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# Tourism in North-Eastern states of India: - Implementing Sustainability Practices to Meet SDG Goals

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**Abstract:** India, a developing economy is focused and well poised towards attainment of the SDG Goals. Sustainable tourism practices of Northeast India throw light on the region's unique socio-economic and environmental challenges emphasizing the growth of responsible tourism while minimizing negative impacts. Tourism is one of the most important and fastest-growing industries in the world and a significant contributor to GDP, foreign exchange earnings and employment. The 2030 Agenda espoused by UN Member States in 2015 for Sustainable Development gave a roadmap to future emphasizing peace and prosperity for all. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognize the dire need of elimination of poverty, improving on health and education, reducing inequality, and spur economic growth along with tackling climate change came into effect on 1 January 2016 post adoption by 193 Member States. This paper aims to address the sustainable aspects and issues of tourism and propose effective strategies for inclusive development and meeting the Sustainable development Goals. Northeast India, known for its ethnic range, rich heritage, and complex socio-political landscape, has gradually started empowering Women to achieve gender equality. Tourism generates a handsome revenue especially in developing countries like India and generates direct, indirect and induced employment for uplifting the socioeconomic status of the locals and provide better life quality eliminating poverty. This paper identifies key factors like poor financial conditions, and Tourism ethics awareness of the tourists in Northeast Indian states. Despite of good literacy percentage, there are large number of Indigenous tribes in socio-economic exclusion list. "Global Code of Ethics" provides detailed guidelines to promote ethical and sustainable tourism. The study undergoes comparative analysis of the projects and schemes launched in Northeastern states to develop strategies for sustainable development and spreading Tourism ethics in remote areas by community engagement. This paper offers recommendations for further research towards comprehensive development in the region and achieving environmental conservation.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, environment conservation, Northeastern states India, Tourism ethics, Socio-Cultural Diversity.

## INTRODUCTION

India characterized as land of snake charmers, once known as "Sone ki Chidia" is still a developing

economy since last 75 years of Independence. 12th five-year plan laid the foundation and gradually accelerated the expansion of domestic and foreign

tourism for inclusive and sustainable growth of Tourism. The criteria and indicator for tour operator and hotels have been finalized under Sustainable tourism criteria for India (STCI). Development of Sustainable tourism involves progression of niche areas like Adventure, Medical and Wellness, Golf, Polo, Pilgrimage/Spiritual, Eco/wildlife/caravan Tourism India's focus towards attainment of the SDG Goals can be seen through the Campaigns like "Atithi devo bhava"- "Incredible India", "Heal in India" and various others which remain the heart of Indian Hospitality and Tourism for attracting foreign tourists. Creation of awareness by the government has not been highly successful due to lack of hygiene and sanitation as a major obstacle. Cleanliness drives at various important tourist destinations are carried out by Government, Non-Government and industry Organizations. Northeast India has rich enlightening diversity and pristine landscapes. It has lately perceived development in hospitality and tourism yet has upheld sustainability to the core. In Northeastern states, women population is almost equivalent to male population, but they still lag in terms of economic freedom, decision-making, and bargaining power. Recent equal opportunities of education and employment have fetched them confidence due to which they have contributed a lot in various fields from sports to journalism, science, to field of athletics and sports, and even culture and social change. Various projects have been initiated by Government of India to uplift Tourism of the North-eastern states. Tourism boosts the local economy by creating jobs opportunity and generating income by foreign exchange earnings. Due to high rate of unemployment in Northeastern sister States, social unrest was common. Tourism generates more than 10 per cent of world jobs and is also included as Sustainable Development Goal for its potential to create decent work but Tourism's role in job creation was often undervalued. According to UNWTO/UN Women research, the global rate of women entrepreneurs in 'hotels and restaurants' is comparatively higher i.e. (36%) than in all sectors combined (22%). Tourism generates jobs by developing skills and building infrastructure majorly apart from ancillary services from artisans, farmers and local produces. With the advancement of various schemes like Swadesh Darshan, PRASHAD and Act East policy, skilling marginalized communities to Promote Inclusive Growth has taken leap. Tourism in Northeast India has seen significant growth, contributing the economic development of the region. Domestic, Inbound and outbound tourism has increased disposable incomes of middle class and generated approx. 14% of total employment out of which approximately 40 million directly employed and 48 million indirectly employed or induced. The 2.5% increase in facilities related to tourist accommodation shows the region's potential and the

