

Tourism Potentiality of Sri Sri Basudev Than and Phato Bihu of Dhakuakhana of Assam

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is now-a-days considered as an important industry which has vast scope for the generation of income and employment. North-East India is a paradise for tourists. Assam, one of the constituent states of the region, an embodiment of the natural beauty and grace, a true representative of the region, has been at the center stage of tourist attraction. Lakhimpur is the oldest district of Assam. The principal attraction of the place is its natural beauty. There are several temples of historical significance around which are attractive tourist destinations. Dhakuakhana sub-Division is one of the best places for tourism potentialities of Lakhimpur district. Among the different potentialities of tourism of Dhakuakhana sub-division the Sri Sri Basudev than Narua Satra and Phato Bihu has great potentiality for tourism industry. A comprehensive and need based tourism policy is an urgent requirement for the development and promotion of tourism industry in Dhakuakhana sub-division as well as Lakhimpur district of Assam.

Keywords: Tourism, Potentiality, Basudev than, Phato Bihu, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The word 'Tourism' means temporary movement of strangers to an area. From the ancient period man is fascinated about discovering the unseen, knowing to unknown, exploring new and strange places to undergo new and thrilling experience of adventure. Tourism is one of the important world's fastest growing industries. It has vast scope for employment generation and income. It also mention that it gives a major source of people believe that travelling may be differing from people to people, it depends upon their reasons. Basically tourism has different kinds of cultural tourism, eco tourism, wild life tourism, river tourism, etc.

Dhakuakhana is a rural town and it manifested a vast area located between the river Brahmaputra and the River Subansiri. Now Dhakuakhana is a sub division of present Lakhimpur district in the North Eastern part of Assam. In Assam Dhakuakhana is popularly known as a land of educated people and this sub-division is famous for various agricultural products, like Eri, Muga and Pat silk industry etc. Dhakuakhana is a home land of various types of tribes and caste . Among them Ahom, Missing, Deori, Konch, Kalita, Keot, Chutia, tea tribes, etc. each having its own cultural heritage. Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, Islamic and many other religious people are there, but Hinduism is the major religion of Dhakuakhana.

In agricultural and cultural sector Dhakuakhana is very famous and popular sub-division of Assam. In this place is very famous for production of food grains specially rice, potato, pumkin, musterd oil, etc. Dhakuakhana is very popular for pure Silk industry. It attracts peoples to this place. Along with the handloom and textile industry of Dhakuakhana is vast and versatile. The skill in hands of people

especially in women's has its own charm. The market of Missing Traditional dresses is very famous and popular. It also attracts peoples to this place. In culturally Dhakuakhana is very rich place, some festivals are like- Phat Bihu, Ma-dam-me-phi, Palnaam, Bhaona, Dolyatra, Rash mela, etc. On other hand some spiritual tourist destinations of Dhakuakhana are- Basudeve Than Narua satra, Harhi Dewalaya, Gorokhiya Dol, Gobindaput Satra, Gopalpur Satra, etc. Among that, I have tried to analyzed the importance and significance and potentialities of Phat Bihu and Basudev Than from the tourism point of view.

Objectives of the study:

The main objectives of this study are to study and highlight the importance and potentialities of Phat Bihu and Basudev Than narua Satra for the tourism sector of Dhakuakhana Sub-division as well as Lakhimpur District of Assam. The paper also studies the need to promote sides of religious and cultural significance at domestic level which may contribute towards promoting rural tourism of Dhakuakhasna sub-division.

Methodology:

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The present study investigator may use of field survey method for collecting primary data. On the other hand the secondary data are collected from reliable sources like- books, journals, research papers, Magazine, website, etc.

Sri Sri Basudev than Narua Satra:

Historically and culturally Dhakuakhana is very rich place. In this place bears historical monuments, educational, environmental and high cultural heritage in Assam. There are some eminent locations which can attract tourist in terms of religious tourism. Among them Sri Sri Basudev than has more tourism potentialities at present day context. Moreover, the famous cultural event 'Phat Bihu'a spring festivals of this locality attract people from different parts of India and World.

Sri Sri Basudev than Narua Satra:

Sri Sri Basudev Than Narua Satra , the well known temple of Assam is situated in Dhakuakhana of North Lakhimpur District. It is one of the ancient Temple of Assam. It situated at Subansiri, a small area between Balahi Champara and Saupara. Sri Sri Basudev Than is situated in a amidst lush greenery and covered by dense forest.



The Basudev Than was originally established in 14th century by the chutia king satyanarayan who donated the plot of land to narayan Dwij for the purpose of Bishnu puja. The history of Basudev Than as told by Atul Chandra Deva Goswami is that the idol of Basudev Krishna was made way back in dwapar Yug by the radiant and adorned princess rukmini, daughter of king Bhis maka of Vidarbha, as an expression of her love and her desire to marry lord Krishna.

The Ahom king Jayadhwaj Singha heard about the glory of the idol and he wanted to establish it in his own Ahom kingdom. So, in mid-17th century during the later part of Kali yug, he designated Damodar Aata, the grandson of Srimanta Sankardeva, with the responsibility of relocating the idol of Basudev Krishna from Kundil Nagar, Bhismaka rajya to Assam. According to the legend, Lord Krishna appeared in King Jayadhwaj Singha's dream prior to the shifting of the idol. The Lord himself gave his consent for the relocation of his idol provided it was ceremonially established at a particular location known as the subarna Peeth. The idol was thus brought to Assam by Damodar Aata and the temple was established by the Subansiri River. This shrine came to be known as Laumura Satra.



