

## Exploring the Unexplored India: An Opportunity in Tourism Industry (With Special Reference to Eastern States in India)

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### Abstract

Globally, it is perceived that India is all about visiting one of the wonders of the world, however, India has much more to offer. There is an India beyond the Taj Mahal, which is more enthralling, rewarding and beautiful. The mind-set of domestic tourists has always been to 'save for the rainy day' and hence majority of the population does not like spending much on tourism. However, the millennials are more open to exploring new locations as they feel confident, connected and are more open to change. As per the Govt. of India reports tourism contributed 9.6% to the GDP, and it is projected to grow further but has not been realized to its full extent. Every state in India has very unique and different flavors to offer to each tourist depending on the travelers interests, be it leisure, spiritual, adventurous, cultural etc. To make tourism a value for money expenditure for both international and domestic travelers, grouping of certain locations in India which are in close proximity and are well-connected by airways and/or roadways could be great as it would help in increasing employment opportunities and also generate revenue for the government. Initially, the government will have to make some investments at the unexplored locations in terms of adequate infrastructure, food and hygiene, safety of the tourists, spots around the place and phone towers. Government initiatives encouraging ease of doing business in the tourism and hospitality sector in the country has attracted FDI and has also helped in getting investments from many companies in this arena. This paper aims to explore the prospects of locations in India which are unfamiliar to the international as well as domestic tourists.

**Keywords :** Tourism Industry, Foreign Tourist, India, Employment Generation, Growth, Opportunities

### Introduction

Foreign Tourist Arrivals and India's domestic tourism sector is flourishing with the country witnessing a double-digit jump in domestic and foreign tours during 2017. The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA's) crossed the 10-million mark, pushing the earnings of the country to 27 billion dollars.

As per the latest data from Ministry of Tourism, India, an approximate total of 1.65 billion domestic trips were registered within India's states and union territories last year, which is 15.5% more than the 1.43 billion recorded in 2015.

However, these visits are concentrated in a small number of states. The focus of the paper would be on this very keynote. The 10 most-visited states accounted for approximately 84% of domestic trips in 2016. Tamil Nadu (344.3 million visits) was India's most popular domestic destination in 2016, followed by Uttar Pradesh (229.6million), Madhya Pradesh (184.7million), Andhra Pradesh (158.5million), Karnataka (129.8million), Maharashtra (115.4million), West Bengal (74.5million), Telangana (71.5million), Gujarat (42.8million) and Rajasthan (41.5million). The major change compared to 2015 was Madhya Pradesh, the large central state, which jumped from sixth to third in the rankings. West Bengal surpassed Telangana into seventh position. These figures can however be misleading as states like Tamil Nadu are mostly visited for medical treatments especially by foreign nationals from Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The growth of India's domestic tourism sector is being driven by the growth of the country's aviation sector (domestic passenger volumes in India jumped 23.3% in 2016, according to IATA) as well the infrastructural development.

FTAs in India increased from 8.89 million in 2016 to 10 million in 2017. France (which is approximately one-fifth the area of India), stands at Rank 1 with 84.5 million FTAs (approximately 8.5 times of India) as of 2017. FTAs in India increased from 8.89 million in 2016 to 10 million in 2017. France (which is approximately one-fifth the area of India), stands at Rank 1 with 84.5 million FTAs (approximately 8.5 times of India) as of 2017. This shows that there is huge opportunity for growth in this sector.

Tourism in India generated US\$220 billion which is 9.6% of the nation's GDP and is predicted to contribute about 10% in the coming years. The sector is generating about 9.5% of employment opportunities in the country.

### Theoretical Framework

Since only a few states get footfalls of tourists the paper aims to figure out states which are lagging behind and the reasons for the same despite the unprecedented growth in the tourism industry. Unexplored places in India include cities in states such as Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Sikkim, Orissa, Meghalaya, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

These places have great potential for tourism growth and are mostly in the north – eastern parts of India, hence we will be focusing majorly on the eastern states of India. The research is done to find the different tastes and preferences of travelers in choosing a destination and finding out where the eastern states of India lack so that the government can work more on those areas to make these places more attractive for tourists.

