

A Study on the Tourist Potentiality & Opportunity and Development of Strategic Management of Khoupum Valley Through SWOT and TOWS Analysis/Application.

Dr. Kahimthonliu Gangmei¹, Meibuangam Kamei², Joshita Parmar³,
Dr. Hemlata Kumari⁴

¹Assistant Professor, Jadonang Memorial College, Manipur

²Research Scholar- Manipur University

³Research Scholar- Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan.

⁴Assistant Professor, P.S. Degree College, Harda, Purnia.

Abstract

Khoupum Valley in Noney district, Manipur, has high tourism potential due to its waterfalls, lush landscapes, cultural richness, and proximity to major infrastructure projects like the world's tallest railway bridge. However, it remains underexplored, requiring investment in accessibility, eco-friendly facilities, and promotion to unlock its full potential. Thus, this research paper is focused on tourist potentiality and opportunity and development of strategic management by using SWOT and TOWS method analysis.

Keywords: Tourist, Potentiality, Tourist site, SWOT, TOWS

1. Introduction.

The important of local government as well as the inhabitant of particular region has a crucial role in shaping the development of tourism. Kaur and Kaur (2019) highlight the needs for sustainable and community-centric marketing strategies to provide a suitable destination. Kamei and Singh (2018) have pinpointed the primary reason for the underdeveloped in tourist sector is due to the inadequate infrastructure, insufficient promotional effort forms the local government and road connectivity. As recorded in tourism directorate of Manipur the annual tourist influx is fluctuated, which is minimal with just 2500 to 5000 from 2010 to 2020. The main result could be both due to lack of government intervention and local ignorance in promoting the tourism. Makhou (2021), clearly bring the need to unlock the eco-tourism potential for sustainable development. He has also call for the proper strategies to look into the financial constrain, infrastructure, the skill required, the trained official and political stability. The community involvement, indigenous knowledge, customs and cultural values influence the development of sustainable business model (Sharma Ashok) which will gain both the local and the environment at large. He stresses the need for corroboration from various stakeholder to bring a successful tourism sector and safeguards the environment. Encouraging Private sector investment in eco-

tourism by the local government could be other right choice to bring successful development in tourism (Singh and Singh 2017). He has also suggested that a facilities like tax break, subsidies and financial support to encourage private sector eco-tourism in certain region. The needs for various training in local level letting the community's involvement for this sector will bring the entrepreneurship among the people (Velmurugan 2019). The economic benefit for the local through preservation, natural resource conservation, wildlife protection with supportive policies is the need of the hour. There are no official disaggregated tourism statistics published specifically for Khoupum Valley in Noney district, Manipur. Available data is at the state level (Manipur), which shows overall tourist arrivals, receipts, and growth trends. Khoupum Valley is recognized as an emerging eco-tourism site, but its visitor numbers are not yet separately tracked in government reports.

Based on the Government of Manipur Tourism Department Annual Report 2023–24 and national tourism statistics, Domestic Tourist Visits (DTVs) in Manipur recorded over 1.5 million domestic tourists in 2023, showing strong post-pandemic recovery. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) were around 12,000 foreign tourists visited Manipur in 2023, mainly from Southeast Asia and Europe. In terms of Tourism Receipts, tourism contributed significantly to the state economy, with receipts crossing ₹700 crore in 2023, reflecting growth in eco-tourism and cultural tourism. In respect to Employment Impact, tourism is highlighted as a “game changer” in providing sustainable livelihoods, especially through homestays and rural tourism. Khoupum Valley is recognised as emerging destination mentioned in promotional materials as a scenic, underexplored site with waterfalls, rivers, and rural landscapes. While no official figures exist, anecdotal evidence suggests low but rising footfall, mainly domestic tourists from Imphal and nearby districts. Potential Growth Drivers of Khoupum Valley is improved connectivity via the Noney Railway Bridge (world's tallest pier bridge). Government push for eco-tourism and rural homestays. Rising interest in offbeat destinations in Northeast India.

Khoupum valley, located in the Noney District of Manipur is physiographically consider as ‘mini Imphal Valley’ as it is the second largest valley in Manipur. The valley is considered as one of the most beautiful valleys with breathtaking landscape, vibrant culture and unique historical site and feature. The Khoupum Dam, The Khoupum Water Fall (Khouduang), The Khoupum Cape (Khukdai), Irang water Resort, The Mount Kasuakbut (Kasuat Flowers- Roodendrum) a flower that bloom at the onset of spring season is some of the unique tourist spot. The valley immerses potential for tourist destination remains largely underdeveloped and under-explored. The study explored the strategic management- specifically through SWOT and TOWS frameworks.

