



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MANIPUR

Ateeque Ahmad and *Shabina Hussain

Department of Geography, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th March, 2015
Received in revised form
16th April, 2015
Accepted 09th May, 2015
Published online 30th June, 2015

Key words:

Tourism industry, tourists,
Socio-economic development,
Infrastructures

ABSTRACT

Tourism is emerged as a large service-sector industry in the modern world which has become a global instrument of economic, cultural and social development. The country India, which have plenty of natural beauty and resources like cultural heritage, archaeological remains, historical ruins, bio-diversity, heritage site etc. enough scope for the tourism promotions. Manipur, "the Land of Jewels", is one of the smallest and easternmost states in India having a geographical area 22,327 sq.km with salubrious climate, exotic greenery and rich flora besides its rich culture. Moreover the Wildlife sanctuaries and floating National parks of the state can attract the tourists all over the world. The state has over 50 tourists' spots. It is the treasure house of various economic resources like natural scenic tourist spots, rich culture and ethnic heritage. Tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities in the state because Manipur is not only characterized by the blending of floras and faunas; it is also exceptionally rich in bio-diversity. Because of her natural assets, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos of hosts, tourism holds high potential in the state. This paper is mainly focussed on the problems and challenges of the state as well as the pitfalls in the tourism development in Manipur.

Copyright © 2015 Ateeque Ahmad and Shabina Hussain. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Ateeque Ahmad and Shabina Hussain, 2015. "Problems and prospects of the tourism industry in Manipur", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (6), 17583-17587.

INTRODUCTION

In the arena of globalization, tourism has acquired an important utmost position in the field of geographical research for bringing prosperity and sustainable of socio-economic development in the country, India. At a global level the phenomenon of tourism since 1950 has been remarkable in terms of growth, spread and diversification, its fast growth and spread not only result the globalization of people's movements as never before but also contributed in creating a vibrant industry and opportunities for millions of people. Tourism is the world's largest and fastest-growing industry (Das, 2013). Traveling and Tourism has been an integral part of Indian Culture and Tradition (Leena and Sapna, 2012). Tourism industry today is the most vibrant tertiary activity and a multibillion industry in India (Patel, 2012). Tourism is an ever expanding service industry with latent vast growth potential and has, therefore, become one of the crucial concerns of not only the country but also of international community as a whole. For many developing countries like India, tourism has become one of the major contributors to social and economic development but it is the prime source of foreign exchange revenue in other

developed countries (Nayak and Mishra, 2013). According to the Annual Report 2011-12, the growth rate of 8.9% in tourist arrivals in India was almost double the growth of 4.4% in tourist arrivals worldwide in 2011. The tourism sector in India, therefore, has fared quite well vis-à-vis the world. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism in India during 2011 were \$16.56 billion as compared to \$ 14.19 billion in 2010, showing a growth of 16.7% (Annual Report, 2011-12). Tourism plays a key role in socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs, enterprises, and revenue earnings in India; and the Planning Commission has identified tourism as the second largest sector in the country in providing employment opportunities for low-skilled workers.

In the country, Manipur is well-blessed state by Nature and it is considered to be one of the richest bio-geographic areas in the world. Because of the God gifted beauties of the state many great scholars gave different names of the state "Manipur". Indian first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the Manipur as "The Land of Jewels" in the extreme north-eastern border of India (Arun's G.K., 2011). Manipur is also named as "A Little Paradise on Earth and Switzerland of India" by Lord Irwin and certain Japanese soldiers had known the name of the state as "A Flower on Lofty Heights" (Sangai Express Newspaper, 18/03/2011). Manipur has rich cultural

*Corresponding author: Shabina Hussain

Department of Geography, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P, India

and ethnic diversities that can easily make it a tourist destination.

Objectives

The objective of the present paper is:

- To identify the potential areas for the development of tourism.
- To assess and examine the problems and challenges of the development of the state through tourism industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is based on secondary data collection which was obtained from the published literature, legal documents, official statistics, reports, articles, publications and other documents, reports of self-government bodies and organizations websites. The findings were discussed and analysed through the published literature and portrait in the form of maps and graphs.