The research paper will help the government get an insight to opportunities in increasing employment opportunities and accelerate infrastructural work in these states. It will not only help locals if the area but also give tourists a more enriching experience of India.

Since FTAs are on a boom, there are excellent opportunities for language translators and interpreters to grow their businesses. Since we have large number of FTAs from China, Brazil, Turkey and Russia and language is a huge barrier for them, language translators can make excellent use of this opportunity.

The government and Indians need to understand that there is an India beyond the mainstream cities, a more beautiful, welcoming and enthralling India. However, people don't have the desired knowledge about how to reach, where to stay and what to explore in these places. The moment the nation understands this, marketing this idea to foreign travelers would not be very difficult.

The government must come up with more campaigns like 'Incredible India' and PRASAD schemes to further promote tourism in unexplored places. Known for its charming and exquisite hill stations, rare flora and fauna and vibrant green cover the eastern states or the seven sisters don't get the exposure that they deserve. The seven sisters are highly uncharted, people want to explore but are unable to due to lack of proper information, political unrest and disrupted infrastructure. The ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the region is as astounding as its lush hills, meandering rivers and verdant valleys.

This paper seeks to examine the potential of tourism in the North-Eastern states of India, the problems encountered and the measures to be taken to nurture, protect and expand the uniqueness of this lesser known territory and her people.

### Literature Review

The Indian tourism industry is growing rapidly and in the correct direction. The foreign tourist arrivals and number of domestic travelers are increasing and stands at 23.3 million in 2016. The industry is economically important generating revenues of Rs.14.02 lakh crores. The prospects for eco-tourism, medical tourism and adventure travel are huge. India being a land of diverse cultures, terrains and experiences, sets the stage right for the government and the nation to fully explore its potentials and earn revenues from it. We as a nation are blessed with a land that has mountains, plateaus, plains, rivers and forests. Without causing any environmental damage these beautiful gifts of nature must be made accessible to domestic and foreign nationals.

A land of a total of thirty-six states and union territories, the states that are geographically accessible but receive the least amount of footfalls are the north-eastern states.

The northeastern part of India comprising the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura and Sikkim have great physical and human diversities to project it as one of the most potential areas of the country for tourism development. The land has ample serene components such as hills (60%), plateau (12 %) and plains (28 %) along with river systems which contribute substantially in enriching its scenic beauty.

Prasanta Bhattacharya in his paper on Tourism Development in Northeast India (2008) states that Assam has been a tourist destination since 1958 however the region has failed to take advantage of its regional, national and international linkages. The government has failed to do enough marketing and hence attract tourists from India as well as abroad.

Northeast India have been advocating for the development of tourism sector very casually without fixing the strategies, goals and priorities and in most cases without any authentic action plan. But, systematic exploitation of tourism potentiality of the region requires a band of trained manpower having better understanding of different facets of the industry.

Moreover, there is necessity of critical judgment regarding the local products prior to their marketing, so that tourism ventures can sustain in local socio-economic situation and contribute meaningfully in the areas concerned. Unfortunately tourism planners of the northeastern region of India often forget these basic issues and try to visualize the industry in such a way that it emerges, performs and brings fruit to the region and concerned destinations in an isolated manner, irrespective of its local socio-economic, cultural, institutional and environmental contexts.

P. Deb Burman, L. Cajee & D. D. Laloo in Potential for cultural and eco-tourism in North East India: a community-based approach (2007) suggests that the segregating line between both cultural and natural heritage is small and tends to merge especially when taking the north-eastern states of India, into context, since the tribal community encompasses nature in all aspects of his life, social, religious and economic. This proximity of the people to nature is reflected especially in crafts, dance and customary laws and beliefs. Some of the states promoting eco-tourism and cultural tourism in the region are Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, but recently Nagaland, Tripura and Mizoram have started exploring such possibilities too.

