



TREKKING TOURISM POTENTIALITY IN ZIRO VALLEY OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh in India is bountiful in the prospects of the tourism as the land is endowed with rich natural and cultural landscape, though not properly explored so far. From the point of view of attractions, the area can prove to be a desired destination for tourists both domestic and foreign origin to carry forward sightseeing, trekking, angling, photography, ornithology study, etc.

The paper focuses on the identification of potential trekking routes in the Ziro Valley of Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh. The potential trek was identified with the help of locals, officials, NGO, trek identification with the help of GPS. The four major trek routes were identified namely: Trekking in Sibe to Pamu Yalang Trek; Hakhe Tari Trek; Dusu Kattu Trek & Talley Valley Trek. It was reviewed the overall physical features and attraction of trekking routes of the Valley, which may become the famous trekking routes among the other trekking routes in the world for nature lovers and adventure seekers.

Keywords: *Trekking, Talle Valley, Heritage Trek, Tourism Potentiality.*

Introduction

Trekking is a form of adventure tourism practiced in difficult terrain and climate, requiring specialized equipment, clothing and food, implying connotations of risk, jeopardy, and wilderness (Weber, 2001).

Himalayan ranges, with their peculiar plateaus, hillocks, Valleys and

magnificent attractiveness, are the most popular destinations for eco-tourists and mountain tourists, which can be a key factor in the focal concern for both the overall development in standard of living of the people through a sustainable development.

The Ziro Valley is situated at an altitude of about 1572 m above the sea level, ringed by high hills. The Valley is confined to approximately an area of about 32 sq. km.

lying between the Valley of Kamla and Kurung on the north and Panyor on the south. The plain of the Ziro Valley is drained by a small River Kale. It flows to the south for some 40 km before it meets the Panyor River near Yazali. The topographic character provides scenic constituents as well as a sound basis for nature and land/water based adventure recreational activities. The Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh is blessed with immense potential in the field of tourism by virtue of its richness in biodiversity, geographical landscape and typical socio-cultural and economic setup. The wonderful elements of a colourful mosaic of tribal cultures, wildlife and scenic beauty of the natural landscape of this Valley can attract tourists from within and outside the country. The present work intended to draw its focus on the fact that the trekking activity can play a great role in bringing up the tourism industry of the Valley in particular and the state in general. Apart from conserving local cultural heritage and traditional know-how, trekking activity in tourism may act as a medium of bringing up the economic pursuits and social changes and help in exposing the state and the Valley by rest of the world. The study finds its stand based on the facts and evidence gathered through field experiences. It is hoped that the work may help in understanding the prospects and possibilities of trekking activity in the Valley.

Objectives

Objectives of the study can be highlighted as:

- To find out the potential trekking routes of the Ziro Valley.

- To make out the constraints and its possible curative steps.

Study Area

The study area, Ziro Valley is situated in the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh which is an integral part of eastern Himalaya also known as Arunachal Himalaya. It is located in between 27°17'N to 27°55'N latitudes and 93°34'E to 94°22'E of longitudes. Nature has gifted heartland of the district in the form of the magnificent Valley, where district headquarter Ziro, the homeland of Apatani is located. The Ziro Valley is situated at an altitude of about 1564 m above the sea level, ringed by high hills. The Valley is confined to approximately an area of about 32 sq. km. lying between the Valley of Kamla and Kurung on the north and Panyor on the south. The plain of the Apatani Valley is drained by a small River Kiile. It flows to the south for some 40 km before it meets the Panyor River near Yazali (Haimendrof, 1962). The topographic character provides scenic constituents.

Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. More specifically, it is based on primary data, collected by using structured and semi structured data by visiting the certain areas of trekking routes. It involves an attempt to consult and interact with the locals, officials, professionals and experts from the related fields. It also involves collection of information from secondary sources such as NGOs and Department of Tourism, Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh. And also

visiting the trek routes with the GPS to identify the trek and generation of potential trek route map with the help of GIS and Remote Sensing.