North – East India

North East India comprises seven states: Assam; Manipur; Meghalaya; Mizoram; Nagaland; Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh, which is strategically important for its international borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar. These states are collectively known as the “Seven Sisters” due to their unity in diversity. Hundreds of dialects are spoken in these regions. Seven Sisters has a rich unique cultural and ethnic heritage that can easily make it a tourist-spot.

Tourism has the greatest potential for generating income and employment opportunities in North-East Indian states because NE India is not only characterized by the blending of flora and fauna it is also exceptionally rich in bio-diversity. The mighty Himalayas, Brahmaputra river, one-horned rhinos, rain-fed forests, pristine environment, wildlife sanctuaries, Bihu dance and many more embodiments of the region are just manifestations of this richness that attract the tourists from all over the world. Further, tea tourism and golf tourism of NE India also attracts the tourists. The region has immense potential for ecotourism and sustainable development.

Profile of the study area: Manipur

Manipur, the Land of Jewels, is one of the states in North-eastern India having a geographical area of 22,327sq.kms which constitutes 0.7percent of the total land surface of India; Imphal city is the capital of the state. 90percent of the total geographical area of the state i.e.20, 089sq.kms is covered by nine hill ranges, the remaining area is a small and beautiful oval shaped valley at the centre covering only 2,238sq.kms and accounting for only one-tenth of the total area of the state. Geographically, it falls into the Southeast Asia region. It is an isolated state stretching between 92°58' E to 94°45' E longitudes and 23°50' N to 25°42' N latitudes. According to 2011 census, Manipur has a total population of 2,855,794 comprising 1,438,586 males and 1,417,208 females (0.21percent of the total population of India). Of these, 58.9% of people live in the

valley region and the remaining 41.1% live in the hilly region. Most of the population (2,021,640 people) live in rural areas and 8, 34,154 live in urban areas. The state has immense scope for the promotion of tourism with moderate climate making it a tourists' heaven. Its rich culture extends into many areas e.g. martial arts, dance, theatre and sculpture.

Tourist attractions in Manipur

Manipur is one of the loveliest spots with her charming physical features, tradition and history. It is encircled by nine hill ranges with a small central valley. Manipur scores low in terms of security and infrastructure but has the potential to show a turnaround if proper efforts are put in this regard. In fact both the hill ranges and valley region of Manipur are the abode of Nature's Gift. The major hill ranges of Manipur have a great power of tourist's attraction with consisting of various scenic beauty of the region like blue-green mountains of high elevation viz. Tenipu (2,994m), Siroi Hill (2568m), Koubru (2561.54m); waterfalls viz. Khayang waterfall and numerous Barak waterfalls, etc. Good and mild climate of the region plays a vital factor for the fulfilment of tourist's visits. Overall the climate of these ranges is salubrious and mild ranging tropical to temperate due to its elevation.

Like the hilly region, the central valley also occupied by a lots of scenic beauty with various species of floras and faunas. The region of great potentiality of tourism with bad and dull climatic activity always discourage to tourists inflow. Then the sub-tropical monsoon climate of the valley offers made it a tourist's heaven. In the part of valley region, there are various small blue and green hill ranges and various small waterfalls viz. Nongmaijing hill, Red Hill, Twin waterfall of Nambol, Artificial waterfall of Singda dam, etc. The World's unique floating Loktak Lake and Sendra islands and KeibulLamjao National Park plays a major role for the fulfilment of visitors. In spite of these potentialities in Manipur, the handlooms and handicrafts items are sought after souvenirs for tourists. It is an indispensable aspect of the socio-economic life. There is a saying that every woman of Manipur is a born weaver.

The more than 33 different communities in the State have imprinted upon their handloom products, exquisite designs peculiar to their communities. Manipur pottery is crafted without a potter's wheel. It is an enthralling experience to witness the potters of Andro, Thongjao and Nungbi deftly moulding an unbelievable range of earthenware. Beautiful pieces of art made of cane and bamboo form an important part of handicrafts. Tourists would like to take home a lifan, phak (weed mat), phiruk, Manipuri Dolls and a host of other beautiful carvings from various rare and exotic varieties of timber. To the Manipuris, festivals are the symbols of their culture, social, ethnic and religious aspirations.

