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Evaluation of Ecotourism Resources: a case study of Nameri National Park of Assam, India

Avaliação de Recursos Ecoturísticos: Estudo de Caso do Parque Nacional Nameri, Assam, Índia

Niranjan Das, Sujata Deori

ABSTRACT

Tourism is currently the world's largest industry (US$ 3.4 trillion annually) and ecotourism represents the fastest growing sector of this market. The term 'Ecotourism' was first coined by "*Hector Ceballos Lascurain*" in 1983, and was initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed area with an emphasis on education. Assam, comprising Eastern Himalaya is one of the Mega bio-diversity hot spots of the world (MYERS, 1991). It also forms part of two endemic bird areas, viz Eastern Himalaya and Assam plains (COLLAR *et al*., 1994). Nameri National Park is a part of NBL (North Bank Landscape) and also is a part of Eastern Himalayan Mega Biodiversity Hotspot has immense potentialities for the ecotourism venture. The present research can provide an assessment of potential sites within the park, which can speed up tourism infrastructural development. Through the paper the author tries to highlight such possibilities on the basis of assessment of potentials Ecotourism resources of the Nameri National Park through field experience gained different parts of the study area.

KEYWORDS: Biodiversity; Ecotourism Resources; Applied Methodology and Potentiality Analysis.

RESUMO

O turismo é atualmente a maior indústria do mundo (US$ 3,4 trilhões por ano) e ecoturismo representa o setor de mais rápido crescimento deste mercado. O termo "Ecoturismo" foi inicialmente cunhado por "*Hector Ceballos Lascuráin*" em 1983, e foi inicialmente utilizado para descrever viagens que têm como base a visita à natureza, em áreas relativamente tranquilas, com ênfase na educação. Assam, compreendendo a parte Oriental do Himalaia é um dos *hot spots* com mega biodiversidade do mundo (MYERS, 1991). A região faz parte também de duas áreas endêmicas de aves: o Leste do Himalaia e as planícies de Assam (COLLAR *et al.,* 1994). O Parque Nacional Nameri, que faz parte da NBL (*North Bank Landscape*) e do *hot sopts* com mega biodiversidade do Leste do Himalaia, possui imensas potencialidades para empreendimentos de ecoturismo. A presente pesquisa pode fornecer uma avaliação dos locais potenciais dentro do parque, o que pode acelerar o desenvolvimento da infraestrutura para o turismo. Através do trabalho, destacam-se essas possibilidades com base na avaliação de potenciais recursos para o Ecoturismo do Parque Nacional Nameri através de análises de campo feitas em diferentes partes da área de estudo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Biodiversidade; Recursos Ecoturísticos; Metodologia Aplicada e Análise de Potencialidade.

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Introduction

Ecotourism is a field of human activity where conservation and development can wisely effectively be balanced to achieve a mutual goal to the benefit of the people in the community. The term 'Ecotourism' was first coined by '*Hector Ceballos Lascurain*' in 1983, and was initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed area with an emphasis on education. This new approach of tourism is becoming an increasingly popular expression to conservation and sustainable development of the biodiversity (YADAY, 2002). It involves education and interpretation of natural environment and to manage it in an ecologically sustainable way. Here 'natural environment' includes cultural components and the term 'ecologically sustainable' involves appropriate returnees to the local community and long term conservation of resources (GRANT, 1995). In this way a person eventually acquires a consciousness and knowledge of the natural environment, together with cultural aspects, that will convert people keenly involved in conservation issues (CEBALLOS, 1998).

Study Area

The study region covers Nameri National Parks of Assam located in $26^{o}50^{/}48^{//}$N to $27^{o}03^{/}43^{//}$N Latitudes and $92^{o}39^{/}$E to $92^{o}59^{/}$E Longitudes covering an area of 200 km^2 in the northern bank of river Brahmaputra in Sonitpur district. The area is criss-crossed by the river Jia-Bhoreli and its tributaries namely Diji, Dinai, Doigurung, Nameri, Dikorai, Khari etc. Nameri is covered by of Tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist deciduous forest with cane and bamboo brakes and narrow stripes of open grassland along rivers. Grassland comprise of less than 10% of the total area of the park while the semi-evergreen and moist deciduous species dominate the area. The area is influenced by the tropical monsoon regime. The predominance of the southwest monsoon in this region causes precipitation to be highly seasonal (BARTHAKUR, 1986).

