However, there is a scope for current Border Tourism project to shape it from the beginning in a way that it not merely turns into any sort of common tourism affair, rather becomes a deeper learning experience.
- To connect the Border Community projects to Voluntourism or Special Interest Tourism market, to encourage more educational trip into border destinations, to incorporate tourism into farming, weaving, crafting and other community driven projects etc.
- Needs a separate Border Tourism Policy above all.
- Border Tourism must be 'people driven' and that 'tourism with a purpose'. This conviction must lead to form a Border Tourism in any area more ethically sound and akin to fulfill responsible tourism objectives and also, rich in learning experience.
- Strict code of conduct for tourists should be laid down and local administration should be able to intervene wherever necessary.
- State and Central Ministries of Tourism need to be more vigilant in evaluating the role of travel intermediaries in maintaining the sanctity of any border destination.
- Zero tolerance policy should be there in place to prevent any kind of unethical behavior/ practices/ pollution (including sound pollution) and cultural contamination.
- It needs sensitization of tourists and not only the host communities.

Concluding Thoughts

- Border Tourism is a unique product of Incredible India. It needs to remember the uniqueness of India's borderland formed by its geographies and historicity. The product lines of Border Tourism in India will thus be non-replicable if designed carefully. The theatrical and sensuous nature of any border needs to be properly designed within Border Tourism format.



- Border Trails should include all national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, desert land, grassland and creek. While designing tourism products of various border locations, the lesser known products like Astro Tourism, Monsoon Tourism, Geo-Tourism, Military Heritage, Cross-Border Cultural Tourism and Root Tourism could be designed. Border Trails can be designed based on Ancient Trade Routes/ The Foot Prints of Chinese Traveller Huen Sang/ The trans-Himalayan journey taken by Guru Padmasambhava of Tibetan Buddhism/ Freedom Trail by connecting places important to the freedom struggle of India, etc.
- The sentiment of populations living in the borderlands must be taken into account before initiating any project. The voice and vision of the elderly and women of any border village need to be taken into consideration in any major decision making process of tourism over there. Over tourism should be avoided at all costs and strict code of conduct should be implemented from the very beginning.
- Various fiscal measures and utilizations of various schemes are necessary.
- Cross-Border Tourism should be seen as a Confidence Building Measure. Cross border ties and trade, Border Haats, people to people contact sharing common thoughts éall have essentially to be part of Border Tourism.
- More Experiential Tourism need to be encouraged rather than fixed common itineraries. Innovative itineraries can offer holistic experience of any border region. Border Tourism should be an instrument for breaking away the long lasting stereotypes of tourists' perception about other marginal places of India.
- The notion of centre and margin requires being little more flexible and arbitrary in the sense while any border is last mile from the perspective of the centre of India, it can at the same time be the first mile for cross-border inbound tourist. Thus proper destination representation and grooming of such border points need special focus and to be promoted as the first mile of India for inbound traveller entering through those points.
- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India needs to give special focus on younger population of the country while creating any border narrative, representation and simulation in the border destinations to make them aware about the past. Border Tourism must be included into the Curricula of Tourism education in India.
- Differently abled population always tends to remain abstracted from any policy. The facilities - infrastructure, border narratives and simulation should be taken into consideration this large segment that otherwise remain as minority in the sense of not being able to get fuller access to tourism experience.
- Finally, borders are not actually happy lines of Indian history. They witnessed greatest ever human movement in the history of mankind, witnessed endless skirmishes and war. Certainly these carry an inevitable weightage which must not be taken for granted. Border Tourism will essentially have to be a humbling experience for every Indian tourist as well as for the people of other countries who visit the borders.
- The border lines are the living testimonies of India as nation state. Border Tourism should be seen as part of national integration process.



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Introduction

1. Borderlands of India

India has a large and complex land border, covering around 15,106.7 km, which it shares with Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and a small area with Afghanistan. The borders of India comprise deserts, fertile lands, swampy marshes, snow-covered peaks and tropical evergreen jungles. In addition to the unique and varying terrain related conditions, extreme climates, geopolitics and military relations with neighbors exacerbate the challenges for border security, which are already vulnerable to insurgency, smuggling and illegal migration.

1.1 Name of the Bordering Countries and Length of the Border (in KM)

Table 1.1.1: Name of the Bordering Countries and Length of the Border (in KM)

Name of the Country	Length of the Border (in KM)
Bangladesh	4096.7
China	3488.0
Pakistan	3323.0
Nepal	1751.0
Myanmar	1643.0
Bhutan	699.0
Afghanistan	106.0
Total	15,106.7

Source: MHA Annual Report 2019-20

The lands bordering China alone, China and Bhutan and China and Myanmar in places have an average altitude of more than 2000 meters. Socio-demographically, the people who live in upper hill ranges in border districts have a lower life expectancy, lower literacy level and a comparatively higher concentration of scheduled tribe population than those who live in the non- border districts.

As per selected economic indicators, most of the border districts have a higher dependence on agriculture, but low agricultural productivity and also a higher incidence of human poverty (Mittra 2020:8). The generic problems of border areas include lack of educational infrastructure, transport and communication, non-availability of health services, erratic supply of electricity, almost no potable water supply, sanitation problem, frequent landslides, isolation and remoteness. Indeed, due to socio-historical reasons, these areas of the country had suffered from backwardness in almost all spheres of economic development which resulted in large scale migration of human population from the already sparsely populated border areas.

Lack of employment opportunities has also given rise to the youth being lured to various crimes and insurgency. Lack of basic facilities has also adversely affected implementation of Government's Plans and programmes in those areas.

The terrain features pose severe constraint on the construction of roads. Due to low population levels, developments of infrastructure along the border have long remained neglected. Hence, there was only a limited and rudimentary road network, primarily for sustenance of troops deployed in the region. Due to low temperatures, there are fewer construction hours and lower efficiency of equipment. The remoteness of and environmental constraints led to a longer construction period and also the maintenance of existing roads remained a challenge.

**Table 1.1.2: Name of the Border States/Union Territories of India**

Name of the Country	Bordering States/UTs of India
Pakistan	3323 kms running along Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh
China	3488 kms running along Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Ladakh
Nepal	1751 kms running along Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim
Bhutan	699 kms running along Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
Bangladesh	4096.70 kms running along West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram
Myanmar	1643 kms running along Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram
Afghanistan	106 kms running along Union Territory of Ladakh

Source: Department of Border Management, Annexure-1, 2021

In these complex conditions, the challenges of development, the socio-economic condition as well as livelihood linkages of the people of international border areas of the country demands a special attention and scrutiny. Despite resourcefulness, these areas are often considered as underdeveloped and economically backward with low standard of living for the people and chronic unemployment issues for which any systematic development of tourism in these areas are yet to be done.

1.2 NITI Aayog Aspirational District Programme and its stake in Border Tourism

The Aspirational District Programme was launched by the Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi in 2018, with the objective of expediting the transformation of 112 most backward districts across 28 states through the convergence of government programmes and schemes. The districts were chosen by senior officials of the Union government in consultation with states officials. To shortlist states, a composite index of deprivation was constructed using a range of socio-economic indicators. A minimum of one district was initially chosen from every state (except Goa).

As the programme is a policy priority of the Government of India, it is anchored by the NITI Aayog which works in collaboration with central and state governments for the programme to streamline the effectiveness and provide regular checks and guidelines. As a result, officers of Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary ranks have been nominated as 'Central Prabhari Officers' of each district, who together with state nodal officers work with the respective District Collectors/ District Magistrates to drive change at the grassroots level.

Furthermore, an Empowered Committee comprising of Secretaries (Department Heads) of key Central Ministries has also been set up under the Chief Executive Officer, NITI Aayog to support the various levels of government. This institutional structure is based on an inclusive approach to governance termed as 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' which aims to facilitate growth and development of the entire district, rather than any single group of population. This motto is mirrored in the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB), the central and transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It was often found that these districts, often rich in recreational, cultural and natural resources provide great potentials for the development of the Border Tourism. Thus active deliberations through the knowledge series by the members of NITI Aayog have given indication to how tourism can become one of the instruments for the socio economic development of the region.

This is an attempt to push for substantial growth across various socio-economic parameters that still remain somewhat distant from inclusive growth and inclusive development for these districts. Tourism here envisioned as an alliance of development, and a portal of exposure for border population to the rest of the country and vice versa. It is envisaged that direct intervention from NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Tourism can influence perceptions of tourists and contribute to the realization of the full potential of that area.



Table 1.2.1: Name of the Aspirational Districts selected for PHDCCI Border Tourism Webinars

S. No.	Name of Aspirational Districts Selected for Border Tourism	Name of the State/UT
1.	Ferozepur	Punjab
2.	Jaisalmer	Rajasthan
3.	Udham Singh Nagar	Uttarakhand
4.	Sravasti	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Sitamarhi	Bihar
6.	West District	Sikkim
7.	Baksa	Assam
8.	Kiphire	Nagaland
9.	Chandel	Manipur
10.	Mamit	Mizoram
11.	Dhalai	Tripura
12.	Murshidabad	West Bengal

1.3 Aims and Objectives

There are often found gaps in knowledge and information about how a border area can become a tourist destination. There is also shortage in expertise, existing networks and experience in collaborating on tourism between stakeholders in border areas compounded with gaps in accessibility, transport and economic infrastructure that are required to supply quality products and services in tourism in border areas.

The aim of the PHDCCI initiative is to find interconnection between Ministry of Tourism, State Tourism Development Boards, community participation and industry participation through the webinar series.

Border Tourism essentially entails strategic planning, which enables considering all relevant data for the state-of-play analysis, defining the tourism development vision, key priorities as well as a clear action plan to be followed by actors. Besides ensuring common strategic planning, it is necessary to ensure participation of the local population in the entire process. Within the scope of the present study all these issues have been addressed and attempts were made to come up with actionable outcomes.

1.4 Nature of the Document

The present White Paper on Border Tourism is based upon the 18 knowledge sessions organized by the PHDCCI from June 2021 to February 2022. The long webinar series explored 18 border districts from 18 different States/ UTs having international borders with neighboring countries. A number of people from the PHDCCI, the Central and State Ministries of Tourism, Border Districts Administrations, Members of NITI Aayog, India's Tourism and Hospitality Industry Experts have made their active deliberations on the series of webinars 'Highlighting the Potential of Tourism in Border Districts/ UTs of India' focusing on various border districts of the country.

Panel discussions explored the possibilities for development of Border Tourism in the border destinations of different States/ UTs and discussed various issues (connectivity, synergies between the tourism and technology sectors, public-private partnerships and proactive community participation and skill building etc.) which could underpin the Border Tourism in these areas. Panel discussions also explored the factors that undermine the tourism development and identified the key areas for mitigation. Within the scope of the present document, those deliberations were reflected in almost intact fashion and attempts were made to come up with a way forward.

The border districts discussed in current document are divided under six international borders areas, namely, Indo-Pak Border Tourism, Indo-China Border Tourism, Indo-Myanmar Border Tourism, Indo-Bhutan Border Tourism, Indo-Bangladesh Border Tourism and Indo-Nepal Border Tourism. Adopting from the work of Martinez on Mexican border (1994), Maini (2004) has classified Indian borderlands into four categories: alienated, co-existent, interdependent and integrated. While in alienated borderlands, borders are hostile and there is minimal or virtually no cross-border interaction and communication, co-existent and interdependent borderlands are similar in nature, there is a reasonable amount of interaction and economic



linkages, more in interdependent borderlands. Integrated borderlands are those that are dependent upon each other and are the most integrated. This classification is found equally pertinent to Border Tourism Projects. The products and element to experience in borders of India will vary greatly upon this classification.

Discussion of each border district is started with brief overview and tourism development of the respective State/UT followed by brief report on the webinar on that particular focus District/State. The report continues to take further the description of focus border district, its existing and potential tourist places. Based on the knowledge session, a possible product line is drawn for each border district report wherein the core challenges and way forward have also been detailed.

Creation of borders was historical arrangements mainly associated with colonialism. Historicity, thus, has been given much importance to describe each border districts rather than the objective details about them. Tourism is inherently a subjective matter: deals with people, culture, history and the surrounding nature which cannot really be fully graspable though objective parameters and more so, the historical shifts have actually rendered many such passages which are now considered to be valuable components of Border Tourism.

Apart from transcribed data, various other discourses e.g. different policy document, reports, working papers, academic articles, journals, news and media report have been consulted developing the present document.

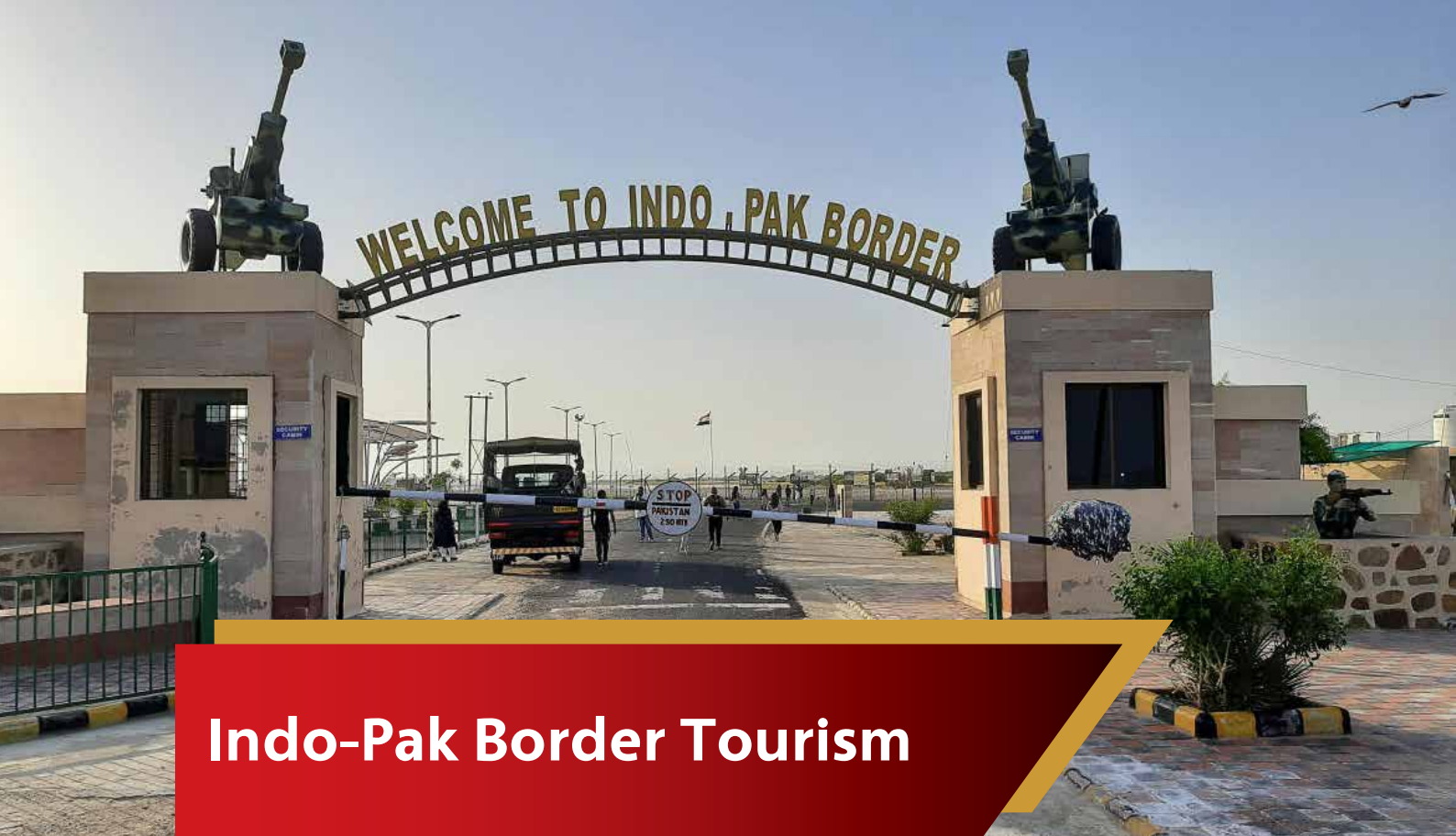




INDO-PAK **BORDER TOURISM**

• PUNJAB • RAJASTHAN • GUJARAT • JAMMU & KASHMIR





Indo-Pak Border Tourism

The Indo-Pakistan border in north-west India, on the other hand, was created in 1947 based on the Radcliffe Line, covering a length of 3,323 km along the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Punjab and Rajasthan. This is one of the most active borders and faces key challenges like infiltration and smuggling. The harsh and varied climatic conditions along this 3,323 km of border compound the challenges faced by our armed forces in securing these areas. Factors like political instability and crisis in Pakistan also lead to an upsurge in cross-border infiltration and threats due to terrorism, creating tension along the border areas. As a measure of control, India started fencing its border in the 1990s and successfully completed fencing Jammu, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat by 2011. Fencing and floodlighting, together with electrification, have been successful in checking all sorts of infiltration to a large extent.

The threats and challenges that India has been facing along its border with Pakistan over the decades have propelled the Indian government to innovate policies and plans to manage the border in such a way that the border is sufficiently hardened to effectively prevent the entry of terrorists and traffickers while at the same time permitting legitimate trade and travel through designated checkpoints.

In fact, a number of initiatives that presently comprise India's border management practices had been initially devised and implemented along the India-Pakistan international border. These include the creation of a border guarding force, BSF in 1965, the construction of fences along the border in the 1980s, the implementation of the Border Area Development Programme in 1987 and more recently the construction and operationalization of the integrated check post in Attari in 2012. The present border management framework that is employed along the India-Pakistan international border has four elements: guarding the border against terrorist and criminal groups; efficient facilitation of trade and travel at designated entry points; development of the border areas; and constituting bilateral mechanisms (Das 2014: 312).

After partition, the Radcliffe region became a zone of transition where millions of people crossed the borders to what they hoped was the relative safety of religious majority. Historically, the Partition was a highly controversial arrangement. According to geo-political scenario, this hastily drawn up border remains as an open wound. The violent nature of the partition created an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan that plagues their relationship till date. What ensued was one of the largest population movements in recorded history which resulted in lack of basic facilities and access to resources such as water, education; health care are issues that affect large parts of the country.

Despite all hostility, the long Indo-Pak border areas of the country is immensely rich in nature and culture and thus, often provides with great potentials for the development of the Border Tourism. The four border districts, namely, Ferozepur (Punjab), Jaisalmer (Rajasthan), Kutch (Gujarat) and Jammu (Jammu & Kashmir) from Indo-Pak Border States are elaborated as potential Border Tourism Destinations.

Tourism here envisioned as an alliance of development, and a portal of exposure for border population to the rest of the country and vice versa. Ferozepur (Punjab) and Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) happen to be two Aspirational Districts under Aspirational District Programme of NITI Aayog where based on various socio-economic parameters the overall development project is going on in these districts.

2. Border Tourism in Punjab



Source: Maps of India

2.1 Introduction

Punjab remains a classic example of a fast developing economy with agriculture as its base. The state of Punjab has approximately 553 kms of international borders with Pakistan, comprising the districts of Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka. This state predominantly depends on the agriculture for its economy and livelihood. Across the length of the border there is fencing of barbed wire from half to three kilometres to prevent human infiltration. District-wise, the state has 1931 villages with many of them at the zero-line border zone.

2.2 Tourism Development in Punjab

Punjab has witnessed an exponential growth in domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in the last 10 years. The State is strategically located and well connected. Tourism and Hospitality sector has been earmarked as a thrust sector under Punjab Industrial and Business Development Policy 2017.

The Department of Tourism strives to establish Punjab as a world-class destination, offering a unique, different and memorable experience to tourists, ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism development and firmly turning tourism into an engine for fostering socio-economic development in the State. The mission of the Department is to work relentlessly to increase the annual tourist visits in the State from 25 million to 55 million by 2023 by creating new infrastructure and improving the existing ones.

Figure 2.2.1: Punjab Government initiatives to provide thrust to Tourism Sector**Table 2.2.2: Punjab: Key Thematic Areas in Tourism**

Theme	Main Attractions/ Location (in District/Town)
Religious Shrines	Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar; Sri Anandpur Sahib, Rupnagar Dist. (Ropar); Moorish Mosque, Kapurthala; Ram Tirath, Amritsar; Sri Durgiana Temple, Amritsar; Taqht Sri Damdama Sahib, Bhatinda; Rauza Sharif-Fatehgarh Sahib; Jama Masjid Khair-Ud-Din, Amritsar; Saint Paul Church, Amritsar
Freedom Trail	Jallianwalah Bagh, Amritsar; Jang-e-Azadi Memorial, Kartarpur; Partition Museum, Amritsar; Khatkar Kalan, SBS Nagar; The National Martyrs Memorial, Ferozepur; Kuka Memorial, Sangrur; Chhota Ghallugharah, Gurdaspur; Waddah Ghallughara, Sangrur; Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Memorial, Chappar Chirri; War Memorial, Amritsar
Heritage Sites	Cradle of Indus Valley Civilization: Sanghol-Sri Fatehgarh Sahib and Archeological Site - Rupnagar Forts and Palaces: Bahadurgarh Fort, Patiala; Anandgarh Fort, Sri Anandpur Sahib; Phillaur Fort, Jalandhar; Gobindgarh Fort, Amritsar; Sheesh Mahal, Patiala; Qila Mubarak, Patiala; Jagjit Palace, Kapurthala; Bhatinda Fort
Ecotourism Hotspots	Out of 26 National Ramsar Sites three are in Punjab: Harike Wetland; Ropar Wetland; Kanjli Wetland 2 sites declared as National Wetlands: Nangal Wetland; Keshopur Wetland
Cultural Landmarks	Fairs and Festivals: Kila Raipur Games; Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan; Hola Mahalla; Sufi Darbar; Baba Sheikh Farid Aagman
Border Tourism	Wagah Border, Amritsar; Hussainiwala Border, Ferozepur District

2.3 Recent Activities undertaken by State Departments in Punjab

Strategy to realize the Sustainable Development Goals

The strategy to realize the sustainable development goal is to devise and implement plan schemes, ensuring people's participation, skill development and human resources development which are envisaged in the policies adopted for the purpose. The main action points of the strategy are as under:

- Formation of Tourism Advisory Council
- Infrastructure and super infrastructure development
- Project Development and diversification
- Rural Tourism and local community development/private partnership
- Support to small and medium enterprises
- Linkages with travel trade
- Leisure and recreation
- Stress shall be laid on the development of eco-tourism sites in Shivalik areas, Harike Wetland, Kanjli & Ropar Wetlands, which are internationally recognized Ramsar sites
- Tapping and untapped potential of NRIs
- Promotion of media and film tourism
- Heritage properties as heritage hotels
- The State is providing incentives to the tourism industry under the Industrial & Business Development Policy 2017
- Various Schemes (Tented Accommodation Scheme, Bed & Breakfast Scheme, Heritage Property as Heritage Hotel, Farm Stay) have been introduced

2.4 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Punjab and Focus District: Ferozepur



(From L to R): Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog; Mr. Gurpal Singh Chahal (IAS), Deputy Commissioner - Ferozepur District, Government of Punjab; Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. R S Sachdeva, Mentor - Punjab State Chapter, PHDCCI; Mr. Harsh Mittal, Manager - Marketing and Skill Development, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board, Government of Punjab; Mr. Manasvee Pushkarna, Director of Sales, Taj Hotels; Mr. Anirudh Gupta, CEO, D.C.M. Group of Schools; Mr. Manmeet Singh, Chairman - Punjab Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism in Punjab with focus district Ferozepur was organized on 14th July 2021 by the PHDCCI. Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI had detailed about the focus district (Ferozepur) along with its existing tourism resources and outlined the challenges with regard to the development of Border Tourism in the region.

Subsequent panel discussions explored the possibilities for development of Border Tourism in Ferozepur and discussed

various issues (heritage and other legacies of Ferozepur district, connectivity, border dynamics, synergies between the tourism and other sectors, public-private partnerships, proactive community participation and skill building etc.) which could underpin the Border Tourism in these areas. Panel discussions also explored the factors that undermine the tourism development and identified the key areas for mitigation.

The deliberations started with Mr. Gurpal Singh Chahal (IAS), Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepur District, Government of Punjab, informed that recently Punjab Government has sanctioned INR 5 crores for the development of Light and Sound Show at the National Martyrs Memorial at Hussainiwalla Border. The Indo-Pak Retreat Ceremony at Hussainiwalla Border is a popular activity and can be witnessed from as close as 100 feet from the Zero Line. If developed and marketed properly, this can outshine the retreat ceremony at Wagah Border, Amritsar.

He further mentioned that the Harike Wild Life Sanctuary, situated on the confluence of the River Beas and Sutlej at the Ferozepur and Amritsar border is one of the most important Wild Life Sanctuaries being recognized throughout the world. It has the potential for promoting eco-tourism and other activities like bird watching, boating.

Appreciating the efforts of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog, informed that Ferozepur district has performed extremely well in the ADP with average growth of 25% in all the thematic areas. He focused on the linkages of ADP with tourism and explained how tourism could directly contribute to the socio-economic development of the place itself. Significantly he has proposed a 'Deshbhakti Circuit' within Ferozepur and Punjab to inculcate the spirit of patriotism in Border Tourism. He also focused on the intra district transportation, skill development infrastructural and financial issues related to Border tourism.

Mr. Harsh Mittal, Manager of Marketing and Skill Development, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board, Government of Punjab, discussed about the projects and initiatives undertaken by the state government to attract more tourists to the state. He shared that a project 'Countryside' has been launched which helps in promoting authentic cuisine, culture and the rural side of Punjab to the tourists. He further said that there are three retreat ceremonies organized at Attari, Ferozepur and Fazilka. While Attari is already a popular tourist attraction, the other two need push for the promotion of Border Tourism in the state.

Mr. Manasvee Pushkarna, Director of Sales, Taj Hotels, has given a highly systematic input on the marketing and management of destination Ferozepur. He has detailed his deliberation based on the aspects, namely, Connectivity, Unique History of the Place, Hotel Availability, Hotel Brand, Rates, Accessibility and Parasytal Promotion. He has particularly pointed out the marketing loopholes and other management issues which are crucial in promoting Ferozepur district as a Border Tourism destination.

Mr. Manmeet Singh, Chairman of Punjab Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has significantly explained the theatrical aspect of Ferozepur Border Retreat. He mentioned that while Amritsar has been a tourist attraction for years, there is a need to promote Ferozepur and other adjacent areas of Punjab. He said that the government needs to improve the infrastructure at Hussainiwalla Border and Saragarhi Memorial so that Film Tourism can be promoted at these areas. He has also outlined several small and big itineraries connecting Ferozepur with other destinations of Punjab and stressed upon the types of tourists to be connected with the Border Tourism of the region.

Mr. Anirudh Gupta, CEO, D.C.M. Group of Schools, has deliberated on the emotional aspects of Ferozepur as a Border District. Very poignantly he delved deep into every detail of pre-colonial and colonial legacies that still exist in Ferozepur district and could serve as immense resource for Border Tourism in the district. He has talked in length about all the lesser known and even unknown attributes of Ferozepur district alone which are strong enough to make the district as one of the significant Border Tourism Destinations of India.

2.5 Border Tourism in Ferozepur

2.5.1 Introduction

Ferozepur (also known as Ferozepur) District was the southern-most of the seven districts of the Jalandhar Division of the Punjab State before 15 August 1973. On that date, the new Ferozepur Division was formed and the Ferozepur district was included in it. The boundary of the present Ferozepur District on the east runs along the Faridkot District. On the north-east, the River Sutlej generally separates it from the Jalandhar and Kapurthala districts. The united stream of the Sutlej and the Beas generally separates it from the Amritsar district in the north-west, and farther down from the Pakistan, with the exception of some areas on each side of the river.

The District produced and nursed Lala Lajpat Rai, in its village Dhudike. On the west bank of the Sutlej, some six miles from the Ferozepur town, the bodies of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were cremated after they had been hanged in the Lahore Jail in March, 1931. The spot has lately been transferred to India from West Pakistan and it adjoins the Hussainiwalla head works on the other side of the Sutlej.

Historic Ferozepur district, once known as one of the biggest districts of Punjab had to take the burn of partition. Till 1971 the Indo-Pak border of Ferozepur was opened which had facilitated trade and movements and kept vibrancy to some extent. This, however, has become closed fully after Indo-Pak war in 1971. Since then Ferozepur as a border district of Punjab has been crumbled with many socio-economic backwardness.

In the given context, Ferozepur as a developmentally challenged district has been selected for the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative anchored by NITI Aayog in 2018. This is an attempt to push for substantial growth across various socio-economic parameters that still remain somewhat distant from inclusive growth and inclusive development for Ferozepur and other districts with similar condition. The programme is implemented with active partnership of state government and state administrations of each Aspirational District. It aims to remove the socio-economic heterogeneity through a mass movement to quickly and effectively transform the aspirational districts.

Despite the developmental challenges, Ferozepur district has been able to retain its tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage, rich pre-colonial and colonial legacies and thus, provides with great potentials for the development of the Border Tourism.

2.5.2 Tourist Places in Ferozepur

National Martyrs Memorial, Hussainiwalla Border

The memorial is constructed on the banks of River Sutlej for the young Indian revolutionaries Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru and BK Dutt. Out of which the first three were hanged in Lahore Jail for the Lahore Conspiracy case on 23 March 1931 and their bodies were burnt and thrown to the river by the British authorities in this Hussainiwalla village fearing their popularity during the Freedom struggle of India. BK Dutt died in 1960s and his wish was to bury his remains at this site.



National Martyrs Memorial, Hussainiwalla Border

In the right-hand corner of the memorial park is an arched tunnel-gate with shell and bullet holes dating back to the 1965 conflict. There is a War Memorial for the martyrs of 1971 Indo-Pak war, a memorial for 'Punjab-Mata' (Vidhyavathi- Bhagat Singh's mother), an Amarjyothi, statue of the three heroes and a park Ayyangar to it.

Hussainwala Indo-Pak Border

At Hussainiwalla, people watch a relatively simple Beating the Retreat ceremony, which is a class apart from the tension and shouting at the Wagah Border. Even the soldiers are informal with each other. The border parade is unique of its kind since this is the only place where the soldiers will cross the Zero line during parade.

Anglo Sikh War Memorial, Ferozeshah

The Punjab Government constructed this Memorial at Ferozeshah to perpetuate the memory of the brave Punjabis who laid down their lives fighting heroically against the British troops at Mudki Ferozeshah Sabhraon and Chellianwala.

Chak Sarkar Forest, Mamdot

There is a block forest area near the village of Mamdot, called Chak Sarkar which has been declared as a Reserved Forest by the Government of Punjab. This is a compact area supporting some natural forest with the rest of the area being rehabilitated with artificial regeneration.



Gurudwara Shri Jaamani Sahib, Bazidpur

Gurudwara Shri Jaamani Sahib is situated in village Bazidpur, Distt. Ferozepur. It is situated on the Ferozepur-Ludhiana Road, just 8 km from Ferozepur City. Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji came here after battle of Muktsar Sahib.

Jamini Sahib Gurudwara Bazidpur

Barki Memorial

The Barki Memorial was constructed in 1969 to perpetuate the memory of the soldiers of the 7 Infantry Division who made the supreme sacrifice on the battle field in 1965 and paved the way for the fall of Barki, a town situated at a distance of 15 miles south-east of Lahore. The memorial which now forms a part of Saragarhi Complex has a pillar in the centre, a pattern tank and a barki mile stone on the south and a water fountain on the north. The pillar is 27 feet high and is built of red and white sand stone and gneise.



Barki Memorial, Ferozepur Cantt.



Saragarhi Memorial Gurudwara, Ferozepur Cantt

Saragarhi Memorial, Ferozepur Cantt.

Saragarhi Memorial Gurudwara has been built in the memory of 21 Sikh soldiers of the 36 Sikh Regiment who fell in heroic defence of Fort Saragarhi in Waziristan on 12 September 1897 while defending the fort against an attack of ten thousand Pathans.

Shan-e-Hind Gate

This 42 feet long, 91 feet wide and 56 feet high Shan-e-Hind designed by Chief Architect, Punjab which is considered as a fine reply to 30 feet high Fakhr-E-Pak constructed on the Pakistan side about 30 years ago.

Indo-Pak Retreat Ceremony, Hussainiwala Border

People from far away visit here to watch the robust BSF Jawans competing their counterpart to prove an edge over them.



Indo-Pak Retreat Ceremony



Harike Wild Life Sanctuary

Harike Wetland & Wild Life Sanctuary

The Harike Wetland, also known as 'Hari-ke-Pattan' is one of the largest freshwater wetlands in Northern India and spreads into the three districts of Ferozepur, Kapurthala and Taran Taran in the State of Punjab. It was declared wetland of National importance in 1987 and was included as a Ramsar Site No. 462 (i.e. in the list of Wetlands of international importance amongst the 25 Indian Ramsar Sites) in 1990. The Government of Punjab had also declared Harike Wetland as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1982. This is a man-made, riverine, lacustrine wetland. Harike Wetland supports 360 species of avifauna, 50 indigenous species of fishes, 7 species of turtle and 4 species of snakes etc.

2.5.3 Product Attributes of Border Tourism in Ferozepur

Sensing the 'Border'

Experiencing 'Border' by 'being' there itself is a sensuous process which evokes many emotions. The existing Hussainiwala Border is one of the prime locations to focus on Border Tourism in Ferozepur. Proximity to border as compared to Attari-



Wagah gives Hussainiwala border a unique proposition which needs to be utilized as the USP of Border Tourism of Ferozepur. Creation of Border narrative for Hussainiwala and more promotion for the border of Ferozepur need to be augmented. It needs to connect with Sadiq (Fazilka) and Attari-Wagah (Amritsar) Ceremonies to create a sustained Border Trail for Border Tourism.

Military Heritage Tourism

Tourism to military locations and structures can play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, especially those of the younger generation. A completed journey may serve as an occasion for reflection and lead to contemplation of the dramatic consequences of war and can be evocative for one to actually 'feel' the Nation. Saragarhi Memorial, Anglo- Sikh War Memorial, Barki Memorial or the War Memorial of 1971 near Indo-Pak Border altogether serves the essence of Military Heritage Tourism which can be an essential component for Border Tourism in Ferozepur.

Heritage Tourism

- Largely unknown, Ferozepur Fort holds immense potential for Heritage Tourism in Ferozepur. Much of the history of Ferozepur Fort dates back to 1830's when East India Company set up a military installation in a mud-and-brick frontier magazine that later was converted into an arsenal, the biggest even at the time of World War II.
- Ferozepur was a walled city of 10 gates existed. Like other such structures, these were christened to indicate the name of the destination they would lead to. The present-day circular road in the city was dotted with these gates. The Delhi and Ludhiana (Baghdadi) gates were towards the south; Makhu towards the east; Bansawala towards the north; and the Kasur and Multan Gates on the west. Others included the Zira Gate, the Amritsari Gate, the Kasuri Gate, and the Magazine Gate.
- The old town was divided into two parts by the main bazaar, which ran from the Delhi Gate in the south to the Bansawala Gate in the north. 'A metalled circular road girdles the wall around the city and is 23,870 feet long. Outside the periphery are well-maintained gardens along the road on the west of which is the present-day city railway station. The town was surrounded on all sides by small hamlets or suburbs,' notes the Gazetteer (1915). These elements of history need to be retrieved and interpreted through the conducted 'Heritage Walk' in the city.
- The martial history of Ferozepur town is unmistakable, as is the intermingling of it with socio-cultural legacy. In the National Martyr's Memorial precincts, one finds the remains of Kaiser-i-Hind Bridge, built in 1885-87. This fort-like engineering marvel was once a broad-gauge railway lifeline from Lahore, across the river Sutlej to Ferozepur. It bears the hallmark of time travel with the carefully preserved railway tracks and a bridge that finishes midway, going nowhere. This railway track and the embedded history can be a significant notion of Border Tourism which testifies the Partition of India.

Film Tourism

Film Tourism is one of the potential market to tap for promoting Border Tourism in Ferozepur. By using the location for film shootings, the place could attract revenue. On the other hand, Film induced Tourism could enhance destination branding for Ferozepur.

Rural Tourism

Punjab Tourism Department has already introduced schemes on Farm Stay Tourism. The scheme once implemented in Ferozepur context could pave way for promotion of authentic Punjabi Rural Culture of Ferozepur. Rural Tourism initiatives could create community-led and community-benefitting tourism opportunities in Ferozepur. Existing quality of hospitality embedded in the people of Ferozepur district needs to be tapped to fully develop authentic form of Rural Tourism in the area.

Eco Tourism and Adventure Tourism

Harike Wetland is one of the famous Ramsar sites of India which provides with immense potential for Eco Tourism and Special Interest Tourism with reference to Bird Watching in the Wetland itself. Chak Sarkar Forest could also be promoted as ecotourism spot in the District. Different Aqua based adventure activities could be promoted in Ferozepur, for example, stream from Hussainiwala upstream up to Harike can be used for Rafting Academy.

Day Excursion and Mixed Itinerary

Border Tourism of Ferozepur could also be developed in combination with other major destinations of Punjab and/or through Day Excursion mode. The following itinerary could be designed comprising other products into Border Tourism, such as: Qila Raipur of Ludhiana (Rural Olympic) → Hari-Ke-Pattan of Ferozepur (Wetland Ecotourism) → Amritsar.



Connecting with Freedom Trail

Border Tourism Project of Ferozepur needs to connect with the existing Freedom Trail of Punjab Tourism. Border narratives as well as the legacies of freedom movement underlying in Border locations need to be interpreted through content creation. Role of Border Guarding Forces as well as the Indian Army might be crucial in content development.

2.5.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Ferozepur

- The border of once vibrant locale of Ferozepur has gone oblivious over time which needs to be retrieved. As compared to Attari-Wagah Border Ceremony, the Hussainiwala Border tends to remain subsided despite its unique proposition.
- How to divert and/or entice a large number of tourists towards Ferozepur who visit Amritsar each year is a question.
- Connectivity is another major problem in border areas of Ferozepur which poses challenge to the Border Tourism Development in the region.
- Lack of proper accommodation and other amenities.
- Overall developmental challenges and lack of proper exposure have a limiting effect in the areas' overall tourism development process.

2.5.5 Way Forward

- Ferozepur needs to be well connected with other destinations of Punjab.
- Intra district transportation services are important for which introduction of subsidized e-rickshaw etc. could be useful for local employment too.
- Last mile connectivity to both new and old destinations of the State also comes to the importance to fully mitigate the connectivity issue.
- Along with hard infrastructural development, the Digital part of connectivity, too, holds a great importance. It has been identified as a key 'Confidence Creator' for tourism.
- Availability of good hotels is a critical factor to make Border Tourism successful in the District. Farm stay and other form of rural accommodation needs to be developed to highlight border region of the district.
- Heritage Walk/ Heritage Trail could be developed in and around historic Ferozepur city uncovering all its legacies, especially Ferozepur Fort needs to be focused by the Government of Punjab as a significant heritage asset.
- All six Border districts should be incorporated into Border Tourism. Border Circuit of Punjab Tourism needs to be fashioned where Ferozepur would be themed centrally as Border destination.
- Border Tourism projects need to be seen as part of overall development agendas of border districts of Ferozepur. District administrations need to modulate and sensitize the local community of the areas for developing tourism. NITI Aayog owing to its flexibility could play a crucial role in spearheading socio-economic development of border tourism destinations as part of the project of Aspirational District.
- Greater engagement of the Indian Army and Border Guarding Forces and good civil-military cooperation require for facilitating with tourism amenities (tourist facilitation centres in border destinations) and accessibilities (to allow domestic tourist access to several border areas), conducting various activities (light & sound show etc.) in close proximity to border areas and for developing various narratives and content on Border Tourism and Military Heritage pertinent to Ferozepur district.
- Numerous signage and destination information need to be disperse in places like Amritsar where already heavy tourist traffic is evident.
- Capacity Building and Skill Development is a cardinal issue for quality assurance in tourism services. No round the corner operation to be encouraged from the beginning. Continuous training for the host community require with special focus on border tourism.
- PPP model could be effective in initial phases of Border Tourism Destination Management process. Local essence of hospitality needs to be tapped in the context of Border Tourism development.
- New products (Water based Adventure/ Birding/ Ecotourism) to be created as well as existing products to be modified keeping the Border Tourism as a core theme of tourism.
- Border destinations with greater environmental resources need to comply with 'Ecotourism Policy' of the State.



- Multi-sectoral dialogues to be initiated with immediate effect to come up with actionable outcomes. The BSF and the Indian Army need to be on loop in any future conference on same.
- Border Tourism will be operated in strategic locations, hence, strict code of conduct to be formulated from the beginning containing environmental, social and geo-political milieu of the region.
- Mere footfall must not be taken as sole 'success indicator' rather holistic socio-economic development should be the priority of any Border Tourism Development project.
- Theatrical and sensuous aspects of borders and the implication of partition in Punjab border need to be inculcated through creation of border narratives and to be incorporated with the product line (e.g. 'Sensing the Border' and 'Military Heritage Tourism' etc.).
- Border Tourism should look beyond the hedonistic aspect of tourism and should be people- driven and tourism with a purpose complying with Sustainable/Responsible Tourism agendas.
- The experience of border must go beyond its corporeal nature of 'going to' and 'seeing' the border or merely 'doing' several tourism activities there. It needs to make tourists emotionally and morally connected with border, to make them aware and conscious about the evocative nature of border through their experience. Cultural heritage of border and social connectivity in Border Tourism must lead to not only revenue generation and enhanced destination image; it should also be thought as part of national integration process.
- Punjabi Diaspora needs to be tapped as a significant market for Punjab Border Tourism.

3. Border Tourism in Rajasthan



Source: Maps of India

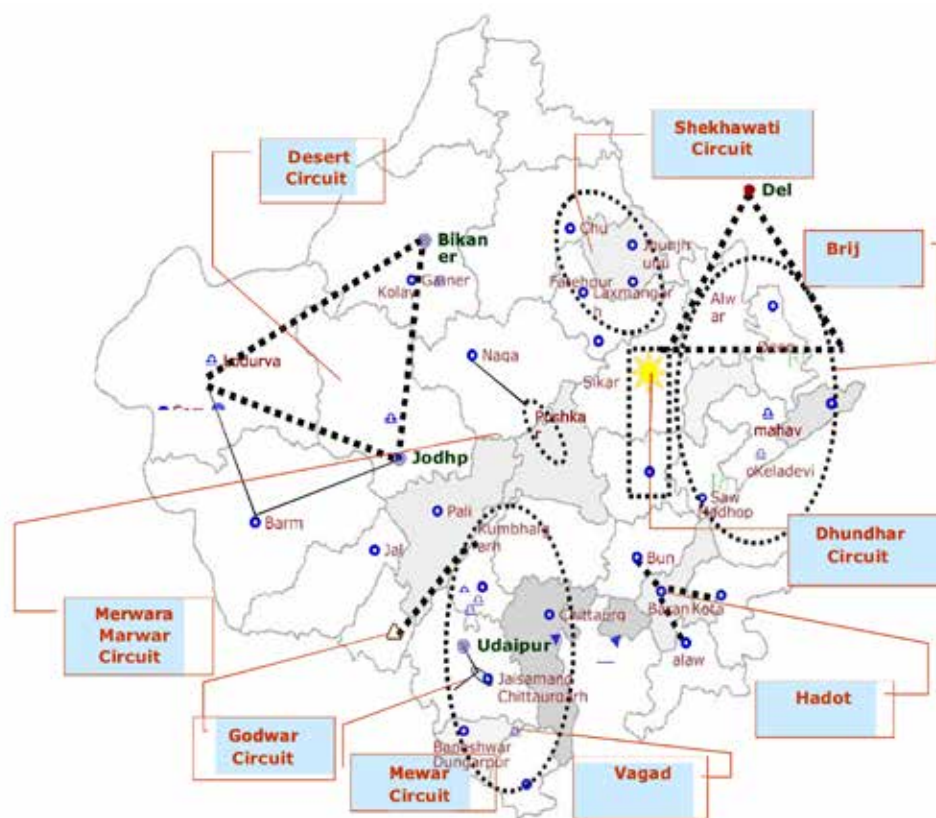
3.1 Introduction

Rajasthan, located in the north-western part of India offers a variety of unexploited agricultural and mineral resources, which is indicative of the scope for value addition and exports. Rajasthan is a natural corridor between the wealthy northern and the prosperous western states, making it an important trade and commerce centre. The state offers a wide range of fiscal and policy incentives for businesses. The Government has introduced sector- specific policies for tourism, biotechnology, IT and ITES industries.

3.2 Tourism Development in Rajasthan

Rajasthan is one of the most important tourist destinations in India and south-east Asia. Rajasthan's potential in tourism reflects the areas of strength: such as its exceptional wealth and diversity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and natural assets. Tourism industry in Rajasthan has many benefits to the state in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, increase standard of living, regional development, promotion of international understanding, conservation of local arts and crafts etc. There are currently 9 tourist circuits or hubs as identified by the Department of Tourism, Rajasthan. Each circuit has distinctive touristic attractions and places of interest.

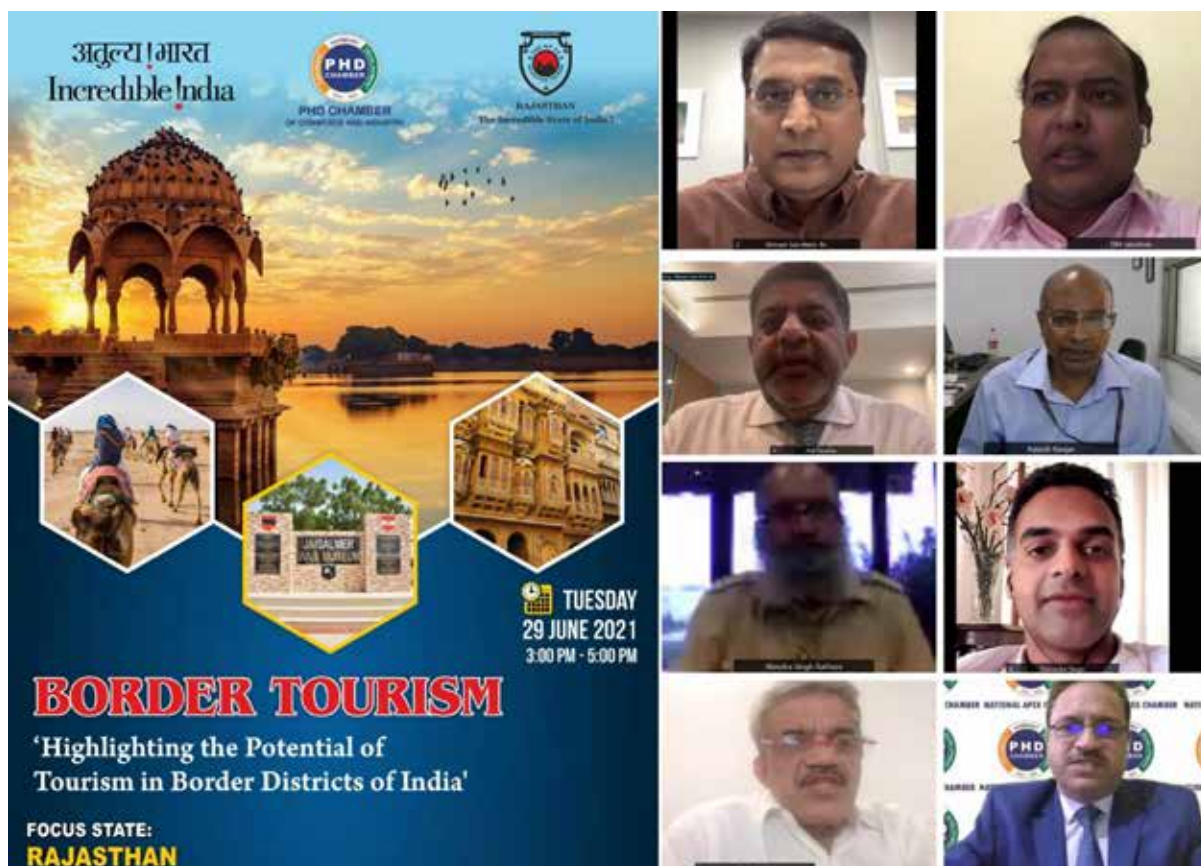
In September 2020, Rajasthan Cabinet has approved Rajasthan Tourism Policy 2020 to reposition Rajasthan as a preferred tourism destination for both domestic as well as international tourists by offering tourists a high-quality experience and through responsible and sustainable policies ensuring conservation of natural, historical and cultural heritage of the State while simultaneously accelerating socio-economic development by improving livelihood opportunities for the local population.

