



## PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION ON GROWTH OF TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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### Abstract

The eastern most boundary state Arunachal Pradesh, plays a significant role both geographically and geopolitically in this Indian subcontinent. The lush green forest cover, the adobe clouds of this Himalayan state make the surroundings with a spell bounding beauty and attracts thousands of visitors across the globe every year and make it a perfect tourist destination for nature lovers. The state with its diverse socio-economic background, intricate river morphology with distinct hydro-geomorphic properties with special emphasis to the study area make a phenomenal ambience to showcase its beauty in more diverse way. The present study identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) present in the successful growth of state tourism based on the primary survey on 200 respondents through a well-structured questionnaire. According to the respondents, the unique geographical diversity is found to be the major strength in the growth of tourism in the study area. But the lack of hotel facilities and increasing climatic variability are considered to be the major weakness and potential threat respectively for the successful growth of tourism in the study area; and conservation of natural ecosystem can be a major step for the tourism development in the state.

**Key words:** Tourism, hotel facilities, Arunachal Pradesh, forest cover, SWOT.

### 1.0 Introduction

In the sphere of international trade, tourism is considered to be a new terminology (Godara et al., 2020). Tourism is identified as the travelling and staying of people to the other places from their permanent places of residence for less than one consecutive year for leisure purpose

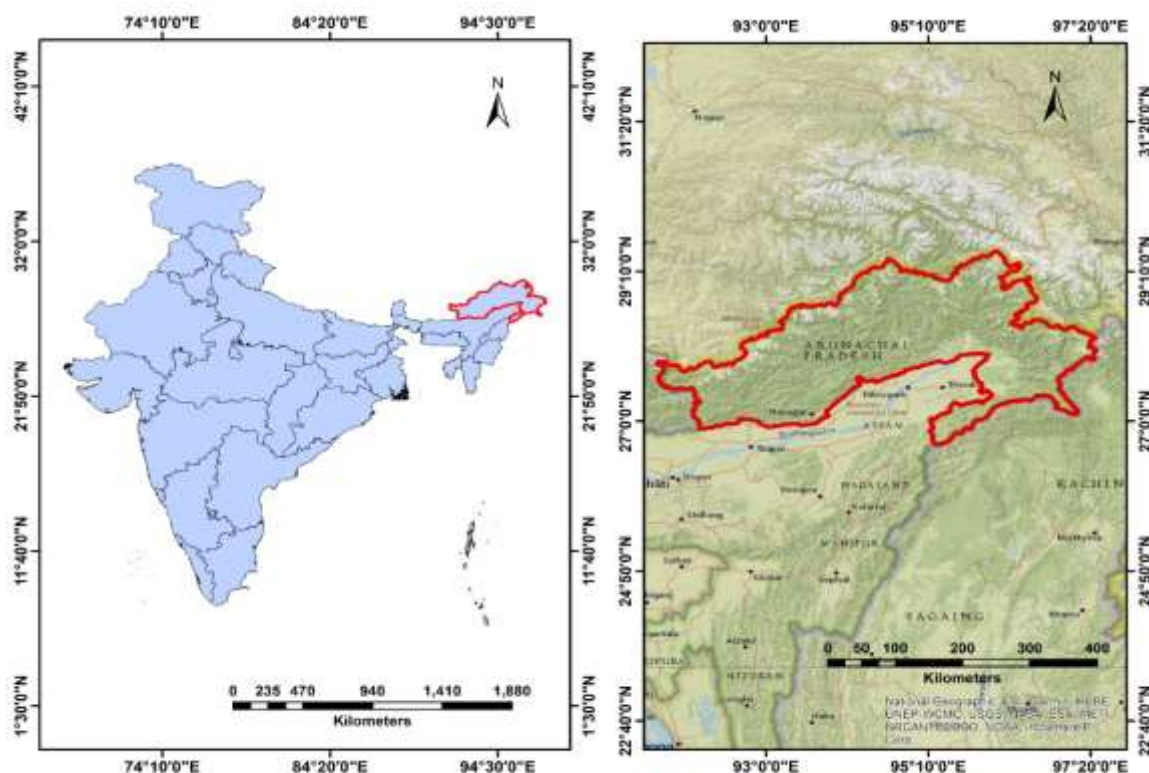
mainly (Bhutia, 2015). Tourism is also described as enriching and energizing activity by Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj (2017). The spending of leisure time by the salaried persons in India has become an interesting topic (Akihito, 2017). Tourism is considered to be the second largest foreign exchange earner in India (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017). Rural tourism has become a matter of interest in India and the tourists are visiting in the rural areas to explore the various dimensions of rural life (Halder, 2021). It has now become an emerging service sector too (Karulkar and Dalvi, 2018) and It has also the potentiality for the economic growth in India through structural transformation (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017).