**Some of the important areas for tourism that have immense potential in the region are elaborated below:**

- i. Tribal Culture – traditional festivals and performing arts
- ii. Eco-villages
- iii. Palaces and Temples

iv. Buddhist Culture

v. Traditional Crafts

vi. Museums and Village Cultural Centres – These include both Government and privately owned museums and may also extend to reserved areas which promote Tribal village centres.

vii. Handcrafted Jewellery

viii. Bamboo and Tea Plantations

About 75% of the region consists of hilly terrain while the rest is level or undulating land. Geographically the North East may be broadly divided into the Eastern Himalayan Range in the north (Arunachal Pradesh) merging with the Arakan Yoma Range (Myanmar), in the East, the Brahmaputra and Imphal valleys, Barak River Valley System and the Meghalaya Plateau. Ethnically, this region is home to over 120 tribes and many more sub-tribes speaking 192 languages and dialects.

A. Kungolos, C. A. Brebbia, Elias Beriatos in their book Sustainable Development and Planning III (2007) mentions that many races and cultures fuse and melt into the composite culture of the melting pot that is North East India. Thus, this zone is diverse not just in terms of culture, geography, history and bio-diversity, but also unique for several 'Hot-spots', some of which have been granted heritage or endangered sites, especially in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur. The British preferred to ignore the region, except for Assam, renowned for its tea, petroleum and the Rhino Sanctuary at Kaziranga, Shillong, the then capital, for its cool climate and army cantonments.

The inaccessible terrain, poor infra-structure and communication, the fear of the so-called tribes, wild animals, the relative isolation and the existence of tiny but severely independent 'chiefdoms' and independent kingdoms of Hill Tipperah and Manipur, kept the Imperialists at bay, as they had little commercial interest. The situation remained almost the same after India's independence in 1947 and little was done to improve the lot of the indigenous people and it is only lately that the Government of India has started to explore the possibility of tourism in this rich area, mainly because of the natural resources, cultural diversity and improved infrastructure, though much needs to be done, as the only means of communication is by air and a few roadways.

Ironically speaking, this isolation, under-development and lack of interest helped preserve and nurture the 'tribal way of life' and is now being marketed globally. However, this change, accompanied by rapid technology transfer and the lure for easy money, is paving the way for mass tourism, which is unsuitable for the region. Needless to say, this may lead to an over-exploitation of resources, both natural and

human. Hence, a systematic assessment is required, starting at the rural or community level, as the case may be.

Apart from this a major challenge is to know what tourists want. Since traditional tourism is changing now to activity based tourism the need to know the new paradigms is extremely important.

For the formulation of a sustainable tourism strategy in the Northeast region, tourism planners may need to concentrate on some key areas like

- i. Conservation of natural, archaeological/ historical and cultural heritage.
- ii. Seasonality aspects of tourism
- iii. Enhancement of tourist facilities and services (transportation, accommodation, etc),
- iv. Public health and safety
- v. Promotion of tourism infrastructure
- vi. Focus on community involvement
- vii. Allocating/ zoning spaces for recreational land use
- viii. Extending efforts on need based tourism education and training
- ix. Tourism financing
- x. Prioritization of domestic tourism sector
- xi. Evolving strategies for better management of the sector.

The region also suffers from a lot of problems which come in the way of tourism expansions.

- i. Poor Communication systems
- ii. Rigid laws and restrictions for travelers into the region
- iii. Accommodation, proper infrastructure and hotels are few in number
- iv. Lack of Government Policy and general and political stability
- v. Lack of proper advertising, marketing, networking and publishing of materials relating to the N.E. region of India
- vi. The lack of documentation and protection of heritage sites and monuments in the region.

Dr. Surajit Kumar Bhagowati (2012) mentioned about the traumatic partition was the prime reason why the north-eastern region remained backward due to the closure of both the land and sea routes. This isolated the region and confined the connectivity via a 27 Kms wide Siliguri corridor making it a remote land. Since 96% of the region is bounded by international borders with countries which India has uneasy relationships with, private investments are also rare.

Mr. Nitukonwar et al. (2013) mention that there is an immense lack of constructive educational facilities in the region. Though there are a number of educational institutions the quality of educational planning and the lack of good teachers lead to an outdated pedagogy of teaching. Due to this lack of education and of industries in this region, majority of the educated youths also remain unemployed. Inadequate financial allocation, the regional backwardness, political negligence by the centre and poor administration in higher educational institutes in North-Eastern Region drives the colleges and universities into disappointing condition.