Objectives

The study is to be carried out within the Nameri National Park and the objectives stated as follows:

- to highlight how the physiographic base can be an attraction for tourists;
- to study the of tourist-flow pattern and their preferred destinations and needs; and
- to evaluate the status of existing facilities with the help of applied methodology for potentiality analysis of the ecotourism resources in the park

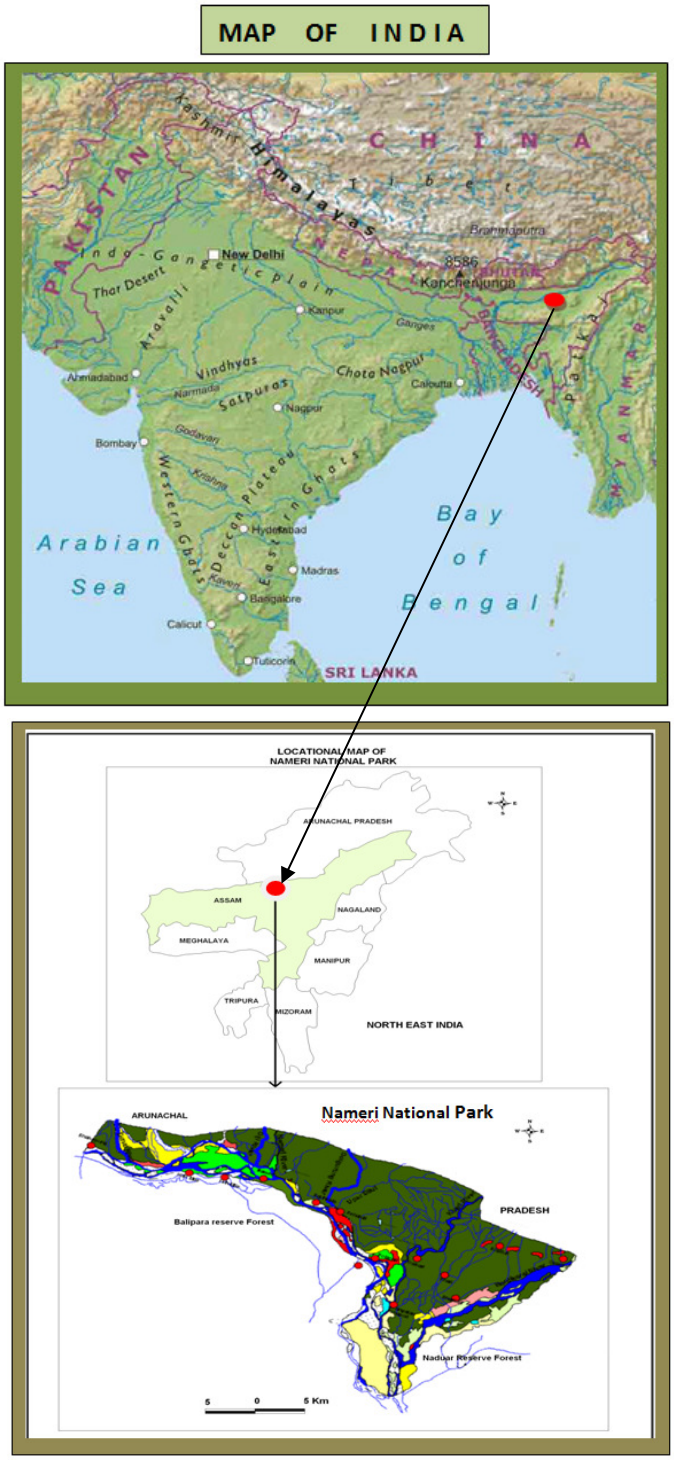

Figure 1: Locational map of Nameri NationalPark.
By authors, 2012.
Figura 1: Mapa de localização do Parque Nacional Nameri.
Org. autores, 2012.

