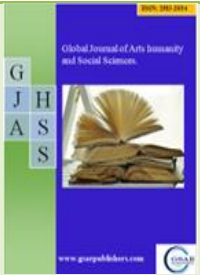
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## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WEST KAMENG DISTRICT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH; A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHERGAON VILLAGE

BY

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### Abstract

Sustainable tourism is a new concept of development that thrives to conserve and sustain the natural, social, cultural, and built environment by involving the local community. The north-eastern part of India has a plethora of tourist attractions, due to the natural resources. Arunachal Pradesh "the land of dawn-lit mountains" lays in eastern Himalayas is home to around 26 major tribes and over 110 sub-tribes, has natural beauty, fresh air with extensive geographical diversity and climatic conditions having a variety of wildlife, flora, and fauna with rich ethnic and cultural diversity. The destination of tourist in Arunachal Pradesh has been divided into twelve divisions of the circuit. There are approximately 3649 tribal villages present in the state, many of which are not explore but now opened their gate for the tourists to experience the wonders. One of the unique features of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh is their close relationship with nature which is imbibed in the cultural beliefs and their indigenous traditional knowledge of conservation the nature. Shergaon village of West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh is one of the famous tourist spot for its unique location. The concept of sustainable tourism contains three important pillars which are economy, environment, and culture or social issue. The tourism industry can play a vital role in the State. As this sector is a labour-intensive industry, it can open an employment opportunity. A large number of unemployed persons can be employed by this industry. The main objectives of this paper are to find out Sustainable tourism and economic development of Shergaon village of West Kameng district. To analysis the relationship between sustainable tourism and socio-economic development, data have been collected through secondary and primary sources.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Traditional knowledge, Environment, Shergaon village, Economic development, Gompa.

### Article History

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### Introduction

Tourism refers to the practice of traveling to various destinations for leisure, recreational, or business purposes. It involves individuals or groups of people visiting different places outside their usual environment, which may include domestic or international destinations. Tourism encompasses a wide range of activities, including sightseeing, cultural exploration, relaxation, adventure, and business-related activities such as conferences and meetings. It plays a significant role in the global economy, contributing to job creation, foreign exchange earnings, and the development of infrastructure in tourist destinations. The primary motivations for tourism can vary from person to person. Some

individuals may travel to experience new cultures, historical sites, or natural landscapes, while others may seek relaxation, entertainment, or adventure. The tourism industry offers a diverse range of services, including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, attractions, and various forms of entertainment.

Sustainable tourism, also known as responsible tourism or eco-tourism, is an approach to tourism that aims to minimize negative environmental, social, and cultural impacts while maximizing positive outcomes. It focuses on the long-term sustainability of destinations, ensuring that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Sustainable tourism integrates environmental, socio-cultural, and economic considerations into all aspects of tourism planning, development, and operations. The concept of sustainable



tourism recognizes that tourism can have significant impacts on the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage. It seeks to mitigate these impacts by promoting responsible practices and ensuring that tourism activities are conducted in a way that benefits the environment, supports local communities, and preserves cultural authenticity.

The benefits of sustainable tourism include environmental conservation, preservation of cultural heritage, economic development for local communities, enhanced visitor experiences, and the long-term viability of destinations.

Overall, sustainable tourism aims to strike a balance between the needs and aspirations of the tourism industry, the environment, local communities, and the visitors. By adopting sustainable practices, the tourism industry can contribute to the protection of natural and cultural resources, foster socio-economic development, and create meaningful experiences for travelers while ensuring the long-term sustainability of destinations

Tourism in India is a vibrant and diverse industry that attracts millions of domestic and international tourists each year. The country's rich cultural heritage, historical sites, natural landscapes, spiritual traditions, and warm hospitality make it a popular destination. Tourism in India is a vibrant and diverse industry that attracts millions of domestic and international tourists each year. The country's rich cultural heritage, historical sites, natural landscapes, spiritual traditions, and warm hospitality make it a popular destination. The government's "Incredible India" campaign, along with various initiatives and infrastructure development, further enhances India's position as a leading tourism destination.

