

ECO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT, EAST KHASI HILLS IN MEGHALAYA



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

This report is a result of a ground up study of the Hima Malai Somat region of Meghalaya, which has great potential for sustainable tourism. The region offers a rich ecological biodiversity; however, it is not without vulnerabilities. The fast decline in agrarian economy, lack of infrastructure and bankable sources of livelihood and above all climate change, have put the tourism business at risk even before the pandemic. The report addresses such concerns faced by the local people, and presents suggestions and policy recommendations on how best to address the issues. The sustainable approach to tourism will ensure ecological and economic prosperity to Hima Malai Somat even in the midst of a pandemic.

Promoting a green economy and a sustainable way of life is perhaps one of the best ways forward.

While the pandemic has taught us many things, it has specially evoked in us the importance of sustainable livelihoods. This is true for the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) states as we are witness to the dire conditions of the region during these times. With constant focus on systemic and sustainable change in the mountain states, while also identifying the potential of some IHR regions for tourism, Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) has been engaged in the integration of Ecotourism, as a way forward for sustainable habitats in the mountains.

Since its inception in 2010, IMI has been focusing on addressing Mountain issues in the Indian Himalayan Region. Our various projects and events have led to several concrete policy outcomes for the mountain states. This report is another work we are all proud of having completed inspite of many challenges due to the pandemic disruption.

My special gratitude to Mr. Tyngshain Dewkhaid, Mr. BiangSyiem, and the founders and representatives of the various ecotourism ventures for their guidance and sharing their experiences with us.

Moreover, special thanks to the IMI team, our Consultants, Field Surveyors of HMS, and other support staff for their tremendous work despite the lurking virus.

I would also like to thank GIZ for giving us this opportunity to prepare this report and their patience.

Finally this, we, at IMI, continue to work to make people of India proud of our mountains.

Mr. P.D Rai President, IMI Former MP (Sikkim), Lok Sabha



Since 2008 the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety has been funding projects that address climate change, mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to climate change, conserving natural carbon sinks / REDD+ / forest landscape restoration (FLR) and the conservation of biodiversity (https://www.international-climate-initiative.com).

IKI projects and programmes are comparably large in scale, calling for integrated approaches of project consortia. Smaller organisations are part of these projects but rather as members of larger consortia. However, the implementation of measures under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) also require the dedicated strengthening of the stand-alone capacities of small and local organisations from partner countries. With the IKI Small Grants scheme BMU therefore extends its IKI strategy and outreach to small organisations to encourage active citizen involvement and local approaches to threats caused by climate change and biodiversity loss.

The global IKI project Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Agragrian Landscapes supports the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, and focuses on conservation of natural carbon sinks forestry and conservation of biological diversity. It also address livelihood concerns wherein ecotourism is the mainstay for the community. Efforts to inject biodiversity conservation in the overall ecotourism planning and management was addressed. A substantial effort to build the capacity of the communities in understanding the close nexus between ecotourism and good diverse natural forest was addressed through a series of capacity building exercises.

The dedicated engagement of Integrated Mountain Institute (IMI) have shown excellent result in creating awareness on the crucial mandate of biodiversity conservation. IMI have gone an extra mile to build the capacity of the community elders in planning for biodiversity conservation. This is envisaged to pave a way for sustainable natural resource management that includes biodiversity conservation as a major attribute.

Mr. Kenneth M. Pala Project Manager BMU IKI - Project "Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Agrarian Landscapes"





LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

■ WTO World Trade Organisation

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme

■ IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature

■ MGNREGA Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

■ IHR Indian Himalayan Range

■ UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

■ CBET Community-based Ecotourism

Hima Malai Sohmat



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report intends to propose a Community-managed, Conservation-Oriented Sustainable Rural Eco-Tourism Management Plan for the Hima Malai Sohmat region of Meghalaya, India. Given the fact that modern mass tourism has an enormous impact on the economy, ecology and society in the fragile Himalayas, it is alarming to take account of the environmental and socio-economic problems created by the tourism industry in pristine ecological areas. Ecotourism has emerged as a response to these issues which involves employing measures to reduce negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment. Community-based ecotourism (CBET) expands its purview further where it ensures that the benefits, both social and economic, are realized by local communities.



View of Bangladesh from Hima Malai Sohmat

The UNWTO estimates that approximately 1 in 10 persons in the world are employed by the tourism industry. In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mountain specific tourism is directly included as a target in Goals 8 and 12:

- Sustainable Development Goal 8 on the promotion of "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth", Target 8.9 (By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products)
- Sustainable Development Goal 12 aimed to "ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", Target 12.b (Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products)

The Hima Malai Sohmat region in Meghalaya, offering a thriving biodiversity ecosystem, needs an ecologically sound, low carbon, sustainable and economically viable community-based tourism management plan to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities that enable the tourists to be equal stakeholders in caring for the environment.

The benefits of having a sustainable tourism plan in execution can be witnessed in many communities in biodiversity hotspots like Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve, a tiger conservation reserve in Ramnagar, Uttarakhand known for its eco-friendly initiatives. In the Eastern Himalayas, institutions such as Future Generations Arunachal have worked on mobilizing women's groups to create sustainable local economies. Similarly, Green Pastures in Arunachal Pradesh, is a small sustainable travel company which promotes responsible tours and adventures to exotic places to uplift local communities and preserve the environment. Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has also been keen on supporting initiatives by setting up eco-camps managed by the deprived youths of the region. These camps, mostly frequented by foreigners and backpackers are a huge boost to the tourism sector. GoingWild is another responsible organization in the Northeast working towards the development of ecotourism by promoting several wildlife and birding tours. There is a need to identify, share and support the learnings from these initiatives across the Himalayan region to boost economic growth with better conservation.

According to the guidelines on 'Making Tourism More Sustainable' by the WTO (WTO & UNEP, 2005), 'Sustainable Tourism is tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. It is not a special form of tourism; rather, all forms of tourism may strive to be more sustainable".

In its component parts, Sustainable Tourism should [1]:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity;
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values; and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations; providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed; including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities; and contributing to poverty alleviation.



COVID-19 & TOURISM

COVID-19 and the subsequent closure of ecotourism sites has had an indelible impact on wildlife and the communities that protect it. Lockdowns around the globe put millions of small businesses in travel and tourism to an existential test. The impact of the crisis is being felt throughout the entire tourism ecosystem, and reopening and rebuilding destinations seems like a challenging road ahead.

"Covid-19 gave time to think which made them realised that they created a rural community with urban consumers where tourists will only boost the livelihood of the rural community without completely engrossing themselves into the rural lifestyle. Hence they decided to expand their horizon by formulating an urban community with rural business model called Mad House to Mud House, where people living in urban areas can relocate to the organisation's rural habitat by renting a residence in an eco-village which gives the person opportunities like farming and sustainable rural business for as long as they want to." - Roopesh Rai, Founder of Green People (The Goat Village)

"Tourist season in the North-East is from October to May every year, there would not be much visitor inflow till the end of this year. It might only pick up from January to February as many tourists are scared of taking a flight. Some tourists from Assam may be received, but not from other states." - Piran Elavia, Founder of Kipepeo.

It is interesting to explore that perhaps tourists would now require and expect greater responsibility and sustainability from tourism operators and destinations, or how they are motivated to travel more but for a meaningful purpose. It is, of course, also possible that they return to their earlier travel preferences and behaviours.

COVID-19 offers public, private, and academic actors a unique opportunity to design and consolidate the transition towards a greener and more balanced tourism. One area where the pandemic is providing an opportunity for potential development of the ecotourism space, is in the area of digitalisation. Digital solutions are being developed to create virtual tourism experiences in an effort to support those experiencing extended periods of social distancing. In Greece, an online platform called "Greece from Home" was launched by the Ministry of Tourism, the Greek Tourism Organization, and Marketing Greece, with the support of Google, aimed at reinforcing the country's positive image during the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform aimed at retaining the interest of potential visitors and leveraged media such as YouTube.

"The restrictions on tourism activities due to Covid-19 have brought certain challenges to Manas Maozigendru Ecotourism. In order to combat these challenges, farming activities of food crops have been promoted which they aim to also get the tourists involved in the near future." - Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society



HIMA MALAI SOHMAT

Introduction

An erstwhile Khasi kingdom, "Hima Malai Sohmat" tucked in the hills of Meghalaya around 75 kms from Shillong is gradually developing into a tourist destination. This Khasi kingdom is well-connected with Shillong and the nearest town of Mawsynram. Hima, is the Khasi word for Kingdom. The traditional administrative structure places a King for the entire 13 villages with a headman in each village as his Counsel. These days, Khasi Dorbars are held only for important issues with very little interference from the King. The village council has well-defined roles and responsibility consisting of a Headman, the Executive Committee and the Dorbar.

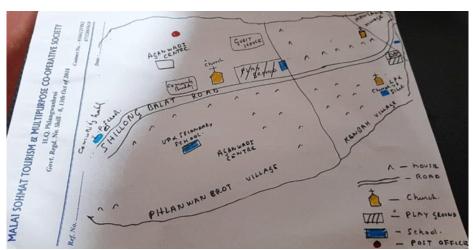


Image: Village Map of Hima Malai Sohmat

The forest of Hima Malai Sohmat gained recognition in the Forest Department of Meghalaya after representatives from the Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society approached the department to undertake measures to protect the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat.

Hima Malai Sohmat has a community forest which is home to western hoolock gibbons since time immemorial, villagers say. Being rich in biodiversity, it is also a habitat of deer, wild boars, bears and other small mammals. Hima Malai Sohmat is well known for its legend and history especially about the Gibbon, and its rich culture and tradition. It is unfortunate that the felling of trees for the extraction of timber still takes place which acts as a serious threat to the biodiversity of the villages. Two of the five villages, Mawsawa and Phlangwanbroi have still not been successful in the complete ban on hunting wild animals.

Agriculture is the major livelihood practised with a marginal percentage working in governmental organisations and owning private shops. Betel nut, betel leaves, black pepper, broom grass and bay leaves are the major crops grown here. The sale of these products go beyond the State if the demand is high. Broomsticks and betel nuts are highly exported to the other districts in Meghalaya and also to the neighbouring states like Assam. The income generated from tourism activities is utilised for maintenance and improvement of the area and for giving salaries to the staff involved. Through the introduction of tourism, the locals have gained employment in the hospitality sector



Signage showing the direction to Hima Malai Sohmat from Mawsynram village

(room and food services) and as tourist guides. These locals are also exposed to training programs like cooks and trekking guides. Further training is also provided to the local communities for the same. The major festival of the tribe residing here is the Shad Suk Mynsiem (Dance of peaceful hearts) celebrated as Thanksgiving. The staple food of the people residing here is rice which is usually accompanied with vegetables growing in the wild.

Villages get support from MGNREGA for various developmental work but progress has still been slow. The quality of the roads is still appalling despite being of tar; villagers face water scarcity especially during the winter season (December-March) and excessive power cuts throughout the year. These villages are also still lacking behind in education and health infrastructure with only eight schools and one healthcare facility present 13km from the village.

Layout of Villages



Layout of villages at Hima Malai Sohmat

Hima Malai Sohmat consists of 13 villages out of which 5 hilly villages have been chosen for this project, namely Mawrapat, Mawkasaiñ, Mawsawa, Kenbah and Phlangwanbroi. These villages occupy an area of 10 km2 with a population of 6000 people, majority of whom belong to the Khasi community. Hima Malai Sohmat is also located close to the other villages which have been recognized as tourist attractions, and those may be able to help facilitate tourism activities here. About 30 kms away from Hima Malai Sohmat is situated a village called Langsymphut, where currently a check-dam is being constructed by the Community & Rural Development Department, to be able to attract tourists to the region. All the five villages of Hima Malai Sohmat has a potential of their own to develop tourism in their respective areas. The nearest major hospital is about three hours away. The forest is a significant part of the Hima Malai Sohmat, where, in addition to being a source of livelihood, many traditional healing methods also contribute to the residents' welfare.

A survey undertaken with 30 respondents of Phlangwanbroi, Mawkasain and Kenbah Malai villages have been attached in the Annexures.