Figure 3.2.1: Tourism Circuits of Rajasthan

3.3 Government Initiatives for Tourism Development in Rajasthan

- PPP in Tourism Sector
- Promotion of Agri Tourism
- Government to Government Partnerships: Rajasthan Government's engagement with Singapore has led to a direct flight and a skill development centre for hospitality.
- Holding Fairs and Festivals
- Policy Incentives
- Rajasthan Tourism - 3.0: Rajasthan Tourism 3.0 is a multi-year, multi-modal, multi-narrative and multi-crore global campaign to galvanize tourism in the state. Rajasthan Tourism 3.0 is Government's goal of 50 million foreign and domestic tourists based on enhancement of the state's current literature, music and folk festivals with museums, exhibits and events, strong enough for tourists to plan itineraries around them.
- Marketing Campaign: In 2019, the government has reverted to the state's old tourism slogan 'Padharo Mhare Desh'. The State Tourism Department has also added 'Rajasthan - The Incredible State of India' in the Departmental logo along with its slogan.
- Promotion of Religious Tourism: Rajasthan Government has decided to renovate 11 religious sites to promote religious tourism in the state; e.g., development of Ajmer under 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive' (PRASHAD) & Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) Scheme.

3.4 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Rajasthan and Focus District: Jaisalmer



(From L to R): Mr. Nishant Jain (IAS), Director- Tourism, Government of Rajasthan; Mr. Ashish Modi (IAS), District Collector- Jaisalmer, Government of Rajasthan; Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rakesh Ranjan, Mission Director- Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Mr. Jitendra S. Rathore, Founder Chairman, Royal Desert Safaries; Mr. Shivendra Singh, CEO, WelcomHeritage Mandir Palace- Jaisalmer; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism in Rajasthan with focus district Jaisalmer was organized on 29th June 2021 by PHDCCI. Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI has detailed about the focus district (Jaisalmer) along with its existing tourism resources and outlined the challenges with regard to the development of Border Tourism in the region.

Mr. Nishant Jain (IAS), Director - Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, mentioned about various schemes of Rajasthan Tourism as well as India Tourism which could steer further tourism development in the region. Film Tourism was mentioned specifically (the Golden Fort of Jaisalmer owes to the masterpiece of film Maestro, Mr. Satyajit Ray's 'Sonar Kella', a film made in 1972 based on Jaisalmer). He informed that the state government along with BSF has developed Sanchu Post at Bikaner which will allow tourists to visit the Indo-Pak border. He also informed that the state government is coming up with a policy from 1st January 2022 that will facilitate the filmmakers to get the necessary permissions online for film shootings in Rajasthan.

While giving an overview on the Jaisalmer district, Mr. Ashish Modi (IAS), District Collector of Jaisalmer, Government of Rajasthan, said that Jaisalmer is not only about desert, it has other attractions like boating, adventure sports and grasslands. Talking about the challenges, he mentioned that connectivity is a major issue and needs to be addressed immediately. UDAN Scheme did give an opportunity to improve the connectivity to the district but was withdrawn later. He emphasized that music and art have been the core activity among the locals and introducing initiatives like Centre of Excellence for Local Art will help them to hone their talent.

Mr. Manoj Sogani, Chairman of Rajasthan Chapter, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), has brought into light the issues of sustainability significantly. Community economic development, vocal for local etc. were some of key agendas of his speech. Significantly, he advocated for altering the cliché itinerary of Rajasthan tourism and fashion Border Tourism itinerary connecting all border districts of Rajasthan.

Mr. Shivendra Singh, CEO, Welcome Heritage Mandir Palace - Jaisalmer has also importantly deliberated on various tourism products of Jaisalmer including Eco-Tourism. He particularly focused on the ecosystem around Indira Gandhi Canal which could serve as great potential for tourism in Jaisalmer. His deliberation highlighted that the border areas of Jaisalmer are not accessible and at present there is only one point open for tourists - Tanot Mata Temple which is managed by BSF. He suggested that the state government along with BSF must develop minimum four more points for the tourists to see and experience the real Jaisalmer.

Mr. Rakesh Ranjan, Mission Director - Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, mentioned about different layers of operation and clarity of objectives that is required as pre-requisite in Border Tourism project. He has also extended the willingness of NITI Aayog working together with district administration in projects to implement as Aspirational District. He said that Jaisalmer has great potential in every aspect especially in terms of attracting tourism, but there is a need to change the mindset of people and make them comfortable to visit the districts which lie in the border areas of the country.

Mr. Jitendra S. Rathore, Founder Chairman, Royal Desert Safaries, addressed the issues of removing the closure of borders in Jaisalmer and to mitigate the restrictions that are actually imposing hindrance to Border Tourism of Rajasthan. He said that the need of the hour is to unlock more border locations across the district and the promotion of canals and artists need immediate attention.

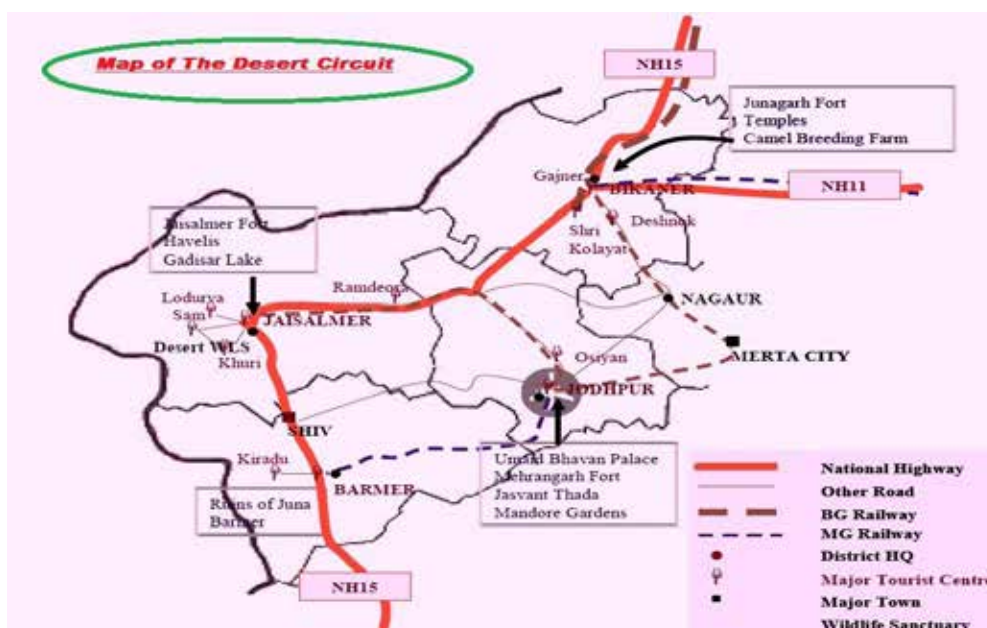
3.5 Border Tourism in Jaisalmer

3.5.1 Introduction

Jaisalmer, lying on the western edge of Thar Desert and located as an entry point to the large northern plains of the Indian sub-continent acted as an important destination for criss-crossing caravans which resulted in its development as a major centre for trade contributing to its economic prosperity. Its major development started during the reign of Mughals where after an initial fight with Humayun, the Bhattis maintained a cordial relationship with the other Mughal Kings including marrying their daughters. This ensured their peaceful existence leading to economic and cultural prosperity which is highlighted in their 17th & 18th century Art and Architecture.

Jaisalmer is the largest district of Rajasthan in area on Radcliff line. Tanot, Ramgarh Sadhewala popular for natural gas reserves have nearly changed the scenario of this region to some extent. The atomic tests in Pokhran (Jaisalmer) have given it a strategically important place in the world platform. However, the western side of NH15 still remains undeveloped still and largely rural with a lack of even basic facilities.

In the given context, the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative anchored by NITI Aayog aims to remove this heterogeneity through a mass movement to quickly and effectively transform the aspirational districts. Jaisalmer comes under this programme where a committee of Senior Officers to the Government of India, in consultation with State Officials is using a composite index of key data sets that included deprivation enumerated under the Socio-Economic Caste Census, key health and education sector performance and state of basic infrastructure in Jaisalmer district. Despite the developmental challenges, Jaisalmer district is famously known due to its tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage and thus, provides with great potentials for the development of the Border Tourism.



3.5.2 Tourist Places in Jaisalmer

The Golden Fort

The only Living Fort in the world. The Fort's massive yellow sandstone walls are a tawny lion colour during the day, fading to honey gold as the sun sets, thereby camouflaging the fort in the yellow desert. It is the city's most prominent landmark also called as Sonar Qila. Unlike most other Forts in India, it houses shops, hotels and ancient havelis (homes) where generations continue to live. Its dominant hilltop location making the sprawling towers of its fortifications visible for many miles around.



The Golden Fort, Jaisalmer

The Patwon Ki Haveli

An interesting piece of architecture and is the most important among the havelis in Jaisalmer. The Havelis are also known as the 'mansion of brocade merchants'. This name has been given probably because the family dealt in threads of gold and silver used in embroidering dresses. This is the largest haveli in Jaisalmer and stands in a narrow lane.



Nathmal Ki Haveli

Nathmal Ki Haveli

This haveli was commissioned to serve as the residence of Diwan Mohata Nathmal, the then Prime Minister of Jaisalmer. The architects of this haveli were Hathi and Lulu who happened to be brothers. There is a very interesting story regarding its construction. It is said that the two brothers started building different facets of Haveli simultaneously. In those days there were no such instruments, which could keep a track on continuity and thus when building came up finally it has irregular shape.

Tanot Mata Temple

As per the oldest Charan literature, Tanot Mata is new clone of divine goddess Hinglaj Mata and then after Tanot Mata becomes Karni Mata and known as Goddess of Charan's. The village is close to the border with Pakistan and is very close to the battle site of Longewala of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971; indeed some credit goes to the temple for the outcome of the battle. Tourists cannot go beyond this temple to see the Indo-Pak border unless one gets the relevant documentation in advance from the District and Military Authorities.

Mandir Palace

The excellent palace complex located near Amar Sagar Gate is the house of former royal family.

Salim Singh Ki Haveli

The five storied structure dominates the skyline of the walled city due to its form.



Mandir Palace



Jaisalmer War Museum

Jaisalmer War Museum

This exhibit is primarily to pay respect to all the soldiers who took part and lost their lives in the 1965 India-Pakistan war and the 1971 Longewala battle. The Indian Army has commemorated the sacrifices of their soldiers in a beautiful display at this war museum, situated at the Jaisalmer military base. A visit to this museum lets you see a number of captured tanks and other memorabilia from the battle, instilling a sense of immense pride in your country and its soldiers. The museum also features an audio-visual room where they screen movies about the battle. Located on the Jaisalmer-Jodhpur Highway, the museum has free entry and holds a very important part of our country's history.

Longewala War Memorial

One of the first major engagements in the Western sector during the Indo Pakistani War of 1971, the Battle of Longewala is an inspiring tale of courage in the face of unconquerable odds. A shining example of the courage, bravery and valor of the Indian soldiers, the Battle of Longewala created history on 4 December 1971, when about 100 Indian defenders halted the advancing troops of about 2000 Pakistani soldiers and 60 tanks. To celebrate the grit and steely resolve of the Indian soldiers who stalled Pakistani forces from their aim of cutting deep into the Indian Territory, the Desert Corps at Longewala have constructed the Longewala War Memorial.

Jaisalmer Government Museum

Established by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, it is a prime attraction for tourists visiting Jaisalmer.

Gadisar Lake

It was constructed in the 14th century by Maharawal Gadsingh to meet the water needs of his arid lands.



Gadisar Lake

Amar Sagar Lake

Amar Sagar is a small and beautiful lake cum oasis and is adjacent to a 17th century palace called the Amar Singh Palace.

Desert National Park

The Desert National Park (DNP) covers an area of 3162 sq. km of which 1900 sq. km falls in the Jaisalmer District and the remaining 1262 sq. km in the Barmer district. This area falls in the extreme hot, arid region of very low rainfall zone of the country. Based on secondary resource, the DNP area is classified as Desert as per the Biogeographic Classification of India and 3A Desert Thar as per Biotic Province of India. The rare among them are Long Eared Hedgehog, Pale Hedge Hog, Desert Fox, Indian Fox, small Indian Mongoose, Desert Cat, Desert Hare, Indian gazelle, Balochistan's Gerbill, Hairy Footed Gerbill, Indian Desert Gerbill and sand coloured rat.

Akal Wood Fossils Park

Rajasthan is a treasure trove of history and historical artifacts, but one place in particular takes one beyond the 'timeline of present', right into the prehistoric Jurassic era. The Akal Wood Fossil Park is a 21-hectare preserved area that lies about 17 km from Jaisalmer. 180 million years ago, a forest used to stand where the park is today. The area was then submersed into the sea and the tree trunks were preserved in the form of fossils. With remnants of fallen and broken logs that date back to the pre-historic times, the park is an absolute must-visit attraction.

Sam Sand Dunes

Sam Sand Dunes are becoming the major attraction in Jaisalmer. This is the closest place from where one can lose oneself in 'the Great Thar Desert'. Sam has a truly magnificent stretch of sweeping dunes, with sparse or no vegetation. In the month of February/March, this whole place turns into a cultural hub. The desert festival organized amid these dunes is the showcase of Rajasthani culture as a whole. Open-air cultural extravaganzas, puppet shows, folk dance.



Tourists enjoying Desert Safari

Ludorva

This place is a major tourist attraction and attracts a lot of attention due to ruins of Jain temples. The most mesmerizing experience will be the peacock dance amid exotic Ludorva ruins. The temples are made of bright yellow sandstones. Though in ruins, the splendors of these Jain temples are clearly visible.

Kuldhara

Located about 18 km from the city of Jaisalmer is this old town that was abandoned by its villagers in the 1800s. It was like the entire town vanished in the course of a single night. With about 85 villages full of people, it remains a mystery as to how no one saw them leave; in fact, even to this date, no one knows where all of them went either. The village remains uninhabited to the day, in the same state that the villagers had left it, hundreds of years ago. The location has become a major tourist destination as people from all over the world travel here to revel in the mysteries of the past.

Bada Bagh

This garden complex houses chhatris or royal cenotaphs of the Maharajas of Jaisalmer state. Located in Bada Bagh in Jaisalmer, Vyas Chhatri is one of the most beautiful examples of Rajasthani architecture. This old Brahmin cemetery, full of local versions of cenotaphs is dedicated to Ved Vyaas, the sage who wrote the epic Mahabharata. Filled with cenotaphs all throughout, this place is more popularly referred to as the sunset point of Jaisalmer. Visitors can also witness a number of locals at Vyas Chhatri, playing Rajasthani tunes on the algoza, a double fluted instrument, making it an experience that astounds the senses.

3.5.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Jaisalmer

Sensing the 'Border'

Experiencing 'Border' by 'being' there itself is a sensuous process which evokes many emotions. The existing Longewala Border is one of the prime locations to focus on the Border Tourism in Jaisalmer. It needs, however, more border outlets to be introduced along the international boundary of Jaisalmer. Clear set of activities in the border of Jaisalmer needs to be outlined, such as experiencing the Border Patrolling done by the Border Guarding Force (BSF) and other activities related to the process of guarding the border of India. Several border outlets in other border districts of Rajasthan (Bikaner, Barmer, Sri Ganganagar) also need to open up and connect with Jaisalmer to create a sustained Border Trail for Border Tourism.

Military Heritage Tourism

Tanot Mata Temple near to the battle site of 1971, Longewala War Memorial and Jaisalmer War Museum holds significant resources for Military Heritage Tourism. Fortification of Kishangarh is also a potential site for Military Heritage Tourism. The fort has a high strategic importance, it being located on the road that links India with Pakistan. As per historians, the secret doors of Kishangarh came handy to the Indian Army during 1965 and 1971 wars. Later, the BSF set up a military post near Kishangarh where hundreds of soldiers live.

Tourism to such military locations and structures can play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, especially those of the younger generation. This is because it gives tourists an opportunity to acquaint themselves with a difficult and painful history. A completed journey may serve as an occasion for reflection and lead to contemplation of the dramatic consequences of war and can be evocative for one to actually 'feel' the Nation.



Heritage Tourism

Golden Fort of Jaisalmer comes under UNESCO World Heritage Site of 'Hill Forts of Rajasthan'. This Fort is one of the few living forts in the world which opens up great potential for experiencing the architecture and livelihood together within the Fort and offers a unique blend of both tangible and intangible heritage tourism. In the format of 'Dine in with Jaisalmer' the locals of the Jaisalmer Fort usually invite tourists to dine with them. This is one of the most important products that need to be promoted routinely, which will enhance the Heritage Tourism product value added with authentic life of this living fort.

Intangible Cultural Heritage Tourism

While tourism is an important source of revenue in Rajasthan given its numerous palaces, forts, and museums, the Intangible Cultural Heritage practices which are unique to the state add product value of Tourism in Rajasthan as a whole and Jaisalmer in particular. For example, Manganiyars are renowned, skilled folk musicians of the Thar Desert, world-famous for their songs and music. The name means 'those who ask for alms' and they have survived for centuries solely on the patronage and offerings of wealthy merchants, particularly in and around Jaisalmer. The village of Manganiyars lies in the district of Barmer and Jaisalmer. While the Manganiyars believe they are the descendants of the Rajputs, the community itself is made up of Muslims. This has not deterred them from praying to the Hindu god, Krishna and seeking his blessings before any performance. The artists of Manganiyars pass down their songs of the desert from one generation to the next. Their songs talk about Alexander the Great, about local Maharajas and the past battles in the region. In a way they are the unofficial curators of Rajasthan's history, keeping stories alive through their songs and music. All of these elements need to be incorporated within Border Tourism where the marginalized culture, too, deserves forward market integration.

Religious Tourism

Jaisalmer is famously known for its Jain Heritage. There are seven Jain Temples in total which are situated within the Jaisalmer Fort built during the 12th and 15th Centuries. Among these temples, the biggest is the Paraswanath Temple; the others are Chandraprabhu Temple, Rishabdev Temple, Shitalnath Temple, Kunthunath Temple and Shantinath Temple.

Tanot Mata became very famous after Indo-Pak war. The story says that few Indian soldiers took shelter in the Tanot Mata temple during the war and Pak soldiers in large numbers surrounded the temple. It was night and the firing started. Surprisingly all the Indian soldiers survived and many Pak soldiers died because of cross firing. The remaining Pak soldiers withdrew thinking that there may be large numbers of Indian soldiers. It is found that another six sister deities namely, [1] Nagnechi, Nagaure; [2] Adhar Devi, Mount Abu; [3] Ashapura, Nadol; [4] Kheemaj, Bhinmal; [5] Ban Mata, Chithod; [6] Lodar Mata, Jaisalmer; [7] Sundha Mata, Jaswantpura.



Desert Tourism

The international boundary in Rajasthan lies under the desert topography. Hence, Thar Desert could be considered as the USP of Jaisalmer and Rajasthan Border Tourism. The existing Desert Circuit of Rajasthan Tourism needs to be included and especially promoted into Border Tourism format of Rajasthan. Three border districts of Rajasthan (Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Barmer) come under the Desert circuit along with Jodhpur. The circuit is characterized by the sand dunes, thin vegetation and thorny trees. The admired tourist attractions are: Osian Temples (near Jodhpur), Sam and Khuri Dunes, Lodurva Jain temples (near Jaisalmer), Gajner Palace and Wildlife Sanctuary, Karni Mata Temple (near Bikaner) and Nakoda Jain Temples (Barmer). Prominent fairs are Marwar Festival (Jodhpur), Camel Festival (Bikaner) and Desert Festival (Jaisalmer). New product like Dunes Bashes could be incorporated within the existing Desert Tourism product.

Film Tourism

Film Tourism is one of the potential markets to tap for promoting Border Tourism in Jaisalmer. Rajasthan Tourism promotes Film Shooting Incentive Scheme within its policy which tends to enhance the destination branding.

Rural Tourism

On 5 September 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNESCO New Delhi and the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan to promote community-based responsible tourism based on the rich Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of the state. The project will be implemented in the districts of Jodhpur, Barmer, Jaisalmer and Bikaner and seeks to spur the socio-economic growth of selected artist. The project focuses on intangible cultural heritage traditions such as pottery, weaving and other crafts, as well as music traditions, in order to create community-led and community-benefitting tourism opportunities. The project plans on developing 10 cultural hubs across the 4 districts, which will help promote diverse types of cultural heritage through the organization of events, performances and the sale of handicrafts. It will also build capacities of local communities to manage and promote their intangible heritage. Thus, this project could be extended as a product of Border Tourism combining rural tourism and intangible cultural heritage of Jaisalmer.

Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism

Though Jaisalmer is predominantly known for its desert landscape, sand dunes, however, a significant part of Jaisalmer actually consists of water bodies, savanna grassland and most of these areas are beyond accessibility for tourists due to security concern. Thus, it becomes imperative to open up such places to develop new ecotourism destinations in Jaisalmer. Indira Gandhi Canal has good number of flora and fauna. Different aqua-based adventure activities like kayaking, boating, fishing etc. can be developed as popular activities around the canal.

Desert Golf Tourism

Golf Tourism in desert location is a potentially ambitious product as part of Border Tourism in Jaisalmer. There are already existing properties ranging from high to moderate which can be utilized for accommodation part of Golf Tourism.

3.5.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Jaisalmer

- The international boundary of Jaisalmer comprises the longest stretch (468 km) of Rajasthan border and much of which due to security reason are restricted and/or prohibited zone. Thus much of Jaisalmer and its tourism resources both natural and cultural in terms of border villages are yet to be explored. As a result of the restrictions, investment in these border areas has remained quite low. Most of the border areas of Jaisalmer are closed due to which all potential resources sand dunes, oasis and local people remained excluded. Thus, security concerns hinder much of the flexibility in developing Border Tourism in Jaisalmer.
- Connectivity is another major problem in border areas of Jaisalmer which poses challenge to the Border Tourism Development in the region.
- Thirdly, the border villages of Jaisalmer are not yet unlocked and thus, the full potential of Border Tourism culture in Jaisalmer is yet to be tapped.
- Heritage properties are owned by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) where any little modification is subject to the permission given by the ASI.
- Overall developmental challenges and lack of proper exposure have a limiting effect in the areas' overall tourism development process.

3.5.5 Way Forward

- RCS-UDAN Scheme puts huge focus on the marginal locations of India which needs to be tapped for development of Border Tourism in Jaisalmer.
- Air connectivity in Jaisalmer with all major cities of India (Delhi, Bangalore, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai) is of prime importance.
- In terms of railway connectivity, Jaisalmer should have services of Intercity Express connecting other parts of Rajasthan as well as super luxury trains as tourism products to give Border Tourism a major thrust.
- Volvo Services run by RTDC could be implemented as a mode of developed road transport connectivity significant to Border Tourism.
- Last mile connectivity to both new and old destinations of the State also comes to the importance to fully mitigate the connectivity issue.
- To deal with 'Digital Divide' is the common fate of any geographically marginal location. Border districts of Rajasthan too, need to address the issue of internet and cellular connectivity. Making of Digital Highway is crucial to Border Tourism.
- Opening up of Border Posts has become imperative and pre-requisite for creating Border Tourism in Jaisalmer.
- At least four more border outlets need to be opened up in Jaisalmer district.
- Border Tourism needs to be drafted covering all four border districts of Rajasthan.
- Borders like Khoori, Ghotaru and Sachoo need to be conscripted in Border Tourism Trail of Rajasthan.
- Fortifications in strategic locations like Kishangarh Fort or Hindumol Fort need to be promoted as part of Border Tourism.
- Border Tourism projects need to be seen as part of overall development agendas of border districts of Jaisalmer. District administrations need to modulate and sensitize the local community of the areas for developing tourism. NITI Aayog owing to its flexibility could play a crucial role in spearheading socio-economic development of border tourism destinations as part of the project of Aspirational District.



- Greater engagement of the Indian Army and Border Guarding Forces and good civil-military cooperation is required for developing tourism amenities (tourist facilitation centres in border destinations) and accessibilities (to get domestic tourist access to several border areas), conducting various joint expedition through difficult terrain which are in close proximity to border areas and for various narratives and content development for Border Tourism product.
- Hard infrastructural development and last mile connectivity are the prime requisites for Border Tourism.
- Capacity Building and Skill Development is a cardinal issue for quality assurance in tourism services. No round the corner operation to be encouraged from the beginning. Continuous training for the host community is required with special focus on Border Tourism.
- PPP model could be effective in initial phases of Border Tourism Destination Management process.
- New products to be created as well as existing products to be modified keeping Border Tourism as a core theme of tourism.
- Border destinations with greater environmental resources need to comply with Ecotourism Policy (2021) of the State.
- Multi-sectoral dialogues to be initiated with immediate effect to come up with actionable outcomes. The BSF and the Indian Army need to be on loop in any future conference on the same.
- Border Tourism will be operated in strategic locations, hence, strict code of conduct to be formulated from the beginning containing environmental, social and geo-political milieu of the region.
- Theatrical and sensuous aspects of borders need to be inculcated through creation of border narratives and to be incorporated with the product line (e.g. 'Sensing the Border' or 'Military Heritage Tourism').
- Border Tourism should be people-driven and tourism with a purpose complying with Sustainable/ Responsible Tourism agendas.
- The experience of border must go beyond its corporeal nature of 'going to' and 'seeing' the border or merely 'doing' several tourism activities there. It needs to make tourists emotionally and morally connected with border, to make them aware and conscious about the evocative nature of border through their experience.
- Cultural heritage of border and social connectivity in Border Tourism must lead to not only revenue generation and enhanced destination image; it should also be thought as part of national integration process.

4. Border Tourism in Gujarat



Source: Maps of India

4.1 Introduction

Gujarat lies on India's western border along the coast of the Arabian Sea. Its vast coastline of 1600 km, mostly part of the Kathiawar peninsula contains numerous ports. Gujarat was one of the main centres of the Indus Valley Civilization and excavations have unearthed more than 50 Indus Valley settlement ruins here.

It was an important commercial centre and there is evidence of trade between the state and Bahrain, Egypt and Sumer during 1000-750 BC. The state has been ruled by eminent dynasties, right from the Mauryas, Guptas, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, the Western Satraps and the Satavahana empires, each of whom left their mark on the region. Some of the signs of these empires can still be seen in several cities of Gujarat.

4.2 Tourism Development in Gujarat

Gujarat is at the forefront on various aspects of tourism:

- World's tallest statue - Statue of Unity (Kevadia)
- World's only home for Asiatic Lions - Gir Forest National Park
- Asia's longest ropeway - Girnar Ropeway
- India's first UNESCO World Heritage City - Ahmedabad
- World's earliest known dock and India's first port city - Lothal
- Home to one of India's exemplary city planning model of Indus valley civilization - Dholavira
- India's First Seaplane Service - Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad to Statue of Unity, Kevadia
- Home to one of the blue flag certification beaches in India - Shivrajpur Beach (Dwarka)



Such diversifications and richness of products have helped Gujarat achieve an immense growth in the total tourist footfall. In the span of 9 years (2009-2018), it has grown at 15% CAGR, surpassing India's total tourist footfall growth at 12%. Gujarat ranked 9th in terms of domestic tourists and 12th in terms of FTAs in India in 2018.

Gujarat Tourism has set the following objectives for coming five years:

- To become one of the leading states in India in terms of tourist footfall
- Strive to double the employment in tourism sector
- To increase sectorial contribution in range of 5-7% of GDP
- Ensure at least 50% of the new and 30% of the existing projects comply to sustainability standards
- Ensure the benefits of the development are percolated to local community
- Position Gujarat as one of the top 5 MICE destinations in India
- Introduce innovative tourism products and offerings to ensure round the year tourism
- Walk the path of 'Aatmanirbhar' and 'Vocal for Local' principles to maximize benefits
- Encourage accreditation to all key service providers within the state and create an exhaustive database
- Streamline investment facilitation for encouraging investment in the tourism sector

Strategies adopted by Gujarat Tourism:

- Towards Sustainability: Adoption of E-vehicles by tourism service providers, projects obtaining Green Building or Sustainability Certification under IGBC or GRIHA or any such international accreditation/certification as identified by SLEC from time to time; Establishment of E-vehicle charging stations, etc.
- Tourist Centric Approach ~~Atithi~~ Devo Bhava: To improve host-guest relationship by ensuring a safe, comfortable and inclusive experience for all tourists.
- Vocal for Local: Promoting unique and lesser explored products that exhibits Gujarat's art and culture. An integrated approach to adopt to further increase the visibility of indigenous products.
- A hand-in-hand Augmenting Tourist Infrastructure: Encouragement for development of facilities and services; leveraging various central governments' schemes and assistance for tourism infrastructure development.
- Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)
- Provision of Incentives for various stakeholders across the Tourism Sector



4.3 Tourism Product Offerings

The Gujarat Tourism Policy 2021-25 offers a wide spectrum of tourism product offerings:

- Adventure and Wildlife Tourism
- MICE Tourism
- Medical Tourism
- Wellness Tourism
- Caravan Tourism
- River cruise Tourism
- Religious/ Spiritual Tourism
- Rural Based Experience Tourism

4.4 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Gujarat and Focus District: Kutch



(From L to R): Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHDCCI; Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Jenu Devan (IAS), Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd; Mr. Avinash Mishra, Adviser- Tourism, NITI Aayog; Mr. Eapen PV, Deputy Inspector General- Frontier Gujarat, Border Security Force; Mr. Paras Lakhia, Managing Committee Member & Chairman- Airline Council, Travel Agents Association of India; Mr. Sandipan Bose, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel Ahmedabad; Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism on Gujarat with focus district Kutch was organized on 6 August 2021 by PHDCCI. Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, has set the tone for the webinar by welcoming all the panelists and explaining the background of the webinar.

Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHDCCI, has also extended his warm welcome to all the speakers and deliberated about the history of PHDCCI and its current stake in organizing the series of Border Tourism.

Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI, has detailed about the focus district (Kutch) along with its existing tourism resources and outlined the challenges with regard to the development of Border Tourism in the region.

The deliberations started with Mr. Avinash Mishra, Adviser - Tourism, NITI Aayog, spoke in length about the importance of tourism sector and its contribution towards GDP. He elaborated the statistical details of the contribution of tourism in pre-pandemic Indian economy. Significantly, he pointed about the rich resources yet lack of market linkages. He also detailed about the tourism resources of Kutch and stressed that aggressive tourism promotion of Kutch is required.

Mr. Eapen PV, Deputy Inspector General - Gujarat Frontier, Border Security Force, informed that the Seema Darshan project is being developed by Gujarat Tourism, Roads & Buildings Department and BSF which is likely to be inaugurated by next month. He further said that major attractions at the spot will include Ajay Prahari Memorial, Parade Ground, Exhibition Centre, Museum, resting place for visitors and specially designed Gates depicting the theme of border security.

Mr. Jenu Devan (IAS), Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited, appreciated the efforts taken by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in transforming Rann of Kutch which has become a top tourist attraction in the state while Rann Utsav is frequented by millions of tourists from across the globe. He also mentioned about the Seema Darshan project which was inaugurated in December 2016 at Nada Bet and soon after its launch started gaining traction with 4000-5000 visitors during weekend.



He mentioned that the tourism department is trying to promote Nada Bet on the lines of Wagah Border with not only a Retreat Ceremony, but also creating a 2-3 hours tour package for that entire area which will include a Tourist Facilitation Centre, Auditorium, Museum and other amenities. Electric vehicles will be introduced that will take the tourists around the 25 km border area up to zero point where they will be allowed to take selfies.

Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General - Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that India is an ancient nation and the young generation needs to know India's history, culture and rich heritage. She suggested that PHDCCI can collaborate with the Association of Indian Universities that brings around 850 Universities and Colleges together with 3 crore students and host question banks with these students which will help to sensitize them about the lives of defence and paramilitary personnel. Once established, Border Tourism will create an economic engine for locals who are living in the villages close to border areas.

Mr. Paras Lakhia, Managing Committee Member & Chairman - Airline Council, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), said that Border Tourism is a vertical that creates thrill and excitement and this segment has immense potential to create employment opportunities as well. Interesting itineraries can be made for the tourists that can generate business and revenue in these difficult times while promoting Domestic Tourism in the country.

Mr. Sandipan Bose, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel Ahmedabad, highlighted the tourist attractions in Rann of Kutch and elaborated how Rann Utsav helps to increase local employment, promote cultural and entertainment activities leading to the overall creation of opportunities for local people. He further stressed upon giving the exposure to the local youth into international standard of hospitality and tourism through the branded property, which he believes, could bring immense change into the locality of Kutch.

Highlighting the issues faced by the tourists while visiting the border areas at Kutch district, Mr. Pravin V. Dangera, Proprietor, Kutch Expeditions & Approved Tourist Guide at Kutch, said that getting permission to visit East Kutch and West Kutch is a major challenge and the tourist has to visit three offices in order to get the permission. He requested the government to come up with Inner Line Permits (ILPs) like North Eastern States and Ladakh for smooth access to these locations.

The webinar ended with the formal vote of thanks given by Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman eTourism Committee, PHDCCI.

4.5 Border Tourism in Kutch

4.5.1 Introduction

Kutch is the largest district of India, with its headquarters at Bhuj. It is bounded by the Great Rann on the north and east, Little Rann on the South-East, Gulf of Kutch on the south and the Arabian Sea on the west. Centuries ago, the Rann of Kutch was part of the sea until an earthquake turned the exposed sea bed into a sprawling desert. Today, it is a vast expanse of arid land, devoid of habitation, stretching out to the Arabian Sea, which is just 10 kms away. Kutch is separated from Pakistan by the Great Rann of Kutch.

Geographically, the district can be categorized as:

1. The great Rann or uninhabited wasteland in the North
2. The Grasslands of Banni
3. Mainland consisting of planes, hills and dry river beds
4. The coast line along the Arabian Sea in the South
5. Creeks and Mangroves in the West

The Rann lies on the border between the Indian state of Gujarat and the Pakistani province of Sind. In 1965, after armed clashes, Pakistan asserted that half of the Rann along the 24th parallel was Pakistani territory. India countered that the boundary ran roughly along the northern edge of the Rann. The matter was referred to international tribunal for arbitration. The Tribunal known as the Indo-Pakistani Western Boundary Case Tribunal announced its Award on 19 February 1968, upheld 90% of India's claim to the entire Rann, conceding small sectors to Pakistan.

The Rann of Kutch is incomparable in the world due to the following unique features:

- (i) The Rann is the largest wetland of hybrid environment during monsoon when entire area, leaving dotted beds, goes under knee deep water as a result of discharge of rain water by numerous rivers and streams and inundation of tidal water.
- (ii) In winter, dry flat saline desert dotted with numerous water bodies support large population of migratory birds, including many threatened species of birds.

- (iii) 'Flamingo City', an area with sheet of water in the Rann is one of the largest nesting ground for two species of Flamingos in the world where some times about half million birds have congregated to nest in good seasons.
- (iv) The Rann is home for single population of the Indian Wild Ass in the world where over 4,000-4,100 wild asses find suitable home (about 3,000 in the Little Rann, 500-600 in the Great Rann and about 500-600 in the fringe areas).
- (v) The Rann along with Kutch is only area in the country where the fossil material of plants and animals (including Dinosaurs) of Pre-Jurassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous and Tertiary periods are abundant. The fossil park at Khadir bet is a center of attraction for tourists.
- (vi) The Rann has a very high historical and cultural significance as Dholavira; an ancient town of Bronze Age Civilization (2100 BC to 1500 BC) on Khadir Bet in the Rann is a site of the Indus Valley Civilization. Similar sites also exist at Katada near Khawada and other areas. Viga Fort near the Pakistan border, now buried under mud and sands was perhaps an important economic centre and a check post for the traders
- (vii) Recognizing the uniqueness and ecological significance, the area has been declared by the Government of India as Biosphere Reserve and also identified for the nomination of World Heritage Site.
- (viii) The Rann is a large reserve of salt as about one fourth of total salt production of the country comes from the Little Rann.
- (ix) The Bets and fringe areas of the Rann support one of the highest populations of Chinkara and Indian Wolf and some threatened mammalian species like Caracal, Desert Cat and Desert Fox.
- (x) The Rann possesses two largest sanctuaries in the country, covering an area of 12,459 sq. km.



White Rann of Kutch

4.5.2 Tourist Places in Kutch

Aina Mahal Museum

Kutch kings are called Maharaos. Maharao Lakhpatji's antique palace, constructed in traditional

Kutchi style is created in a small fortified courtyard in the old part of the metropolis. It is a beautifully presented Museum and is one of the highlights of a visit to Bhuj.

Prag Mahal Palace

Constructed within the 1860's and 1870s in a Venetian-Gothic fashion, Pragmalji's palace has pointed Gothic arches, classical colonnades and European timber roofs. The huge staircases and deep passages are floored with colorful Minton tiles and coated with handrails on classical balusters.



Prag Mahal Palace

Kutch Museum

Founded by Maharao Khengarji in 1877, it is the oldest museum in Gujarat. The Kutch Museum was built up within the year 1877 AD with the aid of the British Governor of Mumbai referred to as Sir James Fergusson. The Kutch Museum, Bhuj boasts of displaying a huge variety of rare artifacts.

Chatardi

The word Chatardi is derived from Chhatri (umbrella) and is popular in Rajasthan and in Gujarat. Locals treat the structures with respect and expect the same from the tourists. The Chatardis in Bhuj were constructed by the Jadeja rulers in 18th century. The most ornate complex is called Rao Lakha Chhatri. The architecture is a mix of Rajputana and Mughal styles. They are carved out of red sandstones.



Royal Chatardi

Bharatiya Sanskriti Darshan

There are exhibits of rural architecture, paintings, textile arts and archaeological specimens.

Shyamji Krishna Verma Memorial

The Memorial's objective is to pay tribute to the contribution of Shyamji Krishna Verma and also to educate the young generation about those great Indians who sacrificed everything for the country's freedom.

Shree Swaminarayan Temple

The temple marks the spot where Swaminarayan sat with local holy men when he came through Bhuj. Swaminarayan Temple has the standard brightly colored wood carvings around the building, broadly speaking depicting Lord Krishna and Radha.



Shree Swaminarayan Temple

Narayan Sarovar

According to Hindu theology, there are five sacred lakes; collectively called Panch-Sarovar, Mansarovar, Bindu Sarovar, Narayan Sarovar, Pampa Sarovar and Pushkar Sarovar.

Mata Na Madh

The villages in Lakhpat Taluka of Kutch district, surrounded by hills on both banks of a small stream and has a temple dedicated to Ashapura Mata, the household deity of former Jadeja rulers of Kutch state.

Jesal Toral Samadhi

The temple is locally known as Jesal Toral ni Samadhi, which literally means 'the tomb of Jesal and Toral'.

Vande Mataram Memorial Bhujodi

It is a unique national monument seeking to immortalize the most momentous episodes in India's freedom struggle from British Rule. Vande Mataram Memorial is the latest and one of Ashapura's most ambitious offering to the society and to the nation. It seeks to immortalize the most momentous episodes in India's freedom struggle from the revolt of 1857 right up to the country's Independence in 1947. It offers light and sound show through projections on the structure which is made as replica of parliament.

Rakshak Vann Park

It is named after the brave and courageous women of Kutch who rebuilt the airstrip of Bhuj airport in an overnight's time. The story of these women dates back to 8 December 1971; this was the time during Indo-Pak war. When Pakistan dropped 14 bombs on Bhuj region, airstrip in Bhuj was completely destroyed. The official took quick decision, that airstrip must be restored by the locals, so the local women of Madhapar village, who were the daily wagers were given the task of restoring the airstrip. They completed this task in less than 72 hours, even in that horrible condition of war.

Vigakot Fort

An old damaged fort of medieval period at Vigakot in the deeper part of the Great Rann near Pakistan border leaves remnant of its past glory when the Indus River irrigated this marshy and prosperous land. Perhaps this fort belonged to local king or Jagirdar. Sweet water of the river continued to flow, perhaps till 1889 AD when the Great Earth Quake changed the landmass near Pakistan by raising its land and diverting the last branch of the river to Pakistan.

Lakhpat

It is a sparsely populated town in Kutch named after Rao Lakha who ruled in Sindh about the middle of the 13th century. The town located at the mouth of the Kori Creek and is enclosed by 7 km long, 18th century fort walls. Historically Lakhpat has been a very important trading post connecting Gujarat to Sindh. In historic times, Lakhpat had only one very short period of prosperity. Today it is a sparsely populated town, a city of ruins of buildings and a magnificent fort surrounding them.

Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary

Situated in the Great Rann of Kutch, this is the largest Wildlife Sanctuary in India area wise. It encompasses a true saline desert where thousands of Greater Flamingo nest in the world famous 'Flamingo City' located in the mud flats of the Rann. The northern boundary of Desert Wildlife Sanctuary forms the international border between India and Pakistan and heavily patrolled by the BSF. Tourists and researchers could enter with special permission from the BSF.

Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary

A fiat, salt-cracked vast barren desert, hissing sand storms and the majestic ghudkhar roaming over mirage waters make the little Rann of Kutch a unique and one of the most fascinating wilderness of the world. The Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary in little Rann of Kutch offers visitors safaris to ensure that they witness as many animals enjoying their natural habitat as possible. The famous bird species found here are laggar falcon, spotted & Indian sand grouse, flamingos, francolin partridge, desert larks, houbara bustard, bustard quails, desert wheatear, short toed eagle, steppe eagle, imperial eagle, storks, ducks, cranes and pelicans.

Black Hill

25 kms north of Khavda, the top of the Black Hills is the highest point in Kutch, at 462 m from sea level. From here, the entire northern horizon vanishes into the Great Rann, the desert and sky often becoming indistinguishable. It is one of the few noncoastal locations where one can feel like at the edge of the earth, on the brink of incomprehensible vastness that fades off towards infinity.





Dholavira

Dholavira is the larger of the two most remarkable excavations of the Indus Valley Civilization or Harappan culture, dating back to 4500 years ago. It has been recently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Dholavira

4.5.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Kutch

Sensing the Border and Border Heritage

The stunningly open, salt-encrusted plains of the Rann of Kutch covers tens of thousands of sq. km of north Gujarat, bordering the Arabian Sea to its west, Rajasthan & Pakistan to its north and the Indian mainland to the south and East. This unique visual itself is a sensuous element of 'experiencing' the 'Border'. The border of Gujarat consists of varied geography of creek, wetland, grassland etc. that could provide with rich visitor experience and activities such as: Bird watching, Camel Safari, Winter Game, Fishing experience etc.

Military Heritage Tourism

'Seema Darshan' project at Nara Bet has already gained its momentum for Border Tourism in Gujarat. Seema Darshan has begun on the basis of Wagah Border pattern with a view to observe bravery of BSF Jawans. The attractions at the border viewing point will be a Retreat Ceremony by the BSF, Fusion Band Performance, Camel Show and Bird Watching. Visitors will also be able to watch an exhibition of weapons, a photo gallery and a film on BSF at the newly developed border viewing point. The place is being developed at the estimated cost of Rs. 125 crore by Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL), Roads & Buildings Department and BSF. Similar project in Kutch could give great impetus to Border Tourism of the District.

Nature Based Tourism

The northern boundary of Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary forms the international border between India and Pakistan and is heavily patrolled by the BSF. Much of this sanctuary is being closed to the civilians after the India Bridge in Khavda. Tourists and researchers could enter with special permission from the BSF. However, with the ease-up of permission this area could open up of immense flourishing of Wildlife and Ecotourism project. Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary is another prominent place to promote Nature Based Tourism in Kutch.

Banni Grasslands Reserve is a protected forest and one of the last remaining habitats of Cheetah in India. It is essentially a belt of dry grassland with a thriving ecosystem on the edge of the Rann of Kutch. The Gulf of Kutch lies on the migration route of many bird species thus making it a nesting site for approx. 75,000 birds every year. More than 100 species of birds are found here and many migratory birds nest and breed at this sanctuary.

Beach Tourism

Beach Tourism can be promoted based on Mandvi Beach. This golden sandy beach of Kutch is worth a visit and is not a frequently visited tourist beach. Pingleshwar Beach lies close to Mandvi and is a wonderful attraction and tourist location.

Cultural Tourism

Hosting site of Rann Utsav, Dhordo is the ideal tourist destination for the tourists who come to Kutch with the lure for white salt desert. Between December and February, the Rann Utsav is organized at Dhordo; that time it becomes really crowded and slack its splendor to some level. Tourist can lodge in Tents at Dhordo during the festival time as an overnight stay closer to white desert. Hodka is a craft village and a rural development and tourism project which is visited by experiential tourists.

Heritage Tourism

Kutch is a rich reservoir of heritage resources ranging from ancient heritage, tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as national heritage which altogether could be a significant pool of resources for Border Tourism itineraries in Kutch. What Dholavira offers in the intense environment that comes with being surrounded by the Great Rann of Kutch is a unique insight into the pioneering Harappan mind, with one of the world's earliest and best planned water conservation systems and what might be the world's first signboards, written in ancient Indus script. Apart from these, Aina Mahal Museum, Pragmahal Palace, Kutch Museum, Bharatiya Sanskriti Darshan, Shyamji Krishna Verma Memorial Ball can potentially be incorporated in Heritage Tourism aspect of Border Tourism.

Religious Tourism

The Black hill is also the site of a 400 year old temple to Dattatreya, the three-headed incarnation of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva in the same body. Legend says that when Dattatreya walked on the earth, he stopped at the Black Hills and found a band of starving jackals. Being a god, he offered them his body to eat and as they ate, his body continually regenerated itself. Because of this, for the last four centuries, the priest at the temple has prepared a batch of prasad that is fed to the jackals after the evening aarti. Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Narayan Sarovar, Mata Na Madh, Jesal Toral Samadhi are also prominent sites of religious tourism in this district.

4.5.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Kutch

- Some of the areas in Kutch fall under the 'notified area' by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). To visit these areas, permission is required not only in border areas but also in cultural or heritage sites.
- Till 2009 there was 'Single Window Permission' system given by the DoT which is no longer available. Current permissions are obtained from different places for the East, West and Northern part of Kutch. Such scattered permission process requires whole day and hinders border visits.
- Disparity in permission (to visit Dholavira archeological site needs no permission while visiting to the Dholavira village needs permission).
- No permit process in Dharamshala Shaheed Smarak Point which was earlier under BSF and presently handed to the local police and since then no permit system is available to visit the place.
- Reopening of Vighakot is essential.