Arunachal Pradesh, a northeastern state of India, is a captivating and off-the-beaten-path experience. Known as the "Land of the Rising Sun," Arunachal Pradesh offers a blend of pristine natural beauty, vibrant cultures, and untouched landscapes. The state's allure lies in its majestic mountains, dense forests, meandering rivers, and diverse tribal communities. Arunachal Pradesh is a paradise for nature enthusiasts, with its snow-clad peaks, verdant valleys, and cascading waterfalls. The Tawang Monastery, one of the largest Buddhist monasteries outside Tibet, stands as a spiritual beacon in the region. The state's rich cultural heritage is reflected in its festivals, such as Losar, Nyokum, and Sangken, which showcase traditional dances, music, and rituals. Arunachal Pradesh's remoteness and untouched landscapes make it an ideal destination for adventure seekers, with opportunities for trekking, river rafting, and wildlife exploration. The state's warm hospitality and the chance to experience the authentic way of life of its indigenous tribes add a special charm to any visit. Arunachal Pradesh, with its breathtaking natural landscapes, cultural richness, and unexplored territories, offers a truly enchanting experience for travelers seeking something extraordinary.

Tourism plays a crucial role in the economy of Arunachal Pradesh. It generates revenue, creates jobs, and stimulates economic growth. The tourism industry encompasses various sectors, including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, attractions,

entertainment, and travel services. It also has multiplier effects on other industries, such as agriculture, retail, and handicrafts, as tourism demand increases the demand for local goods and services.

Shying away in the Northeastern corner of India, Arunachal Pradesh, the beautiful land endowed with dazzling array of flora and fauna, snow-capped mountains, green forests, rare orchids, and sparkling streams. This state is also dotted with beautiful monasteries, wildlife sanctuaries, and an ancient temple is one of the most popular tourist destinations. Arunachal Pradesh allures tourists from all over the world. The state caters to the requirements of every kind of traveller. In figure no 1 represent the total tourist from 2011 to 2022, due to COVID-19, in 2020 the lowest tourist are visit in Arunachal Pradesh.

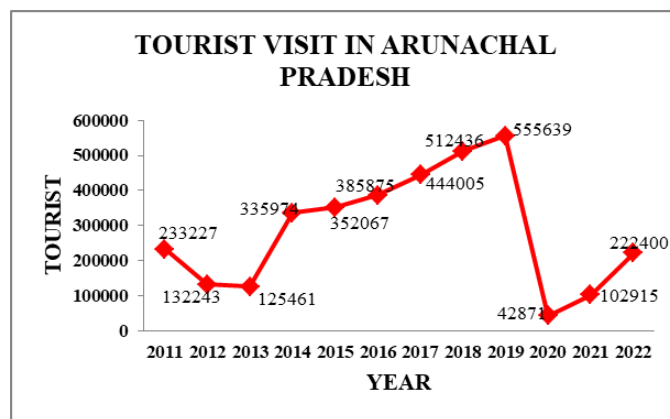


Fig No 1: Tourist Visit in Arunachal Pradesh, Source: www.ceicdata.com, Ministry of Tourism

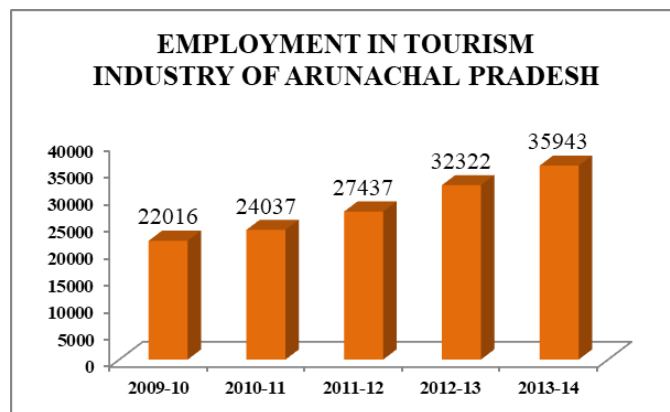


Fig No 2: Employment in Tourist Industry of Arunachal Pradesh, Source: www.nedfi.com

Due to increase of tourist in Arunachal Pradesh, the employment also increased day by day. In figure no 2 shows that the employment of the tourism industry from 2009-10 to 2013-14. In Fig no 3, the Department of Tourism collects revenue sent by districts in which total revenue received is compiled each month which is inclusive of PAP, Leased assets ILPs, etc.