government's efforts to promote tourism as a growth engine. The study encompasses role of sustainable tourism towards preserving local cultures, protecting and upgrading biodiversity, nurturing community engagement in Northeast India for sustainable culture preservation, conservation of environment, and unique attractions. India's ties with Southeast Asia, also highlights the strategic importance of Northeast India in India's foreign policy. Organizations raising awareness, mobilizing communities, and providing legal aid to women are Northeast Network, All Assam Women's Conference, and Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network. Religion plays a central role in shaping the socio-cultural landscape of the region. Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam are the major religions, but many indigenous tribal faiths continue to thrive, particularly in areas like Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh. The coexistence of these religions is an important aspect of Northeast India's pluralism, with festivals such as Bihu in Assam, Christmas in Nagaland, and Buddha Jayanti in Arunachal Pradesh exemplifying the region's religious tolerance and harmony. Language is another pillar of Northeast India's diversity. Over 220 languages are spoken, many of which are not found elsewhere in India. Assamese, Manipuri, and Khasi are among the major regional languages, but numerous tribal languages are also integral to local communication. In Northeast India, the complexities of identity and power dynamics can be observed in intersectionality where One of the primary elements of intersection remains ethnicity and identity because Northeastern states have diverse range of ethnic groups, indigenous tribes, scheduled castes, and communities with varied linguistic and cultural identities. E.g., indigenous communities in states like Nagaland and Mizoram, who have long struggled for recognition of their distinct identities, often face challenges related to land rights, political autonomy, and cultural preservation.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

- 1). To study the latest status of Northeastern states towards SDG Goals and sustainable tourism.
- 2). To compare projects sanctioned under various government schemes in Northeastern states
- 3). To perform PESTEL analysis (Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) on factors affecting the Progress of SDG Goals of Northeastern states of India

#### **Literature review.**

"Zurab Pololikashvili," UN Tourism Secretary-General (August 2020) who shared Global Code of Ethics for Tourism states that "Tourism is a genuine driver of solidarity and development and emphasized that if the potential of Tourism is fully harnessed it has power to bring people and communities together,

by abiding the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This way tourism can keep delivering better opportunities and sustainable development for millions across the globe."

Poya Moli (2008) emphasized the importance of sustainability in tourism industry and work for preservation and upgradation of cultural heritage while handling environmental issues in tourism industry to increase the attractiveness of tourism industry.

Acc to Buckley 'sustainable tourism' started with the basic framework of tourism industry, financial implications, environmental impact and economic viewpoint.

Dhanasekaran (2005) stressed the urgent need to develop a modern mechanism to improve quality of life and improving the natural environment as well as cultural heritage of community. Sustainable development of tourism requires the protection, development and improvement in several elements of the environment. He also stressed the vitality of integrating tourism development at National planning level for environmental development.

Dr. Nigaar S. Patel accentuated the role of Ethics in Tourism Industry as economically important and emphasized that the natural beauty of country can be retained, the series of festivals can be cherished, and history of the heritage sites can be admired if sustainable Practices and Tourism ethics are Practiced. He added that the area receiving mass tourism faces problems like destruction of environment, social and cultural values impaired and messed up. He also suggested and underlined sustainable and responsible tourism as a way out which may strike a balance among financial, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the local community by ensuring constant feedback.

Lucrative tourism industry attracts foreign employees who take prestigious higher managerial designations and the residents do the lower labor work with low wages, low training opportunity, long working hours, no job security, over dependence on tips and low future perspectives (ILO, 2001).

Henderson, J.C., A. Koh, S. Sterlyn & M. Y. Sallim (2001); in their research "Urban Environmental and Nature-Based Attractions: Green Tourism in Singapore" underscored the inclination of twenty first century tourist towards environment and sustainability, they also added that the tourist will travel and spend more but expect more safety and security at the destination.

Godfrey K.B., (1998) emphasized "The attitude of public sector "tourism managers" towards the

principles of sustainable tourism and realized need of integrating the strategic land utilization planning and community involvement to divert from the traditional tourism planning and move towards sustainable tourism.

Tsartas (1996) states that, as tourism industry is an important source of revenue especially in rural areas, it shifts the people's preference from agriculture and allied activities. It also results in creation of "new labor force", "new production structure" etc. As the demand for tourism related products increases, the production pattern of this society becomes neither modernized nor diversified and the future of the region becomes precarious.

Costa, (1988) expressed that Tourism brings in cultural changes by transforming cultural heritage and values resulting in standardization and commercialization of places of cultural heritage and increased attraction among tourists. Many cultural values, religious beliefs and mannerism of residents are adopted to fulfill the expectation and to save the time of tourists. The cultural heritage is also exploited and gradually it becomes a commercial object in tourism industry. It is also accompanied by increase in environmental pollution, and even destructive graffiti or vandalisms on traditional architecture and superstructure.

