

Protection and Conservation policies with special reference to the Archaeological Sites in Seven sister States of North Eastern India

Dr B. Lavanya

Associate Professor, Department of History,
University College of Arts and Social Sciences
Osmania University
Hyderabad
Email: lavanyabenna@rediffmail.com

Abstract

History has grown in importance in recent years, attributed to the increasing importance of heritage and cultural tourism, which has both national and international appeal. While there is a need to maintain and conserve our own rich historical and cultural legacy, it is equally critical to showcase our history to the present through adequate protection and conservation of historical sites across India. Since independence, there has been considerable work in this approach with relation to more popular and famous places in north and south India. At the same time, there exist regional inequalities in the preservation, conservation, and popularization of our heritage, with some places receiving attention while others in some regions remain unnoticed. This paper on 'Protection and Conservation Policies of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Christian Sites with Special Reference to is an attempt to capture the importance of the rich historical and cultural heritage of the seven sister states of North Eastern India, which witnessed diverse historical development and processes right from prehistoric times to modern times. There has never been a comprehensive effort to integrate many of the most important historical sites in all seven states under one study to find their current status, which has significant implications for history, archaeology, tourism and culture and folklore studies. North-eastern states have an increasing advantage over the rest of the country when it comes to preserving and promoting history and culture, among other things.

Physically and culturally, these seven states, collectively known as the "Seven Sisters," are almost cut off from the rest of the country. It has also contributed to a widening gap between the inhabitants of the Northeast and those in other regions of the country because of their isolation. The cultures of these states are mostly unknown to the majority of Indians. This region is abundant in natural beauty, unique culture, and soothing beauty. According to current statistics, none of these states are in the top ten most visited tourist destinations in India. They have enormous potential to increase the money generated by Indian tourism. These states are rich in historical and archaeological legacy, dating back to the Prehistoric civilizations that mark the Kashi and Garo Hills of north-eastern India. There is an urgent need to emphasize diverse ancient sites, with a particular emphasis on Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Christian site protection and conservation programmes. As a result, the purpose of this paper is to fill gaps in research on these topics.

Keywords: Cultural, Heritage, History, Research, Seven States, Tourism

1. Introduction

With the growing significance of heritage and cultural tourism, which has both national and international appeal, history has become increasingly significant in recent years. While it is essential to preserve and conserve our own rich historical and cultural inheritance, it is also necessary to display our history to the present by appropriately preserving and

restoring historical places across India. North East India refers to itself as a "paradise unexplored." With a rich heritage, it is a treat for tourists and a source of pride for the locals. North East India has its unique vernacular architecture that has evolved through time and is an important component of its cultural heritage. Traditional structures are time proven, sustainable, and sensitive to microclimatic

conditions and natural disasters, like earthquakes, which the North East area is susceptible to [1].

The Seven Sisters are Arunachal Pradesh (Itanagar), Nagaland (Kohima), Tripura (Agartala), Assam (Dispur), Manipur (Imphal), Meghalaya (Shillong), and Mizoram (Aizawl). They have some stunning scenery, unusual flora and fauna, and a diverse culture. Jyoti Prasad Saikia, a journalist from Tripura and an Assamese public servant, coined the phrase (the Land of the Seven Sisters) on a radio talk show in January 1972, to celebrate the inauguration of the seven states. Later, he released *The Land of Seven Sisters*, a book about the Seven Sister States. Geographically, these states are quite close. They represent India's most eastern region, which is ruled by the North Eastern Council. Their bond is similar to that of sisters in a close-knit family. As a result, they earned the title "Seven Sisters."

North East India is recognized worldwide for its historical sites, monuments, caves, inscriptions, coins, and rock shelters, among many other things. The monuments can be found scattered throughout the region's mountains and valleys. This study sheds some insight on North East India's history and culture.