Methodology

Potentiality analysis of ecotourism destination: A case study of Nameri National Park, Assam, India is based on research study; data and information were obtained on the spot observation of ecotourism resources by the author supported by secondary information sources like books, papers, reports, maps and information of local people. For this study, data related with tourist flow from Govt. tourist Dept, Dept, of Forest, field survey for primary information and different tourism promotion organization are used.

Method of Potentiality Determination

Potentiality of ecotourism in an area is indeed the result of interaction of tourist demand and supply or local availability of tourist resources. Tourist demand of an area can be assessed through the preference or choice of tourist towards various components of its unique attractions (background tourism resources). To gauge the preference pattern or the choice of tourist, it is necessary to compile a resource inventory incorporating both existing and potential resources possessed by the area (FERRARIO, 1982). Here an attempt has been made to judge the choice of the tourist through campaigns of purposively designed resource inventory of fifteen appeal elements or attractions possessed by the park. The inventory was prepared on the basis of the items of tourist attraction as campaigned in various publications and tourist brochures brought out by the state government and private tourism promotional agencies along with author's field experiences (DAS *et al*., 2003).

The inventory was then handed over to the tourists for their comment. Percentage of tourist preferring each category of attraction is considered as an index to judge the significance of that category. The value are then rounded to a simple conversion scale of 1 to 10 minimize the complexity of manipulating them arithmetically. At the end, each of the attraction categories thus received a numerical coefficient of tourist demand. To have an overall picture of tourist demand of a particular location, the numerical coefficients of each of the attraction category were added, subject to their availability in that area. The second step was to evaluate the supply or local availability component of attraction possessed by an area so as to analyze how well the resources are able to satisfy the interest or choice of tourists. Availability or supply component of resources or attractions was assessed on the basis of some essential characteristics, which are common to all tourist attractions, irrespective of their varying nature.

A set of six criteria was selected on the basis of commonsense, observation and field experience. In fact, these qualifying criteria are some of the most important aspects necessary for any tourist resource, which also enable a place to emerge as a better tourist destination. The criteria considered are:

a. Importance

Some destinations may have similar type of attraction, but one may be comparatively well equipped and capable of offering better facilities and services to tourists. Hence importance of a destination may be estimated to be higher compared

to those with similar resource base but lacking required organization for the promotion of tourism.

b. Accessibility

Accessibility to a destination and its attraction represent its degree of availability over space. Importance of physical access is always underlined in connection with all tourist resources irrespective of their nature. A more accessible destination has greater advantage than a less accessible one.

c. Seasonality

Seasonality has an important role to play in the pattern of use of the available tourist base of an area. It is more important in the case of Nameri national park, as almost all the tourist resources of the park are meant for out-door recreation or nature based. A short tourist season with a considerably long off-season has limitation in this regard.

d. Popularity

Reputation is an asset of a destination and the tourists generally prefer to go to such places, which are preferred by most others. In course of time a positive image of the destination is built which gets diffused from tourist to tourist through the chain of tourist agencies and promoters.

e. Fragility

A tourist destination may have all the important qualities mentioned above, but can be inherently fragile and unable to sustain more pressure from strangers. Such destinations may lose their original natural and cultural characteristics in course of time. So, an understanding of the fragile nature of resources is a prerequisite for sound ecotourism practice.

f. Admission

Physical accessibility does not necessarily imply that an attraction is available to tourist. Many sites cannot be visited or activities enjoyed without obtaining prior permission, buying a ticket, or- in general-gaining admission.

For assessing the 'Local availability' or 'Supply component' of tourist resources of an area, each of the above mentioned criteria were rated by adopting a nominal scale (i.e. good, moderate, bad, etc.). To counterbalance the 'Demand component' a nominal scale 1-10 has been introduced to assess the total weight of the six selected criteria (Table 1).

In the processes of ranking, a location having the best position in terms of all the six selected criteria is given an aggregate weight of 10 (a weight of 2 is given to criteria having the highest position in the category concerned). On the other hand, a location having lowest weight in the rating scale for all the six selected criteria is given

an aggregate weight of 1 (a weight of 0.5 is given to a criterion showing the lowest position in the category concerned). Assessment of the position of the criteria selected has been made on the basis of author's personal observation in the field and interaction with the tourist visited the concerned locations.