Medical tourism is another potential sector which may enhance the growth of tourism in India as the revenues were estimated to reach 2.2 billion US\$ by 2012 from 333 million US\$ in 2007 (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017). Rural tourism is also acknowledged as the crucial tool of economic growth particularly in the rural areas of the country (Halder, 2021). Rural tourism can also be considered as an important sector which can alleviate poverty particularly in the rural areas (Kumar and Shekhar, 2020). Tourism industry has the capacity to absorb a large section of workers both skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017). But the major problem in the development of rural tourism is the loss of rural culture and its identity (Kumar and Shekhar, 2020).

For the promotion of international and domestic tourism in India, Government of India formed The Department of Tourism (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017). Tourism is now considered as the fastest growing economic sector in the country (Bhutia, 2015). This industry has also got attention due to its role in the agriculture and energy development, and poverty alleviation (Khan et al., 2020). But lack of infrastructure, poor transportation are some of the factors responsible for the lack of desired growth of tourism in the country (Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj, 2017). Hence, the capacity building programme is essential for the growth of this sector (Bhutia, 2015). It is also considered as a crucial source of outside currency earnings (Godara et al., 2020). The rich diversity of flora and fauna also attracts the attention of the foreign tourists (Goyal, 2018). Over the past several decades, tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (Baker and Unni, 2019). In the 1990s, the vitality of the private sectors have increased many a times in the growth of tourism industry in India (Akihito, 2017). The growth and development of any tourism place depends on the level of satisfaction of the tourists (Karulkar and Dalvi, 2018). The demand of the tourists is another criterion for the development of tourism (Bhattacharya, 2008). The salaried persons play a crucial role for the overall development of the tourism industry in the country (Akihito, 2017).

Sustainable tourism is found to be closely associated to the concept of sustainable development (VU et al., 2020). The term sustainable tourism indicates a balanced development from the socio-economic and cultural point of view without affecting the environment (Angelevska-Najdeskaa and Rakicevik, 2012). Tourism sustainability is not only responsible for the development of the area at present but also focuses on the development in future (VU et al., 2020). The tourism industry in India has grown to a considerable extent (Goyal, 2018). The state of Arunachal Pradesh has become a centre for tourists' attraction. The high physical and cultural diversities in the north-eastern part of India have the potentiality for the development of tourism sector in that area. In the 1960s, Assam is the pioneering state in the north-east to recognize tourism as the emerging sector of economy (Bhattacharya, 2008).

For the present study, the state of Arunachal Pradesh has been selected. It is the state in the north-eastern part of India. Due to its geographical location, the economic activities in the state is not self-sufficient. So the state has to depend on tourism sector for the overall development of economy. The agriculture of the state is also not found to be self-sufficient. Due to the undulations in the terrain characteristics the industrial development is also not very satisfactory. Also the political problems with the neighbouring countries make the socio-economic condition of the people in the state more vulnerable. The natural beauty created by the presence of uplands, valleys, rivers, forests etc. are ideal for the attraction of the tourists. So, in the present study an attempt has been made to identify the people's perception regarding the problems and prospect of tourism industry in the state of Arunachal Pradesh along with the strengths and opportunities for the overall growth of tourism in the state (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** Location map of the study area