### **Methodology adopted for study.**

The Methodology adopted in the study is elaborative secondary research concentrated to the region and focused on Progress of SDG Goals in Northeastern states. The study also understands and examines the projects sanctioned under various government schemes towards progressing towards Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable tourism in Northeastern states. The PESTEL analysis (Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) on factors affecting the Progress of SDG Goals of Northeastern states of India will help to concentrate on the further development Gaps and suggest ways to accelerate the Progress towards Meeting the SDG deadlines.

### **FOCUSSED STUDY**

#### **Latest status of Northeastern states towards SDG Goals and sustainable tourism**

The SDG share an inclusive vision for the Northeast where diverse Geography, diversity and development intertwine towards Progress towards meeting SDG goals. Niti Ayog and Ministry of development of northeastern region have released 2nd edition of NER district Index on 7th July 2025. 121 out of 131 districts of northeast were included in the index out of which 103 i.e 85% are now classified as front runners. All the districts of Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura are front Runners and Hnathial (Mizoram)

recorded highest score at 81.43. The Sustainable development goals cover a wide range of areas from health and education to economy, environment and governance. Each goal has many interlinked targets making it difficult in forming and mapping them in distinct categories.

Press Information Bureau (Government of India) July 2025, on NER states and its districts Ranks them based on their relative performance across the 15 SDGs as Goal 14 and Goal 17 have limited relevance. The index used 84 indicators to measure progress out of which 41 are based on data from Union Government and 43 from state level systems making the results more credible and useful for further planning and development. The SDG classification system used was based on percentage i.e. a district will be categorized as aspirant if the scores are below

50, performer if the range is from above 50 and below 65, front runner if the score if above 65 till 99.99 looking into the perspectives and scope of maximum development and Achiever if it has reached 100.

The Region's GSDP at current prices is INR 5.75 lakh crore in FY 2021-22, Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of GSDP of North-eastern States grew at 08.17% from FY2015 to FY2022. The per capita income for the North-eastern region was Rs. 1,55,562 in the financial year 2019-20. The region has a total of 13640 km of national highways and 20119 km of state highways, and 2,657 km of major district roads. The average road density per 1000 Sq Km of area is 2258.5 Km against the national average of 1926.02 Km.

#### Progress of Northeast towards 17 SDGs Goals

SDG	Aim of the Goal	Objectives	2025 SDG Status in Northeastern states
SDG 1:- No Poverty	To Mobilize resources and create pro-poor and gender-sensitive policy frameworks by 2030 to End extreme poverty of all kinds.	Implementing protection system to ensure equal rights to resources. Reduce poverty-related vulnerability to climate change, extreme weather events.	Stronger outreach and support systems are in place for Poverty reduction due to which Districts in the Front Runner category have increased from 21 to 36. Government has Implemented numerous Initiatives to reduce poverty like the "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMA)" and the "National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)" aim to provide affordable housing and employment opportunities to the underprivileged.
SDG 2:- Zero Hunger	"Zero Hunger" Goal strives to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. 1/3 <sup>rd</sup> of women population at reproductive age experience Anemia due to nutritional deficiencies.	End hunger and all forms of malnutrition, multiply agricultural productivity and income of small-scale food producers. Apply sustainable food production/agricultural practices and maintain genetic food diversity.	Nutritional support schemes include direct nutrition schemes (ICDS, Poshan Abhiyan), food security programs (TPDS, PM POSHAN), and enabling programs like health missions and creche services due to which Front Runner districts rose from 49 to 83,
SDG 3:- Good Health and Well-Being	Targets ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages by improving life expectancy and reducing common yet fatal child and maternal diseases	Reduce mortality by ending endemics, epidemics and pandemics. Reduce deaths caused due to traffic-related injuries, substance abuse, pollution and contamination. Ensure universal health coverage and improve life expectancy.	Owing to better access to health services, Front Runner districts jumped from 14 to 48
SDG 4:-	To ensure inclusive and	Ensure quality primary and	Schemes like the "Samagra Shiksha