Table 1: Ranking scheme for assessing 'Local Availability' of Tourist Resource in Nameri National Park.
Tabela 1: Esquema de classificação para avaliar a "disponibilidade local" dos recursos turísticos no Parque Nacional Nameri.

Criteria selected	Rating scale	Weight
Importance	Among best attractions Good standard Moderate standard Less appeal	2 1.5 1 0.5
Accessibility	Excellent Adequate Limited Difficult	2 1.5 1 0.5
Seasonality	>6 months 3-6 months 2-3 months <2 months	2 1.5 1 0.5
Fragility	Large development potential Moderate development potential Controlled development potential No development potential	2 1.5 1 0.5
Popularity	>50% foreign visitor 20 – 50% foreign visitor 2 – 20% foreign visitor Rarely any foreign visitor	2 1.5 1 0.5
Admission	No permission Partial permission Adequate permission Restricted	2 1.5 1 0.5

Now each of the tourist locations has two comparable numerical values representing a demand or appeal component (A) and a local availability or supply component (B) of resources. A meaningful '*Tourist Potential Index'* (TPI) can thus be calculated with the help of the numerical values of demand and supply of resources in an area (FERRARIO, 1982). Thus the tourist potential index of an area may be calculated as: TPI = (A+B)/2 (Table 2).

Table 2: Demands and Supply Components and tourist Potentiality Index of Destination .

Tabela 2: Demandas e fonte de componentes e Índice de Potencialidade turística dos destinos.

Destination	Appeal or Demand Component																Supply Component						Tourist Index
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	TI
1.Bogijuli Area	9	6				4								7	3	29	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	18.50
2.Balipung & Kurua Beel	9	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	8	6	36	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.0	22.50
3Jiabhoreli river	-	-	-	9	-	-	7	5	-	-	-	4	2	1	2	30	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	20.50
4.Confluences of tributaries	-	-	-	9	-		6	3		-	-	-	2	-	-	20	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.0	14.00
5.Bhalukpung & neighborhood	-	7	5	-	4	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	2.0	16.25
6.Ecocamp & surrounding	7	5	4	6	5	-	-	-	4	-	3	-	-	4	3	41	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	25.50
7.Fringe villages	-	-	7	-	4	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	4	18	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	13.25
8.Ethnobotany nearby environs	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0	9.00
9.Tribal life	-	-	8	-	-	4	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	3	2	24	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	2.0	16.00
10. Camp in the park	7	5	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	26	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	17.25

Source: Based on survey conducted by the author in between 20010-2011. Fonte: Baseado em pesquisas dos autores entre 2010-2011.

Note: Demand Component- 1-Wild life 2-Scenery and natural landscape 3- Art and handicraft 4- Rafting 5- Native life and culture 6- Flora and Fauna 7-Angling 8-Adventure sports(land & air) 9- Local Dance and festivals 10- Spa Activities 11- Nightlife entertainment. 12- Water sport 13- Sun bath 14- Trekking 15- Research.

Ecotourism Destinations of the Park

1. Bogijuli Area

Bogijuli area is located in the most remote corner of the park in the bank of Bogijuli River near Assam Arunachal Pradesh interstate border. It is easy to wildlife sighting both from Himalayan region and from the plains with elephant safaris crossing most fragile parts of the area. These expeditions can prove to be ideal for appreciating the nature's beauty with the rich variety of flora and fauna. As regard of the local availability or supply component, tourist resources of the area are good standard but inadequate accessibility. The area can enjoy tourist's season of more than three months from October to March. From the view point of fragility the area can sustain controlled development of tourism. As the appeal elements of the area fragile in nature it requires controlled development of tourist venture. The tourist potentiality index for Bogijuli area is 18.50.