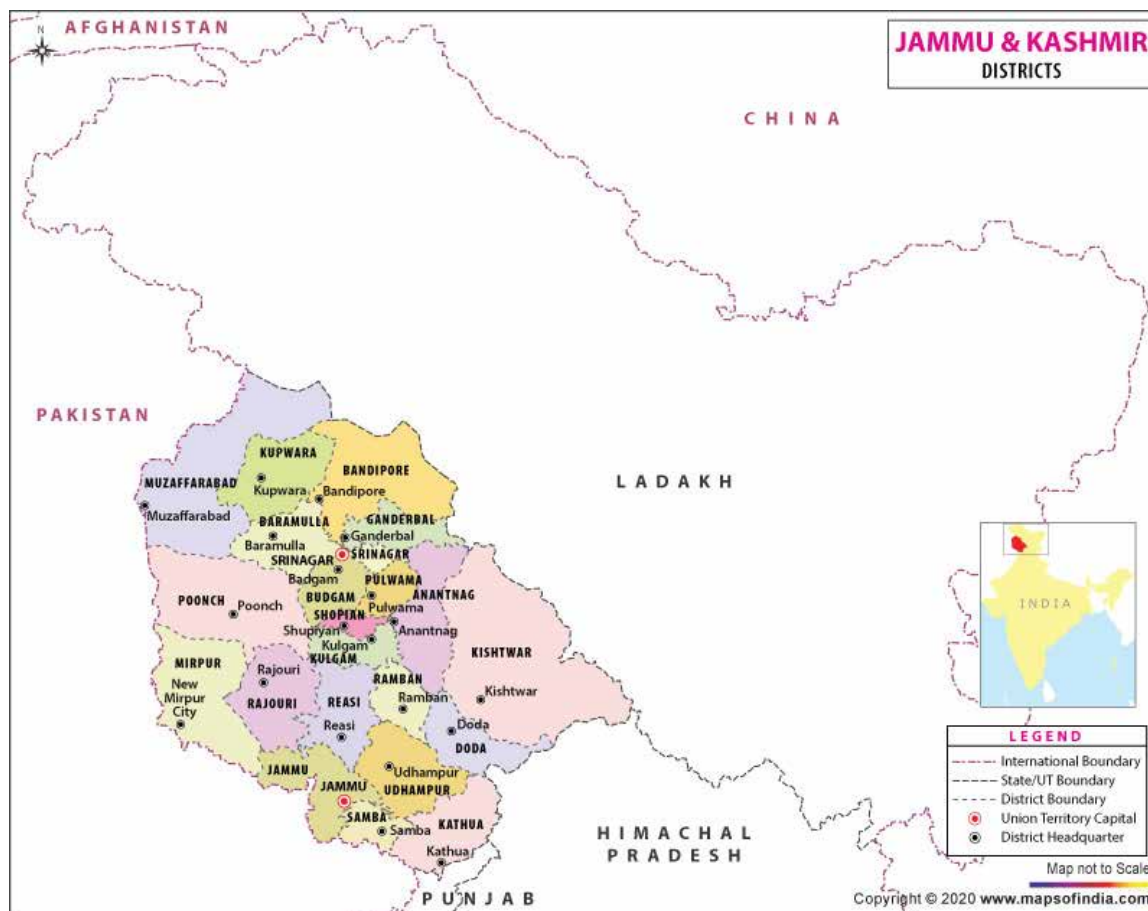
4.5.5 Way Forward

- Most of the Kutch area is still unexplored which need to be opened up for Border Tourism
- Ease of Doing Business needs to be implemented
- System regarding the Permit needs to be streamlined with priority
- Single window permission system needs to be reinforced
- Disparity in permit in sites like Dholavira etc. needs to be streamlined
- Possibility for introducing Inner Line Permit to be thought
- Clear Border Tourism itineraries to be developed based on all kinds of available tourism resources as detailed
- Rigorous Marketing Communication and Promotion required to tap the full potential of Kutch
- Aggressive Branding for projects like 'Seema Darshan' or 'Rann Utsav'
- Opening up of border locations like Vighakot or Dharamshala so that tourists can feel the proximity of the Indo-Pak Border



- Skill development for the local village youth should be given due importance
- Effort could be taken to give local youth exposure to the international standard of hospitality by absorbing them as trainee so that they could bring change to their respective localities
- Border Tourism should be thought as a prime source of changing socio-economic scenario of the border villages
- Training could be given so that villagers can showcase and promote their own art & crafts (music, dance, cuisine, handicrafts) to tourists
- Creation of Border Narrative especially to motivate young Indians, educational trip to be organized essentially as part of Border Tourism itineraries
- Border Tourism to be taken as an integrated part of Border Management and will showcase every aspect of Border guarding process and the lives of our soldiers
- Border Tourism shall essentially be considered as an instrument to enhance the country's profile

5. Border Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir



Source: Maps of India

5.1 Introduction

There are various versions of historical backgrounds available for Jammu & Kashmir in general and for the valley of Kashmir in particular. Jammu and Kashmir is currently a region administered by India as a Union Territory and consisting of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region.

Jammu and Kashmir is home to several valleys such as Kashmir Valley, Tawi Valley, Chenab Valley, Poonch Valley, Sindh Valley and Lidder Valley. The Jhelum River is the only major Himalayan River which flows through the Kashmir Valley. The Indus, Tawi, Ravi and Chenab are the major rivers flowing through the state. Northwestern thorn scrub forests and Himalayan sub-tropical pine forests are found in the low elevations of the far south-west. These give way to a broadband of western Himalayan broadleaf forests running from northwest-southeast across the Kashmir Valley.

5.2 Tourism Development in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu & Kashmir is endowed with topographic diversity, pristine natural beauty and several religious shrines. Besides its natural beauty, Jammu & Kashmir also offers many adventure tourism opportunities in the form of trekking, skiing, paragliding, camping, angling, rafting, mountaineering and rock climbing. Tourism sector contributes to 6.98 per cent of Jammu & Kashmir's GDP. In 2018 J&K has witnessed nearly 16.9 million tourists arrival within the region.

The Tourism Policy 2020 of J&K envisages a dynamic long-term approach to achieve true growth potential of the tourism sector in the state. This policy proposes initiative, attractive incentives and necessary regulatory reforms that will help ensure large scale investment support through efficient management and private partnerships. To make Jammu & Kashmir a destination that is natural in its environment, global in standards, modern in outlook, traditional in hospitality, entertaining in experience and thrilling in adventure.



Vaishno Devi Shrine in Katra

5.2.1 Some of the Strategies for Developing Tourism in J&K:

- Strengthening Tourism Infrastructure
- Promoting Investments
- Development of Land Banks
- Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)
- Public Private Partnerships
- Premium Tourism Transport
- Promotion of different sectors / activities
- Fiscal incentives
- Support for Sustainable Tourism
- Incentive for promotion of Innovation
- Skill Development Allowance Scheme
- Assistance for Research in the Tourism / Hospitality Industry
- Support to Eco Tourism
- Interest subsidy to eligible Tourism Units

5.2.2 Product Offerings of J&K Tourism:

- Adventure Tourism
- Horti-Tourism
- Saffron Tourism
- Angling/ Game Fishing
- Cultural Tourism
- Eco Circuit Tourism
- Film Tourism
- Golf Tourism
- Heritage Tourism

- MICE Tourism
- Religious / Spiritual Tourism
- Wellness Tourism
- Lake Tourism
- Theme based Amusement Parks
- Rural/ Village Tourism
- Wedding Destination Tourism

5.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Jammu and Kashmir and Focus District: Jammu



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Mr. Sarmad Hafeez (IAS), Secretary, Tourism, UT of Jammu and Kashmir; Mr. Anil Parashar, Senior Member, PHDCCI; Mr. Rahul Sahai, Senior Member, PHDCCI; Mr. Sanjay Wadhwa, General Manager, Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Katra; Mr. Nasir Shah, Chairman, Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Senior Member, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir with focus district Jammu was organized on 6th October 2021 by PHDCCI. Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI, mentioned that every year, thousands of Hindu pilgrims visit holy shrines of Vaishno Devi and Amarnath which has had significant impact on the state's economy. Being an ideal tourist destination for family tours, honeymoon tours and the perfect place for adventure enthusiasts, Jammu & Kashmir offers abundance tour options for travelers of all kind.

Mr. Rahul Sahai, Senior Member, PHDCCI, talked about the tourist places in Jammu and suggested introducing Rural and Village Tourism in the UT. He also said that along with new tourist accommodation facilities, other facilities for adventure tourists, tent accommodations can be set up and permitted across the valleys. He emphasized that single window clearance is the need of the hour for all the licenses required to travel to the state.

Mr. Sarmad Hafeez (IAS), Secretary - Tourism, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, informed that the tourism department is developing tourist facilities and roadside amenities around Suchetgarh border which is at a distance of 28 kms from Jammu. The department is also working with BSF and trying to replicate similar destination on the lines of Wagah Border. He further said

that the tourism department has identified few other locations for promotion of Border Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and also trying to get funds sanctioned under Border Areas Development Programme (BADP). There is a huge potential for tourism development and growth in Jammu & Kashmir, especially in the unexplored valleys of Jammu. The focus must be on providing experiential tourism as in today's time, destination stays aren't enough for the tourists.

Mr. Nasir Shah, Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has emphasized on the point that tourism industry in J&K needs to move out of the commercial tourist spots and put more focus on new destination development including border tourism destinations along with improvement of connectivity, community engagement etc. Significantly, he mentioned that Border Tourism can become an instrument of cross-border friendship, understanding and could reduce animosity.

Mr. Anil Parashar, Senior Member, PHDCCI, said that tourism is the largest industry in Jammu city. It is also a focal point for the pilgrims going to Vaishno Devi and Kashmir Valley as it is second last railway terminal in North India. All the routes leading to Kashmir, Poonch, Doda and Ladakh start from Jammu city. Throughout the year, the city remains full of people from all the parts of India.

Mr. Sanjay Wadhwa, General Manager, Welcome Hotel by ITC Hotels, Katra, focused on his deliberation about the branding and promotion of Jammu as a border tourism destination. He suggested several ways including roadshows, blogging, social media inputs that could promote J & K border tourism at large. He also focused on the importance of branded hotels in destination branding.

5.4 Border Tourism in Jammu

5.4.1 Introduction

Jammu is situated on a hillock, on the bank of river Tawi and is bound by Udhampur district in the north and northeast, Kathua district in the east and southeast, Pakistan (Sialkote) in west and Rajouri district and POK (Bhimber) in the northwest. Today, the Jammu region comprises the districts of Kathua, Jammu, Udhampur, Doda, Rajouri and Poonch. The district is extended along the whole length of the international border with Pakistan. The rural population of Jammu depends mainly on agriculture.

The city Jammu has numerous shrines for Muslims, Sikhs & Christians also. Jammu also serves as a base camp for the holy shrine of Vaishno Devi. Besides the Vaishno Devi shrine, Jammu region is known for its scenic landscape, ancient temples and mosques, Hindu and Muslim shrines, castles, gardens and forts. Jammu's historic monuments feature a unique blend of Islamic and Hindu architecture styles.

5.4.2 Tourist Places in Jammu

Akhnoor Fort

The Akhnoor Fort which lies towards east of the town, on the bank of the Chenab River holds great significance and is extremely important for reconstruction of the past history. This two-storeyed fort which is perched on a cliff overlooking river Chenab is under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) since 1982 and has been declared a national monument protected under the Monument Act, 1958. Akhnoor Fort is perched upon an ancient site depicting three periods of history. The first period is represented by the Harappan red and grey earthenware that include jars, beakers and goblets. The second period is marked by the presence of early historic pottery and the third period is represented by Kushana objects and an impressive wall of rubble diaper masonry flanked on both sides by a 3-metre wide street.



Akhnoor Fort

Jia Pota Ghat

Jia Pota Ghat is one of many ghats situated on the right bank of Chenab. Jia Pota Ghat got its name from the Jia Pota tree under whose shade the Raj Tilak ceremony of Maharaja Gulab Singh took place. The coronation at the ghat would always remain etched in the collective psyche of the people of this state and more particularly the Dogras as the first concrete step towards the foundation of the modern Jammu and Kashmir. The importance of the place lies in the fact that Jia Pota Ghat is probably witness to the march of civilization right from the existence of early man.

Amar Mahal Palace Museum

This museum is housed in the Amar Mahal Palace, built in 1862 in a unique, French-chateau style of architecture. Located atop a hill overlooking the Tawi River, 4 rooms of the palace have been converted into art galleries and historic museums, depicting the royal history of Jammu.



Amar Mahal Palace Museum

Bahu Fort

Situated at 5 kms away from Jammu city this is perhaps the oldest fort and edifice in the city. It was constructed originally by Raja Bahulochan over 3,000 years ago. The existing fort was more recently improved upon and extended by the Dogra rulers. Inside, there is a temple dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. An extensive terraced garden, known as Bagh-e-Bahu has been developed around the fort.

Bahu Fort Complex

Mubarak Mandi Palace

The palace was the royal residence of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir from the Dogra dynasty. It was their main seat till 1925 when Maharaja Hari Singh moved to the Hari Niwas Palace in the northern part of Jammu. The palace resembles both Rajasthani and Mughal architecture. The Pink Hall houses the Dogra Art Museum with miniature paintings of the various Hill Schools of Kangra, Jammu and Basholi. It also has a gold painted bow and arrow of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. The pink hall owes its name to the pink plastered walls of the palace section.

Raghunath Temple Complex

Maharaja Gulab Singh began the construction of the Raghunath Mandir Complex in the crowded downtown Bazaar named after it, in 1851. It was left to his son, Ranbir Singh to inaugurate it six years later perhaps the most popular temple north of Benares. It contains representations of almost entire Hindu pantheon, though the emphasis falls on the various incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The complex houses a rich collection of ancient texts and manuscripts.



Raghunath Temple

Panchvaktar Temple

The temple was constructed by Raja Guje Singh of Jammu (1687-1703) and is considered one of the oldest in Jammu. It is linked to the visit of Shankaracharya in the 9th century A.D. The temple, constructed much later is considered sacred because of the self-originated Shivalinga. One of the most revered Shiva Shrines in the city, the Lord is worshipped here in the Swachananda form having five faces representing the totality of Shiva in his most abstract form. Hence, it is known as Panchvaktar.



Other Religious Sites

Jammu is famous for its temples. In fact it is known as the city of temples and the every fame of it tends to overshadow its palaces, forts, forests and powerful ziarats. If Bahu Mata is the presiding deity of Jammu, the dargah of Peer Budhan Ali Shah is the other shrine that protects Jammu-ites. Some of the religious sites include Ram Talai Temple, Rani Kalhuri Devi Temple, Sardaran Temple, Ranbireswar Temple, Jama Masjid etc.

Ambaran

Ambaran is the 8th place in the world where relics of Buddha have been found in a stupa. Historians are of the opinion that the place might have been an important centre of Buddhism between the 1st and 7th century B.C. A cultural sequence of four historical periods has already been unraveled at Ambaran. Excavations have unearthed terracotta figures, small sculptures, pottery and brunt brick structures dating back to pre Kushan and post Gupta period.



Ambaran



5.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Jammu

Suchetgarh: The Border Destination

Suchetgarh border post has been developed as a tourism spot by the state tourism department which is 28 kms from main Jammu. The road to Nai Basti-Gulabgarh from Jammu follows the train route as it existed prior to 1947 and a number of old buildings can be seen on the way. Suchetgarh Post served as the route to Sialkot during the pre-partition era, which is just 11 kms from the post and earlier there was an Octroi post at this point. On the other side of the border post lies a spectacular Banyan Tree, that is as old as 100 years.

Special Interest Tourism

In close vicinity of Suchetgarh are the Gharana and Abdullian wet lands where migratory birds of a number of varieties flock during winter season.

Pilgrimage/ Religious Tourism

Jammu is traditionally known for its religious sites and pilgrimage. This could further be brought into attention within the Border Tourism format of Jammu. Along with the famous religious places, the lesser known sites could also be brought into highlight in this context and religious circuit could be developed.

Heritage Tourism

Jammu's historic monuments feature a unique blend of Islamic and Hindu architecture styles. The already famous heritage sites of Akhnoor Fort, Bahu Fort, Amar Mahal Palace, Mubarak Mandi Palace could be incorporated as the heritage aspect

of Border Tourism in Jammu. Apart from the existing heritage sites, Jammu needs more exploration of other heritage reminiscence.

Culinary Tourism

Authentic cuisine of Jammu & Kashmir could be one of the most unique aspects of border tourism which needs special attention and can be an integral part of border tourism in the region.

Rural Tourism

Reviving rural economy through tourism is one of the prime concerns. It holds immense potential for border tourism in Jammu as well. Establishing homestays in the border destinations of the region could boost the economy of the marginal population in Jammu. It needs further exploration to identify potential rural destinations of the area.

5.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Jammu

- Much of the Jammu is unexplored in terms of its border region
- Inadequate hard infrastructure and digital divide is a key challenge
- Jammu Border Tourism lacks promotion at gross rate

5.4.5 Way Forward

- Need to move out of the commercial tourist spots in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Need to identify hitherto unexplored heritage places of the region and incorporate them into Border Tourism format.
- Need to develop more spots like Suchetgarh in places like Akhnoor, Uri and Kathua.
- Suchetgarh needs more viewpoints and better road connectivity.
- BADP fund can be utilized in places for developing infrastructure etc.
- Cross border connection through Border Tourism could be developed which may reduce the animosity between countries.
- In coordination with BSF, more retreat ceremony in border posts could be introduced.
- Border Tourism could be taken as a Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in border regions.
- Local youth could be actively engaged in identifying potential places for border tourism and creating the inventory for Border Tourism in Jammu. Role of guides will be crucial in border tourism. Hence, local youth should be trained accordingly.
- Border Tourism could be highlighted as a form of Experiential Tourism.
- Tourism in general and Border Tourism in particular needs rigorous promotion and marketing in Jammu.
- Blogging, Social Media inputs, Roadshows as well as representing in global platforms like ITB Berlin could promote Border Tourism in Jammu.
- For a successful Border Tourism project, several border destinations need to be trailed along the international border of Jammu & Kashmir. It can't be taken in isolation and thus requires Multi-Sectoral Approach (MSA).



INDO-CHINA

BORDER TOURISM

• LADAKH • HIMACHAL PRADESH • ARUNACHAL PRADESH





INDO-CHINA BORDER TOURISM

Four Indian States viz., Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Ladakh share border with China. The Sino-Indian border is generally divided into three sectors namely: Western sector, Middle sector and Eastern sector. In the Western Sector, India shares about 2152 km long border with China. It is between Union Territory of Ladakh (erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir) and Xinjiang Province of China. In the Middle Sector, India shares about 625 km long boundary with China which runs along the watershed from Ladakh to Nepal. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand touch this border with Tibet (China) in this sector. In the Eastern Sector India shares a 1,140 km long boundary with China. It runs from the eastern limit of Bhutan to a point near the Talu Pass at the tri-junction of Tibet, India and Myanmar. This boundary line is called McMahon Line.

The border between India and China had not been and is still not demarcated from point to point throughout its length of almost 3,488 kms from Ladakh in the West to Arunachal Pradesh in the East. In the mountain ranges, several imaginary lines and borders separating the two countries exist which were drawn on maps made by different agencies of Britain, India and China between 1865 and 1962. Starting from Johnson line in 1865, through the British office Line; MacDonald Line; MacMohan Line: India's Claim Line; and China's Claim line. The perceptual and often one-sided definitions of the international border led to Line of Actual Control (LAC) after the Sino-India war in 1962. However, even the LAC agreed to after the 1962 Sino-Indian war is not precisely delineated. Originally the Indo-Tibetan border (before the occupation of Tibet by China in 1950), remains disputed along its entire length and is one of the key points of friction between the two countries over the past years. All this makes it imperative for the Indian armed forces to maintain constant vigil along the LoAC (Indo-China border).

Intervention through PHDCCI Border Tourism Webinar Series were exploration for the potential of Indo-China Border Tourism focusing on Arunachal Pradesh with focus district Anjaw along with Anini (Dibang Valley) and Mechuka (Shi Yomi), Ladakh with focus district Leh and Himachal Pradesh with focus district Lahul and Spiti respectively. Panelists from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; NITI Aayog, respective district administrations, tourism industry experts of India and members of the PHDCCI all have given their active deliberations.

Though predominantly focusing on Indo-China border, the knowledge sessions often tended to go in a fluid manner beyond focus districts and discussed border realities of even Indo-Pak or Indo-Myanmar borders which actually gave a more comprehensive overview of Border Tourism in these states.

6. Border Tourism in Ladakh



Source: Maps of India

6.1 Introduction

Ladakh, also known as the 'Land of High Passes' has emerged as the largest Union Territory of India on October 31, 2019. Ladakh is bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region to the east, the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh to the south, both the Indian-administered union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Pakistan-administered Gilgit-Baltistan to the west and the southwest corner of Xinjiang across the Karakoram Pass in the far north.

Since its emergence as UT, Ladakh is witnessing several developmental activities. To provide grid connectivity to the far-flung villages of Ladakh, the Central Government approved intra-state transmission project at a revised estimated cost of Rs. 1,309.71 crore in May 2021. In October 2020, the Defence Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh inaugurated eight strategic bridges in Ladakh. He also announced construction of 45 more bridges in Ladakh that will be completed by Border Roads Organization (BRO) in the next two years.

6.2 Tourism Development in Ladakh

Tourism is one of the key areas that play a vital role in generating revenue, jobs and overall growth of Ladakh. Ladakh has been recognized for its diverse topology with high-altitude cold desert located in the Great Himalayas and picturesque locations since 1974. Currently, about 60% of local population is directly or indirectly linked with the tourism industry in Ladakh which results in 62-65% contribution to local economy of the region (data extracted from Knowledge Session).

Total tourist arrivals to the UT reached 279,937 in 2019, out of which 241,285 were domestic tourists and 38,652 were foreign tourists. Until June 2020, total tourist arrivals in Ladakh were 6,079, of which 5,019 were domestic and 1,060 were foreign tourists. On April 20, 2020, the Ministry of Tourism conducted its 5th webinar on the rich heritage of Ladakh titled 'Ladakh: Explore the Unexplored' under the 'Dekho Apna Desh' webinar series. World Tourism Day was celebrated at the Siachen Base Camp on 27 September.

In January 2020, a MoU was signed between NITI Aayog and UT Administration of Ladakh to develop a strategic plan and provide support to specific projects, especially in tourism, solar energy and others, which will be under the public-private partnership mode (IBEF 2021).

6.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus UT: Ladakh and Focus District: Leh



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Mr. Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, MP- Lok Sabha & President, BJP Ladakh; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India; Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General- Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India; Mr. K Mehboob Ali Khan (IRS), Secretary- Tourism and Culture, Administration of U. T. of Ladakh; Mr. Deleks Namgyal, President, All Ladakh Tour Operator Association; Mr. Skarma T. Dehlex, President, All Ladakh Hotel & Guest House Association; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

Webinar on Border Tourism in Ladakh with focus District Leh was held on 12th November 2021. The knowledge session was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI, said that tourism in Ladakh offers a variety of sightseeing and entertainment opportunities for all kinds of travellers. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has recently declared some more areas of Ladakh opened for international tourism – Khardung La, Nubra and Nyoma sub-division. These areas are among the outstanding feature of Himalayan panorama. It could be yet another destination for the global tourists looking for Cultural and Adventure Tourism.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, said that tourism has won a wide recognition as an important industry in Ladakh in view of its potential for creation of employment opportunities and generation of income on a large scale. The recent announcement by the Government of India to boost air connectivity to the Ladakh region, planning four new airports and 37 helipads will not just boost tourism, but also serve as vital assets for the armed forces and help deliver quick relief during natural disasters.

While giving an overview about the tourist places in Ladakh, Mr. K Mehboob Ali Khan (IRS), Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Administration of UT of Ladakh, said that Ladakh has rich heritage sites, flora and fauna, religious tourism places, a majority of which are yet to be discovered. The Ladakh Administration has recently done away with the Inner Line Permit (ILP) for domestic tourists visiting all notified protected areas of the region which will further help in increasing tourism. However, the Administration is laying great emphasis on Sustainable and Responsible Tourism and not just looking at numbers. The



Secretary Tourism informed that the Administration will soon launch its Tourism Policy, where Border Tourism will also be included.

Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, appreciated the efforts taken by the Border Roads Organization (BRO) for improving connectivity in Ladakh region. Connectivity is the key for tourism anywhere in the world and especially in border areas, she said. The role of Border Tourism in bringing local communities together is crucial in today's time. She emphasized that there is a need for capacity building and skill development as it will help to scale up the quality of human resources while creating employment opportunities for the locals. She has also mentioned about the weary situation that happened due to over tourism.

Delivering the Chief Guest Address, Mr. Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha & President, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Ladakh, said that Ladakh has a huge potential in the tourism sector but it is looking for quality tourism and not just quantity tourism. Hence sustainable development in the region is important for a pathway towards Sustainable Tourism. Since its opening for the tourists in 1974, Ladakh has attracted many foreign tourists and in the recent years there has been an increase in domestic tourists also, said Mr. Namgyal.

He further mentioned that it is important for our own people to explore and be aware of Ladakh's rural areas as it will further increase tourism and consequently uplift the livelihood of the locals. Border Tourism is crucial for strengthening national security while establishing a strong foothold at India's border areas. Therefore, increase in Border Tourism is directly linked to the national interest.

Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, mentioned that the border areas of Ladakh have their unique selling prospects such as geo-climate, historical value, connections to the age old trade routes, some of the highest plateau ranges, sparsely populated localities with secular harmony. He suggested that the tourism department should utilize the financial package from the Government of India for improving infrastructure in the region. The Administration needs to work towards enhancement of wayside amenities, digital connectivity and up gradation of homestays.

Mr. Deleks Namgyal, President, All Ladakh Tour Operator Association, said that Ladakh Tourism is now in full swing as infrastructure development like roads and telecom towers have brought both physical and digital connectivity in the region. The new Homestay Policy is a great initiative to bring tourists closer to the rustic culture of Ladakh. The Umling La Pass has become a major attraction for thousands of tourists and with the opening of Siachen Glacier base camp, it will certainly boost tourism, employment and stronger border presence in Ladakh.

Mr. Skarma T. Dehlex, President, All Ladakh Hotel & Guest House Association, in his deliberation has crucially asserted that the tourist footfalls in border region of Ladakh will not only develop those areas socio-economically, but also strengthen India's claim over the land. He mentioned that Border Tourism will uplift and enhance the lifestyle of the people in Ladakh's rural areas. Sustainable Tourism of Ladakh can be truly achieved by bringing in the confidence of the locals for effective policy making regarding tourism.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, proposed the formal vote of thanks and mentioned that the future of tourism is going to be Peace Tourism after the pandemic and Ladakh, in this context could be an important destination. He has also mentioned that Ladakh should be known to the world not just for Indo-china standoff, but for all its communal harmony and exemplary beauty and cultural heritage.



6.4 Border Tourism in Leh

6.4.1 Introduction

Leh district is linked with the Kashmir Valley by the Zojila Pass (10,098 feet) and forms part of the outer Himalayas. It is one of the highest regions of the earth (altitude 8,800 feet to 18,000 feet approximately) with mountains running along parallel ranges. The district is bounded by the international border or LoC with China in the north and east and with PoK in the north. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main sources of livelihood. Cultivation is possible only during summer; barley, vegetables and fruits like apple and apricot are the main crops. Forestry is also one of the source of income and Leh abounds in medicinal herbs. This district is the source of origin of pashmina goat which produces fiber used for high quality fabric pashmina wool. The district is also rich in water resources like ponds, streams and rivers, which can be utilized for fisheries.

Kargil town is located at a distance of 204 km from Srinagar almost midway on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway. Most of the villages of the district are located at an average height of 10,000 feet above sea level. It shares the LoC with PoK in the north and borders with Leh in the east and the Kashmir valley in the west. Tourism is being promoted as an industry after Ladakh was opened to foreign tourists in 1974. Horticulture and forestry are being given special attention.

6.4.2 Tourist Places in Leh

Hemis Monastery

Hemis Monastery is a Himalayan Buddhist monastery of the Drukpa Lineage in Hemis, Ladakh. Situated 45 km from Leh, the monastery was re-established in 1672 by the Ladakhi King Sengge Namgyal. The annual Hemis Festival honouring Padmasambhava is held in early June.



Hemis Monastery

Lamayuru or Yuru Monastery

Lamayuru or Yuru Monastery is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Lamayouro, Leh district. It is situated on the Srinagar-Leh highway 15 kms east of the Fotu La at a height of 3,510 metres. Also known as Yung-Drung, this monastery is home to more than 150 monks and houses a rich collection of artifacts, wall paintings, thangas, statues, carpets and an impressive 11-headed, 1000 eyed image of Chenzing.

Alchi Monastery

Alchi Monastery is a group of ancient Buddhist shrines that together form one of the most important religious centres in Ladakh. This gompa attributes its establishment to the legendary translator Rinchen Zangpo, who built it in AD 1000 by bringing 32 wood carvers and sculptors from Kashmir. After the Gelug sect permanently shifted its activities to the Likir Monastery, it became the administrative shrine of the Alchi Gompa.

Thiksey Monastery

Thiksey Monastery is a popular Buddhist Monastery which is situated very close to Leh. It is a part of Gelugpa order in Buddhism and houses Thangkas, stupas, swords, wall paintings, statues and a pillar. This pillar is carved with the preaching and ideas of Buddha and is housed in the 12- storey building of the monastery. The monastery buildings are structured in hierarchal order. The monastery is referred as 'Mini Potala' of India as it resembles Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet.

Ladakh Festival

It is a festival which marks the synonymous celebration of harvesting and prosperity among the Ladakhi community. It is celebrated in September and stretches up to 15 days. People from all parts of the Ladakh gather in the Leh town. The festival is all dotted with traditional music performances, dance programs and more. It is specially marked for celebrating a good harvest of crops. One can see the marching of the religious procession from one Monastery to another in traditional outfits.



Nubra Valley



Celebration of Ladakh Festival

Nubra Valley

Located to the North of Leh, Nubra Valley is a celestial slice of Ladakh. A myriad of lively textures and colors are sprinkled with a graceful symmetry across the valley. The holy confluence of Nubra and Shayok River poses a very artistic aquatic landscape. Nubra Valley is famed as 'Orchard of Ladakh' because of the presence of blooming flowers and green fields. The valley has lush green fields which craft a panoramic vista. It has a breathtaking landscape like that of the moon and thus called 'Moonland'.

Sham Valley

It is also called by the name of 'Apricot Valley' for the valley is bordered with plenty of apricot flowers blooming. It is the most preferable trekking destinations. Small mountain passes, shady willows and barley fields enrich the beauty and thrill of the trek. Most of the Indo-Tibetan crowd of the village is richly infused with hospitality. The Sham valley trek encompasses splendid visits to the Leh Bazaar, Ang village, lined artistically with apricot Orchard, Hemis Shukpachan and Tingmosgam.

Magnetic Hill

Lying at a distance of around 30 km from Leh, the Magnetic Hill is marked by a yellow signboard which reads 'The Phenomenon That Defies Gravity'. It also instructs you to park your vehicles in the box marked with a white point on the road, which is known as the Magnetic Road. When parked at the indicated spot, vehicles begin moving forward at a speed of almost 20km/h.



Magnetic Hill

Hanle

On the way to Hanle from Leh, it seems like a different planet altogether. Its horrifying beauty imparts the feeling of being lost in an alien land. There is some wildlife to spot along the way: mostly wild asses, golden ducks, rabbits, jackals. One can also see a few nomads along the roadside, in their makeshift tents and surrounded by their cattles and dogs.

Suru Valley

It is a beautiful destination with green landscape and dense plantation. It is also the base for four days trek to Shargole via Rusilla and Sapi and three days pleasure trek to Drass via Umballa.

Sankoo Valley

As the richest flourishing and most verdant valley throughout the entire region of Ladakh, the village of Sankoo valley is known as the Ladakh's own Gulmarg or the meadow of flowers.

Umling La Pass

It is the highest motorable road and pass in the world with an elevation of 19,024 feet.

Khardung La Pass

The elevation of Khardung La Pass is 17,582 feet. The pass on the Ladakh range is north of Leh and is the gateway to the Shyok and Nubra valleys. The Siachen Glacier lies part way up the latter valley. Built in 1976, it was opened to public motor vehicles in 1988.



Khardung La Pass



Pangong Tso Lake

Pangong Tso Lake

Pangong Tso is a splendid lake known to play the tricky play of blues and greens in its water. You will be mesmerized to see the multiple hues of lake water dissolving with each other. It becomes a bewitching landscape with a backdrop of snow brushed mountains and rugged terrains with rich stains of brown. Situated at a remarkable height of 14,270 ft, Pangong Tso is an aquatic miracle infused with deepest hues of turquoise. All because of the stark beauty of the landscape, it has been chosen to be included in some of the classic scenes of Bollywood movies including 3 Idiots.

Tso Moriri Lake

Also famed as Mountain Lake, it is one of the most scenic lakes of Ladakh region. The lake reveals the story of serenity and poise with its tranquil waters. Located in the lush greens of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, the lake is home to some of the rare breed of migratory birds. It is 28 km long and 100 feet deep situated at a whopping height of 4595 meters above the sea level. The lake crafts a captivating vista with the muse of stunning mountains sleeping calmly on the pristine waters of Tso Moriri. It is a part of wetland reserve called Ramsar Site and also referred to as Tso Moriri Wetland Conservation Reserve.

6.4.3 Product line for Border Tourism in Leh, Ladakh

Sensing the 'Border': Experiencing LAC and LOC in Ladakh

The strategic location of Ladakh itself offers an experience of sensing the 'Border'. Experience of LAC or LOC of Leh as well as Kargil districts could thus be one of the most important products for Ladakh Border Tourism.

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) passes along the southeast side of Demchok village, along the Demchok River which joins the Indus River near the village. Demchok is a historic area of Ladakh, having been part of the kingdom from its inception in the 10th century. Turtuk is one of the northernmost villages of India, situated in the Leh district of the Nubra Valley and 2.5 km from the Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan. Turtuk was under Pakistani control until the war of 1971, when the Indian Army captured the village. It is the last outpost of India's Ladakh. It is also one of the gateways to the Siachen Glacier.

After India and Pakistan gained independence, Hunderman found itself in a peculiar spot: The LOC runs over the mountain peaks of the valley the village is situated in and shifts its course without warning. In the past 70 years, Hunderman has witnessed four wars, innumerable skirmishes and incredible moments of military history. Phobrang is another settlement near Lukung on the Indo-China border in the Leh District on the 77.5 km Lukung-Phobrang-Chartse Road.

These villages could be developed as border tourism destinations to create awareness of the strategic value of these places. It would certainly be a humbling experience for tourists to sense the 'reality' of borderlands being here.



Military Heritage Tourism

Rezang La War Memorial, located a few kilometers after the town of Chushul was created in the remembrance of the brave soldiers of 13 Battalion of Kumaon Regiment, deployed under the leadership of Major Shaitan Singh, during the 1962 Indo-China War. There is also a Chushul War Memorial, made to commemorate the sacrifice and bravery of Indian Soldiers from the Artillery Division in the 1962 Indo-China War. The Kargil War Memorial, also known as Drass War Memorial is a war memorial built by the Indian Army in the town of Drass, commemorating the 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan. The memorial is located on the Srinagar-Leh National Highway 1D, about 5 km from the city centre across the Tiger Hill.

Astro Tourism

Ladakh is the highest plateau of India. The high altitude of the place and pollution free atmosphere is ideal for developing Astro tourism in the region where tourists could come for star gazing. Hanle houses the Indian Astronomical Observatory, the highest observatory in the world at a staggering height of 4,500 metres. The Hanle observatory is operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru and is currently the second-highest optical observatory globally, with an installed telescope of about 2.01 metres (6.5 feet) diameter.

Merak is situated 176 kms east of Leh, on the southern banks of Pangong Tso. It is directly opposite to Finger 3 which is located on the northern bank of the lake. In 2018, a telescope was installed to study solar chromosphere. The new installation named as Indian Astronomical Observatory, Merak.

Religious Heritage Tourism

Every corner of Ladakh has a touch of Tibet and Buddhism in it. It was the dawn of the 7th and 8th century when the history of Ladakh began sprouting in full bloom. Dards were the civilization which had migrated along the Indus River and has chosen Tibet as their home. 3rd and 4th centuries saw the spreading of roots of Buddhism in numerous Asian countries. The era of great King Ashoka (273-232 BC) saw the colonization, settlement, and bringing of Buddhism to Ladakh which led to the shifting of Buddhist Missionaries to the locations of Kashmir, Yark and beyond. The monasteries and monastic festivals of Leh are all rich resources for Religious Heritage Tourism as part of Border Tourism of Ladakh.

Cultural Heritage Tourism

Land of geographical contrasts, Ladakh has a unique culture inspired by the locals. Much influenced by Tibet, Ladakhi culture has embedded spiritual intricacies of Buddhism. Dards were the initial inhabitants of Ladakh, an Indo-Aryan race. Ladakhi women enjoy a similar status of freedom and privilege to work and interact with other people, including men. People are very bounty-full and celebrate great festivals like Hemis, Losar and Sindhu Darshan festival.

There is the Museum of Memories, housed in one of the restored private homes among the storied blocks of abandoned buildings. It connects the past with the present through exhibits ranging from old and traditional kitchen utensils to jewellery to indoor games, from family documents and letters to armaments from the wars. The villages of Dha (also called as Dah) and Hanu are amongst the only few villages that are home to the Drozpa tribe of Leh. The tribe, which is different from the Ladakhi tribe found in the rest of the area, are quite hospitable people. The Drozpa are culturally, racially and linguistically different from the rest and are said to be the only living descendants of the original Aryan (Indo European) race. The Drozpa tribes are known for their distinct ornaments and head gears. The hypnotizing splendour of Turtuk Village, the unique blend of Muslim village in a Buddhist realm, within a Hindu-majority and the myriad sun shades of nature is something you must enjoy once for your lifetime.

Nature Based Tourism

Unique geo-climatic and topographical condition of Ladakh makes it a gold standard product of Incredible India with special reference to nature based tourism in combination with adventure tourism. The valleys, lakes and passes could serve as the prime locations for Nature Based Tourism in the format of Border Tourism itineraries. Whilst historical tales could be explored in trek to Nubra Valley, Sham Valley could offer one of the most preferable trekking destinations through small mountain passes, shady willows and barley fields enrich the beauty and thrill of the trek. On the way to Hanle from Leh, it seems like a different planet altogether. Its horrifying beauty so eerily calm imparts the feeling of being lost in an alien land. There is some wildlife to spot along the way: mostly wild asses, golden ducks, rabbits, jackals. One can also see a few nomads along the roadside, in their makeshift tents and surrounded by their cattle and dogs. Suru Valley is a beautiful destination with green landscape and dense plantation. It is also the base for four days trek to Shargole via Rusilla and Sapi and three days pleasure trek to Drass via Umballa. The Mushkoh Valley is situated in Drass and also known as valley of wild tulips.

Adventure Tourism

Umling La is the highest motorable road and pass in the world with an elevation of 19,024 feet and an alluring location for development of Adventure Tourism in Ladakh. The elevation of Khardung La pass is 17,582 feet. The Siachen Glacier lies part way up the latter valley. Built in 1976, it was opened to public motor vehicles in 1988.

Based on these natural assets, different Special Interest Tourism, Wildlife Tourism as well as adventure activities (Trekking, Hiking, Mountain Biking, etc.) could be developed fully to tap the natural bounty of Ladakh.

Mountaineering

There are several peaks with altitude of 6000 m and above fall in border areas of Ladakh. Though national security is the prime concern, however, in future, if it becomes permissible that serious mountaineer can be allowed to summit the way it happens in K2 in Pakistan that could open up a new avenue of Ladakh Border Tourism through mountaineering.

Wellness Tourism/ Peace Tourism

In the post pandemic world, it has become the imperative for the human society to heal up inside out. The serenity, tranquility and rejuvenating proposition of the nature could be utilized meaningfully to create Wellness Tourism/ Peace Tourism product into Ladakh Border Tourism itineraries.

Innovative Itineraries for All Season

Where over tourism is a major concern for environmentally fragile region like Ladakh, it is thus, of utmost important to create Border Tourism in a way so that Ladakh can become an all season destination. It needs several winter ready products to fulfill the gap.

6.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Ladakh

- Sparsely populated border regions of Ladakh witness constant human migration from periphery to centre, resulting in weakening of borderlands geo-politically.
- Abstracted due to lack of physical and digital connectivity.
- The removal of Inner Line Permit couples with film induced tourism (3 idiots) has given a thrust to the domestic tourism into the region which tends to pose threat of over tourism in the environmentally fragile land Ladakh. Thus sustainability issue and carrying capacity is becoming one of the major challenges for Ladakh.
- No written notification of MHA for opening up of Siachen Base Camp makes thing a limbo. Thus, clarity in opening up the border region is a critical factor.

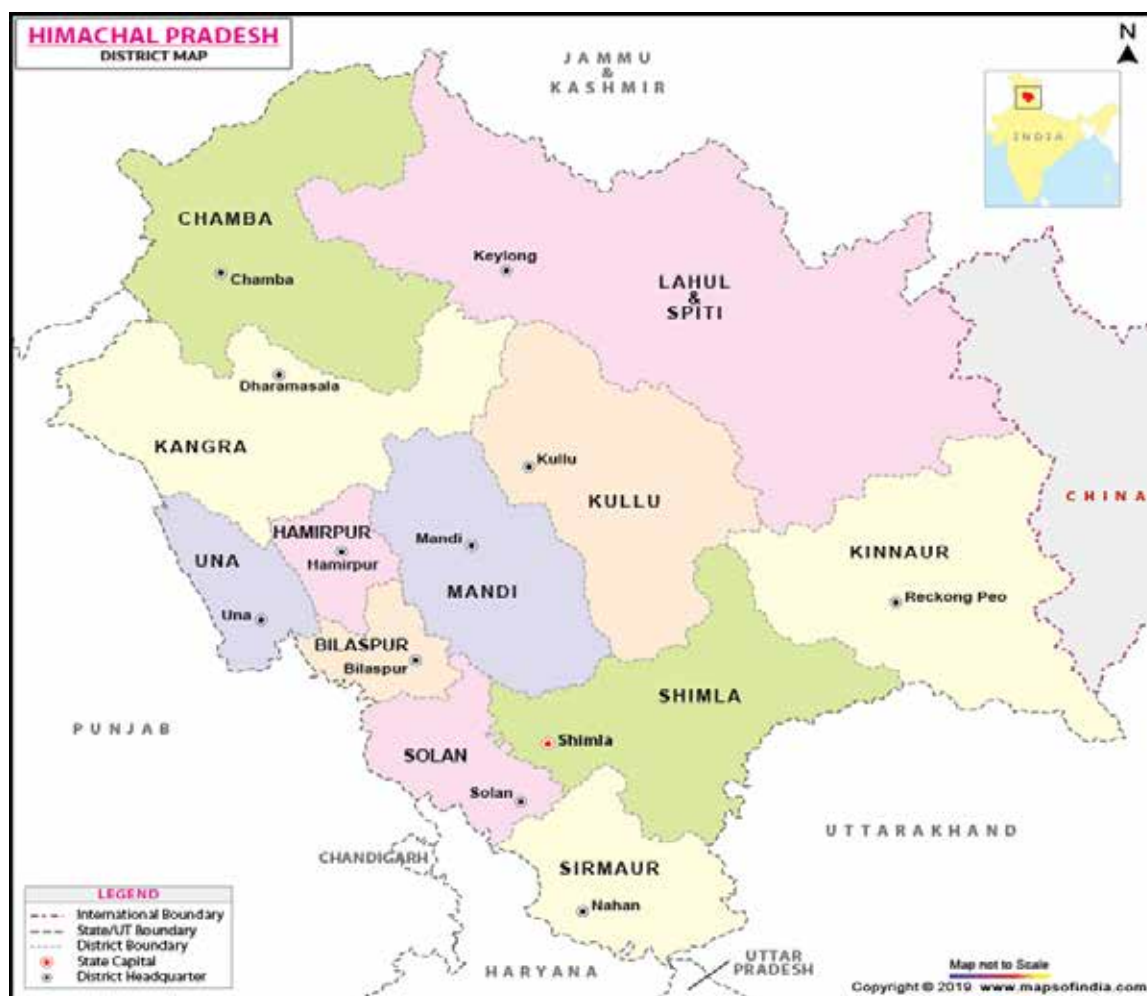
6.4.5 Way Forward

- Ardent need for Ladakh Tourism Policy which should be formulated based on Tourism Vision of Ladakh document. It requires integrated approach to work out long term basis as to what kind of hand holding Ladakh Tourism requires from the industry. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Ladakh Tourism need to work collectively to figure it out.
- Ladakh should pitch for special financial package from Government of India for development of tourism infrastructure and up-gradation of tourism destinations.
- In 2015 Prime Minister Development Package (PMDP) was sanctioned for then J&K. Ladakh could seek for its share from PMDP.
- Flagship Scheme of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD can be availed by Ladakh administration.
- Ladakh has remained deprived in terms of India's presence in form of tourism offices. Thus, India Tourism Office can be set up in Ladakh.
- Opening of Hotel Management Institute (IHM Ladakh) which has been sanctioned could pave way to upgrade the hospitality standard of the region through imparting training to the young generation.
- International Travel Mart (ITM) could be organized in Ladakh to give the place a major highlight in international tourism.
- Connectivity and infrastructure are top priority for Border Tourism Development. Augmenting wayside facilities are crucial.



- Ladakh ecosystem needs careful handling. Hence an overarching principle of tourism development of Ladakh is very important.
- All tourism stakeholders of Ladakh need to be taken into confidence in any preparation of Border Tourism Policy or further guidelines.
- Ladakh hitherto known as predominantly summer destination where the threat of visitors outnumber resident is evident, thus carrying capacity needs to be dealt with.
- It requires diverting the inflow of tourists or dispersing the number of visitors into all seasons. For that Ladakh tourism needs to create winter ready products as well as promotion of Ladakh for all seasons is required. New products like Zaskar Winter Festival need to be highlighted.
- Ladakh needs to find lucrative as well as sensible market. For that it needs to reinvent Ladakh in terms of destination branding and promotion.
- Antyodaya-Lakshya would be a prime focus for Ladakh Border Tourism where last mile connectivity as well as socio-economic betterment of nomadic border population should be of prime focus. Places like Mushkoo Valley or Hunderman village of Kargil etc. need to be given due preferences into Border Tourism format of Ladakh.
- The LOC and LAC of Ladakh have witnessed innumerable skirmishes, assaults and wars till date. Nevertheless, the Border Tourism of the region should not only be hoarded in name of war. Communal harmony and co-existence blended with its immensely rich cultural history and beauty would also need to be highlighted in the Border Tourism context of Ladakh.
- It is envisaged that successful Border Tourism implementation will not only bring socio- economic opportunity to the region; the tourist footfalls will be crucial in strengthening of borderlands geo-politically as well.

7. Border Tourism in Himachal Pradesh



Source: Maps of India

7.1 Introduction

The state of Himachal Pradesh is one of the 10 Indian states spanning the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), positioned in the north-western part of the country. Himachal Pradesh is surrounded by the states of Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir and shares international borders with the Tibet Autonomous Region (China) on the east.

Agriculture is the main occupation and the major source of employment in the state as 89.96% of the population lives in rural areas. Himachal Pradesh is one of the fastest-growing regions in the pharmaceutical industry in India. In order to preserve the unique floral and faunal diversity of the state, the government has demarcated Protected Areas in the form of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves. Among the Protected Areas are 5 National Parks, 32 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 3 Conservation Reserves and 1 Biosphere Reserve (ENVIS Centre on Wildlife and Protected Areas, 2017).

7.2 Tourism Development in Himachal Pradesh

The tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh contributes 7% to the state GDP. Domestic tourist inflow in the state reached 16.83 million in 2019, while foreign tourist arrivals reached 383,000 (IBEF Himachal Pradesh 2021). The state, having recognized the potential of tourism for the state economy, has developed infrastructure in order to facilitate the development of the sector.

The Vision of Himachal Tourism puts it: 'Positioning Himachal Pradesh as a leading global sustainable tourism destination for inclusive economic growth'. A tourism policy that accelerates economic development, minimizes social inequality, reduces poverty, conserves tangible and intangible heritage (by making use of state of the art technologies) in a sustainable manner is an immediate requirement.