DISCUSSION

At present, Manipur has around 50 tourist spots with various historical, cultural, archaeological sites and Gifts of Nature. From the findings the capital of the state, Imphal city holds high potential for tourism as shown in the table 1.

Table 1. District-wise name of Tourist place of Manipur for the year 2011-12

Sl. No.	District	Number of Tourist place	Name of Tourists place
1	Imphal West	8	Manipur State Museum, Saheed Minar, Manipur Zoological Garden, Khonghampat Orchidarium, Langthabal Old Palace, Ima Market, RKCS Art Gallery, Nupilal Complex
2	Imphal East	12	Shri Govindajee Temple, Kangla Fort, Ramjee Prabhu Temple, Hanuman Thakur Temple, Dewlahland War Cemetery, Hatta War Cemetery, KhumanLampak Sports Complex, Minuthong MMTA, Keirao MAASI, Kaina, Jiribam, Mutua Museum
3	Bishnupur	8	Vishnu Temple, Ningthoukhong Loktak Project, Loktak lake and Sendra islands, Phubala, Keibull amjao National Park, Moirang INA Memorial Complex, Loukoipat, Red Hill
4	Thoubal	4	Khongjom War Memorial, Thongam MondumMahadev, Waithou lake, Serou
5	Senapati	4	Mao, TadubiMakhel Cave, SaduChiru(Leimaram)
6	Tamenglong	3	Waterfalls, Willong Megalith Zailad lake, Tharon Cave, Barak waterfalls
7	Churachandpur	6	New Churachandpur, Tonglon Cave, Cheklaphai, Behiang, Kaiham Hill Range, Tipaimukh
8	Chandel	2	Moreh, Tengnoupal
9	Ukhrul	3	Khangkhui Cave, Shiroy Hill, Nungbi

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Manipur

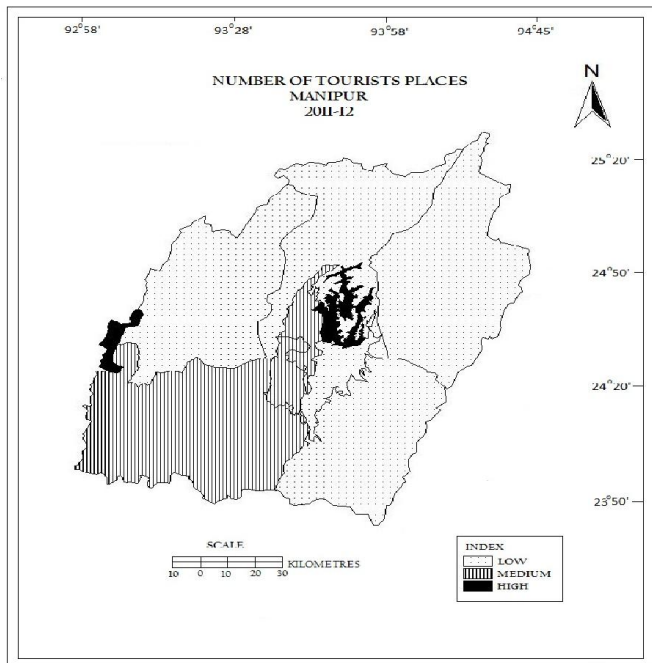


Fig. 1. Number of Tourists Places in Manipur

In the Figure 1, Imphal-East district has highest potential for tourism amongst the other districts of Manipur. Mostly the

hilly districts like Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul, and Chandel districts and Thoubal district are having less potential for tourism. On the other hand, Imphal-West, Bishnupur and Churachandpur are grouped under the medium potentiality for tourist spots. Table 2 shows the number of tourist's arrivals in Manipur with increasing number of tourist's arrivals both domestic and foreign in 2011-12 as compare to the previous years. But the trend of tourist arrivals in the state is fluctuating due to mainly of the political instability and then disturbs to travel by strikes, bandhs and blockades which have been shown in Figure 2. Then the trend of this tourist inflow in the state is very slow one. Table 3 reveals that the pattern of both domestic and foreign tourists visits in every districts of Manipur. With having the potentiality of tourism development Bishnupur and Thoubal districts have no records of tourist's visits (overnight visitors). This is due to mainly of the inadequate facilities of accommodation and other tourism infrastructures.