2. Balipung and Kurua Beel

Balipung, one of the most important potential sites for Spa activities located only in two kilometres away from Potasali camp has its unique character because there is a natural salt lick. This salt licks offered opportunities for mineral bath in the park. It is a kind of outdoor activities to cure from communicable skin diseases. Apart from the salt licks, the surrounding area is covered by moist deciduous forest with tall elephant grasses is the rich habitats of mammalian species like Gaur, Elephant, Deer, Hollock Gibbon, resident and migratory water birds etc. Both foreign and domestic tourist usually prefers to travel the area as a part of their tourist's ventures. It is a beautiful nature spots ideal for nature exploration, trekking and bird watching. The area can enjoy tourist's season over three months from November to March. From the fragility point of view, it has scope for controlled tourism venture. From popularity point of view, it is observed that the area has able to attract foreign tourists. The tourist potentiality index for Balipung area is 22.50.

3. Jiabhoreli River

The Jiabhoreli River forms the western boundary of the national park. The rafting down the river Jiabhoreli gives a unique experience to the tourist. The stretch of rafting is about 20kms in length from 16th mile to Potasali camp. The regulated angling is also permitted along with rafting for research and education on catch, record and release basis in the river within the stretch from 16th mile point to Potasali bank during the period from 1st November to 31st March. Rafting in the park is well organized and popular among both Indian and foreign tourists and their preference pattern is (10.47%) and (13%) respectively. During the course of rafting in the river a rafter has to cross rafting grade I to III. Regarding seasonality the destination can enjoy a tourist season of over three months, from October to March. As the appeal elements of the area are fragile in nature, it requires controlled development of tourist venture. The tourist potentiality index for Jiabhoreli River stands at 20.50.

4. Confluences of the Tributaries

There are five major tributaries namely Diji, Dinai, Doigruing, Nameri and Khari, which intersect the park from its different locations. Dinai flows from northern corner of the park has short in length. It adjoins the Jiabhorelli River near the 16th mile camp along with three small tributaries. The small catchment of the Dinai in the park consists of grassland and supports mammalian species. Diji, one of the tributary flows down from Arunachal Pradesh and carries enormous water during rainy seasons. Doigrung is another tributary flowing along with Diji and Dinai has small in bed width but comparatively deep. The bank of the Doigrung River is dominant with savannah grass locally known as *Bat and Tora.* These grasslands are the breeding ground of mammalian species of the park. Khari River flows nearby the Bogijuli camp and the bank of the river is used as shortest elephant path through Khari-Charali to the Potasali camp as the camp is located in the remote corner of the park. All the tributaries in the park are perennial nature. These two tributaries (Doigrung and Khari) traverse the park in a short distance and lead to meet in the middle of the Jiabhorelli River south of the park. The confluences of these tributaries in the park are important point for regulated angling. Angling seasons generally starts from November to March on catch and release basis. The confluences are the breeding ground of Golden Mahseer (*Labeo pengusia*) Sil Gharia (*Tor putitora*). The confluence of the Nameri River near 13th mile is one of the important points for the angling.

The confluences of the tributaries enjoy tourist's season over three months from November to March. From the fragility point of view, it has scope for controlled tourism venture. From popularity point of view, it is observed that the area has able to attract foreign tourists. The tourist potentiality index for the area is 14.00.

5. Bhalukpung and Neighbourhood

This pocket covers north-western part of Nameri National Park, Assam and its adjoining areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The pocket is ideal for ecotourism venture like trekking and rafting. Bhalukpung is an ideal point for picnic and hot spring bath. It also an ideal place to carry out interstate trekking venture along Nameri river touching Nilboha and Pakhui wildlife sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh) up to the confluence of Papu river, a left bank tributary of the Kameng/ Jiabhoreli. This trek measures a distance of about 47 Km. and can provide scope of rafting for about 50 km. along the course of Jiabhoreli River up to Bhalukpung. The area also can provide opportunities for cyclist to appreciate natural beauty of the area, especially along Charduar-Bhalukpung-Tipi trek. In terms of supply of local availability, the area possesses some of the best tourist attractions of the state with adequate accessibility. The area can enjoy a tourist season of over three months, from October to February. From the viewpoint of fragility, the area can sustain controlled development of tourism. So far the popularity is concerned, the area has able to attract 49 percent of the foreign tourist visiting in the park. The tourist potentiality index for the Bhalukpung area stands at16.25.