7.2.1 The priority areas for Himachal Tourism are:

- Protection of state's natural and cultural heritage
- Improved quality of life and better employment opportunities
- Enhanced tourist experience
- Innovation through private sector participation

7.2.2 Guiding Principles and Policy Objectives Adopted by Himachal Tourism:

- Sustainable Tourism: Sustainable tourism is a concept that entails visiting a destination as a tourist and trying to make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy. No harm can be caused to the destination in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects because of tourism.
- Inclusive Tourism: Inclusive tourism intends to reduce poverty by integrating disadvantaged groups, so that they can participate in and benefit from tourism activities.
- Atithi Devo Bhava: It is a concept where host community considers tourists as gods and provides them with a comfortable and safe environment.

In order to realize the mission and achieve the goals for sustainable tourism, objectives focusing on different facets have been formulated to achieve the proposed target for 2029.

- Objective 1: To promote Tourism Diversification through theme based development
- Objective 2: To safeguard state's tourist destinations through sustainable interventions
- Objective 3: To ensure that sustainable tourism primarily benefits host communities
- Objective 4: To build capacity & develop quality human resource for the tourism industry
- Objective 5: To provide safe, secure and unique 'Tourism for all'
- Objective 6: To create an enabling environment for investments for sustainable tourism

Table 7.2.3 Promotional Themes of Himachal Pradesh

Eco Tourism	Natural Landscapes/ Himalayas/ Rivers/ Forests/ Flora and Fauna
Agro Tourism	Organic Farms/ Stone Food Orchards/ Local Food and Produce
	High Altitude Passes/ Snow Capped Mountains/ Frozen Lakes/ Frozen Waterfalls
Lake Tourism	Glacial Lakes/ Natural Lakes/ Man-made Lakes/ Reservoirs
Adventure Tourism	Aero Sports/ Water Sports/ Land Based/ Snow Sports
Pilgrimage Tourism	Temples/ Monasteries/ Gurudwaras/ Churches
Cultural & Heritage	Heritage Buildings/ Art & Handicraft Products/ Cuisine and Food Products/ Traditional Dance Forms/ Local Festivals
Health & Wellness	Hot Springs/ Himalayan Ayurveda/ Spiritual Health Centres/ Yoga-Meditation/ Spa Resorts
Film Tourism	Natural Landscapes/Built Heritage/ Religious Structures
MICE Tourism	Hill Stations/Star Rated Hotel and Convention Centres

Source: Himachal Tourism Policy 2019

7.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Himachal Pradesh and Focus District: Lahul and Spiti



Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Subhasish Panda (IAS), Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of Himachal Pradesh; Mr. Neeraj Kumar (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Lahaul & Spiti District, Government of Himachal Pradesh; Mr. Abinash Manghani, CEO, WelcomHeritage Hotels; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Umesh Kapur, Director, Grand Travel Planners; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism on Himachal Pradesh with focus district Lahul & Spiti was organized by PHDCCI on 3rd December 2021. The session was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, said that Himachal Pradesh is one of the most popular and easily accessible hill states of India. People from all parts of the country and world visit this beautiful State to enjoy its natural beauty. The state has so much to offer, no wonder it's a top tourist attraction in North India.

While giving an overview on the Lahaul & Spiti district, Mr. Neeraj Kumar (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Lahaul & Spiti District, Government of Himachal Pradesh, informed that Lahaul Valley has become one of the most popular tourist destinations of Himachal, due to its easy approach after the opening of Atal Tunnel. Spiti Valley boasts a rich Tibetan Buddhism influence; it is also home to numerous scenic monasteries such as Tabo, Dhankar, Komic and the famous attraction, Ki Monastery. He further said that villages bordering China shall be earmarked for development of hinterland by establishing dual purpose villages i.e. both for security and tourism.

Mr. Subhasish Panda (IAS), Principal Secretary - Tourism, Government of Himachal Pradesh, informed that Himachal Pradesh is slowly recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic with around 45 lakh tourists visiting the state in 2021. Tourism remains a key contributor to Himachal's economy with its current share of approximately 7% to the state GDP. The state government is in the process of taking its second loan from the Asian Development Bank worth Rs. 2100 crores for developing infrastructure to create new destinations. He also informed that heliport services in Shimla district is likely to start in a week's time which will give further impetus to the tourists.

Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that the tourism board along with the district administrator needs to work towards enhancement of road, air connectivity and up gradation of tourist infrastructure. Access to Himachal Pradesh through air mode of transport, especially heliports is much needed for smoother

tourism transportation and accessibility. He further added that there's a need for separate government scheme focused on development of tourist infrastructure in the border districts.

Mr. Abinash Manghani, CEO, WelcomHeritage Hotels, mentioned that the establishment of new airports and heliports in Himachal Pradesh will provide an immense push to the state's tourism and tourism related businesses. Further, the uptick in tourism by infrastructural development will bring about a significant change in the economic profile of Himachal Pradesh.

Mr. Umesh Kapur, Director, Grand Travel Planners, highlighted the urgent need for accreditation in order to establish quality check and standardization across tourist destinations and accommodations that will consequently lead to a much higher quality of tourist experience.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, in his formal Vote of Thanks has deliberated on the future of Border Tourism that how it could actually be an instrument to disperse the over-crowding in hill stations.

7.4 Border Tourism in Lahul and Spiti

7.4.1 Introduction

The district of Lahul and Spiti falls into the Trans Himalayan zone. This district is situated in the northern and north-eastern part of Himachal Pradesh and makes boundary line between Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir and Tibet (China) in these directions. The district is divided into three sub-divisions of Udaipur, Lahul and Spiti with headquarters at Udaipur, Keylong and Kaza respectively.

As per 2011 census, entire 100% population of Lahaul and Spiti district live in rural areas as there is no urbanization. The district accounted for the second lowest population for any district in India in 2001 census and is the least populous district in the country according to the 2011 census since its population has declined from 33,224 in 2001 to 31,528 in 2011. The people and the culture in the region evolved over the centuries largely isolated from the rest of the world. In 1992-93, Government of India lifted all the restrictions, including for foreigners, for travelling into the ancient Kingdom of Lahaul and Spiti that has been virtually forbidden to outsiders for over 30 years since 1962 i.e. during Indo-China war.

7.4.2 Tourist Places in Lahul and Spiti

Rohtang Pass

Rohtang Pass (altitude 13050 feet) separates Kullu from the exotic charm of the Lahaul Valley. At the highest point on top to the right as one faces Lahaul, is a small stone enclosure and a water spring which is the principal source of the River Beas; the other, Beas Kund is at the head of the Solang Nullah. The place gained religious significance because of sojourn of Beas Rishi (the famous Vyasa Rishi), author of the epic Mahabharata.



Rohtang Pass

Khoksar

Khoksar is the first village and gateway to Lahaul situated at an altitude of 3140 m on the right bank of the River Chandra. Khoksar remains covered under snow during winters. This village is surrounded by high mountains and is avalanche-prone. Avalanches can be seen piled up even near the river bed. During summers rich growth of alpine flowers, beautiful potato fields and numerous water channels spell bound the visitor.

Gondhla

The village is situated at a distance of 18 kms from Keylong, the district headquarters along the right bank of the River Chandra. Situated at an altitude of 3160 m on a fairly level expanse of land, this hamlet is large as compared to other villages in the valley. House of the Thakur of Gondhla, called the Gondhla castle or fort, attracts a large number of tourists.

Tandi

The village is situated above the confluence of the rivers Chandra and Bhaga in the Pattan valley some 7 kms away from Keylong. Revenue and settlement records reveal that Tandi was founded by Raja Rana Chand Ram under the name of Chandi which over the years got corrupted into Tandi.

Keylong

Keylong is the district headquarters of Lahaul and Spiti. It is situated on the main trade route between the Rohtang and Baralacha passes above the Bhaga River. Most of the government offices are located at Keylong. This is also the hub-centre of all commercial activity with a regular bazaar. As far as communication facilities are concerned, there are police and telegraph radio nets, telephone exchange at Keylong and postal service throughout the valley.

Jispa

This beautiful spot is 22 kms away from Keylong and 4 kms ahead of Ghemur. The village is situated at the junction of two nullahs with the main River Bhaga. Jispa has a very large dry river- bed, a rarity in Lahaul. Near this the river is shallow and plenty of trout fish can be caught during summers.

Darcha

Darcha is situated at the junction of Yotche nullah and the Zangskar chhu which takes off from the Shinkun la. Both these nullahs meet with the main river Bhaga at this place. The altitude of Darcha is about 3500 m which makes it an ideal base camp for acclimatization. Two days acclimatization at this place will prove useful for expeditions to Baralacha la and beyond.

Suraj Taal

Suraj Taal or the lake of the Sun god is situated well on the summit of the Baralacha la, a little below an altitude of 16000 feet. The Bhaga River rises in this lake which is situated in a beautiful natural amphitheater just below the highway. During winters, it remains in the grip of a pall of ice untidy with lumps of frozen snow and jutting stones. But in the summer season this tarn comes back to its glorious charm, the deep blue of its icy waters reflecting craggy mountains and snowy heights.



Chandra Taal



Suraj Taal

Chandra Taal

The natural lake of Chandra Taal is situated at about 14,000 ft above msl between a low ridge and about 9 kms from the Kunzom Pass. The lake lies in a broad grassy plain which in ancient times was a glacier. The water in the lake is so clear that stones at its bottom are easily visible. Alpine vegetation grows on the surrounding moraines in summer. This lake freezes during the winter season.



Udaipur

This sub-divisional headquarters is situated at the junction of the mighty Mayar nullah with the main river Chandrabhaga. Situated 53 kms away from Keylong, earlier this village was known as Margul or Markul. This place attracts a lot of tourists and pilgrims to its two unique temples, namely, Trilokinath and Markula Devi temples.

Kaza

Kaza, the sub-divisional headquarters of Spiti, is situated on the left bank of the Spiti River at an altitude of about 12,500 ft. above msl. The village is overlooked by steep ridges. The otherwise soporific place hums with activity of tourists during summer, who converge here for permits, current exchange, information, accommodation, petrol and to witness the annual trade fair which a number of visitors compare with the fairs in some of the gompa towns of Ladakh.

Dhankar

On the left bank of the Spiti river at a distance of 32 kms downstream from Kaza near Shichling at an altitude of 3870 m nestles the citadel of Dhankar, the official capital of Spiti. Founded between 7th and the 9th centuries, Dhankar's old temple complex occupies the southern part of the steep mountain slope of the village. It is known by the name of Lha-pa Gompa. The monastery consists of a number of multi-storeyed buildings perched together, giving a fortress like impression.

Lhalung

From the small hamlet of Attargu the track leads through deserted and rugged terrain over heights of around 3800 metres into the Lingti valley. Lingti is the third biggest river, after the Pin which pours its great waters out into the Spiti. The road into the Lingti valley leads along the slopes of the Lingti's right bank in serpentine curves from which one has a giddy view of the few medieval settlements along the river.

Kunzam Pass

This pass is situated at 60 kms from Gamphu on the Gramphu-Kaza-Sumdo road. It provides chief access to the Spiti-valley from Lahaul which is separated from the Spiti valley by the great Kunzom range and from where the Spiti, the chief river of the area takes its source. Though higher than the Rohtang Pass, Kunzom is safer and provides easier ascent and descent.

Lossar

Lossar is the first inhabited village on the Spiti side if you advance to the valley from Manali over Kunzom pass. Situated at a height of 4,085 m, the village is singularly secluded. Sight of Lossar to a trekker coming down from Kunzom brings instant relief. The neatly white-washed mud houses with red bands look extremely picturesque.

Kye Monastery

Overlooking Kaza from a height of about 13,500 ft, the Kye Monastery is the largest in the valley and holds a powerful sway over the most populous part of the valley around Kaza. The gompa is an irregular heap of low rooms and narrow corridors on a monolithic conical hill. From a distance it resembles the Thiksey Monastery near Leh in Ladakh.



Kye Monastery

Kibber

Kibber is located at a height of about 14,200 ft in a narrow valley on the summit of a limestone rock. It is only 16 kms from Kaza and a bus service plies between these two places in summer. Kibber is a rather pleasant village with plenty of cultivation. The moment you get down from the bus you are greeted by lush green fields which look strikingly refreshing against the arid backdrop of lofty hills.

Pin Valley

One of the four local units of Spiti is the Pin valley which lies on either side of the Pin River. Geographically, the Pin valley is shut off from the rest of Spiti by high mountains. The only opening has been provided by the Pin River that forces its way through a deep narrow gorge to join the main river Spiti, at Attargu. The Pin valley is famous for its internationally recognized Chaumuiti horses that are bred and sold for considerable sums in Rampur-Bushahar during Lavi fair and in Ladakh.

7.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Lahul and Spiti

Experiencing the Border

The location of Lahul and Spiti, its inaccessible remoteness provides historical significance as international borders. Losar village in Spiti Valley is located adjacent to the Indo Chinese border at an altitude of 4,085 meters above sea level. It is located in the extreme end of the Spiti Valley, which is much similar to Ladakh in appearance. There are magnificent mountains, stunning rivers and breathtaking vistas in Losar that can spellbind any tourist with its unparalleled beauty. Such border village could be explored through Photographic Tour, Trekking etc.

Buddhist Circuit in Spiti

Boasting a rich Tibetan Buddhism influence, the Spiti valley is home to numerous scenic monasteries and gompas such as Tabo, Dhankar, Komic and famous attraction Ki monastery in Spiti.

Adventure/ Nature Based Tourism

The District comprises of Cold Desert High Altitude region which can be designed as High Hill Circuit for high altitude trekker, mountaineers, Yak Safari, etc. Other adventure tourism products like skiing, paragliding, rafting, sighting of snow leopard can be explored.

Heritage Tourism

The rich history of the District, multi ethnicity, Buddhist heritage sites, natural heritage elements altogether can offer profound experience of Heritage Tourism in Border Tourism circuit of Lahul and Spiti. Rich heritage trail can be formatted exploring through traditional seasonal routes and passes.

Emerging Tourist Circuit in Spiti Valley

Sundo - Tabo (important Buddhist monastery, two Kalachakra by Dalai Lama) Dhankar-Kaza- Losar-Chander Taal-Koksar.

Emerging Tourist Circuit in Lahul Valley

- Manali-Sissu-Keylong-Jispa-Darcha-Sarchu
- Manali-Sissu-Tandi-Triloknath-Udaipur-Killer-Pangi-Kishtawar

Ethnic Tourism

Lahul and Spiti is a tribal district for which tourists get exposure to tribal culture. Ethnic Tourism thus, is a viable option to give an impetus to tourism to enhance lives of people. Souvenir, Antique articles, Stay and Food, Photographs in traditional attire, Snow craft in winter all could be incorporated within the format of Ethnic Tourism.

Excursion Circuit

It has become one of the most popular tourist destinations of Himachal due to its easy approach after the opening of Atal Tunnel. Thousands of tourists visit Lahul Valley every day to enjoy its breathtaking beauty. Manali to Lahul valley via Atal Tunnel is only 1 hour. North and South Portal of Atal Tunnel Making Manali the base, plan of Day Trip from Manali to Lahul/ Kinnaur-Spiti Day circuit.

Experiential Border Tourism

Optimizing all the elements of tourism, Lahul and Spiti can offer a holistic experience as Border Tourism, a combination of Nature walks, Treks, Hikes, Eco Trails, Buddhist Circuit.

Rural Tourism

Being 100% Rural District, Lahul and Spiti needs to give bigger impetus to Rural Tourism products within Border Tourism format. Milking a cow, a day with craftsman, Fossil trail in Spiti, brewing liquor with tribal, refurbishment of old Jullas, Bridges - rural tourism products can be designed numerous ways in this border district.

Long Stay Tourism

Owing to the pandemic situation, there is an evident shift from short term visit to long stay where people can create their stay as well as continue work. Such workation concept can be developed in places of Lahul and Spiti where particularly homestays can be equipped and utilized for long stay purposes.



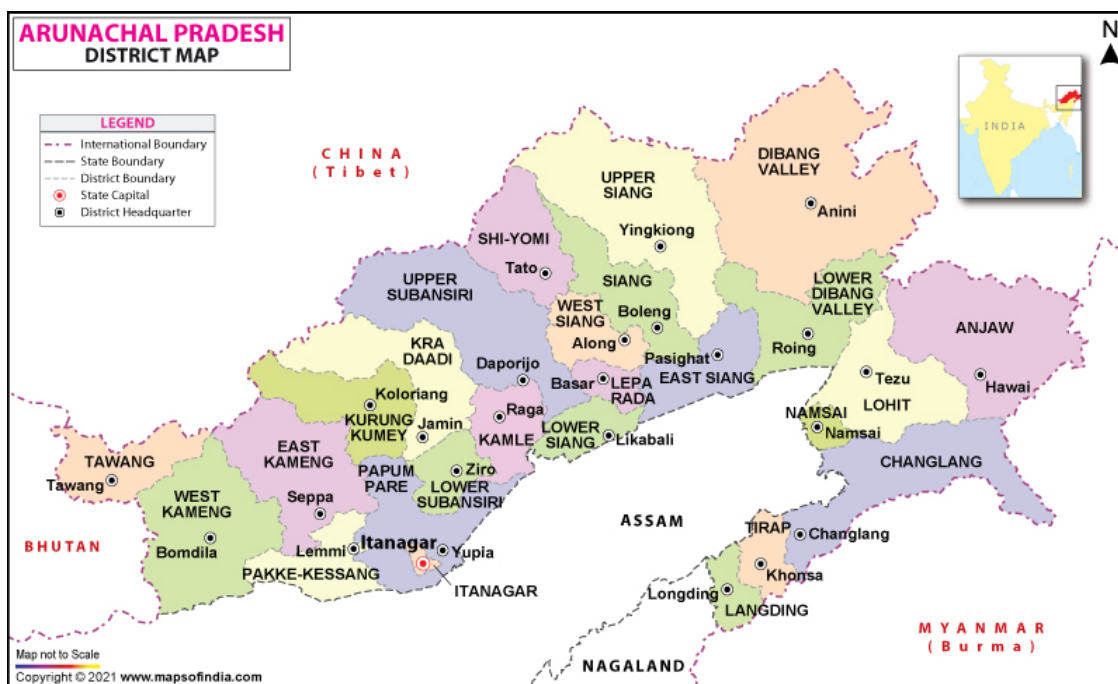
7.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Lahul and Spiti

- Geographical remoteness: All major villages and border roads are remotely located in very high altitude and cold area.
- Climatic Extremities and Ecological issues: Most of the areas remain snow bound during winters and the temperature goes down as low as minus 20 degree Celsius. The area is very ecologically sensitive.
- Capacity constraint: Working season is limited and with limited numbers of hotels and caf   in the region, carrying capacity to be fixed.
- High Capital maintenance: Cost of infrastructure such as roads electricity and hotels.
- Stakeholder's concern: Due to opening of Atal Tunnel tourists outnumbered local population. With exponential rise in the inflow of tourists in the region there have been many incidents where local communities have expressed their concerns and displeasure on the issues like garbage being thrown openly by tourist, law and order related matters.

7.4.5 Way Forward

- In mountainous state, connectivity is top priority; good road and tourist friendly along the state and national highway amenities etc. is required.
- Access to Himachal has to be strengthened through air connectivity. Two airstrips have been sanctioned in Lahul & Spiti which can be used in peace time.
- Need to build separate scheme for building infrastructure in border district destinations which has been identified by the MoT.
- Alternatively PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan scheme can be utilized.
- Gap finding scheme of central Government Ministry of Finance can be used for golf course construction.
- Need to prepare more projects for Himalayan region to fetch finance from Ministries for development.
- Lahaul and Spiti have multi-lingual and multi religion social fabric despite in small population which features secular character of the district. This needs to be highlighted in cultural tourism products of the place.
- Pin Valley National Park can be considered as one of the USPs to promote Lahul & Spiti.
- A separate Buddhist Circuits can be developed: Chandigarh-Himachal (McLeodganj, Dharamsala) Ladakh. Lahul & Spiti can be naturally Buddhist sites for the circuits.
- Being 100% rural district, Rural Tourism needs bigger impetus.
- Promotional materials to be developed for Adventure Tourism, Mountain Biking, Paragliding, Cycling, Mountaineering, Rafting, Skiing.
- Himachal Pradesh Tourism department is actively trying in infrastructure development. To support infrastructure loan taken from Asian Development Bank. Creating infrastructure for creating new destination to deal with carrying capacity is of paramount importance.
- Number of repeat visit will ensure growth of tourism.
- Chandigarh is gateway to Himachal. Himachal Pradesh is well connected with Punjab, NCR and Chandigarh which determines the types of Consumer preference.
- Highway development could change economic profile of Himachal Pradesh. Strategic value of borders tourist can experience and gain awareness about border realities.
- Convenience and comfort which tourists want convenience of activities required for promoting border tourism.
- Government of Shimla needs to introduce accreditation for homestays to maintain benchmark. Policy to be there for selecting homestay.
- More focus to be given to utilize homestays for Staycation/ Long stay Tourism.
- Present Challenge: Indiscipline traffic in Atal Tunnel is presently a challenge where government intervention required streamlining the traffic of Atal Tunnel.
- 24x7 Water Supply 24x7 Power supply local solar supply are pathways for Sustainable Tourism.
- Roads (Koksar to Kaza, widening between Tandi-Udaipur and Arterial roads) development is a major priority.
- Investment opportunities: Homestay schemes preserving local architecture, solar lighting around tourist attraction, solid waste management, drinking water mechanism, Village Museum.

8. Border Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh



Source: Maps of India

8.1 Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh has a long international border with Bhutan to the west (160 km), China to the north and north-east (1,080 km) and Myanmar to the east (440 km). The State was the site of a bitter Indo-China War in 1962 when Chinese troops advanced deep into the State and inflicted heavy casualties on Indian troops. The McMahon Line, a Raj-era demarcation now referred to as the Line of Actual Control (LAC), marks the China-India boundary along Arunachal Pradesh. It is one among a few States of India which has international boundaries with three countries.

8.2 Tourism Development in Arunachal Pradesh

Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh has grown rapidly in the recent years with eco and adventure tourism, cultural tourism and religious tourism being the major areas of interest. Tourist arrivals in the state reached 563,464 in 2019, with 555,639 domestic and 7,825 foreign visitors. From 2010 to 2018, tourist arrivals increased at a 10.55% CAGR. Eventually, Tourism has been identified as a key sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

Table 8.2.1 Tourism Circuits of Arunachal Pradesh

Name of Circuit
Tezpur-Bhalukpong-Bomdila-Tawang
Itanagar-Zero-Daporijo-Aalo-Pashighat
Pashighat-Jengging-Yiongkoing-Tuting
Tinsukia-Tezu-Hayuliang
Margherita-Meao-Namdhap-Vijaynagar
Roing-Mayudia-Anini
Tezpur-Seijosa-Bhalukpong
Zero-Palin-Nyapin-Sangram-Koloriang
Doimukh-Sagalee-Pake Kessang-Seppa
Aalo-Mechuka
Daporijo-Taliha-Siyum-Nacho
Jairampur-Manmao-Nampong-Pangsau Pass

20 Years Master Plan for Tourism was initiated by the Ministry of Tourism in 2003. Government of Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Department has outlined an Ecotourism Policy in 2018 and 'An Operational Guidelines for Rural Tourism and Homestays' in 2019. Several Schemes and campaign have been initiated by the Department of Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh:

- Chief Minister Paryatan Vikas Yojana (CMPVY) through which the beneficiaries can avail loan for opening a restaurant, running a tour operator, hotel, homestays, purchasing adventure equipment etc. This is a value-added subsidy scheme where funds are granted for opening home stays, restaurants, bakery, food courts and adventure sports.
- Chief Minister's Paryatan Shiksha Yojana (CMPSY) through which regular training in hospitality is provided to the youth of the State. Under CMPSY youth from the hospitality sector are sent to reputed institutes for training.
- Dekho Apna Pradesh conceptualized in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Dekho Apna Desh campaign is an attempt to promote tourism within the state to heal the damage caused to the sector by the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Chief Minister's Advanced Certificate Course (CMACC), under which youth are trained in adventure and allied sports for which government has tied up with the Dirang based National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (NIMAS).
- The State won the Best Emerging Tourist Destination in India award for 2019 and the Best Emerging Green Destination for 2019.

8.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Arunachal Pradesh and Focus Districts: Anjaw, Dibang Valley and Shi Yomi



Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI; Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Abu Tayeng, Director- Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Ms. Ayushi Sudan (IAS), Deputy Commissioner- Anjaw District, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Mr. Minga Sherpa (IAS), Deputy Commissioner- Dibang Valley District, Government of Arunachal Pradesh; Mr. Nirmalya Choudhury, Chairman- North East States Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Sudesh Poddar, President, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India; Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The webinar on Border Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh was organized on 24 June 2021 and it was the first of the series of knowledge session on Border Tourism organized by PHDCCI. Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI has detailed about the three focus district areas, namely, Anjaw, Anini of Dibang Valley and Mechuka of Shi Yomi in the beginning of the webinar.

Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, mentioned that Border Tourism is of immense interest to the Government of India and the Ministry of Home Affairs is taking keen interest to develop this segment. She mentioned that in order to promote Border Tourism, there is a need to enhance connectivity and the Government has thrust in improving the road network and creating air strips. The Regional Connectivity Scheme- UDAN 4.0 undertaken by the Ministry of Civil Aviation has given huge focus to the north-eastern part of the country. There is a lot of work happening on roads as well to ensure last-mile connectivity to the new and older destinations.

Mr. Abu Tayeng, Director Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, mentioned that the state should take advantage of its natural beauty, environment, bio-diversity, flora and fauna to attract tourists but at the same time not make it over crowded. He informed that infrastructure development is taking place with the help of Chief Minister Paryatan Vikas Yojana (CMPVY). There are a lot of youth training programs happening with the help of Government schemes which is helping to promote tourism in the state. He also informed that civilian flights are open for Pasighat, Tezu, Mechuka and others are in pipeline of opening soon.

While giving an overview about the demographic and geographic locations of Anjaw district, Ms. Ayushi Sudan (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Anjaw District, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, said that the district carries historical tourist attractions, spiritual locations and eco-tourism hubs especially in bird watching, which needs to be developed as a major tourist attraction. She informed that Anjaw is the only district that shares border with China and Myanmar and has the potential to unlock Border Tourism. She mentioned that there is a need for development of road infrastructure and telecom connectivity.

Mr. Minga Sherpa (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Dibang Valley District, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, deliberated on the district's issues due to remoteness along with its strength in terms of biodiversity, environment and natural resources. Talking about scope and opportunities ahead, he mentioned camping, bloggers and trekkers meet can be organized along with bird and butterfly watching events. Mr. Sherpa emphasized that there is a need for handholding of budding local entrepreneurs which can help in revamping the tourism business along with promoting local artists and craftsmen in the district.

Mr. Nirmalya Choudhury, Chairman North East States Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has focused on the industry perspective for the development of Border Tourism. He has come up with several pragmatic solutions on Destination Management and Operation.

Mr. Sudesh Poddar, President, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI), has also shared his ideas on how to develop border region into high end tourism destination. He gave an overview of the basic aspects of development of tourism in the State and emphasized that the industry needs to collaborate, explore new destinations and look at domestic travel following the safety norms and precautions.

Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI, mentioned that the problem of border districts and tourism development is recognized as an important challenge for local communities along the border. Although institutional environment and security barriers remain the stumbling block for entrepreneurial cooperation; conditions for Border Tourism enhancement can be enabled through the setting up of frameworks for easier cooperation of public, private, and civil actors.

Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, highlighted the challenges of border districts in terms of gaps in knowledge and information about how a border area can become a tourist destination; gaps in accessibility, transport and economic infrastructure that is required by tourists. Interconnection between the Ministry of Tourism, State Tourism Development Boards, community participation, and industry participation is strategic. He further said that besides ensuring common strategic planning, it is necessary to ensure the participation of the local population in the entire process.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, delivered the formal vote of thanks and mentioned that PHDCCI will come out with a White Paper after each webinar and the recommendations shall be submitted to the relevant Ministries for their immediate action.

8.4 Border Tourism in Anjaw, Anini (Dibang Valley) and Mechuka (Shi Yomi)

8.4.1 Introduction of Anjaw

On 16th February 2004, Anjaw District was bifurcated from Lohit District with its headquarter at Hawaii with seven Administrative Units viz., Hayuliang, Hawaii, Walong, Kibotho, Manchal, Goiliang and Chaglagam. The District shares

international borders with China to the North and East by the Myanmar and district borders in the south by Changlang District and in the west by Lower Dibang Valley & Lohit District. It is the extreme eastern district of India.

8.4.2 Tourist Places of Anjaw

Kibithoo

It is one of the remotest Circle Headquarters in Arunachal Pradesh and the only Circle Headquarter facing a visible across vantage of international boundary of Indo- China Border.

Kaho

The last border village in the Indo-China border, it is inhabited by Meyor Community. It has a very old Gompa denoting the Buddhist faith practice by the Meyors.



Kaho Village

Dong

Dong is a small picturesque village inhabited by the Meyors just 7 km away from Walong and is situated in the left bank of Lohit River. Snowcapped mountains and beautiful pine forests make the place immensely inviting.

Namti Valley

Namti Valley also known as Namti Maidan is placed 7 kms away from Walong on the way to Kibithoo. The fiercest battle of 1962 was fought here by the Indian forces against Chinese aggression into the valley. A sombre war memorial stands in honour of the sacrifices of brave Indian soldiers. Alongside, age-old pines standing and beautiful undulating green valley stays silent witnesses of the supreme sacrifices made during the war.



Helmet Top

Helmet Top

Helmet top is a head top, located above the Namti plains where a memorabilia stands dedicated to the memory of soldiers who lead their lives in 1962 war. The Helmet Top is frequented by all visitors to salute the martyr.

Hawai

The District Headquarter of Anjaw district is situated on the left bank of Lohit River. A beautiful township located at a height of 1296 metres above sea level, the town is connected by a cable suspension bridge popularly known as the Anjaw Bridge. It is a motorable cable suspension bridge with span of 156.55m, one of the longest in North Eastern Region. The beautiful scene of the Lohit valley and the commanding height of the township make Hawai one of the most beautiful places in Arunachal Pradesh.

Chaglagam

Chaglagam is known for highest yield of Large Cardamom production in the State and is known for being one of the interior most progressive circles. This area enjoys a lot of shade thus encouraging proliferate growth of the shade loving large cardamom.

Walong

Walong Circle HQ holds historical significance as it has been the witness to the fight of Indian soldiers against the invasion of Chinese forces in the year 1962. The spectacular natural beauty of the place and the War Memorial at Walong are

landmarks of stature Namti Valley. Walong also houses a grand War Memorial built in honour of the sacrifices of brave Indian soldiers.

Hayuliang

Hayuliang means 'place of respite'. It is situated at 750 metres above sea level and has a cool and pleasant climate. The place offers a splendid view of the confluence of Lohit and Dalai Rivers and is adorned with mesmerizing natural beauty.

Tidding

As one enters Anjaw district the first major land mark is Tidding marked by a strong bridge laid over brilliant clear aquamarine running water of the Tidding River. Undulating slopes greets a traveler quietly edging for a moment of respite and nature photography.

8.4.3 Introduction of Anini (Dibang Valley District)

Dibang Valley is the largest district area-wise in Arunachal Pradesh (9129 sq. km) with population of 8004. Extremely remote; nearest major town is 220 km away which is Roing. Dibang Valley has very low population density (less than 1 person in per sq. km). A strategic district of Arunachal Pradesh, Dibang Valley shares 300 km long borders with China.

8.4.4 Tourist Places of Anini

Anini is the headquarters of the Dibang Valley district in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Idu Mishmis, known as Yidu Lhoba in China are the major inhabitants of the township. Anini is a plateau situated between Dri and Mathuan rivers: the two tributaries of the Dibang River. The district has only one sub-division namely Anini and three CD Blocks with five Circles. A small underdeveloped town, mainly due to its remoteness, Anini is marked by pleasant weather and immense natural beauty. It has basic road and air link to the rest of India.



Aerial view of Anini

8.4.5 Introduction of Mechuka (Shi Yomi District)

Shi Yomi District was bifurcated from West Siang District in 2018 with its headquarters at Tato. The district would have four administrative units namely Mechuka, Tato, Pidi and Manigong. Religions practiced in the valley include Donyi Polo, Tibetan Buddhism, and Christianity. The spinning and weaving of their garments as well as carpet making are done by the woman folk. The woodcarving and painting are done by men folk. In addition, they are working under various department and private construction work for their livelihood as and when get free from agriculture works. Nowadays, horticulture, small-scale industries, tourism etc. play significant role in development of their economy.

8.4.6 Tourist Places in Mechuka

Mechuka is one of the lesser explored tourism destinations in the country. With cascading waterfalls and crystal clear water running on stony river beds, the exclusivity of this valley holds out a promise of serenity. Mechuka is a mountainous region endowed with rich natural resources and biodiversity of diverse flora and fauna that further enhances the natural beauty consists of hilly terrain with narrow serpentine roads.



Samtem Yongcham Monastery

The oldest monasteries called Samten Yangcha of Mahayana sect is located at a hilltop in the western most part of Mechuka. This Gumpa as per oral history of Membas is a contemporary of the great Tawang monastery.

Samtem Yongcham Monastery

Neh Pemashubu

A pilgrimage place about 13 km from Mechuka town, called Neh Pemashubu is known as the meditation place of 6th rebirth of Guru Padma Samba.

Siko Dido Waterfall

On the way to Tato there exists a beautiful waterfall in between Hirgo and Yapik village. Just as a tired walker takes rest under a shade, this enchanting waterfall revitalizes the onlookers and enables them to carry on the walk unto the journey of untold beauty.



Siko Dido Waterfall

8.4.7 Product Line of Border Tourism in Anjaw, Anini and Mechuka

Sensing the Border

Experiencing 'Border' by 'being' there itself is a sensuous process which evokes many emotions. Over the past one year, the places like Walong, Kibithoo, Kaho and Dong of Anjaw District have drawn much attraction in terms of Tourism. The District has viewpoints of international border, a prime essential for Border Tourism. Also, Dong, being the easternmost village receives the first sunrise of the country.

Several trek routes of Dibang Valley district could also take to the proximity of Indo-China Border.

The border between India and China is also a battle of colonial legacy which had not been and is still not demarcated from point to point throughout its length. Even the LAC agreed to after the 1962 Sino-Indian war is not precisely delineated. Such a contested space can very well be framed into the Border Tourism for Mechuka, from where the famous McMahon line is just 29 km away.

Military Heritage Tourism

Tourism to military locations and structures can play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, especially those of the younger generation. This is because it gives tourists an opportunity to acquaint themselves with a difficult and painful history. A completed journey may serve as an occasion for reflection and lead to contemplation of the dramatic consequences of war and can be evocative for one to actually 'feel' the Nation.

During Indo-China War in 1962, a large part of the Anjaw District was captured by the Chinese which have left some historical elements in terms of Military Heritage, for example bunkers all along from Walong, Kibithoo and Kaho which could provide with a great potential for Military Heritage Tourism. The story of the War of 1962 could be a rich reservoir of narratives feeding into the essence of 'Border Tourism'. Light and Sound show in Walong War Memorial is an important part of it. Namti and Walong are the places rich in war narratives and significant to Border Tourism of the Anjaw District.

Ethnic Tourism

The villages of Anjaw (Walong, Kibithoo, Kaho and Dong) are the host of the smallest tribal group 'Mayor' in Arunachal Pradesh State who are only 800 in number and hospitable and could be a potential community to develop Ethno Tourism in the District. Arunachal Pradesh State Government has taken up Kaho to project as the first Model Village with best of the amenities.

Similarly, experiencing the traditional agro-pastoralism of the Membas of Mechuka could be unique in that they apply intelligent management and sustainable utilization of natural resources for their livelihood. Memba is one of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh living in an eco-friendly relationship with nature in the Mechuka Valley in subalpine to alpine climatic conditions. Membas of Mechuka are followers of Lama Cheeji Lengbo who practice the Nyingmapa sect of Mahayana Buddhism. The Ramo and Tagin are the followers of the Donyi-Polo. Losar is the main festival of the Memba tribe and it is celebrated with pomp and gaiety by the local people. It is considered as the New Year for the Membas which lasts for 3 days. The Tagin Tribes celebrates Si-Donyi from 4th-6th of January every year for the good quality crops, good health and prosperity of the community. The Ramo tribes celebrate the Podi-Barbi festival for good harvest and prosperity of the people.

The lives and culture of Meyor of Anjaw, Idu Mishmis of Anini in Dibang Valley or the tribes of Memba, Ramos, Tagin, Bokar and Libo of Mechuka could provide with a strong product line for Ethnic Tourism in 'Border Tourism' format.

Spiritual Tourism

The Samtem Yongcham monastery of Mechuka, situated atop a hill overlooking the valley is believed to be more than 400 years old. For the Membas, Pema Shelphug is one of the most important holy places in Mechuka valley. The annual pilgrimage to the cave is a major event for the Buddhist Membas. This cave connects the Membas with their past and their homeland from which their ancestors once migrated and where their belief system and moral values originated. It is a symbolic representation of what constitutes Memba society and Memba identity. The annual pilgrimage to the cave is a major event for the Buddhist Membas. Along the circumambulation path are several spots that are connected to Padmasambhava's sojourn in Pema Shelphug.

In Dibang Valley district, Spiritual Tourism through IGU (local priests) culture and rituals (Shamanism) also holds immense potential.

Wildlife and Eco-Tourism

The district Anjaw holds great potential for Eco Tourism with special emphasis on 'Bird Watching'. The 'White Bellied Heron' is a species of large heron known from the foothills of the eastern Himalayas in India and Bhutan to northeastern Bangladesh and Burma. It is mostly solitary and occurs in undisturbed riverside or wetland habitats. Hence, Eco Tourism brings a good potential especially for doing conservation through tourism.

Dibang Valley district has a unique biodiversity. 4000 km out 9000 km of the District falls within Dibang Wildlife Sanctuaries. This is home of the highest number of tigers in Arunachal Pradesh, Mishmi Takin, Mishmi flying Squirrel.

Adventure Tourism

The state offers immense opportunities for terrestrial, aquatic, air based adventure tourism. The fast flowing rivers, valleys and remote mountainous unconquered virgin forests are attracting travellers. The Department of Sports and Youth Affairs Adventure Wing is trying hard to promote adventure sports in the state for the last decades.

The district administration of Shi Yomi in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh organizes three days event branded as 'Adventure@ Mechuka' in the month of November every year. During the festival, one can enjoy various adventure and sports activities like aero-modeling, trap-shooting, paragliding, mountain-biking, rappelling, river-crossing and trekking.

The Dibang Valley district is also trying to emerge as an adventure tourism destination comprising various adventure activities like river rafting, river crossing, zip lining, bungee and para motoring. Several difficult trek routes have been identified which can be operated in collaboration with ITBP and the Indian Army. There are potentials for zip lining, rafting or paragliding in Anjaw district.

Homestay Tourism

Homestays are of huge potential in all the three destinations which can serve the purpose not only of rural accommodation, but also can be integrated with Ethno/Eco and other aspects of Border Tourism and can be instrumental in preserving and exhibiting the unique the nature and culture of the places.

Indo-Myanmar Border Tourism

Anjaw shares its border with both China and Myanmar. Hawaii-Walong and Manchal are situated in Indo-China-Myanmar tri-junction. There are several impassable passes to trek through which can be incorporated into Eco Tourism project of the District. A separate focus for developing 'Indo-Myanmar Border Tourism' in Arunachal Pradesh is felt required for Anjaw.

8.4.8 Challenges in Border Tourism Development of Arunachal Pradesh

- Connectivity is the chronic and categorical problem in border areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The three discussion areas of Border Tourism (Anjaw, Anini and Mechuka) have grossly been affected by the poor connectivity which poses primary challenge to the Border Tourism Development in the region. Several projects are going on in these areas expecting some improvements in road connectivity which will enhance the tourism potential of those areas in general.
- Secondly, extremely poor cellular and internet connectivity in Dibang Valley district and in places like Walong, Kibithoo, Kaho, Chaglagam of Anjaw district categorizes the second challenge for Border Tourism development in the region.
- Thirdly, not many local entrepreneurs have come up within the Anjaw district in terms of tourism initiatives. In Dibang Valley also, there is a dominant demography of untrained and unemployed youth who lack any



awareness about conservation of wildlife and employment opportunities through tourism.

- All the focus destinations are having minimal tourism related infrastructure, limited number of homestays and other facilities.
- Overall developmental challenges and lack of proper exposure have a limiting effect in the areas' overall tourism development process.

8.4.9 Way Forward

- Border Tourism project need to be seen as part of overall development agendas of border districts of Arunachal Pradesh. It requires links with other key sectors (Agriculture, Textiles etc.) of the State. District administrations need to modulate and sensitize the local community of the areas for developing tourism
- Greater engagement of the Indian Army and Border Guarding Forces and good civil-military cooperation is required for developing tourism amenities (tourist facilitation centres in border destinations) and accessibilities (to get domestic tourist access to several border areas), conducting various joint expedition through difficult trekking route which are in close proximity to border areas (e.g. Dibang Valley) and for various content development for Border Tourism Product (e.g. Light & Sound Show).
- Digital Connectivity is identified as a fundamental factor which needs to be set up on priority basis.
- Hard Infrastructural Development and Last Mile Connectivity are the prime requisites for Border Tourism. More ALGs need to open up for civil aviation to reach the border destinations.
- Capacity Building and Skill Development is a cardinal issue, for quality assurance in tourism services. Continuous training for the host community is required with special focus on border tourism.
- PPP model could be effective in initial phases of Border Tourism Destination Management process.
- High End Tourism may be an option for places in low population density of the borders. State Government needs dialogue with pioneer investors for that.
- Border destinations with greater environmental resources need to comply with Eco Tourism Policy of the State (2018) to avoid environmental threats especially for endangered species.
- Multi-sectoral dialogues to be initiated with immediate effect to come up with actionable outcomes.
- Border Tourism will be operated in strategic locations, hence, strict code of conduct to be formulated from the beginning containing environmental, social and geo-political milieu of the region.
- Mere footfall must not be taken as sole 'success indicator' rather holistic socio-economic development should be the priority of any Border Tourism Development project.
- Theatrical and sensuous aspects of borders need to be inculcated through creation of border narratives and to be incorporated with the product line.
- Border tourism should look beyond the hedonistic and exploitative aspect of tourism and should be people-driven and tourism with a purpose complying with Sustainable/ Responsible Tourism agendas.
- The experience of border must go beyond its corporeal nature of 'going to' and 'seeing' the border or merely 'doing' several tourism activities there. It needs to make tourists emotionally and morally connected with border, to make them aware and conscious about the evocative nature of border through their experience. Cultural heritage of border and social connectivity in Border Tourism must lead to not only revenue generation and enhanced destination image; it should also be thought as part of national integration process.





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- Quantification of variability in flows and quality parameters.
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INDO-MYANMAR BORDER TOURISM

• NAGALAND • MANIPUR





INDO - MYANMAR BORDER TOURISM

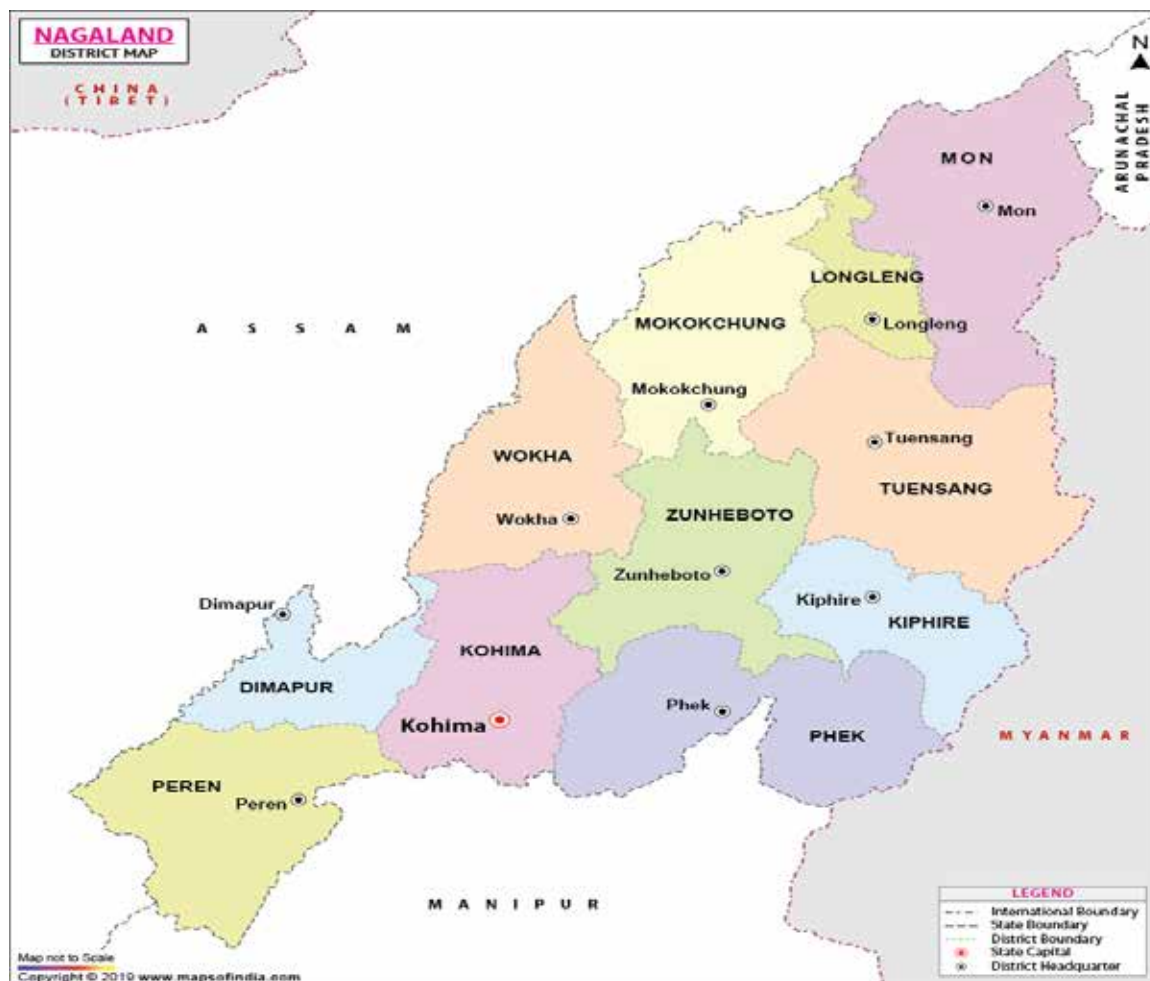
Myanmar is located at the tri junction of East Asia, South Asia and South East Asia. Myanmar is India's gateway to ASEAN as it is the only country of this grouping which has a land and maritime boundary with India. Myanmar has a land border (1643 km) covering four Indian states (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram), border Myanmar (Kachin & Chin states and Sagaing Division) and a 725 km maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.

The India-Myanmar border is the international border between India and Myanmar (formerly Burma). The border is 1,643 km in length and runs from the tri-point with China in the north to the tri-point with Bangladesh in the south. India and Myanmar share maritime boundaries too. The two countries have maritime exclusive economic zones in each other's vicinity. Landfall Island, India's northernmost Island in Andaman and Nicobar is 40 kms south of Coco Islands belonging to Myanmar.

Myanmar is geopolitically significant to India as it stands at the center of the India-Southeast Asia geography. Myanmar has a big border with China in the north contiguous with the Sino-Indian disputed border which has many implications. It is the only country that sits at the intersection of India's 'Neighborhood First' Policy and its 'Act East' Policy. Myanmar is an essential element in India's practice of regional diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific and serve as a land bridge to connect South Asia and Southeast Asia. India and Myanmar have traditionally had much in common, with cultural, historical, ethnic and religious ties. Cross-ethnic ties among the tribal communities are common in Indo-Myanmar border.