However, in the unfortunate event of destruction of the temple due to erosion by the river, the idol was subsequently shifted to the present site by Ramakanta Aata, son of Damodar Aata, where it came to be known as Narua satra. The shrine was so named because of the inconsistency of its site, having passed through many hands and lands.

The popular prevailing belief is that Basudev- Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu fulfils the wishes of all who offer prayers at this holy shrine. Hence, people from across the state and abroad come here to offer their prayers to Lord Krishna, the Dwapar Avater of Lord Vishnu, their by making Basudev Than a very popular place of worship.

On arrival, one cannot miss the numerous shops which provide dry 'Prasad' items (maah-proxaad) and fresh fruits along with other puja essentials such as diyas and agarbatti (saaki-bonti, dhoop-dhunaa) and Gamosa. There is a large parking area for vehicles near the first gate. A little distance ahead, a beautifully sculptured gate (turon) welcomes visitors into the temple-complex. As per ritual, visitors wash their hands and feet at a tubewell before proceeding to the entrance of the Namghar. It is heartening to see ladies dressed in Mekhela Sador- the traditional attire of Assam. Men and Women alike invariably drape a Gamosa around the neck as the quintessentially Assamese symbol of respect.



Inside the Namghar, on the left side close to the entrance, there is a counter where the offerings for the xorai are handed over, there is a special room known as ‘Saaki Joluwaa Ghor’ where diyas and agarbattis are lit by the visitors. It is extremely common to catch sight of a very long queue of people lined up to catch a glimpse of and seek blessing from the idol of Basudev-Krishna, hosted in a sacred portion of the temple. If one reaches very early he/she may be fortunate to find a place in the front part of the long queue. Naam-kirtan takes place in the large Naamghar.

A matter of significance about Basudev Than which is worth mentioning is that, instead of mixing salt to the Prasad (Proxaad) which is common tradition at Basudev Than, the Prasad is mixed with sugar instead. This has become a significant tradition of Basudev Than and has been maintain over the years. It is notable shrine not only Dhakuakhana but in upper Assam. Every year thousands of pilgrims come to visit Basudev Than far from Nepal, Bhutan, USA, England, Israel, etc also.

Phato Bihu:

Phato Bihu is a unique traditional festival of Dhakuakhana. However, the Phato Bihu is not a festival of a particular community or tribe. It is a common festival of all the ethnic groups of the region. It is a symbol of unity among the people of Dhakuakhana sub-division as well as Lakhimpur district of Assam. But it is true that Phato Bihu has lost its originality and specialty with the passage of time.



Originally, the Phato Bihu is celebrated at Mahghuli chapori near the river Charikaria phat. But at present, this Bihu is being observed at Mahghuli Chapori at its permanent stage under the Sisu trees. However, it is observed three days in the month of Bohag(April-May) in an organized manner. On On

the first day, the programme like- flag hosting and stage inauguration take place in the morning. The Toka Bihu and Childrens Huchari Compitition are also held on the same day. On the seconday, planting of trees and orchid flowers(kapouphul) take place early in the morning. Then the Gamosha competition and Huchari competition of adult person thke place. On the same day, 'Bihuwan' the souvenir of Phato Bihu is released.



On the third day, the cultural procession which is an attractive event of the Phato Bihu takes place in the morning. Besides the Bihu different cultural aspects of Dhakuakhana are also shown in the procession. Then the Mukali Bihu , the most colourful and traditional programme of Phato Bihu is observed. The Mukali Bihu is the original identity of Phato Bihu celebration. During the time of Mukali Bihu all the Bihu teams perform Bihu simultaneously for one or a half hour under different trees. Every Bihu team has a serial number and they show their traditional culture while performing Bihu. In the end the concluding ceremony starts. In this ceremony elderly people of this locality are felicitated and prizes are distributed among the best performers. The selected Bihu team also performs their Bihu on the stage followed by lectures given the invited guests.

The Phato Bihu of Dhakuakhana is a original form of Bihu celebrated by the all people irrespective of caste, religion, etc. of Dhakuakhana sub-division. Now a days, the Phato Bihu of Dhakuakhana is modern to some extent it is different from the other Bihu functions of present day because it has its own identity. The fact is that it is still maintaining some traditional characters of the original Phato Bihu whice may attract tourist of other states or country. Therefore, the present Phato Bihu has a great significance in Assamese culture as well as society.

The Phato Bihu of Dhakuakhana has great tourist potentialities at present day context. Recently, tourist has come from various parts of the country as well as abroad to enjoy the Phato Bihu. Especially in the last few years numbers of foreign tourist come from Israel and France to enjoy and study the facts of this celebration. Some of them are Kfirmalka and yana Miluick (Israel) and Rey Marie (France). This is because they have come to know that the Phato Bihu of Dhakuakhana is the original form of Assamese Bihu culture. Some of them come with their family and stay for whole three days of the Phato Bihu. These national and international contacts have helped in spreading ideas and promoting cultural exchange. This kind of situation also helps in economic development of this region.



Conclusion:

Tourism education and training is an area of prime importance as there is dearth of trained manpower in both managerial and technical levels. At present the region requires education and training of people to work in tourism sector at all levels, including operational, managerial and personal. At community level too, there is the need for training, so that local people gather appropriate knowledge base to work for the tourism industry. In true sense, general public education and awareness programme, fruitful utilization of local media, active co-operation of Government decision makers and technical personal are yet some of the gray areas in the context of Dhakuakhana sub-division.

From this study it can be concluded that Dhakuakhana sub-division has great potentialities of tourism sector especially in Basudev than Narua Satra and Phato Bihu. But, there are several obstacles to promote and development of religious and cultural tourism in the study area. If these problems could be reduced through proper planning, it will increase the inflow of domestic as well as foreign tourist and which will help to socio-economic development of the region.

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