

Exploring the Potentialities and Strategies for Development of Tourism Industry in Assam Post Covid 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Unprecedented present, unknown future. The year 2020 can safely be referred to as the year when human kind matured a lot and evolved even more. Various difficulties in various sectors due to Covid 19 Pandemic and because of continuous lock down, the global economy has been pushed into a recession. This pandemic is an epidemic which has affected all aspects of our lives without discerning between caste, creed, religion, social or monetary status, state of economy of a nation; everything is covered with this virus. Assam tourism industry is suffering a huge downfall and the travel agencies are facing a tremendous revenue loss and generated unemployment problem in the state. This study is an attempt to Identify the socio-economic importance of the tourism industry in the post Covid scenario, how to harness the various resources and assets, lying idle or underutilized because of Corona epidemic-pandemic and how to develop a strategy to revive tourism industry in the state of Assam, which has everything favoring the tourism but the tourists and that too because of Corona.

Key Words: PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis, tourism revival strategies,

Introduction

Unprecedented present, unknown future. The year 2020 can safely be referred to as the year when human kind matured a lot and evolved even more. Various difficulties in various sectors due to Covid 19 Pandemic and because of continuous lock down, the global economy has been pushed into a recession. Along with many industries the Corona virus pandemic has affected the travel & tourism industry most severely “*Simon Johnson, Professor, MIT Sloan & Peter Boone, London School of Economics' From lockdown to locked in, here's what post-pandemic travel could look like. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/coronavirus-lockdown-travel-tourism/>”.* Social distancing, travel restrictions, closure of tourist attraction sites and a lot more has declared the homes as the safest places on planet earth. People are scared of even visiting hospitals “*The New Nation, Corona virus fears still keep people away from hospital, <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/coronavirus-fears-still-keep-people-away-from-hospital/ar-BB16Sw8x>”.* In such a time visiting another place for recreational purposes seems like a cruel joke. I’m calling it cruel, because travelling is ingrained in human psychology as a mode to discover the world and rediscover oneself “*Jenny McWhirter, How Travelling Boosts Personal Development, <https://www.theleap.co.uk/travelling-boosts-personal-development>”* and now this discovery and rediscovery, both are denied to us. This pandemic is an epidemic which has affected all aspects of our lives without discerning between caste, creed, religion, social or monetary

status, state of economy of a nation; everything is covered with this virus. Assam tourism industry is suffering a huge downfall and the travel agencies are facing a tremendous revenue loss. According to the Managing Director of Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) the tour operators association has declared a loss of 200 crores, therefore the state tourism department is requested to give support to revive the tourism industry. With a conservative estimate, about 3000 packages of various tour operators are cancelled in this peak season.

Wildlife sanctuaries are the major attraction of tourist in Assam but due to increase of Covid 19 infection and lock down all National Parks and wild life sanctuaries are forced to close down. If the lock down prolongs further than there is a chance of increase in unemployment rate, as many of the villagers' daily earnings depends on tourist movements. Around 100 registered tour operators have requested State Tourism Department to come up with special packages worth of 6 crores to revive the tourism industry of the state. In addition to this the tour operators have also urged the government to provide a working capital assistance of 2 lakh each which can be used to sustain the existing investments or initiate new investment and 1.5lakh to each operators as a promotional support to advertise and attend the travel marts across the country when lock down is over.

While explaining the losses Managing Director of Assam Tourism Development Corporation also highlights that Prashanti Lodges run by the corporation witness a low occupancy, and footfall is enormously poor in revenue earning areas like parks, restaurants and bars. The travel agency of ATDC "The Red River Tours & Travels" too is facing heavy losses because of booking cancellations. According to the data obtained from the government website, Assam tourism industry employs 2 lakh people directly and 5 lakh people indirectly. The Covid 19 Pandemic has increased the unemployment rate and this catastrophe has further pull down the state into heavy losses.

According to Assam Tourism Development Corporation Chairman, if this situation continues than it's definitely going to affect the tourism sector and revenue collection. In, 2018, the state tourism department had collected Rs.1,200-1,500 crores revenue and around 30 percent collected alone in the month of December, whereas in December 2019 only Rs.300-400 crores is collected.