There are designated immigration and customs crossings in Moreh, India to Tamu, Myanmar in Manipur and Zorinpui international border crossing in Mizoram. However, the India-Myanmar border has a Free Movement Regime (FMR) which allows tribes living along the border to travel 16 km across either side of the border without visa restrictions. There are over 250 villages with over 300,000 people living within 10 kms of the border who frequently cross the border through 150 small and large formal and informal border crossings. There are several security concerns evident in Indo-Myanmar border such as drug trafficking and narco-terrorism, smuggling of arms, insurgencies in the North Eastern States of India or illegal immigrations. Despite the border between India and Myanmar is properly demarcated, its porous nature of border is somewhat a threat to border security.

9. Border Tourism in Nagaland



Source: Maps of India

9.1 Introduction

If North East represents the richest ethnic region of the world and meeting point of four major races (Aryan, Mongoloid, Austric, Tibeto-Burman) of the world, Nagaland and Nagas are known for the myriad tribes and rich culture and traditional systems ranging from the autocratic to pure democracy. The culture, values and systems of governance among the tribes are so different. The rich music, ballads, art and crafts and other knowledge systems also indicate times of leisure and possibility that at least some of the tribes may have belonged to or were part of some ancient civilization at one time.

Nagaland as a small state holds various potentials for development. It is one of the richest ethnic/ cultural states anywhere, given the size of the state and number and complex nature of the tribes. It is a sociological and anthropological gold mine, still waiting to be discovered! Community spirit and social capital of the people are tremendous if these can be tapped in the right way. The fact that English is the state language and used as the medium of instruction in all educational institutions, gives the state an immediate obvious advantage. This provides Nagas with the opportunity to enter any field anywhere. With their Christian faith and Mongoloid ethnic stock, Nagas have natural links with both East and West.

Nagaland falls within the Indo-Burma Bio-diversity Hotspot and it is one of the richest bio- diversity areas, despite its small size. What must be kept in mind, however, is that the bio-diversity of Nagaland is very fragile due to small size, hilly terrain, development imperatives, lack of awareness among the people, lack of proper investment, lack of technical know-how and the fact that the lands belong to the various village communities etc. But a wise and prudent bio- technology policy, with adequate and right funding, could propel the state into prominence in one of the sunshine sectors in the world. The state offers excellent potentials for agro-based and forest-based industries, horticulture, food processing, mining, tourism and the handlooms and handicrafts sectors.

9.2 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Nagaland and Focus District: Kiphire



Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior VP, PHDCCI; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. T. Yanpvuthung Kikon (NCS), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of Nagaland; Ms. Ane Khieya (NCS), Extra Assistant Commissioner, Kiphire District, Government of Nagaland; Mr. Nehjamang Simte, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, Government of India; Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog; Mr. Nirmalya Choudhury, Chairman, North East States Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. A David Solo, President, Nagaland Tourism Association; Mr. Seyiekhrielie Natso, Secretary, Nagaland Hotel and Restaurant Association; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman, Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The knowledge session on Border Tourism of Nagaland with focus district Kiphire was held on 27 August 2021. The session was moderated by Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI and received participation from senior government officials, tour operators, hoteliers, tour guides, airline professionals, travel and hospitality associations, students from the tourism and hospitality institutes.

Talking about the Focus State- Nagaland, Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI, said that the state has been extremely successful in promoting the Hornbill Festival, which attracts Indian and foreign tourists alike. Among all other industries that the central and state governments are trying to promote, Sustainable Tourism has the upper hand, for it is the only way for progress and eco-friendliness to walk hand-in-hand.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, said that over the years, Nagaland has been through a lot of ups and downs; but this has been a blessing in disguise for it has preserved the beauty, natural wealth and the overall sanity of the place. Today, as India's North-East is making rapid economic progress and carving out a corridor into South-East Asia, Nagaland is standing on the threshold of an economic boom.

Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog, informed that Kiphire district has performed extremely well over the last two years which has shown transformation in all parameters of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP). He emphasized that the potential of tourism is high in Nagaland especially for domestic and inbound tourists. He mentioned that NITI Aayog is confident that Kiphire district will be one of the most visited tourist destinations in the near future.

While talking about the geographical strengths of Nagaland, Mr. T. Yanpvuthung Kikon (NCS), Joint Secretary - Tourism, Government of Nagaland, mentioned that festivals, nature, adventure and culture are the main aspects of tourism promotion



in the state. He apprised that the state is providing incentive for tribal festivals and capitalizing on festivals to boost tourism. The district has abundant varieties of natural attractions and it can be a potential hotspot for adventure, eco, cultural and rural tourism. He also informed that the tourism department is developing trekking paths and adventure sports around Mount Saramati, which is the highest peak in Nagaland in Kiphire district. Considering the strategic location of the district, Kiphire has the potential to become the centre for international trade and tourism.

Mr. Nehjamang Simte, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, highlighted that their Ministry has a North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) sanctioned by the Government of India to focus on projects relating to infrastructure creation concerning water supply, power and connectivity and thereby enhancing tourism. He informed that as on date total 9 projects are on-going in the tourism sector in Nagaland. He also talked about the various skill development programs which are helping to generate local employment in the district. He emphasized the need to improve last-mile connectivity, digital marketing, hotel and road infrastructure.

Mr. Nirmalya Choudhury, Chairman of North East States Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators, talked about the need for good road connectivity, accommodation and internet connectivity which will promote tourism in the state. He mentioned that training of local youth should be facilitated as it will help them in becoming tourist guides thereby generating employment opportunities.

Mr. A David Solo, President, Nagaland Tourism Association, emphasized the need for promoting Village Tourism in the state as real Nagaland lies in the villages. He mentioned that the Government has to keep in mind the sentiments of local people in mind while formulating the policies and it should be aligned with existing structure.

Highlighting the challenges of the hospitality sector in Nagaland, Mr. Seyiekhrielie Natso, Secretary, Nagaland Hotel and Restaurant Association, mentioned that hotels and restaurants are main stakeholders of tourism but economically it is not viable to have hotels in remote areas. However, he has given the optimistic picture of how hospitality industry is sure to flourish in the region in coming years with the improved infrastructure and connectivity in the State.

Addressing the webinar, Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary - Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, mentioned that the scope of Border Tourism is immense if promoted and marketed well as it gives an opportunity to see the neighbouring countries from our own motherland. Talking about the potential of Border Tourism in Nagaland, Mr. Zutshi said that Nagaland is the land for inhabitant diversity of tribes with its unique culture and heritage. There are lots of villages in the border areas of Nagaland and especially Kiphire district which gives an overview of the Indo-Myanmar border. The state tourism department can look at promoting Tribal Tourism as majority of travellers arrive during the Hornbill Festival.

He further said that the tourism board along with the district administrator needs to work towards enhancement of road and air connectivity, up gradation of tourist infrastructure and ease of access in terms of permissions. He also emphasized that there is a need to bust the misconception that Nagaland is an unsafe destination to travel to with lot of digital and social media campaigns.

While giving an overview on the tourist attractions of Kiphire district, Ms. Ane Khieya (NCS), Extra Assistant Commissioner - Kiphire District, Government of Nagaland, shared that the district has immense potential for Border Tourism. However, major challenges exist in terms of road infrastructure, supporting services such as private hotels, economic backwardness, lack of tourism education amongst the locals, underdevelopment of cross-border trade. Capitalizing on the enormous Border Tourism potential in Kiphire, through the concerted and collaborative effort of all stakeholders i.e. the government, private industry and local communities will go a long way in contributing to the development of the border villages and the district as a whole.



9.3 Border Tourism in Kiphire

9.3.1 Introduction

Located in the eastern most part of the state bordering Myanmar, the areas under Kiphire district was part of the 'North Eastern Frontier Agency' (NEFA) as part of Tuensang area. This part of the state remained untouched by the British colonial administration even after its neighboring areas were subjugated during the 1920s. There are officially three recognized tribes - Sangtam, Yimchungru and Sumi. Besides these, there are several sub tribes speaking various languages.

Kiphire is the eastern most district of Nagaland bounded by Tuensang in the north, Zunheboto in the west, Phek in the south and international border with Myanmar in the East. The district is located in one of the most interesting geomorphological zone of the state and is home to the highest mountain peak of Nagaland, Mount Saramati. There are eight administrative circles in the district and the entire stretch of international border with Myanmar falls under Pungro sub-division. Pungro sub-division under Kiphire district shares an international border with Myanmar, measuring around 20 km. It is an administrative sub division and covers around 54 villages, 3 towns and has a total population of 14, 464 persons as per 2011 census.

9.3.2 Tourist Places in Kiphire

Mount Saramati

The highest peak in Nagaland at 3826 meters, it is located near Thanamir villages which famous for its local variety of apples and hosts the annual Thanamir Apple Festival. Mount Saramati stands right across the Saigon region of Myanmar. The magnetic mountain and its pristine forest with its rich flora and fauna and inspiring scenic beauty is a nature lover's paradise. Mount Saramati offers immense potential in ecotourism and adventure tourism.



Mount Saramati

Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary

Situated close to the Indo-Myanmar border, it covers an area of 642 hectares. It is home to a variety of bird and animal species such as hillock gibbon, Himalayan bear, great hornbill, Blyth Tragopan and other endangered species. It is one of the most attractive tourist destinations for wildlife enthusiasts, conservationists and adventure seekers.



Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary



Mimi Cave

Mimi Village

Mimi is a village bordering Myanmar and offers a unique potential for attracting tourists interested in exploring caves, climbing rock cliffs and enjoying mesmerizing waterfalls. Mimi village can also be a destination for cultural tourism where tourist can learn the art of ancient pottery making, weaving and other traditional arts and crafts. The numerous natural caves found in Mimi such as the Raneak Khun (grass black cave), Zholap Khun, Wuepukhun and other are characterized by limestone features, small streams deep inside the caves and various cave structures.



Bomrr Lapkhen (Bomrr clan bat cave)

Bomrr clan of Mimi and surrounding villages own the bat cave. Bats are harvested annually as traditional practice, consumption and for medicinal value. It may be mentioned that Bat Festival is organized every year in the first or second week of October.

Vavte Cave and Waterfall

Vavate waterfall in Mimi village falling from a height of 350 feet with its surrounding scenery is an amazing sight to behold, but remains an unexplored treasure due to inaccessibility to the border region.

Hakumati

It is a satellite village around 20 km away from Mimi village in Kiphire district. Hakumati is one of the last places that are yet to be explored by humans till date. Its untouched wild nature includes caves and waterfalls, including the glorious Chetsude and Twin falls. Hakumati is also home for the biggest rock Bee Hives in Nagaland hanging from unbelievable heights of high cliffs.

Chetsude and Twin Falls

The area is so unreachable that among the villages also only a few have actually witnessed the falls. The 7 hours hike to reach the falls is one of the most wild and surreal once into a nature utopian world.

9.3.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Kiphire

Geo-Tourism/ Eco Tourism/ Nature Tourism

Kiphire is located in one of the most geo-morphologically interesting zones of the state. There are a number of topographical features such as Saramati peak, Stone cave in Khongjiri, Mimi and Salomi villages which could amaze the visitors. Trips to Zungki, Tizu and Likhimro rivers, mining locations in Pokphur and adjoining areas, Fakim Wild Life Sanctuary, proposed International Trade Center at Mimi and Likhimro Hydro Project also holds its own unique rewards for the outdoor lovers. A number of traditional houses with stone slates in other parts of the State are seen in Phuvkiu, Mimi, Pongren, Phelungre and Pungro villages.

Horti Tourism

The general climatic condition of the district is also favourable for horticultural farming. In colder regions such as the foothills of Saramati Mountain, apples are grown in abundance such that Apple Festival has been an annual fixture in Thanamir, a frontier village bordering Myanmar. Other fruits like mango, guava and banana are also grown abundantly. A good variety of Orchids like Blue and Red Vanda, white, red and yellow Rhododendron which are not commonly found in other parts of the state are also found in Saramati and Jingkhu mountains.

Cultural Tourism

The important festivals celebrated in the district are Mongmong in September by the Sangtams; Metumneo celebrated in August by the Yimchungru and Tuluni and Ahuna celebrated in July and November respectively by the Séni. All the three tribal communities have close social and cultural affinity with their counterparts in the districts of Zunheboto and Tuensang. The Sangtam and the Yimchugru tribes of Kiphire and Tuensang district have shared history and culture. Similarly, the Séni of Kiphire district also shares similar socio-cultural ties with the Sumi of Zunheboto district.

Agri Tourism

With the majority of the people living in the rural villages, agriculture remains the main occupation of the people of the district. The primary mode of agricultural practice is jhum also known as slash and burn method of cultivation. The main crops grown in the jhum fields are largely traditional crops such as upland rice, maize, millet and varieties of beans. The farmers are slowly taking to growing cash crops such as potatoes with encouragement from the Agricultural department. Also traditional crops such as soy beans, local varieties of beans called 'Kholar' is grown as cash crop using traditional methods. Farmers are also taking up permanent paddy cultivation in terraced fields in favourable terrains. As a whole, the location serves a good opportunity to develop Agri Tourism.

Heritage Village Tourism

There are nearly 16 major tribes in Nagaland éAngami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kachari, Khamniungam, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sumi. The cultures, values and systems of governance among the tribes are different. All these differences provide wide cultural colours. The rich music, ballads, art and crafts and other knowledge systems also



indicate times of leisure and possibility that at least some of the tribes may have belonged to or were part of some ancient civilization at one time.

Naga villages have two aspects, one, the villages are based on clan so every village in Nagaland is unique; the governance, structure of village is different from each other, architecture, food song dance all are unique. Secondly, every village has a sense of pride among villager for their village a sense of owner ship. These two aspects make Naga villages unique to experience. The oral history could be a rich reservoir for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Place.

Cultural Tourism

Nagaland is often been called 'The Land of Festivals' because with its 16 major tribes one or the other tribe would be celebrating its festival every month of the calendar year. Apple Festival and other festival could be promoted in Kiphire.

9.3.4 Challenges for developing Border Tourism in Kiphire

- Kiphire is one of the toughest districts under Aspirational District Programme of NITI Aayog, which means lot of socio-economic developmental challenges exists in the district.
- Major challenges exist in terms of good road infrastructure, supporting services such as private hotels, economic backwardness and lack of tourism education amongst the locals, under development of cross border trade etc.
- Kiphire has the highest school drop-out in Nagaland.
- Rainy season lasts for over 7-8 months. This climatic condition could result in severe seasonality in tourism.
- Due to geo-climatic condition and difficult accessibility, business ventures and investments are lacking in the region.
- Inner Line Permit regime is a barrier to have smooth access to the region which results in lack of tourist footfall. To reach even further to Kiphire would be even more difficult as there are many barriers within the state also.
- Lack of information and market linkage for tourism is a challenge to showcase the full potential of the district.
- Overall misperception that Nagaland is not safe is a critical issue for developing sound tourism activities in Nagaland.

9.3.5 Way Forward

- Improvement in the basic infrastructures especially roads and other means of transportation such as chopper services are imperative to develop Border Tourism in Kiphire.
- Homestay facility is doing well through Airbnb in other parts of Nagaland.
- Guide training for local youth can generate income for local community.
- Invite private sector to come and work with community keeping vernacular architecture with moderate facility in tourist accommodation. 5% local employee to run the property the handholding may last till 15-20 years till the community grow fully in industry standard.
- Annual event at Mount Saramati, to organize annual climbing event and promote it through all media sources may create destination promotion.
- Wildlife Sanctuary trekking track, walking trail, camp site generation well mapped and recorded flora and fauna will attract nature enthusiasts.
- Encourage local youth to enter tourism and hospitality industry with the help of IATO. They can be placed as intern/ employee in any other properties in North East or across the country who have good track record ecologically sound sustainable tourism practices.
- Investment in guest house/ hotels/ restaurants especially in villages such as Mimi and Hakumati which have attractive tourist locations. In the pipeline is a traditional styled Slate-roof rest house funded under Aspirational District Project.
- Establish museum for conservation and display of the unique natural artifacts and traditional crafts such as pottery, weaving etc.
- Development of infrastructures for various types of tourism such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism and eco-tourism.
- Various tourism products need to be developed such as Horti/ Agri Tourism, land of minerals, Limestone Cave etc. brings possibility of Geo-Tourism; Wildlife sanctuary, biodiversity, home of hornbill, plethora of flora and fauna, Thanamir apples of Thanamir village all resources need to be tapped and designed into various product.

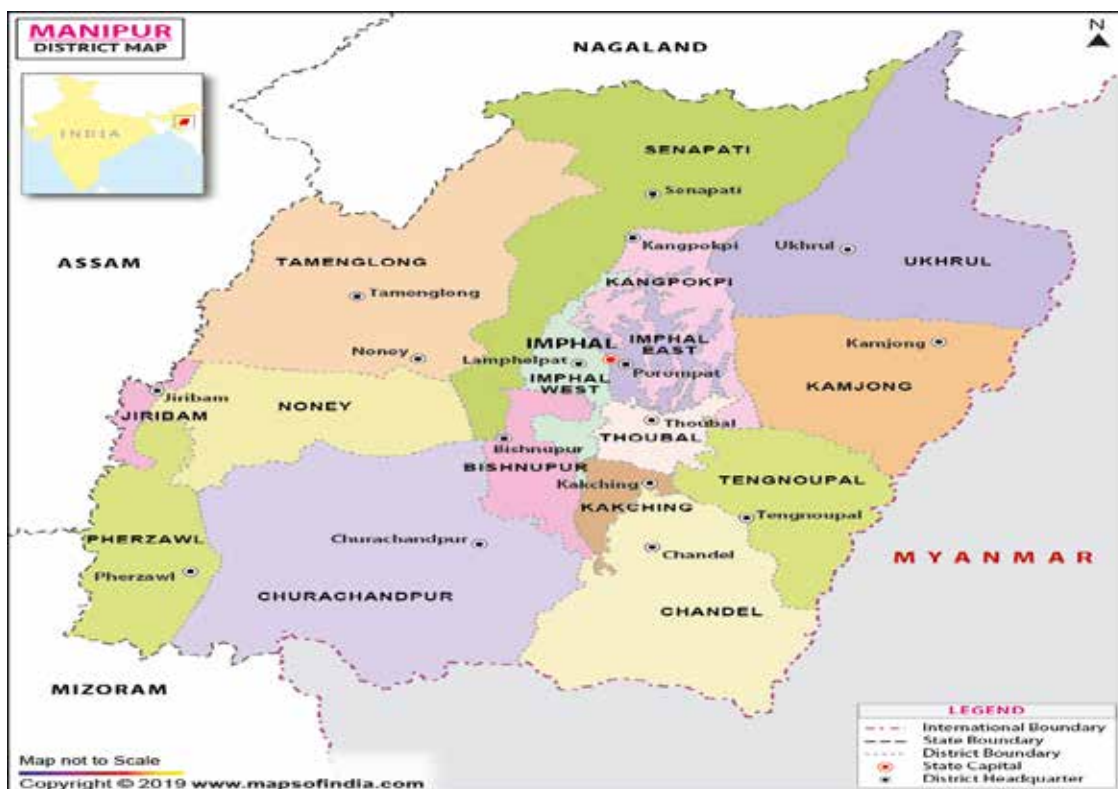


- Policies should be made keeping in mind the heritage and culture of the place. Policy should preserve the uniqueness of Naga Village Culture.
- While developing tourism first, a person needs to talk to the village head, elderly people and women of the village keeping local sentiment into account.
- Projects should be taken up which complement existing structure of village.

In addition to the above, it is pertinent to discuss that how to promote Nagaland not just through Border Tourism, but other verticals:

- Nagaland is not getting enough tourist footfalls as much as the state deserves. The figure over last 2019 majority of the travellers (30-40%) arrived during Hornbill Festival. Therefore, it needs to consolidate its strengths.
- Nagaland is the hub of tribal tourism, tribal festivals to be utilized for tourism purpose. This is the first USP to be tapped.
- Second strength is Hornbill Festival which is the biggest tourist puller; it needs to be expanded and promoted more aggressively so that there will be more footfall.
- Tradition of year round festivals needs to be promoted further in other parts of the country.
- Nagaland is also known as the most Baptist State of the world. This unique feature could be a great crowd puller for the people of this religion not only from India, but also from all over the world.
- Unique heritage of ethnic tribes as showcased in Naga Heritage village in Kisama needs to be promoted and infrastructure need to be further strengthened.
- Golf Tourism is another area is of great value to Nagaland. Golf courses near Kohima will pay dividends in the long run.
- Connectivity is major concern area, having only airport in Dimapur will not be sufficient. Quality of roads and connectivity is the mainstay of requirement of tourism.
- Last mile connectivity has to be there. Otherwise it will be Heli Tourism; up-gradation of road is of paramount importance.
- Need to have more tourism projects from within the states but more from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. DoNER needs to expand the projects into core areas of tourism infrastructures not only in basic infrastructure and water supply.
- There is a genuine lack of information and more so, a misconception about the place Nagaland. Investors will come when this misconception will be lifted. That needs lot of promotion exercises by the Department of Tourism to promote Nagaland as a safe place to invest then investors beyond Nagaland from other parts of the country might be attracted to come and invest in Nagaland.
- Message to the Indian tourism fraternity that Border Tourism, if promoted well, has immense potential for Domestic and International tourism.
- India's foreign policy say from 'Look East to Act East' this should be taken into account by Nagaland Tourism literally to Look to the 'East' which has a lot of market potential for Nagaland from these eastern countries.
- India, Myanmar, Thailand highway is going to give connection to the East and the far East in better way. Trilateral highway can be a lifeline for the North East and they can build tourism, get tourism from Southeast Asian countries.

10. Border Tourism in Manipur



Source: Maps of India

10.1 Introduction

Manipur is situated in the eastern-most corner of Northeast India. The state shares borders with other north-eastern states of Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam and the neighbouring country of Myanmar. Loktak Lake, the largest fresh-water lake in the Northeast is situated in the state.

At present Manipur is one of India's largest bamboo producing states and a major contributor to the country's bamboo industry. State grows 55 species of bamboo and 25% of the total growing stock of bamboo in the North Eastern Region and 14% of the country. Manipur has the highest number of handicrafts units as well as the highest number of craft persons comprising skilled and semi-skilled artisans in the entire north-eastern region. Handloom is the largest cottage industry in Manipur and the state ranks among the top five in terms of the number of looms in the country.

Manipur has the largest women-run market in the country. The Ema Bazaar is one of India's largest markets run by women. This market majorly sells handloom and handicraft products such as earthen pots, knives, shawls and puppets; as well as all kinds of dried fish and vegetables.

10.2 Tourism Development in Manipur

Tourism is also one of the sectors which are included in the list of thrust areas by the NEC, DoNER and the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi) (GoM, 2010). The state has well connectivity by road and air with other metropolitan city like Delhi, Kolkata and Guwahati. Considering the natural assets of the state, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos, development of tourism émore specifically, Nature, Adventure and Cultural tourism will go a long way in bringing about prosperity to the State.

In Manipur, there have been several moves to bring in more undefined tourist by creating more accommodation in the form of star hotels, increased cultural extravaganza such as Sangai Festival, adventure programmes and nature tourisms such as rock climbing and trekking, international events like international trade fairs, food festivals and so on and so forth.

The Department of Tourism, Government of Manipur came in to existence in August, 1972 as a publicity wing of the IPR Department. Over the years it has evolved into an independent department, considering the natural beauty and potential of the State, every effort should be taken to make it an efficient and vital department of Tourism in the State.

Table 10.2.1 District wise Tourist Spots in Manipur

Name of District	Places of Interest
Senapati District	Senapati, Mao, Makhel Cave Tadubi, Sadu Chiru Waterfalls, Megalith at Willong Tamenglong district: Zailad lake, Tharon Cave, Barak Waterfalls
Churachandpur District	Behiang, Tipaimukh, Tonglon cave, Cheklaphai Singhat, Kailam hill range
Chandel District	Chandel, Moreh, Tengnoupal
Ukhul District	Ukhul, Khangkhui cave, Shirol hill, Nungbi
Imphal East	Shri Govindajee temple, Ramjee Prabhu temple, Hanuman Thakur Temple, Kangla fort, 2 nd WW cemetery at Dewlahlane, Indian army war cemetery at Hatta, khuman lampak sports complex, MMTA at Minuthong, MAASI at Keirao, Kaina, Jiribam, Mutua Museum
Imphal West	Manipur state museum, Saheed minar, Zoological garden, khongampat orchidarium, Langthabal old palace, Ima market, RKCS art gallery, Nupee Lal complex
Bishnupur District	Vishnu temple, Loktak project, Sendra, Phubala, Loktak lake, Keibul Lamjao national park, Red hill (India peace memorial), Loukoipat, INA memorial Moirang
Thoubal district	Khongjom war memorial, Thongam Mondum Mahadev, Waithou, Serou

Source: Statistical Year Book of Manipur 2015 cited in Lhouvum, T. (2016)

With regard to Border Tourism in the state, Manipur has a strong linkage with Southeast Asian countries. Moreh town offers a feasible land-route between India and Myanmar and to the Southeast Asian countries. Moreh has a land customs station; an Integrated Check Post (ICP) is also being developed. The state is bounded by Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south and Assam to the west. Thus, Manipur has the advantage of acting as India's 'Gateway to the East' through Moreh town, which is the only feasible land route for trade between India and Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries. This geostrategic location of Manipur offers strong border trade and tourism opportunities.

10.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Manipur and Focus District: Chandel



Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI; Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East; Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Senior Specialist- Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Dr. Th. Dhabali Singh, Founder President- Manipur Tourism Forum & CMD- Classic Group of Hotels; Mr. H. Radhakrishna Sharma, State-In-Charge- Manipur, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Dearson Maring, Consultant - Aspirational District Programme Cell, Chandel District; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

Webinar on exploring the potential of Border Tourism in Manipur with focus district Chandel was held on 24 September 2021.

Dr. Jatinder Singh, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI, has moderated the knowledge session. In his introductory speech he has outlined the rich resources of Manipur essential for tourism and focused on Chandel as an Aspirational District of NITI Aayog.

Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI, has given the welcome address with brief introduction of PHDCCI. He has also mentioned about various natural and cultural resources of Manipur and given the emphasis on Manipur as an aspiring place to tourists.

Pointing out the unique concept of Border Tourism, Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman éTourism Committee, PHDCCI, has asserted that since post pandemic tourism is witnessing a shift into travelling to lesser known and less crowded area, it may give an impetus to Manipur to emerge as a prime destination of tourism especially with regard to Border Tourism.

Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East, in his deliberation has detailed about all the natural and cultural resources of Manipur and its uniqueness.

Mr. Dearson Maring, Consultant éAspirational District Programme Cell, Chandel District, in his deliberation has given detailed account of Chandel district, its potentials and challenges as border destinations and proposed or undergoing work of the district.

Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Senior Specialist éAspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, has focused on the performance of Chandel in terms of improvement in agriculture, education, basic infrastructure, health and nutrition under the Aspirational District Programme of NITI Aayog.

Dr. Th. Dhabali Singh, Founder President éManipur Tourism Forum & CMD éClassic Group of Hotels, has outlined various initiatives taken into hospitality sector in Manipur and focused on key issues which pose challenges to tourism development in Manipur.

Mr. H. Radhakrishna Sharma, State-In-Charge éManipur, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), significantly pointed out that after Tengnapoul curved out of Chandel, how the district has left with nothing in terms of tourism attraction. In his deliberation, thus, he has pointed out systematically about the steps to be taken to build Chandel as a tourist destination from scratch.



10.4 Border Tourism in Chandel

10.4.1 Introduction

Chandel District is geologically one of the least explored districts of Manipur. It is situated in the southeastern part of the state bordering with the Union Socialist Republic of Myanmar. The whole district is comprised by hilly ravines and long range of Indo-Myanmar boarder, dense tree forest cover, moderately dense tree forest covered and open tree forest cover.

Earlier, the Moreh town was the international trade centre of the state which lies on the southernmost part of the district. Under the Extra Ordinary Manipur Gazette Notification No. 408 9 December 2016 Tengnoupal District is created by bifurcating from Chandel District with sub- divisions Machi, Moreh and Tengnoupal under Tengnoupal District.

10.4.2 Tourist Places in Chandel

Langol Peak Garden

About 60 kms drive from the heart of Imphal city along the Indo-Myanmar road, surrounded by beautiful landscape, hillocks and breathe taking sceneries, Tlanglungbung Leikol or Langol Peak Garden lies in the Langol Village of Machi Sub-Division in Chandel District. It is said that in legendary myth Khamba-Thoibi of Manipur, Thoibi came to pick the very special flowers known as Thoibi-Lei from this peak. It is also a historical site for the World War 2 where allied force put up their camps. Langol Peak is now becoming one of the favourite tourist centres in Manipur.



Langol Peak Garden

Several other places of interest around Chandel are Chiru Waterfall, Scenic of Kwatha, Sajik Tampak, Church of Chandel, Indo-Myanmar Border Fence and Indo Myanmar Friendship Gate which is in Moreh and connects India to Kalewa in Myanmar's Sagaing Division. The town is already seen as the commercial capital of Manipur and India's Gateway to South-East Asia.



Chiru Waterfall



Different scenes of the Sajik Tampak

10.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Chandel

Experiencing Myanmar Border

Most of the border areas of Chandel come under Khedkarong, Chendoi sub division. The border areas of Khenjoing sub division is far flung and hard to connect from the district headquarter itself.

Theme Based Tourism: Amusement Park

The upcoming amusement park could provide opportunity for theme based Tourism.

Cultural Tourism

Tribal Museum Project under Tribal Development Corporation Manipur, is sanctioned and under process. Upon completion it will be a tourist interest place.

Eco Tourism Park

The future prospect of establishing Eco Tourism Park in Gamvet mol in Lonpi village of Chandel can bring excellent scope of Eco tourism in the District.

Nature Based Tourism (Hill Station) in Joupi

Joupi is a village situated 50 kms away from the district headquarters. What makes Joupi unique is the fact that it receives a substantial amount of rainfall throughout the year. Most of the days, rain- laden clouds cover the slopes of the surrounding hills and thus the atmosphere remains foggy throughout the day. In those days when the sky becomes distinctly clear, one can experience the uniqueness of the village in its natural and pristine beauty.

Sugnu is the nearest town from Joupi. Presently, 29 Assam Rifles of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) is stationed in the village. Their presence in the region has created a conducive and secure environment in and around the village. Apart from functioning as the sentinel for the villagers, they are also actively involved in social activities such as organizing free medical camps, extending help to villagers at times of natural disasters/ calamities, etc.

Cross Border Trade and Tourism in Molcham

It is a village situated at the Indo-Myanmar border. Due to its proximity to Myanmar, the village is characterized by plain topography with warm and humid climate. One of the interesting features of the village is the fact that the villagers procure

most of their basic. Thus, Border Haat in Molcham village in Khenjoi Sub Division can offer a lively experience of cross-border trade and tourism. As Moray is bifurcated with Tengenapoul District, access to Bokan will be easier through Molcham.

Rural Tourism

Chandel has rich ethnic fabric. Thus, promotion of rural tourism, cultural dynamics of existing lives, éritual and lifestyle all can be potential resources for developing rural tourism in the district.

Heritage Village in Anal Khullen

Anal Khullen has been chosen for heritage village. Various itineraries containing different cycling and trekking trails can be developed around the village.

Adventure Tourism

Rafting in Chakpi River can be considered for river rafting. Slops and heights etc. springs waterfalls are there. Also, the flow of Chakpi River flows down with many legendary tales which could be potential source of intangible heritage tourism resources for Chandel.

Dark Tourism

Important places related to insurgency like Sajik Tampak can be made popular tourist place.

10.4.4 Challenges in Border Tourism Development in Chandel

- As Tengenapoul curved out of Chandel, most of the already popular tourist spots like Moray, Langul Peak, Senam Sedel which is an important battle site of WW II went with the new district of Tengenapoul. Now Chandel seems to have left with nothing.
- As a result Chandel lacks basic 5 A's of Tourism industry (accommodation, attraction, accessibility, activity and amenity) and needs to start from scratch to develop Chandel as Border Tourism destination.
- Road and mobile connectivity are big challenges. People in Border area use mobile network of Myanmar.
- Overall under development in socio-economic areas of the district pose challenges.
- Negative destination image of Manipur associated with perceived threat is a critical factor for the growth of tourism in the region.

10.4.5 Way Forward

- To develop Chandel as a tourist destination requires step by step approach. Firstly, FAM trip of tour operators of the region is needed so that they can promote the district. Eventually major tour operators from across the country can be included for destination awareness. The process needs extension to include inbound tour operators also.
- Chandel needs to be highlighted in state level tourism promotion as it has not been covered in any tourism circuit/ itinerary/ tour packages; neither is reflected as a tourist destination.
- It needs to blend old ingredients into new shape of the district.
- Anal Khullen chosen as heritage centre will boost up tourism in the district. Government should take suggestions of stakeholder to build up this project.
- There has to be a Consultative Committee which can assess the village to build it as a model village on a priority basis.
- Border Haat in Mosam Village can be a lively experience of border which needs special focus into Border Tourism initiative.
- Requires chalking out viable circuit within the district and interconnected circuits with the neighbouring districts.
- Cycle and trekking trails can be developed around Anal Khullen. Chakpi River can be considered for river rafting.
- Community culture, indigenous sports and adventure, elements of folk lore and stories all are to be taken into active considering in developing the destination.
- Government initiative in capacity building along with other developmental process is of paramount importance.
- Manipur is still associated with certain perceived threats and negative image as a tourist destination. Hence, massive image building exercise is required through active promotion of the place.



INDO-BHUTAN BORDER TOURISM

• ASSAM





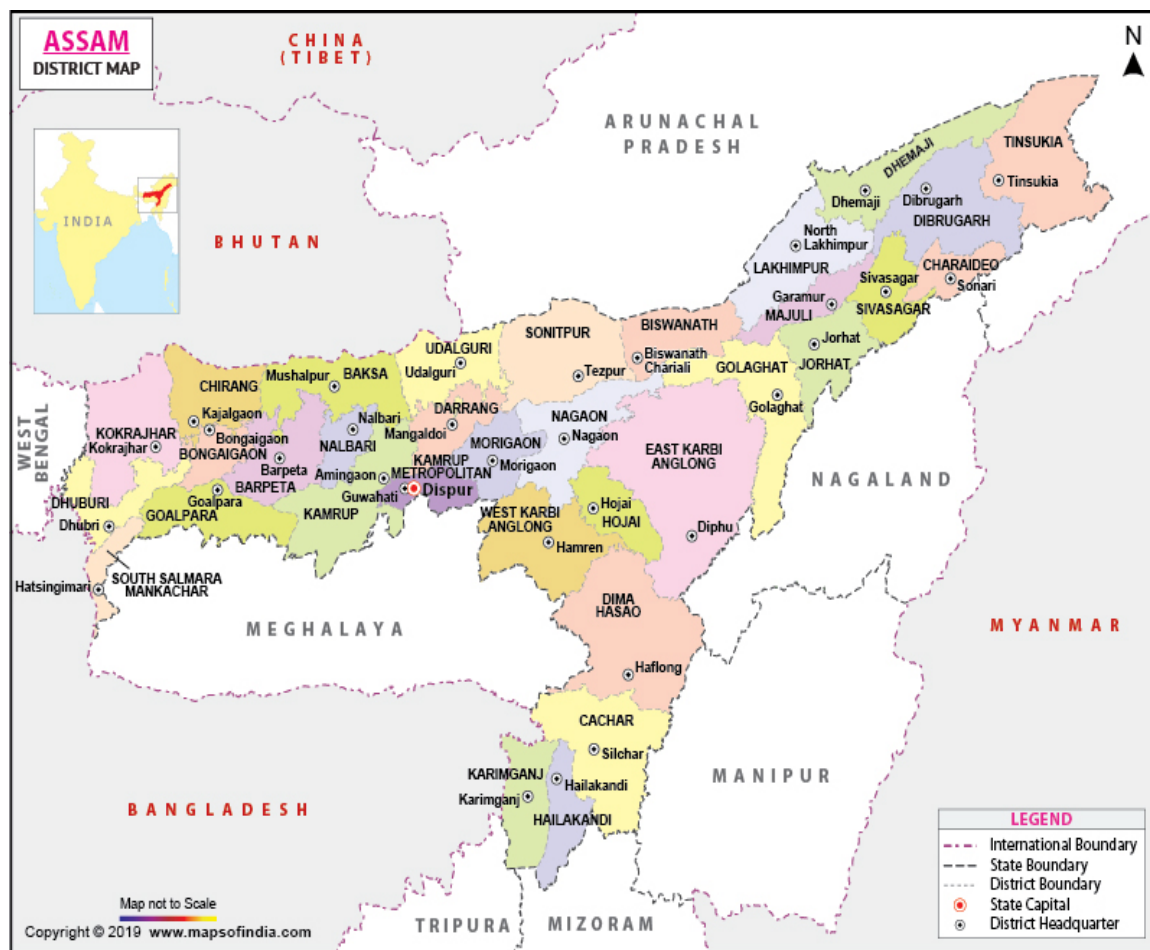
INDO - BHUTAN BORDER TOURISM

Bhutan shares border with four Indian States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim. Nestled in the Himalayas, Bhutan serves as a buffer between India and China. Bhutan provides a market for Indian commodities and is a destination for Indian investment. For India, Bhutan is a rich source of hydropower. Besides sharing a 699 kms border, India and Bhutan also share deep religious-cultural links. Guru Padmasambhava played an influential role in spreading Buddhism and cementing traditional ties between people in both nations.

When India declared independence in 1947, Bhutan was among the first nations to recognize it. Indo-Bhutan Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1949 provides for, among other things, perpetual peace and friendship, free trade and commerce and equal justice to each other's citizens. In 2007 the treaty was re-negotiated and provisions were included to encourage Bhutan's sovereignty, abolishing the need to take India's guidance on foreign policy. The updated treaty, besides providing close cooperation on national issues, provides for stronger cooperation in cultural and economic fields.

A politically stable Bhutan is important to India. An unstable and restive Bhutan can provide a safe haven to anti-India activities and anti-India militant groups. There is a Secretary-level mechanism on border management and security related matters between the two countries. There is also a Border District Coordination Meeting (BDCM) Mechanism between the bordering States and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to facilitate coordination on border management and other related matters.

11. Border Tourism in Assam



Source: Maps of India

11.1 Introduction

The state of Assam, regarded as India's 'Gateway to the East', shares international borders with Bhutan (265.8 km) and Bangladesh (267.5 km). Assam also shares inter-state borders with Meghalaya (884.9 km), Nagaland (512.1 km), Manipur (204.1 km), Mizoram (164.6 km), West Bengal (127.0 km), and Tripura (46.3 km). Given Assam's geostrategic location, it is well suited to meet the import demand of neighbours, provided it develops appropriate manufacturing capabilities, human resources and infrastructure including logistics.

11.2 Tourism Development in Assam

Assam is a state of breathtaking scenic beauty. Its enchanting hills, dancing rivers, dense forest, roaring waterfalls, heavy rainfall during monsoon, innumerable varieties of flora and fauna, countless species of wild animals and plants, melodious folk music, variety of many delicious dishes, historical monuments, pilgrimage centres, tea gardens, colourful festivals, handlooms and handicrafts and above all its green landscape make Assam one of the splendid tourist destinations in India. It was the British who initiated the modern concept of outdoor recreation, adventure and organized search for mysteries of nature and culture in Assam. The richness of nature has made tourism in Assam essentially nature centric, despite the fact that there are historical and religious places of tourist attraction.

Due to the high potential for development of wildlife tourism in the state, the central Government has increased the funds under the centrally sponsored 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' scheme towards the state to US\$ 428 thousand for the year 2017-18. Under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, amount sanctioned by the Government as of March 2017 for a heritage circuit was US\$ 15.26 million. Under the PRASHAD Scheme, for the expansion of Kamakhya temple along with pilgrimage destinations in and around Guwahati, the Government sanctioned US\$ 5.19 million during the same period. In 2019, Assam has witnessed arrival of 47,10,971 domestic and 25,739 international tourists within the State (Directorate of Tourism, Government of Assam).

Table 11.2.1: Exploring Assam through Different Product Based Circuits

Wildlife, Ecological, Spiritual, Historical, Cultural, Cruise, Luxury	Guwahati-Kaziranga-Nameri-Dirang-Tawang-Bomdila-Tezpur-Guwahati
Spiritual, Ecological, Cultural, Luxury	Guwahati-Cherrapunjee-Shilong-Mawlynong-Guwahati
Wildlife, Ecological, Spiritual, Cultural	Jorhat-Kaziranga NP-Majuli-Sivasagar-Jorhat
Wildlife, Ecological, Historical, Cultural	Dibru-Saikhowa NP-Dihing Patkai-Dibrugarh
Religious, Spiritual, Historical, Cultural	Guwahati-Hajo-Sualkuchi-Borduwa-Sivasagar-Majuli-Jorhat
Religious, Spiritual, Historical, Cultural, Wildlife, Ecological	Guwahati-Hajo-Sualkuchi-Manas-Dhubri-Guwahati
Wildlife/ Birding Tours	Manas-Nameri-Kaziranga-Hollongapar-Dibru Saikhowa-Dihing Patkai
Wildlife/ Eco Tourism/ Culture/ Birding	Guwahati-Abhyapuri-kakoijan Reserve Forest-Nigamhola Village Trail-KoyakujiyaEco Park-Chakrashila WLS-Manas NP
Wildlife Photography & Conservation Volunteering Tour	Kaziranga-Majuli-Gibbon WildlifeSanctuary
	Dibru Saikhowa NP –Barekuri Village-Jeypore Rain Forest
River Cruise (House boat)	Guwahati-Sualkuchi-Pobitora-Kaziranga -Majuli-Jorhat/ Guwahati
Explore Brahmaputra River Cruise	Guwahati-Tezpur-Kaziranga NP-Bishwanath-Majuli-Sivasagar-Jorhat-Dibrugarh
Wildlife Cruise (Downstream)	Jorhart-Dibrugarh-Gibbon WLS-Majuli-Nameri NP-Kaziranga NP-Pobitora WLS-Guwahati

11.2.2 Assam Tourism Policy (2017) Initiatives

Recent Tourism Policy of Assam mentions about various initiative with a vision that 'Assam becomes a nationally and internationally acclaimed all-season tourist destination for its unique wildlife, bio-diversity and experience of an unexploited wonderland. Tourism is to be one of the main sources of income generation for the people. It will also be a vibrant and significant contributor to the sustainable development of the State of Assam.'

In this context, apart from existing product development, the Tourism Department of Assam intends to take followings steps:

- Identification of tourist destinations/ spots and circuits: For each individual category of tourism such as Nature & Wildlife, Spiritual, Tea & Golf, Eco, Ethnic, Monsoon, Adventure etc. different tourist destinations and tourist circuits shall be identified. For example, Jatinga valley and Majuli can be destinations for Ethnic Tourism.
- Development of Tourism infrastructure
- Community involvement in Tourism
- Skill Development
- Local Transport Improvement
- Development of Wayside amenities
- Audit of quality of Destinations
- Managing Resources for Tourism
- Adopt a tourist centric approach

- Enhancing local experience of tourist
- Promotion of Environment Friendly Practices
- Sanitation & Cleanliness
- Ease of Doing Business: A single window clearance system will be developed to facilitate fast track clearance of all required approvals/ permission for film shooting in Assam.
- Ownership and Proactive role of State Government/ Tourism Department in Destination Branding
- Active collaboration with Central Government and proper implementation of Central Schemes: Active collaboration with Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Skill Development, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce, NITI Aayog, Archeological Survey of India and other Ministries.
- Public Private Participation (PPP) in Tourism

11.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Assam and Focus District: Baksa



Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Aayush Garg (IAS), Deputy Commissioner-Baksa District, Government of Assam; Mr. Suresh Kumar, Commandant- Guwahati Frontier, Border Security Force; Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser- Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Ms. Moitreyee Das, Deputy Director- Tourism, Government of Assam; Mr. Debajit Kumar Borah, President, Tour Operators Association of Assam; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Vishwanath Goenka, Advisor, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Assam; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Saurabh Sanyal, Secretary General, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

Webinar on Border Tourism in Assam with focus district Baksa was held on 21 January 2022. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

While welcoming the delegates, Mr. Saurabh Sanyal, Secretary General, PHDCCI, mentioned that tourism is considered to be the most prominent and convenient industry for the development of remote, peripheral and rather rural border landscapes. The border areas of all the States and Union Territories are rich in natural and fabricated tourism potentials. Through all these programmes organized under the Border Tourism Webinar Series, it is evident that there is huge scope for development of Border Tourism in the country.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, said that Border Tourism lets us explore the places where one can almost see the boundary disappear into another country. PHDCCI is committed to create such meaningful platforms to do its bit in enabling all the parameters of the tourism industry to grow and flourish further.

While giving an overview on the Baksa District, Mr. Aayush Garg (IAS), Deputy Commissioner - Baksa District, Government of Assam, mentioned that the district has lot of tourism potential and advantages as it has a long border line stretching approximately 45 kms with Bhutan. Crossing the border is also a smooth process as there are three entry gates to Bhutan which can be easily accessed by showing a valid Indian passport. The district is completely safe for tourists and has well developed road infrastructure in place and accommodation facilities including 3 to 4 star properties.

Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, highlighted that the last few years have been a period of discovery for the Indian tourists to look within and explore their own country. This also encourages us to bring the lesser known destinations of India to all of you under 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign. She said that making the right itineraries is important connecting two or three different terrains that can provide huge value addition in terms of Cross-Border Tourism further enhancing the experience of a tourist. Ms. Brar emphasized that there is a need for capacity building and skill development as it will help to scale up the quality of human resources while creating employment opportunities for the locals. Other areas where the capacity building is required are for homestay owners, service providers which need both centre and state intervention.

Giving a detailed presentation on the tourism products of Assam, Ms. Moitreyee Das, Deputy Director of Tourism, Government of Assam, said that with the third wave of the pandemic still looming at large, the state will have to strategize and start intra state as well as intra continental travel. She further said that development of Assam through the 'Look East' and 'Act East' policies of the Government of India is the need of the hour and the stakeholders of the tourism sector has to play a proactive role. It is imperative to establish a smooth tourist corridor to boost tourism and benefit trade linkages between Assam and the ASEAN countries, she added.

Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser of Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, informed that Baksa district has done quite well in terms of improving various indicators relating to socio-economic development such as health and nutrition, education, agriculture, financial inclusion and basic infrastructure. Many of these indicators are directly linked to tourism development like road and digital connectivity, sanitation and drinking water facilities, skill development among others. Therefore, improvement of these indicators also improves the overall tourism potential of a district.

Mr. Suresh Kumar, Commandant of Guwahati Frontier, Border Security Force (BSF), mentioned that for promotion of Border Tourism in the North East, we must give employment opportunities to locals and carefully select areas that are well connected. There are still many areas in the North East region that require significant focus on enhancing their connectivity and infrastructure. Despite being a border district, Baksa remains a very peaceful and stable destination and therefore is a favourable option for tourists.

Mr. Debajit Kumar Borah, President, Tour Operators Association of Assam (TOAA), said that border districts must refrain from being only a transit point and further focus on becoming a tourist destination. Network is an area that requires urgent attention for promotion of stronger connectivity and integration.

Mr. Vishwanath Goenka, Advisor, Hotel & Restaurant Association of Assam (HRAA), informed that after the second wave of Covid, big flow of tourists started visiting the north-eastern areas. With such influx of tourists, the prospect of development in the north-eastern regions has grown exponentially.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair of Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, in his formal vote of thanks has brought together all the connecting thoughts deliberated by panelists and outlined the significant issues of how tourism should be continuous in a sustainable way and how people would become responsible tourists.

