

RETROSPECT

Workshop on Making North East Tourism Ready

25 September 2012, New Delhi



L-R Mr N K Bharali, Chairman, CII North East Council and Director Oil India Ltd, Mr A S Lamba, Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, Mr U K Sangma Secretary, North Eastern Council, Government of India, Mr Laeta Umbrey, President, Association of Tour Operators of North East India and Mr Chandan Brahma, Hon'ble Minister of Transport and Tourism, Government of Assam

CII in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and the North Eastern Council organized a workshop on “Making the North Eastern Region Tourism Ready” at the Vigyan Bhawan Annexe in New Delhi on Tuesday, September 25, 2012.

This workshop sought to provide a platform for all stake holders to come together and evolve a Short term actionable agenda to promote North East as a potential tourism hub and explore ways to generate awareness of the region.

The workshop was well attended by senior officials from all Eight State Governments and private players such as NSDC, Domestic Tour Operators Association of India, Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism, Indian Association of Tour Operators, and Lemon Tree Hotels amongst others.

During the deliberation, Smooth Connectivity, Skill Development, Branded Hotels, Promotion of Regional and International Circuits and Experiential Marketing were emphasized for promotion of North East as a Tourism hub.

The North Eastern Council in partnership with the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), has developed an “Integrated Tourism Master Plan for the North Eastern Region. It unveiled a blueprint for the future which, in the first instance, recommends the development of 9 major tourism circuits in the region. The 10-year plan was prepared with tourism infrastructure and resources analysis, tourist survey and

market analysis leading to formulation of tourism strategy, tourist circuit and PPP strategies were highlighted. Mr A.S. Lamba, Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, said tourism in the northeast had not realised its potential due to infrastructure bottlenecks and poor marketing.

Highlighting the need to develop strategic approach Mr N K Bharali, Chairman CII North East Council said “The Transport and hotel industry itself generates construction activity and generates demand for a wide variety of goods and services with significant linkages to agriculture, horticulture and handicrafts”.



Delegates at the workshop

Plenary Sessions

The workshop was spread into FOUR plenary session's. Some of the key issues highlighted and opportunity envisaged were:

I. Highlighting Tourism Potential in North East : TCS Perspective

The session presented the Integrated Master Plan prepared by TATA Consultancy Services (TCS) in consultation by NEC and discussed short term actionable agenda for strengthening the Tourism Circuits. The session provided broad framework for the tourism development in the North East Region and discussed the need to create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India's unique civilization, heritage, and culture in partnership with states, private sector and other agencies.

"Time bound implementation of the plan with continuous monitoring by State and Central level agencies will lead to the development of the Tourism sector of the Region"

Mr H S Das,
Principal Secretary-Tourism,
Government of Assam



L-R Ms Priya M Varghese, Project Consultant, TATA Consultancy Services, Mr Madan Prasad Bezbaruah, Chairman, Board of Management, North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology and Mr. H.S. Das, Principal Secretary – Tourism, Government of Assam

Key Issues

- Accessibility and Travel
- Gaps in transportation and connectivity
- Weak air connectivity
- Lack of proper infrastructure
- Security concerns
- Development Issues (Accessibility, Infrastructure, Destination /Circuit development, tourist amenities, information systems etc)
- Management Issues – (Safety Issues and safety perception. Non/late implementation of Packages, Statewise Promotion without Regional Branding, lack of tourism service providers, Absence of visitor management plan etc).

Opportunity

- North Eastern region is a natural tourist destination with reservoir of rich natural resources & bio diversity
- One of the top 18 hotspots of the world
- Tourism infrastructure development including accommodation requirements, restaurants, Tour and Travel servicesm shopping facilities, ATM etc

II. Develop Infrastructure for promoting Tourism Circuits in the Region

The session discussed the key issues and probable short and medium term solutions for developing the infrastructure for promoting Tourism Circuits. During the deliberations there was a need felt for a close-knit coordination between all the eight states and a better understanding to be developed to understand the complexities of tax, investment and other fiscal policies in each of these states.