Tourism Services & Activities

Since 2015 when Hima Malai Sohmat opened its doors for tourists, it has been able to receive around 300 tourists. The Government of Meghalaya's Department of



Campsite at Hima Malai Sohmat

Tourism is now looking at a new direction to restart the tourism activities across Meghalaya with the aim to transition to a sustainable high-value tourism model and focus on creating jobs, building lives and enabling growth. The Restart Mission Meghalaya was launched by the Chief Minister, Mr. Conrad K. Sangma on the 15th of August, 2020, keeping in mind the revival of the different developmental activities that were brought to a standstill because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Camping site beside River Umngi. A two-hour trek is required to reach this destination.

At Hima Malai Sohmat, before the pandemic, tourists arrived to enjoy the scenic beauty and also to take part in activities like trekking, kayaking, swimming and camping. These activities usually take place in the post-monsoon season that is from September to April. No entry fee is required to enter the vicinity hence the current income generated is solely from these activities as well as from the accommodation at the guest house.



The trekking route at Hima Malai Sohmat

To reach Hima Malai Sohmat, one has to take a three-hour journey from Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. The means to reach Hima Malai Sohmat from Shillong is by road in which local share taxis and rental cabs are available at a price of Rs. 150 and Rs. 1200 respectively.



Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society Guest Room

At present, there is only one guest house at Hima Malai Sohmat which is a pucca house run by Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society. In addition to this, the tourists also have the provision to stay in tents. With guest house, the society can only accommodate five tourists per night and the duration of the stay usually ranges from two to three nights for local tourists and one week in case of tourists from abroad. The tourists are served the etnic food of the local communities giving them a true essence of the culture of the people residing in these villages.



The rainwater harvesting tank cum swimming pool at the Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society guest house in Hima Malai Sohmat

Ecotourism can be targeted to a certain group of people which can be divided in terms of age, their specific interest and so on. For the group of tourists who cannot take up intensive trekking, an alternative can include enjoying the scenic landscape of HimaMalaiSohmat. Village tourism can also be one of the aspects of tourism for HimaMalaiSohmat where one can go around the village and at the same time visit a few viewpoints. The local people of HimaMalaiSohmat have started conducting annual festivals called as the Gibbon Festival with the support of Conservation Initiatives that involves showcasing their traditional food and hosting competitions for the same. Since the presence of certain species of migratory birds was perceived, a Gibbon festival, also known as the bird festival, was conducted in 2018. The tourists are free to explore the area along with a tourist guide. However, unfortunately, the area still lacks in proper waste management system—plastic wastes are burned instead of recycling it.

S.No	Description	Charges*	Time Period
1	1 Local guide	Rs. 600	1-day trek
1		R s. 300	Short-distance trek
2	Tent tariff	R s. 300	1 night
3	Room tariff	R s. 500/ head	1 night

^{*}The room tariff is intended to increase to Rs. 1000/head after tourism activities resumes in Hima Malai Sohmat



Night camp at Hima Malai Sohmat



Jalabit Cave (jalalabit meaning bats) located at 15 min trek from the guest house

The following are the names of tourist spots and the respective villages they are located in:

- 1. Phlangwanbroi: Riad dhoi, Rangkylleng (Rangkylleng cliff), Iapsier (Iapsier cliff), Riad mawniuh (Mawniuh cliff), Wah Um ngi (Um ngi river), Krem Blang (Blang cave), Krem Mawjudok (Mawjudok cave), Krem Jalabit (Jalabit cave)
- 2. Mawrapad: Krem misor (misor cave), Krem khasaw (Khawsaw cave),
- 3. Mawkasain: Wah um ngi (river um ngi), Ka phud rang shriew
- 4. Kenbah: Pynnoh thlen, Mawsiang owen



Riat Dhoi cliff at Hima Malai Sohmat



Kshaid iap sier/iap sier waterfall. A 1.5 hr hour trek is required to reach this waterfall.

Biodiversity-enriched region



Wild flora present in the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat

Hoolock Gibbon - the prime attraction

Hoolock gibbons, found in all the north-eastern states as well as in parts of Bangladesh and Myanmar, are listed among the 25 most endangered primates in the world. These are also classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and as a schedule 1 species by the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The Hima is home to Hoolock Gibbons where the gibbons 'mark the territory of the Hima'. The presence of the Western Hoolock Gibbon in the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat emerged as a topic of interest when newspaper articles began documenting and publishing about them in June 2019.

There are an approximate of 5 groups of Gibbons in the forest of HimaMalaiSohmat that have been documented so far. Unfortunately, Meghalaya's Forest & Environment department does not have adequate information available on the exact

number of gibbons.

Local residents, such as those associated with the Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society share that when the weather conditions are clear, Gibbons can be heard almost every morning from their guest house. Even the representatives of Conservation Initiatives have spotted a gibbon three to four times during their visits. Those who go into the forest and work in the forest farms are able to spot the gibbons on a regular basis. Due to the large landscape of the area, it is possible for different people going to different parts of the forest to be spotting the same family of gibbons.

Locally known as huleng, as the species is called in the local Khasi language, the villagers have peacefully coexisted with the animals. It is only in the last two decades that the population of the gibbons has fallen drastically owing to rampant hunting. According to the reports from people, over the years instances of hunting of the Gibbons have reduced and because of that they feel like the gibbons are coming closer towards the top of the plateau where people reside. In addition, the frequency of hearing these Gibbons have also increased but it has not been verified whether it has just been a trend in the population. Recently, the Hima dorbar passed a resolution to save the endangered species and renew healthy coexistence. While the survey to determine the number of gibbons in the Hima Malai Sohmat is under process, conservationists including Conservation Initiatives, a Shillong-based wildlife conservation organisation feel that the villagers' efforts are reaping rich rewards.

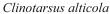
The specific feeding habits of the Gibbons in the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat have not been studied as yet. The sighting point of the Gibbons in the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat can be identified with the help of the local communities as well as researchers. Sound recorders are installed in different parts of the forests to record the call of the Gibbons which happen in the morning. This acts as an evidence for the presence or absence of Gibbon in the forest. Since Gibbons move around a lot in the huge forest, demarcating a specific spot for tourists to come see the Gibbons would not be possible, instead a gibbon trail inside the forest can be made where the chances for the tourist to spot a gibbon or gibbon group will be high. At present there is no booklet or leaflet for the documentation of information on the gibbons.

For tourism to focus on gibbon conservation, a certain set of tourism activities can include trekking inside the forests to witness the gibbon and other wildlife present there.

Other species

In addition to the Hoolock Gibbons, following are the animals found in the region: Barking deer, Serow, Wild pig, Himalayan black bear, Clouded leopard, Civet,







Rhacophorus bipunctus Image Courtesy: Mr. Wallambor Kharlyngdoh

Macaque species, Capped langur, Slow loris, Pangolin, Marbled cat, Barking deer, Assamese macaque, Stump-tailed macaque, Dhole, Crab eating mongoose, Porcupine and Millipede. The list of Scientific names of the species have been added as Annexure 11.

Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society



Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society Office-cum-Guest House

In the early 2006 like-minded people of Hima Malai Sohmat came together to discover ways to improve the livelihood opportunities in their villages by forming a a Self Help Group with the primary focus on agriculture and farming. With the increase in the number of members this SHG formally registered themselves as a Society under the Government of Meghalaya in 2008 with the name Multipurpose Co-operative Society and amended to Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Cooperative Society in 2015. It was only in the year 2015 when Beth Hume an internationally famous British kayaker breathed her last breath in the Umngi river beyond Phlangwanbroi that this Society saw light in tourism as a way to provide additional income to the local communities which were otherwise unable to sustain themselves. The Administrative Structure of this society consists of the General Body comprising 36 members and the Executive Committee with Chairman and Secretary, elected by the General Body. For the proper functioning of the Society, funds are generated from the share contribution of the members and also through financial assistance from the Government. In addition they also receive technological support from organisations working together like the Conservation Initiative. The purpose of this society is employment generation for all the members of the society and promotion of natural tourism. This Society also aims to limit the number of tourists to its carrying capacity in order to not put a strain on the villages.





Pamphlets distributed to the locals as part phase II of the awareness program



View from Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society Guest House

Conservation Initiatives

Since the formation of the MS Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society, conservation efforts were also initiated by the MS Society with several wildlife enthusiasts from the state, and NGOs including the Conservation Initiatives. These organisations are actively involved in various activities such as mapping the gibbon population, community led conservation programmes for agro-forests, screening of documentaries in schools and villages for awareness building and ecotourism-based livelihood programmes.

Conservation Initiatives is a non-governmental organisation, headquartered in Guwahati and Shillong, with a focus on science-based conservation of wildlife and their habitats, and sustaining positive human-environment interactions. At Conservation Initiatives, they follow three basic tenets while practicing conservation:

- (i) Using scientific evidence to prioritise best practices, locations and actions for conservation landscapes.
- (ii) Devising solutions tailored to the local ecological and conservation context, and social and cultural environment.
- (iii) An inclusive participatory approach wherein stakeholders are integrally involved in the implementation of conservation strategies.

In Nagaland and Meghalaya, the organisation has been involved with different village councils and local institutions to help document wildlife in community forests, increase conservation awareness, as well as develop conservation-based livelihood options.

Conservation Initiatives has recommended guidelines to ensure minimum negative impacts or disturbance to the endangered western hoolock gibbon, or other species; and minimal damage to the natural environment.

The following activities have been undertaken and/or is in the process of being undertaken by Conservation Initiatives together with MS Society:

1. Assessment of gibbon occurrence in the forests of Hima Malai Sohmat: A systematic survey of gibbon occurrence in one part of the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat has been undertaken. The survey involved the placement of multiple sound recorders at different locations across forests in the area to record the presence of gibbons, through their calls. This survey will help provide an assessment of the population status of gibbons in Hima Malai Sohmat.

2. Village-level conservation programmes: Regular village-level conservation programmes are being carried out by members of Conservation Initiatives together with the Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multi-purpose Co-operative Society. These programmes involve nature documentary screenings, pamphlet distribution in local language in the different villages of Hima Malai Sohmat, and short talks highlighting the need and importance of gibbon, wildlife and forest conservation and rain-water harvesting.



Image: Documentary screening as part of a locally organised community awareness program on conservation.

Credit: Bikash Kumar Bhattacharya

- 3. School-level conservation programmes: School-level awareness programmes have been conducted at schools of Kenbah Malai and Mawkasain villages. These programmes included activities such as drawing competitions on themes related to gibbon and forest conservation, nature documentary screenings, wildlife photo exhibitions and short talks to help raise conservation awareness amongst school children.
- 4. Annual gibbon conservation festival: An annual gibbon conservation festival is organised by the villages of Hima Malai Sohmat, to bring attention to village residents and visitors about the importance of conservation. Conservation Initiatives supports the festival by providing resource persons for conservation awareness talks, and also provides financial aid for conducting the festival.
- 5. Conservation exposure trips: At the start of conservation work in Hima Malai Sohmat, Conservation Initiatives organised an exposure trip for village residents and

Sohmat, Conservation Initiatives organised an exposure trip for village residents and leaders to Kaziranga National Park, to showcase to them wildlife conservation efforts and the scope of wildlife-based tourism, in other parts of Northeast India.

6. Video documentary of the conservation efforts at Hima Malai Sohmat: A short

documentary is currently being made by Conservation Initiatives on the conservation work being undertaken at Hima Malai Sohmat.

- 7. Through various initiatives, the chief of Hima Malai Sohmat has passed a law for a complete ban in hunting, especially the gibbons in the kingdom which is ultimately applicable for every village.
- 8. The Society has also given a portion of the forest land to be enclosed by the forest department in order to avoid any encroachment by the people and to sustain the forest for the future generation.



STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

According to the World Tourism Organization, Sustainable Tourism indicates 'satisfying current tourist and host community needs, while protecting and improving future opportunities... managing all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be met, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems'. Having deliberated upon the essence of Sustainable Tourism, the automatic next step arises to set standards in order to cohesively follow measures suited for all players of the tourism ecosystem.

The approach envisioned to achieve ensures ecological and economic prosperity to Hima Malai Sohmat. At the same time, it needs to take into account the risks associated with biodiversity conservation, adaptation to climate change and alignment with good governance practices influenced by interventions across the IHR and beyond. Tourism policies are to be designed in a way that they predict the onset of problems related to ecological conservation in the decades to come. The onus of following these standards must be shared by the tourists as well as the local populations.