11.4 Border Tourism in Baksa

11.4.1 Introduction

Baksa is one of the four new districts of the state created after Census, 2001. This district falls under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) which is a territorial privilege established according to the Memorandum of Settlement of February 10, 2003. Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD) is an autonomous region located on the north bank of Brahmaputra River in Assam in the North-East India by the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. The region is inhabited predominantly by Bodo language speaking ethnic group and Bengalis, Assamese, Rabha, Rajbongshi, Garo and other indigenous Mongoloid tribes. The BTAD consists of four contiguous districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri.

BTAD has most of its area located along the boundary with Bhutan. The entire forest landscape along the Indo-Bhutan boundary is almost contiguous and its biogeography has Indo-Tibetan, Indo-Malayan and Indo-Gangetic influences. The

BTAD area is situated in the moderately heavy rainfall area, because of which there is in no dearth of natural beauty, exquisite flora and fauna.

11.4.2 Tourist Places in Baksa

Manas National Park

Located at the western side of the district at the foothills of Bhutan, it is a place of great tourist attraction. The most abundantly found animals are Tiger, Leopard, Golden Langur, Pigmie Hog, Dhanesh Pakhi, Wild Buffalo, Bison, Python, Wild Cat, Elephant, Hyena, Fox etc. Manas National Park has 60 mammal species of which 22 are considered threatened (including the endangered Asian Elephants) along with 42 reptile species, 7 amphibians, 372 species of birds, 54 species of fish and over 100 species of insects (District Statistical Hand Book, Baksa, 2010). Declared as a Tiger Reserve, Manas is the home of diverse carnivores, particularly because of its unique regional ecological settings (Borah et al., 2012).



Tiger spotting inside Manas Tiger Reserve



Manas National Park

Manas Soushi Khongkor

Enshrined with natural beauty just adjacent with Bhutan hills, it is an eco-tourism spot which attracts a large number of picnic goers.

Moina Pukhuri

Located just adjacent to the international India-Bhutan boundary, it is the only trekking site in Baksa district.

Bogamati

A popular spot alongside River Barnadi on the foothills of Bhutan, it attracts a large number of picnic parties during New Year and Magh Bihu.



Picnic spot at Bogamati

Daragaon

It is a picnic spot surrounded by lush green hills and falls under Dihira Reserved Forest of Baksa.

Tea Tourism

There are 4 Tea Gardens across three sub division of Baksa District namely Doomni Tea State, Menoka Tea State, Nagrijulie Tea State and Fatemabad Tea State.



Women plucking tea leaves from tea garden

11.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Baksa

Ethnic Tourism

As the district is predominantly inhabited by the Bodo people so the influence of Bodo art and culture is seen much in the district. Generally, two cultural trends can be seen in Baksa district; one is general and other is that of tribal people. While the general women wear Mekhela Sador and Saris, the tribal people especially Bodo women wear Dokhona. All the male people irrespective of caste and creed wear long-pant while at outdoors and Gamocha when in home.

Cultural Heritage Tourism

As there are different kinds of tribes living in the district, their dances are also different. While Assamese speaking people's favourite dance is Bihu, Bodos and other tribes have divergent types of dances. Varied Bodo dances are Bagurumba, Kherai, Mwchaglangnai, Daosa-Thwi Lwngnai, Rwnswndri etc. Adivasi dances are Jhumoor dance, Karam dance, Domkaich dance etc. Nepali dances are Sangini dance, Loknritya, Khukri dance etc. Local festivals like Bihu, Bwisagu, Magh Bihu, Magw, Bathou Puja etc. are also observed with plumb and gaiety. All of these could serve as assets for Cultural Heritage Tourism of Baksa.

Rural Homestay Tourism

'Aamaar Aalohi' - Rural Homestay Scheme 2018-19 has already been framed by the Tourism Department, Government of Assam, with the objectives of giving a new dimension and thrust to the Rural Homestay Facilities in the State of Assam and creation of self-employment opportunities for educated youth in rural and semi-urban areas of tourism potential and importance. A Rural Homestay Tourism inculcates the following concepts:

- Heritage & Culture (Ethnic Tourism)
- Learning and education from natural environment about rural life style, art and culture (Ecotourism)
- Scenic Value (Nature Tourism)



- Religious value (Pilgrim tourism)
- Adventure/ sports-based activities (Adventure Tourism)
- Rural/ agrarian lifestyle

Implementing the Rural Homestay Tourism as a mandatory product would bring economic viability and facilitate cultural conservation within the border tourism framework of Baksa.

Wildlife Tourism

Majestic riverine sites: Mathanguri is a hillock on the bank of River Manas, a vantage point for wildlife watching particularly in evening and morning when the animals come to the river for drinking water. This river serves as the boundary between India and Bhutan. The animals from Royal Manas National park of Bhutan and Manas National Park of India travel to this place from opposite sides.

Wetlands: The wetlands of Manas are also the habitat of a great variety of fauna, for which it has been recognized as wetland of international importance.

Wet Alluvial Grassland: In case of Manas, about half of its total geographical area enjoys the cover of such flat and well-drained alluvial grasslands, considered as the safe haven for wildlife.

Geo-Tourism

The deposits of Manas river including enormous quantities of boulders, stones, sand, silt and other debris that are carried down contributing to unique geo-tourism landscapes amidst of surrounding hills as a nature tourism paradise. These areas could be of immense scientific and educational value, as well as aesthetic and recreational value.

Cross Border Tourism

Apart from travelling to two or more counties in a single trip itinerary, Cross Border Tourism can be framed in myriad ways. For example:

- **Uncovering Historical Trade Route in Tourism**

Most of the times the businesses were carried on by barter system. The Bhutanese brought down for barter gold dust, rock salt, musk, cow tails, blankets, knives rubber, elephant task, ponies, Chinese silk, woolen cloth etc. in exchange for rice, dry fish, cotton cloth, glass, breads, salt, utensils, brass metal, eri and endi cloth from the people of Assam. Thus, tracing back the heritage trade route could be a significant heritage product of Cross Border Tourism Combining element of the trade history of the place.

- **Cross Border Cultural Tourism**

South Asian countries and Assam state share lot of similarities in terms of culture and heritage. The New Year festival in Laos, Thailand, Arunachal Pradesh and part of upper Assam and Rongali or Pohag Bihu celebrated at the same time around April holds lots of similarities. These festivals offer a unique standpoint for both the regions to assimilate and form a stronger association on the basis of common cultural practices and heritage.

- **Genealogy Tourism**

Sometimes called Roots Tourism, it is a segment of the tourism market consisting of tourists who have ancestral connections to their holiday destination. These tourists travel to the land of their ancestors to reconnect with their past. Similar format could be developed incorporating inbound tourists from South East Asian countries who have their past connections with Assam.

- **Trans-boundary Circuit**

- Kokrajhor-ultapani-sarpang-gelephu-dadgari
- Bansbari-mathanguri-nganglam-deodhara (BTR)
- Bhairabkunda-bhutan-arunachal Pradesh

- **Trans-boundary Adventure Activities**

- Bogmati to Samdrupjonkhar (Bhutan) exit at Darangamala (7hr trek covering 35 km)
- White water rafting from Deothang (Bhutan) to Bogamari where rapids of 3 4 degree will be experienced

Innovative and Holistic Itinerary: Combining Geo-Tourism and Ecotourism

National Parks are known more for eco-tourism rather than geo-tourism. It is because the term ecotourism, which is popularly defined as a visit to natural areas for experiencing the elements of natural and ecological resources, is more appealing to the globalized tourism market. Geo-tourism is inseparable from ecotourism in real sense for the geological diversities that have profound impacts on ecological resources. Use of geo-sites for ecotourism reveals the scope of research on interconnectivities between ecotourism and geo-tourism. Thus, the landscapes of geo-tourism being added with wildlife value could generate immense attractions towards Manas as natural World Heritage Site for scientific and educational purpose as well as for aesthetic and recreational purpose.

11.4.4 Key Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Baksa

Unlike many other border areas of India, Baksa has a geo-politically friendly border which contains a sort of liberal cross over mechanism. This certainly is an advantage for Baksa to be developed as border destination. However, Baksa is home of natural World Heritage Site as well as rich community culture of Eastern Dooars which are susceptible to threat that uncontrolled development of tourism may bring. Therefore, the key challenges to border tourism in Baksa are:

- Enumeration of the carrying capacities to determine the threshold limit of daily visitors' entry in peak season with special emphasis on protection of bio-geologically diverse areas to promote bio-geodiversity tours.
- Community involvement for defending wildlife from poachers and valuable trees from loggers.
- Human resource development for managing PAs involving the community to look after the activities of visitors from conservation standpoint.
- Raising geo-conservational awareness of visitors mandatorily before entering the park with the application of multi-media devices at the entry points of both the parks.
- Border population of North East India tends to be sensitive. Thus, any outside intervention through tourism may unsettle the community unless otherwise sensibly approached.
- Ensuring maximum benefits from tourist accommodation by promoting the local players in order to prevent leakages because dominance of entrepreneurs from outside means profit from business will not percolate in the host economy.

11.4.5 Way Forward

- Despite all digital smoothness especially in urban location, there is still lack of information and misconception about remote locations of India which needs to be mitigated through destination promotion. Stereotyping about such places needs to be dissolved through Border Tourism initiatives in India.
- Connecting livelihood of people and not just creating enough economic value for them but also inculcating a sense of pride and belongingness, therefore, it needs to find how it aids so that our border areas are actually inhabited and protected because of human habitation. Lot of infiltrations happening because these areas have become so desolate and there need to build robust tourism for the national security perspective.
- People of border areas have unique culture, dance music cuisine, thus important take away of Border Tourism would be to conserve and preserve of their culture by making them stay rooted into their soil.
- Create economic value as well as pride among the community sentiment for Border Tourism project anywhere including Baksa.
- Need to be engaged with community to figuring out the gap from the community feed itself, then fill gap through promotion, training, financial assistance, up-gradation of user friendly tourism technology etc.
- Soft Skilling, creation of digital platform to promote the destination and inventory check etc. Local youths need to be encouraged to showcase the place through personal blogging.
- Proactive role of district administration required to give information to tourists.
- All the work that our Forces are doing in terms of guarding the border, along with that inhabiting the border with the usual activities is going to go a long way in ensuring national security and in creating local employment.
- Sustainability would have to be the guiding thought of Border Tourism initiative. Starting with local automatically starts making tourism sustainable doing tourism with community consent, using local material and manpower etc.
- Different innovative and holistic itineraries required, e.g. Agro with Cultural Tourism, Geo-Tourism with ecotourism, Natural and Cultural Heritage Tour etc.



- Theme based tourism could be explored people perhaps could celebrate their festivals in each other's land with same excitement which they do at home. Need is to educate people about their common culture and heritage.
- People in North East are sensitive so when we are going to start border tourism they might feel disturbed in places where they don't want much interference from outside world. Thus, need to think sensibly when promoting border tourism.
- Initially needs to pick those destination which are well connected and give opportunity to local population to start their business for the tourists instead of giving chance to outsiders they might get agitated.
- Connectivity not only with Guwahati but identifies potential market for tourist generation for the district and channelize the development according to that potential.
- Centre-Margin notion needs to be arbitrary; if it is last mile from our perspective it will be the first point for foreign /inbound tourists in case of cross border tourism that is the interesting part of it. Border districts thus, should welcome inbound foreign tourists where these districts should be professionally groomed in that way.
- The border districts should not merely be a transit point which has seen many places. These places should be promoted as a destination in itself.
- Other Border destinations like Dhubri can be connected through river route giving ample scope for Cross Border River Tourism. Historic Stillwell Road, also known as Ledo Road which is connected to Myanmar so those districts could also be developed eventually as part of Border Tourism of Assam.





INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER TOURISM

• MIZORAM • TRIPURA • WEST BENGAL • MEGHALAYA





INDO - BANGLADESH BORDER TOURISM

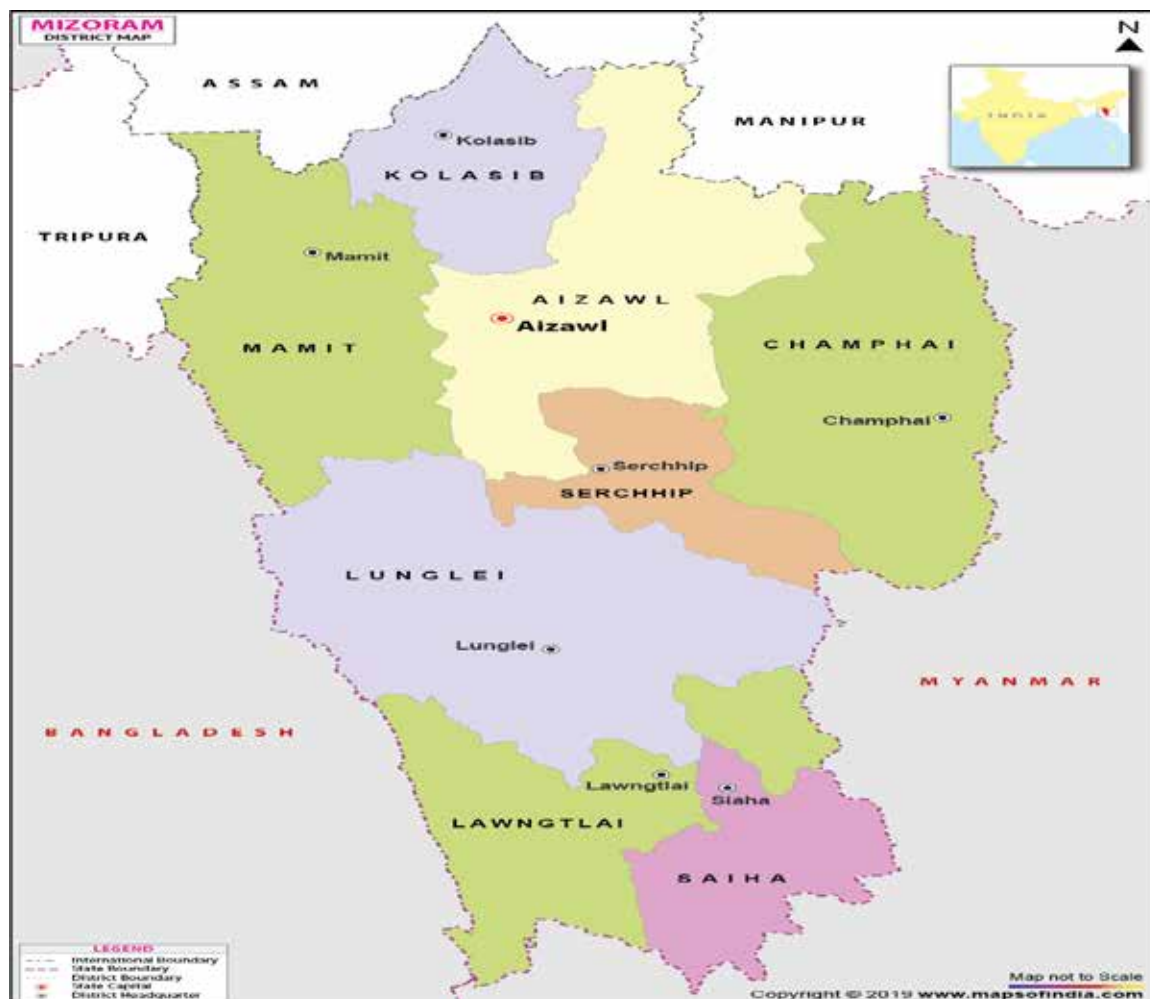
The India-Bangladesh border is 4,096.7 km long, covering the states of West Bengal (2,216.7 km), Assam (263 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Tripura (856 km) and Mizoram (318 km). This is said to be the 5th largest international border in the world. The border traverses a range of natural and cultural landscapes, which pose a challenge to its effective management.

The flat and fertile land along the border supports dense human settlements right up to the border. There are more than a hundred villages located right along the zero line, with many houses opening into Bangladesh. The ethnic composition of the people is similar on both sides of the border and it is quite difficult to differentiate between the citizens of India and Bangladesh. Moreover, traditional trans-border ethnic and socio-cultural ties continue even today. This factor has helped migrants from Bangladesh to crossover to India illegally as they find a welcoming population across the border. Therefore, stretches along the borders in south Bengal, Assam and Tripura have witnessed a large-scale influx of illegal migrants.

Like all boundaries of the Indian sub-continent, the India-Bangladesh border is also an artificial one superimposed by the British colonial authorities over the existing cultural landscape. The boundary between India and erstwhile East Pakistan was not marked against an actual field survey, but on old district maps. This laid the boundary circuitous, not following natural barriers but meandering through villages, agricultural lands and rivers, rendering the border extremely porous with many disputed pockets. By delving into the history of this piece of political engineering, one can realize that the border was a rather artificial construct which actually ran through people's houses, hearts, lives and living and split people living socially, culturally and economically integrated lives into two communities with different badges of national political identities.

In this context, the webinar series have explored various nuances of border tourism in the border districts of East Khasi Hills (Meghalaya), Mamit (Mizoram), Dhalai (Tripura) and Murshidabad (West Bengal) that can be developed along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

12. Border Tourism in Mizoram



Source: Maps of India

12.1 Introduction

Mizoram is one of the seven sister states listed as in North Eastern India, sharing borders with the states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur and with the neighboring countries of Bangladesh and Burma. Its capital is Aizawl. The primary official language of Mizoram is Mizo. The literacy rate is 88.49%.

As per updates, Mizoram shares approx. 510 km border with Myanmar and a 318 km border with Bangladesh. Industries in the state enjoy a unique location-specific advantage. Bordering Myanmar and Bangladesh, Mizoram offers a gateway for engaging in international trade with Southeast Asian countries. With improving road, rail and air connectivity and the establishment of trade routes with neighboring countries, trade facilitation has improved over the last decade.

12.2 Tourism Development in Mizoram

With its highly green hills, criss-crossing rivers and interspersed lakes, Mizoram is a tourist's paradise. In 2019, foreign tourist arrivals and domestic tourist visits in the state stood at 2,249 and 1,53,762 respectively. In August 2020, the Union Minister of State for Tourism, Mr. Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the 'Thenzawl Golf Resort' project in Mizoram under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

The Department of Tourism in Mizoram was created in 1987 by bifurcating Information, Public Relations and Tourism Department (IPR&T) to act as a nodal agency for development and promotion of tourism in the State. Since then it has been making endless efforts to promote tourism in the State by utilizing the available resources, building new tourist infrastructures, promoting rural tourism, focusing on human resource development and by promoting fairs and festivals. The vision of the Department is 'to develop Tourism in a sustainable and integrated manner so as to make Mizoram a major national and international tourism destination, catalyzing growth and economic development'.

The main objectives of the Department are:

- Promotion of Tourism Industry with a comprehensive approach and which will not be in conflict with the social, religious and cultural values of the host community.
- To create conducive environment for growth of Tourism Industry by imparting awareness of the scope and the positive impacts of tourism to both urban and rural population.
- To actively promote ecotourism and nature based tourism.
- To upgrade and develop manpower skills with a view to providing requisite expertise to the youth so as to render them fit for employment in this industry.
- To promote Public Private Partnership in development and management of tourist infrastructures in the State.
- To enhance and monitor the growth of tourism by way of registration and formulation of guidelines for the tourism sector.
- To encourage private sector participation for creation of quality tourism infrastructure and to ensure better management of tourism projects.

Tourism Circuits is a very popular concept in the tourism sector today. The development of such circuits and organizing tours on these circuits becomes economical for both tourists and tourism departments.

Table 12.2.1: Specific Tourism Circuits for Mizoram

Heritage Circuit	Caves, Lunglie Church, Rengdil, Ethnic Villages under Rural Tourism, Handicraft Centre
Wildlife Circuit	All sanctuaries & National Parks
International Border Circuit	Myanmar border circuit, Bangladesh border circuit
Interstate Circuit	Mizoram - Tripura (via Jampui hills), Mizoram - Manipur circuit
River Tourism Circuit	Perennial Rivers - Kolodyne, Tlawng, Tuirial, Khawthlangtuipui

12.2.2 Unique Tourism Projects for Mizoram

- Zokhawthar / Tiau River / Rih Dil Lake (Myanmar border) Region, International Collaborative Project
- Tlabung / Khawthlang Tuipui River Region at Bangladesh border, a Composite Project
- Eco-Tourism, Wildlife & Adventure Tourism Projects
- Cultural Tourism through integration at the International / Interstate Tri-Junctions
- Handicraft / Agriculture Centre at Thenzawl
- Defence Tourism
- Water Tourism
- Rural Tourism
- Geography / Astronomy Centre at the Tropic of Cancer
- Urban Tourism
- Regional Nature Parks: Ecological Park - Lawngtlai, Botanical Park/ Orchid Sanctuary - Lunglei, Zoological Park - Aizawl
- Heritage Tourism: Historical Caves, Historical site at Rengdil (Mamit district), Lunglei: 1st church in Mizoram
- Tourism Festivals: Christmas & New Year, Festivals in collaboration with Star Hotels

Source: 20 Years Perspective Plan for the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the State of Mizoram

12.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Mizoram and Focus Districts: Mamit and Champhai



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Ms. Maria C. T. Zuali (MCS), Deputy Commissioner - Champhai District, Government of Mizoram; Mr. V. Lalengmawia, Director of Tourism, Government of Mizoram; Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser, NITI Aayog; Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East; Mr. Zoliana Chhakchhuak, President, Association of Tour Operators Mizoram; Mr. B Zoliansanga, General Secretary, Mizoram Hotel Owners Association; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Senior Member, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State - Mizoram was held on 22 October 2021. The primary focus district was Mamit in Indo-Bangladesh border which happens to be one of the Aspirational Districts under the Aspirational District Programme of NITI Aayog. The Indo-Myanmar border district Champhai has also been taken into discussion for its unique features significant to tourism development of Mizoram.

In his presidential address, Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI, mentioned that the concept of Border Tourism refers to the notion of visiting border areas in order to experience diverse cultures, acquiring knowledge for trade, or even meeting local communities who are living in border region. Being an ideal tourist destination for family tours, honeymoon tours and the perfect place for adventure enthusiasts, Mizoram offers abundance tour options for travellers of all kind.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, said that with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and respective State Tourism Boards, the Tourism Committee of PHDCCI has launched the Border Tourism Webinar Series in the month of June 2021. PHDCCI is committed to create such meaningful platforms to do its bit in enabling all the parameters of the tourism industry to grow and flourish further.

Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East, appreciated the efforts of PHDCCI for taking an initiative in highlighting the tourism prospects of Mizoram as well as other North Eastern states of India. He also mentioned that Mizoram's pleasant weather, grand cultural festivals, hilly ranges, lush greenery and exciting outdoor activities make it a versatile tourist destination.

Mr. V. Lalengmawia, Director - Tourism, Government of Mizoram, highlighted the tourist destinations of the state, especially that of Mamit and Champhai districts. He further mentioned that Mizoram has currently 69 total tourist lodges and guest houses, 72 private hotels across the state, 77 rural homestays and 8 approved tour operators. He also encouraged the tourists to explore the unexplored locations of the state and also urged the private players to invest more in Mizoram.

Ms. Maria C. T. Zuali (MCS), Deputy Commissioner of Champhai District, Government of Mizoram, highlighted that the district shares a long stretch of border with Myanmar which is about 300 miles. She said that Mizoram has a large number of natural tourist attractions that are yet to be explored. Champhai district is home to beautiful ranges of Orchids and Cherry Blossom trees along with many heritage sites.

Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser, NITI Aayog, said that there has been a significant growth in the basic infrastructure of Mizoram and its districts that will evidently be of great help in the promotion of Mizoram Tourism. He suggested that the new focus must be towards homestays and bringing other such elements to promote Mizoram's economic development.

Mr. Zoliana Chhakchhuak, President, Association of Tour Operators Mizoram, mentioned that there are immense potential for promotion of Border Tourism in Mamit and Champhai districts provided the infrastructure and awareness is created in the state.

Mr. B Zoliansanga, General Secretary, Mizoram Hotel Owners Association, said that the Mizoram tourism sector is at an infant stage and is still growing. As on date, Mizoram has total 8 official tourism partners. Hence, there is great potential for Border Tourism in Mizoram and districts like Champhai and Mamit.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Senior Member, PHDCCI, proposed the formal vote of thanks. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

12.4 Border Tourism in Mamit and Champhai

12.4.1 Introduction of Mamit

Mamit District is situated in the western part of Mizoram. It is a land locked district and is bound by Bangladesh and Tripura on the West, Assam on the North, Kolasib and Aizawl District on the East and Lunglei District on the South. Majority of the tribes inhabiting the district comprises of Mizo, Reang (Bru) and Chakma. The district is famous for abundant production of orange for which it is often called 'The Orange garden of Mizoram'.

The entire District is covered by hilly terrain as well as some plain areas and is part of the western extension of the system that links up with the ranges of Nagaland and Manipur in the north and Chin Hills of Myanmar in the east and ramifies from the Sub-Himalayan Patkai-Arakan Ranges.

12.4.2 Tourist Places in Mamit

Reiek

The mountain offers a range of caves and caverns with a natural forest preserved since the days of ancient Mizo chiefs. The rocky cliffs of the range give it a spectacular view from the bottom.



Reiek Mountain

Khuangchera Puk

Khuangchera Puk is a cave located in Ailawng near Reiek village. The cave is named after Khuangchera, the legendary Mizo warrior who used to live here in the late 19th century. The vertical range of the cave is 10 metre deep. Khuangchera Puk is an ideal adventure sports.

Dampa Tiger Reserve

As the name suggests, the bio reserve is a place for tigers specially, then hornbills, wood pigeons, jungle fowls, pheasants, etc. Dampa Tiger reserve hosts a wide variety of avifauna. It is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Mizoram, built in the area of about 500 sq. km.



Dampa Tiger Reserve

Puk Zing

Puk Zing is a cave with narrow passages and having the large interiors which makes the voice echo around. It is also called as, 'The Cave of Shouting Stone'. It comprises of three sections and each about 4 sq. km, connected with narrow passages. According to a legend, villagers used to hear voices from the cave.

12.4.3 Introduction of Champhai

Champhai means a flat land and it derives its name from the vast paddy field situated at the foothill of Champhai town. Champhai is a bustling commercial district surrounded by Myanmar border which offers various tourist attractions. It offers a wide variety of cash crops like rice, kiwi plantation, vineyards, passion fruit, etc. It is also known a rice bowl of the state. The marketplace offers a wide variety of imported goods too in the form of electronics, cloths, household items, cosmetics, etc.

12.4.4 Tourist Places in Champhai

Kungawrhi Puk (Cave)

Kungawrhi Puk is one of the most significant and largest caves in Mizoram. The cave is located between Farkawn and Vaphai villages.



Kungawrhi Puk

Tiau Lui (River)

The legendary river Tiau is between the international boundary of India and Myanmar. The river being the juncture between two international places offers a wide variety of imported goods.

Mangkhaia Lung

These are some of the stones in series having engravings of human figures, animals and birds. According to the local belief, these engravings act as guardians of the dead.

Lianchhiari Lunglen Tlang

This is a cliff hanging out loosely hanging from the rugged mountain. It is a legend behind the cliff that Lianchhiari use to lookout for her lover Chawngfianga from the cliff. Undoubtedly, it rose to many folklores and sweet love stories.



Lianchhiari Lunglen Tlang

Thasiama Se No Neihna

The steep rugged hillock which is not even walkable and navigable by man is located at Vaphai village. According to one of the legend, Thasiama's Mithun gave birth to a calf on the hillock. It was considered that the Thasiama was in love with a fairy and it bestowed a gift upon her that her calf will multiply and there will be no sorrows afterwards. So, Thasiama gave birth to her calf on the hillock to save it from wild animals and being hunted down.

Fiara Tui

Fiara Tui was believed that there lived a widow and her son Fiara. They used to cover long distances for fetching drinking water. In one of the instance, Fiara, happened to find out source of clear water, suitable enough for drinking purpose under stone. He kept it a secret but some of the villagers found it and felt relieved. As the water was sweet, clean and fit for drinking purpose, hence it was named after Fiara.

Kawtchhuah Ropui - Vangchhia

Kawtchhuah Ropui (Great Entranceway) a natural heritage site marked with 171 carved stones. It is located at Khawbung. The 171 menhir stones in the village became Mizoram's first protected archaeological site in 2012.



Kawtchhuah Ropui

Hlakungpui Mual (Mizo Poet's Square)

Mizo Hlakungpui Mual is a monument which was set up in 1986. It was built to commemorate Mizo poets, writers and composers. After the interval of ten years Mizo laureate poets and writers were given a place at the monument. About 36 known writers and poets of Mizo culture have got their place here so far.

Murlen National Park

Murlen National Park is known for its virgin forests, sub-mountain forests, honeycombs, bird watching. Situated at Indo-Myanmar boundary of Champhai district is known for being one of the few remaining features of refugees of Mizoram state bird, Vavu (Mrs Hume's Pheasant).



Lamsial Puk (Cave)

The cave is situated in the north of Farkawn district. The cave is of about nine metres in length. It is known for a wooden box of about cubic metre, placed inside the cave, comprising of human bones. There are also Mizo shawls, 'Chawgnak', which act as a cover of these skeletal remains. These bones are supposed to be about 300 hundred years old.

Champhai Winery

The Hnahlan Grape Winery (HGW) was established in 2007 and it serves as the first for Mizoram. The first wine was released in 2010 by the name of Zawlaiddi which means Love Potion. This is a lovely place for wine testing.

Lungphun Lian

It is named after a large monolith found in the vicinity. The stone is uneven in shape. Lungphun Lian itself means a large monolith'.

Lengteng Wildlife Sanctuary

The sanctuary is located at the second highest mountain with a height of about seven thousand feet. It occupies sub-tropical broad leaf and tropical evergreen forest. Various other plantations of rhododendrons and cherry are also there.

12.4.5 Product Line for Border Tourism in Mamit and Champhai

Heritage Tourism (Tangible and Intangible)

Mizoram border districts are rich in intangible heritage such as folklore, legends. Champhai district villages are gateway to Mizoram where one can find quiet unique folklores, historical remains. It is believed that Champhai is the place where folklore, legend and history began for Mizoram. Rich relics of ruins, cultural heritage, traditional custom, tribal tradition, textile, traditional Mizo hut, bachelors hut and other heritage sites of the districts can be part of Heritage Tourism (both tangible and intangible).

Cross-Border Tourism

Champhai has great potential for border tourism. Cross border ethnic ties could be an attractive feature to experience borders. Infrastructural development and connectivity from Bangladesh side could provide better opportunity for cross-border tourism for Mamit.

Film Tourism

Owing to the grand locations of the state, Film Tourism can be promoted in the region by organizing Film Tourism Conclave.

Nature Based Tourism/ Special Interest Tourism

The landscape of the state is dominated by thick bamboo groves, thick paddy fields, lush green forest, vineyard, sheer cliff serene lakes, waterfalls, exotic orchids and other species of flowers which can offer excellent opportunity for various nature based tourism products. Walking trail for leisurely walk, trekking track, eco-tourism sites and activities can be developed around these resources.

Adventure and Eco-Tourism

Various hill ranges, rugged mountains, hills, natural caves lakes all can provide with various adventure tourism products with the districts and the State. Different outdoor activities could be developed based on these natural resources. Dampa Tiger Reserve could serve as an important place for Wildlife and Eco-tourism site. Trekking across the Tiger reserve could be an option for adventure tourism as well. Along with that, wildlife photography and photography tour in general can also be a product for this site.

Tribal Tourism

The lives and culture of Chakma and Bru people can provide with rich resources for Tribal Tourism.

Geo-Tourism

Some of the prominent caves in Mizoram are Pukzing Cave at Pukzing village near Marpara in Mamit district, Milu Puk (cave of skulls) near Mamte village in Lunglei district, Lamsial Puk (Lamsial cave), near Farkawn village in Champhai district and Kungawrhri Puk (Kungawrhri cave) located near Vaphai village in Champhai district. Many of these caves in the state are located deep in the jungles and remote areas. These caves can be highlighted as part of Geo-Tourism.

MICE Tourism

Development of Convention Centres will lead to promote MICE tourism in Mizoram.

Rural Tourism

Villages like Ailawng, Pukzing or Rengdil of Mamit can be developed as Rural Tourism destinations providing a holistic experience of nature, culture and authentic rural lives of Mizoram.

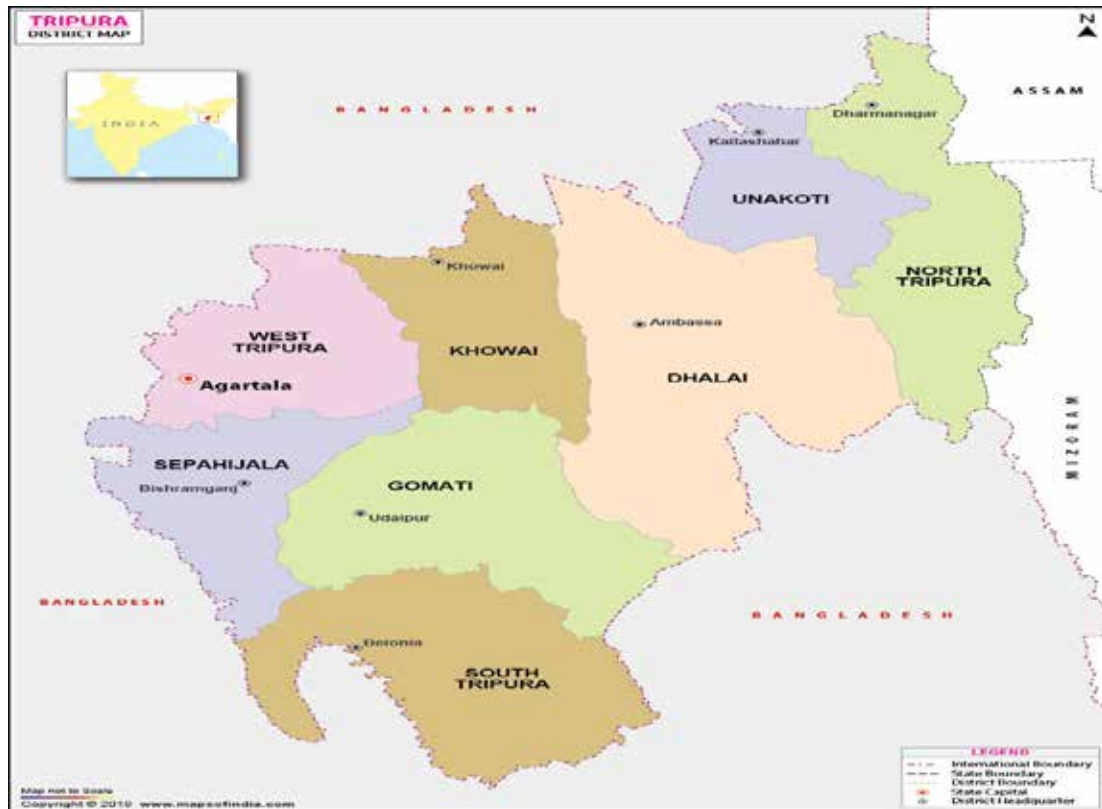
12.4.6 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Mamit and Champhai

- Mizoram is unfamiliar to most of the Indians due to lack of proper information about the districts and the State in general.
- Serious lack for providing basic tenets of tourism of the State.
- Difficult terrain and marginal locations.
- Small market size poses constraint to big investments for tourism industry.
- Infrastructure marked by constraint of funds.
- Bangladesh side across Mamit border is hugely underdeveloped which hinders effective cross border tourism.
- Overall developmental challenge evident in Mamit as an Aspirational District.

12.4.7 Way Forward

- Information is vital to promote Mizoram at first.
- To promote state pilgrimage, heritage, spiritual tourism éorientation drive for tourism is required.
- Moderate climate, serene landscape, festivals etc. need to be tapped as USPs for developing wide ranges of tourism products to attract all kinds of tourists.
- The natural resources in particular should be given focus on developing destination in hitherto unknown places of the districts.
- The tourism trends in post pandemic focuses more on lesser known destinations of the country which needs to be tapped to promote Mizoram at large.
- Human resource development for tourism is of prime importance.
- Pro-poor approach in tourism development needs special focus and attention.
- Mamit has shown progress in road and internet connectivity, sanitation facility. As an Aspirational District, Mamit is having various avenues promoting tourism, focusing on homestay can bring economic development.
- Local suppliers and service providers need to be encouraged and engaged in tourism and hospitality of the districts.
- Forest Bungalow in Dampa is important. The infrastructural need is crucial to promote Dampa as successful tourism site.
- No heavy infrastructure should be constructed around ecotourism trails of Champhai.
- Need to utilize Campaigns like Dekho Apna Desh to promote aggressively the latent travel potentials of Mizoram.
- Cable Car, Ropeway etc. to be constructed under the Schemes of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Mamit is not in tourism map anywhere in Mizoram; it needs vigorous approach to introduce Mamit as tourist destination. Various social media platform, blogging etc. need to be utilized for that.
- To promote one particular district for Border Tourism is not viable. Thus, it needs to create a holistic border trail involving several border districts of the State.

13. Border Tourism in Tripura



Source: Maps of India

13.1 Introduction

Tripura is a land-locked state, surrounded by Bangladesh on its north, south and west. The length of its international border is 856 km (84% of its total border), while it shares a 53 km long border with Assam and a 109 km long border with Mizoram. Tripura is connected with the rest of India by road, which runs through the hills to Cachar District in Assam. The terrain of the state is hilly and forested: over 60% is hilly and around two-thirds of the land area is classified as forest land.

13.2 Tourism Development in Tripura

Tripura is blessed with natural rich topography, unique geographical location with tropic of cancer passing through its heart. The State, an abode of rich floral and faunal biodiversity, unique landscapes and moderate climate throughout the year has immense potential for tourism. Peaceful co-existence of 19 indigenous tribes along with Bengali and Manipuri communities in the State, their diverse cultural streams and faiths, traditional art, music and festivals, beautiful handloom and handicrafts constitute irresistible charm as a tourist destination. It has spellbound rock cut sculptures of archaeological significance, Buddhist pilgrimage sites and the royal palaces that add to the charm.

13.2.1 The current Tourism Policy 2020 of the State aims:

- To make Tripura nationally and internationally acclaimed all-season tourist destination.
- To provide world class amenities and facilities to the tourists at all destinations and also provide well managed public amenities on the highways.
- To highlight rich culture, heritage, wildlife, bio-diversity so as to provide unique experience of unexploited wonderland to the tourists.
- To disseminate Tripura's rich history, cultural and traditional aspects related to the ancient kingdom.
- To facilitate involvement of private sector in establishment and management of tourism infrastructure.
- To encourage local communities in management of tourist destinations as well as hosting activities like home-stay.
- To generate employment opportunities for the local communities in sectors directly and indirectly linked with the tourism.

13.2.2 The Guiding Principles of Tripura Tourism Policy (2020-2025) include:

- Promotion of religious tourism by developing places of worship of all faiths.
- To promote eco-tourism in the state in collaboration with the Forest Department.
- Undertake measures to provide best experience to the tourists in terms of information, logistics amenities, security and hospitality.
- Establish active and coordinated participation of Government departments, voluntary organizations, local community and other stakeholders of tourism sector.
- Set up an institutional mechanism to promote private investment.
- To create enabling framework for public-private partnerships in developing tourism products, projects and services.

13.2.3 In order to strategize the tourism vision, Tripura Tourism focuses on the following:

- Tourism Infrastructure Optimization
- Improving Connectivity
- Human Resource Development
- Marketing & Promotion
- Attracting Private Investments
- Safety & Security

- ### 13.2.4 Tourism Product Offerings:
- Eco Tourism
 - Adventure Tourism
 - Spiritual Tourism
 - Ethnic Tourism
 - Film Tourism
 - Tea & Golf Tourism
 - Wellness Tourism
 - Heritage Tourism
 - Border Tourism
 - Arts, Crafts and Souvenirs

13.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Tripura and Focus District: Dhalai



Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East; Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant- Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Mr. Arun Kumar Verma, Second-in-Command- Tripura Frontier, Border Security Force; Mr. Soumen Dutta, State In-Charge- Tripura, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Kanti Deb, President, All Tripura Hotel & Restaurant Owner's Association; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Saurabh Sanyal, Secretary General, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

The 14th webinar series on Border Tourism on Tripura was organized on 17 December 2021 by PHDCCI. The session was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

Mr. Saurabh Sanyal, Secretary General, PHDCCI, in his welcome address gave brief introduction of PHDCCI and briefed about the concept of Border Tourism. He further elaborated various socio-cultural aspects of the North East which make the region uniquely potential for Tourism.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chairman - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, has also welcomed the panelists where he gave a brief overview of border state Tripura.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, set the tone of the webinar with his theme address. He has discussed in post pandemic era, how Border Tourism could significantly bring the outbound tourist market of India inward to visit the country and contribute to country's economy in return.

Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, India Tourism North East, has detailed about the historical significance of Tripura, its geography and culture and various potential tourist attractions of the state. He further stated how Tripura gets obliterated from national media which needs more attention to the state.

Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant - Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, has given an overview of the performance of Dhalai as an Aspirational District. He further explained how an Aspirational District could have an edge over the non-aspirational districts to build up sustainable tourism.

Mr. Arun Kumar Verma, Second-in-Command (G) - Tripura Frontier, Border Security Force, in his detailed deliberation has covered all the tourism aspects of Tripura in general and in particular of Dhalai. He proposed several tourism products that could be incorporated into Border Tourism of the District.

Mr. Soumen Dutta, State In-Charge - Tripura, Indian Association of Tour Operators, explained in his deliberation that how Indo-Bangladesh good relation can actually be a USP for the cross border tourism of Tripura. In post pandemic time he referred to the close collaboration that needed the most to revive the industry and in particularly marginal locations like border district of Dhalai.

Mr. Kanti Deb, President, All Tripura Hotel & Restaurant Owner's Association, has given an overview of the hospitality industry of Tripura and stressed upon the awareness creation for the state through FAM trip etc.



13.4 Border Tourism in Dhalai

13.4.1 Introduction

Dhalai district has a distinguished characteristic than any other districts of Tripura both in area and population. Among the four districts, the land of Dhalai is mostly uneven and hilly and has less plain area. The strengths of the district are its huge natural resources, fertile land, conducive climate, adequate and well spread rainfall, high literacy rate & strategic location of the District being well connected by the National Highway (NH 44). If all these resources are utilized properly, rapid development can be achieved but for lack of required infrastructure and inaccessibility of many tribal areas the District is still very backward.

13.4.2 Tourist Places in Dhalai

Dumboor Lake

A massive and breathtaking water body of 41 sq. km, the look of the lake is like tabour shaped small drum, 'Dumboor' of Lord Shiva from which the name 'Dumboor' originates. The lake is the confluence of rivers Raima and Sarma. Various species of migratory birds are visible in the winter and it has rich reservoir of natural and cultured fishes. In one of the islands 'Narikel Kunja' or a coconut island has been developed.



Dumboor Lake

Setrai Waterfall

Setrai Waterfall in Durgachoumuhani Block is an excellent spot for enjoying breathtaking beauty of nature, with its clear water and dense vegetation.

Longtharai Mandir

There is a myth which says that Shiva on his return from Kailash rested here for some time in the hill of Longtharai. There is a large 'Mela' of devotees during Mahashivratri festival.

Kamaleswari Mandir

This temple is located in the center of the town and a major pilgrimage spot.



Kamaleswari Mandir

13.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Dhalai

Border Tourism

People living along border of both the countries are having similar linguistic religious and cultural similarities. Organizing cultural fest in border district will promote tourism as well as people to people contact. Developing infrastructure for BSF, BGB border joint retreat ceremony at ICP Agartala in pattern of ICP Attari-Wagha, ICP Manughat in Panisagar area, ICP Belonia, ICP Srimantapur can also be considered for border tourism promotion in the State.

Cultural Tourism

Rich in tribal community, skilled in handcraft, Dhalai could be developed in Cultural Tourism. Manipuri community Rasleela is organized and fest in Poush Sankranti éall these could be part of Cultural Tourism product of Dhalai.

Religious Tourism

Kamaleshwari temple in Kamalpur is a major destination of pilgrimage Tourism. Same is Longfai in Kanthabari with greater religious significance.

Heritage Tourism

Heritage Park is a premier destination since 2012 in Kamalpur. It shows architecture landmark and important sites of the state in the miniature form.



Nature Based Tourism

The charming water body Dumboor Lake is around 120 km away from Agartala. The place could offer various Special Interest Tourism like Birding, water sport facility etc. Developing national/ nature parks for safeguarding beauty natural and cultural heritage of the scenic landscape could boost Nature Based Tourism in this place.

Adventure and Eco-Tourism

The terrain and natural resources of Dhalai could offer different Adventure Tourism products. Various adventure sports and events: jungle expedition mountain biking, war biking, trekking, forest trails nature walks hiking etc. and other eco-tourism activities too can be developed utilizing the natural resources of Dhalai.

13.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Dhalai

As a socio-economically backward region, the overall developmental challenges remain dominant factors in Dhalai, such as:

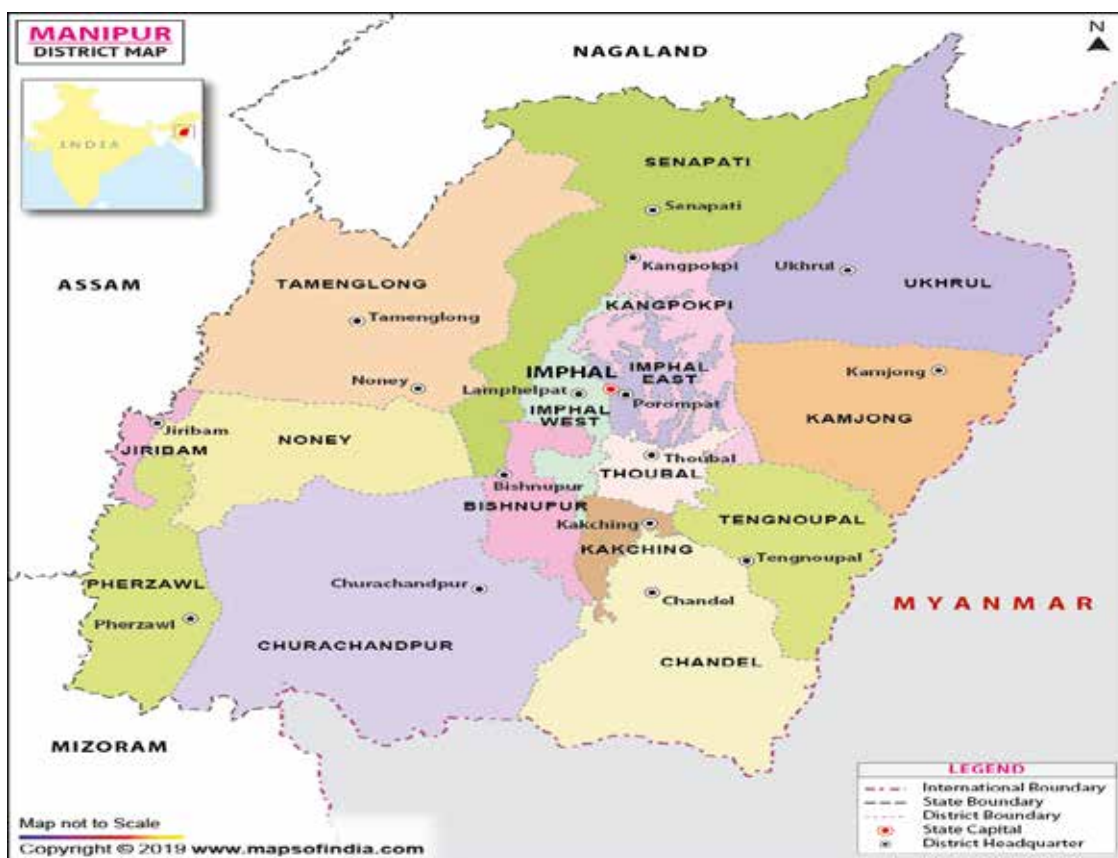
- Poor Connectivity and Communication facilities
- Poor Infrastructure
- Lack of stable economic activities
- Lack of major marketing facilities
- Poor Irrigation facilities or Health and Sanitation facilities

13.4.5 Way Forward

- Activation of old non-functional airports in prominent tourist places like Unokoti and Manikbhandar Kamalapur.
- Pawan Hans air services can be started in the initial stage and eventually can be upgraded in regular airport.
- Aggressive Marketing Strategy is required.
- Place branding and promotion of local product, information Centre to be set up at airport railway or in ICP.
- Advertising in the international/ national fair.
- Various lucrative tourist package showcasing art and culture of the district need to be designed: multi-faced products combining agro/ culture/ nature/ heritage/ rural within the settlement can be developed.
- Focus on destination image through photographic tour.
- Small scale enterprises in form of Rural Tourism to be encouraged where open space contact with nature, traditional societies with customary practices all can be experienced by developing the basic infrastructure.
- Provision of modern tents with tradition ethnic cuisine.
- Development of more heritage garden and theme park.
- Participation in inter-state and national level handicraft/ culture and fest to promote local tribal culture among common public and integrate to national culture at district level to be organized rotation wise.
- Border village games and sport, various traditional village sports need to be promoted and encouraged.
- Sports Tourism can be developed niche product optimizing all local popular sports of the place.
- Provision of quality accommodation need to be increased.
- Aspirational Districts run under particular ecosystem. This eco-system would definitely help aspirational district like Dhalai if tourism is identified as one of the sectors they would like to further develop in a sustainable manner.
- Good Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relation need to be focused to develop cross border tourism in the region. Akhaura check post flag of ceremony in a friendly ambience need to be highlighted and reflected as part of Border Tourism.



