

Melamora Rural Tourism Centre of Golaghat, Assam-Youth Development and Employment: A Brief Overview

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Abstract:

Curiosity is a natural human instinct. There are many new concepts that have emerged since people started travelling in search of some relief from their daily lives. Such thinking is the root cause of the development of the tourism sector. The term 'Tourism' became widely popular in the early twentieth century. The English word Tourism is the Assamese synonym for tourism. It comes from the English word Tour which means to travel. Tourism is a journey that takes people from one place to another just to learn about art and culture or to enjoy the beauty of nature. Rural tourism is the enjoyment of rural life, arts, culture and heritage in a rural environment, the economic and social benefits of the local community and the interaction between tourists and local people. There are many tourist attractions in the village of Melamora under Khumtai constituency which is currently gaining popularity in the field of tourism- **Melamora Tea Eco-Tourism Centre, Meluha, Melamora Children and Water Sports Park, Barguri Heuj Khetra and Melamara Turtle/Tortoise Preservation Centre**. Nature seems to have opened up its unique harmony. The Melamora Children and Water Sports Park is located in a natural environment on the banks of Mohghuli Bill, surrounded by green tea plantations. Meluha is located in a natural environment full of Assamese culture as well as Indian and other products of the world and has attracted many tourists from home and abroad. **"Wait, wait, O passer-by, sit in my shade and relax your body and mind"** The large big Banyan tree in the Barguri Heuj Khetra fills everyone's body and mind. There is a lot of potential for youth development and employment in the Melamara Rural Tourism sector. Twenty (20) women have got permanent employment in Melamora Children and Sports Park and five (5) youths have got employment in Meluha. The 28 educated youths of the Heuj Hopun Group have been working tirelessly to make the village a clean, polythene free and green village. The village has already won the **"Best Clean Village Award"** in Inter Village Cleanliness Competition declared **by the honourable Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on 17th March, 2023**. In the future, the village has a strong potential to develop in the field of tourism and employment of youth. The proposed paper will describe the tourism sectors developed in Melamora village and give a brief discussion on youth development and employment in it.

Keywords: Melamora, Rural, Tourism, Youth Development, Employment

Introduction:

Tourism is currently one of the most significant industries in the world. There are many tourist attractions in a place like natural beauty, natural resources, vast sanctuaries, green canyons, rare animals, birds, arts, culture, ancient historical treasures, etc. The definition of tourism by scholars Warter Hunziker of the University of Saint-Gallen and Kut Karf of the University of Bern is recognized by the International Association of Tourism Scientists: With the rapid development of urban civilization and industrialization, there is a tendency around the world to spend some time in rural areas free from the pressures of urban life, increased interest in heritage and culture, environmental awareness etc. There is a growing interest in enjoying a healthy lifestyle, hence the concept of rural tourism, which is aimed at protecting and conserving the natural environment, improving the skills of local

youth, employment, jobs, growth of local businesses and improvement of local infrastructure The rural economy can be strengthened through rural tourism.

Objectives:

Khumtai constituency is very popular as a rural tourism destination now a day. There are many tourist attractions in the village of Melamora-Eco Tea Tourism Centre, Melamora Children and Water Sports Park and Meluha. The paper will present a brief discussion of these tourism areas in Melamora village and a discussion on youth development and employment opportunities in these tourism areas.

Hypothesis:

"Establishing a rural tourism center like Melamora in Golaghat District, Assam, has a positive impact on youth development and employment opportunities, as it provides avenues for skill development, entrepreneurship, and job creation within the local community."

Methodology and Scope of the Study:

Descriptive and analytical methods have been used in preparing the paper. Brief description of the tourism areas of Melamora village in Khumtai constituency of Golaghat district in limited scope. A comprehensive analysis of youth development and employment potential in these tourism sectors will also be presented.

Sources of Information:

Both primary and secondary data have been used in preparing the paper. Data from various books, magazines, souvenir relating to tourism centres and oral interviews with people involved in these tourism sectors have been conducted.

Discussion of the Content

There are many different types of tourist attractions in the country. There are already several tourism destinations in Melamora village under Khumtai constituency and there is a lot of potential for tourism in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to develop the tourism sector in rural areas like Melamora. These tourism centres will gain considerable expansion and employment opportunities will be created for the youth.