### 1.1 Review of literatures

A large number of studies have identified the development of tourism potentials in the different parts of the world. Akihito (2017) identified the growth and development of tourism industry in India with special reference to Uttarakhand. Baker and Unni (2019) tried to identify the characteristics of cruise ship passengers to Caribbean destinations, and also the reason for their return for the land based vacations in the Caribbean. Bhutia (2015) studied the pros and cons

of sustainable tourism development in the Darjeeling Hills area of West Bengal and identified limited infrastructure along with unplanned growth of this sector in the study area. The identification of trend of tourism sector and the vitality of adopting sustainable tourism development strategy has been assessed by Bhattacharya (2008). Chandel et al. (2021) assessed the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on tourism sector with special reference to Rajasthan in India and identified that the geospatial technique has immense contribution in the detection of pre and post Covid-19 situation. The role of geospatial technique in the process of decision making was also investigated by him. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector of India was also investigated by Dogra (2020). His study supported the restructure of the approach by the tourism and hospitality sector viz., changing of the social behaviour of the people, mandatory wearing of mask when stepping out, maintenance of social distancing etc. VU et al. (2020) examined the factors which affect the sustainable tourism development in Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Vietnam and identified twelve groups of factors affecting the growth of sustainable tourism viz., socio-economic condition, quality of tourism, infrastructural development of the concerned area etc. Donyadideh (2013) studied the problems and obstacles responsible for the underdevelopment of tourism industry in Iran. Some of the important factors like poor infrastructural development, low quality of hospitality and entertainment facilities were identified by him as the major limiting factors for the poor development of tourism industry in Iran. Anandanatarajan and Antonyraj (2017) identified the growth of Indian tourism industry and its role in the overall economic development of the country.

Edward and George (2008) identified the tourism development with special reference to Kerala state of India. Their study also identified the strengths and weaknesses present in the prospect of tourism industry in the state. Godara et al. (2020) investigated the contribution of tourism industry in the Indian economy. Their study identified a positive relation between economic growth and foreign tourist revenue growth; but the relation is found to be very weak according to their study. Goyal (2018) highlighted the need of boosting tourism in India. His study also identified the government policies and regulations to boost the tourism sector in the country. Gupta et al. (2021) assessed the satisfaction level of different stakeholders viz., hoteliers, restaurants etc. in the Pushkar region of Rajasthan, as their satisfaction levels are considered as a core indicator of sustainable tourism. The study made by Halder (2021) examined the prospect of rural tourism for creating new business opportunities for the rural population. Karulkar and Dalvi (2018) identified the tourists' satisfaction about the tourism places of Sindhudurg and Palghar districts of Maharashtra. The study actually identified that the attitude and behaviour of local people is a less determining factor in the growth of any tourism place. Khan et al. (2020) identified the role of tourism industry in the development of emerging economies. Kumar and Shekhar (2020) assessed the role of innovation and technology in the development of rural tourism sector. The present study employs SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) and QSPM (quantitative strategic planning matrix) techniques for highlighting people's perception of Arunachal Pradesh regarding the growth of tourism in the state based on primary level survey through well-structured questionnaire by randomly selecting 200 people engaged directly in the tourism sector.