Objective:

1. To identify and established the existential Strengths, inherent Weaknesses, potential Opportunities and impending Threats of Khoupum Valley as tourist destination
2. To suggest sustainable strategic Management.

2. Study area.

Khoupum valley is Located on the Noney district, western part of the State wedge between Nungba and Bishnupur, and it is passed through by historic old Cachar Road. The valley is just in proximity to Imphal with only 90 Km away. The valley is known for its lush greenery in its sereneness and cultivation of rice for tribe of Naga is endowed with its historical monuments and pristine cultural style of construction. Climatically, Khoupum was part of rainiest Tamenglong district before bifurcation into Noney.

Surrounded by hilly ranges, the valley itself entirely is a tourist spot. Within it there are specific spots particularly important for unique features viz. khoupum Dam, khoupum water fall, khoupumcave, Irang water Resort and so forth. Khoupum dam is the oldest existing dam constructed in hill district. The most eye-catching hallmark of the valley is khoupum water fall which has potential to generate micro-electricity for domestic consumption. The Minchen River which connects Khoupum dam with Khoupum water fall supplies water to water fall perennially. The river runs through the heart of valley be used for rafting and canoeing as recreation. The cave which is located in the upland of hill side is a trekking destination. Located on Irang, the tributary of leimatak, is the Irang water resort famous for picnic and summer camping.

Khoupum Valley.

Khoupum valley, 88 kilometers away from the Capital Imphal enroute Tungjei Marin aka Old Cachar road (one of the first motorable road introduced by the Britisher to reach Imphal from Cachar Assam) is another similar valley under Noney District, Manipur. Like Imphal Valley albeit smaller in size its beset with hills range; burgeon of paddy and tress in the plain and the human settlement in the peripheral of the valley foothills endowed verdant landscapes which render unfathomable view to the visitors. Besides that, nocturnal view of surrounding settlement gives simmering corona. Mentioned may be may made for the enhancement of beauty of the place are as follows. 1) Khoupum Dam, 2) Khoupum Waterfall (Khoupum Khoudung), 3) Khoupum Cave (Khukdai), 4) Khoupum Chingkao Village (Lofty Village of Khoupum), 5) Mount Kasuakbut, 6) Irang Water Resort 7) Duilin Cascade.

- **Khoupum Dam:** Khoupum Dam was constructed in the year 1978. This is the first Dam in North East India which is constructed in the hilly region. It provides irrigation water to the agriculture land of 800 hectares in the valley. It is the Earthen Dam of 17-meter height and 600 square meters in area (L. Sherjit Singh et.al 2018). It was inaugurated by the then CM of Manipur, Shri. Yangmeiso Shiza. It is the fresh water reservoir, home to many species of aquatic and amphibian fauna like shrimp, grass carp, crape frogs etc. The peripheral shore abounds with lotus bloom seasonally adorn the artificial dam looks naturally. It interlinked some of the villages in Khoupum Valley.
- **Khoupum waterfall (Khouduang):** Downstream of Khoupum Dam aka as Menchen Thuak coalesce with river Luigungpangthuak in the middle of the valley accumulating all the water drain in from the surrounding hills slope; gurgling down toward the narrow lane in the southern hillslope, outlet the water falls high in the stiff rock come to known as Khoupum Khouduang. The descent of water layer after layer emanates series of ripples creating a breathtaking phenomenon whereupon the deflected water droplets as mist of cloud forms colorful rainbow in the air when simmering sunlight incident upon it. The green verdure in its vicinity magnifies the waterfall luxuriously. The plunge pool is dotted with flat rocks and boulders provide enough place for the visitors for camping, strolling, swimming, picnicking, photography, angling, hunting of snails, crabs etc. Indeed, the picturesque spot is a sight for the sore eyes and paramount important from waterfalling perspective. The surrounding area is adorned with lush greenery, dense forest, and rocky outcrops, adding to the allure of the landscape and providing an idyllic setting for visitor to relax and unwind. The cool refreshing water of the waterfall provides a welcome respite from the heat, making it a popular spot for local and tourist alike to escape the hustle and bustle of the city life.
- **Khoupum cave (Khukdai):** Slightly curved interior looks like shelf for storing things called in local parlance Khuk-chest, Dai- large. The beauty of the cave is not only water streaming down from top as waterfall but also disperses water droplets in its vicinity and flat big rocks available along with

huge banyan tree entangle its roots and branches provide enough shade and breeze. The cave adjoining with land has enough spaces for camping, picnicking, photography, recreation and would have great importance for speleological survey. It was told that in olden day laymen who were unable to fight against the enemies hide and shelter in the cave. The quiet breathtaking spot in the flank of the Khoupum valley would definitely provide majestic aesthetic value to the visitors