Anushree Banerjee (2014) stated that the major issues that are restraining the industry from achieving high economic value are shortage of qualified personnel, shortage of tourism training institutes, shortage of well qualified trainers, working conditions for the employees. Policies which can help the employees to work in supportive environment are also a point of concern.

The north – eastern region has immense potential for growth opportunities but it needs dedicated financial and human resources along with good leadership. Tourism will boost economic growth, enhance livelihoods of skilled labor and also of the locals of the region.

A comparative study of all states of the eastern region by Praveen Riza et al (2016) mentions that the highest inflow of tourists is in Assam and the lowest in Nagaland. This gives an idea of the opportunity states where the government must focus. As for growth rate the highest influx of tourists is of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. The major reasons cited for the same are insufficient funds, lack of infrastructure, transportation, lack of alternatives means of transport, marketing, boundary issues, terror effect and permit period.

Sweta Basu and Laxmi Goritoyal (2018) states that the North-Eastern states of India helped in understanding the real problems that are not letting the north eastern region grow.

This includes - traditional marketing approach and not activity based marketing, disputed regions and political unrest and underdeveloped infrastructure.

What needs to be done next is increasing the connectivity of this region. Without connectivity there would be no exchange of information and hence no progress.

Locals of the area need to get out of the cocoon that they are living in and need to hone their skills better to be able to earn a living from their rich heritage and culture.

The government has to intervene financially and socially to see prosperity of this highly beautiful and blessed land. Initially, foreign nationals must be given incentives for visiting the north-east such as free accommodation, vehicle etc.

## Research Method

### Sources of data

The data collected was both primary and secondary. The primary data was based on questionnaire with a sample size of ninety four.

The secondary data was Ministry of Travel sites, Government policies on Eastern States Tourism EBSCOHOST database.

### Scope and Limitation

The research provides greater opportunity to tourist, tourism industry and government also to the local public of eastern states destination. The collection of sample is limited to only ninety four.

### Hypothesis

#### Null Hypothesis:

Ho1 Tourist have no significant difference in travel purpose and preferences

Ho2 Tourist have no significant difference of opinion in preferring unexplored travel destination

Ho3 There is no significant hurdle for prospects of location in eastern region part of India

#### Alternative Hypothesis:

Ha1 Tourist have significant difference in travel purpose

Ha2 Tourist have significant difference of opinion in preferring unexplored travel destination

Ha3 There is significant hurdle for prospects of location in eastern region part of India

## Data Analysis and Results

### Data Analysis

#### Frequency

Age				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	41	43.6	43.6	43.6
2	44	46.8	46.8	90.4
Valid 3	8	8.5	8.5	98.9
4	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

### Statistics

#### REGION

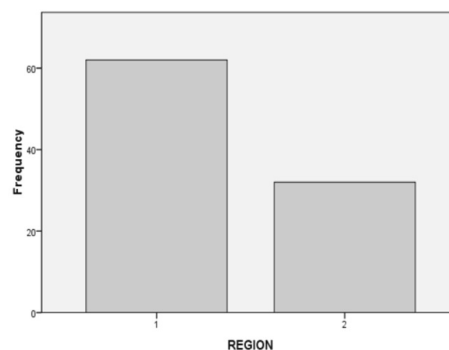
N	Valid	94
	Missing	0

The sample size of data is 94. And there is no missing data.

#### REGION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	62	66.0	66.0	66.0
2	32	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

REGION





The region is divided into two. Metro and Non Metro cities. 1 being the Metro cities and 2 represent as Non Metro cities. 66 percent data is collected from metro city tourist and

around 34 percent data collected from non-metro city tourist.