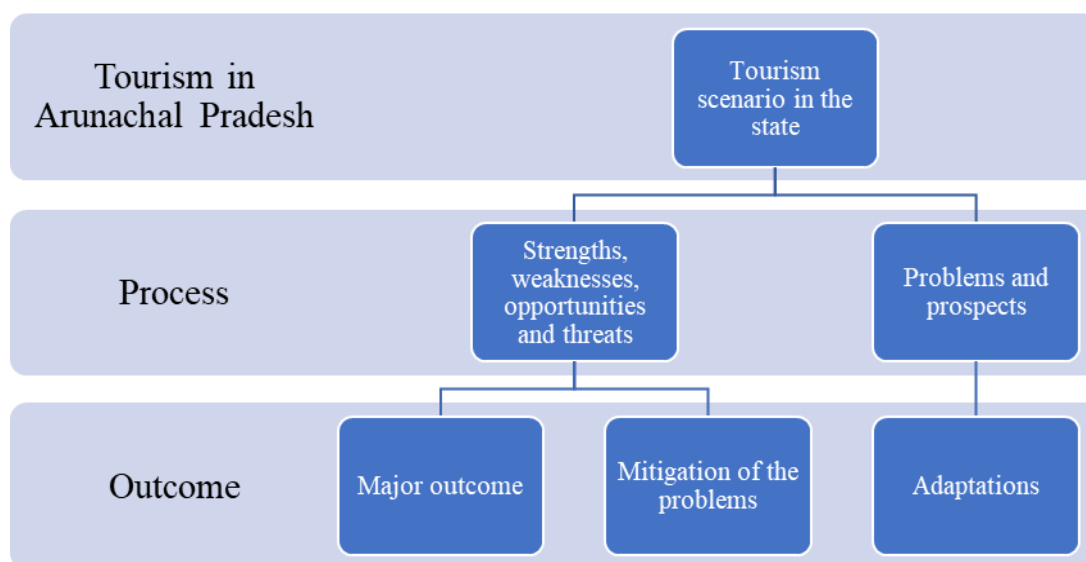
## 2.0 Materials and methods

The present study is based on both the primary and secondary observations. The primary data have been collected from the field survey. The secondary data of the study have been gathered from the district gazetteer and the published literatures. The research design of the study has been indicated in figure (Fig. 2).

In the present study, SWOT analysis technique has been employed to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, future possibilities and constraints in the growth of tourism sector in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in India. The sample size of 200 respondents including hoteliers (N=50), administrators (N=100) and researchers (N=50) have been selected by random sampling. On the basis of their responses, the SWOT matrix table has been generated and they are formulated to prepare QSPM matrix.

Conceptual elements of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) are as follows:

- A. Strength is the effective use and management of the potentials and resources of a system.
- B. Weaknesses are the limitations or lack of capacity of an organization's resources to accommodate them and to achieve a goal.
- C. Opportunities are the general environmental conditions that an organization reaches when it can support strategic competitiveness.
- D. A threat is a situation that affects activity in a typical environment.



**Fig. 2** Research design of the study

### a) External Factors Evaluation Matrix (EFEM)

- i) In the first stage, the opportunities and threats are listed.



ii) At this stage, each factor is assigned with a weightage which ranges from 0 to 1.

If a factor is assigned with a weightage of 0, it means that the factor is not important. On the other hand, the weightage of 1 indicates that the factor is most influential. The sum of all the weights should be equal to 1.

iii) At this stage, each factor is assigned with a rating. The value of which ranges between 1 and 4. For the threat factors, ratings 1 and 2 are used. If the assigned rating is 1, it will be designated as a major threat. And the minor threat is indicated by the rating of 2. Similarly, minor opportunity and major opportunity are represented by the ratings of 3 and 4 respectively.

iv) At the fourth stage, weightage of each factor is multiplied by the rating of that factor in order to get the weighted score of that particular factor.

v) Then, the weighted scores of all the factors are added to get the total weighted score.

#### **b) Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix (IFEM)**

i) At the first stage, all the strengths and weaknesses of a system are identified.

ii) Each factor is assigned with a weight, the value of which varies from 0 to 1. Zero(0) means the factor is not important; while one (1) suggests a very important factor.

iii) At this stage, each factor is assigned with a rating. The values of the rating range between 1 and 4. For the strength factors, ratings 3 and 4 are used. Broadly speaking, the minor and major strengths are assigned with the ratings of 3 and 4 respectively. Again, for the major and minor weaknesses, ratings 1 and 2 are used respectively.

iv) At this stage, each factor weightage is multiplied by the each factor rating in order to get the value of weighted score of that factor.

v) At the fifth stage, the weighted scores of all the factors are added to get the total weighted score.

For the identification of an ideal type of strategy, strategic position and action evaluation (SPACE) matrix is used. The SPACE matrix has been broken into four quadrants. These are namely aggressive, conservative, defensive and competitive. Based on the position of the total weighted score values of internal and external factors evaluation matrix in the SPACE matrix, type or nature of strategy is determined.

#### **c) Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM)**

The best strategy for a system is usually selected by the QSPM approach. The left column of the matrix consists of the internal and external factors. The top row of the matrix consists of the alternative strategies. Each alternative strategy is assigned with an attractiveness score (AS); the values of which range between 1 (not alternative) and 4 (highly alternative). The attractiveness scores determine the attractiveness of each factor to each alternative strategy. The weightage of each key factor is multiplied by the AS of each alternative feasible strategy in order to get the total attractiveness score (TAS) of each strategy. Now, TASs of each strategy are added to get the sum of total attractiveness scores (STASs). These STASs indicate the most attractive strategy of the business system.