Brief Introduction to Melamora Village:

Melamora village is a holy meeting place of Hindu, Muslim and tea garden workers. It is another example of harmony and unity. The village is home to rows of tea trees, greenery, a children's park on the banks of Mohghuli Bill and a golden bird of prey full of various elements of Assamese culture. There are many different types of trees in the green fields of Melamora Barguri Heuj Khetra, which are full of beautiful nature.

Total Population: 1290 + 293 = 1583 (2021-22)

Males: 670 + 139 =809

Female: 620 + 154 = 774

Total houses: 408 houses.

Educational Institutions: =09 in total.

(It is perhaps the only village in Assam with Primary School to Degree College within 200 metres radius. The village has a total of 9 Educational Institutions)

- ❖ Melamora Primary School.
- ❖ Melamora Model Higher Secondary School
- ❖ Melamora Sankardev Shishu Niketan.
- ❖ Melamora Junior College.

- ❖ Melamora College
- ❖ 04 Anganwadi Centers in Melamora.

Religious Institutions

- ❖ Melamora Namghar.
- ❖ Melamora Mosque.
- ❖ Melamora Barguri Heuj Khetra
- ❖ Melamora Vishnu Temple.
- ❖ Melamora Shiva Temple.

Institutions in Melamora:

- ❖ Melamora Bhimraj Devaraj Natya Mancha
- ❖ Melamora Samanya Yuvak Sangha.
- ❖ Melamora Gyan Aluk Moina Parijat
- ❖ Melamora Small Tea Farmers Association.
- ❖ Melamora Village Development Party
- ❖ Melamora Lekhika Samittee.
- ❖ Melamora Sub Health Centre
- ❖ Melamora Water Supply Scheme.
- ❖ Melamora Mohila Samittee

Tourist Areas in Melamora:

The miner of modern Melamora, the Heuj Homrat, the President of the All Assam Small Tea Farmers Association, Gangadhar Saikia, was able to create a green revolution through small scale tea cultivation in the wider region as well as the entire Assam. He established an "Eco Tea Tourism Centre" in Melamora. "Meluha" established by Nature lover of Melamora Dr. Deepak Saikia has already attracted many tourists from home and abroad. Khumtai constituency has gained popularity as a rural tourism centre under the strong leadership of MLA Mrinal Saikia. A Turtle Preservation Centre has been set up at Melamora. Melamora Children and Water Sports Park is located in complete natural environment. In addition to enhancing the natural beauty, 20 women have already been employed.

"The Melamora Barguri Heuj Khetra has already become a tourist destination. The natural beauty of the Banyan tree attracts everyone. The annual Bhogdia event at the B Boraguri Heuj Khetra attracts people from different parts of the state. The program is run by a management committee.

A Brief Discussion of Tourist Area of Melamora

- ❖ Melamora Eco-Tea Tourism area.
- ❖ Meluha.
- ❖ Melamora Children and Sports Park.
- ❖ Melamora Barguri Heuj Khetra
- ❖ Melamora Turtle Preservation Centre.

Melamora Tea is an eco-tourism Centre

- ✓ In 2011, it was inaugurated by Gangadhar Saikia the miner of modern Melamora.
- ✓ The main objectives of the establishment are:
- ✓ A Eco Tea Tourism Centre in Melamora to attract locals and foreigners
- ✓ Establishment of a children's park in Melamora area.
- ✓ There is currently a children and water sports park at Melamora with the efforts of the MLA.
- ✓ The Melamora Eco-Tea Tourism Sector has come to life with the efforts of the MLA.

Meluha

- ❖ Meluha was opened to tourists on 1 January 2022
- ❖ More than 50,000 tourists have come to Meluha in the first opening year
- ❖ Meluha is located in a natural environment with the exceptional thinking of Dr. Deepak Saikia.
- ❖ It is full of various elements of Assamese culture.
- ❖ There are many tourist attractions in the country and abroad

Melamora Barguri Heuj Khetra:

- ✓ The Banyan tree in Boraguri Heuj Khetra is known as Garakhia Bar because it was planted by Garkhia Lara. (Planting Time approximately-1927)
- ✓ Bhogdia, Annual Barsabah and Shivratri are celebrated every year.
- ✓ The big Banyan tree covered more than three bighas of land

Melamora Children and Water Sports Park

- ✓ The park was opened for children on 11 May 2021 by the honourable MLA of Khumtai constituency.
- ✓ The park is located in a completely natural environment and fills the minds of children.
- ✓ Twenty (20) women have been employed in the park.
- ✓ The average income is Rs-50,000/60,000 per month.
- ✓ The women of the children's park keep the park beautifully tidy every day.
- ✓ They keep roads and public places clean regularly.