### Data Analysis

#### Tourist travel

#### purpose

ANOVA: Single Factor

#### SUMMARY

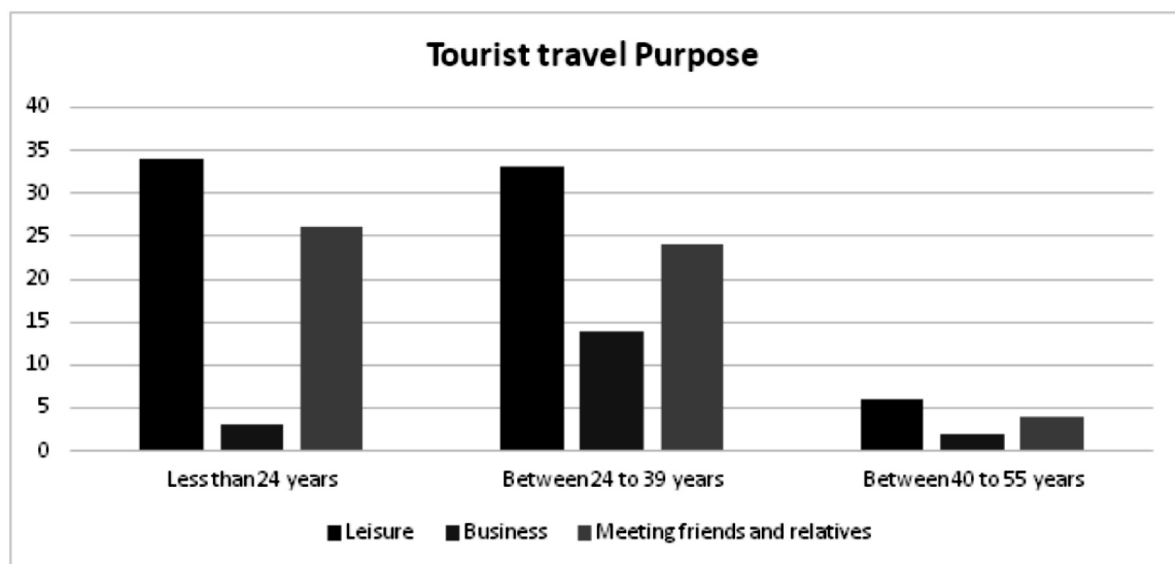
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	3	63	21	259
Column 2	3	71	23.666667	90.33333333
Column 3	3	12	4	4

#### ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	682.888889	2	341.444444	2.899056604	0.131527	5.14325285
Within Groups	706.666667	6	117.777778			
Total	1389.555556	8				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 5.14325285 which is more than the F value i.e., 2.899056604. And the P-value is 0.131527 which is more

than the 0.05. Here null hypothesis is accepted. Hence tourist have no significant difference in travel purpose and preferences.



Tour combining a few explored and a few unexplored Indian locations (cities, towns, districts) is interesting

ANOVA : Single Factor

#### SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	3	41	13.666667	322.3333333
Column 2	3	44	14.666667	386.3333333
Column 3	3	8	2.666667	9.333333333

## ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	266	2	133	0.555710306	0.600599	5.14325285
Within Groups	1436	6	239.33333			
Total	1702	8				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 5.14325285 which is more than the F value i.e., 2.899056604. And the P-value is 0.600599 which is more

than the 0.05. Here null hypothesis is accepted. Hence tourist have no significant difference of opinion in preferring unexplored travel destination.



## Preference/Purpose criteria in selecting a destination

ANOVA:

Single Factor

SUMMARY

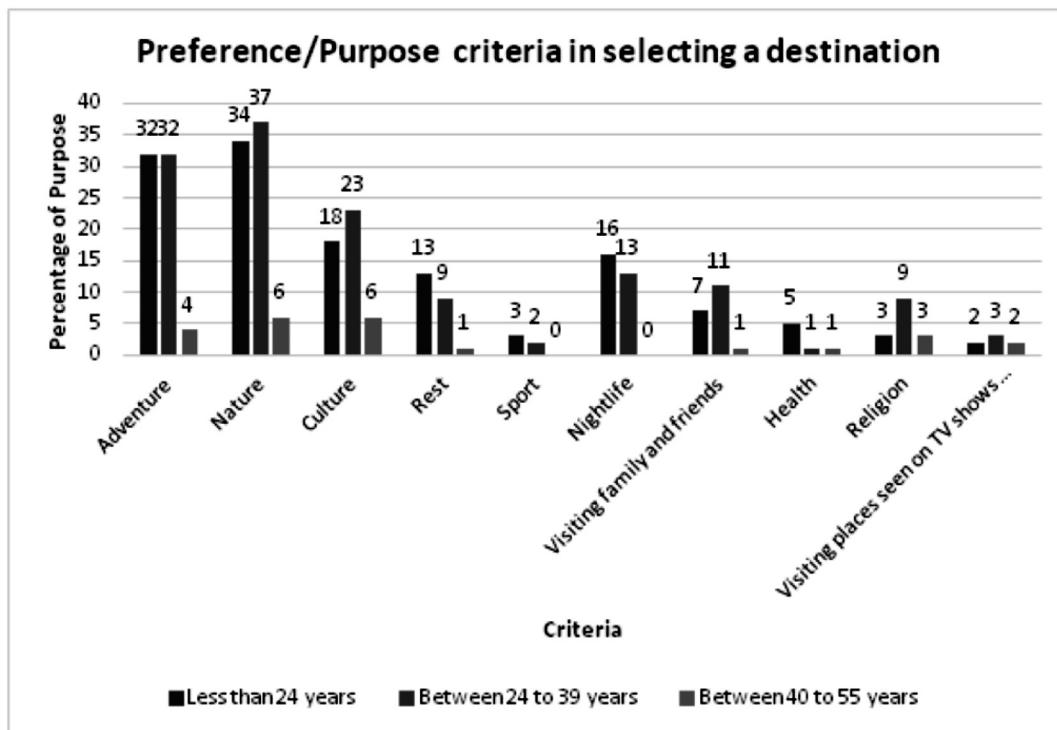
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	10	133	13.3	139.566666
Column 2	10	140	14	158.666666
Column 3	10	24	2.4	5.15555555

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	846.2	2	423.1	4.18373924	0.02613	3.3541308
Within Groups	2730.	5	101.129629			
Total	3576.	7				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 3.35413083 which is less than the F value i.e., 4.183739242. And the P-value is 0.026137 which is also less than the 0.05.

Hence tourist have significant difference in travel purpose and preferences



### Major challenges tourist face while choosing a destination

ANOVA: Single Factor

#### SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	7	110	15.71428571	85.2381
Column 2	7	120	17.14285714	77.4761
Column 3	7	23	3.285714286	6.23809

#### ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	813.238	2	406.619	7.22012	0.00498	3.55455
Within Groups	1013.71	18	56.3174			
Total	1826.95	20				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 3.5545 which is less than the F value i.e., 7.2201. And the P-value is 0.00498 which is less than the 0.05. Hence tourist

faces challenges while choosing the destination in eastern region part of India. There are challenges in prospects location in eastern region.



**Places tourists love to see first (if not visited already)**

ANOVA: Single Factor

**SUMMARY**

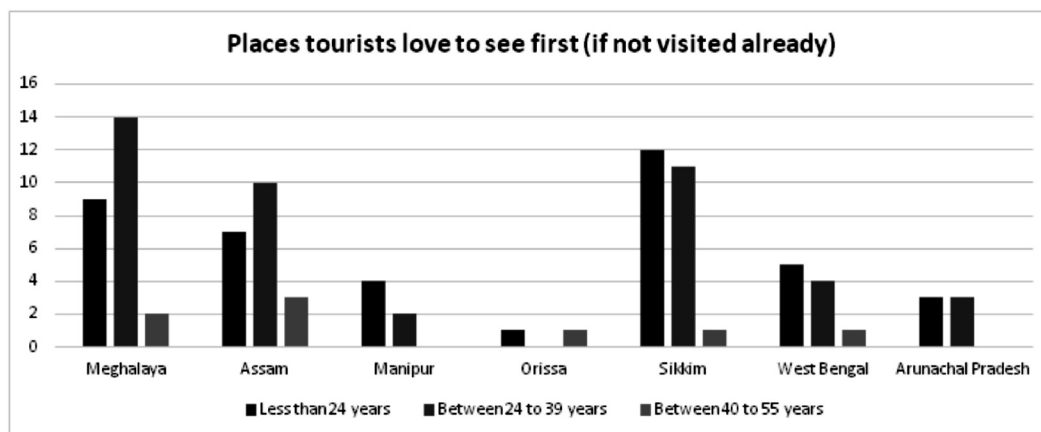
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	7	41	5.85714	14.1428
Column 2	7	44	6.28571	28.2381
Column 3	7	8	1.14285	1.14285