Table 2. Pattern of Tourist arrivals in Manipur

Years	No. of foreign tourists	No. of domestic tourists	Total No. of tourists
2006-07	263	120572	120835
2007-08	460	101000	101460
2008-09	271	115300	115571
2009-10	405	127524	127929
2010-11	431	116652	117083
2011-12	602	133224	133826

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Manipur

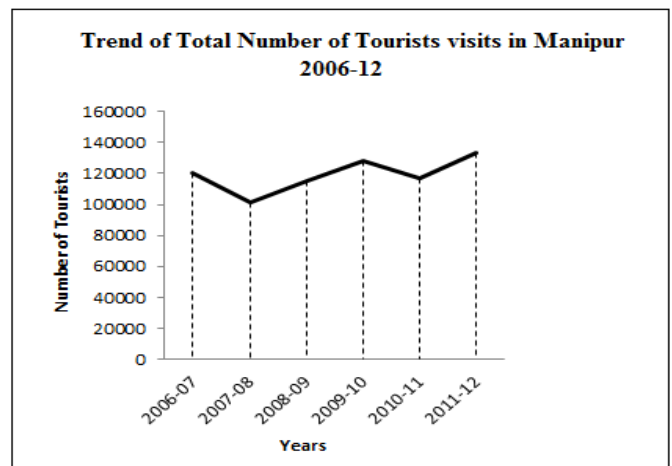


Fig. 2. Pattern of total number of Tourists visits in Manipur

Table 3. District-wise patterns of Tourist arrivals in Manipur for the year 2011-12

Sl.No.	District	No. of Domestic Tourist	No. of Foreign Tourist	Total No. of Tourist
1	Imphal West	92398	569	92967
2	Imphal East	16804	33	16837
3	Bishnupur	-	-	-
4	Thoubal	-	-	-
5	Senapati	1181	-	1181
6	Tamenglong	2697	-	2697
7	Churachandpur	5372	-	5372
8	Chandel	8653	-	8653
9	Ukhrul	6119	-	6119
Total		133224	602	133826

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Manipur

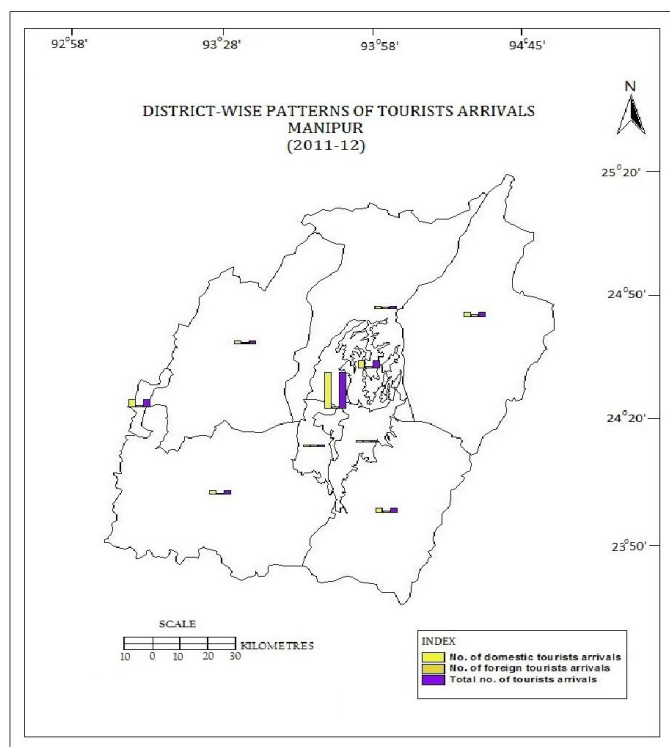


Fig. 3. District-wise patterns of tourist arrivals in Manipur (2011-12)

But, both the number of foreign tourists and domestic tourists attracts more in the city due to its better connectivity and communication with other states which is mainly of business and religious perspective as shown in the Figure 3. Besides the Imphal city tourists are being to discourage to travel the other region of the state because of lack of infrastructures, political instability and various problems as to be discussed below in details.