The state government and the Archaeological Survey of India have conserved the majority of the monuments in good condition. Sculpture, palaces, temple, tombs of varied designs, coins, and epigraphic documents may be found across the area. The remains gave vital information about the people's rituals, traditions, and social and economic lives. The remains have been safeguarded. However, in North East India, excavation and exploration are still insufficient. The archaeological remnants of this location provide an almost uninvestigated and unexplored topic of research.

North East India's architecture is related to the socioeconomic structure, cultural identities, and a strong climatic reactivity. Many climate responsive design challenges, such as temperature control, enhancing natural ventilation or protecting the building from natural disasters like floods and earthquakes are discovered through the examination of residential layouts. Due to lack of damp proofing and non-stabilized soil, traditional

homes are susceptible to fires and termite infestations, as well as water seepages and washouts when it rains, which can lead to mould and mildew growth.

Sikkim, one of India's eight north-eastern states, is a culturally and geographically diverse region that gives a view of not only a "tiny India," but also Southeast Asia, all inside a 265,000-square-kilometer territory. Primarily of Mongoloid and Tibeto-Burman ancestry, the indigenous population has managed to hold on to its own culture, language, and way of life well into the twentieth century.

Because of the region's diverse terrain and ethnicities, as well as its abundant fauna and diverse vegetation, it has recently begun to draw both local and international tourists [2].

2. Methodology

The research is based on the examination of early manuscripts, literary sources, monuments, unpublished publications, and archival materials. In addition, additional resources, such as magazines and bulletins, offered by several researchers to the study of the history of North East India, were employed as useful sources.. The study makes use of both primary and secondary sources, including archival records and reports, as well as document analysis. A variety of research methodologies, mostly historical, have been employed, including formative, observational, open-ended, and qualitative approaches.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this article include a description of its historical background, the areas where it was discovered, its historical relevance, and its structural function. an assessment of the existing material and a study of reconstruction techniques and a discussion of the growth and development of art are both taken into account when considering conservation and protection laws by the State and Central government's effort at reconstruction; an examination of art and architecture's growth and development.

4. The History of the Seven Sisters of India

The history of India's Seven Sisters is enthralling and deeply ingrained. The initial residents may have been speakers of Southeast Asian Austroasiatic languages, followed by Chinese Tibeto-Burmese then, approximately

500 B.C., Indo-Aryans from the Gangetic Plains. The Seven Sister States, sometimes referred to as "Paradise unknown and unexplored," Sikkim is not geographically a part of the periphery northeast area. Sikkim is known as the "only brother of seven sisters states." Mizoram and Manipur are linked to the rest of India by the Barak Valley in Assam. Assam is the largest of the seven sister states of north-eastern India. Based on its strategic position, Arunachal Pradesh is India's Gateway State. They are home to some spectacular landscapes, exotic flora and animals, and a diversified culture. These states are blessed with lush woods and pleasant weather. They are well-known for tea production and export Orchids produced globally.

The three physiographic zones of the Northeast include the Eastern Himalaya, the Patkai and Brahmaputra river lowlands, and the Barak valley plains. With hot, humid summers, strong monsoon rains, and mild winter temperatures, Northeast India has a humid subtropical climate. As well as on India's west coast, this region is home to some of the sub-continent's surviving rainforests, which support a wide variety of plant and animal life. There are anticipated to be one-fifth of India's total potential resources in the region's petroleum and natural gas deposits. Archaeologists believe that early immigrants in Northeast India grew a variety of important plants due to the region's bio- and agricultural diversity.

The religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of India's Seven Sisters is reflected in their rich, diverse, and unique tribal customs and traditions. The boundaries of India's seven sisters are mostly international (Myanmar, Bangladesh, China and Bhutan). Tawang Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh is India's biggest. Manipur's Loktak Lake is India's biggest freshwater lake. Mawsynram claims to have the world's highest average rainfall. Mawlynnong, Meghalaya, is the cleanest village in Asia. India's oldest oil refinery is located in Digboi, Assam. The Ahom Dynasty, which ruled the Ahom kingdom for about 600 years, is India's largest uninterrupted dynasty. The Indian states that make up the North East area are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Mongoloid dominance, tribal culture, a

"Hot Spot for Biodiversity," and huge hydropower potential are just a few of the region's many unique features [3].