UNESCO's Sustainable Tourism Strategy Document, by the UNESCO Jakarta office, advocates for the promotion of good practices in conservation and

SWOT

Strenghts

- Since the formation of the MS Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society, conservation efforts were also initiated by
 the MS Society with several wildlife enthusiasts from the state, and NGOs including the Conservation Initiatives. These
 organisations are actively involved in various activities such as mapping the gibbon population, community led
 conservation programmes for agro-forests, screening of documentaries in schools and villages for awareness building
 and ecotourism-based livelihood programmes.
- There are an approximate of 5 groups of Gibbons in the forest of Hima Malai Sohmat that have been documented so far.
- The local people of Hima Malai Sohmat have started conducting annual festivals called as the Gibbon Festival with the support of Conservation Initiatives that involves showcasing their traditional food and hosting competitions for the same. A Gibbon festival, also known as the bird festival was also conducted in 2018, since there exist the presence of certain species of migratory birds. The tourists are free to explore the area along with a tourist guide.

Veaknesses

- Hima Malai Sohmat has a relatively low carrying capacity for tourists, and any tourism venture needs to be properly
 planned to prevent unregulated tourism which can have negative implications for the natural environment.
- The approach envisioned to achieve ensures ecological and economic prosperity to Hima Malai Sohmat but has not yet taken into account the risks associated with biodiversity conservation, adaptation to climate change and alignment with good governance practices influenced by interventions across the IHR and beyond.
- With limited marketing skills and restricted market access, locals may not be drastically excited about the adoption of
 ecological practices in serving the visitors. This could also be due to the fact that tourism is not seen as a viable source of
 income where the salary received is low and does not run the whole year round.
- In addition to that, the tourism sector is particularly vulnerable to all kinds of crisis, ranging from disease, natural disasters, economic downturn and conflicts—that can occur without warning and have an immediate effect. There could not be a better example to prove this point than the current ongoing pandemic which has brought the hospitality industry to a standstill.



Opportunities

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- The traditional cuisines and the traditional style of agriculture is usually known by the women of a particular area. However, their contribution is not acknowledged since their services are not yet monetised. Eco tourism can help by converting the daily activities of women into income generating ventures. They can offer hospitality to the tourists by providing traditional food, offering homestays in their houses, helping them to learn local agriculture practices.
- Local youth can become eco-guides and introduce local flora, fauna, medicinal plants to the tourists. Becoming trek guides is another activity where local youth can find their livelihoods instead of migrating to cities. Thus, ecotourism can play an important role in the holistic and sustainable development of rural areas by promoting the local food, culture, language, handicrafts, sports, indigenous knowledge, medicines as well as generating livelihoods across sectors, gender, caste and age.
- This pandemic serves as an opportunity for ecotourism businesses to question and reset why tourism is viewed, practiced and managed as a way to 'escape', 'relax', 'socialise', 'construct identities/status', 'learn' and reward tourists from a routine life. While the crisis is an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future, it is claimed that in this period of people adapting to new lifestyles and working patterns, they are reflecting and recalibrating their priorities and social values.



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preservation. The dream is to be able to preserve pristine natural environments that form the basis of tourism, such as the rich biodiversity found in the villages of Hima Malai Sohmat, and ensure that these natural assets prosper in all times to come. This means that all operations related to the tourism business should cater to optimal use of local commodities and resources and be appropriate in scale to optimize local ownership and opportunities.

Recommended Practices for Hima Malai Sohmat



The type of tourism practiced in and around Hima Malai Sohmat is eco-tourism, where tourists visit the place for its natural environment—more recently for gibbons and other wildlife. The success of this type of tourism depends on the continued conservation of the natural environment of the place. Keeping these points in mind, tourism at Hima Malai Sohmat is already moving in the direction of trying to meet both nature and wildlife conservation, and the livelihood needs of village residents.

However, it must be kept in mind that HimaMalaiSohmat has a relatively low carrying capacity for tourists, and any tourism venture needs to be properly planned to prevent unregulated tourism which can have negative implications for the natural environment. Tourism should be seen as just one of a larger number of ways to help meet conservation goals, while also addressing people's livelihood needs.



Fuelwood collected by locals of Hima Malai Sohmat

Effective forest conservation is more popular when alternative sources of energy are explored as opposed to simply telling people to save trees and forests. The provision of energy saving devices helps to reduce the amount of firewood used saves time for women who spend most of their time collecting firewood and fodder use of Iternative energy such as micro hydroelectricity, solar, gas, kerosene and other energy saving devices along with effective enforcement of forest protection contribute to the greening of villages.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to minimize the waste generated by the tourist, Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society has planned on putting up boards and holdings to give awareness to the tourist about the Do's and Don'ts to avoid littering in the vicinity and in that area. Checkpoints will also be set up to stop tourists from bringing in any plastic material.

Renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, or water, rather than polluting fossil fuels are, in many cases, more practical, cost efficient, and less of a strain on local resources.

- Promotion of zero waste destinations should be led as a priority by enforcing The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, and The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 of the GOI. Convergence with the Swachh Bharat Mission may also be explored.
- Waste Management: Green practices must be put in place based on the principle of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Similarly, waste water in the higher or lower elevation tourist destinations must be treated effectively. Non-adherence to Standard norms must be punished/fined. For areas already rich in biodiversity, the generation of bio compost from the biodegradable waste can pose as a win-win initiative to be able to deal with solid waste while enriching the natural ecosystem.
- Rapid crash courses on education for sustainable development (ESD) should be introduced in primary and secondary school curriculum, and teachers training. Any non-compliance must be responded to with non-renewal of permissions needed for operational procedures and investments.
- Owing to its dependence on natural resources, ecotourism should not only protect the natural resources in the destination area but also contribute to strengthening the area's natural resource base (by adding to the biodiversity and landscape of the area). One important way of doing so is to enlist the support of the local population by providing economic benefits.

ECO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT,
FAST KHASI HII I SIN MEGHAI AYA

- Sustainable sanitation needs to be given adequate attention in the region. The accommodation units may be provided with Ecosan toilet (urine-diverting dry toilet UDDT), for example, is a closed system that does not need water and, hence, it is ideal where water is scarce or where the water table is high with the risk of groundwater contamination. The toilet is based on the principle of recovery and recycling of nutrients from excreta (both urine and faeces) to create a valuable manure.
- Other infrastructure may include biogas, solar photovoltaic panels, aerogenerators, etc. Adoption of ecological land/water use planning and ecotechnologies based on the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) is an inevitable option.

CASE STUDY IN FOCUS: Adventure La, Himachal Pradesh, India

The founder's motto was to plant one tree for every booking they got. In 2017, they started a tree plantation drive where they collaborated with top Instagram influences such as 'Abhi and Now' which led to the plantation of 50 tree saplings. Planting trees is a way of reminding them of what their business stands for, which may also be used as a marketing tool.

For rafting and adventure activities they collaborate with local/native guides. To maintain the carrying capacity of a place, which the ecotourism venture is committed to capping the number of tourists and cars that can enter a city. An online system can be made where tourists can register to – like Rohtang Pass- limited number of cars.

The community around the business is encouraged to make mud houses with slate rooftops instead of concrete houses.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

 An Ecotourism Working Group can be created for constructive dialogue between stakeholders and to coordinate planning, training and other ecotourism development activities. They can also serve as a mechanism for mitigating future conflicts.

- An Environmental Code of Conduct can be prepared for the benefit of host communities, tourists, and the tourism industry who need to be aware of their role and responsibility in protecting the HMS area. Voluntary codes of conduct are the most effective way to achieve this.
- Increase awareness & understanding of the natural heritage of the area by encouraging interaction with nature through experiential programs
- Five year plan: The Society aims to make the entire village mindful about the importance of ecotourism and that it is one of the ways through which it will benefit the surrounding environment as well as act as a source of livelihood for the people.
- Private app-based homestay services like Airbnb and Zostel can initiate
 homestay development in the area. However, it has to be kept in mind that
 private agencies do not violate the carrying capacity limits set by the HMS
 Society.
- Equally important is the need to inculcate this information to be able to communicate this with other actors involved, such as hospitality management, educational institutions and vocational centres. Such a series of awareness sessions should also be provided to all other related service providers, such as staff at the homestays or tours & trek operators, who may be interacting directly or indirectly with the tourists.
- On the other hand, tourists set to arrive at their destination ready for a new experience, must also be made eco-conscious through exciting and interactive awareness campaigns. In this regard, the staff directly engaging with the tourists may be relied upon to educate groups of visitors on the significance of biodiversity conservation.

ON VISITOR ORIENTATION:

The kind of sustainable tourism that is envisioned to be achieved will not be possible without the cooperation and active participation of tourists visiting Hima Malai Sohmat. As mentioned above, an interim exercise for the visitors can be a series of sensitization modules aimed at exposing them to the fragility of the ecosystem. Making them conscious of the consequences of their choices at every level would help in setting the foundation for all communication.

Broadly, as a long-term measure, the idea is to be able to alter their consumption patterns in a way that the established environmental management systems encourage tourists to willingly follow the recommended practices. The responsibility of orienting them in a way that inspires the tourists to care for the ecological ecosystem lies equally on both the staff and the community members. Their behaviour and attitudes would set the tone to be followed by the tourists for the duration of their stay,

and hopefully beyond that as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Limits have to be applied on the number of tourists allowed in the Hima Malai Sohmat which would help maintain the integrity and vitality of the site. In order to control the number of tourists that enter per day into Hima Malai Sohmat, the local drivers will be given training and awareness to maintain the set limit. On occasions where the tourists come by their private cars the local people will be trained to not allow the tourist to enter if the target of the day has been achieved.
- Activity Control: Strict regulatory actions must be in place to control tourist
 activities such as vegetation destruction, wildlife disturbance and congestion.
 Therefore, both the self-organized and pre-arranged tourists must be briefed
 by the government officials or tour operators before entering into
 destinations.
- A detailed survey of tourists should be carried out in the near future to elicit
 visitor perceptions on what services they are looking for and identifying the
 gap areas. Specific strategy for marketing off-season events and attracting
 year-round visitors should form the part of visitor services. Accordingly, also
 demand-supply of natural resources can be planned.
- As the kayaks that are currently used are taken on rent, the society has
 thought of introducing bamboo rafting which is not only closer to nature but it
 will also give more livelihood opportunities to the local people through the
 construction.
- Film Screening: The tourists will get to witness various documentaries about Hima Malai Sohmat under the theme of biodiversity and conservation.
- Homestay and Kitchen Garden: Homestays will be adopted by the society as
 additional options for tourists to stay in. The Society aims to introduce
 kitchen gardens in all the households in the villages in order to limit the over
 utilisation of the forest resources as well as to prevent deforestation. The
 tourists staying in these homestays will also get the opportunities to take part
 in various activities related to it.
- The annual gibbon conservation festival can be celebrated in a way that it captures the attention of incoming tourists while educating them about the relevance of conservation through awareness sessions.





Locals enjoying the common water resource

While discussing the pressing need to pay attention to eco-friendly tourism management interventions, it may be worthwhile to deliberate upon the socio-economic conditions of the community residing in these 5 villages. The fast disappearing agrarian economy, climate change and the lack of bankable sources of livelihood have resulted in the migration of several youth to other urbanised cities.

Host families who run homestays may also feel that tourism related activities are socially disruptive. Instances of visitors creating a ruckus, making noise and general disturbance along with littering their area has been a source of pain for many. The occasional use of drugs or other social practices by the visitors, which may be looked down upon, is also another concern. The bonding between the local community members and the tourists is crucial to follow eco-tourism interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• To be successful in providing a viable income to local communities and create rich and rewarding interpersonal and cultural experiences, the homestay programmes are often combined with other community-based tourism activities like camping, trekking, bird watching, the showcasing of traditional culture and festivals and so forth, either within the village or in

ECO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT FAST KHASI HII I S IN MEGHAI AYA adjoining areas. Like in Thrissur, Kerala, where homestay guests can enjoy cooking, yoga and ayurveda classes, plantation tours, hiking and treks, cultural tours, bird watching, wildlife safaris, cycling, access to local events and visits to local markets. Homestays thus diversify the income opportunities for the villagers and generate interest in sustaining such nature-based activities.

