

The Role of Kaziranga National Park (The World Heritage Site) For the Development of Tourist Industry of Assam

Jyotimala Saikia

Ph.D Research Scholar, C.M.J University, Shillong

Abstract—Kaziranga National Park is one of the most important protected areas of Golaghat District of Assam. It is situated in flood plain of the Brahmaputra River systems at the North-Western part of Bokakhat sub-division. Kaziranga is known all over the world for successful conservation of great one-horned Rhinoceros. It is also home to a number of threatened wild animals and migratory birds. The Kaziranga landscape comprises of sprawling grasslands, numerous water bodies and woodlands that provide an ideal habitats for variety of flora and fauna. The flood plain eco-system, which acts as an important refuge in rich bio-diversity, is the result of the River Brahmaputra and its tributaries. Kaziranga is a large complex of rivers, lakes, marshy lands in the flood plain of the Brahmaputra river. It is an extremely important area for larger mammals i.e 23 species of birds, 17 species of mammals, 10 species of reptiles are in endangered list. All these has been contributing much for attracting the tourist. But due to the lack of proper attention, these beels and streams have been converted into bogs and marshy lands covered by weeds besides becoming shallow as a result of deposition of silts, loams etc. A number of beels have already become non-existent. Hence, these could be dug in the dry season and built high embankments for the protection men and wild life of the Kaziranga National Park. Primarily, if such steps are taken then it will help the development of this infant tourist industry of Assam.

Keywords—Kaziranga, Brahmaputra, National Park, Tourist.

I. MILESTONE OF KAZIRANGA

The milestone of Kaziranga National Park are as follows :-

During the year 1905, the preliminary notification of Kaziranga Reserve forest has been announced and received full recognitions as reserve forest in the next year 1908. In the year 1916, it was declared as a Game Sanctuary and in the 1937, the sanctuary is opened for all visitors and world heritage site in 1985 and Tiger Reserve in 2007 respectively.

Kaziranga National Park covered an area of 1030 sq.km. Out of which, Kaziranga National Park covers 429.93 sq.km, six nos of additional area 429 sq.km, Panbari Reserve forest 7.66 sq.km, Kukurakota Reserve forest 15.93 sq.km, Loakhowa wild life sanctuary 70.14 sq.km, Burachapory wild life sanctuary 44.06 sq.km. and Bagser Reserve forest 33.67 sq.km. respectively.

II. SAILENT FEATURES OF KAZIRANGA :-

- Worlds largest population of one horned Rhinoceros are 2048 nos as per 2009 census.
- High density of tigers are 86 nos. as per 2000 census.
- World's largest population of Asiatic wild buffalo –1937 (2003).
- Important bird area of India with more than 500 bird species.
- Significant population of Asian Elephant –1293 (2008).
- Last surviving population of Eastern swamp deer –681 (2007).

III. FLORA AND FAUNA

Kaziranga's flora comprises of alluvial grasslands, semi-evergreen forest, tropical moist mixed deciduous forest and swamp forest. Grasslands dominate the plain area with tall 'Elephant' grasses on the higher grounds and short grasses on the lower grounds surrounding the wetlands or beels. These exhasive grasslands supports mega herbivores like Rhinoceros, Asian Elephants, wild buffalos and swamp deers. The grasslands have been maintained by annual flood and control by burning the grasslands over the years.

Though Kaziranga is famous all over the world as the 'Rhinoland', but many other rare and endangered animals also inhabit the park. Apart from the BIG FIVE, the following mammals have been recorded from the National park ---Capped Langur, Hillock Gibbon, Leopard, Samba, Sloth bear, Genetic Dolphin, Otter, wild Boar, Barking deer, Common Languor, Indian Porcupine, Fishing & Jungle cat, large and small Indian civet, Mongoose, Indian Fox, Jackal, Eastern Mole, Pangolin, Squirrels, Bats etc.

Due to its locations at the junction of East-Asia Austral flyway Kaziranga supports a rich and varied bird life. In addition to numerous species of resident birds, it serves as the winter visiting ground to many migratory birds. Altogether 550 species of birds, both migratory and resident have been so far identified. Kaziranga has also been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International for the conservation of the avifunal species.

IV. ACCOMMODATION

Keeping in view to attempt both home and foreign tourists for the world heritage site Kaziranga National Park, due emphasis has been given by the Director of Tourism Govt. of Assam and the local people by providing accommodations and transport facilities without any inconveniences. There are several hotels, lodges and resorts owned by Govt. agencies and private groups are available in Kaziranga. The Govt. owned accommodation are----- DRDA guest house, Jupuri ghar, Aranya lodge, Banani, Bonshree & Kunjabon lodges at Kohora and the name of the privately owned lodges are---Wildgrass resort near Kohora, Bonhabi, GL resort near Burapahar, Kaziranga lodge at Bokakhat, Dhansiri lodge, Green Reed park hotel, Landmark at Bagory. Besides, there are few small hostels / lodging facilities available at Kohora and Bokakhat. For visiting the beautiful landscape and bio-diversity by the tourist's elephants riding facilities are also provided by Kaziranga jeep safari. Problems and Measures Suggested for the Growth of the Tourist Industry of the Govt. of Assam.