Certain special characteristics, such as the prevalence of the Mongoloid race, tribal culture, a "Hot Spot of Biodiversity," and hydroelectric potential are found in the North East. The Northeastern Indian boundaries, a cultural crossroads between the South, Southeast, and East Asian areas, represent a notable post-colonial exception to the country's past [4]. If India is a reflection of the globe, then the North-East is a microcosm of India. There are 653 tribal indigenous communities in India, including 213 indigenous groups in the North-East [5].

There are Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim north, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura to the south, Nagaland east, and Assam and Meghalaya west. The states of Mizoram and Tripura, which are located in the tropical zone, are distinguished not only for their geopolitical significance but also for the natural diversity, cultural richness, and historical significance of the region. The north, northeast and southeast of India are dominated by mountains and uplands, while the southwest and west are dominated by tablelands and low-lying floodplains. The region's colonial authorities were the first to report on archaeological findings, although they were restricted to surface sites only. Post-independence excavations in the region began to delve at some of the region's archaeological concerns. Early human dispersal methods and the Paleolithic research scenario are some of the concerns that need to be addressed in this regard. The region's significance as a probable hotspot for early plant domestication; and the archaeological evidence for early agriculture, notably rice, millet, and tuber crops. There has been little empirical investigation into the emergence of early urban centres and early state forms, the establishment of village settlements defined by ancestral sites, and the later historical eras despite an abundance of opportunities for historical archaeology [6].

Assam's ancient ruins may be found dispersed around the state. Most of them have been tampered with. These monuments were destroyed by both natural and man-made factors. The monuments that mark Assam's landscape

bring attention to the resourceful capability of ancient Assam and the region's varying degrees of splendour over the course of history [7].

Karbi-Anglong and the North Cachar Hills are home to a number of megalithic monuments, such as Kasomari and Jamugori in Karbi-Anglong, Tuivamittlang, Kobak, Boloson and Kartong in the North Cachar Hills [8].

In India's Neolithic cultural legacy, the Neolithic culture of Northeast India has a distinct character. Three significant excavations were carried out in Northeast India during the 1960s and 1970s, one in the North Cachar Hills (1961-1963) and two in the districts of Kamrup and Manipur (1972-1974). The Neolithic civilization in Northeast India was validated by these excavations. At Daojali Hading in Assamese North Cachar Hills, M.C Goswami and T.C Sharma conducted the first stratigraphic ground-level research in 1963. Aside from these excavated sites, there are several surface sites in various regions of Northeast India that have revealed a significant number of stone items and pottery [9].

Highland populations of farmers and hunter-gatherers in the Northeast had minimal contact with the lowlands during this time period [10].

The socio-ethnic makeup of the Northeast is extremely diverse, with more than 220 different languages spoken by a huge number of ethnic tribal groupings [11].

5. Problems

For many years, the Northeastern states and the rest of India have had a substantial divergence. The "Seven Sisters" are the names given to these seven states in India's northeast. The rest of India has mostly ignored the Seven Sisters states, not only geographically but also mentally. The majority of India is ignorant of the culture of these seven sisters and is utterly isolated from the rest of the country. Apart from the dance traditions, the north-eastern area of India has been a mystery to the rest of India, and the distance appears to be growing.

There has been an increasing imbalance between the Northeastern states and the rest of the country in a variety of areas, including the preservation and promotion of history and culture, throughout time. These states, informally known as the Seven Sisters, have

been virtually isolated from the rest of the country, not just geographically but also culturally. The Northeast's isolation from the rest of the country has contributed to a widening of the psychological block between the region's residents and those in the rest of the country. Most Indians have little idea what these states' cultures are like. This place is rich in natural beauty, diverse culture, and therapeutic beauty. According to current data, none of these states are among India's top ten most popular tourism destinations. However, unlike in other Indian states, archaeology did not flourish as an academic field in north-east India. Until now, no university in the region had a dedicated archaeology department.