Due to Covid 19 Assam is facing a major economic crash which turns into an unemployment scenario in the Hospitality & Tourism industry and daily wages workers. The local people who reside near the tourist sites whose earning is completely depends on Tourists are facing tremendous financial crisis to survive, which is beyond our imagination. Immediate implementation of new plans is the essential requirement at this hour to revive the tourism industry in Assam. Through this study, an attempt has been made to explore the potentialities and strategies for development of tourism industry in Assam post Covid 19 pandemic. This study is an attempt to Identify the socio-economic importance of the tourism industry in the post Covid scenario, how to harness the various resources and assets, lying idle or underutilized because of Corona epidemic-pandemic and how to develop a strategy to revive tourism industry in the state of Assam, which has everything favoring the tourism but the tourists and that too because of Corona.

To begin with, I'll be using multiple tools of strategy development like PESTEL to identify the key indicators which actually can play the role of "strengths" to the state of Assam to promote the tourism industry, moving on further, the SWOT analysis will be put to use to identify the opportunities and threats to the tourism industry in the state of Assam. Assam, the gateway to entire N-E region in India,

having magnet cities like Guwahati and National treasures like Kaziranga National Park with uncountable known and unknown places of tourist attraction, so any cut and dried formula applicable anywhere in the world, might not be practical in the state of Assam. Hence few specifically tailor-made strategies are needed for the state.

This study is based on secondary data. The various sources which are used during data collection are –

1. Current and previous publications of Ministry of tourism, government of India.
2. Websites and online resources in relation to the topic.
3. Reports of various publications.
4. Special supplements of UNWTO and WHO.
5. Research papers and relevant articles/ Newsletters.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Government of Assam.

The Present Status of Tourism Industry in Assam:

Given the times of social distancing (4 ft. distance from next person) and homes as the safest places on earth, it is quite difficult to plan a tour or an outing. If people have a fear of touching the next person then how to invite them to eat some food, cooked by someone else or sleep in the bed made by a total stranger. But “The Show Must Go On “a song by the British rock band **Queen**, written mainly by Brian May is the purpose of human life. Given the current scenario, it is high time to identify and design a plan to revive the tourism industry back. Assam has the potential to revive back, all it needs to do is work on the requirements of the tourist which are more specific and more demanding than ever. Now the timeless concepts of “Utility”, “Benefits and Value”, “Pricing strategies”etc. are going to play a vital role in strategy development.

Political Factors affecting the prospects of a destination:

The region is rich in natural resources, covered with dense forests, has the highest rainfall in the country, with large and small river systems nesting the land and is a treasure house of flora and fauna. Marked by diversity in customs, cultures, traditions and languages, it is home to multifarious social, ethnic and linguistic groups. Troubled by history and geo-politics, the State of Assam has remained one of the most troubled regions of the country. The trauma of partition in 1947 not only took the region backwards by at least a quarter of a century, but also placed hurdles on future economic progress. It isolated the region, sealed both land and sea routes for commerce and trade, and severed access to traditional markets and the gateway to the East and South-East Asia. It distanced the approach to the rest of India by confining connectivity to a narrow 27-km-wide Siliguri corridor, making it a ‘remote land’ and constraining access for movement of goods and people. The uneasy relationship with most of the neighboring countries has not helped the cause of development of the region either: with major portion of the boundary of the region forming international borders, private investment has shied away from the region. Poor infrastructure and governance is combined with low productivity and market access. Inability of governments to control floods and river bank erosion causes unmitigated damage to properties and lives of millions of people every year in the region. The quest for ethnic and cultural identities has sowed the seeds of frustration and dissatisfaction from seclusion, backwardness, remoteness and problems of governance have provided fertile ground for breeding armed insurgencies.

As per the different studies and government development strategies the state of Assam needs and wants to concentrate on Domestic tourism but there is still a perceptible lack of political willingness and policies which can revive the tourism industry. When we talk about tourism of Assam, it has many surprises in store coupled with commensurate number of negative factors involved and it is not a day’s

job to eradicate or solve all the problems. For more than a decade, Assam faced the problems of insurgency or terrorism from ULFA's, NDFB and different organizations which created a negative image in the tourism sector. And as if all this was not enough, the state of Assam started featuring in news related to Anti CAA and chicken neck. Which only added to the negative image amongst the tourists. Then came the Covid 19 Pandemic which led to the complete lock down and social distancing.

Adding salt to the entire scenario, prevalent corruption and disorganized state legal regulations is proving to be the barrier in the development of the state. But as we all know that it is difficult to improve the perfection but it always easy and desirable to improve the imperfection. Hence given the information boom, more informed and rational population, availability of scrutinizing mobile phones and other devices, the time is just right to attempt the development and advancements in the state and tourism industry.