### 3.0 Geographical settings of the study area

Arunachal Pradesh is located at the foot of the eastern Himalayas in northeast India. It covers an area of 83,743 square kilometers (32,333 square miles). 98% of the country's territory consists of land, 80% of which is forest and the remaining 2% is water. The river system in the region originates in the high Himalayas mainly from the Patkoy and Arakan ranges. Eventually they flow into the Brahmaputra River. Altitude ranges from mountains to plains, to more than 7000 m in the former and less than 300 m in the latter. The state shares borders with neighbouring countries like Bhutan, Tibet (China) and Burma.

### 3.1 Tourism characteristics in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh occupies an important position in the field of tourism. Each year from the different parts of the world people come to Arunachal Pradesh to enjoy the scenic beauty of the area. The present chapter is ideally based on the primary observations regarding the tourism characteristics of the state. It is found that the major tourism activity in the state is based on the environmental beauty associated with the large areal extent of the forest cover. The river morphology, scenic beauty of the area are all the dragging forces in the process of tourism.

### 3.2 Tourism based on major festivals

The state has a number of festivals which are celebrated during different times of the year. Majority of the festivals are based on their cultural beliefs and taboos. Even the tourists also enjoy the festivals. A number of tourists visit to Arunachal Pradesh to enjoy the festivals and also the involvement of local people in tourists' hospitality is found to be very high.

### 4.0 SWOT analysis of tourism in Arunachal Pradesh

The state of Arunachal Pradesh has so many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding their tourism prospect and development (Table 1). The strengths are already the factors which are present in the study area. Emphasis should be given to highlight and explore the opportunities in the field of tourism. The unique geographical diversity of the Arunachal Pradesh is found to be the most important strength in the tourism development of the state. This factor is assigned with the score of 4 and it gets the weight of 0.12 (Table 1). It is followed by the strength of young labour supply which is assigned with the score of 4 and it is marked by the weighted score of 0.48. The state has unique eco-tourism prospect but the potential factors for the growth of eco-tourism are less. Another important strength is the hospitality of the local people. The positive attitude by the government is a way forward regarding the tourism development of the area. But in the process of proper tourism development there are some weaknesses too. The major weakness is the lack of hotel facilities, inadequate management of the tourists' spots and lack of knowledge of sustainable tourism. All these weaknesses are assigned with the weighted score of 0.09. Another weakness is the large scale deforestation which is assigned with the weighted score of 0.08. These weaknesses should be properly

managed for the proper development of the tourism activity of the area. The state has so many opportunities regarding the tourism development in the study area. The first and foremost opportunity is the conservation of natural ecosystem which is assigned with the total score of 0.4 and it gets the significance value of 4. Over exploitation of natural resource is a fundamental threat in the proper development of the tourism sector in the study area. The increasing climate variability is another threat regarding the loss of tourism potentials.

#### 4.1 Quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM)

QSPM is an important tool for identifying the best strategy to deal with any kind of parameters. It is also an ideal tool for the identification of alternative strategy for any business system. On the basis of the intersected location of internal and external factors evaluation matrix, the position is found to be weakness threat strategy. The minimization of threats by overcoming the weaknesses will be the best strategy for the tourism development in Arunachal Pradesh. Seven weakness-threat (WT) strategies have been identified for overcoming the problems in the tourism sector of Arunachal Pradesh (Table 2). Out of those strategies increasing the hotel infrastructure is found to be the ideal strategy for the development of tourism in Arunachal Pradesh with the sum of total attractiveness score of 5.4 followed by the strategy of improvement of transportation infrastructure (Table 3).