- As men and youth migrate and there is increasing feminization of local landscape management, an updated capacity development programme is needed that not only mentors future policymakers and practitioners from the public and private sector but also enables local economic and entrepreneurship avenues through sustainable tourism. This would require that mountain specific vocational centres are in place and updated with modern facilities and knowledge on the subject.
- There already exists a joint tourism society for the villages of Hima Malai Sohmat which has been working to promote the development of tourism-based livelihoods for village residents. This existing setup can help provide a ready way to meet the livelihood needs of village residents and ensure that benefits from any tourism venture in Hima Malai Sohmat reaches residents of the village.
- Supply chains at the local level need to be strengthened so that multiple new employment avenues spring up. This could include tour operators, food and drink producers, transport services, and guides. As the local economy resurfaces with the creation of opportunities in this space, it is then hoped that reverse migration takes place.

CASE STUDY IN FOCUS: Glamp Eco, Himachal Pradesh, India

The enterprise offers sustainable durable tents for guests to stay in. Their entire site relies on solar electricity including all bulbs and charging points, which amounts to about 3 kilowatts. Solar heaters are used for heating water provided to guests. This also indicates that the venture is able to save money which it would have otherwise splurged on electricity bills!

The staff at Glamp Eco is hired from the community itself, mostly on a contractual basis where a daily payment is provided. The owner of Glamp Eco supports the local community with marketing, especially having a presence

[CO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT, fast khasi hii 1 s in meghai aya

of their services online. The idea is to help them with using technology to promote their business and products. In turn, the locals help Glamp Eco with challenges faced with the handling of leopards etc.

The owner at Glamp Eco realised that the traveller did not have knowledge about green practices about saving water and electricity, which is when he decided to run an online campaign where many travellers signed up promising to be more eco-friendly.

Waste is segregated into wet waste and dry waste, which is then sent to the Manali Municipal Corporation. They have also experimented with the bio tanks systems in which a biochemical is put which consumes the sewage and septic load. What then comes out is grey water which can be used on the land and does not have any bad effect on the land.

Finally, the business realises that the mountains are a female-led community where women run dhabas, sell socks, village toys and other stuff. They are conscious of the fact that they are adding to that indirectly when they send them customers. The guests coming in round the year is a source of revenue for them.

ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Maintaining socio-cultural richness while preserving the ecosystem services requires the support of the community to a huge extent. The involvement of the localities in standing up for political demands and for sharing related information is paramount to drive any sort of transformation. With the objective being to preserve essential species and retaining biodiversity, the community members can provide historical narratives and rich inputs from their experience. This would also help in ensuring that tourism is aligned to the local economic interests. With the local communities participating in the planning and implementation of such interventions, benefits derived would be sustained over a long period of time. There are ways in which

people can indirectly contribute too – folk artists can lead creative mechanisms of sensitizing tourists to advocate for local environmental issues.



Cautionary Signage for people of Mawrapad Village on deforestation, waste management, hunting etc.



- Involving local people as consultants or directors of community-based, ecotourism projects can help ensure community support. If they lack the necessary skills to participate in the eco-tourism industry or interact with foreign tourists, the government may provide job training and education.
- Handicrafts: As the locals are skilled in bamboo weaving, additional training will be given to them to enhance their skills so that they can be sold to the tourists. The motive of the Society is not to make the local communities dependent on tourism as a source of income by replacing the existing livelihood of the people but it will only act as a helping hand for the people to be able to sustain themselves.



With roads being the only means of transport for tourists for Hima Malai Sohmat, it becomes imperative to safeguard the road network from natural disasters such as cloud bursts or landslides. Better road infrastructure and alternative means of transportation is one of the priority actions. However, the creation of such



Mawsynram-Balat road leading to Hima Malai Sohmat

infrastructure cannot be at the cost of the erosion of ecosystem services.

Though roads and modes of transportation can have much higher environmental impacts on remote locations, scanty attention is paid to them; non-motorized transportation (battery-operated solar PV vehicles, cycle, horse/elephant/camel/mule riding) to reduce air/noise pollution must be encouraged in wildlife rich areas.



- The homestay owners of HMS region must persuade the government authorities to take steps to ensure revenue retention by regulating foreign investment and by encouraging local investment and employment in lodging, guide services, and other ventures. Collaborating with government officials, conservation groups and nongovernmental organizations will provide the ecotourism business owners the funding, training, and technical assistance that can lend both legitimacy and sustainability to their venture.
- The founder of Glamp Eco shared, 'The government does have provisions to give help for electricity for homestays. But this implementation is not quick and proper. Many legal formalities need to be completed. The subsidies are also limited which are given for a specific use, for a specific amount and for specific customers. No subsidies given on foreign made. Subsidies only given for so long for the subsidy and that it was better to get it done quickly rather

- than save my costs through receiving the subsidy'. Hence it is suggested that adequate support must be provided by governments so that the use of natural resources is encouraged"
- Road connectivity and maintenance of HMS with the major tourist circuits of the region can ensure confidence among tourists to come for ecotourism experience without any hassle.



Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society is working to scale up their tourist inflow to 3000 per season with advertisement done through tourist agents and government programs. At present, there has been no form of paid advertisement for the promotion of these villages at Hima Malai Sohmat. It has exclusively been through verbal communication that people have learnt about this lesser known place. The creation of media content and coffee table books are ways of branding that can be tapped to attain higher levels of tourist attraction.

Marketing and Promotional activities include Newspaper, Magazines, Film and Documentaries, Fairs and Festivals etc. to promote 'Hima Malai Sohmat', by portraying the uniqueness of the region, its natural beauty, spiritual value and its diverse tourism products ranging from leisure to activity tourism. Promotional material needs to be designed in such a way that it promotes and clearly differentiates Hima Malai Sohmat as a destination with its distinct tourism products, packages and circuits.

Eco-labelling of tourism products and services offered by small, medium and large enterprises has to be in place. Credible ecolabels promote sustainable consumption patterns by providing concise and accurate information to consumers to help them identify those products and services which incorporate a good level of environmental performance.

Tour Operators need to be made aware of the ecotourism services provided by HMS and include HMS in their tourists circuits for better promotion keeping in mind the carrying capacity of the region. (List of tour operators, guest houses and major tourist circuits included in the annexures).



Interactions with Members of Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Forest and Environment Department, the Chief of Hima Malai Sohmat, Meghalaya Biodiversity Board, Tourism Department, Community and



Signage of Phlangwanbroi Viewpoint by Meghalaya Tourism Department

Rural Development, Phudrangshriew Eco and Adventure Development Society as well as the local youth and the volunteers with Conservation Initiatives have strengthened the belief that a multi-stakeholder approach would help in understanding the value and uniqueness of the area, the problems, and each person's responsibility in helping to protect it.

The Forest Department has expressed interest in supporting the formation of local youth committees that would act as a model to showcase the coexistence of man and nature in areas like the Hima Malai Sohmat. The C&RD Department, Mawsynram Block can support the local communities in terms of tourism through MGNREGA by setting up Village Employment Councils. They can provide aid through the construction of water-harvesting units and of water conservation structures. The construction of water conservation structures will not only help in conserving water but it will also act as a habitat for aquatic organisms and at the same time, thereby serving as an additional attraction for tourists. The areas where the condition of the roads and the approach road is not in a good state, the C&RD Block can facilitate its construction in the required villages with the support from DMF (District Mineral Foundation). The department can also aid tourism development by purchasing additional amenities like boats which can be used by the tourists for boating purposes.

The Information Center and Interpretive Center both play key roles in this respect; they are the initial contact point for most tourists and set the tone for their visit. Many of these departments can come together to assimilate information and facilities such as the Tourist Code of Conduct, a directory of tourist amenities in the area (lodging, food, attractions, recreational opportunities, porter/guide services, etc.), and a recycling center. The Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Cooperative Society

can help in setting up small shop (ideally operated by a community member) to sell snacks and drinks, locally-made handicrafts, park souvenirs and publications, and eco-friendly items such as iodine tablets, durable water bottles, and solar batteries/chargers. The various government departments can assist with homestay certifications, which can lead to bringing partnerships and more funds for improving the quality of life of the locals and beef up existing ecotourism services. For the state authorities and government bodies, the designing of policy, financial, institutional and any other incentives should be carried out in a way that caters to the practical implementation of eco-friendly practices. Norms for interested investors keen to make investments in sustainable tourism must be simplified so that restrictive complications do not hinder private sector engagement.

The Department of Tourism, Meghalaya has formulated SOPs for Tourist Destinations for the entry of local tourists and SOP on preventive measures in hotels to contain spread of COVD-19. An SOP on preventive measures in homestays to contain spread of COVID-19 is still under process.

As part of RESTART Meghalaya Mission, the following principles are to be followed:

1. Carrying Capacity

Each Tourist Destination shall notify its "Carrying Capacity" which shall be defined as the maximum number of visitors that a destination can accommodate and still achieve the measures of social distancing. This will enhance sustainable growth, COVID resilience as well as responsible tourism. The Department of Tourism is planning to set the carrying capacity in three ways:

- Put a cap on the number of people who can visit a spot on any given day
- Controlling the scheduled opening and closing time
- Charging high fees during peak hours

2. Right Pricing

The Department of Tourism is targeting high-end tourists to enter the State postcovid. With the limit in the number of people and with the concerns of maintaining social distance, low volume high value tourism seems like the most relevant way to revive tourism activities without impacting the local communities. The pricing of the tourist destinations in Meghalaya at present is very low for its value. With the right pricing there is a huge scope for increasing the revenue through tourism. This will also help in sustaining pre-COVID revenue levels and at the same time minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the local ecosystem.

3. Zero-Waste

To prevent the deterioration of the local ecosystem, minimize carbon footprint of the tourists, and to preserve the aesthetics and natural appeal of the destinations, the principle of Zero-Waste Tourism has been introduced to the RESTART MEGHALAYA MISSION. The tourists would not be allowed to leave behind any waste products like single-use plastics and tobacco products. Alcohol should also be prohibited inside the premises of the tourist spots. Arrangements should be made so that people either deposit them at designated counters for a fee or dispose of them at the entry points.



Restart Meghalaya Mission-Tourism



CONCLUSION

In the North-East, Meghalaya receives the second highest number of tourists. The government recognises the value that tourism can add to Meghalaya's state economy, and in particular to Hima Malai Sohmat, by boosting income creation as well as the provision of vast employment opportunities. The state government recognises travel and tourism is an industry that is seen to be exciting, interesting, and appealing to the young — its promotion in Meghalaya could help absorb many of the unemployed youth in the state or attract back those who have gone to other states to train in this industry. It could also provide entrepreneurship opportunities for people who want to set up eco-tourism or adventure tourism on their own. Further, by promoting 'non-mass' tourism — eco-tourism, adventure sports, and village-related activities — the



Hima Malai Sohmat

activities — the tourism sector could serve the much-needed goal of retaining people in the land.

At Hima Malai Sohmat, there is considerable scope to develop tourism infrastructure, such as resorts, hiking trails, hillside restaurants, keeping in mind the fragility of the mountain environment in which it is being done. The region and its stakeholders <u>realise</u> that apart from the physical sustainability issues, development has to contend with social and economic sustainability in a way that it does not exacerbate economic disparities and continues to promote social and cultural harmony.

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Major Tourist Circuits*

A. Recommended tourist circuits by directorate of tourism, GoM are as mentioned below:

1. Kaziranga-Guwahati-Shillong-Cherrapunjee-Shillong

The Kazirannga-Guwahati-Shillong-Cherrapunjee-Shillong circuit is the most favored spot for tourists arraivaing mostly from Northern India. Mostly these tourists are Assam bound to visit Kamakhya temple in Guwahati and see Kaziranga National Forest. These tourists make a retreating visit to Shillong and visit Shora (Cherrapunjee) to witness the wettest place on earth.

2. Shillong-Mawphlang-Weiloi-Mawsynram-Shillong

The circuit is mostly famous for forests with the name Ki LawKyntang (Sacred forest), Ki Law Adong (Prohibited forests), Ki Law Shnong (Village forest) and Ki Law Kynti (Private forest). The circuit is less known amongst tourists.

3. Shillong-Smit-Nartiang-Thadlaskein-Jowai-Thlu Umwi-Shillong

The circuit exhibits the cultural and historical perspective of Khasi and Jaintia tribes of Meghalaya. The circuit consists of ancient Hindu temples (Shiva & Durga) built by Jaintia rulers. The circuit is also famous for lakes and monoliths.