Quality Education	equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.	secondary education for better childhood development. Ensure gender equality in Higher education and making it affordable and equally accessible. Increase skills in youth and promote sustainable development in education.	Abhiyan”, focuses on improving school infrastructure, teacher training, and student learning outcomes due to which Districts in the Front Runner category have more than doubled, rising from 36 to 80
SDG 5: Gender Equality	To achieve gender equality and empower women to work and contribute in community and management bodies and government. To stop domestic violence on women so that they Gain respect and recognition in society.	Ensure equal rights, health care and opportunities for leadership and value unpaid care and domestic work offered by them to the family. Eradicate Gender discrimination to eliminate all forms of violence or harmful practices against women.	This goal has seen broad gains, with 112 districts now in the Front Runner category, up from 71. Policies such as the “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” and various programs related to women empowerment programs.
SDG 6:- Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensures safe water for drinking, sanitation, hygiene, and its sustainable management for water and sanitation	Ensure equal access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene by reducing water pollution and developing water-use efficiency. Integrate water-resource management and protect ecosystems dependent on water.	Front Runner districts rose from 81 to 114. Programmes like Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission have played a key role in this shift. “The Swachh Bharat Mission” is a major initiative aimed at improving sanitation and hygiene In Northeast, by focusing on the construction of toilets and promoting clean practices, this program seeks to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation facilities.
SDG 7:- Affordable and Clean Energy	To ensure affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy, electricity, natural gas etc. xs	Increase use of renewable energy and enhance international cooperation for technological research and development to access and upgrade clean energy use efficiency in developing countries for sustainable energy services.	In Northeast, ambitious targets for solar and wind energy expansion through initiatives like the “National Solar Mission and the wind energy program”. The number of Achiever districts has doubled from 7 to 14. This goal reflects progress in village electrification and clean cooking fuel use
SDG 8:- Decent Work and Economic Growth	To promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, decent work and productive employment.	To increase working youth population for productive employment by protecting labor rights and to end forced labor. To Promote tourism by improving resources and grant access to financial institution for Sustained	Front Runner districts have increased significantly, from 69 to 111. This indicates improvement and better access to economic opportunities and employment.

		economic growth and increase in economic productivity.	
SDG 9:- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	Strengthening rural connectivity to Innovate Resilient infrastructure for inclusive and sustainable industrialization.	Increasing research and development investment, and manufacturing high tech products to stabilize infrastructure.  Increased access for small-scale industries in improving technology	The number of Front Runner districts rose from 55 to 92, showing better connectivity and infrastructure planning.
SDG 10:- Reduced Inequalities	Reducing inequalities in terms of caste, color, creed and Income within and among countries.	Strengthening of policies to reduce all forms of inequality for better financial markets and institution regulation.	In Northeast, the refugee crises, and inequality indexes show that certain areas are highly beneficial to live in than others. <b>Due to which Front Runner districts are 43 as against 59 in the last index, while Aspirant districts are 33 as against 12. The report calls for focused attention on relevant indicators.</b>
SDG 11:- Sustainable Cities and Communities	Application of national urban policies in Making cities and human settlements safer, resilient, and sustainable due to fair access to public spaces, convenient public transportation, and the reduction of slums.	safe and sustainable urbanization and human settlement protecting cultures.  Monitoring air quality and waste management to reduce negative city impact, and to provide green public space.  Protecting the poor and vulnerable from death by natural disasters, with Sustainable housing, transportation.	Northeast is focusing on infrastructure improvements, green spaces, and smart technologies, the mission seeks to enhance the quality of urban life.
SDG 12:- Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensuring Responsible consumption and production patterns, as a goal, to reduce climate change and negative environmental impacts.	implementing a 10-year framework program for sustainable development and consumption, achieving sustainable management.  managing food and chemicals waste in an environmentally responsible way and encourage sustainable practices to be in harmony with nature	Front Runner districts declined from 67 to 51. Aspirant districts remain at 18, indicating the <b>need to raise awareness on responsible consumption.</b>
SDG 13:- Climate Action	To control the adversities of climatic changes due to increasing Temperature and Rising greenhouse gas emissions.	Integrate climate related policies into national policies, to raise adverse effects of climate change.  Climate action involves the fight against climate change and its impacts.	Four districts have achieved a perfect score. The number of Front Runners rose from 36 to 59. But 49 districts remain in the Aspirant category, showing the need for stronger climate strategies. The country's "National Action Plan on Climate Change" outlines strategies for mitigating climate impacts and