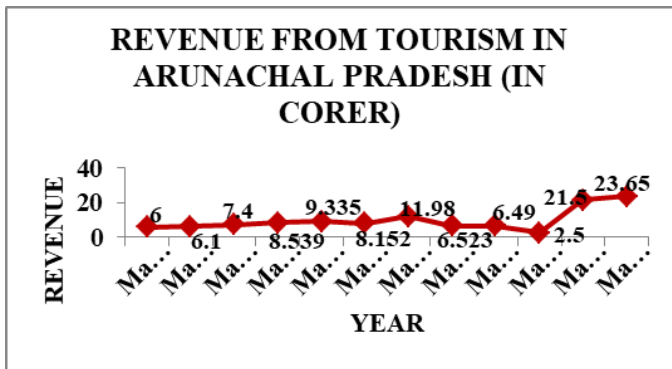


Fig No 3: Revenue from Tourism in Arunachal Pradesh, www.CEICDATA.COM, Ministry of Tourism

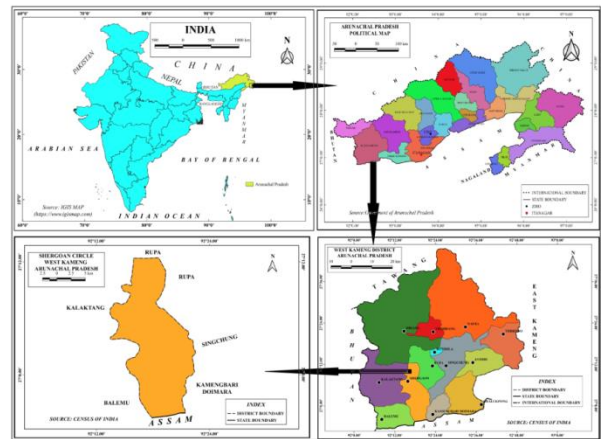


Fig No 4: Study Area

**OBJECTIVE**

The main objectives are to find out the Sustainable Steps for tourism and economic development of Shergaon village of West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh.

**METHODOLOGY**

This work is a qualitative research which is done on the basis of secondary data and information collected from the field visit. The map is done by QGIS 314 Version. Data related to Shergaon village collected and elaborated with special concern to tourism and economic.

**STUDY AREA**

Shergaon is a small village Located at 27° 7' 0" North, 92° 16' 0" East, Shergaon village is in the West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh (India) and is 60 km away from Bomdila, the head quarter of West Kameng district. It is surrounded by lofty mountains of the eastern Himalaya ranges; Shergaon experiences a temperate climate throughout the year. The village is home to the "Sherdukpen" community. Sherdukpen community practices Buddhism along with animism. There are two government run primary schools and one Government secondary school. Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya is also present in the village to impart education in the region. It is situated in the northeastern part of India, near the Bhutan border. Shergaon is known for its picturesque landscapes, lush green forests, and serene surroundings.

The village is surrounded by hills and offers breathtaking views of the Himalayan ranges. It is a popular destination for nature lovers, trekkers, and adventure enthusiasts. The region is rich in biodiversity, and visitors can explore the diverse flora and fauna found in the area.

**RESULT & ANALYSIS**

West Kameng is an administrative district of Arunachal Pradesh with its headquarters at Bomdila. The district derives its name from river Kameng, a tributary of Brahmaputra River. Most areas of the district are covered by mountains and forests. The inhabitants are all tribes. There are five major tribes found in the District namely: Monpas, Mijis, Akas, Sherdukpen, and Khawa (Buguns).

The most visited tourist places are Bhalukpong, Lhagyala Gompa at Morshing, Rupa Caves, Shergaon, Hot spring at Dirang, Shangti, GRL Monestry at Bomdila, Tippi Orchid Centre, Upper Doogjar at Rupa, Sela & Sange, SELA PASS, Nechipu (Zero Point), Jamiri, Morshing, Dirang Fort, Ruins Of Bhalukpong, Ruins Of Dimachung-Betali. The tourist are visit in West Kameng district all over the year. The graph (Fig no 5) shows that, the month-wise tourist visit in West Kameng district. In figure no 6 represent that the yearly tourist visit in this district due to COVID-19 2020 and 2021 the lowest tourist visit in the places.

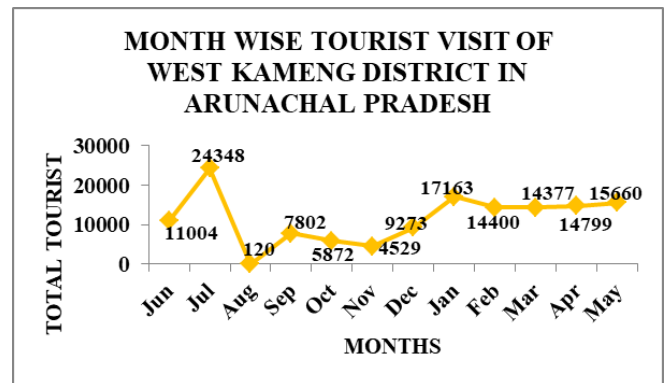


Fig No 5: Tourist visit in West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh, Source: Mott MacDonald Report Template (tourism.gov.in)