4. Guwahati-Dudanai-Bajaengdoba-Angore-Tura-Barergapara-Baghmara-Siju-Balpakram-Shillong

The circuit is famous for eco tourism sites full with long caves (longest in Indian Subcontinent), bird sanctuaries and forests. This is a less famous circuit owing to odd road connectivity and poor hotel infrastructure.

B. Eco-tourism destinations: The major eco destinations tourism sites identified by Department of Tourism, Meghalaya are as mentioned in the table below:

S.No	Location	Destination
1	East Khasi Hills District	Mawphlang Sacred Forest
2	West Khasi Hills District	Nongkhnum Island
3	West Khasi Hills District	Jakrem Hot Spring
4	East Khasi Hills District	Mawlynnong Village

^{*}Data provided by ECOSS from Comparative Tourism Study conducted by Priyatam Anurag



Annexure 2

List of Tour Operators

For Conducted Tours & Local Sightseeing

1. Tourist Information Centre Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation Police Bazar, Shillong - 793001 Ph: 0364-2226220

2. Van Rap Tours & Travels Police Bazar, Shillong - 793001 Ph: 0364-2220954 (M): 9863028787/9436103247

Fax: 0364-2220954

e-mail: vanrapch@hotmail.com

Cultural Pursuits Adventures

Hotel Pegasus Crown

Contact: James Perry (Introduction & Customized trips to Meghalaya)

Ph: 0364-2550573 (M) 98630-60937

Fax: 0364-2220774

email: james@culturalpursuits.com Website: www.culturalpursuits.com

4. Meghalaya Adventure Tours (Cave Tourism) Contact: Gregory Diengdoh Ph: 0364-2545621/2548059 (M) 098630-60368 email:briandaly@rediffmail.com

5. Natural Ways- Adventure Tour Garo Hills Contact: Mr. Anup Ingty Hawakhana, Tura Ph: 098630-91278 (M) email: somuingty@yahoo.co.in

6. Nakliar Tourist Info Centre & Travels (Mawlynnong Circuit) Contact: D. D. Laloo Ph: 0364-2229598/2502420 email: nakliartravels@hotmail.com

7. Tower Tours & Travels Contact: K. Tibrewal

Ph: 0364-222341/222342 Fax: 0364-2220090

email: hpt@vsnl.com

8. Meghalaya Road Runner Tours

Contact: G. Lyngwa Ph: 098630-25621/94361-08581 (M)

9. Walk With Nine Lives

Email: 9lives7trep @gmail.com, babatdordkhar@

gmail.com

Phone: 91 9863472784, +91 9831419047 Website: http://www.walkwith9lives.com/

10. Quest Holidays Contact: Janet Lytan Specialises in "Domestic & International Tour Packages"

Head Office: I.PDE Building, Next to Hotel Yalana, Laitumkhrah Main Road,

Shillong 793003

Branch Office: Tympang Club, Opp SBI Iawmusiang, Jowai, Meghalaya 793150

Ph: +91 364 2501671, +91 9863300397, +91 9856026363 + 91 9436700544

Email: holidaysquest@gmail.com

11. New Horizon Travel & Tours Contact: Christine B. Rynjah Salonsar Mansions, 2nd Floor, Police Bazar, Shillong-793001

Ph: 0364-2223233 (M) 98630-26900, 94361-17896

Email: newhorizonstravels@gmail.com



Annexure 2

List of Tour Operators

For Further Information Contact

The Directorate of Tourism

3rd Secretariat Nokrek Building, Lower Lachumiere, Shillong - 793001, Meghalaya, India Ph: +91-364-2500736 / 2502166

TelFax: +91-364-2226054 website: megtourism.gov.in

Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation

Polo Road, Shillong - 793001

Ph: +91-364-2222731/2224933/2505012/2224471

India Tourism

Tirot Sing Road, Shillong - 793001

Ph: +91-364-2225632

Tourist Information Centres:

- 1. Meghalaya House, 9 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi -110001 Ph: +91-11-23014417
- 2. Meghalaya House, 120 Shanti Pally, Rash Behari Connector, Kolkata 700107 Ph: +91-33-24411937, Fax: +91-33-24411930
- 3. Meghalaya House, A.K. Azad Road, Rehabari, Guwahati Ph:+91-361-2544343/632174

Toll Free Telephone No. BSNL 1364



Annexure 2

Travel Agencies*

- 1. Van Rap Tours & Travels, Police Bazar, Ph: 0364-2220954 (M): 9863028787/9436103247 Fax: 0364-2220954, e-mail: vanrapch@hotmail.com
- 2. Sheba Travels, Police Bazar, Shillong, Ph. 2223015/6222/5020
- 3. Jais Travels, Rap's Mansion, Shillong, Ph. 2222777
- 4. Global Tours & Travels, Laitumkhrah, Shillong, Ph. 2502318
- 5. Indrani Tours & Travels, MUDA Complex, Shillong, Ph. 2228150
- 6. Just Trippin', Thana Road, Shillong, Ph. 2228415
- 7. Nongbri Travels, G. S. Road, Shillong, Ph. 2228118
- 8. Sophia Tours & Travels, Hotel Assembly, Shillong, (M)9863239999
- 9. Travel City, Quinton Road, Shillong, Ph. 2228568
- 10. Natasha Travels, Police Bazar, Shillong, Ph. 2228422/8845
- 11. Towers Tours & Travels, TSS Road, Shillong, Ph. 2222997
- 12. Nakliar Tourist Information & Travel, Police Bazar, Shillong, Ph. 2502420
- 13. Golden Arrow, Police Bazar, Shillong, Ph. 2501240
- 14. Tour 'N' Style Pvt. Ltd., Langs & Lyngs, Wahthapbru, Motphran, Shillong-793002, Ph: 09863062190, 9863064346, 9856817554, e-mail: dkhar.tns@gmail.com
- 15. Aripile Travels, Howell Road, Laban, Shillong-793004, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, Ph: 94361-62838 Email: aripiletravels@yahoo.in, customercare@aripiletravels.in; Website: www.aripiletravels.in

^{*}Data provided by ECOSS from Comparative Tourism Study conducted by Priyatam Anurag

ECO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT EAST KHASI HILLS IN MEGHALAYA

ANNEXURES

Annexure 3

List of Guest Houses*

Summit Guest House Upper Lachumiere, Shillong Ph No 2226216

Hilltop Chateau Riat Laban, Kynjat Phutbol, Shillong-793004 (M) 98622 01461/ 98631 41921

Pine Brook Guest House Howell Road, Laban, Opp. SBI Laban Branch, Shillong-4 Ph: 9863062574/ 9863036475/ 9856122878/ 0364-2501422 Email-somibiswas@yahoo.com

Best Holiday Inn Upper Lachumiere, Shillong Ph.No.(M) 98622 62037

White Orchid - The Guesthouse

Upper Lachaumiere, Shillong 793001 Phone: 9774012129 / 9774012150 Mobile: 9863109294/9774030609 E-mail: whiteorchidshillong@gmail.com Bonnie Guest House Laban, Shillong Ph.No.2229527, (M) 98630 21977 Lachumiere House Upper Lachumiere, Shillong (M) 98622 55980

Eldorado Guest House Dhankheti, Shillong (M) No. 98627 83608

Sa-I-Mika Khliehshnong, Sohra, Meghalaya Ph: +919436307200, 919863020718 email: saimikapark.sohra@gmail.com

Highwinds Pine Mount Ridge Barik (Opp. Lady Hydari Park), Shillong Ph.No. 2505148, (M) 98620 55501

Apsara Guest House Fruit Garden, Cleave Colony, Shillong (M) 98567 21384 Email: firmcysyiem@gmail.com Aesthetics Guest House 46/1 Lachaumiere, Near Horse Shoe Building Temple Road Shillong - 793 001

 $Ph: 0364\text{-}2223503 \, / \, 2220341 \, / \, 9436104442$

Aerodene Cottage Lower Cleve Colony, Stonyland, Shillong – 793 003

Phones: landline - 0364-2224958 Mobile - 09774065366 / 09863023567

Stay-Inn Guest House Keating Road, Shillong Ph. No. 0364 2223965

Rosaville Guest House Nongthymmai, Shillong, Ph. No. 2231248

Eco - Park Guest House Nongthymmai, Mawsmai, Sohra - 793108 (Cherrapunjee) Ph. No.(M). 98620 91212, 98560 65544

STATE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSES

- 1. Meghalaya Government Circuit House, Laban, Shillong, Ph. 2226834
- 2. Assam House, Stoney Land, Laitumkhrah, Shillong, Ph. 2223828
- 3. Nagaland House, Nongrim Hill, Laitumkhrah, Shillong, Ph. 2230083
- 4. Arunachal Pradesh Bhavan, Cleve Colony, TC. Road, Shillong, Ph. 2224247
- 5. Mizoram House, Cleve Colony, TC Road, Shillong, Ph. 2225068

(source: Meghalaya tourism website)

^{*}Data provided by ECOSS from Comparative Tourism Study conducted by Priyatam Anurag





List of Hotels (Government and Private)*

SHILLONG

HOTEL PINEWOOD

Rita Road, Shillong Ph. 0364- 2223116, 2223146, 2223263

Fax:91-364-2224176

HOTEL ORCHID

Oakland Road, Polo Grounds, Shillong

Ph. No.: 0364 2224935, 2222664

Fax: 0364 2224176 e-mail: hpt@vsnl.com

ROYAL HERITAGE-TRIPURA CASTLE

Cleave Colony, Shillong

Ph. No.: 0364 2501111, 2501149

Fax: 0364 2501111

e-mail: rh_tripuracastle@rediffmail.com Website: www.tripuraroyalheritage.in

LAKKHOTAA LODGE

Mawpun, Polo Hills, Shillong

Ph. No.: 0364 2590523, 2590524

Fax: 0364 2590516

e-mail: info@lakkhotaalodge.com

Website: www.lakkhotaalodge.com

HOTEL POLO TOWERS

Polo Ground, Shillong

Ph. No.: 0364 2222341, 2222342

Fax: 0364 2220090

e-mail: enquiry@hotelpolotowers.com

Website: www.hotelpolotowers.com

HOTEL PEGASUS CROWN

Ward's Lake road, Police Bazaar, Shillong 793001

Ph. No.: 0364 2220667, 2220668, 2220669,

2220665

Fax: 0364 2228835

e-mail: pegasuscrown@gmail.com

HOTEL ALPINE CONTINENTAL

Thana road/Quinton road, Shillong 793001

Ph. No.: 0364 2220991, 2223617

Fax: 0364 2220996

e-mail: alpineshiilong@hotmail.co Website: www.alpinecontinental.com

HOTEL CENTRE POINT

Police Bazaar, Shillong 793001

Ph. No.: 0364 2225210, 2220480, 2229839

Fax: 0364 2220100

e-mail: center_point91@rediffmail.ccm

THE MAJESTIC HOTEL

ME-BA-AI PLAZA, Polo Hills, Shillong

793001

Tel: +91.364.2506597-99

Fax: +91.364.2227497

e-mail: info@majesticmonsoonshillong.com

Website: www.majesticmonsoonshillong.com

HOTEL MICASA

Keating Road, Police Bazar, Shillong-793001

Ph: 0364-2226766/2300253/2302032

098630-63461 (Mobile)