Economic factors affecting the prospects of a destination:

Economy, economics, economic factors have always banked upon the timeless concepts of demand and supply, more demand supported with adequate supply leads to growth in GDP as well as the economy. If we consider the last four decades compatibility in-case of tourism industry, the movement of tourists was very less compared to other states. The GDP contribution of Assam for 2020-21 is 4.09 lakh crore (US\$57billion) only which clearly identifies the productivity of the state. Assam is abundantly rich with its natural resources but under-utilization of resources leads to lesser productivity, which in turn leads to lesser supply, ultimately leading to product/service substitution. Once a product or service is substituted then the competing or substitute products or services acquires the maximum market share leading to further decline in the demand of the principal product or service leading to the rejection of the product/service by the market/consumers. The tourism industry of Assam is facing the similar problems, because of negative image the demand was lesser, lesser demand never allowed the benefits of economy of scale to be accorded to the tourism industry which led to higher prices of the accommodation and other services. Higher prices further reduced the quotient of utility and hence the demand. Which leads to reduced chances of revisit by loyal tourists and bars the innovator or adventurous tourists from visiting the state or facilities.

But there is a silver lining in all this discussion. Because of so many issues discussed till now there are very limited entry barriers to the tourism industry in the state, hence reducing the cost of establishment combined with access to all the under-utilized resources and supply chain at a minimal cost. All this actually makes the state a very fertile ground for investment.

Socio-Cultural factors affecting the prospects of a destination:

Assam being a traditional society rich with cultural and religious heritage used to have the joint family structure. In joint families, there was very little need to travel far or beyond. Moreover, the cost of tours and travelling for a joint family would be awfully highleading to further dis-interest in the population for travelling. But with advent of modern times the joint families have disintegrated into nuclear families, nuclear families have more necessity of travelling to their native places and more leverage to spend money in tours and travel for personal enjoyment. Today's travelers are ready to explore new destinations with their small families to spend their holiday. They demand better or modern facilities with adequate services for which they are ready to pay. These sundry, regular, vocational, seasonal tourists are in large numbers and hence actually present a ready market only to be harnessed by the state, local businessmen and/or entrepreneurs.

Technological factor of the destination:

I'll start with the hypothesis of a perfect capital market for which one of the most prominent assumption is availability of information at zero cost and zero, time lag. This free information would make the market more competitive, investors more rational, decision making, more logical, and timely and overall market as more efficient and reliable. The modern era could be considered as a technologically developed era, everyone, everywhere is connected via internet by mobile phone users. Each individual has access to least or zero cost information with zero, time lag with the help of mobile technology which automatically gets updated and corrected with every passing second through internet. Now, people are able to carry encyclopedias on multiple topics in their pockets. The decisions today or more informed, rational, logical and trustworthy and are taken by sitting at home. This has made planning quicker and fail proof. The review of the place given by another traveler is considered as more trustworthy and makes a positive impact in the minds of the reader or traveler while deciding about a place. The negative publicity like insurgency problems, remoteness has also started taking backseat as rumors only. Advertisement or publicity has become an easier task to promote a tourist destination. The stakeholders only need to choose the right channel or portal to showcase a tourist destination, by highlighting the accommodation facilities, route map etc. either through a form of a video or short clipping to attract the tourist. And reduced cost of promotion presents another window of opportunity to the business, entrepreneurs for establishing a more trustworthy and successful organization with greater chances of sustainability.

Legal factors affecting the prospects of a destination:

The legal factors, actually are able to affect the prospects of a business adversely only if these are binding in nature with regards to the use of local resources or partnership of the local population in various business processes and usually these restrictions come only if the resources are limited in nature or quantity or are potentially lethal or dangerous to use. Since we are trying to develop the strategies to promote tourism, and the basics of tourism is preservation and proper utilization of resources, and it's a pursuit of government to create more operating cycles to generate more revenue by utilizing the under-used or unused resources. So legal system is created in the state to promote business and entrepreneurs. When we promote a tourist destination, it means we expect a huge amount of tourist movement in the state. The state needs to improve the security system for the conveniences of the tourist. Assam was and is known as a disturbed area because of insurgencies from different fractions of the society but now it can safely be called as a hangover of previous binge night. Though, the government has to seriously strengthen the safety and security norms to provide for the protection of the tourist. But that's a very basic necessity of any and every progressive society. Given the information boom and alacrity of the population to improve the scenario, things are definitely looking brighter and promising.