14. Border Tourism in West Bengal



Source: Maps of India

14.1 Introduction

West Bengal is situated in eastern India and shares its borders with Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Sikkim and Assam. West Bengal has international boundaries with Bangladesh in the east, Bhutan in the North and Nepal in the north-west. West Bengal with 2,217 km (2545 mile) shares the longest border with Bangladesh. Its location advantage makes the state a traditional market for eastern India, the Northeast, Nepal and Bhutan. It is also a strategic entry point for markets in Southeast Asia.

14.2 Tourism Development in West Bengal

West Bengal is the only state in the country to have the icy snow bound Himalayas in the north, Bay of Bengal at its south and temperate plains and plateaus covering the remaining region. West Bengal is also home to two UNESCO world heritage sites viz. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Sunderbans National Park.

West Bengal State Tourism Policy (2019) Vision States: 'Earning Through Quality'

'To develop West Bengal as one of the most preferred tourist destinations of choice, while generating gainful employment, enhancing economic opportunities and providing best-in-class tourism facilities, services and enriched tourist experience.'

14.2.1 The State Policy Instruments include:

- Tourism standards, certification and regulation
- Institutional framework
- Tourism infrastructure development
- Marketing and promotion
- Research and ICT enablement
- Skill development and capacity building

14.2.2 Tourism Product Offerings:

- Cultural and Heritage Tourism
- MICE
- Tea and Jute Tourism
- Religious Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Eco-village and Horticulture Tourism
- Wildlife Tourism
- Herbal Ecotourism

Source: West Bengal Tourism Policy 2019

14.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: West Bengal and Focus District: Murshidabad



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Debit Dutta, Chairman, West Bengal Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Darshan Dudhuria, Co-Owner, Bari Kothi Azimganj; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair, Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair, Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

The webinar series on Border Tourism in West Bengal with focus district Murshidabad was held on 26 November 2021 organized by PHDCCI. The knowledge session was moderated by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

In his Presidential Address, Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI, mentioned that post pandemic, tourists are looking at exploring lesser known destinations across the country and Murshidabad can be an ideal option for them with so much of history and culture associated with it. Border Tourism Webinar Series will continue and PHDCCI would work towards showcasing the tourism potential of the diverse and untouched border districts of India.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair, Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, said that with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and respective State Tourism Boards, the Tourism & Hospitality Committee of PHDCCI has launched the Border Tourism Webinar Series in the month of June 2021. PHDCCI is committed to create such meaningful platforms to do its bit in enabling all the parameters of the tourism industry to grow and flourish further.

Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, mentioned that geographically, West Bengal is placed very beautifully and is enriched with rich heritage and culture. It is also a very important state for promotion of cross border tourism with the South East Asian countries. Ministry of Tourism is doing lot of activities for the development of human resource, skill development and capacity building. Through the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF) Certification Programme, an E-market place is under development that will add new opportunities for the stakeholders in tourism sector.

Mr. Darshan Dudhuria, Co-Owner, Bari Kothi Azimganj, said that in the 1700s, Murshidabad contributed to almost 5% GDP in the world. However, it went down after Kolkata became the capital of the state during the British rule. Murshidabad is the heritage hub of Bengal filled with great stories and tangible as well as intangible heritage. He also focused on the narrative

building and storytelling that could be an important component of tourism in places like Murshidabad. The tourism policies in the state have to be conducive involving the local communities then only investment will increase.

Mr. Debjit Dutta, Chairman of West Bengal Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), mentioned that from the mountains of Himalayas to the mangroves of Sundarbans, diversity is the key selling point of West Bengal. Almost 80% of the state is still unexplored, therefore there is a need to brand and market these destinations. Cruising on River Ganges is one of the top 10 cruising experiences in the world said Mr. Dutta. He emphasized that cross-border tourism opportunities are plenty for West Bengal as it shares its borders with Nepal, Bhutan & Bangladesh.

Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that West Bengal is one of the states whose tourism potential is still untapped. The railway routes running especially through the remote regions of West Bengal are well made, but there is scope for establishment of more air strips for better connectivity via UDAN Scheme. He also emphasized on promoting Heli Tourism in the border areas of West Bengal as it is well connected with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair of Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, proposed the formal vote of thanks. He kept on connecting various threads of discussions with his own valuable inputs for Border Tourism in India.

14.4 Border Tourism in Murshidabad

14.4.1 Introduction

The modern district of Murshidabad came into existence in 1787 following certain jurisdictional interchanges with the Birbhum district, though the units in the district were finalized in 1879 AD. Since 1879 AD, the present set up of the district remained same along with the boundaries. As per '3 June Plan' or 'Mountbatten Plan', after the partition of India on 15 August 1947, by mistake Murshidabad was supposed to come under the jurisdiction of East Pakistan. However, after the declaration of Radcliff award the district became a part of West Bengal. It is remarkable to note that for 3 days Murshidabad unofficially remained a part of East Pakistan although it was officially a part of West Bengal.

14.4.2 Tourist Places in Murshidabad

Hazarduari Palace

Earlier known as the Bara Kothi, Hazarduari was built by Humayun Jah during the period 1829-1837 at the site of the old fort known as Nizamut Qila (fort). Hazarduari in Murshidabad is undoubtedly the most iconic attraction. The grand yellow structure is located right beside the Bhagirathi River. The palace has now been converted into a museum having a great collection of antiques, arms, weapons and some invaluable paintings of various European artists. Hazarduari literally means the place of thousand doors (Hazar means thousand and duar means doors). The palace is said to have a thousand doors. The Hazarduari complex also consists of the Clock Tower, Bacchewali Tope and Madina Mosque.



Hazarduari Palace



Katra Masjid

Katra Masjid

The Katra Masjid is perhaps one of the oldest standing structures in Murshidabad. It was built by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan between 1723 and 1724. The Katra Mosque was a great centre for Islamic learning. There were actually 4 towers on the four corners, but the other 2 got destroyed in the earthquake of 1897. There were a flight of stairs through which one could get to the top of the tower but now the gates have been closed.



Fauti Masjid

Fauti or Fouti Masjid is another impressive structure in Murshidabad. It is a huge structure but in a state of decay overgrown with vegetation. The mosque was built in 1740 by Nawab Sarfaraz Khan, the grandson of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan but was never completed. The mosque is located near a railway crossing about a km from Hazarduari in Murshidabad.

Nizamat Imambara

The present Imambara was built in 1847 by Nawab Nazim Mansoor Ali Khan Feradun Jah after the original wooden Imambara built by Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula was destroyed by fire. The Imambara is 680 feet long and the central block is about 300 feet in width. The Nizamat Imambara is the largest one in Bengal and one of the largest in India.



Nizamat Imambara

Nashipur Palace

It was the court of Debi Singha, who was the expense gatherer of the British during the Nawabi era and was known for being a strict tax authority.



Jafarganj Cemetery

Jafarganj Cemetery was built by Mir Jafar over an area of 3.51 acres within an enclosure of walled walls, about half a mile north to the Nizamat Fort Campus and inside the campus of Namak Haram Deorhi. It hosts the graves of the later Nawabs of Bengals of the Najafi dynasty.

Motijheel Park

A 350-acre oxbow lake formed out of an abandoned bed of River Bhagirathi stands witness to a remarkable turning point in Indian history.



Motijheel Park

Tomb of Siraj-ud-Daulah

The garden hosts the graves of Siraj-ud-Daulah and Alivardi Khan, inside a square, flat-roofed mausoleum surrounded by an arcade verandah.

Dutch Cemetery

It is a heritage Christian cemetery at Kalikapur in the Berhampore CD block in the Berhampore subdivision of Murshidabad district. The Dutch Cemetery has '47 tombs and obelisks etc. and the oldest being that of Daniel Van der Muyl who died in 1721 AD'.

Karnasubarna

Karnasubarna or Karnasubarna was the capital of Gauda Kingdom during the reign of Shashanka, the first important king of ancient Bengal who ruled in the 7th century. After Shashanka's death it was the Jayaskandhavara of Bhaskaravarman, the king of Kamarupa probably for a short period.

Other places include Bishnupur Kalibari, Sonarundi Rajbari, Dahapara Dham, Cossimbazar Palace of the Roys (Rajbari) which is a fine example of European and Indian architecture, now lovingly resurrected to its former glory.

14.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Murshidabad

Heritage Tourism

Murshidabad is a land with a rich and varied history. Many different rulers' dynasties and empires have fought over and controlled different parts during its eventful history. Various monument including palaces, tombs, victory pillars tell glorious stories. Thus, Heritage Tourism is the most significant tourism product for Murshidabad.

Murshidabad remains one of the most underrepresented destinations in India. Being the last capital of Independent Bengal, Battle of Palassey which is 40 km away from Murshidabad could be an important signpost for Heritage Tourism of the District. The heritage resources could be experienced through various heritage trail/ walks, live interpretation and stay in a heritage property or even by creating different light and sound show and other modes of heritage representation.

Cultural Tourism

Murshidabad, being a significant centre of Indian history remained a space of cultural confluence wherein different communities, religions, people from all walks of life had made their imprint. To uncover those resources, Cultural Tourism could be another significant product. Storytelling here plays a thematic role as through stories different layers of history could be unfolded. Different community histories can be told, different crafts can be defined and, different forms of music and cuisine can be represented by connecting stories to them.

Cross Border Tourism

West Bengal shares international borders with three different countries which can be focused for developing cross border tourism. In case of Murshidabad, the cross country itineraries could be developed combining Indo-Bangladesh tourism products. Radcliff international boundary line could itself be a significant source of historical journey. It needs proper narrative and simulation to create Border Tourism keeping Radcliff Line as central theme.

Cruise Tourism

The great river Ganga was a central character to the history of Murshidabad. Literally speaking, the River had witnessed all the ups and downs of the place throughout the history. By taking the River into account the historical journey though River Cruise along the District could be one of the most intriguing aspects of Border Tourism of the place.

14.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Murshidabad

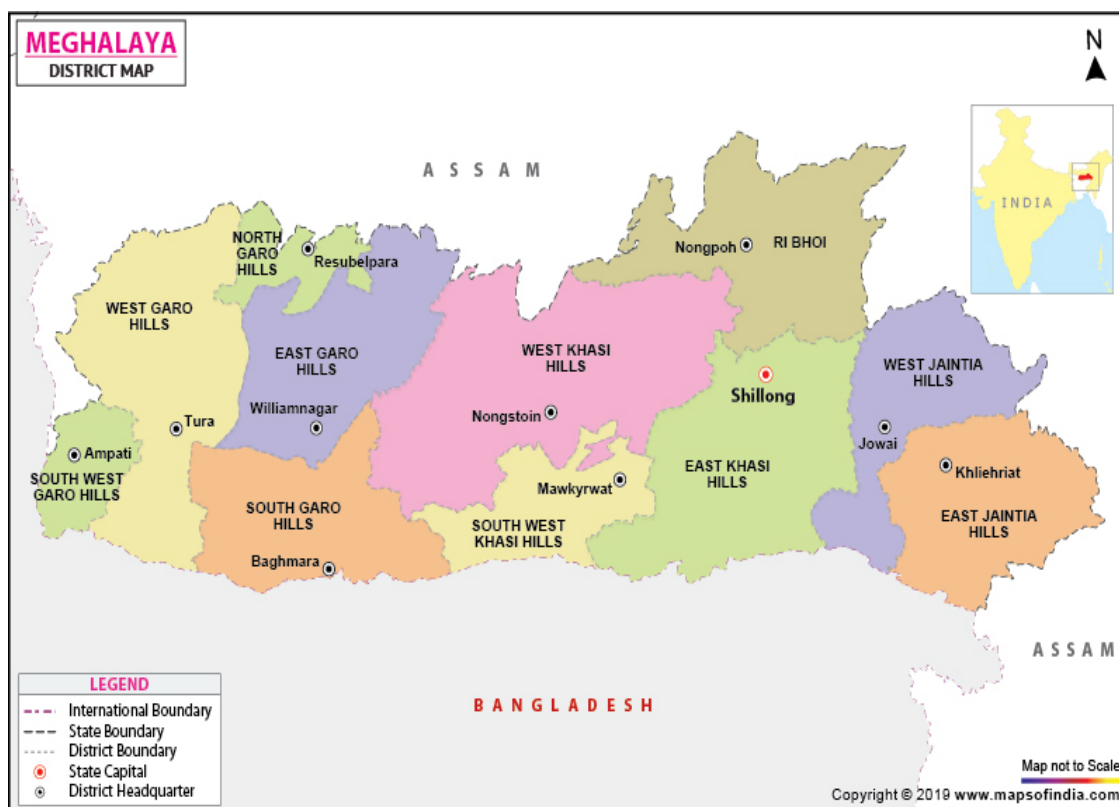
- Murshidabad is largely under represented as heritage destination of India.
- Connectivity, in particular road connectivity is a chronic issue for developing effective tourism system here.
- Unskilled labour is one of the major challenges in hospitality and tourism development of the district.
- West Bengal as a whole is not correctly branded and positioned in tourism market.
- Being the gateway of South East Asia, the state is largely sold as part of North East travel itineraries.
- Incorrect branding and positioning pose challenge to market Murshidabad as a tourism destination.



14.4.5 Way Forward

- Connectivity is one of the prime issues as border destination. Thus, road connectivity needs to be improved.
- RCS UDAN project could smooth regional connectivity and more airstrips can be opened up.
- Heli Tourism within the State could be a viable option to mitigate the connectivity part of tourism.
- Heli service could be crucial mode of transport to create faster and effective itineraries. Contractual heli service to be recommended for smooth functioning.
- Creation of tourism infrastructure around border districts all over the State. Luxury yatri niwas, homestays, setting up homestays in border regions develop tourism in border region.
- E marketing facilities need to be available to the service providers of the Border districts.
- West Bengal as a state needs effective destination branding and correct market positioning.
- Cross-Country tourism products and itineraries need to be designed.
- Murshidabad has historically significant destination needs special attention in India Tourism map.
- High end tourism/ inbound tourism need to be developed utilizing heritage properties of Murshidabad.
- River cruise can be introduced in Murshidabad.
- Light and sound show can be thought of simulating heritage of the District. Various heritage trail/walks etc. can be designed.
- Murshidabad is a land of great cultural confluence. Crafts, textile and cultural aspects of the District need further exploration and marketing in tourism.
- IITFC Programme of the Ministry of Tourism for skilling can be tapped.
- Creative solution to be thought of utilizing existing labour force to run the tourism ecosystem of the District.
- Community engagement is the only way to build a self-sustained tourism ecosystem in the destination.
- Stress upon intangible aspects of culture and heritage, stories, storytelling the entire fine lines of narratives need the greatest attention to create a successful USP for Murshidabad as a heritage destination.
- Effort should be given towards heritage conservation projects.
- Murshidabad needs to be attained the status of Heritage City of the world.

15. Border Tourism in Meghalaya



Source: Maps of India

15.1 Introduction

Meghalaya shares its border on the north and the east with Assam and on the south and the west with Bangladesh. The population is predominantly rural and few towns exist in the state. Shillong is the largest town; other urban centres, listed in descending order of population, include Tura, Mawlai, Nongthymmai and Jowai.

It is one of the most picturesque states in the country, has two national parks and three wildlife sanctuaries. It offers many adventure tourism opportunities like mountaineering, rock climbing, hiking and trekking, water sports, etc. One of the world's wettest regions is found in Meghalaya at Cherrapunji, which has an average annual precipitation of about 450 inches during monsoon season (May to September).

15.2 Tourism Development in Meghalaya

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya envisions Meghalaya as a preferred tourist destination by taking advantage of its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. Realising Tourism's potential as a key promoter for economic growth of the state, the Government of Meghalaya set general objectives to bring about responsible growth in this sector.

Those objectives include:

- To establish a holistic growth of the industry with the cooperation of the private sector/ community and other stakeholders.
- To develop an effective marketing strategy linked with regional and national initiatives through a collaborative mechanism to project a positive identity for Meghalaya in the national and international tourism markets as a unique and preferred destination.
- To strengthen the quality and attractiveness of tourism experience in Meghalaya including improvements to be brought about in the conservation of the environment.
- To identify and promote new opportunities for the future development of tourism in Meghalaya on a sustainable basis.

- To strengthen the cultural aspects of the tourism product in Meghalaya and to actively promote local participation, including community-based tourism.
- To develop a tourism plan in concurrence with the objectives of the policy.
- To ensure greater emphasis on capacity building/ training to local youth and tourism stakeholders in the State.
- To ensure acceptable service levels, training and human resource development will be provided on an ongoing basis.
- To take full advantage of the various institutes in the state like the Indian Institute of Management, Institute of Hotel Management, Martin Luther Christian University, Food Craft Institute (Tura), to develop courses and implement training in various categories of service providers.
- To make the tourism industry in Meghalaya a leader in responsible environmental practices.
- To establish a set of best practices in the tourism sector.

15.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Meghalaya and Focus District: East Khasi Hills



Mr. Cyril V. D. Diengdoh (IAS), Director- Tourism, Government of Meghalaya; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHDCCI; Ms. Varianarica Syiem (IAS), Director- Border Areas Development Department, Government of Meghalaya; Mr. T. Kabilan (IDAS), Director- North Eastern States, NITI Aayog; Mr. Alexander S. Mukhim (MCS), Additional Deputy Commissioner, I/c Sohra Civil Sub-Division- East Khasi Hills District, Government of Meghalaya; Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East; Mr. Parambir Singh Sehdev, President, Federation of Shillong Hotels; Mr. Arijit Purkayastha, Chairman- North East Chapter, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India; Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman- Tourism Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI

The webinar series on Border Tourism of Meghalaya with focus district East Khasi Hills was organized by PHDCCI on 30 July 2021. The knowledge session was introduced and moderated by Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI where he explained the background of the webinar and connected the various issues throughout the knowledge session.

Delivering the Keynote Address, Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary - Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that Border Tourism has immense potential if promoted and marketed well as it gives an opportunity to see the neighbouring countries without actually crossing the border. Campaigns like 'Dekho Apna Aur Padosi Desh' can be introduced to promote semi international travel. A national level seminar should be organized by the Ministry of Tourism with all the 18 Border States and UTs to create awareness and buzz about this segment, which will help to increase domestic as well as international tourists.

Mr. Zutshi further said that there is a huge potential for promoting Monsoon Tourism in the state as Cherrapunji is known for being the wettest place on Earth. Emphasis should also be given on Festivals and the state government should create a mega Tourism Festival on the lines of Hornbill Festival in Nagaland.

Mr. Cyril V. D. Diengdoh (IAS), Director - Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, said that the state has seen a steady growth of tourist arrivals from Bangladesh over the years with 4,300 arrivals in 2014, which went up to 13,000 in 2018. A MoU has been signed between Tour Operators Association of Meghalaya and Bangladesh Tour Operators Association to promote Mountain to Sea Tourism.

He further mentioned that the tourism department is keen to develop 'Experiential Eco Tourism' apart from Adventure Tourism, Rural Tourism and Homestays. In order to enhance the experience of tourists, the state government is following the three fundamentals - right pricing, carrying capacity and zero waste. He also informed that Meghalaya Tourism has come up with a mobile app that provides a one-stop solution to tourists who wish to plan a trip and helps in contactless check-in following the safety protocols.

Ms. Varianarica Syiem (IAS), Director - Border Areas Development Department, Government of Meghalaya, informed that there are 13 border blocks in the state and 435 recognized border villages. In order to ensure ease of movement for the tourists, several projects have been funded under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) for construction of roads, parking and wayside amenities.

Mr. T. Kabilan (IDAS), Director - North Eastern States, NITI Aayog, informed that the Government is keen on promoting Homestays in the state as that will aid off-beat, experiential tourism in addition to increasing options for the domestic and international tourists. He further said that Tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities and therefore it should be integrated in a manner that the youth in North-East Indian states do not have to move out for livelihood.

Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East, said that the region is endowed with diverse tourist attractions and each state has its own distinct features. Besides having spectacular biodiversity, wildlife, snow-capped Himalayas, tropical forests, shrines of diverse religions and prominent archaeological sites, the Northeast India provides an immense opportunity for Medical Tourism which can attract tourists from the South East Asian countries.

While giving an overview on the East Khasi Hills district, Mr. Alexander S. Mukhim (MCS), Additional Deputy Commissioner, I/c Sohra Civil Sub-Division - East Khasi Hills District, Government of Meghalaya, shared that new tourist sites are being developed in the district and the government has helped in providing support and assistance in the maintenance of these sites.

Mr. Arijit Purkayastha, Chairman - North East Chapter, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India, talked about the different aspects of tourism - cultural, natural and spiritual which offers a prospect to promote Experiential Travel in Meghalaya.

Mr. Parambir Singh Sehdev, President, Federation of Shillong Hotels, emphasized the need to improve infrastructure, connectivity in the state which will help to double the number of tourists especially from Bangladesh. He also emphasized on the need for tourism education and skill development in the border areas which will help to generate employment.

In his presidential address, Mr. Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHDCCI, mentioned that the problem of border districts and tourism development is recognized as an important challenge for local communities along the border. Although institutional environment and security barriers remain the stumbling block for entrepreneurial cooperation; conditions for Border Tourism enhancement can be enabled through the setting up of frameworks for easier cooperation of public, private and civil actors.

Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, said that Meghalaya has some of the thickest primary forests in the country and therefore constitutes one of the most important eco-tourism circuits in India. He further said that air and road connectivity, infrastructural facilities at tourist sites in terms of accommodation, transport, drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, needs to be addressed. However, all efforts to develop tourism infrastructure have to be done carefully, keeping in mind the fragility of the mountain environment.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman - Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, delivered the formal vote of thanks and mentioned that PHDCCI will come out with a White Paper after each webinar and the recommendations shall be submitted to the relevant Ministries for their immediate action.

15.3 Border Tourism in East Khasi Hills

15.3.1 Introduction

East Khasi Hills is one of the 12 districts of the state of Meghalaya. The district occupies an area of 2,748 sq. kms and it is bounded by Ri-Bhoi District on the north, Karbi Anglong District on the north east, Jaintia Hills district on the east, Bangladesh on the south and West Khasi Hills district on the west. Shillong is the district Headquarter of East Khasi Hills District as well as the state Capital. It is a hill station with unique natural scenic beauty which is an ideal resort throughout the year.

15.3.2 Tourist Places in East Khasi Hills

Shillong City

The capital city of the State as well as the District headquarters of East Khasi Hills District is one of the hill station well connected with good roads.

Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures

Located in Mawlai, it is a major tourists' spot providing a glimpse of the rich and multi-cultural lifestyles of the indigenous peoples of North East India.

Lady Hydari Park

The Park is located in the heart of the city with abundance of plants and flowers.



Lady Hydari Park

Cathedral Catholic Church

This historical monument of peace and divinity is one of the biggest cathedrals in the State.

Capt. Williamson Sangma State Museum

There are monuments of the great patriots of the state besides the statue of Indira Gandhi and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

Golf Course

Shillong Golf Course is one of the oldest and beautiful natural golf courses in the world.

Elephant Falls

Elephant falls is 12 kms on the outskirts of the city. The mountain stream descends through two successive falls set in dells of fern-covered rocks.



Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures

Ward's Lake

Ward's Lake was named after Sir William Ward, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam. This man-made lake is locally known as Nan Polok.



Ward's Lake



Elephant Falls

Shillong Peak

It is the highest peak in the state, about 10 kms from the city offering a breathtaking, panoramic view of the Shillong city and the countryside.

15.3.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in East Khasi Hills

Experiencing the Border

Border experience in Meghalaya can be done in many different ways. The three border Blocks, namely, Shella-Bholaganj, Mawsynram and Pynursla hold immense potential for Border Tourism in the District.

Dawki Integrated Check Post or Dawki border crossing is on Dawki-Tamabil and one of the few road border crossings between India and Bangladesh in West Jaintia Hills district. Overstepping to border land through Dawki could be an exciting experience as part of Border Tourism. The historical tour of boundary line famously known as Radcliff Line could be part of border interpretation. Other than that, seeing and meeting people of other border event ceremony, border haat, people to people interaction cultural mingling, all could fortify the mutual ties. To watch the border guarding activities of the BSF would also be a great step to create border awareness and strategic importance of the country among the common people.

Experiential Eco-Tourism/ Adventure Tourism

The East Khasi Hills District is mostly hilly with deep gorges and ravines on the southern portion. The most important physiographic features of the district is the Shillong Plateau interspersed with river valley, then fall sharply in the southern portion forming deep gorges and ravine in Mawsynram and Shella-Bholaganj bordering Bangladesh. Shillong peak lying 10 kms from the city, offer a panoramic view of the scenic country side and is also the highest point in the district as well as in the State. This scenic landscape altogether offers lot of opportunities for Experiential Eco-tourism and Adventure Tourism as well. Experience in the Mawlynnong village, presence of living Root Bridge, hills and waterfalls gives plenty of scope for developing ecotourism activities. Various border road trekking trail, double decker root bridge, camping, scuba diving, rafting, kayaking, zip lining are different adventure activities that could be developed around three border Blocks of East Khasi Hills.

Rural Tourism

The villages of the East Khasi Hills could be developed as part of rural tourism where distinctive tradition, cuisine and culture of the communities could be observed and experienced. The direct livelihood connection would also be created through the connection of Rural Tourism.

Cross-Border Tourism

The friendly atmosphere of Indo-Bangladesh border dynamics should be utilized to further develop cross border tourism. Several steps have already been taken such as MoU signed between Tour operator associations of Meghalaya with Bangladesh to promote North East Regional Circuit. Mountain to Sea Tourism is also an initiative between the two countries where Bhutan could also be integrated. Dhaka-Shillong 374 km Bus Service is an important step towards cross border tourism. All these initiatives need further development.

Educational Tourism

Meghalaya is famously known for its exotic and variety of Flora which could be tapped for bringing more Naturalists/ Researchers/ Scholars in the region. Floral Biodiversity of the Districts could develop Educational Tourism for botanist and natural science students.

Geo-Tourism

Cave of Meghalaya age has been discovered which is bringing tourists in the region. It could be further promoted as part of Geo-Tourism in the District and State as well.

Monsoon Tourism

Swiftly flowing streams and crystal clear rivers meander through the hilly tracts and the innumerable cascading waterfalls and the tranquil lakes are definitely a sight to behold. The whole of the district is influenced by the south-west monsoon which begins generally from May and continues till September when the waterfalls fed by the rains, the misty skies and the lush greenery makes Meghalaya live up to the name given to it the abode of clouds. In this amazing and adventurous journey through the Khasi lands, during Monsoon where there will be rain and lots of that! This experience need to be tapped as Monsoon Tourism.



Golf Tourism

Shillong Golf Course is one of the oldest and beautiful natural golf courses in the world. Different corporate travel of both India and Bangladesh and even international events can be part of Golf Tourism.

15.4.4 Challenges for Border Tourism Development in East Khasi Hills

- Pandemic Covid 19 has hit Meghalaya Tourism hard which pose a challenge to revive the tourism in areas like East Khasi Hills.
- Infrastructural Development and connectivity shortfalls in areas are also a hindrance which needs to be removed.

15.4.5 Way Forward

- East Khasi Hills District as well as the state Meghalaya should be the gateway for Bangladesh to North East India.
- East Khasi Hills need to be focused as hub of Eco and Nature Tourism.
- Aim should be to develop the place as All Season Destination.
- Adventure Tourism needs rigorous marketing and development in the district.
- David Scott trail should be promoted as an international trail.
- Festival tourism is an important component; Wangala festival should create an aura in line of Sangai Festival of Manipur and Hornbill Festival of Nagaland.
- Floral biodiversity needs proper mapping to promote educational tourism for naturalist and botanists in the region.
- Potential of Golf Tourism need to be focused.
- Various Parking lot, bio-toilet etc. developing under BADP project, more such initiatives are needed in the Border district.
- Skill training, tourism education is an important need to create good workforce in the industry.
- Ease of access required where Inner Line Permit and tourism would not go together
- Ease of last mile connectivity, motorability up to no man's land.
- Some kind of economic activity cafe restaurant resort homestay to be developed under Swadesh Darshan project in line with border tourism.
- International travel mart in north east should focus on border tourism.
- Hospitality sector has to come up with more border resort tourist destination should club with border spot as part of itinerary.
- Role of BSF for issues like crowd management, permission, code of conduct, etc. Border retreat ceremony in line with Akhaura Border in Tripura could be developed.
- Border Haats, trailing to boundary line, historical interpretation of boundary line could be designed to take Border Tourism initiative further.





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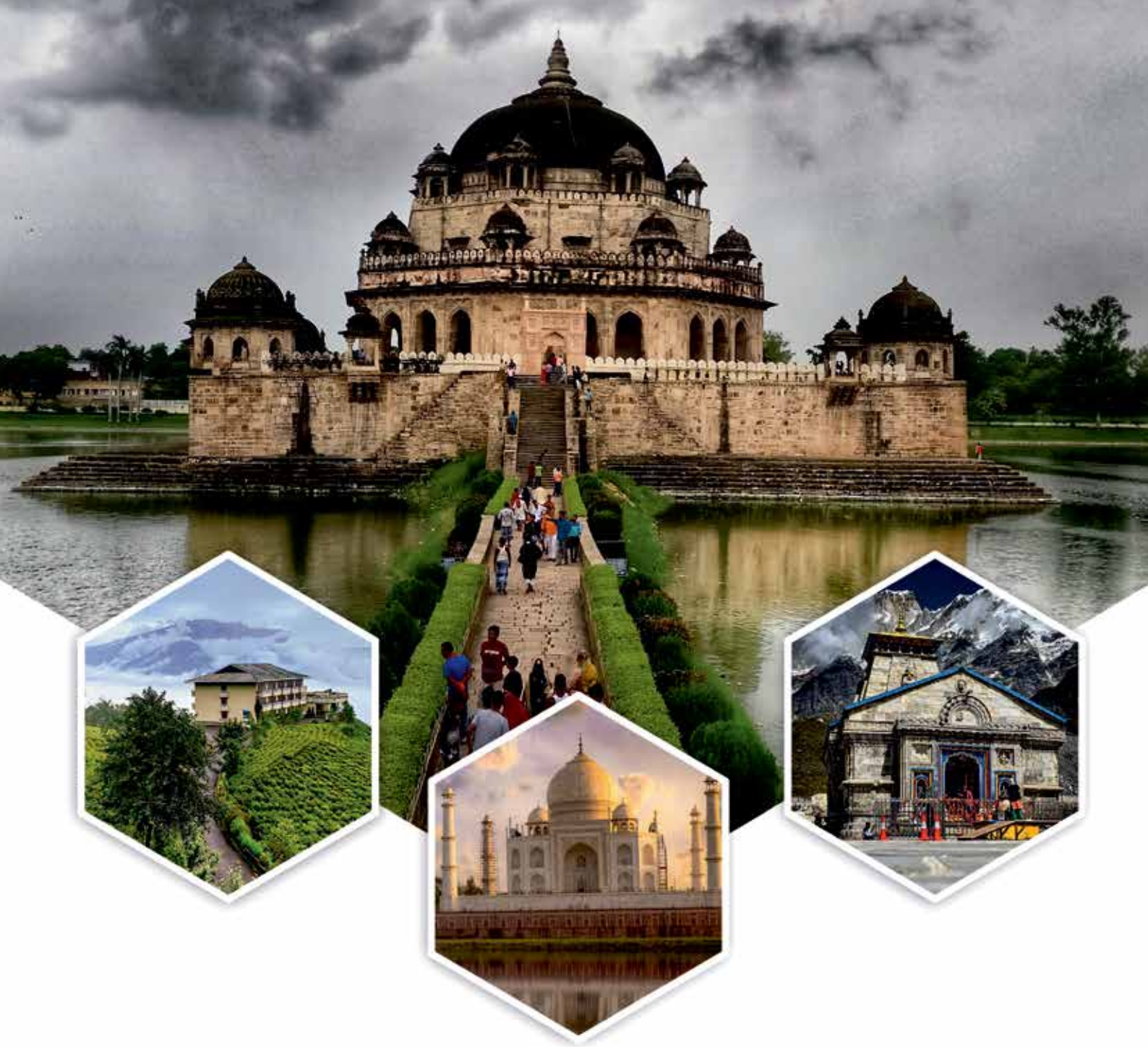
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INDO-NEPAL

BORDER TOURISM

• BIHAR • UTTAR PRADESH • UTTARAKHAND • SIKKIM





INDO - NEPAL BORDER TOURISM



PHD CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The India - Nepal border is an open international border running between India and Nepal which includes the Himalayan territories as well as Indo-Gangetic Plain. Nepal and India shares 1213 km land border and remaining 595 km is river boundary.

Nepal shares border with 5 Indian states - Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar. Nepal is right in the middle of India's 'Himalayan frontiers' and along with Bhutan it acts as northern 'borderland' flanks and acts as buffer states against any possible aggression from China. Many Hindu and Buddhist religious sites are in Nepal making it an important pilgrim site for large number of Indians.

Internal Security is a major concern for India; Indo-Nepal border is virtually open and lightly policed which is exploited by terrorist outfits and insurgent groups from North Eastern part of India e.g. supply of trained cadres, fake Indian currency. However, Nepal and India have always shared a unique relationship in the world and their friendship and cooperation characterized by open border, free and unhindered movement of people across the border, similar culture and traditions, deep rooted people to people relationship.

The knowledge sessions on Highlighting the Potential of Tourism in the Border States/ UTs with focus states Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Sikkim have explored the possibilities of developing Border Tourism in border districts of these states in line with the unique thread that connects India with Nepal.

16. Border Tourism in Bihar



Source: Maps of India

16.1 Introduction

Bihar is located in the eastern part of India. The state is surrounded by Nepal in the north, West Bengal in the east, Uttar Pradesh in the west and Jharkhand in the south. The state enjoys a unique location specific advantage because of its proximity to the vast markets of eastern and northern India, access to ports such as Kolkata and Haldia and to raw material sources and mineral reserves from the neighboring states. Bihar is one of the strongest agricultural states. The state has a large base of cost-effective industrial labour, making it an ideal destination for a wide range of industries. In March 2021, the Union Aviation Ministry announced that the Darbhanga Airport in Bihar is being expanded under the UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme.

16.2 Tourism Development in Bihar

Bihar draws its name from the word 'vihara' or monastery and was the early home of Buddhism. Steeped in history and religion, the state's wealth of religious and historical monuments has, in one way or another, defined tourism in the state. Bihar's great competitive strength from tourism point of view is its ancient and yet living civilization that gave rise to two of world's great religions namely Buddhism and Jainism.

Bihar was the nerve centre of religious activities of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and Islam. Endowed with a rich cultural and religious heritage, Bihar was a seat of power of the vast and powerful Magadh Empire, whose might had checked further onslaught of Alexander the Great. This is a land of ancient universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila, the seat of higher learning, which spread knowledge far and wide through its students coming from different countries of the world. The remnants of these two ancient universities, the antiques and artifacts are already attracting tourists.

The Travelogues of the Chinese travellers Huen Tsang and Fa-Hien describe historical splendor of Bihar, which offers much to tourists irrespective of their age and class. Bihar's contact with other civilizations is reflected in the rich cultural diversity of its people, traditions, customs, religious practices and festivals, architecture and art and craft. A trip to the state offers revelations in history, architecture, yoga, eco-tourism, fairs and festivals, art and crafts besides a unique cuisine. In 2019, foreign and domestic tourist arrival reached 1.093 million and 33.99 million, respectively.

16.2.1 The key competitive opportunities before Bihar are:

- Develop its strength as a major religious destination attracting tourists of diverse religious beliefs
- Promote the Buddhist circuit to attract Buddhists from a number of countries

- Leverage its rich cultural history to increase its share of the huge international travel market
- Harness the huge potential of promoting rural tourism revolving around its rich tradition of art, craft and handloom
- Leverage its strength in yoga to develop well-being centers to attract a sizeable number of international and domestic tourists

16.2.2 Tourism Development Key Objectives:

- Position tourism as state priority.
- Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth.
- Promote Bihar for cultural, religious and wellness tourism.
- Improve the efficiency of the industry, for enhanced social and economic benefit, and consequential increased economic benefits, including increased employment generation.
- Ensure the participation of all the stakeholders in society, including the travel trade and tourism industry.
- Create world class infrastructure.
- Plan and implement a professionally managed integrated communications strategy to be called the Tourism Awareness and Promotion Campaign.
- Provide quality services to all domestic & international consumers and stakeholders.
- Improving connectivity of important tourist sites.

16.2.3 Strategy for Development:

- Establishment of Tourist Security Force
- Preparing and implementing Master Plans for Integrated Development and Marketing of Identified Circuits
- Upgrading and Augmenting of Accommodation, Catering and Recreational Facilities
- Augmenting Connectivity and Transport Facilities by Improving and Expanding Tourism Products to meet new market requirements
- Establishing and Strengthening Institutions for the Development of Human Resources
- Effective Marketing of Destinations both in the Domestic and International Market
- Focus on Domestic Tourism and Regional Tourism/Cooperation
- Promotion of Arts, Crafts, Festivals and Cuisine of the State

Source: Bihar Tourism Policy 2009

16.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Bihar and Focus District: Sitamarhi



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Ms. Rupinder Brar (IRS), Additional Director General- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Debjit Dutta, Chairman- West Bengal Chapter, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Darshan Dudhoria, Co-Owner, Bari Kothi Azimganj; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair- Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI



The Knowledge Session on Border Tourism in Bihar with focus district Sitamarhi was organized by PHDCCI on 7 September 2021. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Jatinder Singh, Director, PHDCCI and received participation from senior government officials, tour operators, hoteliers, tour guides, airline professionals, travel and hospitality associations, students from the tourism and hospitality institutes.

In his welcome address, Mr. Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI, mentioned that Bihar has wide range of tourism attractions in the form of Religious Circuits, Heritage Circuits, Eco Circuits. The Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar has to work diligently to achieve its rightful place on the world tourism map, which has not been utilized to the fullest so far.

Mr. Anil Parashar, Chairman éTourism Committee, PHDCCI, said that among all other Indian states, Bihar is most intimately linked to the life of Buddha, resulting in a trail of pilgrimages which have come to be known as the Buddhist Circuit. Efforts should be taken to market this circuit and promote domestic tourism to the state.

Mr. Satyajit Kumar Singh, Chair éBihar Chapter, PHDCCI, mentioned the border tourism is a critical factor for the economy of Bihar. Focusing upon the role of Sitamarhi as a significant point for Ramayana circuit of Religious Heritage Tourism, he stressed on the need for the formation of the Task Force for Bihar to take the Border Tourism project further.

Mr. Taranjot Singh (IAS), Deputy Development Commissioner éSitamarhi District, Government of Bihar, highlighted the tourist places and said that Sitamarhi district has huge potential for Religious Tourism as it forms an integral part of the Ramayana Circuit. The Government should tie up with private stakeholders to create a complete tourist package for increasing the number of tourists to the state while uplifting the socio-economic status of the local people. He further mentioned that a lot of work is being done to improve the connectivity; however, there is still a huge scope for development in terms of enhancing basic amenities, infrastructure, tourist lodges, meeting halls, etc.

Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant, NITI Aayog, said that the tourism aspects of the border districts of India are phenomenal. Sitamarhi district is like a 'Punya Bhoomi' and shall be visited by thousands of tourists under the Ramayana Circuit. Bihar also has significant number of tribal population which is another USP. The state government can tie up with Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED) for marketing the end to end products made by the tribals which can create excellent livelihood opportunities for them while showcasing their talent.

Sharing details on the initiatives taken by the tourism department, Mr. Pushkar Srivastava, Event Management Expert é Tourism, Government of Bihar, informed that they have come up with the concept of opening 'Dhabas' on all state and national highways. A 'Dhaba' complex will be constructed connecting tourist places such as Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Bagha National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, Sitamarhi, Kaimur, among other places. Each complex will have quality eateries, restaurants, medical shop, parks, apart from basic amenities such as clean toilets. This will bring a significant volume of tourists to the Sitamarhi district and basic amenities in the area will flourish as well.

Mr. Lajpat Rai, Chairman and Managing Director, Lotus Trans Travel, said that the tourism department should encourage the locals first to see their own state as many people have not even visited the popular Bodhgaya yet. Initiatives shall be taken to showcase Bihar to the Biharis first, followed by tourists from neighboring states followed by foreign tourists.

He further stated that Bihar has huge potential for Buddhist Circuit since more than 600 million people follow Buddhism and another 100 million people follow 'New Buddhism', hence around 700 million people are already in queue as potential visitors.

Mr. Manvir Singh Thakur, General Manager, Oaks Bodhgaya, mentioned that their vision is to establish a connective infrastructure across the major Buddhist sites in and around Bihar. Even after having an international airport, there are only a few flights that are connected with international destinations. Same is with railways; there is a lot of room for growth in establishing direct rail connectivity across places like Rajgir and Kushinagar.

Highlighting the potential of the tourism sector in Bihar, Mr. Sanjay Sharma, Founder President, Tourism Association of Bihar, said that Bihar is a multi-faceted destination and has potential for not only Religious Tourism but also for MICE and leisure. Over the years the connectivity has improved a lot in the state. Districts that used to be affected badly during floods are now approachable and can be visited during monsoons as well. He also informed that the tourism department has appointed KPMG to create a roadmap for the development of tourism in the state.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chairman éTourism Committee, PHDCCI has given formal Vote of Thanks in the end of the session where he also mentioned about the learning curve that the Border Tourism project has on offer and indicated the significance of Sitamarhi as a strategic destination of Ramayana route where Sitamarhi can actually be connected to Colombo in Sri Lanka as a cross border tourism circuit.



16.4 Border Tourism in Sitamarhi

16.4.1 Introduction

Sitamarhi district came into existence on 11 December 1972 after it was separated from the present Muzaffarpur district. Sitamarhi is situated in the northern part of Bihar. The district is popularly known as the 'Land of Goddess Sita'. Sitamarhi district is bounded by Nepal on the north, Muzaffarpur on the south, by the districts Darbhanga and Madhubani on the east and on the west by the districts East Champaran and Sheohar. The important rivers flowing through the district are Bagmati, Lakhandei, Adhwara. The district headquarters was shifted here after the town of Sitamarhi was devastated in one of the worst ever earthquakes in January 1934.

Major Industries of the District include Sugar factory, rice mills, oil mills. There is a large scale industry known as Bihar State Warehousing is situated in the district. Sitamarhi has scope to develop food processing industry due to its rich agricultural produce. The land use around Sitamarhi is mainly agricultural. The district has a very rich and fertile land which is favourable for agriculture. Paddy, wheat, maize, lentils are the main crops of the district.

16.4.2 Tourist Places in Sitamarhi

Janaki Temple

About 1.5 kms off the railway station, this is the birth place of Sita. Janaki-Kund is adjacent to the south of the temple.



Janaki Temple at Sitamarhi

Panth-Pakar

It is 8 kms north-east of Sitamarhi. It is said that after her marriage, Sita was carried in a palanquin to Ayodhya by this route. An old Banyan tree is still standing here under which she is said to have rested for a while.

Bagahi Math

Some 7 kms north-west of Sitamarhi, in Bagahi village, there is a big Hindu monastery which contains 108 rooms. This is a famous place for worship and performing Yajna.

Pupri

There is a famous Baba Nageshwarnath (Lord Shiva) temple here. It is said that Lord Shiva had himself appeared as Nageshwar nath Mahadeo.

Goraul Sharif

It is situated some 26 kms from Sitamarhi town. This is a very sacred place for Muslims, after Bihar Sharif and Phulwarisharif in Bihar.

Deokuli (or Dhekuli)

It is 19 kms west of Sitamarhi town. An ancient Shiva temple is situated here. A big fair takes place every year on the eve of Shivaratri. Legends have it that Draupadi, the wife of five Pandavas was born here. Now it lies in Sheohar district, carved out of Sitamarhi in 1994.

Haleshwar Sthan

This is 3 kms north-west of Sitamarhi. As the myth goes, King Videha had founded a temple of Lord Shiva on the occasion of Putra Yeshti Yajna. His temple was named as Haleshwarnath temple.



Haleshwar Sthan



16.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Sitamarhi

Religious Tourism

The temple of Janaki, contains three stone figures with eyes of mother of pearl which represent Rama, Sita and Lakshman. It is said that Raja Janak excavated a tank at the place where Sita sprang to life and after her marriage set up the figures of Rama, Sita and Lakshman to mark the site. This tank is known as the Janaki-kund just to the south of the Janaki Mandir. Vivah Panchmi and Ram Navami, commemorating the marriage of Sita to Rama and the birth of Ram respectively are celebrated at Sitamarhi with great élan. A cattle fair is also organized on this occasion.

On these two occasions the congregation is regaled with stories about the adventures of Rama who had conquered Lanka and killed the demon king Ravana. Religious dramas and dances depicting episodes from Rama's life, known as Ramleela are organized. All these sites and occasions hold immense potential for developing systematic religious tourism product in Sitamarhi.

Cross-Border Tourism

In line with its religious heritage it has been observed that a majority of pilgrims come from Janakpur, Nepal to Sitamarhi in their religious sojourn. Based on that trail a more organized and systematic cross border religious circuit can be developed which can even connect to other strategic destinations like Ayodhya and even go further down to Colombo in Sri Lanka. Thus, Sitamarhi can be a strategic destination for cross border tourism related to Ramayana route.

Tribal Tourism

There is a good representation of tribal populations found in the District Sitamarhi which needs further focus to develop Tribal Tourism in the District. Tribal culture, lives, arts and crafts could be potential resources for designing Tribal Tourism product in the destination.

National Heritage Tourism

More historical research and documentation required where Sitamarhi can be projected as a significant destination as part of National Heritage of India. In the 75th anniversary time of India's Independence, it has become all the more important to uncover the hitherto unknown tales of the heroes of Sitamarhi who were part of India's freedom struggle and to connect the District as part of Freedom trail of other Border Destination of India.