			promoting sustainable practices like commitments to reduce carbon emissions and enhance climate resilience.
SDG 14:- Life Below Water	Need of conserving oceans, seas and marine resources for food, tourism, recreational activities, and global trade.	For Sustainable development, preventing pollution and to safeguard the life below water protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, minimizing ocean acidification through impact reduction, protecting the fishing market, conserving marine and coastal areas, and overfishing control.	Not applicable for the Northeastern states
SDG 15:- Life on Land	To promote health of land life by protecting, restoring, and promoting land ecosystems, managing forests sustainably. Combatting desertification, reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.	Ensuring health and sustainable management of different ecosystems like forests, freshwater mountains, deserts and other natural habitats. Ending poaching and protected species trafficking and integrating biodiversity values into national planning.	Achiever districts have increased from 12 to 26. The Front Runner group now includes 87 districts, showing greater attention to forest and biodiversity conservation.
SDG 16:- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	To reduce conflict, insecurity, and weak institutions by means of promoting peace and inclusivity for sustainable development and justice for all.	To reduce financial crime, reduce corruption and end all forms of violence or death and promote law at national and international levels. Develop transparent institutions to ensure public access to information and freedom rights.	There is steady improvement, with Front Runner districts rising from 64 to 90. However, Aspirant districts have also increased slightly, from 1 to 5.
SDG 17:- Partnership for the Goals	Reducing conflict, insecurity, and weak institutions	promoting peace and inclusivity for sustainable development and justice for all	Northeastern states have limited relevance at the district level.

### **Comparison of projects sanctioned under Government schemes in Northeastern states**

The study critically observes the details of projects sanctioned under the above-mentioned schemes in Northeastern region under various schemes.

	Swadesh darshan scheme				under PRASHAD scheme			Swadesh darshan 2.0 scheme IN 2024	
state/UT	Name of the Project Sanction year 2015-16	Amt (CR)	Name of the Project and Sanction year 2016-17	Amt (CR)			Amt (CR)		Amt (CR)
Arunachal Pradesh	Northeast circuit -Development of Bhalukpong-Bomdila and	49.8	Northeast circuit-Development of Nafra- Seppa-	96.7	Development of Parshuram Kund	2020-21	37.9	Unlok Nacho Expedition, Mechuka	14.02,18.48 &12.75

	Tawang in 2014-15		Pappu,Pasa, Pakke Valleys-Sangdupota-New Sagalee-Ziro- Yomcha in 2015-16					cultural Haat, and Adventure Park	
Assam	wildlife circuit-Development of Manas–Probitora–Nameri–Kaziranga–Dibru–Saikhowa	94.7	Heritage circuit-Development of Tezpur – Majuli –Sibsagar	91	Development of Pilgrimage amenities at Kamakhya Temple	2015-16	29.8	Kokrajhar wetland experience, Raimagining Cinnamara Tea Estate	26.67 and 23.91
Mizoram	Northeast circuit-Development of Thenzawl & South Zote, District Serchhip and Reiek.	92.3	Eco circuit-Development of Eco-Adventure Circuit Aizawl - Rawpuichhip - Khawhphawp - Lengpui - Chatlang-Sakawrhmutuaitlang- Muthee - Beratlawng - Tuirial Airfield - Hmuifang	66.4	Development of Infrastructure for Pilgrimage and Heritage Tourism at Chite Vang, Zuangtai, Reiek and Aizawl	2022-23	44.9		
Nagaland	Tribal circuit-Development of Tribal Circuit PerenKohima-Wokha	97.4	Tribal circuit-Development of Mokokchung-Tuensang-Mon	98.1	Development of Pilgrimage Infrastructure at Molungki mong, Noksen Church, Aizuto, Wokha and Kohima and Development of Pilgrimage Tourism Infrastructure at Zunheboto	2018-19 & 2022-23	25.2 & 18.18	Eco-Tourism Exp at Chumouke dima viewpoint and Tribal cultural experience at Midway Retreat.	7.87 and 21.56

Sikkim	Northeast circuit- Development of Tourist Circuit linking Rangpo (entry) – Rorathang- AritarPhadamchen- Nathang- Sherathang- Tsongmo- Gangtok- Phodong- ManganLachung -Yumthang- Lachen- ThanguGurudongmer- Mangan- Gangtok- TuminLingee- Singtam (exit)	98.1	Northeast circuit- Development of Tourist Circuit Linking Singtam- Maka-Temi- BermoikTokelPhongia- Namchi –Jorthang- Okharey- Sombaria- Daramdin- Jorethang- Melli (Exit)	95.3	Development of Pilgrimage Facilitation at Four Patron Saints, Yuksom	2020-21	33.3	Eco-wellness Experience at Yuksom Cluster Gyalshing and Gangtok cultural village	15.40 and 22.59
Manipur	Northeast circuit- Development of Tourist Circuit in Manipur: Imphal- Khongjom	72.2	Spiritual circuit- Development of Shri Govindajee Temple, Shri BijoyGovindajee Temple – Shri Gopinath Temple – Shri Bungshibodon, Temple – Shri Kaina Temple	45.3					
Tripura	Northeast circuit- Development of Agartala – Sipahijala – Melaghar – Udaipur – AmarpurTirtha mukh- Mandirghat- DumboorNarikel Kunja- Gandachara- Ambassa	82.9	Northeast circuit- Development of SurmaCherra- Unakoti-Jampui Hills- Gunabati – Bhunaneshwari- Neermahal- Boxanagar- ChottakholaPila k- Avangchaarra in 2018-19	44.8	Development of Tripura Sundari Temple	2020-21	34.4		
Meghalaya	Northeast circuit- Development of Umiam (Lake View), ULumSohpetbne ng- Mawdiangdiang –Orchid Lake	99.1	Northeast circuit- Development of West Khasi Hills (Nongkhlaw – KremTiro – Khudoi&Kohman g Falls – Khri	85	Development of Pilgrimage Facilitation at Nongswali a Church, Nartiang Shakti	2020-21	29.3	Waterfall trails and Meghalaya n Age Cave Experience in Sohra	27.84 and 32.45