With all this discussion, if everything, apparently looking good and promising, the next logical question comes that why such a dismal state of affairs in the state? It is true that Corona has a lot to contribute to the bad scenario, but we can take the history as evidence that only Corona has not made the situation like this.

Let's move to next step of our strategy development and since PESTEL has already identified the opportunities and threats, which is a part of external analysis, so let's do the internal analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the state of Assam to adjudge that if the weaknesses are so

insurmountable that an area immensely rich with natural resources is not even in top 10 tourist destinations in India. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_India. If not, and weaknesses can be overcome with right strategies then let's do the SWOT analysis and strategies.

Assam being the gateway to the NE India is blessed with multiple types of visitors, which increases the footfall in the state. But majority of this footfall belongs to the 'visitors in transit', hence the duration of visit is minimal, purpose of visit is to wait for the next mode of transport, out of the state and hence the expenditure in the state during the visit is bare minimum. Moreover, the jewel in the crown of the State of Assam, Kaziranga National Park and Kamakhya Temple, people use these spots as the terminal point of their tour program mostly after visiting different parts of North East. Tourists don't even explore the other tourist destinations of Assam. So, we need a paradigm shift, amongst the tourists. The state of Assam should be a primary destination, instead of terminal or passing destination for all the tourist programs. As per the figures of 2019-20 the total number of Domestic tourists was 9.5 million in entire NE region and out of this 9.5million a total of 2.5 million visited during Ambubashi Mela. If this, 9.5 million tourists could be converted into a dedicated tourist to the state of Assam, then the state tourism industry will become the most productive sector. If we add the footfall to these numbers and try to convert 10% of the footfall into a dedicated tourist to the state of Assam then the numbers would swell beyond any calculations and the only thing needed in this regard is using the religious tourists to the Ambubashi Mela and in-transit visitors to the state of Assam as the ambassadors to the tourism in Assam, then the state would be able to attract domestic and global tourists to the state of Assam. We are well aware that due to Covid 19 pandemic, a huge seasonal business is lost, and has logically resulted into a huge revenue loss for the local entrepreneur who depends mainly on tourism. So, post Covid 19 the major criteria will be to uplift the livelihood of the local residents and to reduce unemployment problems.

The state of Assam has plenty of ancient time's religious and historical monuments in different parts of the state. But due to improper marketing, awareness program and political willingness, the state is struggling to earn its rightful spot in the tourism sector. If people like Amish Tripathy can earn millions by writing novels like The Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of the Nagas, The Oath of the Vayuputras and Scion of Ikshvaku all having NE and Assam as the backdrop for all the novels, then we seriously lack the willingness and ability to market our own historical and cultural richness. Numerous examples can be quoted in this regard.

Assam is world famous for its natural resources, flora and fauna, beautiful hills, silk and muga, colorful festivals, unity in diversity. In spite of having so many positive factors the state is struggling for its rightful spot among the top most tourist destinations in global or domestic tourist destinations, this study becomes even more important and strategizing for the state becomes the need of the time, especially in post Covid-19 scenario. The most common assertions in this regard, so far, have been, that the state is lacking in extensive advertisement, marketing and promotional activities which is most essential to promote tourism industry and stabilize the economy of the state. All of these can be taken as the weaknesses for this study.

Now that the strengths have been identified as geographically unique location, increasing the footfall and natural & cultural heritage richness with the capability to handle almost every type of tourist, ranging from ethnic tourist to adventure tourist to even medical tourist. Weaknesses can be enumerated

as improper marketing & advertising, and negative publicity in past regarding insurgencies and violent incidents. Let's try to summarize the findings till now, then we will try to proceed further.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Unique Geographical Location	Improper Marketing	Information boom	Negative publicity
Higher number of Footfall	Inadequate Advertising	Technological Savviness	Past Records of Insurgencies
Multiple modes of tourism	Poor Infrastructure	Under-utilized resources	Past Records of violent incidents
Unexplored sights			Frequent Natural calamities (floods)

Fig.: 1 SWOT analysis of the State of Assam Tourism

Domestic & Foreign Tourist inflow in Assam:

Assam is well known for its hospitality by the residents of the state. The state has enormous tourists' destinations to offer to a tourist along with local delicacies. But still the state is not able to maintain a required number of tourists flow to explore the state. The international tourist movement in the state illustrates fluctuating figures. The year 2019 end and 2020 is the most unpleasant year for tourism industry due to Anti CAA and Covid 19 Pandemic. The following table shows the inflow of both domestic and foreign tourist to the state from 2004 to 2019. The table reveals an escalating movement of both Indian and foreign tourist inflow:

Tourist arrival	Domestic	International
2004	22,86,630	7,285
2005	24,67,656	10,782
2006	32,68,657	11,151
2007	34,36,484	13,105
2008	36,17,306	14,426
2009	39,98,706	14,533
2010	40,50,924	15,157
2011	43,39,485	16,400
2012	45,11,407	17,542
2013	45,11,407	17,542
2014	46,84,527	17,638
2015	48,35,492	21,725
2016	54,91,507	24,673
2017	56,42,950	26,320
2018	59,34,791	31,739

2019*	47,10,971	25,739
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Table: 1 Upto Dec. 2019, Source: Directorate of Tourism

Post Covid 19 this weakness could be converted into strength by highlighting less explored tourist destinations of the state. Tourist will stay away from mass crowded tourist destinations, so for those Assam will be the best place to visit where they could find a peaceful environment surrounded by natural beauty. In a positive note, the Covid 19 Pandemic could be a blessing to disguise, as it is providing an opportunity to widen our tourist destinations.

Few of the less explored Tourist Destinations:

Travelling is an inherent part of human being; a traveller cannot be bunged from travelling those who love to explore new destinations. Once the Covid 19 pandemic stabilizes and the restriction made on travelling is unlocked, the movement of tourist will begin. Few of the new-fangled tourist destinations of Assam, which will attract the tourist to pay a visit to the state.

Sonoka is a beautiful village on the banks of mighty Brahmaputra. This little village near Mayong is 45 km away from Guwahati is an absolute paradise for nature lovers. One can see quite a large number of Hornbills there, but this site is not been explored as a birding site. This place also has two ancient caves of 1400BC. As per the history, these caves were captured by King Arimatta, his son Junghal Bolohu and grandson Ratna Singh from a man-eating demon.

PRP (Panbari Rubber Plantation) Valley is an Eco-Adventure cum recreational hub in Burha Mayong Par. A wide variety of trees and small birds and animals occupy the area, where Natural Rubber is still harvested. A small river runs throughout and one can enjoy the serenity and tranquility of the nature.

Sri Surya Pahar, a noted archaeological sited situated at the banks of Brahmaputra, 12 km southeast of Goalpara town, is a less explored tourist spot. The sacred Sri Surya Pahar is a stretch of Shivlingas approximately expanding up to kilometer. The lingas are said to be formed by stones and big rocks. It is believed that there are 99999lingas, engraved by Krishna Dvaipayana or commonly known as Ved Vyasa to make it a replica of Kashi or second Kashi. Sri Surjya Pahar is open to all religion and it merges three religions together with its myriad scriptures and antiques of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Jogighopa five rock cut caves is situated in Bongaigaon district. Although, most of the studies reveals that the caves are established during the Salasthamba period but each of the caves has a brick and mud masonry made platform, which was probably built during a later period. The art and architecture of the caves are great examples of the kind of art which were practiced during this time mainly in the western part of India. This interprets the fact that though Assam is far way but was not cut off from the artistic movement in other parts of the country. These rock caves are under the protection and preservation of the Archaeological Survey of India.

Kakoijana Reserve forest located in Abhayapuri, Bongaigaon District is a home for different troops having adult, juvenile and new born infants of Golden Langur, a rare species of Langur which is not found elsewhere in the world except in Indo-Bhutan Border areas are found in Kakoijana Reserve

Forest. It is spread around 2000 hectare and is also a habitat of one of the rarest and highly endangered species like Binturong, Jungle Fowl, Pangolin, Hornbill, Leopard, Porcupine, python, Barking Deer, Mongoose, Civets etc.

Raj Hawli in Gauripur was built by Raja Prabhat Chandra Barua which is a beautiful specimen of high architectural development of feudal age. He was the patron of music, arts, drama, fine arts, sports and unique culture of western Assam. He was a diehard fan of music and use to arrange musical nights in his Raj Hawli. He encouraged his granddaughter Pratima Pandey Barua for music and she becomes a legend of Goalparia lok Sangeet.