- **Khoupum Chingkao Village (Lofty Village of Khoupum):** It is a primitive native village nestled in the lofty pleateau over-looking the Khoupum valley. It provides panoramic view of the entire scenic beautiful valley and to horizon radiation. It is the oldest village inhabited by indigenous Khoupians prior to the exodus to Khoupum valley. Some archaeological monuments and artifacts still found in existence like Stonehenge, stone fortified wall (Raengc). Historically the village is known for defensive stronghold accessible only through narrow rock-cut passage. The sizeable section of villagers still preserved and follows indigenous religion TRC (Tingkao Raguang Chapriak) and practices vibrant culture, traditions, and custom. Certain unique features on top of the pleateau are i) Goubijang, and ii) Khoupum Rock Bridge.
 1. **Goubijang-** literally Goubijang in local parlance Goubi- cream, and Jang-valley/plain. With the advent of monsoon season army of frogs gregariously croaking day in and day out breeding and matting. Topographically the plain is a doab of Chibanangthuak & Rireichangphaituak and the natural pond like oasis lies in the plain. During the rainy season the inundated pondwater meet the two streams (tri-juncture) downward descend from two peripheral directions outlet to reach Irang River from the high khoupum Chingkao known as Lunglamduisa (Lunglam waterfall) which can be seen from the other side of the mountain. It is one of the highest seasonal waterfalls originated from Goubijang. Some portion of plain is used for cultivation and production of crops. In the periphery of the plain scattered with enchanting features like caves known as Meitunliu cave and Jeicsuan cave and others two minor seasonal waterfall, Kaipoujeic Waterfall and Guaikeikhou Waterfall. Ecologically the place is home to varieties of rich flora and fauna.
 2. **Khoupumc (Rock Bridge).** Colloquially Khou-cliff, Pum-Bridge. It is a natural rock bridge one side sloped toward khoupum valley and other side extended to Irang river. The so called Khoupum valley derived its name from this rock bridge. The bridge has broader at the two ends tapering at the middle akin sand hourglass. One can experience rustling of wind invigorating the mind of whoever cross the bridge. With its great elevation it gives the sensation of vertigo and excitement. When standing in the middle of the bridge when fling any light stuff boomerangs back by the rustling wind. The spot is par excellence for adventurous enthusiasts and trekkers.
- **Irang water resort:** Irang River is the major tributary of Barak River. It provides canoeing and rafting to venture enthusiast. The stretch of river bank with pebbles and rocks along the river in miles quintessential for camping and hiking as vacation. The settlers near the river engrain with hospitality and love.
- **Duilin Cascade:** Unlike Khoupum waterfall Duilin cascade is another unexplored pristine beauty with the formation of pile of rocks one after another. The surrounding of the cascade engulfed with virgin forest undisturbed till today. The clarity and transparent of the water are beyond compared as one can see through deep enough around 20 feet to the bottom. The river abounds in varieties of fish, big rocks, etc stiff flow of water and narrow landscape sometime impermeable to sunlight.
- **Mount Kasuakbut:** It is one the highest mountain in the Zeliangrong land with flourishing kasuat flowers (Rhododendrum) bloom usually at the advent of spring season. The mount is a historical site

stands towering epitomized the true legendary love story of herculean Nakam and beautiful lass with long hair Rinsuannei. A time-honored legend narrated that drop-dead

- Gorgeous Rinsuannei used to weave shawl for clothing in flat stone of mount Kasuakbut. The remain of the footprint engraved in the stone stands against the sand of time is the testament to the legendary attachment. The stone is known as Nakaam the weaving stone (Nakaam Pheidak). The awe-inspiring view of flowers and its diffused fragrance around the place is most conducive for romantic atmosphere and meditation. Moreover, the place is a heaven of peace and tranquility for the weary mind lamented by nearby village elders.
- **Guangpungbut:** Century old banyan tree planted by (Late) Shri, Khanguangpou Rongmei of upper Khoupum Village, which is still standing on the pre-historic hillock Guunpungbut in the middle of the valley (E-Pao 2024). It is where the administrative block scatter in Khoupum Sub-Division, Noney District, Manipur.