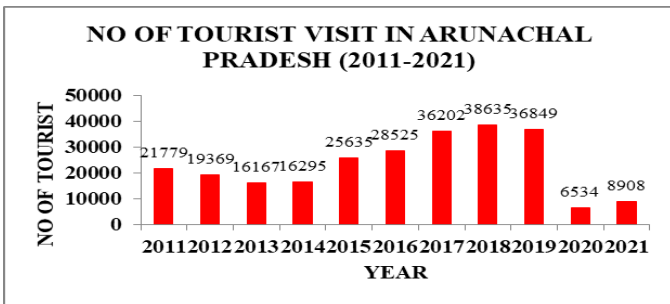


Fig No 6: No of Tourist visit in Arunachal Pradesh from 2011 to 2021. Source: indiaenvironmentportal.org.in

Shergaon, a picturesque village situated in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, an ideal place for nature and adventure lovers. It has been awarded the "Best Tourism Village of India" in the silver category. The Sherdukpen tribe of this village are heart-warming and hospitable folks. Shergaon is an emerging destination for tourists who visit here to explore the apple and Kiwi orchards and the meandering streams of surrounding the Hamlet. The place offers a pleasant climate, breathtaking landscapes, and a rich cultural heritage that makes it an appealing destination to explore. Camping, trekking, in the forest, bird watching are some of the activities, and also several historical monuments and places of interest to visit.

## TOURIST SPOT OF SHERGAON VILLAGE

### 1. SHERGAON MONASTERY: ZENBU GOMPA

Shergaon is also known for its unique cultural heritage. One of the main attractions in Shergaon is the Shergaon Monastery, it is a Buddhist monastery that holds religious significance for the local community. Visitors can witness the daily rituals, prayer sessions, and interact with the resident monks. Apart from the monastery, Shergaon offers opportunities for various outdoor activities like trekking, bird-watching, and camping. The scenic beauty and tranquil environment make it an ideal place for meditation and rejuvenation.

### 2. CHOSKORONG WATERFALL

Choskorong Waterfall is the most well-known of Shergaon's attractions. Located about a km and half down the track from Valley View English Medium School, it is located at a place where the Choskorong Kho takes a plunge over a steep wall-like structure. Choskorong kho (River) NGO adopt the stretch of river for five years for the biodiversity conservation and they released trout fish in this river which is first of its kind in this area.



Fig No 7: Choskorong Waterfall. Source: Photo Courtesy- (Pema Chodon Thungon)

### 3. KAMCHOO YAAM

Kamchoo yaam ruins of 'Thungeey Gonpa', existed before 17<sup>th</sup> century approximately located in Shergaon village is one of the oldest Gonpa among all other Buddhist temples in West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh. It was built by a monk Lamu Jangsey Pejang. The speciality of this Gonpa is that the whole structure is made up of mud. Therefore, it is also known as 'Kaamcho yaam' which literally meaning mud house in Sherdukpen dialect. The whole area covers nearly 1 hectare approximately, also requested as Biodiversity Heritage site from member secretary, Arunachal Pradesh Biodiversity Board.



Fig No 8: Kamchoo Yam. Source: Photo Courtesy- (Pema Chodon Thungon)

### 4. STATE HORTICULTURE FARM, SHERGAON

State Horticulture Farm, Shergaon was established in the year 1966. Reason why shergaon is called as APPLE BOWL of Arunachal Pradesh. Covering area 120 hectares approximately Apple Orchard is famous for quality apple for more than two decades. Flowering and fruiting begin from February to March. Joy of harvesting can be experience in the month of July to last September. The farm is more than 35-year-old. Therefore, for sustainable harvesting, 5000 saplings have been planted in 2014 which were imported from France. More than forty varieties of Apples can be found in which Royal delicious, red delicious, molliies delicious are dominating varieties among other apples. Other than apples many fruits and berries like plum, peaches, pears, persimmon, and blue and blackberries are also found in the farm.



Fig No 9: State Horticulture Farm, Shergaon Source: Photo Courtesy- (Pema Chodon Thungon)

5. COLD WATER FISH TROUT HATCHERY

Shergaon is also known for trout hatchery where both brown and rainbow trout fishes can be found. The trout hatchery is looked after by the Department of Fishery, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. A cold-water trout fish hatchery established in the year 1979. It is also another Centre of attraction in shergaon. Trout fishes are found in cold and freshwater habitat. In India, such fishes are found only in Jammu and Kashmir, Tawang, and in Shergaon. Trout breeding period is in the month of Nov and December. Fish pond comprises of 10 no's of Hatching box which has 5000 number of eggs holding capacity can be seen in the site.