**Table 1** SWOT analysis of tourism in Arunachal Pradesh

Strengths	Weight	Score	Weighted score
Unique geographical diversity	0.12	4	0.48
Supply of young labour force	0.06	4	0.24
Large number of hotels	0.04	3	0.12
Eco-tourism	0.02	3	0.06
Vast variety of natural resources in terms of land, water, rainfall, flora and fauna	0.03	3	0.09
Agro-ecological practices	0.02	3	0.06
Local people are very hospitable and tourist friendly	0.06	4	0.24
Positive attitude by the government to promote tourism	0.07	3	0.21
<b>Total</b>			<b>1.5</b>



Weaknesses	Weight	Score	Weighted score
Safety of the tourists	0.06	1	0.06
Lack of knowledge about sustainable tourism	0.09	1	0.09
Deforestation	0.04	2	0.08
Hotel facilities are not enough	0.09	1	0.09
Changing attitude of people during the pandemic	0.04	1	0.04
Research facilities in tourism is less	0.03	1	0.03
Inadequate management of tourist spots	0.09	1	0.09
Poor infrastructure of the hotels	0.04	2	0.08
Poor transportation facilities	0.05	2	0.1
Private sector investment in tourism is low	0.03	1	0.03
Absence of large markets in the tourist places	0.02	2	0.04
<b>Total</b>			<b>0.73</b>
<b>Total weighted score</b>			<b>2.23</b>

Opportunities	Weight	Score	Weighted score
Conservation of natural ecosystems	0.1	4	0.4
Private sector investment in tourism	0.04	3	0.12
Development of new tourism places	0.06	4	0.24
Increasing govt. support for the promotion of tourism	0.07	4	0.28
Growing interest of local people in domestic tourism	0.07	3	0.21
Opportunities of festival tourism	0.04	3	0.12
Prospect of eco-tourism	0.04	3	0.12
Opportunities for agro-ecological practices	0.03	4	0.12

Growing market facilities in the tourists' destinations	0.05	3	0.15
<b>Total</b>			<b>1.76</b>
<hr/>			
Threats	Weight	Score	Weighted score
Over exploitation of natural resources	0.05	2	0.1
Negative growth of tourism industry due to pandemic	0.09	1	0.09
Increasing climatic variability	0.1	1	0.1
Increasing political instability	0.06	1	0.06
Environmental degradation	0.07	1	0.07
Occurrences of natural disasters	0.05	2	0.1
Destruction of ethnic culture and rural identity	0.08	1	0.08
<b>Total</b>			<b>0.6</b>
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<b>Total weighted score</b>			<b>2.36</b>

**Table 2** Weakness threat strategies

WT 1	Increasing the hotel infrastructure
WT 2	Afforestation programme
WT 3	Improvement of transportation facilities
WT 4	Proper management of tourists' spots
WT 5	Initiative to encourage research facilities in tourism
WT 6	Development of market infrastructure, transportation etc.

**Table 3** Quantitative strategic planning matrix

SWOT	KEY FACTO R	WEIGH T	WT		WT		WT		WT		WT		WT		KEY FACTO R
			1		2		3		4		5		6		
			A	TA	A	TA	A	TA	A	TA	A	TA	A	TA	
			S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
Unique															
geographical diversity	S1	0.12	4	0.48	4	0.48	3	0.36	3	0.36	3	0.36	3	0.36	S1
Supply of young labour force	S2	0.06	2	0.12	3	0.18	2	0.12	1	0.06	2	0.12	1	0.06	S2
Large number of hotels	S3	0.04	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	S3
Eco-tourism	S4	0.02	3	0.06	3	0.06	4	0.08	3	0.06	3	0.06	3	0.06	S4
Vast variety of natural resources in terms of land, water, rainfall, flora and fauna	S5	0.03	3	0.09	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	3	0.09	2	0.06	S5
Agro- ecological practices	S6	0.02	2	0.04	2	0.04	3	0.06	2	0.04	3	0.06	3	0.06	S6
Local people are very hospitable and tourist friendly	S7	0.06	3	0.18	3	0.18	4	0.24	3	0.18	2	0.12	3	0.18	S7
Positive attitude by the government to promote tourism	S8	0.07	4	0.28	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	S8
Safety of the tourists	W1	0.06	3	0.18	2	0.12	2	0.12	1	0.06	2	0.12	3	0.18	W1