3. Materials and Methods

This paper is exploratory and descriptive in nature. The paper is mainly based on the primary source data. To collect first hand data, empirical field observation, group discussion and brainstorming with local village elders, in-depth interview with subject panelists who have well versed and expertise in this field are engaged for in the data collecting process. The primary data are re-enforced by the secondary source derive from literature reading, document, journal, newspaper and so forth. The SWOT analysis is employed to digest the internal strength and weakness and external opportunity and threats of tourism of study area. The results/findings of SWOT analysis are further examined to form sustainable strategies through TOWS method. The paper is a comprehensive and qualitative study which emphasizes on main focus of strength and opportunity and to devise strategies for long term planning of the valley. SWOT is a diagnostic tool that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while TOWS is a strategic tool that takes those factors and develops actionable strategies.

Internal Strength		Internal Weakness.	
S1	Existence of unique (Dam, Cave, waterfall, Khoupum’s Rock pier etc.)	W1	Deplorable transport condition
S2	Traversing of Tonjei Marin road (old Cachar)	W2	Lack of proper accommodation
S3	Hospitality of residence easily accessible and incurred no fees.	W3	Ineffective management authority
S4	Indigenous handloom and handicraft.	W4	Lack of waste management Facility.
S5	Closed distance from Capital City (Imphal)	W5	Seasonality of some unique features
S6	Concentration of tourist spots within the valley	W6	Lack of basic infrastructure
S7	Indigenous weaving and Handicraft	W7	Poor biodiversity
S8	Indigenous brewery	W8	Language barrier and xenophobia
S9	Salubrious environment associated with pleasant atmosphere	W9	Poor communication
		W10	Inter-village ownership conflict

4. Results and discussions.

Such a place with natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, historically significant need a special study to realize it’s prospect and to showcase to larger public domain. In recent years the number of tourists from

outside Khoupum has been steadily and slowly surging which poses a challenge and threat to the pristine existence of environment. Often time visitors violate the sanctity of the place by infringement of traffic rule resulting in fatality, indulgence in intoxication, indiscriminate littering of used items- all these causes great concerned to the surrounding and its local residents.

Khoupum, the plethora of natural pride since time immemorial has been left unexplored and unexposed as a result it's potential and economic viability remain aloof from realization to tap the natural endowments. The major setbacks related to development of ecotourism can be studied from different angles: poor and underdeveloped transportation and marketing, poor network of communication, lack of impetus from government, NGOs, etc., lack of funding and poverty, ignorance about conservation among locals and lack of other amenities such as hotel facilities, management services, etc. With the dawn of railway in Noney, the discovery of petroleum reserve and scope to convert old Cachar Road to National Highway (NH) there is an apprehension that the floodgate of outside tourists would open to flood and put pressure on the environment beyond its adaptive and carrying capacity. The discovery of petroleum reserve causes panic among the public about their safety and intactness of greenery. The overstep of human encroachment due to population increase and construction activities by beyond its horizon further exacerbate the already deteriorated environment and tourist spots. Considering all the stated problems it is not too late rather high time to address the issues effectively and find sustainable solution for the benefit of both present and future generations. To develop short term remedies such as formulation of guidelines and regimentation for tourists, to develop sound policy for prudential utilization of inflow of fund for larger good of public in general and poor in particular, to inculcate people with the sense of belongingness and responsibility.

From the table 4.1, it is evident that the matrix provides a roadmap for sustainable tourism development by emphasizing more on following factors like income, education, environment, culture, jobs, and quality of life. SO, strategies emphasize leveraging strengths like cultural richness, eco-tourism potential, and community engagement to maximize opportunities. WO strategies focus on fixing gaps like transport, infrastructure, communication, hospitality, and skill development—so opportunities can be fully realized. This now gives you a complete TOWS framework that can be adapted in tourism sustainability indices. Even weights could be assigned (e.g., income 20%, education 15%, environment 15%, etc.) in order to measure progress across regions like Khoupum Valley.

Table 4.1: SWOT and TOWS Matrix Table

External Opportunity		S-O Strategies		W-O Strategies	
O1	Income generation	SO1	Fee charge on Entry cum hiring guide, engagement in tourist activities etc.	WO1	Revamping of transport condition.
O2	Widening of outlook	SO2	Develop fair management Mechanism of profit.	WO2	Setting up of basic infrastructures.
O3	Enhance education value	SO3	Develop robust market for handloom and handicraft and local liquor.	WO3	Implementation of proper waste management systems through inculcating educational values