6. Eco camp and Surrounding

The southern buffer of Nameri National Park in Potasali area near the picturesque Jiabhoreli River, a camping facility was set up in 1994 for nature lovers and wild life enthusiast. The eco-camp is outcome of a joint effort of the Department of Forest, Government of Assam and Assam (Bhorelli) Angling and Conservation Association (A (B) ACA) with the financial support of the North Eastern Council. Eco camp arranges safaris conducted by the wildlife department to explore the fascinate habitat on foot or on elephant back.

Eco camp offer ideal site for stay of tourist who seek to visit the Nameri National Park. Tourist also experiences the comfortable stay in this camp which having thatched roof and wooden floor an eco-friendly accommodation. The area can enjoy a comparatively long tourist season of over six month from October to April. Considering the fragility angle the area can be said to have good development potentiality for ecotourism. In spite of varied tourist attractions in the surrounding areas, the area is gaining popularity among foreign and domestic tourists. So far cent percent tourist visited the resources of the area. The tourist potentiality index for the area is highest of all the resources in the park i.e. 25.50.

7. Fringe villages of the park

There are several villages, which are laying in the east or west buffer of the Nameri National Park. These fringe villages are dominated by Mishings, Karbi, Tea Garden laborers, Garo, Assamese and Bodo Communities. This indigenous ethnic identity flourishes with own tradition. The people of the fringe villages are bearing rich tradition of arts and crafts. Assamese craftsman still retain some of the crafts of the past through such activities as weaving, bamboo, cane, bell metal, pit clay and wood workers and ivory carvings. The craft of weaving cane certainly surpass the works of the many parts of the world. Weaving is considered as a part of the domestic chore of the folk in every rural indigenous home in the villages. The area has the tradition of producing three verities of silk Viz. Pat, Eri ao Endi and Muga. The practice of providing this type of silk is common to all the indigenous people both tribal and non tribal residing in the fringe villages. Bamboo and cane crafts make a major contribution to the material cultural of the fringe villages. As the climate is suitable for growth of bamboo and cane, the artisans of nearby the park prepare verities of cane and bamboo artifacts for day-to-day use, decoration and sale. Fringe villages near by the park are ideal site for tourist to know about the local customs, tradition and way of living. The area can enjoy comparatively a long tourist season of over six months, from September to March. The tourist potentiality index for the area is 13.25.

8. Ethno-Botany nearby environs

There are several communities inhabiting in the periphery of the park has often dependent on local plant species both for day-to-day life and for medicinal purposes. The ethno-botany of a particular area reflects the adoption of the communities in the existing environment. The people of the locality used different type of plants either for

medicine or for daily use. Some of the plant species that are found in the area used as sacred grooves for their long back traditional system of rituals. Through the practices of such traditional systems, the community acts as a conservationist of the surrounding area. The area can enjoy a comparatively long tourist season of over six month from October to April. The tourist potentiality index is 9.00.

9. Tribal social life

A glimpse of local life and culture of the rural tribal people can be observed along the fringe area of the park. The area is the home of several tribal and non-tribal communities viz, Mising, Garo, Karbi, Bodo, Nishi and typical Assamese and thus ideal for exploring the colorful elements of their life and culture.

The missing people reside in the forest villages of both the buffers. They are tribal people used to dwelling in 'Chang Ghar'. They have their own customs of management of their society. They are good in bamboo and cane craft.

The Karbi people used to dwell on 'Chang Ghar' and rare cattle for agricultural purposes. They weave their cloths in traditional Loam. Their population is limited in the area.

The Bodo people reside in both east and west buffer. They are having their own customs and culture. They also construct their dwelling houses mostly by locally collected building materials. They are also good in cane and bamboo craft.

The Garo people inhabit in the west buffer of the Nameri National Park. Garos are dwelling in traditional Chang Ghar.