Trekking Tourism in Ziro Valley

In connection to the countries diverse geographical features, adventure and trekking tourism were seen as viable strategies for rural development (Zurick, 1992). Trekking tourism in Nepal is one of the foremost examples of ecotourism operations (Gurung & DeCoursey, 1994). Today, trekking tourism has becoming one of the important activities of world tourism industry.

Also tourism has been possible in Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh because of its unique and rich natural resources. The Valley is having potentiality to offer all sorts of trekking possibilities from easy short soft treks to difficult hard long treks, where trekkers get great opportunities to see ethnic and natural diversity on the trek.

Major potential trekking routes of Ziro Valley

After having an interaction with the stakeholders of tourism, few potential trek routes were identified. And the positivity of these routes are that, the starting and ending point of trekking routes are connected with road ways. Almost all the starting and ending points of the trekking routes are started and ended in the different villages of the Valley. Introducing these trekking routes can pay back to the livelihood of the local people and to the nature. The potential trek routes identified and drawn along with a map depicting the possible trekking routes in

the Ziro Valley area (**Fig. 1**). Afterward the routes are studied and described accordingly. Following are some important trekking routes in the Valley.

Trekking in Sibe to Pamu Yalang Trek

The trek route Pamu Yalang starts from a village *Sibe*. It can be considered as a soft trek route, which is also a heritage route, as this route was once used by the locals to collect forest resources. Pamu Yalang is a rock and is considered sacred by local people. It is located 1828 m above the sea level at Dolo Mando hill from where one can have a birds-eye view of Ziro Valley. *Pamu Yalang* (Hawk Stone) is believed to have named when the rock was frequented by a hawk in early days. After ascending *Dolo Mando* hill for two and half hours through thick bushes and jungle one can see the beauty of the surrounding Valley. Several feet higher up is the *Mando Katu*, which is the highest point (1864 m) offer a wider view of the Valley can be seen. The place is also suitable for paragliding as it has large stretches of open and barren land. Initiating this trekking can identify more hotspots to boost eco-tourism. On the way to *Mando Katu* another spot is there on the *Dip Putu* hill. Here it passes through aged pine trees called *Dip Piisa*. This pine tree is also considered sacred by local people. Another attractive spot of the trek is *Tado Lambia*, a lake on the hilltop. Total length of the trek is 7 km. It starts from *Sibe* village and end at the *Hija* village and takes 4 to 5 hours to complete the trekking. As it is a heritage route, during journey tourist can enjoy some rural culture with mythological imprints as well as the diversity of vegetation.