The world heritage site faced a number of various problems for which it fails to contribute much for the growth of the tourist industry in the state. These problems are still alive due to the lack of proper attention and negligence of various Govt. department such as the Brahmaputra board, Water Resource Department, Soil conservation department, Director of Forest department, Archaeology department including the lack of statewide awareness of the people. The major problems faced by the Kaziranga National Park are the flood of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, bank erosions, weak embankments, increasing attitude of occupying park lands both by immigrants and local peoples, increasing rate of hunting one-horned Rhino and other wild animals by poachers etc. It is expected that if the above mentioned departments and the local people don't come forward for solving the fire problems, soon the world heritage site will lose its importance and its pride in future. For example, in my field survey it has been seen that only during the year 2012 and January 2013, thirty two Rhinos were killed by the poachers of Rhinos in the Kaziranga National Park and take away Rhinos' horns easily. In this connection, though the department of Kaziranga National Park is able to arrest twenty two numbers of poachers, it will not be able to satisfy the well wisher of the wild life and becomes a burning problem for the locality of the Kaziranga National Park. Unlike the proceeding years, a number of suspected deaths of tigers, elephants and other wild animals, arrival of suspected people unlawfully occupying activities of park land, contradiction and conflict about six nos. additional area amongst the inhabitant of the local people and forest department, regular bank erosion of the river Brahmaputra and Dhansiri. Conversion of grasslands to forestlands, construction of big dams at the upswing of the Subwansiri river and its probable effects falls on its downswing of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries etc. are signed as major burning problems that faced by the Kaziranga National Park and shown a gloomy picture about the world heritage site.

With a view to overcome all the above mentioned difficulties and problems to save the wild life specially one horned Rhinoceros of the Kaziranga National Park, hurriedly active measures should be taken by all the respective departments without any delay. In order to make it sure for saving the wild life from the flood of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, strong and high embankments should be constructed during the months of winter season, instead of beginning the Summer seasons and built up highlands in the needy areas of the park wherever necessary.

Secondly, to protect the bank erosions at different parts of Kaziranga National Park of such as Arimora areas, Mehirmukh, Burhapahar plain areas, Hatikhuli, Agorotoli, Bonkual etc. Brahmaputra board and Water Resource Department should undertake both long-term and short-term measures such as digging the beds of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, changing the river course by applying scientific techniques, construction of spurs and porcupines etc. If such attempts are adopted, it will be able to minimize the erosion problems to a greater extent. In this connection, due attention should be taken by the Govt. So that the allotment of funds for the specific projects are utilized properly without any misused.

Thirdly, A plenty of river beaches are available at the bank of river Brahmaputra & Dhansiri and if the river beaches are reserved for growing *Tamaris gallica* and after two or three years if walling reeds, *Arundo Karka* and

other variety of reeds and common grasses are allowed to grow than it will be a suitable shelter for the wild animals who come out from the park. In order to save the re-sheltered animals including Rhinos, forest camp with sufficient forest guards, modern weapons and boats should be provided so that they may be able to protect the poachers easily. Amongst other measures it is considered as a very easier and least cost measures for saving wild life of the Kaziranga National Park.

Fourthly, during the flood of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries when sub-merged the entire park, then most of the wild life including Rhinoceros are runs to the Karbi-Anlong hills area for taking shelter. This is a major problems of the forest departments for taking strong steps for saving the migrated animals as it is the golden chance of the poachers for killing Rhinoceros. As such with a view to save the animals if mutual discussion are made both by Govt. of Assam and Karbi-Anglong Antorona Body, it will reduce the anti-well wiser including poachers activity easily.

Fifthly, controlling the activities of Rhinocero's poachers is not a easy task. As such, prevailing laws should be modified so that there remains no any leage of escaping such poachers. Regarding court judgement of such indomitable persons, unnecessary delay of judgement should not be done by the respective megistrates and lawyers of the court.

Sixthly, in order to decrease the demand for one horned Rhinoceros, its national intrinsic values should be reduced as far as possible by applying such medical techniques as China Govt. does today.

Seventhly, above all as a national property, it is our moral responsibility to protect by all means the scarce one horned Rhinoceros. As such all the organizations, Govt. respective departments and the general public should come forward for saving the innocent animal from the cruel hands of such anti wellwishers of wild life.

In- spite-of facing numoures problems, this park is able to attract both home and foreign tourists by an invigible hand to a greater extent. For example, during the year 2006-07 up to the 2011-12, from the point of view of assessment of revenue collection, it has been seen that during these years, both revenues and tourists are increases. During these periods, it has been noticed that the trends of home as well as foreign tourists increases parallels. The maximum number of tourists that visited the National Park are the state of West Bangale, Kerela, Hariana, Mumbai. In the year 2006-07, total numbers of tourists both home and abroad was 67968 and its number increases upto 117308 during the period of 2011-12. Among them, it is estimated that the total number of foreigners that visited the National Park during the Period 2006-07 was 5748 and in 2011-12 it was 7521. From the above increasing trends of visitors to this park, one can expected that there is enough potentiality and prospects for the future development of the baby tourist industry of the Govt. of Assam.

REFERENCES

- [1] Barpujari, H.K. ed, Political History of Assam, Vol-I, Guwahati, 1977
- [2] Baruah, S.L., A Comprehensive History of Assam, New Delhi, 1977
- [3] Ahmed, Aijajuddin, India: A general Geography (NCERT), New Delhi, 2001