e-mail: mi_casahotel@yahoo.co.in

Website: www.hotelmicasa.net

ASHUTOSH INN

G.S. Road

Shillong 793001

Phone: 0364-2221276/94361-65135 email: ashutosh_inn@hotmail.com

www.ashutoshinn.com

HOTEL YALANA

Laitumkhrah Main Road, Shillong 793003

Ph. No.: 0364 2211420, 2226059

HOTEL J. K. INTERNATIONAL

Police Bazar, Jail Road, Opp. Vishal Megamart

Shillong-793001

Ph. No.: 0364-2501588/98624-57675

Email: jk@jkinternational.com

www.hoteljkinternational.com

HOTEL BOULEVARD

Thana Road, Police Bazar Shillong

Ph. No.: +91.364.222.9823/ 9044/ 9039

Fax: +91.364.222.9058

THE EEE CEE HOTEL

Khyndailad, Shillong - 793001

Tel +91 364 2500188, 9206043888

Fax +91 364 2500258

Email: concierge@ecshillong.com

www.ecshillong.com

HOTEL BROADWAY

G.S.Road, Shillong 793001

Tel: +91 364 2226996 / 2220815

Fax: +91 364 2501892



Annexure 4

List of Hotels (Government and Private)*

HOTEL EMBASSY	RI BHOI	TURA
AC Lane, Police Bazar, Shillong		
Ph. No.: 2223164	ORCHID LAKE RESORT	ORCHID LODGE
	Umiam, Barapani	Tura, Arai Mile, West Garo Hills
SHILLONG CLUB	Ph. No.: 0364 -2570258, 2570296	Ph. No.: 0986-2202772
Kachari Road, Shillong		Fax: 03651-224176, 222731
Ph. No.: 0364 2225497	RI KYNJAI RESORT	
e-mail: shillongclubltdresi@hotmail.com	Umniuh Khwan, U.C.C Road Ri Bhoi, Meghalaya	HOTEL RIKMAN CONTINENTAL
	Ph. No.:+ 91 98624 20300 / 20301	Tura 794001, West Garo Hills
HOTEL PINE BOROUGH	Fax: 0364 2220100	Ph. No.: 03651-220744-45
Police Bazar, Shillong	e-mail: info@rikynjai.com	Fax:03651-223611
Ph. No.: 2220698	Website: www.rikynjai.com	e-mail: rikman_tura@hotmail.com
COHDA	BREEZE DALE TOURIST RECORT	HOTEL CLINDADE
SOHRA	BREEZE-DALE TOURIST RESORT	HOTEL SUNDARE
	Umran P.O. Umsning, Shillong-Guwahati Road,	Circular Road, Tura, West Garo Hiils
CHERRAPUNJEE HOLIDAY	NH-40, Meghalaya-793105	Ph. No.: 03651-224610
RESORT	Ph. No.: +9198620-99039/+9198560-06376	
Village Laitkynsew, Cherrapunjee		WILLIAMNAGAR
Ph. No.: 03637 244218, 244219,	STAR VALLEY TOURIST RESORT	
244220	Ri-Bhoi District	WILLIAMNAGAR TOURIST LODGE
Mobile: 94361-15925	13th MILE, Byrnihat	Williamnagar, East Garo Hills
Website: www.cherrapunjee.com	Phone No: 9863081629, 9856823338,	Ph. No.: 03651-232394

CONIFEROUS RESORT

Cherrapunjee Ph. No.: 03637 235537

Mobile: 9436178164, 9615791752

SOHRA PLAZA

Sohra Market, Cherrapunjee Ph. Nos (M).: 9774970825,

9436308007

JOWAI

9856743040

ORCHID INN

Thadlaskien, Jaintia Hills Ph. No.: 9856003662/ 9863600078 / 9863101231

E-mail: ctc_orchid_inn@indiatimes.com

BAGHMARA

BAGHMARA TOURIST LODGE

Baghmara, South Garo Hills

Ph. No.: 03651-232394, 03639-222141

SIJU TOURIST LODGE

South Garo Hills

Ph. No.: 03651-232394, 03639-222141

annexures



Annexure 5

List of People Interviewed

Date	Organisation	Person Interviewed	Location	Comments	Contact Details
10th Aug.	Khonoma Ecotourism Management Committee	Mr. Neikedolie Heikha	Khonoma	Mr. Neikedolie Heikha has initiated the first community-based tourism in Nagaland	8575185649
15th Sept.	TIEEDI	Mr. Utsow Pradhan	8th Mile Gorbari, Darjeeling	Mr. Utsow Pradhan is the founder of Tieedi forest garden	tieediforestgarden @gmail.com
16th Sept.	The Goat Village/ GreenPeople	Mr. Roopesh Rai	Uttarakhand	Mr. Roopesh Rai is the founder of The Goat Village and GreenPeople	9618889005
17th Sept.	Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society	Mr. Kalicharan Baumatry	Manas National Park	Mr. Kalicharan Basumatry is the founder of Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society	maozigendri @gmail.com
27th Sept.	Vacation Rental	Ms. Rigzin Lachit	Ladakh	Ms.Rigzin Lachit is the founder of Vacation Rental	8527595856
28th Sept.	OurGuest	Mr. Karma Thutop	Sikkim	Mr. Karma Thutop is the founder of OurGuest	9833658616
29th Sept.	Kipepeo	Mr.Piran Elavia	Maharashtra	Mr. Piran Elavia is the founder of Kipepeo	9930002412
30th Sept.	Gibbon Eco Camp	Mr. Jayanta Jyoti Sarmah	Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary	Mr.Jayanta Sarmah is the founder of Gibbon Eco Camp	9854054135





List of Organizations and Websites Cited

Name of organisation	Website
Adventure LA, Himachal Pradesh	https://www.adventurela.in/
GlampEco Stays Manali	https://glampeco.com/
Lapa Rios, Costa Rica	https://www.laparios.com/
Chalamthang Homestay	http://chalamthanghomestay.com/
Western Arunachal Landscape, WWF	https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/critical_regions/ western_arunachal_landscape/about_western_arunachal_landscape/



Annexure 7

Interview Schedule for Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Society

Introduction

Name:

Designation:

Years engaged:

- 1. Data on Hima Malai Sohmat (Collect)
 - 1. Number of Villages
 - 2. Area of all the 5 villages
 - 3. Map of all the 5 villages (please attach)
 - 4. Population
 - 5. Communities
 - 6. Cultural practices and festivals:
 - 7. Village Council structure
 - 8. No. of villages with Gibbons:
 - 9. Gibbon population in each village:
 - 10. Rural Development work through government schemes:
 - 11. Amenities such as road:
 - 12. Amenities such as drinking water:
 - 13. Amenities such as electricity:
 - 14. Amenities such as Sanitation facilities:
 - 15. Public Representative in the State legislature:
 - 16. Public Representative in the Parliament:
 - 17. How does HMS want to grow in terms of tourism?
 - 18. No. of schools in HMS
 - 19. Public Health Centre nearest:
 - 20. Nearest Hospital:
 - 21. Employment of people in the area:
 - 22. Area available for homestay:
 - 23. Materials used for constructing existing homestays:
 - 24. Any solar panels installed in the homestays or village?
- 2. Background of Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Society (please provide as attachment)
 - 1. History/origin
 - 2. Administrative Structure
 - 3. Funding
 - 4. Development Agenda
- 3. Documentation of Hima Malai Sohmat's Tourist Attraction (please provide as attachment)
 - 1. History
 - 2. Culture
 - 3. Food Habit
 - 4. Festivals
 - 5. Wildlife
 - 6. Biodiversity



4. Tourism Details

- 1. What all tourist activities do you provide? Are these activities available for all the season?
- 2. How many tourists do you expect each season? Give details.
- 3. How much revenue have you generate from Tourists since 2015?
- 4. Where did the majority of expenditure from tourist revenue go?
- 5. What kind of infrastructure has been put in place for tourists' comfortable stay?
- 6. What types of services and human resources have you allotted for tourist management?
- 7. Does Malai Sohmat fall under any famous Tourist Circuit?
- 8. Do you also receive local tourists from nearby districts?
- 9. How well connected is it to the nearby tourist areas?

5. Interaction between Host population and Tourists

- 1. Can tourists freely roam around Malai Sohmat?
- 2. Is it mandatory to take a local tourist guide?
- 3. How has been the interaction between villagers and tourists so far?
- 4. Do you feel villagers hold any kind of apprehension towards new people?
- 5. Is there any Standard Operating Manual jotting down rules and regulations for conflict resolution between visitors and locals?
- 6. Can there be any possible threats from visitors to the local Gibbon population? Are there any rules to manage human-Gibbon interaction?

6. Waste Management

- 1. Who is entrusted with the waste management system in HMS?
- 2. Please explain the entire cycle of waste management from households to landfill/incineration?
- 3. What are the facilities installed for waste disposal from households?
- 4. Is the youth/community involved in the waste management process?
- 5. How are plastics handled in HMS? Do you allow outsiders to use/bring plastic in HMS?
- 6. Are there any rules and regulations in place to communicate to visitors the Dos and Don'ts of Plastic?
- 7. What are the future plans of the Society for waste management?

7. Vulnerability

- 1. How frequent are landslides in your area?
- 2. How frequent are floods in your area?
- 3. Is there any existing study/report assessing the vulnerability of Malai Sohmat from natural and manmade disasters?
- 4. Has there been any initiative to mitigate risks of disasters? If yes, please explain.

8. Growth Plan

- 1. How does the Society plan to grow Tourism?
- 2. Is there any effort underway to increase the tourist flow?
- 3. How many tourists will the Society aim to bring in?
- 4. Are private individuals also working in the area to build facilities for increasing tourist flow?
- 5. Will private individuals contribute to the Society for common facilities?
- 6. Has there been any kind of publicity or advertising for Tourism on Hima Malai Sohmat from State level agencies or other agencies?
- 7. What kind of training has local guides undergone?
- 8. What are the areas where you see capacity building is required for individuals engaged and the community?

9. Farming

- 1. Are families in the villages engaged in any organic farming with certification?
- 2. How many families are engaged in kitchen gardening in the villages?
- 3. Give examples of vegetables/plants cultivated by the village growers for own-consumption or commercial purpose.
- 4. How many families are engaged in broomstick farming business?



Annexure 8

Interview Schedule for Conservation Initiatives

Introduction

Name:

Designation:

Years engaged:

- 1. Background of Conservation Initiatives
 - 1. Kindly tell us more about your organisation.
 - 2. Will you be able to share your findings to incorporate in our study? If yes, kindly share the findings to develop a conservation centric ecotourism plan.
- 2. Conservation-related activities
 - 1. What are the threats to conservation in Malai Sohmat?
 - 2. What all activities have been undertaken for awareness building and gibbon conservation in the area? Explain each activity in detail.
 - 3. What are the threats you have noticed for gibbon conservation?
- 3. Tourism and conservation
 - 1. How can tourism impact your conservation initiatives? Please explain in detail.
 - 2. Has CI undertaken any tourism promotion activity to bring in revenue for conservation?



Interview Schedule for Ecotourism Initiatives

A. Data on the ecotourism area run by you/your organisation

Number of Villages

Source of drinking water:

Source of electricity

What are the Sanitation facilities?

What are the additional livelihoods gained after introduction of ecotourism in the area?

Materials used for constructing existing homestays:

B. Tourism Details

What are the kinds of tourist activities you provide (including cultural)? Are these activities available for all the season?

How many tourists do you expect each season?

Where did the majority of expenditure from tourist revenue go?

What kinds of services and human resources have you allotted for tourist management?

Can tourists freely roam around the area?

Is it mandatory to take a local tourist guide?

How has the interaction between villagers and tourists been so far?

Do you feel villagers hold any kind of apprehension towards new people?

Is there any Standard Operating Manual jotting down rules and regulations for conflict resolution between visitors and locals?

C. Waste Management

Please explain the entire cycle of waste management from households to landfill/incineration?

What are the facilities installed for waste disposal from households?

Is the youth/community involved in the waste management process?

How are plastics handled in your area? Do you allow outsiders to use/bring plastic in?

Are there any rules and regulations in place to communicate to visitors the Dos and Don'ts of Plastic?

D. Energy

Which type of Renewable Energy (RE) technology do you use for your business?

What kind of Energy Efficient (EE) practices have you engaged in?

What were the key energy-related challenges faced by your enterprise before the RE & EE intervention?

What are the key economic benefits of RE & EE adoption for your business? (compare to a baseline)

What are the key social benefits of RE & EE adoption for your business? (compare to a baseline)

What have the key environmental benefits of RE & EE adoption been for your business? (compare to a baseline)

According to you, how does RE & EE adoption address existing challenges for small and medium tourism enterprises?

Do you think adoption of RE technology or energy efficiency practices have made your businesses more resilient to external shocks such as climate change? If so, in what manner?

What are some of the major challenges you faced in the adoption of RE technology or EE practices?

How did you become aware of the RE & EE technology solutions? Is information on RE & EE technology solutions accessible?

How much did the RE system cost? How did you finance the RE technology?

Did you rely on any partnerships with other entities for RE or EE adoption?