Native life and culture, art and craft dance and festivals of the tribal community can certainly prove to be important source of attraction for tourists. Regarding supply or local availability of component, tourist resources of the area can be stated as among the best attraction in the park with adequate accessibility. The area can enjoy a tourist season more than six month from November to April. Lack of positive publicity and inadequate tourists' infrastructure, the area is able to attract 8 percent foreign tourists coming to the park. The tourist's potentiality index of the area stands at 16.00.

10. Camp in the park

Adventure activities like trekking, and jungle exploration can be done in an around camp both short and long duration. There are 15th camps in the Nameri National Park.

The anti-poaching camp in the park is- 1. Bhalukpung 2. 16th Mile camp 3. 14th Mile camp 4. Nameri 5. Doigurung 6. Baithakata 7. Upar Dikarai 8. Potasali 9. Ow-bari 10. Morisuti 11. Rangajan Chapori 12. Khari 13. Bordikorai 14. Seijosa 15. Bogijuli

The patrolling path within the park from one camp to another is considered as elephant riding as well as for trekking. Some of the important trekking routes are--

i. Potasali camp to morisuti (3.5 Km.); ii. Potasali to Owbari (2.5 Km.);

iii. Potasali to watch tower (1.2 Km.); iv. Ow-bari to Morisuti (1 Km.);

v. Morisuti to Tomaljuli (3 Km.)

The camp in the park enjoy tourist's season over three months from November to March. From the fragility point of view, it has scope for controlled tourism venture. From popularity point of view, it is observed that the area has able to attract foreign tourists. The tourist potentiality index for the area is 17.25.

Analysis of Potentiality Index

On the basis of the techniques adopted above, the tourist potentiality index for as many as 12 destination of the park has been calculated (Table 3). Tourist potential values for different destinations of the park range from 9.00-25.50. As demand component of a destination is represented by the total of weight of different categories of attractions, it's over all influence is well reflected in determining tourist potentiality of the destinations.

Table 3: Tourism Potentiality of Destinations in Nameri National Park, Based on Tourist Potential Index.
Tabela 3: Potencialidade dos Destinos Turísticos no Parque Nacional Nameri, com base no Índice de Potencial turístico

Sl. No.	Destination	Weights of demand element (A)	Weights of supply element (B)	Potentiality Index TP = (A+B)/2
1	Bogijuli area	29	8	18.50
2	Balipung and Kurua Beel	36	9	22.50
3	Jiabhoreli river	30	11	20.50
4	Confluences of	20	8.0	14.00
5	Bhalukpung& neighborhood	23	9.5	16.25
6	Ecocamp & surrounding	41	10	25.50
7	Fringe villages	18	8.5	13.25
8	Ethno-botany nearby	11	7.0	9.0
9	Tribal life	24	8	16.00
10	Camp in the park	26	8.5	17.25

Source: Based on the survey conducted by the author (1st October 2010 to 31st March 2011).

Fonte: Com base nas pesquisas realizada pelos autores (1 de outubro de 2010 a 31 de Março de 2011).

For the purpose of prioritization of the destinations for future tourism promotional venture, all the associated tourist potential index values are grouped together under a five-fold scheme, viz. very high potential area (index value- > 21), High potential area (index value-18-21), high moderate potential area (index value 15-18), low moderate potential area (index value- 12-15) and low potential area (index value-<12). From the analysis it is found that only 2 destinations of the park belongs to very high potential category, 3 destinations belong to high potential category, 3 destinations belong to high moderate potential category, 3 destinations belong to low moderate potential category and one destination belong to low moderate potential category. Among the very high and high potential destinations, eco camp and surrounding area and Balipung & Kurua beel has adequate tourist facilities and services. These two destinations are able to get good response from both domestic and foreign tourists.

Conclusions

A high tourist potential index of an area reflects its high weights of 'Appeal' and 'Supply' element of resources. As such areas can offer highly rated tourists attractions and larger choices of things to see and to do by the tourists themselves. A destination may have high tourism potential but may possess fragile resources-cultural or natural. The very concept of tourist's potentiality is a dynamic one. In due course, potentiality may change with changing nature of tourist demand and supply of locally available tourist resources. It is believed that such scheme of prioritization of potential pockets of tourism may certainly provide a suitable framework for formulating tourism development strategies in Nameri National Park.

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