	Resort		River-Mawthadraishan, Shillong), Jaintia Hills, (Krang Suri Falls-Shyrmanglooksi), Garo Hills (Nokrek Reserve, KattaBeel, Siju Caves) in 2018-19		Peeth, Aitnar Pool and Charantala Kali Temple				
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**PESTEL framework (Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) on factors affecting the Progress of SDG Goals of Northeastern states of India**

Political	<u>Fiscal policy, Government activity, conflicts/ help, Taxes</u>	The political Boundaries of Northeast comprises of eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. These states cover an area of 2,63,179 sq. k.m. approximately eight per cent of the country's total geographical area and connected via a very 22 km land strip Siliguri Corridor, West Bengal commonly known as chicken neck but these sister states is surrounded by neighboring countries like China (1395 k.m), Bhutan (455 k.m), Myanmar (1640 k.m), Bangladesh (1596 k.m) and Nepal (97 k.m). Tourism has suffered a lot due to insurgency, political and social instability in the region and difficult terrain that hinders growth and development of wider roads or expressways.
Economic	<u>GDP, Employment rate, exchange rate, Inflation.</u>	According to IMF data released in Oct 2024, India ranked fifth economy globally in terms of GDP with a margin behind Japan. The leaders in terms of GDP are America (US\$29.2 trillion), China (US\$18.3 trillion) and Germany (US\$4.7 trillion). Recently, India has become 4th-largest economy by overtaking Japan recently due to strong urban demand, domestic consumption and structural reforms and the role of Northeast in this development is acknowledgeable. India's real GDP grew 8.2 % in 2nd quarter of 2025-26 and aims to become a developed country by 2047. This will require at least 7.5% annual growth in per capita income and a 9% GDP growth. Many Researchers and analysts estimated India to surpass Japan in 2025 and Germany after a year to become the third largest economy in the world.
Social	<u>Demographic variables, Cultural factor, religion, lifestyle</u>	Northeastern states also have unique attractions and unexplored cites blessed with scenic beauty are prime attractions for tourists from various parts of the world. Places like shillong" Known as scotland of east to Land of dawn lit mountains of Arunanchal Pradesh which has Cultural gems like Twang Monastery and serene valleys like Ziro apart from Namdhapa National Park. Tsomgo lake and Gurudongmar lake (High altitude Glacier Lake), Nathula pass and Yumthang valley of flowers in Sikkim. Mawphlang Sacred Forest (Meghalaya), Umiam Lake (Meghalaya), "cherrapunjee (shora), and Asia's cleanest village Mawlynnong, cleanest Dwaki river, and living root bridges, etc There are also various historical places which are popular among tourist like Kaziranga wildlife sanctuary in assam for one horned rhinos.