ECO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT, EAST KHASI HILLS IN MEGHALAYA



ANNEXURES

How much did the RE system cost? How did you finance the RE technology? Did you rely on any partnerships with other entities for RE or EE adoption?

E. Conservation

What are the threats to conservation in your area?

What are the conservation-based activities performed by you?

Has it encouraged the local people to promote conservation?

Was education about the species/conservation activities in your area introduced as part of the ecotourism initiative? If yes, specify

What are the challenges you face in terms of promoting biodiversity conservation along with ecotourism? What should be the effective remedies to improve the management and conservation of natural resources in your area?

Has the area benefitted through ecotourism in terms of providing revenue in the field of conservation.

What is the mode of transportation used to enter this area?

Do tourists get involved in any agro-forestry practices in your area?

Does your eco-tourism support the change of mass-tourism activities to responsible, environmental sensitive activities which promote sustainable ecotourism destination management & development? What are the human-wildlife interactions or human-wildlife conflicts you faced? What are the mitigation measures taken by you?

What are the success stories and failures of ecotourism development in this site?

What are the natural resources that you aim to conserve through ecotourism and how?

- Wildlife i.
- ii. Landscape
- iii. **Forest**
- Birds iv.
- v. **Butterflies**
- Rare or endangered plant/animal species vi.
- Water vii.
- viii. Others



Case Studies in the Indian Himalayan Region

Jabarkhet Nature Reserve

Based in Mussoorie, the idea behind this nature reserve originated in order to conserve natural resources through a sustainable model that generates income for the communities. This objective of wanting to create jobs for youth led to the setting up of a nature reserve instead of simply establishing yet another tourist resort. Understanding the role that private individuals can play, the team involved members from the local community to clear 100 acres of land, an activity that led to the emergence of forest canopies and all sorts of vegetation. Taking the lead to create small core zones that were bereft of any sounds or disturbance, the reserve is now home to some 140 species of birds and several other wildlife such as bears, samar and foxes which had not been reported for the last 40 years!

On the economic sustainability front, the Jabarkhet Nature Reserve has been able to retain all eight of their full-time staff members and maintain the reserve by charging visitors for nature trails. Nearly 5000 visitors, from all across the world, have visited the reserve to witness how a once dilapidated forest has now transformed into a hub of biodiversity. Maps and booklets are also provided to the visitors.

IMPACT STORY

It is interesting to learn that youth who worked as dishwashers at a local dhaba have now been trained as guides, and they are extremely enthusiastic about nature!

Even more amazing is that fact that now one of these youths is a national award winner guide.

Dhanaulti Eco Park

Dhanaulti Eco Park in Tehri District of Uttarakhand is managed by a committee of 18 members. The committee works on managing the Eco park, conservation of forest and ecosystem and effective waste management. Additionally, the committee also looks after the conservation and management of adjoining forest areas. The Eco Park provides five major amenities to the visitors in which accommodation facilities like Eco-Huts, amusement facilities like plantation of memory saplings, nature trails with Yoga centre and an Interpretation Centre are some of the most attractive and informative activities related to conservation. The Interpretation Centre helps to generate awareness on the conservation and management of the Himalayan ecosystem and biodiversity.

WASTE MANAGEMENT: This area was once degraded due to the dumping of non-degradable plastic waste. Over the years, through the efforts of the Dhanaulti Ecology and Ecotourism Development Committee, there has been a gradual improvement. Some of these interventions include placing of holdings on the road and vantage points emphasising on the ill effects of non-biodegradable substances and other garbage, which helps in spreading awareness among the tourists and locals about the effective usage of waste bins. The waste is then collected and transported to Dehradun where it is either recycled or disposed-off following proper measures. The reduction in garbage has helped the local flora to revive.

PLANTATION OF MEMORY SAPLINGS: Over 1000 saplings of tree species, mainly of Deodar, have been planted as memory plantations in the Eco Park area. These saplings flourish well, as they are under intensive care of the committee. The encroachment activities have also been minimized to a great extent.

BENEFITS SHARING: The total income as generated by conducting different activities in the Eco Park is shared in such a way so that the Eco Park can be made functional besides providing benefits to the local people. Of the total Eco Park income, the maximum share (40%) is provided as honorarium to the local people for the conduction of various activities within the park and for environmental conservation. Thirty percent (30%) of Eco Park income is used for its maintenance and development. Twenty percent is allotted as revenue in state exchequer, and the remaining 10% of total Eco Park income is deposited in the corpus fund. In a year the Eco Park earned Rs. 33,14,698 revenue, which is higher than the revenue earned by 6 important national parks and sanctuaries of the State such as the Valley of Flowers National Park, Nanda Devi National Park, Govind National Park, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttarakhand Forest Government of Uttarakhand, 2020).

TIEEDI Forest Garden

TIEEDI forest garden is an organisation following the principles of permaculture, i.e. to live in harmony with nature. This forest garden is located in a wasteland in 8th Mile Gorbari, Darjeeling which has been reclaimed into a rainforest by the organisation. Low volume tourism is practised where a maximum of 12 people are accommodated during the peak seasons at 70%-80% of frequency in the homestays.

ARCHITECTURE: The architecture of the homestays is made up of locally sourced natural materials like stones, bamboo, wood, grass and mud which is in symbiosis with nature. The goal of the selection of such material is to lessen the carbon footprint.

WASTE MANAGEMENT: This organisation is very conscious about the waste produced by them through the tourism activities where the biodegradable waste is composted - amounting to 100kg compost per week. The non-biodegradable waste is then sent into the MRF (Materials recovery facility) with the intention to repurpose and recycle it to the maximum. The remaining waste like diapers and sanitary pads are then locked into the cement construction wherever necessary in the vicinity. The tourists are also asked to make plastic bricks out of their individual plastic waste if any.

SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER: The tourists are recommended to not bring in plastic bottles hence drinking water is freshly available for them from the stream which is boiled giving them a close to nature experience.

SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY: Due to the less abundance of sunlight, the use of solar panels didn't turn out successful but provisions are being made by them to shift to mini hydro projects keeping in mind clean energy generation.

LOCALS INVOLVED AND LIVELIHOOD: 15 locals are currently employed in TIEEDI forest garden and they are involved with working on their traditional practises like bamboo weaving, mud and stone architecture. In addition these locals are also involved in transport. Locals are also trained for village tourism where they accompany tourists in hiking and trekking activities and simultaneously show them around the village. A local guide is also mandatory to travel into the wildlife reserve.

ACTIVITIES: The activities offered by them include cycling, running, hiking and sightseeing. In addition the tourists also have the opportunity to get involved in a 'Earn a Meal' voluntary programme where they work in their farms for a set period of time per day and earn their meal. The organisation practise forganics, a term which comes from the words forage and organic. The produce are farmed organically and

simultaneously harvested and foraged from the forest. These include fiddlehead ferns, Nepali hogweed, cardamom, tumbru (toothache tree), plum, pepper, tomato, rosemary, cauliflower and other perennials.

REVENUE: The revenue generated from tourism activity is utilised for the management of the tourism where a home composting unit has been set up where all the biodegradable waste is composted through it. This home composting unit is also sold and implemented by the local employees in the villages to minimize the household waste production. A 'Zero Waste Store' has also been launched by the local community where all the local agricultural produce and homemade snacks are sold and people can purchase by bringing their own bags or containers to store.

CONSERVATION: For the purpose of conservation, the organisation conducts learning programs called 'Everyday Environmentalism' to train people to live in harmony with nature. The term 'Everyday Environmentalism' signifies learning from everyday activities like composting, eco-bricking, alternatives to plastic, natural farming and so on. This has had a tremendous impact on the tourist as well as the locals to shift towards an eco-friendly lifestyle. The aim of this organisation is to conserve the ecosystem as a whole.

Green People (The Goat Village)

The Green People is an organisation working in Uttarakhand on reverse migration of marginalised farmers via two channels 'The Goat Village' and 'Bakri Chhap' in which the former works on promoting farm retreats or home stays and reviving abandoned villages through tourism. Their work focuses on the three Ps, that is Planet, People, and Profit. Their effort is to bring about economic development to rural India by offering the insight into the impact of human beings on the environment and bridging the gap between rural and urban India.

At present there are more than 100 community-run home stays. The Goat Village is multi-dimensional with a blend of Eco, Farm and Rural tourism. The Goat Villages has also bagged the World Responsible Tourism Award 2020 for their path breaking efforts in working with the community. 'Reduce, Recycle and Reuse' along with minimalism/smart minimalism are the core guiding principles of this organisation.

GUEST PROGRAM

1. Volunteer

The tourist also gets a chance to volunteer for activities like storytelling, farming, content creation and providing assistance by giving a fee which varies with the

duration of the stay. Facilities like stay, meals and tea snacks are provided to these guests.

2. "Pay What You Like"

With the aim to replace "Value for Money" to "Money for Value" the organisation started a "Pay What You Like" initiative where travel and adventure enthusiasts can visit, experience and evaluate the services at Green People Farm Retreats and home stays without the compulsion of payment. Through this initiative they aim to encourage and promote the urban population to spend some quality time with villagers, to understand their challenges, learn from their best practices of living and also contribute to the labour in their farm. This will also boost the self-esteem enabling them to continue putting in efforts towards rebuilding their villages.

The meals served to the visitors are purely regional and created from local produce.

Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society

Manas National Park is home to 22 vulnerable mammal species and is also an Important Bird Area (IBA). Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society was started out by the local community in order to sustain Manas National Park in Assam which was undergoing threats in terms of conservation. The people collectively decided to ask the poachers to surrender their weapons and in turn they were trained for ecotourism activity and conservation. With the introduction of ecotourism, the local unemployed youth got the provision of being tourist guides and hospitality experts. The sale of locally sourced agricultural produce and handicrafts has also been introduced to boost the tourism activity. Only vehicles allotted by MMES are permitted to enter into the vicinity which increases the capacity of local employment. MMES aims for low volume tourism with two thousand (2000) tourists per year with a target tourist of students, researchers and others in the field of academics. No modifications are made on the homestays and the architecture is seen to it that it highlights the Bodo community. There is a complete ban on plastic but no strict action has been taken at present in case of violation by the tourist. Boiled water is provided in the homestays in order to prevent the tourist from bringing in plastic bottles. Conservation Programs are also held by MMES yearly in which the tourists get the opportunity to take part in it if interested. Besides that, activities like nature walk, bird-watching are popular for spotting certain species like the Bengal Florican. The tourist also gets the opportunity to interact with the ex-poachers and learn about their journey of giving up hunting for conservation and becoming natural guards of the same species they once hunted. In addition they can enter the forest along with these natural guards where they get to learn about the species of interest. Beyond

conservation, MMES also aims to promote the culture of the Indigenous tribes through cultural programs and serving of ethnic food. The income generated from tourism activity is indirectly utilised for conservation where certain benefits are given to the natural guards in terms of providing education to their children and healthcare benefits for conserving the area.

OurGuest

An off-beat tours and travels company based out of Sikkim, OurGuest aggregates unique farmstays, homestays, resorts and retreats across NorthEast India in its endeavour to provide exciting and customizable tour packages for its guests. Currently connected with around 80 homestays in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya, the enterprise owner feels that there needs to be a standardised process for homestay bookings. In his opinion, the practice of collection of a nominal fee from both the homestay as well as the tourist should be in place, so that this pool of funds can be directed towards strengthening the village community infrastructure. This becomes all the more essential during post-Covid times, when a strong health infrastructure and hygienic facilities hold supreme significance to boost tourism in the region. However, according to the owner of OurGuest, the state of Meghalaya will take some time to recover from the Covid shock and open for tourism. At present, no advance bookings are being accepted in spite of multiple queries from eager tourists. This is because the villagers around the homestays are deeply suspicious of the incoming tourists who may be carriers of the deadly virus. Their scepticism also arises due to the absence of medical facilities in their area. Without a local hospital or even an ambulance service, there is little scope for tourism to flourish in the hinterlands of the state.

Vacation Rental by Rigzin Lachic

Rigzin Lachin, is working on constructing a vacation rental in Leh with the aim to promote its history and tradition through Art and Architecture. Sustainable tourism is put into focus having three factors: environment, local communities and overall human health.