16.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Sitamarhi

- Border Tourism cooperation as far as Bihar is concerned is critical factor for Bihar's economy.
- There is a gross lack of connectivity, infrastructural development, promotion and branding in tourism areas of Bihar in general.
- Sitamarhi is a distant area.
- Bithamre Indo-Nepal Border road needs to be improved.
- Integration of local population to create tourism security and safety is one of the critical issues of the area.

16.4.5 Way Forward

- Bihar is famous for religious and ecotourism. Sitamarhi is going to be the root for Ayodhya network also which requires greater focus for development.
- The religious significance of Sitamarhi needs greater projection in national and international tourism aspect by including it to Ramayana circuit.
- PHDCCI should create a Task Force for Bihar so that it can work to create a project on how to scale the tourism activities in Sitamarhi.
- NH 227 connects Sitamarhi to Bitamore which connects various cities of Uttar Pradesh to Ayodhya. The interstate religious circuit could be developed by augmenting this connectivity.
- Sitamarhi has significance as part of National Heritage of Freedom struggle; highlighting the Heroes of Sitamarhi needs special focus.
- Sitamarhi has good representation of tribal population.
- Providing skills set to tribal community could be helpful to develop tribal Tourism product.

- Rural/ Tribal Tourism initiative could be an excellent livelihood opportunity for Sitamarhi.
- The template used in Aspirational District Programme could be replicated in developing tourism in the District.
- Promotion of religious festival of the area as well as conducting tourism related festival need to be organized.
- Cross border religious tourism circuit connecting Janakpur and Sitamarhi needs to be created.
- Proper tour package is required where not only religious tourism product but also other attractions would be incorporated.
- Infrastructure development is a top priority: guest house in punoura dham, amenities shops of local products are required around the attraction areas of the destination.
- Ministry of Textile for training locals' aplic terracotta and get them market linkage with tourist spots. Local handicraft of Mithila region.
- In general throughout the State tourism branding and promotion need greater emphasis.
- Digital marketing as religious tourism, Dhaba Policy with be a unique concept for connectivity with amenities.
- Light and sound show theatre event of life event can be showcased.
- Heli service Varanasi to Bodhgaya is required.
- Bihar Tourism needs to connect well with the entire strategic destination.
- Connectivity between Ayodhya and Sitamarhi two birth places of Rama and Sita needs bigger focus.
- Destination for MICE can also be thought in pilgrimage destinations.
- Government need to facilitate the process by setting timeline.
- Collaborative approaches need foremost.



17. Border Tourism in Uttar Pradesh



Source: Maps of India

17.1 Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India with a population of nearly 200 million people. Uttar Pradesh shares its borders with Nepal on the north, the Indian states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh on the north-west, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan on the west, Madhya Pradesh on the south, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand on the south-east and Bihar on the east.

Uttar Pradesh is the largest producer of food grains in India and accounted for about 17.83% share in the country's total food grain output in 2016-17. Uttar Pradesh is a favored tourist destination in India with Taj Mahal, one of the eight Wonders of the World, located in Agra. In 2019, domestic tourist arrivals in the state reached 535.8 million. Foreign tourist arrivals crossed over 4.74 million (Source: IBEF Uttar Pradesh 2021).

17.2 Tourism Development in Uttar Pradesh

The Uttar Pradesh Tourism is envisioning the State as a preferred tourism destination in India which aims to achieve country's highest tourist arrivals and tourism receipts, driving employment generation and ensuring best visitor experience. In this regard the Mission of Tourism Policy (2018) states: 'To drive a sense of inclusive tourism development in the local community of Uttar Pradesh and make optimum use of the tourism experiences across vibrant cities, attractions, nature, wildlife, adventure, food, handicraft, (including the promotion of One District One Product Scheme) heritage, religion and culture of Uttar Pradesh.'

In order to strategize the policy vision, the following steps have been outlined:

- Strengthening tourism infrastructure
- Promoting investment and employment generation
- Augmenting brand Uttar Pradesh
- Promoting Theme Based Tourism
- Sustainable Tourism through community growth and up-gradation of local skills

Table 17.2.1 Tourism Circuits of Uttar Pradesh

The Buddhist Circuit	Kapilavastu, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Kaushambi, Shravasti, Sankisa
The Ramayana Circuit	Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Shringverpur
The Adhyatmik Circuit	Gorakhpur, Balarampur, Ghazipur (Hathiyaram, Bhudkura), Goriya (Mathura), Sant Ravidas Sthal & Kabir Chaura (Varanasi)
Wildlife & Eco Tourism Circuit	Dudhwa, Pilibhit, Katarniaghat
The Krishna/ Braj Circuit	Mathura, Vrindavan, Goverdhan, Gokul, Barsana, Nandgaon
The Shakti Peeth Circuit	Vidhyavasini Devi (Vindhyachal), Pateshwari Devi Devipatan (Balarampur), Vishalakshi Devi (Varanasi), Kadavasini (Kaushambi), Alopi Devi (Allahabad), Lalita Devi (Naimisharanya), Jwala Devi (Shonbradra), Shakumbhari Devi (Saharanpur), Shivani Devi (Chitrakoot), Kaatyayani Devi (Mathura)
The Bundelkhand Circuit	Chakhari (Mahoba), Kalinjar, Jhansi, Deogarh, Lalitpur
The Mahabharat Circuit	Hastinapur (Meerut), Kampilya (Farukhabad), Ahichhtra (Bareilly), Baranava (Baghpet), Mathura, Kaushambi, Gonda
The Jain Circuit	Deogarh, Hastinapur (Meerut), Vahelna (Muzaffarnagar), Baghpet, Varanasi, Bateshwar, Kampil (Farukhabad), Ahichhatra (Bareilly), Kaushambi, Ayodhya (Faizabad)
The Sufi/ Kabir Circuit	Jayas (Amethi), Maghar (Sant Kabir Nagar), Salim Chisti Dargah (Fatehpur Sikri), Dewa Sharif (Barabanki)

Theme Based Tourism Product Offerings:

- Religious Tourism
- Cultural Tourism
- Heritage Tourism
- Eco Tourism
- Wellness Tourism
- MICE Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Craft Handloom and Textile Tourism

17.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Uttar Pradesh and Focus District: Shravasti



Mr. Mukesh Kumar Meshram (IAS), Principal Secretary - Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh; Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant- Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Mr. Sunil C. Gupta, Chairman - Northern Region, Indian Association of Tour Operators; Mr. Vivek Pandey, President, Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI.

The border tourism in Uttar Pradesh with focus district Shravasti was the second last of the webinar series on Border Tourism in India organized by PHDCCI on 11 February 2022. Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI gave background of the webinar and moderated the whole knowledge session.

Mr. Mukesh Kumar Meshram (IAS), Principal Secretary - Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh, shared the details of tourism products of Uttar Pradesh and also invited the private stakeholders to join hands with the Government and invest in the state. He further mentioned that the state has identified 12 major tourist destinations which will be developed in the coming years.

Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant - Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, informed that Shravasti district has done quite well in terms of improving various indicators relating to socio-economic development such as health and nutrition, education and basic infrastructure. Many of these indicators are directly linked to tourism development like hygiene, sanitation and drinking water facilities.

Mr. Sunil C. Gupta, Chairman - Northern Region, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has explained how Border Tourism could be a sustainable tourism for Uttar Pradesh attracting inbound tourists from the neighbouring countries. He has focused on various issues that pose challenges to the development of Shravasti as a tourist destination.

Mr. Vivek Pandey, President, Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP), in his insightful remarks stated the about the factors hinder the development of tourism within the state and how the post pandemic tourism needs to move toward domestic population in order to have a steady tourist influx. His focus was how to make tourism as a strategic business unit taking society in its concern.

The session was concluded by the formal Vote of Thanks given by Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI.

17.4 Border Tourism in Shravasti

17.4.1 Introduction

The district Shravasti is one of the new districts of Uttar Pradesh carved out from the district Bahraich. Bhinga is district headquarters of Shravasti, a city of ancient India, was one of the six largest cities in India during Gautama Buddha's lifetime. According to the Mahabharata, the origin of Shravasti lies with the legendary King Shravasta.

Shravasti is surrounded by Nepal in north, District Bahraich and Gonda in the south, district Bahraich in west and Balrampur district in the east. The District is divided into two parts, Tarai area in the north and Basin of Rapti River, which is also called 'Uparhar'. There are costly and useful woods found and 'Tharu' scheduled tribes are resided in this area.

17.4.2 Tourist Places in Shravasti

Sahet (Jetavana)

Ruins at Sahet, which are supposed to represent Jetavana area spread within an irregular enclosure. Archaeological excavations conducted at regular intervals since 1863 have brought to light plinths and foundations of numerous Buddhist structures including stupas, monasteries and temples. Most of the earliest structures at the site date from 1st century A.D, i.e. Kushan period, many of them rebuilt or renovated in later times.



Ruins at Sahet

Mahet (The Shravasti City)

Located on the back of the river Archiravati (Rapti), the city of Shravasti had a high earthen rampart with a brick wall running along a circuit of 5.23 km and pierced by several gates distinguished by high bastions. Four main gates are known as Imli Darwaza, Rajgarh Darwaza, Naushahra Darwaza and Kand Bhari Darwaza. The remains within the city area include Buddhist, Brahminical and Jain Structures and a few medieval tombs. The most significant structures among them are Temple of Shobhnath, Pakki-Kuti and Kacchi-Kuti.

Shravasti Stupas

Located on the banks of Rapti River, Shravasti is a place which gives an interesting insight into the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha. In ancient days it was the capital city of Kosala Kingdom and was a major religious site for Buddha's disciples. Home to several stupas like Anathapindika's stupa, Angulimala's stupa, Jain Tirthankara's temple and Stupa of Twin Miracle, Shravasti is still unexplored and that adds a unique charm to it. In addition to these stupas, there is Jetavana Monastery which attracts lots of devotees and tourists alike. People do practice meditation at Buddha's hut (Gandhakuti) and under the Anandabodhi Tree.

Angulimal Stupa

One of the major landmarks in Shravasti, Angulimar Stupa is also called Pakki Kuti. It is named after the dreaded dacoit who would wear a necklace of fingers that were chopped-off from his victims. One day, he tried to kill his own mother in a fit of rage. It was then that Sakyamuni arrived and his wise words enlightened the dacoit, who then decided to abandon his evil ways and pursue the path shown by the sage. Barely a kilometer away lie the ruins of an ancient Jain Temple, believed to be the birthplace of Swayambhunatha, the third Jain Tirthankar.



Angulimal Stupa

Vibhuti Nath Temple

During 'Sawan' millions of devotee visits the temple for offering their prayer to lord Shiva.

Suhaildev Wildlife Sanctuary

Situated on the International Border, this sanctuary is situated near an important Buddhist circuit and a number of foreign Buddhist tourists visit Shravasti.



Suhaildev Wildlife Sanctuary

Vipassana Meditation Centre

This centre is highly recommended for those who wish to learn meditation, as well as the experienced meditators.

17.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Shravasti

Cross Border Heritage Tourism

Shravasti is the places where Lord Buddha had spent most of his lifetime and had delivered his teaching. Thus Shravasti is intimately connected with the life and living of Lord Buddha. The District is one of the top ten destinations identified by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to attract foreign tourists in the State. In this context, the heritage sites of Shravasti needs proper augmentation. Connecting all major Buddhist sites of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar can give a bigger impetus to bring not only Buddhist pilgrims of other countries but also other tourists interested in Jain and Buddhist heritage sites of India.

Nature Based Tourism/ Wildlife Tourism

Situated on the International Border Suhaildev Wildlife Sanctuary is a strip of land, approximately, 120 kms long from the east to west and 6-8 kms wide. In the north are the jungles of Nepal and together they form a situational unit. The wild life sanctuary encompasses Tulsipur, Barhawa, Bankatwa, Eastern Suhailwa and Western Suhailwa Range and the Buffer Zone covers Bhaabar and Rampur Range. These natural forests have a vast natural wealth and bio-diversity.

The Suhaildev Wild Life Sanctuary is situated near an important Buddhist circuit and a number of foreign Buddhist tourists visit Shravasti, an important Buddhist holy place on the southern border of the sanctuary. It is from Shravasti that the Buddhist tourists move on to the other holy places on the circuit viz, Kapilvastu, Lumbini and Kushinagar. By promoting the location as cross border destination for wildlife tourism can be promoted.

Ethnic Tourism

The unique feature of the Suhaildev Wildlife Sanctuary is the presence of the Tharu Tribe. The Tharu tribe having mongoloid features have been residents of this area since long and are wholly dependent on the forest land for their survival and livelihood. This aspect can be part of Ethnic Tourism of Border Tourism Circuit of the District.

Holistic Tourism Itineraries

It can also be a product of tourism in Shravasti by connecting it with Balarampur and Baharaich. Different innovative itineraries could be developed optimizing the potential tourism attractions of these places.

17.4.4 Challenges for Development of Border Tourism in Shravasti

- Buddhist tourist circuit Shravasti to Lumbini road connectivity needs to be improved.
- Lack of good local guide, language speaking, monument sites management required.
- Existence of fake monks, fake guides, beggars cheat tourist which needs local administration intervention.
- Shravasti to Nepal border road connection lack international standard paid toilet and café
- Outdated website of Shravasti.
- Lack of toilet at monument is a major challenge.
- Lack of street lighting; apparently no light at night.
- Devotees pilgrimage want to offer flower which is prevented that gives negative impact.
- Lucknow via Bahraich Rupaiddiha can be connected with Shravasti border tourism map.

17.4.5 Way Forward

- Shravasti needs to be highlighted along with five other places associated with Lord Buddha: Sarnath, Kushinagar, Kaushambi, Sankisa and Kapilavastu.
- Buddhist tourist circuit Shravasti to Lumbini road connectivity needs to be improved Shravasti to Varanasi also need improvement.
- Good local guide, language speaking, monument sites management required.
- Local administrative intervention required to remove fake monks, fake guides who cheat tourists.
- Shravasti to Nepal border international standard paid toilet and café is important to establish.
- Shravasti websites outdated which needs updation.
- Monument gets closed at sunset. Light and sound show at heritage sites required to enhance visitor experience.
- Toilets at monument sites are the most required.
- Street lighting required as apparently no light at night.
- Pilgrimage devotees want to offer flower which is prevented that gives negative impact which needs mitigation.
- Balarampur, Bahraich and Shravasti can be combined for tourism destination as aspirational districts to provide good livelihood opportunity.
- Border tourism comes from neighbouring states and then outside India, thus interstate and international tourism connectivity needs to be enhanced.
- Tourism should operate as strategic business unit combining tourism product tourist of adjoining states.
- Product awareness is required for parallel and vertical growth.
- Continuous movement of inter-state tourist flow needs to be smooth.
- Development of lesser known destination and focus on unexplored product is important in post pandemic tourism scenario.
- Focus on domestic tourism market of other states is of paramount importance.
- Systematic gap identification, in the form of recommendation and suggestions to be offered to the Department of Tourism for better branding and promotional performance.
- Various fiscal and non-fiscal subsidy needs to be channelized properly for different destinations.

18. Border Tourism in Uttarakhand



Source: Maps of India

18.1 Introduction

Uttarakhand often referred to as the Devbhumi due to the many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state lies in the northern part of India. The state is known for its natural beauty of the Himalayas, the Bhabhar and the Terai. The state has proximity to the national capital, Delhi and excellent connectivity with neighboring states. Uttarakhand has abundant natural resources due to hills and forests. Its agro-climatic conditions support horticulture-based industries. The vast water pilgrimages available in the state are also favorable for hydropower. The presence of several hill stations, wildlife parks, pilgrimage places and trekking routes make Uttarakhand an attractive tourist destination. In 2019, domestic tourist arrivals in the state was 37.58 million, while foreign tourist arrivals crossed over 0.15 million.

18.2 Tourism Development in Uttarakhand

The Tourism of Uttarakhand aspires to make the State as a global tourist destination that is safe, sustainable and by which includes world class tourism products and services and could unleash true tourism potential of the State.

The objectives of the Uttarakhand Tourism Policy 2018 are:

- To develop and strengthen the image of Uttarakhand as a safe and tourist friendly destination.
- To create and develop new tourism destinations and unique tourism products offering unmatched experience catering to various tourist segments.
- To ensure necessary basic amenities at all tourist destinations like- parking, toilets, signages at strategic locations, ATMs, dispensaries, ticketing counters, internet and telecom facilities etc.

- To promote and develop Uttarakhand State as a wellness hub and promoting medical tourism based packages.
- To promote and develop Uttarakhand as winter tourism & Alpine tourism destination which will solve the issue of short tourist season of the state. These destinations will be specially promoted after Char Dham Yatra.
- Promote inclusive tourism strategies through community based tourism ensuring equitable distribution of benefits to the local communities.
- Making disaster resilient tourism infrastructure & establish SoPs to reduce adverse effects of disaster on tourists.
- To promote balanced regional development through hub and spoke model and to resolve the carrying capacity issues of prominent tourist destinations.
- To promote and support entrepreneurship through tourism incubators, start-ups and Skilling Centre etc.
- To enhance ease of doing business (investor facilitation) by strengthening single window clearance process for faster approvals of tourism entities k.
- To ensure the involvement of other State and Central Government Ministries/ Departments to leverage their strengths and schemes (e.g. Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, AMRUT, Swachh Bharat Mission, Wellness Centre under Ayushman Bharat Scheme, Start-Up India, Hunar Se Rozgar etc.) for improvement of tourism infrastructure in the state.

Table 18.2.1: Theme-wise Major Destinations of Uttarakhand

Themes	Major Destinations
Adventure	Rafting- Shivpuri, Tons, Kali; Skiing - Auli, Dayara, Khaliya Top; Trekking - Gangotri Kalindi Khal, Badrinath, Devariyatal, Chandershila, Govindghat - Ghangariya, Valley of Flowers, Almora - Jageshwar, Binsar, Bedni Bugyal, Chopta, Pindari Glacier Trek, Milam Glacier Trek, Om Parvat- Aadi Kailash etc. Aero Sports: Helium & Hot Air Balloons/ Blimps - Pithoragarh, Naukuchiyatal, Tehri, Bedni Bugyal, Chopta etc. Mountain Biking- Nainital, Mussoorie, Almora etc.
Pilgrimage, Cultural & Festivals	Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Jageshwar, Baijnath, Piran Kaliyar, Hemkund Sahib, Nanda Devi, Chota Kailash, Patal Bhuvaneshwar, Nanakmatta, Panch Prayag, Panch Kedar, Panch Badri, Nanda Rajjat Yatra, Uttarayani Mela, Kumbh Mela, Ramman Festival etc.
Wildlife & Bird Sanctuaries	Jim Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kedarnath Musk Deer Sanctuary, Nanda Devi National Park, Askot Musk Deer Sanctuary, Neel Dhara Pakshi Vihar, Benog Wildlife Sanctuary, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, Gangotri National Park, Kedarnath Sanctuary etc.
Nature and Landscape	Mussoorie, Nainital, Chakrata, Dhanaulti, Almora, Kausani, Lansdowne, Mukteshwar, Ranikhet, Khirsu, Chaukauri, Pithoragarh etc.
Health, Rejuvenation & Medical	Rishikesh, Haridwar, Tapovan, Dehradun, Haldwani etc.
Eco/ Rural Tourism	Mana, Chopta, Chakrata, Deoriyatal, Pallyu, Shaukiyathal, Bageshwar, and Munyari, Dodital, Dayara Bugyal, Kanatal, Sattal, Chaiinsheel, Mori etc.
Water sports, Cruise, Yachts	Tehri Dam Reservoir, Nainital, Nanaksagar, Baur Jalashaya, Naukuchiyatal, Bhimtal, Sattal, Maneri etc.
MICE	Dehradun, Nainital, Haridwar, Rishikesh
Buddhist	Rock Edict Kalsi Dehradun, Govisairn (Kashipur)
Heritage Tourism	Narendranagar (Tehri), Gujargarhi (Pauri), Uppugarhi (Tehri), Pithoragarh Fort (Pithoragarh), Chandpurgarhi (Chamoli), Vairat Kila (Chakrata), Katarmal Sun Temple (Almora), Devalgarh (Pauri), Nelong Valley (Uttarkashi) etc.
Ropeways and Funicular	Auli, Haridwar, Ranibagh, Dehradun, Mussoorie, Jankichatti, Yamunotri, Govindghat, Ghangaria Gaurikund, Kedarnath, Hemkund Sahib etc.

18.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Uttarakhand and Focus District: Udham Singh Nagar



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India; Mr. Yugal Kishore Pant (IAS), District Magistrate - Udham Singh Nagar, Govt. of Uttarakhand; Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser - Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Hemant Kochar, Chair - Uttarakhand Chapter, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

The Knowledge Session on Border Tourism in Uttarakhand with focus district Udham Singh Nagar was organized by PHDCCI on 7 January 2022. Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI gave the introductory speech and moderated the whole session.

Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI gave the welcome remarks in his presidential address as well as a brief introduction about PHDCCI.

Mr. Vinod Zutshi (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that visiting the Border States provide a culturally and historically rich experience. In the light of the fragile nature of Uttarakhand's environment, it is crucial to promote Sustainable Tourism by adopting measures such as regulation of footfalls, having a robust Disaster Management System ready to act. The state government should also look at developing alternative tourist attractions and promote 'Winter Sports' activities which states like Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir has started.

Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser - Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, informed that Udham Singh Nagar over the past few years has shown significant growth across its different socio-economic indicators. However, with this growth it is crucial to focus on Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Tourism given the past incidents in the region. The road connectivity of Uttarakhand from the National Capital Region is great and with the new concepts of staycations, the tourism in the region can be further enhanced through homestays.

Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, mentioned that popularly known as Devbhoomi or the Land of Gods, Uttarakhand has several well-known destinations like Nainital, Mussoorie, Corbett National Park, Auli and pilgrimage sites like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Rishikesh and Haridwar. It receives tourists from across the globe who visits this great land in the search of physical, mental and spiritual healing.

Mr. Hemant Kochar, Chair - Uttarakhand Chapter, PHDCCI, mentioned that many Border States allow cultural intermingling through Border Tourism. However, there is a stark need for more engaging forms of tourism to which many private players

will also be able to contribute. Uttarakhand has over the years shown immense growth in its connectivity infrastructure thus becoming a hub for spiritual travellers.

Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, mentioned how Uttarakhand being a Devbhumi could be an important place for peace and wellness tourism.

18.4 Border Tourism in Udham Singh Nagar

18.4.1 Introduction

District Udham Singh Nagar was created on 29th September 1997 by carving out tarai belt of district Nainital. It is named after the famous martyr Udham Singh. The extensive archaeological remains discovered in the vicinity of the village of Ujhain, about 1.6 km to the east of the town of Kashipur, indicate that this locality must have been an important and flourishing cultural as well as political centre during the first millennium prior to the Christian era. From the archaeological remains in Ujhain, it is evident that this place represents the site of an important city which was probably the capital of the country called Govishana visited by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, in the 7th century A.D.

18.4.2 Tourist Places in Udham Singh Nagar

Nanakmatta

Gurudwara Sri Nanak Matta Sahib is associated with the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Devji, who is believed to have visited Nanakmatta on his way to Kailash Parvat in 1515 AD.



Gurudwara Sri Nanak Matta Sahib

Atariya Temple

One of the oldest and most revered shrines located near Rudrapur, the Atariya temple is dedicated to Goddess Atariya.

Chaiti Devi Temple

Located at a distance of 2.5 km (approximately) from Kashipur, this temple is a revered Shaktipeeth.

Giri Tal

Located in Kashipur, Giri Tal is a popular tourist spot.



Lake Paradise

A serene piece of heaven near River Kalyani in Rudrapur, it is a popular recreational spot among tourists and locals.



Lake Paradise

18.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in Udham Singh Nagar

Cross-Border Tourism

Visiting international boundaries is itself informative and enriching experience because each international boundary with India has its own history. Indo Nepal border is accessible and 200 years old border. Banbasa is the closest check post from Udham Singh Nagar. Kanchanpur is the border town in 5 km away from Banbasa. SSB and armed police force of Nepal. Visitor can do some shopping after crossing border. Exploring these possibilities could improve border tourism in future in Uttarakhand.

Root Tourism/ VFR

The next generations of the population living in Border Districts of Uttarakhand have moved to other parts of the country for which Border Tourism can be a way to reconnect with their own root. Thus, a concept of Root Tourism can be introduced in Border Tourism format for Udham Singh Nagar as well as in other border districts of Uttarakhand. Establishment of quality accommodation and good connectivity will certainly give an impetus to this kind of tourism product in border region.

Agri/ Rural Tourism

Agri/ Rural tourism could be an extended or integral aspect of root tourism and even can be designed separately to give tourism an in depth experience of the pristine locations and way of life of Border region.

Religious Tourism

Various shrines and temples like Nanakmatta, Atariya Temple and Chaiti Devi Temple could be promoted as part of Religious Tourism of Udham Singh Nagar.

Weekend Destination

Udham Singh Nagar is the gateway to the Kumaun, Nepal one side other side is Jim Corbett National Park so it is a quick gateway from the NCR or other places around.

Staycation

Pandemic has brought a paradigm shift in tourism worldwide. WFH concept made people to work as well as carry out vacation and stay longer in a destination. Uttarakhand scenic places and peaceful ambience is ideal for such staycation. The development of homestays can be promoted for staycation which will go a long way for the tourism of the district.

18.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in Udham Singh Nagar

- Connectivity has always been a major challenge to let the whole State developed in Tourism.
- Lack of overall Promotion and branding of Border Districts and other lesser known places.
- Identification of the right kind of target market was necessary.
- Over tourism and over concentration in certain hill stations of Uttarakhand is a challenge indeed.
- Ecological concern is one of the most critical factors for a mountain State like Uttarakhand and its border regions.
- Overall developmental challenges and connectivity issues as well as lack of exploration of tourism potentials are key factors which pose challenges to the development of Udham Singh Nagar as border destination.

18.4.5 Way Forward

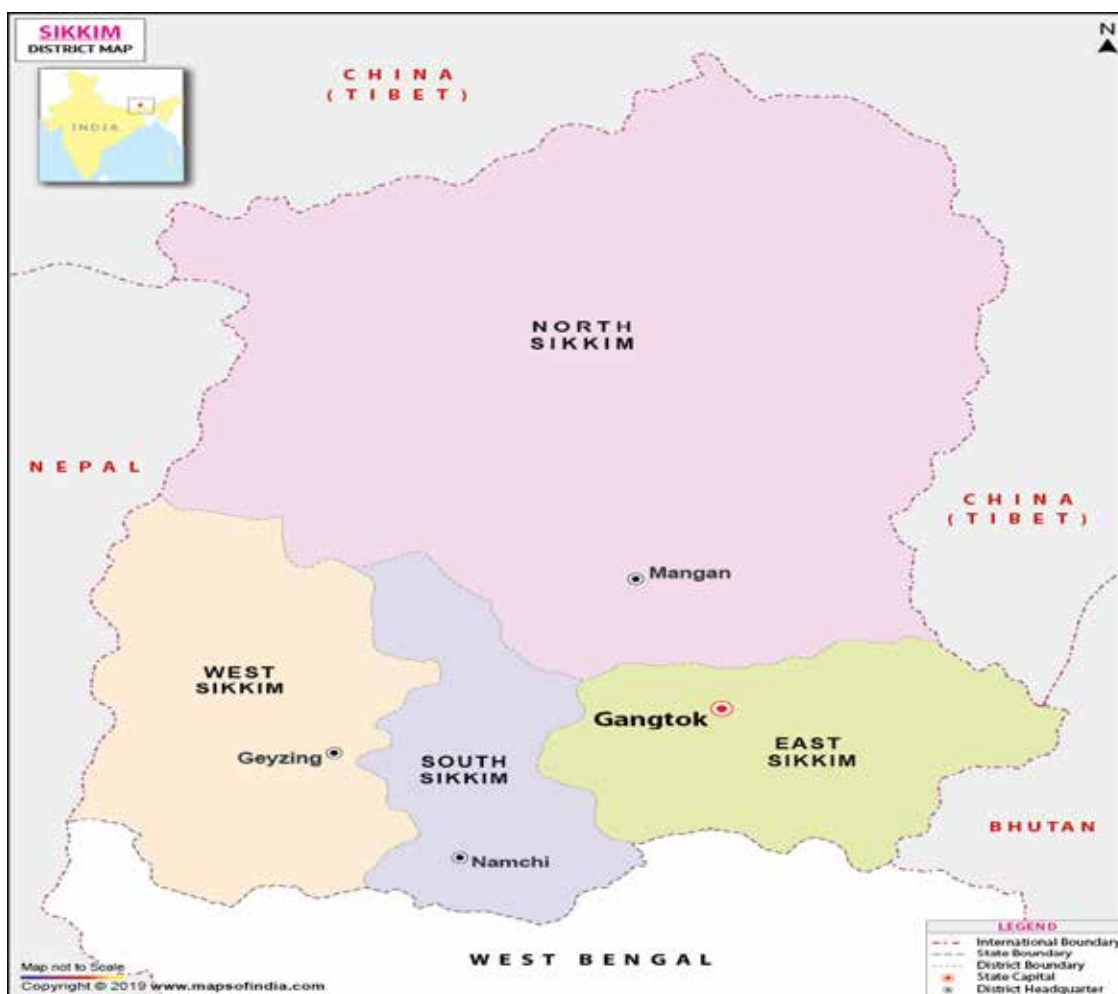
- Border Tourism has greater scope for bringing border population of both countries to intermingle their common thought.
- Land borders need to be explored to the fullest. All the resources to be tapped in various forms of tourism product.
- Uttarakhand is getting better connectivity. Great potential is coming out. Four lane highway all weather road will connect most of the border districts of the State.
- Uttarakhand is a destination for pilgrimage which with better connectivity could unleash huge spiritual/pilgrimage market.
- Pilgrimage, trekking, mountaineering, bird watching, rafting, yoga meditation, Ayurveda, can be major driver for tourism.
- Film Tourism and Golf Tourism are two emerging products that need further development in the region.
- Border districts and their scenic beauties are much deserved locations for developing as a tourist destination.
- Products of winter tourism need to be developed.
- Ski Resorts can be turned into Golf Tourism destination during summer.
- Tourism infrastructure needs focus; peace and wellness tourism need special focus keeping in view of the USP of Uttarakhand as a land of spirituality.
- Root Tourism can be emerging concepts for Border Tourism. It needs market linkage for enabling people to go back to their root and reconnect.
- Tourist market of East and South East Asia need to be tapped.
- Udham Singh Nagar as Aspirational District has shown progress. By fast-tracking progress to basic infrastructure, good solid social structure will automatically enhance tourism in the place and bring economic prosperity.
- Developing tourism in rural sector would help the locals with economic opportunity as well as for protection of environment.
- Udham Singh Nagar is the gateway to the Kumaun, Nepal one side and other side is Jim Corbett National Park so it is a quick gateway from the NCR or other places around.
- Connectivity from NCR could provide the District with a significant tourist market.
- While developing strategy for Border Tourism especially in case of Uttarakhand, the ecology and environment of the area need to be kept in mind. Sustainable development is of utmost important thing.
- Destination Planning and Destination Management systems are necessary which will address the issues of over tourism, carrying capacity, etc.
- Regulation of visitors is necessary, number of vehicle to be restricted all the mountain states.
- State should have to have Robust disaster management system which would entail prevention of disaster, you need to have prediction of disaster, you need to have crisis management crisis management and rescue



management and you need to have rehabilitation whenever such things happens. Disaster management is a must.

- The state must have robust information and data analytics: weather forecasts, prediction for earthquake, do it by drone surveillance, use of space technology (ISRO has developed through satellite image which glacier formation is happening). These things need constant monitoring.
- Instead of mass tourism, develop alternative tourism new destination development necessary utilizing various scheme like PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan etc. better infrastructure through alternative destination needs emphasis.
- Policy of homestays should be more liberal, need to have some incentives also for establishing and promoting homestays.
- Develop winter tourism and promote winter tourism winter carnival and sports ropeways, skiing etc. to create more products.
- For air connectivity, pick some more areas for regional connectivity; have some more air strips being revived.
- Pitching for train connectivity, 125 km railway lines in Uttarakhand to be build.
- All combined connectivity will quality tourism, infrastructure environment into account. To improve border tourism in the state and over all tourism development of state.

19. Border Tourism in Sikkim



Source: Maps of India

19.1 Introduction

Sikkim is a state in Northeastern India which borders the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in the north and northeast, Bhutan in the east, Province No. 1 of Nepal in the west and West Bengal in the south. Sikkim is also close to the Siliguri Corridor, which borders Bangladesh. Sikkim is the least populous and second smallest among the Indian states. Situated in the Eastern Himalaya, Sikkim is notable for its biodiversity, including alpine and subtropical climates, as well as being a host to Kangchenjunga, the highest peak in India and third highest on Earth. Sikkim's capital and largest city is Gangtok. Almost 35% of the state is covered by Khangchendzonga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

19.2 Tourism Development in Sikkim

The Vision of Sikkim Tourism Policy (2015, 2018) is to 'Make Sikkim a highly valued responsible tourism destination such that it contributes significantly to the state economy while conserving its natural and cultural heritage and ensuring visitor satisfaction.'

The Policy sets the following principles to guide the tourism sector in Sikkim:

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Tourism development will not be at the cost of environmental degradation.
- **Cultural Integrity:** Tourism development will ensure appreciation, respect and promotion of Sikkim's diverse culture.
- **Equity and Inclusiveness:** Opportunities and benefits of tourism shall not exclude those disadvantaged by gender, remoteness and poverty.
- **Atithi Devo Bhava:** Tourism development shall focus on providing quality experiences and services for all visitors and ensure their safety and satisfaction.

Furthermore, to manage the impacts of tourism in fragile mountain areas and to enhance incentives for local stakeholders to play a role in management and regulation, a number of different approaches have been used in different mountainous regions of the world. Some of these approaches could be relevant to Sikkim, as well:

- Managing tourist numbers in ecologically sensitive areas
- Sharing of tourism revenues with local communities
- Integrated mobility
- Certification and Standards

Overall, the Policy focuses on the following objectives to be fulfilled:

Objective 1: Strengthen/ Establish Institutional Structures

Objective 2: Promote Standards & Certification

Objective 3: Human Resource Development

Objective 4: Develop Quality Infrastructure and Transport

Objective 5: Promote Regulatory Framework

Objective 6: Develop Key Tourism Products

19.2.1 Tourism Product Offerings:

- Conventional leisure based tourism
- Nature based tourism or Ecotourism
- Adventure based tourism
- Culture based tourism & village homestays
- Religion based tourism
- MICE
- Health and Wellness
- Casino and gaming

19.3 Webinar on Border Tourism with Focus State: Sikkim and Focus District: West Sikkim



Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI; Mr. Rohan Agawane (IAS), Additional District Magistrate, West Sikkim, Government of Sikkim; Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East; Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser, Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog; Mr. Sonam Norgay Lachungpa, President, Travel Agents Association of Sikkim; Mr. Karma Thutop Chechutharpa, Executive Member, Homestay Association of Sikkim; Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair, Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair, Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI; and Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI

Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI has given the introduction of the knowledge session which was last of the series on Border Tourism organized by PHDCCI. Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair - Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI, moderated the webinar where he has brought different threads of discussion together.

In his Presidential Address, Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI, said that there are several virgin mountain peaks, unprotected monuments, rivers, rich local cultures and other unspoiled tourism resources which should be further explored by tourists. Through all these programmes organized under the Border Tourism Webinar Series, it is evident that there is huge scope for development of Border Tourism in the country.

Mr. Rohan Agawane (IAS), Additional District Magistrate - West Sikkim, Government of Sikkim, spoke on the various products like Agro Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Religious Tourism which has immense potential to increase the tourist traffic to the state. He also highlighted the challenges in terms of infrastructure like poor road connectivity, landslides which causes traffic jams for long hours making it difficult for the tourists to commute.

Mr. S. S. Dev Barman, Regional Director, Indiatourism North East, highlighted that being the gateway to the Himalayas; Sikkim is known for its beautiful scenery, green meadow, crystalline lakes and towering mountain ranges. Sikkim is bordered by Nepal, Bhutan and China and hence there is no dearth of tourist places in the state.

Mr. Saurabh Rishi, Joint Adviser é Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog, informed that West Sikkim district has improved on various indicators relating to socio-economic development such as health and nutrition, education and basic infrastructure. Many of these indicators are directly linked to tourism development like hygiene, sanitation and drinking water facilities.

Mr. Karma Thutop Chechutharpa, Executive Member, Homestay Association of Sikkim, deliberated on the Homestay development of Sikkim and its prospect within the State. He has also importantly pointed out the critical factors like digital connectivity that affects the development of Sikkim Tourism including the West District.

Mr. Sonam Norgay Lachungpa, President, Travel Agents Association of Sikkim, has given a detailed account on the various natural and cultural resources of West Sikkim. He further pointed out the areas for development of tourism and several other tourism products like Monsoon Tourism or Staycation that Sikkim Tourism is trying to bring into its tourism map.



19.4 Border Tourism in West Sikkim

19.4.1 Introduction

The West District carries significant importance in the history of Sikkim as Yuksom, a village in the district was the first capital of Sikkim and it remained so for almost 50 years since 1642 and Dubdi Monastery is considered as one of the oldest monasteries is also located near Yuksom. The foundation of the Namgyal dynasty which ruled Sikkim till its merger with India in 1975 was laid in Yuksom in the year 1642 when Phuntsog Namgyal was consecrated as the first king in this place.

The topography of the district is hilly mountainous terrain with many streams, ravines and ridges. The district has many peaks, snow clad mountains, glaciers, natural lakes and picturesque waterfalls. Reserves of minerals like Quartzite Dolomite Graphite and Sillimanite have been reported in the district but these minerals have not been explored yet.

19.4.2 Tourist Places in West District

Pelling

Its main USP is the breathtaking view it offers of the Khangchendzonga and surrounding ranges, as well as the easy access it provides to tourist spots in the area. The Rabdantse Palace was second palace of the 'Namgyal Dynasty' after Yuksum till the year 1814 AD is located in the District. The king of Sikkim had ruled the state from this place. Today the ruins Rabdantse palace situated hidden from the main road way to Pemayangtse monastery.



Pelling

Yuksam

Yuksam meaning the 'meeting place of three lamas' is of great historical importance to the Sikkimese. Yuksam is religious and tourist importance place and was the first capital of Sikkim. The first Chogyal of the kingdom of Sikkim was consecrated in 1641 AD. The Monastery has now been declared a National Monument and is under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India.

Khecheopalri Lake

It is considered as one of the sacred lake of this state both by the Buddhist and the Hindus. The lake remains hidden in the rich forest cover. It is believed that the birds do not permit even a single leaf to float on the lake surface.



Khecheopalri Lake

Soreng

The village is famous for the wide variety of flowers and birds available here.

Versey

Between the Singalila National Park in the south and Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in the north, this small Sanctuary is at an altitude of 10,000 ft. and supports a wide variety of bio-diversity.

Hee Bermiok

The main attractions are mountain biking, nature walk, visit to villages, Sirijonga Yuma Mangheem, Sirijonga Holy Cave at Martam etc.

Utteray

The place provides beautiful view to the Himalayan Mountains and is yet relatively less traveled by tourists.

Tashiding Monastery

The Tashiding Monastery belongs to the Nyingmapa order and is highly revered among the people of Sikkim.



Tashiding Monastery

Sombaria

It is close to the Indo-Nepal border and border region of Darjeeling Hills.

Rinchenpong

The upcoming tourist spot in the western part of Sikkim has a magnificent command over the mountain views, sunrise and sunset, flora and fauna, village tourism, historical sites and heritage of Resum Monastery, rich forests and ample area for short treks.



Rinchenpong

Dentam

Dentam commands a constant view of the Kanchenjunga. The entire area is surrounded by forest of rhododendrons.

19.4.3 Product Line for Border Tourism in West District

Homestay Tourism

Almost all towns and villages in Sikkim have homestays where you can stay with locals and learn about their culture and traditions. Staying at homestays throughout the trip tourists can get the opportunity to chat with the family and learn about their day-to-day life, their hardships and economic activities, and the joy of living in such scenic surroundings.

Adventure Tourism

From river rafting, mountain biking to paragliding, there's a number of adventure sports that you can take your pick from. High-altitude trekking draws enthusiasts to Sikkim from around the world. There are several well-known trek routes exist in the District.

Agri Tourism/ Rural Tourism

Fresh organic produce is one of the USPs of Sikkim. Almost every homestay will have a plot of land where the owners grow vegetables like peas and potatoes, carrots and radishes. In the countryside, people often forage for herbs that are added



to food or used for their medicinal properties. For the best of local Sikkimese food, stay at a homestay. Many households are entirely vegetarian, so you can taste a wealth of produce and local greens. In the evening, take a swig of chhang and enjoy the starry skies.

Nature-Based/ Ecotourism

The rich natural heritage and its flora and fauna makes Sikkim a premium site for developing nature based and /ecotourism. Several community based ecotourism can be developed which can attract tourists from all over India as well as international tourists.

Special Interest Tourism (Birding/ Butterfly Watching/ Botanical Tour)

West Sikkim have great potential comes under alpine region altitude 4000 mt to 2500 mt and famous Yuksam Pelling, Soreng, Barsey, Uttarey Dentam Tashiding are already in tourism map. The rare more than 1000 species butterfly 500 birds available in the region. The rich Biodiversity of West Sikkim makes it an ideal destination for various special interest tourism.

Religious Tourism

The religious map of West Sikkim is a patchwork of Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous religions like Yumaism. In the mountains, people worship the bounteous nature, the sparkling water bodies, and ancient trees. One can witness memorable dances at the monasteries and other festivals in West Sikkim. Religious tourism pilgrimages Buddhist Circuit covers Dubdi, Norbugang, Tashiding, Pemayangshe, Sanga Choling upto Khechodpalri Lake.

Cultural Tourism

The rich ethnic fabric gives Sikkim a different vibes as destination. Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali traditions and culture, their distinctive customs, attire, festivals altogether makes the place an important destination for Cultural Tourism.

Leisure Tourism and Sightseeing

From the skywalk in Pelling to the countless monasteries that dot the countryside, there is no dearth of sightseeing options here.

19.4.4 Challenges for Developing Border Tourism in West Sikkim

- Road Connectivity is one of the biggest challenges of entire Sikkim including West District. The journeys take much longer to reach any destination with severe traffic at times and in places which affects visitor experience and comfort adversely.
- Fragile environment and geo-climatic conditions which causes frequent landslides, entire roads get washed away and areas got cut off.
- The locations are not suitable for all kinds of transports.
- Over tourism is another critical issue for the mountainous region like west Sikkim. Severe traffic jam and visitor outnumbers residents cause major challenge in carrying capacity of the region.
- There is a lack of public transport and hiring taxi is expensive. Sharing basis transport facility not available beyond Gangtok region mostly which altogether pose challenges to the smooth traffic for the tourist movement especially in West District.
- Air connectivity is not cost effective or viable for the West District as it takes nearly 4 to 5 hours to reach the nearest airports in Pakyong (East Sikkim) or Bangdogra (Siliguri, West Bengal).
- Weather abruptly changes in Sikkim and visibility goes down.
- Pakyong airport has a very small airstrip and not well equipped it needs clear visibility of 5 km which is a huge for terrain in Sikkim.
- Most of the land of Sikkim comes under forest department and getting forest clearance often becomes a tedious task and takes time longer than anticipated. Projects tend to languish due to delay.
- Digital Divide is a major challenge for destination development and management in Sikkim and places like West Sikkim. Due to lack of proper network homestays remain abstracted from digital platforms and lack the facility of modern booking systems and major up-gradation that they need.
- West Sikkim lacks proper marketing, branding and promotion. Till date majority of marketing basically word of mouth through previous tourists drivers etc.

- The issues with the Inner Line Permit is a challenge which hinders inbound tourists to stay longer in the districts and visit all the places.
- Finally satellite phone is not allowed in the trek routes in West Sikkim rural border zone which always carries a potential threat in case of any mishaps there is no mode of communication available there.

19.4.5 Way Forward

- Connectivity is the first thing to be taken into account for any tourism development of West District of Sikkim
- Need options for regular reliable public transport.
- West Sikkim needs proper marketing and promotion.
- Product knowledge and product positioning into the right kind of tourist market is essential.
- Digital divide is the most important issue to be taken seriously by the Government of Sikkim.
- With better connectivity homestays could be able to optimize their visibility in digital marketing and it will boost rural tourism market of the area.
- Staycation would be a viable and sustainable option for West Sikkim rural tourism provided there is a seamless network connection.
- Skill training for hospitality and tourism, tourism education and guide training with language skills are required.
- Rural populations need tourism and environmental awareness for their own region.
- West Districts as well as whole Sikkim need to develop itself as an all season destination.
- New Tourism products related to Peace Wellness Tourism/ Yoga Tourism/ Organic Farming etc. need to be developed.
- Over tourism is a major concern of the region which needs to be checked at all cost. Proper Destination Management Model should be implemented.
- Policy regarding the ILP needs special attention as this is hindering the development of inbound tourism in the District.
- The trek routes of Border region needs connections through satellite phone in order to avoid any potential threats/ mishaps during the journey.



CONCLUSION

The global pandemic demands a radical shift in tourism industry approach and an earnest incorporation of Sustainable and Responsible Tourism practices in all its spheres. Borders are essentially colonial projects, so is tourism to a large extent. The majority of the tourism practices so far tend to view things mainly through the colonial frame of reference. The current initiative of Border Tourism happens to be an emerging and unique product of Incredible India which may shift the way of seeing things in the context of experiencing borders of the country by decoding its own historical fractures and giving a separate weightage on the histories of borders. The significant stake of tourism not only as an economic affair, but its importance in the context of national security, too, would make the project all the more significant.

Thus, it needs a national level seminar on Border Tourism for framing a Border Tourism Policy in India. National as well as State Tourism Advisory Boards specifically need to be set up, followed by the present white paper, it is envisaged that a group of experts will come up to take this project up to the next level.

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Border Tourism Webinar Calendar with YouTube Links:

S. No.	STATE / UT	FOCUS DISTRICT	DATE	YOUTUBE LINK
1	Arunachal Pradesh	Anjaw, Mechuka, Anini	24 June 2021	https://youtu.be/Ki-qR_vle8M
2	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	29 June 2021	https://youtu.be/7_3X5-9yZ3M
3	Punjab	Ferozepur	14 July 2021	https://youtu.be/_iIVjND9fO0
4	Meghalaya	East Khasi Hills	30 July 2021	https://youtu.be/B8g67BjgJqY
5	Gujarat	Rann of Kutch	6 August 2021	https://youtu.be/TobEMZNAY-4
6	Nagaland	Kiphire	27 August 2021	https://youtu.be/R4KYZEFOMfw
7	Bihar	Sitamarhi	7 September 2021	https://youtu.be/bpV4g-_JAOM
8	Manipur	Chandel	24 September 2021	https://youtu.be/lblyiuJEXPM
9	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu	6 October 2021	https://youtu.be/yoi3rD025gk
10	Mizoram	Mamit, Champhai	22 October 2021	https://youtu.be/kZ4ebqIDkfU
11	Ladakh	Leh	12 November 2021	https://youtu.be/89AikdOP9ug
12	West Bengal	Murshidabad	26 November 2021	https://youtu.be/1plqBFyDq3Q
13	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul & Spiti	3 December 2021	https://youtu.be/ANApDyLG_i8
14	Tripura	Dhalai	17 December 2021	https://youtu.be/mKGgruY-vig
15	Uttarakhand	Udham Singh Nagar	7 January 2022	https://youtu.be/X1xAxOSmleQ
16	Assam	Baksa	21 January 2022	https://youtu.be/FuTIWHKmW_I
17	Uttar Pradesh	Shravasti	11 February 2022	https://youtu.be/2Yq9uYZs1zo
18	Sikkim	West Sikkim	25 February 2022	https://youtu.be/Ek4RyYM3E5g



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