**ANOVA**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	114	2	57	3.92888	0.03838	3.55455
Within Groups	261.1429	18	14.5079	4	2	7
Total	375.142	9	20			

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 3.5545 which is less than the F value i.e., 3.5545. And the P-value is 0.0383 which is less than the 0.05. Null hypothesis is

rejected. Hence tourist have significant difference of opinion in preferring unexplored travel destination

**Awareness about unexplored places in eastern states**

ANOVA: Single Factor

**SUMMARY**

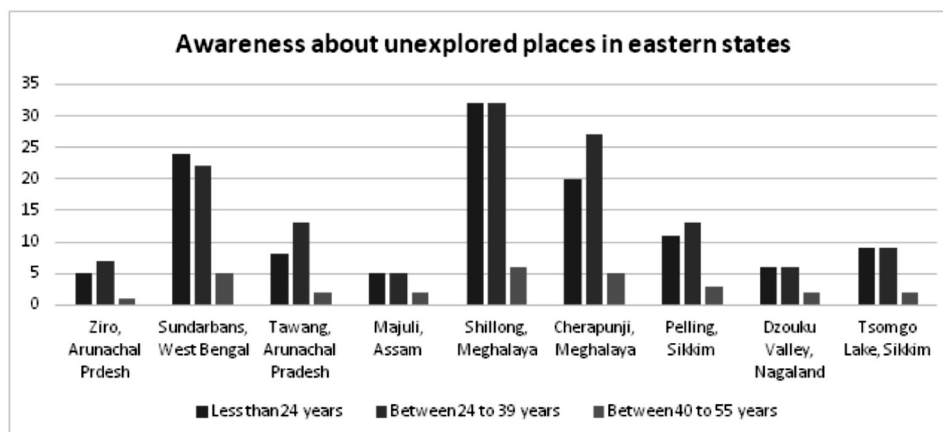
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	9	120	13.3333	94
Column 2	9	134	14.8888	96.3611
Column 3	9	28	3.11111	3.11111

**ANOVA**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	736.888	2	368.444	5.71313	0.00934	3.40282
Within Groups	1547.77	24	64.4907	7	6	6
Total	2284.66	26				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 3.402 which is less than the F value i.e., 5.713. And the P-value is 0.009 which is more than the 0.05. Hence the tourist are not

much aware about the unexplored places but would like to know or explore in future.



**Women doing small and medium businesses get benefited from growth in tourism activities, especially in eastern states**

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	3	41	13.66667	156.3333
Column 2	3	44	14.66667	210.3333
Column 3	3	8	2.66667	14.33333

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	266	2	133	1.047244	0.407273	5.143253
Within Groups	762	6	127			
Total	1028	8				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 5.143 which is more than the F value i.e., 1.047. And the P-value is 0.407 which is more than the 0.05. Null hypothesis is

accepted. Hence there is no significant hurdle for prospects and growth of location in eastern region part of India.