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE: The vacation rental consists of seven cottages traditionally built using local materials. The traditional architecture is accompanied with modern intervention to adapt to the changing climatic condition. Mud and locally available wood are chosen in order to make these cottages eco-friendly and closer to nature. These materials at the same time help in insulation during the winter

season in contrast to the concrete buildings. It is taken into consideration that the tourists are conscious travellers regarding the carbon footprint that they leave behind while travelling.

LIVELIHOOD GENERATION: To boost the livelihood of the people and to prevent an age old tradition from diminishing, the interior elements of all these cottages are specially made by the local artisans. These include rugs, light fixtures, hand woven baskets, pottery and metal works. In order to promote the work of these last generation artisans, vacation rental is working with them to market their products and conduct workshops in order to help them sustain their art and generate income.

Vacation rentals also have a plan of collaborating with the local farmers and local food producers including dairy producers to serve at these cottages. This will not only help them in increasing their income but at the same time the aim is to cut down the usage of packaged food to minimise the waste generation from these cottages. Ideally, they want the money from the tourists to go back to the local community as a major portion of Ladakh's economy is generated from tourism. Tourists are also given a tour to the villages which are not under the limelight in order to elevate the tourism activities there and prevent the increasing rate of out migration from these villages to Leh which occurs in search of better employment opportunities.

ADAPTATION AND SUSTENANCE: The people of Ladakh are not primarily dependent on Tourism as they are self-sustained. It is only during the peak season where people take up additional jobs like that of a guide, cook, driver and homestay owners. Hence, the people did not face much difficulty during the pandemic in terms of sustaining themselves when tourism activities have been put on a halt.

Kipepeo

Hailing from Mumbai, the founder of Kipepeo wanted to provide a proper perspective of the North East to the rest of the country. The idea of supporting the local community – both with a source of income as well as boosting their motivation, led to the formation of the travel company, Kipepeo.

The idea is to identify those local communities which are really earnest in the work that they are doing – they may be homestay hosts or villagers, who promise potential and seem genuinely interested in serving outsiders. Meghalaya has become very popular as a tourist destination in the last 2-3 years. Every second house is now a homestay – the owners may not have the training, but seem to have gotten into the hospitality sector from an economic perspective.

Although by and large, these communities across the North East are extremely

hospitable in nature, yet the team at Kipepeo felt the need to conduct training sessions to fine tune their skills in accordance to the demands of the city folk. As most of these homestay owners are getting into hospitality for the first time, it has been crucial to lay context on how they can best manage tourists, supervise hygiene, how to serve food, organise village walks and train guides on guest etiquette. The founder of Kipepeo is aware of Aranya, World Wide Foundation, Help to Risen and other NGOs who support local communities by holding training programs for homestay owners and guides.

The founder at Kipepeo further shares that although Meghalaya is home to the cleanest village called Mawlynnong that receives nearly 1000 tourists a day, sometimes that does become an intrusion. Additionally, the home stays there are not that hospitable, taking the discussion back to the simple yet important intervention of training the homestay owners.

Talkharka Experience

WWF- India has been working with the Talkharka community residing in East Sikkim along the fringes of Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary since 2018 on responsible tourism promotion as a means to offset the income loss of farmers from conflict by providing an alternative livelihood option, as well as for raising awareness on red panda conservation. Pangolakha forest is home to Sikkim's state animal, the red panda which is an endangered species.

ACTIVITIES

PROMOTION OF NATURE AND CULTURE: Tourists visiting Talkharka get an entirely authentic experience through the promotion of nature and culture. The Rai community, the major inhabitants of Talkharka have a very strong cultural component through their many festivals and rituals.

NATURE INTERPRETATION: The nature guides are made sure to have the capacity to translate the local knowledge of the flora and fauna of the biodiversity rich Talkharka. Local youth from the village have been trained as nature and bird guides through intensive training and capacity building programmes as part of the intervention. These bird guides train others in the community as well as raise awareness among the children on conservation values. Red panda trails have been developed that take tourists within the forests on the lookout for the animal. Sighting of red pandas in the wild is not easy, and this is explained to the guest. The tourist guides have been trained to show other signs of the red panda such as their pellets, or the trees and food that they mostly prefer.

SETTING UP OF HOMESTAY STANDARDS: Family run homestays are arranged to accommodate the visitors. WWF-India have supported the upgradation of facilities, mainly of toilets and provision of mattresses, pillows and other basic requirements with contribution from the homestay families. The main focus is to provide authentic rural experience to the visitors and therefore keeping the homestays as real as possible, taking into consideration maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. 10 homestays have been set up in the village that have also been formed into a Homestay Operators Committee that meets regularly. Visitors are to follow code of conduct developed by the Homestay Committee. To maintain similar standards in every homestay, the committee has also developed and agreed upon common minimum standards for every homestay to follow. These include specification on meals, services and facilities to be provided to the guests, specification on number of rooms allowed per homestay. Common minimum standards ensure that guests get similar experiences from every homestay and same value for money. These are developed for all elements of the homestay such as kitchen and dining, bathroom and toilet, bedroom space, outside space, etc.

Promoting local organic cuisine, being plastic free, providing privacy to the guests, ensuring water supply and well-lit bathrooms are some of the standards that all homestays abide by.

PROMOTION OF LOCAL PRODUCTS

Women self-help groups have also been trained on bee keeping and on honey production to expand the benefits from tourism to the larger community. Support for packaging of the honey was also provided and SHGs generate some income out of the honey that is sold both to tourists as well as in the local markets.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

WWF- India supported a website for Talkharka Homestays which also has a booking portal. Travel brochures were also printed and distributed among hotels and travel operators. A dedicated page for the village was also run on social media pages. Familiarisation tours for travel operators were also organised for them to experience the sights and sounds of the village and what it has to offer. Birding camps and photography camps were also organised in the village for attracting local birding groups and spreading the word about the village.

Gibbon Eco Camp

Gibbon Eco Camp is a locally run organisation located near Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary or Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary which focuses on three components of tourism namely Rural tourism, Wildlife tourism and Adventure tourism. The main attraction for tourists is to witness the hoolock gibbon for photography, research and also for a learning experience. Other than the hoolock gibbon, this sanctuary is also known for other wildlife species like elephant, leopard and arboreal species like stump-tail macaque, pig-tailed macaque, capped langur, slow loris and Assamese macaque.

SUSTAINABILITY: This Gibbon Eco Camp is located on the peoples own land in which cottages made up of natural materials like cane, bamboo and thatched grass are constructed to accommodate the visitors. This camp comprises a total of five rooms having a daily limit of 15 people for regular tourists and 30 people in case of students. This camp gets an average of 300 tourists annually.

CONSERVATION: Compensation is provided to students and researchers who want to study about the wildlife in this sanctuary. As this camp is located close to the wildlife sanctuary, it indirectly aids the forest department in improvement of conservation activities by bringing in tourists adding to their revenue.

LIVELIHOOD: Around 15 locals from the nearby villages are appointed as tour guides in this camp. Locals can also voluntarily participate in guiding the tourist whenever required. The locals through interaction with academicians visiting the wildlife sanctuary since the year 1995 have gained scientific knowledge about the wildlife present in their sanctuaries. These locals then in turn started training the youth of the villages as trekking guides. Additionally, the locals have also been trained by various NGOs and Assam Forest Department as tourist guides and the Do's and Don'ts to carry out tourism activities in the Gibbon wildlife sanctuary. Beyond that other hospitality training have also been provided to the locals in Jorhat as well as Guwahati. The revenue generated from this camp is solely for the locals and maintenance of the camp. Beyond revenue the locals benefit in terms of skill improvement and boost in their self-esteem which is important in terms of rural development.

ACTIVITY

- Jungle trek to spot Gibbon is one of the activities provided by this camp. This varies according to the likings of the tourists ranging from a 2hr trek, half day trek and three day trek. Night trek is provided to the researchers and students with prior permission taken from the forest department. Night safari around the wildlife sanctuary is also provided to the traveller.
- The tourists get to experience the lifestyle and culture of the local communities through the ethnic food and witnessing the daily activities. Such activities include the handloom weaving, tea garden processes and farming of black pepper. The tourists also get a chance to fish with the

local communities in the village pond giving them a chance to interact with the people and get to know their way of living. Cultural dances like Bihu dance, dance of the tea tribe and skits are also performed to the guests on request.

The Chalamthang Homestay, Sikkim

The Sikkim State Government conceived the Homestay Scheme under the 13th Finance Commission that provides a double roomed homestay with attached toilets on the property of selected beneficiaries free of cost. Additionally, it also facilitates homestay management training. In 2013, around 728 homestays were commissioned for construction.

Chalamthang Homestay is one such initiative by Mr. Amrit Sharma in Chalamthang, South Sikkim that has availed the benefits of the government's beneficiary scheme and expanded his business of homestays across the state. This homestay model emphasizes rural tourism and guarantees improvement in the economy of the rural masses by employing the local villagers. Amrit realised the need for conservation of the village resources as tourist attractions and embarked on a community led initiative to conserve and enhance these assets.

Through publicity on Facebook, local newspapers and travel guides, his venture started expanding at a fast rate. In 2016, his homestay registration witnessed a 300% increase since 2014, resulting in 2000 tourist visitors in that year. The success of his homestay model has led to many partnerships as well.

Innovative Features

- Chalamthang Tourism Development Committee (CTDC) headed by Amrit decided to mobilise their farmers into an agro-tourism group so that they could earn extra money from the guests. Any guest visiting the organic farms was charged Rs 30 as entry fees that was given to the farmer. This way farmer groups converted into Agro Tourism groups.
- A 164-year-old heritage house has been conserved under his initiative.
- Mr. Amrit encouraged the use and sale of eco-friendly locally made products in his homestay, thereby supporting the local community and reducing ecological distress.
- He has helped set up a bamboo handicrafts manufacturing unit engaging locals which was recently upscaled and awarded funds for purchase of machinery and equipment.
- Inspired by the success of Chalamthang homestay, the village community realized the importance of eco friendly practices for ecotourism promotion and so adopted zero- waste practices such as regular clean

SO-TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIMA MALAI SOHMAT,

ups, designated point wise waste collection and segregation and discouraged use of plastics. Waste was collected at designated spots segregated and sent to waste merchants in Singtam and the 32 mile landfill.

• Forest visits, nature walks, bird and butterfly watching are also part of the standard visitor's itinerary.



List of Species Present in Hima Malai Sohmat

Source: Mr. Wallambor Kharlyngdoh (Local Youth and volunteer of Conservation Initiatives)

Scientific Names of species

- 1. Zhangialus suffry
- 2. Roarchestes shillongenesis
- 3. Amolaps assaensis
- 4. Hylaeona tytleri
- 5. Rhacophorus bipuntatus
- 6. Kurixus naso
- 7. Polypedates teraiensis
- 8. Odorrana mawphlangenisis
- 9. Odorrana livida
- 10. Duttaphryniss melanastictus
- 11. Minervarya pierrei
- 12. Leptobrachium smithi
- 13. Megaphrys flavipunctata
- 14. Megophrys megaophala
- 15. Megophrys oropedon
- 16. Clinotarsus articola
- 17. Hydrophylax leptoglossa

Common Name of species

- 1. Common skittering frog,
- 2. Indus Valley bullfrog,
- 3. Twin spotted flying frog
- 4. Black striped frog
- 5. Copes Assam frog
- 6. Green cascade frog
- 7. Rock toads
- 8. Jerdon's tree frog





List of Stakeholders Interviewed

S. No.	Name of Organization/ Person
1.	Members of Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Cooperative Society
2.	Forest and Environment Department
3.	Chief of Hima Malai Sohmat
4.	Meghalaya Biodiversity Board
5.	Tourism Department
6.	Conservation Initiative
7.	Community and Rural Development
8.	Phudrangshriew Eco and Adventure Development Society



Pictures of Hima Malai Sohmat



Mawrapat Village



Office of the village Dorbar of Mawrapad



Road leading to Mawkasain Village



Mawsawa Village



Malai Sohmat Multipurose Co-operative Society Guest House under Construction



Phlangwanbroi



Campsite at Hima Malai Sohmat



View point of Hima Malai Sohmat. Tourists have to trek for 30 mins to reach this view point



Trekking route to riat dhoi from the Malai Sohmat Tourism and Multipurpose Co-operative Society Guest house



The traditional attire of the local communities of Hima Malai Sohmat



The First Bird Festival conducted in Hima Malai Sohmat



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