"States should recognise and promote Bed & Breakfast options as well as apartment hotels and there should be convergence with the National Urban Renewal Mission".

Mr D. Venkatesan,
Assistant Director General, Ministry of Tourism,
Government of India



L-R Mr. D. Venkatesan, Assistant Director General Ministry of Tourism Government of India, Mr Subash Goyal, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators, Lt Gen K M Seth (Retd.), Former Governor of Tripura and Chhattisgarh & President - Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism, Mr Subash Verma, President, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India, Mr Ashish Gupta, Member - CII National Council and Strategy Listener & Facilitator Dimensional Learning's, and Mr Muralidhar Rao, COO, Lemon Tree Premier and

Key Issues

- Government funds available, but not adequate
- Development of accommodation/facility hubs
- Facilitating private sector participation in development of infrastructure
- Upgradation of non-operational airports
- Monitoring and implementation of projects
- Develop Centre-State, State-State, Intra-State coordination
- The 25% subsidy given to the private partner is not sufficient. The figure has to be increased to at least 50% to attract private investments.

Opportunity

- Integrated sub projects (Regional circuits) implementation
- Developing 3-4 mega projects in each sub-region/state
- Development of international circuits with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan

Plenary Sessions

III. Destination Promotion

The session discussed various approaches to position North East India as paradise unexplored and the vast untapped potential of North East India as a Destination. The session also brainstormed alternative approaches in terms of product positioning and brand experience required in North East to position it on the tourism map of the country. It was felt that it is important to highlight the diversity and focus on each state's unique features and highlight it through various marketing strategies.

“It is a chicken and egg situation. Should the state invest first in infrastructure and wait for the tourist traffic to go up? Or should it be vice versa? There has to be a middle path somewhere.”

Mr. Mukul Gogoi,
Adviser - Tourism, Government of Assam



L-R Mr. Mukul Gogoi, Adviser - Tourism, Government of Assam, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, Commissioner-Tourism, Government of Manipur, Mrs. Nalini G Pradhan, Commissioner cum Secretary, Tourism & Civil Aviation Dept, Government of Sikkim, Mr Manoj Jalan, Chairman, CII Upper Assam State Zonal Council & Managing Director, Purvi Discovery Ltd and Mr. Ravi Luthra: Indian Association of Tour Operators and Owner, Landmark Tours & Travel

Key Issues

- Inadequate marketing of tourism products both in domestic and international market
- In-consistency in North East branding and unaware attractions
- Lack of proper market segmentation for domestic and foreign tourists

Opportunity

- Scope of Experiential tourism
- Influencing the Influencers – National Tour Operators, Travel Writers, Bloggers through Familiarization tours, travel marts etc.
- Branding and promotion through PR centric approach.
- Promotion of intra-regional travel within the North East
- Rich cultural heritage – celebration of various fairs and festivals
- Developing adventure tourism
- Branding and campaign through national advertisement, documentary film, video, clips, print posters, pamphlets, leaflets etc.

IV. Skill Development and Capacity Building

This Session discussed the skill development and capacity building requirements and the opportunities for building partnerships between development agencies to impart skill based training in the tourism sector.

“It is important to develop an intangible heritage. It is crucial to know how to interpret culture to the tourists and skills needed for this”.