Melamora Turtle Preservation Centre.

- ✓ The Turtle Preservation centre was inaugurated by the MLA on 30th June,2018.
 - ✓ Along with the previous Turtle in the pond, the MLA introduced 12 new species of Turtle.

“We will make Melamora a polythene-free, clean, green village and will gift a greener world to the next generation.”

To make Melamora a clean, polythene free green village, the group has been undertaking various activities such as tree planting, tree nurturing and tree conservation the **“Heuj Hopun Group”** was formed on 10 August, 2022.

Steps:

- ✓ In 2006, tree planting (100 trees in Namghar, 100 in Mosque, 100 in College, 100 in Barguri Heuj Khetra, 100 in Fishery Beach, 200 in Sarkari Pukhuri, 500 trees along the road).
- ✓ Active participation in the Tree Festival at Melamora in 2017.
- ✓ In 2022 Khumtai Constituency MLA in conjunction with **“Destination Khumtai”** Marathon Race 42 km walk with MLA cleaned both sides of the road.
- ✓ Cycle Rally and Car Rally about cleanliness in Khumtai constituency to create consciousness among the people.
- ✓ Regularly tweets about cleanliness work.

Success:

- ❖ One of the achievements is to raise awareness among the villagers.
- ❖ It is truly commendable that the youths studying at college level have spontaneously come forward to clean up the village.
- ❖ Their activities are published in state newspaper -The Assam Tribune and various media outlets
- ❖ With the cooperation of the MLA, the members of the group have been able to visit the cleanest places in Assam and the cleanest places in Asia free of cost.
- ❖ The group members are provided with free 5 days' tour of Arunachal tourist destinations by the Minister of State (Independent) for Sports and Youth Welfare Kiren Rijiju to the Heuj Hopun Group and Women of the Children Park.
- ❖ The cleanliness competition was held in Khumtai constituency and Melamora village won the title of best cleanest village in the competition. On 17th March 2023, the Chief Minister of Assam, Dr. Himanta

Biswa Sharma officially declared Melamora as the Best Clean Village at a public meeting held at Bapuji High School, Senchowa, Golaghat. Such an announcement will take a step towards cleanliness and will surely attract tourists to the village. It will also contribute to youth development, employment and strengthening the rural economy.

Findings:

- ❖ Melamora tourism sector will bring a lot of potential in rural tourism.
- ❖ Melamora tourism strengthens the local and rural economies as well as the global economy
- ❖ The Melamora Tourism Centre will help in protecting the environment and preserving the balance of nature.
- ❖ The Melamora tourism sector has employed more than 50 people and more are likely to be employed in the future.

Recommendations:

- Encouraging local youth participation through tailored training programs in hospitality, tourism management, and other relevant skills.
- Facilitating partnerships between the tourism center and educational institutions to offer internships, apprenticeships, or educational tours.
- Promoting entrepreneurship among youth by providing resources and support for small businesses, such as homestays, handicrafts, or local food ventures.
- Creating networking opportunities for young people to connect with potential employers, mentors, and industry experts within the tourism sector.
- Implementing sustainable practices within the tourism center to ensure long-term economic benefits and environmental conservation, thus securing employment opportunities for future generations.
- Collaborating with government agencies, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders to enhance infrastructure, marketing efforts, and overall tourism development in the region, thereby boosting employment prospects for local youth.

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Names, Addresses and Designations of the Persons Interviewed in the Field Study:

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- Manjula Saikia, Melamora (Children and Water Sports Park Supervisor) Mobile No. 6001705942
- Prodip Saikia, Melamora (Melamora Tea Tourism Person) Mobile No..9854120555,
- Simanta Saikia, Melamora (Coordinator Heuj Hopun Group)-Mobile-6000326266