O4	Impart environmental awareness	SO4	Organizing awareness campaign vis-à-vis values of eco- tourism.	WO4	Up gradation of communication to next generation partnership with investors.
O5	Promotion of local culture and artifacts	SO5	Relevant publication and documentation on materials about the tourist hot spot.	WO5	Conservation of flora and fauna by means of environmental awareness.
O6	Provide job opportunity	SO6	Expansion of job horizon.	WO6	----
O7	Greater inflow of outside tourists	SO7	Develop attractive tourism packages, festivals, and homestay programs	WO7	Improve hospitality standards, sanitation, and visitor facilities
O8	Exposure to wider public domain.	SO8	Use digital marketing, social media campaigns, and virtual tours	WO8	Build online presence, multilingual signage, and information centers
O9	Scope for partnership (NGOs, investors)	SO9	Leverage NGOs for training and community development	WO9	Attract investors for infrastructure and eco-friendly projects
O10	Adventure sport	SO10	Promote trekking, rafting, rock climbing, and eco-adventure trails	WO10	Ensure safety infrastructure, trained guides, and medical facilities
O11	Improve quality of life.	SO11	Community-based tourism benefits reinvested locally	WO11	Improve healthcare, sanitation, and housing through tourism revenue
O12	Reduce emigration	SO12	Create local employment through tourism-linked enterprises	WO12	Skill development programs and vocational training for youth

Table 4.2: TOWS Matrix for External Threats

External Threats		S-T Strategies		W-T Strategies	
T1	Disturbing law and order	ST1	Streamlining of law and order to secure safe atmosphere	WT1	Establishment of minimum standard accommodation facilities.
T2	Disfigure of unique features	ST2	The Concerned government should give special priority to the development of the valley.	WT2	To make the unique features beautiful undisturbed yearlong by concerted effort of environmental conservation.
T3	Jeopardy of overcrowding and traffic congestion	ST3	Adoption of guidelines and Standard Operation Procedure with a view to keeping unique features and pristine environment intact.	WT3	Effective empowerment and Autonomous execution of responsibility by managing Authority.

T4	Interference in the local ethos	ST4	Promote cultural tourism that respects traditions and involves local communities	WT4	Establish codes of conduct for tourists and provide orientation programs to minimize cultural disruption
T5	Degradation of pristine environment	ST5	Strengthen eco-tourism practices with strict environmental safeguards	WT5	Introduce waste management, pollution control, and reforestation programs to counter degradation
T6	Lack of funding from state Government.	ST6	Mobilize alternative funding through PPPs, NGOs, and international eco-tourism grants	WT6	Encourage community-based microfinance and self-help groups to sustain basic infrastructure

The table 4.2 is a TOWS Matrix for External Threats, with some S–T (Strength–Threat) strategies and W–T (Weakness–Threat) strategies having full framework that balances opportunities and threats. S–T strategies: Use existing strengths (eco-tourism potential, cultural richness, community involvement) to neutralize threats like overcrowding, cultural interference, and environmental degradation. W–T strategies: Focus on capacity building and resilience—improving infrastructure, empowering local authorities, and diversifying funding sources to reduce vulnerability. Balanced approach: Together, these strategies ensure that external threats don’t derail tourism sustainability, while also reinforcing community participation and environmental protection.

5. Conclusion

Tourism is one of the significant tools for delivering economic growth for the local and social development in general. The local and the government hold an important role to foster and nurture the eco-tourism sector. Both, an Opportunities (O1–O12) and Threats (T1–T6) mapped with strategies can give a complete TOWS Matrix that can be directly integrated into tourism sustainability index or policy framework.

6. References

1. Annual-Report-2023-24.pdf, Government of Manipur, Tourism Department.
2. Gangmei, Makhou (2021). Enhancing Eco-Tourism development in Tamenglong District, Manipur Through Local Government Initiatives, Vol. 8.
3. Kaur, M., & kaur, S. (2019). Exploring the potential of eco-tourism in India. International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM), 7(6),620-626.
4. Nigam,V. & Agrawal, M. (2018). Role of local governance in promotion of sustainable tourism practices in India. International journal of Management, Technology, and Social Science (IJMTS),3(2),26-34.
5. Sharma, Ashok (2024). Eco-Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in Mizoram’s Mountains landscape: Unleashing potentials for Positive change” chapter-4, page 45 -60.
6. Singh, Dr.Th.Nabakumar (2014). Geography of Manipur. Rajesh Publication
7. Singh, R., & Singh, R (2017). Role of government in eco-tourism development in India: a review of policies and programs. Journal of tourism and Hospitality management,5(1),1-12.
8. Tourism | Noney District, Government of Manipur | India

9. Velmurugan, S. (2019). Community- base ecotourism and rural development in India: A review of the role of government. *Journal of Rural Studies* ,65,31-44