Fig No 10: Cold water fish trout hatchery, Shergaon Source: Photo Courtesy- (Pema Chodon Thungon)

SUSTAINABLE STEPS FOR TOURIST SPOT IN SHERGAON VILLAGE

Sustainable tourism is all about the preservation of natural vegetation and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Various steps were taken by the villagers are

1. **Archaeological tourism:** The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts has found out the following archaeological sites in and around Shergaon.
  - (a) The monastery of Shergaon is more than 200 years old.
  - (b) Lha Gyala Monastery is 600 years old Buddhist monastery located in Sangkem village (Morshing) which is nearly 22.6 km away from Shergaon.
  - (c) Ped Ma Chhaling Monastery presently known as Rupa monastery is located in Rupa which is 41 km away from Shergaon.

Apart from the above, places like Kamchoyam (meaning mud house) and Luung Jhuk Thung (meaning place of buried stone), and Senjong are considered as Megalithic sites by the Department of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

2. **Adventure tourism:** Instead of creating new adventure area in the village, the various landforms of Shergaon circle provide opportunity for adventures like mountain climbing, trekking, and paragliding. One can also mix trekking with rural tourism as there are villages which are far away from motor-able roads. Bemchang village can be reached after trekking of approximately 6 hours and is famous among villagers for a very old stone rice

grinder which is 1.5 meters in length. There is also a cave known as 'Kro' which is annually visited by the villagers and takes approximately 6 hours of trekking to reach there.

3. **Festival tourism:** The "Sherdukpen" community celebrates Buddhist festivals like Lossar in the month of February every month and Chekor in the month of May/June every year. Kikshaba is a non-buddhist festival of the community meant for the forest deities. In the festival, one can witness various dance forms and rituals of this indigenous community.
4. **Resort and homestay:** Villagers recreate their own house as a homestay to make tourist feel the raw feeling of local house and resort are made in the riverside to create more focuses nature of the village.
5. **Others:** There are places like state apple farm in Shergaon, Kiwi farm in Kalaktang (41.7 km), and other villages around the Shergaon which can be of tourist interest. The richness of flora and fauna can also be a major tourist attraction. The unique handicrafts and dress are also attractive for tourists.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SHERGAON VILLAGE DUE TO TOURISM

The peak period of development of tourism in shergaon was from the year 2019. During the pandemic period, a very fast growing of tourism was found in the village. Due to which the economic development was massive. Before the year 2019 there were only 2 homestays in the village but today there are more the 10 homestays available. And all the homestay are fully booked in the peak month of the year. During my survey, I found that their monthly income is least 50 k per month. Talking about the prices, it is pretty affordable and every day breakfast is provided in free of cost.

Overall because of more exposer the no. of shops and hotel also increases automatically. As a whole the economic development of the village is increasing drastically. Because of tourism employment generation was also observed in this field. All villagers are very focused in the economic development of the village through tourism.

Table No 1: Different Economics Impact of Sustainable Tourism in Shergaon Village

Economic Impacts	Shergaon Village
Employment Generation	Lot of job opportunity increase in this village
Incomes Levels	Income generations from tourism-related activities
Support for Local Businesses	Support for small scale enterprise and local businesses
Overall Economic Growth	Contribution to economic growth in local economic.

## CONCLUSION

Through the study sustainable tourism of West Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh; a special reference to Shergaon village. It can be concluded that Tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Shergaon and the tourism has both positive and negative impact but the community perceived that the impact of tourism has more positive than negative impacts. On one hand, it plays a very important role in the development of the local economy by increasing the job opportunities for locals, by benefiting the local business and it is leading the community towards better living standards. On the other hand, resident's shows concern that income generation from tourism is Seasonal and it also raises the cost of living for locals by increasing the general price of goods and services.

Also, there is a need to take effective measures to ensure sustainable tourism development and create awareness among different stakeholders of tourism about its importance so that maximum benefits can be drawn out of it and minimize its risks. The importance of support and participation from the local residents in the development of tourism has been well recognized. To survive tourism for the long run in any community there is a need for cooperation from local residents. Therefore, it can be possible by the development of community-based tourism which will help to gain support, cooperation, and participation from the local community Tourism should promote in such a way that it does not hamper the living standard of local people by increasing the general price of goods and services. Hence, there is a need for a policy approach to deal with it. Due to lack of awareness, people do not understand the importance of tourism as a tool of economic development.

Therefore, it is advisable to cater awareness and provide training to the people especially to unemployed youths so that they can grab the opportunities.

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