Dr (Mrs) C T Misra,
Member Secretary,
Indian National Trust For Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)



L-R Mr Ranjan Choudhury, Principal - Program Development, National Skill Development Corporation, Mr Ramesh Verma, Head Strategic Alliances, Future Sharp Skills Ltd, Dr(Mrs) C T Misra, Member Secretary, Indian National Trust For Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and Mr Rajat Khawas, Head of Services & Government Affairs, Manipal City & Guilds and

Key Issues

- Develop Centre-State, State-State, Intra-State coordination
- Inadequate vocational skills
- Lack of adequate professional training facilities for human resource development and quality of services

Opportunity

- Upcoming sectors such as training in folk dance, theatre, Orchid Farming, Tea Tourism, handloom bamboo, and handicrafts.
- Integrating handicrafts into tourism
- Govt schemes available for sponsoring candidates for pilot training, aircraft maintenance and hospitality sector.
- Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus to rural tourism;
- Inherent skills in the youth of North East

Media Coverage

22 MAIL TODAY Special Initiative



Moves afoot to put N-E on tourist map

The North-East may be oozing charm yet it gets only a minuscule number of tourists. A multi-agency effort is on to end this regional imbalance

Hong Kong & Macau
 2 Nights Sheraton Macao ***** ₹ 64,999/-
 2 Nights Harbor Plaza Hotel***** ₹ 71,999/-

DUBAI Dhaka
 4 Nights ₹ 30,999/-
 5 Nights ₹ 34,999/-

THAILAND 4 Nights ₹ 28,999/-
 5 Nights ₹ 30,499/-

MAINTENANCE ₹ 15,999/-

EGYPT 5 Nights ₹ 74,999/-

AUSTRALIA 7 Nights ₹ 1,10,999/-

NEW ZEALAND 7 Nights ₹ 1,15,999/-

CANADA Eastern Journey 7 Nights ₹ 1,15,999/-

Hong Kong and Macau are the most popular tourist destinations in the world. The Government of Assam is planning to put the North-East on the tourist map. The Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has been set up to promote tourism in the region. The Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has been set up to promote tourism in the region. The Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has been set up to promote tourism in the region.

The Assam Tribune

74 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE NATION
 PUBLISHED DAILY, EXCEPT FRIDAY, FROM GUWAHATI, ASSAM
 RN-112757 TECHRG-1842/312-294 VOL. 74, NO. 263, GUWAHATI, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2012, P. 1

New policy to attract tourists ...

Pritya M Varghese of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said the north-east accounts for 7.5 per cent of the country's geographical area but attracts only 0.9 per cent of domestic tourists and 0.3 per cent of international tourists.

North-east can be new tourist destination, says Assam Tourism Minister

More than 20 countries were expected to take part. Pritya M Varghese of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said the north-east accounts for 7.5 per cent of the country's geographical area but attracts only 0.9 per cent of domestic tourists and 0.3 per cent of international tourists.

New policy to attract tourists to State

State Tourism Minister Chandan Brahma said the north-east accounts for 7.5 per cent of the country's geographical area but attracts only 0.9 per cent of domestic tourists and 0.3 per cent of international tourists.

London Olympics gives fresh impetus to sports in northeast

The London Olympics, the best ever for India, has been a great impetus to sports in the north-east. The Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has been set up to promote tourism in the region.

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AS Lamba, secretary, Ministry of Development of North East Region, said tourism in the north-east had not realised its potential due to infrastructure bottlenecks and poor marketing.

He said the master plan could be executed over the next 10 years depending on availability of funds, and nine tourist circuits were expected to be taken in first phase of its implementation.

Package to boost NE tourism on anvil

Lamba was speaking at a workshop on 'Making North East Tourism Ready' that the north-east has rich ethnic diversity, cultural heritage, wildlife and natural beauty and has potential to emerge as a favourite of tourists.

Northeast: A 'mini' India rich in natural resources, social capital

The indigenous people construct their roads with their resources, build hanging bridges - which, though not adequate for the use of four wheel vehicles, serve their own purposes well - to connect one hill with another, administer justice with the help of their customary laws, use herbal medicines to cure illnesses and seldom look for any help and intervention from the government even at the time of calamity.

Infrastructure bottlenecks and poor marketing hit hard NE tourism

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Infra hurdles hinder NE's tourism dreams

The North-East region, said the Assam government was coming up with a tourism policy and initiatives such as river taxis and a luxury cruises on the Brahmaputra River. He said Assam International Tourism Carnival will be held in January next year.

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