		Pobitra wildlife sanctuary (Assam), Deepor Beel (Assam) the only freshwater island Majauli, sualkuchi for famous mughal silk, Hajo (Pilgrimage site, Kamakhya and Umananda temple (spiritual tourism), Saraighat, Karbi anglong, cultural landscapes of Mizoram and Phawangpui blue mountains, the highest peak of which is a sacred site. Rich tribal culture and tradition of Kohima and Mokochung a part from Dzukou valley in Nagaland. The Royal Heritage of Tripura can be seen in Ujjayanta palace. Unique floating islands like Loktak lake in Manipur are also among the famous tourist destinations of the country.
Technological	<u>Technological access, Infrastructure, research. Technology Trends</u>	Technological Implementation of government schemes is tough in Northeast India area except Assam because of the mountainous region. The Northeast Region of India earlier could not receive much attention from both the central and state governments which hampered the regional development and thus lacks proper infrastructure developments. The Northeast India is geographically contiguous to Myanmar, which is a part of South-East Asia. India's economic relations with ASEAN countries have witnessed dramatic growth. India's Act East Policy is closely linked with its long-term vision of developing the Northeast Region which is considered as a gateway to Southeast Asia for strengthening connectivity with ASEAN region through trade, culture, tourism, people-to-people contacts and physical infrastructures. India's Act East policy is in harmony with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific and South Korea's New Southern Policy which is evident from the various development projects in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. owing to Japan's interests in India's Northeast Region the India-Japan Act East Forum must identify projects for the economic advancement of the region, with focus on connectivity projects, disaster management and environment and people-to-people contacts through tourism and culture.
Environmental	<u>Environmental Policies, recycling, consumption trends, Production Processes</u>	Northeast Region of India is blessed with scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, rare wildlife, historical sites, distinct cultural and ethnic heritage and warm hospitality. The region offers unforgettable Wildlife Tourism, Tea & Golf Tourism, River Tourism, Religious & Spiritual Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Cultural & Culinary Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Agro. & Rural Tourism and Offbeat Destinations.
Legal	<u>Wages Rights, Job security, regulations</u>	Tourism industry should be developed with proper planning and legislative framework to minimize rule violations by tourists and eliminate environmental, cultural, social and ethical issues. Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization of tourism industry raised the level and standards of competition incorporating more uncertainties, global players and flexible working conditions creating problem for unskilled workforce which the tourism industry utilized and cherished for profitability. Administrative procedures relating to inner line permits fall within the competence of States to facilitate the travel and access the areas of the tribal population. Administrative procedures relating to border crossings fall within the purview of National interest and relations or result from international agreements, such as visas or health and customs formalities to facilitate the maximum freedom of travel and widespread access to international tourism.

## **ANALYSIS**

Tourism in India is promoted by Ministry of Tourism via various events, social media activities and campaigns. Incredible India, a Digital Portal provides information on various tourist destinations of the country. Ministry of Tourism has launched “Incredible India Content Hub” ([www.incredibleindia.gov.in](http://www.incredibleindia.gov.in)) an easily accessible digital repository of high-quality images, films, brochures and newsletters for industry stakeholders across the globe like tour operators, travel agents and media operators with an aim to amplify Incredible India in all their marketing and promotional efforts. Ministry of Tourism manages International Tourism Mart (ITM) in the Northeastern States of India to attract both Domestic and International Guests. The latest ITM was held at SAP Grounds, Pangthang, Gangtok, Sikkim on 13th-16th November 2025 to showcase the immense tourism potential of Northeastern Region- The “Astha Lakshmi” of India. The Mart presents the region as a unified tourism destination providing diverse experiences like sustainable tourism, responsible and community tourism, ecotourism, wellness, rural, cultural, spiritual circuits, adventure and wildlife tourism etc. In addition, Ministry of Tourism has undertaken various skill development programs to provide education, training and certification to the Hospitality and tourism service providers under Capacity Building for Service Providers scheme (CBSP). Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects for the development of tourism related infrastructure under the Swadesh Darshan, Swadesh Darshan 2.0, PRASHAD and Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development Schemes. Government of India has also sanctioned tourism projects under the ‘Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2024-25’ (SASCI).

## **Achievements under Schemes of MDoNER**

### **Sanctioned Projects for NE States**

As per end of report of 2024, 86 projects worth Rs 970.54 crore was approved, under Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) schemes viz. North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme-Other than Roads Infrastructure (NESIDS-OTRI), North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme - Roads (NESIDS-Roads), Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE), Schemes of NEC and Special Development Packages. Process reforms for approval of project and release of funds:

A) Guidelines of schemes of PM DevINE, NESIDS (OTRI), NESIDS (Roads) have been simplified to reduce the lead-time in conceptualization and sanction of projects.

B) Financial and sectoral demarcation among the

schemes of MDoNER has been rationalized to prevent duplicate sanctioning of projects.

C) The fund flow process of projects sanctioned under schemes of MDONER/NEC has been simplified to get funds of projects released in 4 installments only to reduce the delay/ pendency.

D) Poorvottar Vikas Setu portal has been developed to digitize submission process for expeditious processing and ensured proper tracking of proposals received from State Governments.

E) MDONER has created its own instance of the PM GatiShakti portal which monitors the geotagged details of all the ongoing and completed projects.