**Action the government prioritize to promote tourism**

Anova: Single Factor

SUMMARY

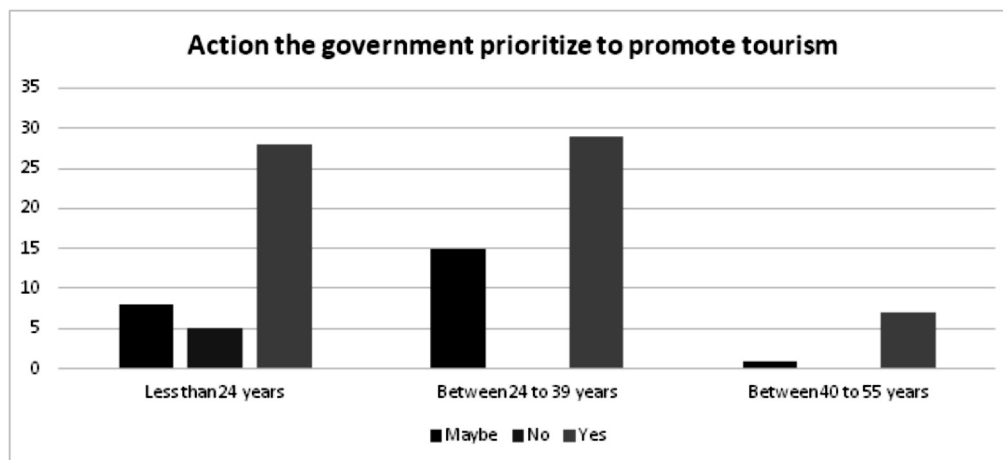
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	3	63	21	259
Column 2	3	71	23.66667	90.33333
Column 3	3	12	4	4

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	682.8889	2	341.4444	2.899057	0.131527	5.143253
Within Groups	706.6667	6	117.7778			
Total	1389.556	8				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 5.143 which is more than the F value i.e., 2.899. And the P-value is 0.131 which is more than the 0.05. Null hypothesis is

accepted. Hence there is no significant hurdle for prospects and growth of location in eastern region part of India.



### Benefit with the growth in tourism industry

ANOVA : Single Factor

#### SUMMARY

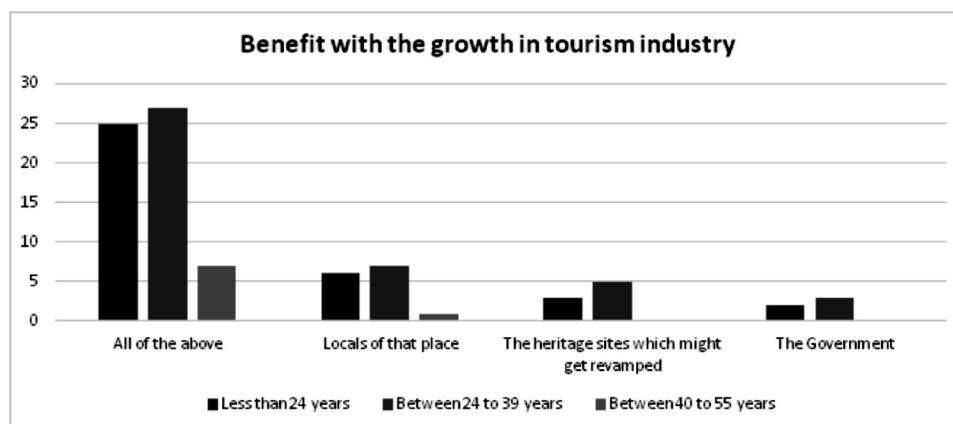
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	5	41	8.2	90.7
Column 2	5	44	8.8	107.2
Column 3	5	8	1.6	9.3

#### ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	159.6	2	79.8	1.15540	0.34761	3.88529
Within Groups	828.8	12	69.0666	5	8	4
Total	988.4	14				

As per ANOVA Single factor tool the F critical value is 3.885294 which is more than the F value i.e., 1.155405. And the P-value is 0.347618 which is more than the 0.05. Null

hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant hurdle for prospects and growth of location in eastern region part of India.



### Conclusion

The tourism industry has lot to offer to the Tourist, Tourism Company, Government and the Eastern states local public by exploring the unexplored destination. The research paper

finding is providing ample opportunities to the prospective people and others. Though the differences in preferences of tourist are not much significant and they have shown significant interest to these destination to explore which they are not yet seen and not yet aware about it.

Government have huge opportunity to increase the tourism business, employment generation and many more things through eastern states unexplored destination. Even they can focus on women empowerment by giving them the scope by setting up their own business. There is a huge scope of growth for all the beneficiary if the Government focuses on these areas which will definitely progress and develop in years to come. Also the State and Central Government must look into the challenges which the tourist are facing currently in the eastern states of India and try to overcome with it at the earliest possible.

Under the current government Make in India Initiative and the collective efforts of Tourism Company, these unexplored eastern states destination will boost the economy of the country to a great extent in a years to come.

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