The Chief Minister of the state announced the intentions to upgrade the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary (well known among the tourist as Amazon Forest of the East) in Assam, which is a home to vast variety of flora and fauna, to a National Park. Government is also planning to promote river tourism in Guwahati and Umrongso in Dima Hasao District.

In addition to the above, ATDC in association with private participation is running 45 various projects/units. Some of the major projects are:

- Luxury Cruise Vessel between Kaziranga and Guwahati
- Amusement Park at Guwahati
- Ropeway project to connect Guwahati North and South bank.
- Luxury resorts, wayside amenities with all modern facilities etc. are in various stages of implementation.

Strategies for development of Tourism Industry in Assam post Covid 19:

It is very important to streamline the strategies before we proceed for any further implementation. The stake holders need to restructure some long term and short term plans and policies to overcome the present scenario facing by the tourism industry. The infrastructure and communication should be look upon before declaring it as a tourist destination. While planning new schemes and implementing policies, it is important to consider the long term sustainability of the tourism industry, along with the people of the region. The government and policy makers should also consider the community feedbacks and then pursue a well proof plan for the development. We need to emphasize on domestic tourism i.e.inter district and intra district tourism at the initial stages and in the later part international tourism, due to travel restrictions. The Covid 19 has created a fatigue among the people due to lockdown, so short travels will be a solution to relieve their stresses.

It is very important to keep in mind while implementing new policies that the authenticity and the originality of the product should not get hampered. Before advertising a new tourist destination, the utmost requirement of the area is to highlight the carrying capacity, so that later on it should not create any trouble. Assam got a huge potential to revive back from this pandemic, only need to adopt few strong strategies and administrative norms for all round development of the tourism industry.

1. The Assam Government should work out a plan for global partnership which could contribute in the socio-economic development of the state through foreign exchange and could also generate job opportunities. This will create a strong relationship between both the countries. It may also open the scope of export and import of the trades between the state and partnering countries.

2. It is essential for the government to initiate PPP model (public private partnership) to take the tourism industry into a global standard. This will definitely help the state by developing new infrastructures and projects, which will generate a huge footfall in state tourism.
3. Today's world is a world of digitalization; an electronic media will be the best medium for publicity and advertise centrally to sustain the tourism industry of the state. To achieve that government has to really work hard on brand positioning and professionally managed media planning. We cannot achieve without a proper brand road map.
4. Assam is lack of well conversed tourist guides, so more concentration should be given to train and develop the local people who resides near the tourist destination. They will be the perfect guide for their areas. The students those who have pursued tourism courses could also be recruited as a tourist guides.
5. Government has announced a subsidy if local entrepreneurs comes up with a good proposal to develop homestay concept in the state. Many tourists prefer homestay rather than staying at the hotels. This will help to promote the ethnic cuisine and showcase the life style of different tribes of Assam. As the present scenario demands in promoting domestic tourism, so this concept will be a platform for the local communities to generate revenue and promote local tourism.
6. Since, the education sector is also affected by the Covid 19 Pandemic, the state have an opportunity to emphasize on education tourism also. Students from different parts of the country visit Assam for higher education. In spite of having many top Universities and educational institutes, many of them across the globe are unaware of education facilities available in Assam. By using a proper medium of advertisement and PR initiatives this could be highlighted to attract more national and international students.

Conclusion:

Assam has the potential to revive its tourism industry post Covid 19 Pandemic. The study has revealed few strategies which could help to prosper the tourism industry of Assam. The idea of using the in transit visitors as the brand ambassadors for promotion of the tourism in the state of Assam seems to be an appropriate strategy, because the in transit visitor is going to stay for a very short duration in the state and it seems easier to impress anyone for a short duration in a limited time frame, this approach would help in brewing positive publicity about the state and eroding away the effects of negative publicity done in the past. The investment in infrastructure upgradation won't also be substantial and with all the under-utilized resources in the state, the system should be able to handle the surplus inflow of tourists in the state. The initiative has to be taken by Government to implement those strategies. To minimize unemployment problem and economic growth is only possible in the state by designing a full proof plan for the development of the tourism industry. Domestic tourism is the key factor of revival during this scenario but foreign investors will be an added advantage in the development of the tourism industry in long run. Local community developments through proper training, focusing on local cuisines are the important tools for reviving the tourism industry of the state. Moreover, a sense of belongingness from the residents of the state and the will to do it has to come from the Government to boost up the tourism industry.

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