Lack of knowledge about sustainable tourism	W2	0.09	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	W2
Deforestation	W3	0.04	3	0.12	3	0.12	2	0.08	3	0.12	3	0.12	3	0.12	W3
Hotel facilities are not enough	W4	0.09	3	0.27	3	0.27	3	0.27	3	0.27	2	0.18	2	0.18	W4
Changing attitude of people during the pandemic	W5	0.04	3	0.12	2	0.08	3	0.12	2	0.08	3	0.12	3	0.12	W5
Research facilities in tourism is less	W6	0.03	2	0.06	3	0.09	3	0.09	2	0.06	3	0.09	2	0.06	W6
Inadequate management of tourist spots	W7	0.09	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	2	0.18	W7
Poor infrastructure of the hotels	W8	0.04	2	0.08	3	0.12	2	0.08	2	0.08	3	0.12	1	0.04	W8
Poor transportation facilities	W9	0.05	3	0.15	3	0.15	2	0.1	3	0.15	2	0.1	2	0.1	W9
Private sector investment in tourism is low	W10	0.03	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	3	0.09	W10
Absence of large markets in the tourist places	W11	0.02	3	0.06	1	0.02	3	0.06	3	0.06	2	0.04	3	0.06	W11
Conservation of natural ecosystems	O1	0.1	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2	O1

Private sector															
investment in	O2	0.04	3	0.12	2	0.08	3	0.12	3	0.12	3	0.12	3	0.12	O2
tourism															
Development															
of new tourism	O3	0.06	4	0.24	3	0.18	3	0.18	3	0.18	2	0.12	3	0.18	O3
places															
Increasing															
govt. support															
for the	O4	0.07	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	O4
promotion of															
tourism															
Growing															
interest of															
local people in	O5	0.07	2	0.14	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	3	0.21	2	0.14	O5
domestic															
tourism															
Opportunities															
of festival	O6	0.04	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	3	0.12	1	0.04	O6
tourism															
Prospect of															
eco-tourism	O7	0.04	1	0.04	1	0.04	2	0.08	3	0.12	2	0.08	2	0.08	O7
Opportunities															
for agro-															
ecological	O8	0.03	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	2	0.06	3	0.09	2	0.06	O8
practices															
Growing															
market															
facilities in the	O9	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.1	3	0.15	3	0.15	3	0.15	3	0.15	O9
tourists'															
destinations															
Over															
exploitation of															
natural	T1	0.05	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	T1
resources															
Negative															
growth of	T2	0.09	3	0.27	1	0.09	3	0.27	2	0.18	3	0.27	3	0.27	T2
tourism															

industry due to															
pandemic															
Increasing															
climatic	T3	0.1	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2	3	0.3	2	0.2	2	0.2	T3
variability															
Increasing															
political	T4	0.06	2	0.12	2	0.12	2	0.12	2	0.12	3	0.18	3	0.18	T4
instability															
Environmental															
degradation	T5	0.07	2	0.14	2	0.14	2	0.14	2	0.14	3	0.21	2	0.14	T5
Occurrences															
of natural	T6	0.05	2	0.1	3	0.15	2	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	3	0.15	T6
disasters															
Destruction of															
ethnic culture															
and rural	T7	0.08	3	0.24	3	0.24	3	0.24	3	0.24	3	0.24	3	0.24	T7
identity															
STAS				5.4		4.88		5.01		4.96		5.01		4.84	
PRIORITY				1		4		2		3		2		5	

## 5.0 Conclusion

Tourism often creates excessive pressure on natural resources through over-consumption specially in places where resources are already scarce. Tourism puts enormous stress on landscape, natural habitat, endangered species and bio-diversity above all. The image of tourism development from a sound and systematically perspective focuses more on charming and charismatic part than the ecosystem conservation. Creating groups of promoters is also a need today. This can be done through the expansion of tourism education services and the short-term development of human resources, which creates an organized tourism sector in the region that can provide tourism benefits to both tourists and local residents. Adoption of a sustainable tourism strategy is therefore essential to exploit the tourism potential of northeast India. The present study exclusively highlights the people's perception regarding the development of tourism in the study area through SWOT analysis. A number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been listed after consultation with the experts (government officials, academicians etc.) who are working on the issue for more than 10 years. Along with the unique geographical diversity, hospitality of the local people, positive attitude



by the government to promote tourism are some of the existing strengths for the successful growth of tourism in the study area. Considering the weaknesses and threats like lack of hotel facilities, poor transportation facilities, overexploitation of natural resources, increasing climatic variability the policy makers need to focus on the potential opportunities like increasing agro-ecological practices, growing market facilities, increasing private sector investment in tourism for its proper growth.

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