Constraints of tourism development in Manipur

Despite all its potentialities, the tourism industry in Manipur is not able to develop to the desired extent because of many associated problems. Lack of co-ordination among private companies and the State government involved in tourism is also a major problem. As such infrastructure is inadequate for large scale tourism. The state has neither railways nor navigable waterways and the transport system is synonymous with road communication and airways connection. Highways/Roads are regarded as arteries and veins of a state which are essential for its overall growth. The main arteries of communication for the state are 325kms long National Highway No.39 and 225kms long National Highway No.53 which connects the Imphal city with Dimapur (Nagaland) and Silchar (Assam) via Jiribam respectively. There have been a lot of hindrances to travel along these routes for the lack of political stability and of the rugged topography of the region. Kidnapping and ransoms have become a norm in these routes during the night time. Due to its poor communication facility and insurgency problems tourists are being discouraged to travel. In fact tourist spots are not properly developed yet. Infrastructure at tourist sites in terms of accommodation, transport, communication, banking facilities including credit card use, drinking water, sanitation facilities is either

lacking or not developed or sometimes being deplorable. Over and above of all these, tourists do not receive any helpful or welcoming attitude from the local public. They are not familiar with Hindi language because of which tourists face problem while communicating with the local people. Above all findings, the main constraints that are being discouraged the tourist's arrivals and development of tourism industry in the state can be identified as:

- Lack of infrastructure
- Communication bottlenecks
- Geographical isolation
- Political instability and insurgency
- Lack of fund
- Indifferent attitude of Central and State Government
- Lack of a proper tourism development policy of the government
- Lack of people's co-operation and consciousness

SWOT analysis of Manipur tourism

A SWOT analysis provides gross understanding of the tourism, its Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats.

Strengths

- Unique floating Loktak Lake and Keibul Lamjao National Park.
- Offers a cultural treat through the Manipuri dance forms and an adventure treat through avenues for sports.

Weaknesses

- Security and internal conflicts – both in terms of perception and reality.
- Limited tourism infrastructure facilities like transport, accommodation, market, etc. particularly in terms of quality, experience and site services.
- Many projects are delayed in implementation and done only on the official paper causing development lags.

Opportunities

- Presence of border town like Moreh and the international boundary with Myanmar has been looked as an opportunity to develop border markets.
- Opening up of Railway line up to Imphal connecting through all the states and country.

Threats

- Instability and perception of lack of security in the region with potential to affect tourism movement.
- The continuous fear of unstable environment can make the tourism investment climate unattractive.

Suggestions

In spite of many hindrances as in the discussion, Manipur has a bright prospect of the economic development through tourism industry. This process would be a slow one but ultimately it

will bring good results. When the adequate infrastructure will flow in, when people will get jobs, insurgency will be gradually lost and political-economic and social stability will usher in. Therefore some immediate and long term measures should be adopted as the following:

- A strong political will is of excessive need for the restoration of peace and political stability in the area. Government should need to tie with various insurgent groups working in Manipur within the framework of Indian constitution in a democratic manner.
- Government should make huge investments to break the geographical isolation and to remove the communication bottlenecks from the state.
- Plan efforts should be made by the Government to build the required tourism infrastructures such as accommodation, markets, banking facilities, etc.
- Planned, sustained and well-thought long term efforts of the Government are needed to improve the socio-economic and political set up of Manipur.
- Proper tourism development policy is the need of the hour.
- Above all, people's awareness to develop their own area through the development of tourism-industry is a great need of the hour.