## **Adverse concerns related to Tourism:**

- International Tourism causes increase in number of foreign tourists and increased foreign exchange earnings for the country. The foreign exchange earnings improve the balance of payment position of country. Tourism industry increases the pressure on the ecosystem of tourist destinations, causing environmental degradation and ecological imbalance especially when tourism is more than the carrying capacity of the destination. All the stakeholders of tourism industry should take on sustainable tourism right from the policy makers from ministry of tourism to travel and tour operators, and the community who take care of the Tourists. Even the Tourists must be sensitized about the environmental upkeep. With the multifold rise in tourism, Sustainability aspect often gets compromised and may affect the Host community and society at large raising probability of crime and violence against tourists. Hence, the government has stressed importance on integrating conservation, community, culture and commerce for the long-term benefits. Advancement in Tourism demands Infrastructure development but it causes massive deforestation which alters natural landforms. With advancement in Tourism industry, utilization of natural resources like land, food and water increases for the aesthetic upkeep of the destination. Tourism demands decent energy consumption and exerts pressure on renewable resources. Solid waste dumping also surges with the along with exhaustion of non-renewable resources. Different types of pollution increase due to infrastructure development impacting biodiversity and overall environment of a destination. Increase number of tourists in ecologically sensitive area results into destruction of rare and endangered species due to accidents, killing, disturbance in reproduction and breeding cycles. Technological advancement should be used to maintain entropy between Tourism and environment because financial health of tourism is inversely proportional to socio-ecological health of the industry. When tourism development neglects the local consideration, conflicts between local and international workforce

erupt because the benefit of tourism industry goes to big foreign travel companies and poor residents face the heat of foreign system in the region.

Despite of Good literacy rate In Northeast, Gender Inequality Persists due to a combination of socio-cultural, economic, and political factors in Northeast India. Historically, matrilineal structures were prevalent in tribal communities like Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia tribes and women held significant roles in family and community life majorly related to property inheritance and decision-making. Later due to influence of mainstream patriarchal systems and sociopolitical changes women now retain some degree of autonomy and often face discrimination in politics education, health care, employment, and economic dependency leading to High rates of violence against them. Grassroots initiatives for women upliftment at local level in Northeast is done by Organizations like the Northeast Network and other women's groups which work diligently to raise awareness on gender- violence, legal rights and reforms. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, National Policy for the Empowerment of Women and similar other laws address gender-based issues.

Women rights are influenced by a unique combination of traditional practices, socio-political dynamics, and the ongoing challenges of modernization. Violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking, remains a pervasive issue in the region. Political instability, insurgency-related conflicts, and ethnic tensions have unreasonably affected and exposed public to exploitation, displacement, and marginalization.

### Findings and suggestions.

Northeast states of India can emerge as the biggest hub for mountaineering, trekking and adventure tourism in the region if developed and promoted well. Information and policies have to percolate down to the Grassroot level concerned with the foreseeable repercussions with the utmost transparency and objectivity and then applied in a way to help to raise the standard of living of the populations of rural or mountain regions. Promoting and integrating Local people with tourism activities can share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs. Tourism professionals must provide honest information on their places of destination and on the conditions of travel, hospitality and stays; they should ensure that the contractual clauses proposed to their customers are readily understandable as to the nature, price and quality of the services as committed. Cultural and spiritual fulfilment of tourists is possible when the Tourism professionals contribute their bit during

their travels, to practice their religions. Similarly, Support, encouragement and facilitation of the public authorities is supportive for Social and associative tourism encompassing leisure, travel and holidays for Family, youth, student and senior tourism and tourism for people with disabilities. Agreements between groups of countries must be made to harmonize and simplify these procedures instead of penalizing the tourism industry of North-eastern states by undermining its competitiveness.

Tourists must acquaint themselves before their departure, with the characteristics of the destination they are preparing to visit and must be aware of the health and security risks. Tourists may observe the social practices and cultural traditions of indigenous people and minorities and value the impetus they hold for the tradition and beliefs. Stakeholders in tourism development must ensure that the Tourism activities are conducted in harmony aligned with host traditions, laws, practices and customs. Provide protection, security, insurance to the tourists and facilitate information and assistance consistent with their needs. Tourism associated with rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature, should be planned open minded with collective fulfilment for self-education, mutual tolerance between peoples and cultures and their diversity i.e. ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples avoiding exploitation of human beings in any form. Travel for purposes of religion, health, education and cultural or linguistic exchanges should be encouraged. All the stakeholders in tourism development have a responsibility to safeguard the natural environment for sustainable economic growth. Tourism infrastructures are well-designed and tourism activities are programmed in such a way as to protect the natural heritage, i.e to preserve endangered species of wildlife and promote ecotourism for conducive and enriching tourism with the carrying capacity of the sites. Tourism policies and activities are bound to be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, preserving the monuments, shrines and museums. Financial resources derived from visits to cultural sites and monuments should majorly be used for the upkeep and development of the site. Tourism allows traditional cultural products, crafts and folklore to survive and flourish, rather than causing them to degenerate and become standardized.

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