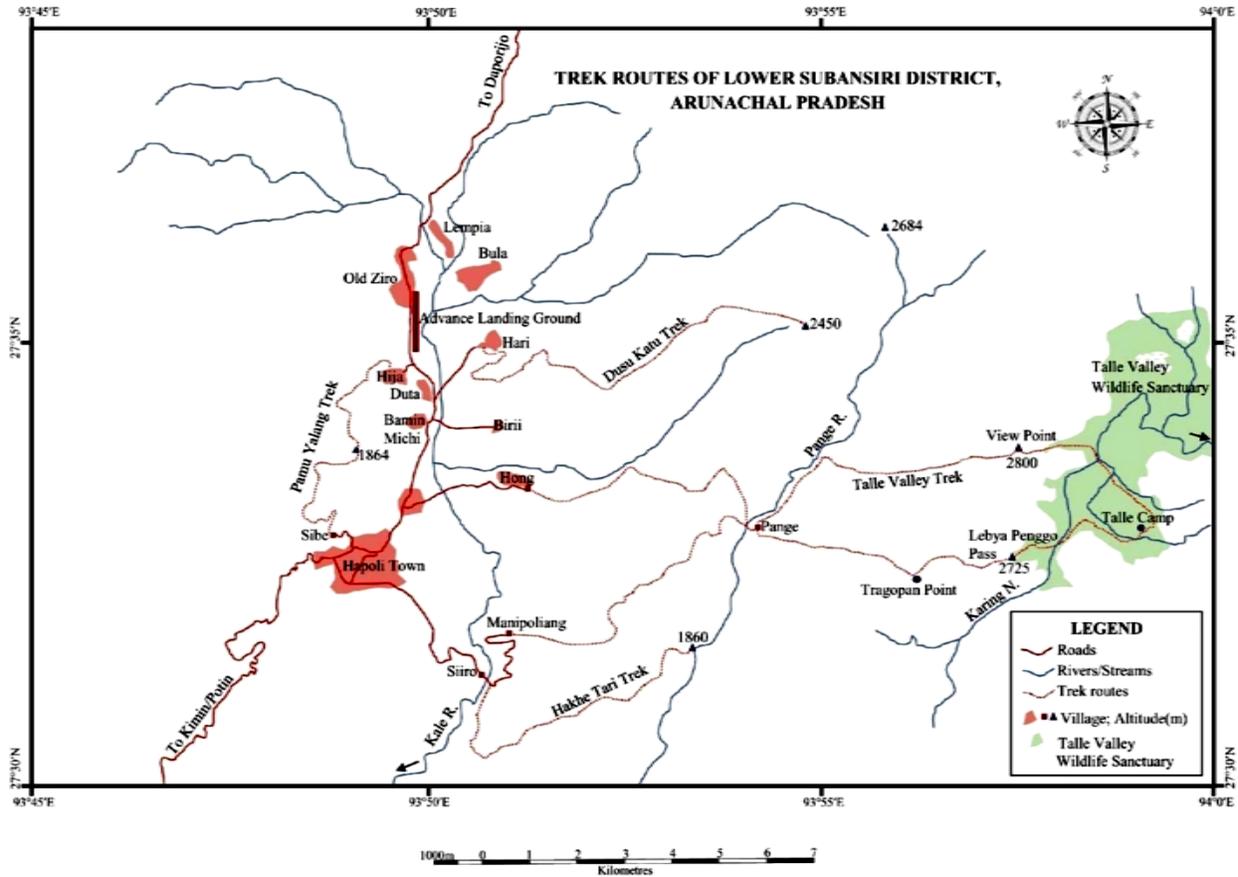


Figure 1: Potential trek routes of Ziro Valley

Hakhe-tari Trek

This trek starts from *Siiro* village, it is also considered as one of the soft routes. It takes 3 to 4 hours to reach Hakhe-tari, which is the highest spot with an altitude of 1860 m. At this point, a beautiful waterfall is flowing towards the River Pange, which can be a spot for River trekking. This form is also known as rafting, practiced in raging Rivers, in an attractive natural environment. Particular attention is paid to scenery an spectacular attractions in the vicinity such as waterfalls, cascades, interesting rock formations. Rafting is practiced usually on pontoons or rafts across wide Rivers, pouring over a area. Good examples are the

Siberian Rivers such as Lena, Yenisei, Ob and Irtysh. River trekking I usually short, we talk about pontoon, sometimes risky rafting. For tourist who turn into trekkers it is sufficient just hour or even a few minutes to taste the incredible experience in surf and face the element (Pawel & Diana, 2014). On the way to Hakhe Tari trek, colorful orchids and other flowers, lush green landscape, diversity of butterflies and birds make the journey beautiful that the tourist will never forget. People of every age-group can enjoy this trekking route as it is thoroughly enjoyable and easy. Every year in the month of September, when the migratory birds are

migrating to the Valley and the butterflies can also be seen available.

Dusu-kattu Trek

It is mostly referred to as moderate trek route. It starts from the *Hari* village and total length of the route is 9.4 km, and the journey takes 10 to 11 hours. It is an ideal trek, best suited for those who are interested to explore the beautiful nature of Himalaya. Spring experience brilliant blossoms both at lower and higher altitude, and the slopes covered with dense vegetation and colorful flowers. Dusu-kattu is the highest point with an altitude of 2450 m above the sea level, which is the last point of the trek and from where the wider view of the Valley can be seen.