Conclusions

There is no denying the possibility that tourism can blossom as a most prosperous smokeless and silent industry in the 21st century because it will never be a threat to ecology. The development of the tourism industry also contributes to changes in the quality of life, social structure and social organization of local residents. As tourism supports the creation of community facilities and services that otherwise might not have been developed, it can bring higher living standards to a destination. Manipur have unlimited potential of tourism which could attract tourists from all over the world but it could not develop due to the lots of constraints in the tourism development. Thus from the above findings; the development of tourism industry in Manipur directly depends upon the formulation of a proper tourism development policy and people's co-operation and consciousness. As compare to the previous years, the number of foreign and domestic tourist arrivals is relatively increased in the state in 2011-12. Government should more emphasize to increase the number of hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, etc. and try to supply proper and good electricity, drinking water and sanitation for the fulfilment of tourist's demands. In this paper we tried to find out the prospects of tourism development to fulfilling the inadequate facilities for tourism infrastructures. In fact, the development of tourism leads a well-developed society.

REFERENCES

- Mehtani, S. and Sinha, A. 2010. *Tourism Geography*, Commonwealth Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi; ISBN 978-81-311-0213-8, pp.1-39
- Chauhan, R. 2009. *Tourism- Concept and Practice*, Vista International Publishing House, Delhi; ISBN 978-81-908605-2-9, pp.1-30
- Nayak, P. and Mishra, S.K. 2013. Problems and Prospects of Promoting Tourism in Meghalaya, National Seminar on 'Promotion of International Tourism Circuits in North East India: Prospects, Priorities and Strategic Options' organized by the Department of Business Administration, Assam University, Silchar, India during 8-9 March
- Das, D. 2013. Tourism Industry in North-East Indian States: Prospects and Problems, *Global Research Methodology Journal*, Vol-II, 7th issue, Nov-Dec-Jan www.grmglaranya.com ISSN 2249- 300X; pp.1-6
- Uma, H.R. and Bettanaika, B. 2014. Challenges and Prospects of Tourism Industry in India, *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, Impact Factor 1.393, ISSN: 2320-5083, Volume 2, Issue 2, March
- Kalita, P. 2012. Tourism In Jorhat District: Problems and Prospects, *International Journal for Basic Sciences and Social Sciences (IJBS)* ISSN: 2319-2968 Vol.1, Issue 2, pp. 36-39, www.rfbss.org
- Madhusmita, M. and Prabina, K.P. 2013. Emergence of Tourism in the Sustainable Growth of India: An Empirical Analysis, VOLUME NO.1, ISSUE NO.8 ISSN 2277-1166; pp. 161-167
- Raina, A.K. and Jain, N. 2004. *Dynamics of Tourism: Concepts, Philosophy and Strategies*, Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, ISBN 81-7391-620-9, pp. 3-4
- Bookman, M.Z. 2008. *Tourists, Migrants and Refugees: Population Movements in Third World Development*; Lynne Rienner Publishers; Vinod Vasishta for Viva Books Private Ltd; ISBN- 10:81-309-0844-1; ISBN-13:978-81-309-0844-1
- Candela, G. and Figini, P. 2012. *The Economics of Tourism Destinations*, Springer Texts in Business and Economics; DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-20874-4_2; Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg
- Singh, E. 2003. *Tourism Development in Manipur*; Unpublished Thesis; Department of Geography, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P- 200202
- Kakkar, L. and Sapna, 2012. Impact of Tourism on Indian Economy; *International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services and Management Research*; Vol. No. 4; ISSN 22773622; pp.70-75; online available at indianjournals.com
- Patel, R. 2012. India's Tourism Industry – Progress and Emerging Issues; *Arth Praband: A Journal Of Economics and Management (APJEM)*; Vol. 1, Issue 5, August, ISSN 2278-0629, pp. 1-10
- Arun's Manipur General Knowledge; G.M. Publications, Imphal-2011
- The Sangai Express – Manipuri's Largest Circulated Newspaper in Manipuri and English; 18th March, 2011, Friday

Websites visited

<http://censusindia.gov.in/>
<http://www.indiaonlinepages.com/>
www.ibef.org

Reports

- Annual Report 2011-12; Ministry of Tourism: Govt. of India
- Manipur Tourism Policy 2014
- Statistical Year Book Manipur 2013, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Manipur, Imphal
- Economic Survey Manipur 2012-13, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Manipur, Imphal