Talle Valley Trek

The Talle Valley wildlife sanctuary is the most attractive natural destination of the study area. This place provides exciting trek route to the visitors. Some parts of the trek are passing through the Talle Valley wildlife sanctuary, which is the main attraction for the tourists. This trekking route may be referred as moderate trek, starts from *Manipolyang* and end in the *Hong* village, which takes four days to complete the journey. The total length of the route is 32 km. After 3 hours of a steady climb from *Manipolyang* there lies the Taria tabe khoke pass, then the trail follows through downhill amidst open forest and pastures. After that, it follows through uphill to the Pange camp, where tourists can enjoy the Pange River and the breathtaking the beauty of nature. After halting one night in the camp next day the trail leads to the Talle

Valley camp, which is inside the Talle Valley wildlife sanctuary. On the way, the trek allows the visitors to wander amidst the virgin forest, conifers, indigenous bamboo and grasslands, rare species of butterflies and birds, and some other wildlife forms. Destinations and tour operators exploits indigenous, iconic, and charismatic species in their marketing and product development. For example, in India's 10 most prominent tiger reserves, findings suggest an average annual visitor growth rate of 15% between the years 2002 and 2008; demand mostly driven by domestic tourism and India's increasing middle class (Karanth & DeFries, 2011). Talle Valley is surrounded by snow clad mountain and hills which makes the Valley more beautiful and attractive, which is the home of varieties of flora and fauna. The third day of the journey is to the Pange camp again but through another way, which takes 3 to 4 hours. On the way to the pange camp after two hours of walking it reached Labya penggo pass situated at the 2725 m. The trail crossed through dense jungle reached Tragopan, one of the highest points of the place, from where can see the wider view of the Talle Valley wildlife sanctuary. From the Tragopan point, it takes 2 hours to reach Pange camp to take rest for a night. Last day of the journey from Pange to *Hong* village takes 3 to 4 hours, on the way a tourist can enjoy the different species of wildflowers, birds, and butterflies. Wildlife tourism, particularly when conducted in small groups with a wildlife guide, can be instrumental in reawakening our connection and love of nature. A unique combination of interpretation and embodied tourist experiences can elicit feelings of

wonderment, awe, and engagement; thereby facilitating lasting sensory impressions, emotional affinities, new environmental awareness and interest, and treasured memories; all of which potentially frame further wildlife experiences at home and away (Curtin, 2009).

The Ziro Valley of Arunachal Pradesh is bountiful in the prospects of the tourism as the land is endowed with rich natural and cultural landscape, though not properly explored so far. From the point of view of attractions, the area can prove to be a desired destination for tourists both domestic and foreign origin to carry forward sightseeing, trekking, angling, photography, ornithology study, etc. Lack of information base, travel restrictions, viz. PAP, Inner Line Permit (ILP) and lack of infrastructure facilities and other tourism services make this wonderful land less accessible to the tourists till date. Advancements in technology had particularly high effects onto the way the tourism and hospitality industry operate (Kapiki, 2012; Scaglione *et al.*, 2013). Road connectivity scenario should be developed as a priority in the area. Apart from it, the landing strip at Ziro, used for only military purpose can also partially opened for civilian use, during the winter season, especially meeting the need of the foreign tourist segment.

Travel formalities for the tourists should be relaxed. The local culture and traditions should preserve for future generation as well as for tourism development, and tourism can be used as a tool to add value to traditional sustainable cultural practices.

Conclusion

Ziro Valley is known for its unique landscape, outstanding natural beauty and climate and culture practiced by the Apatani tribe. The Valley may become the ultimate destination for mountaineers and trekkers from all over the world. Trekking tourism is one of the top parts of tourism industry and the fastest growing economic sector in terms of foreign exchange earnings and job creation.

In this paper, all the physical features and attractions of trekking routes has been discussed. However, the development of trekking activity is found slower whereas the tourism has been started in the place from last few decades. Behind this fact poverty, lack of transportation, accommodation and public awareness are the main problem of the area.

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