They might have a huge impact on the Indian tourist industry. The ancient cultures that dotted the Kashi and Garo Hills in northeastern India's north-east have left a rich historical and archaeological record in these states. Archaeological sites, including Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Christian structures, need to be highlighted urgently, with a particular focus on protecting and preserving them. As a result, the goal of this project is to close the knowledge gaps that exist in this area.

Greenery, rich culture, and healing beauty are undervalued and undernourished in Seven Sisters. A look at the country's top 10 tourist sites reveals that none of India's seven sister states make it into this year's top 10. They might have a huge impact on the Indian tourist industry. In India, there is a rich history, a flourishing culture, and a vast array of wildlife. Every state has its own unique characteristics and specialties.

North eastern India has long felt isolated due to variations in appearance, culture, and the government's stance toward these regions. Its lively tradition and enriched ecosystem provide a fresh depth to the natural beauty of this diverse country. As a result, we must safeguard and protect this area of India. Academics have mostly ignored India's north-eastern area, despite the diversity of its socioeconomic and cultural qualities. There is indeed a lack of concern for women's issues too. As a result of differences in look, culture, and the government's attitude toward these regions, North Eastern India has long felt secluded. Its

rich cultural heritage and diversified environment provide a further dimension to the country's already impressive natural splendour. Because of this, we must conserve and preserve this region of India. Academics have mostly ignored India's north-eastern area, despite the diversity of its socioeconomic and cultural qualities. A lack of respect for women's issues persists today [12]. In addition to frontier and frontier land difficulties, it is necessary to get a thorough understanding of local and transnational challenges [13]. With regard to chronology and periodization, there was no consistent evolution of sophistication in Northeast India, and this is a significant argument. There has been a lot of work done, but the cultural chronology of many parts of the region is still incomplete. Lithic technology and microwear research in Northeast India have been overlooked and must be revisited. We can improve our understanding of the lithic artefact assemblage in the region by using microwear analysis. There is lack of funds for both horizontal excavations as well as post-excavation evaluations. The dearth of competent archaeologists in the area and the lack of sufficient academic training is another obstacle. One of the primary causes for the dearth of archaeology-related infrastructure is that Floods, riverbank erosion, and landslides are common occurrences in Northeast India. Earthquakes in northeastern India regularly causes problems for archaeologists conducting research in the region.. Prior to moving on to more intriguing topics, several academics have emphasized the significance of first establishing an accurate cultural and historical sequence [14].

6. Archeological Sites and Protection and Conservation policies

In addition to the well-known temples and pilgrimage sites found in the northern and southern parts of India, few people are aware that India's north-eastern area is home to an equally rich and diverse collection of religious structures. There are several pilgrimage sites in this land of the seven sisters, making it popular with people of all religious backgrounds.

6.1 Famous Hindu Sites

The Kamakhya Temple, perched atop Nilachal Hill in Guwahati, Assam, is one of India's oldest Shakti Pithas. Tantric worshippers

go here to pay their respects to the mother goddess Kamakhya at this revered shrine. The Kamakhya Devi Temple in Guwahati, Assam, perches atop the Nilanchal Hill and is one of the most visited Hindu shrines in the region. To Goddess Kamakhya, the Goddess Shakti who is revered as a tantric master, this temple is dedicated. Hindu pilgrims to the temple revere the Siddha Shaktipeeths, or sites where Goddess Sati's womb and vagina are claimed to have fallen after her execution by fire in India. The 'Bhuvaneswari Temple,' or temple of Goddess Bhuvaneswari, dates from the 16th century and is also located in Assam. . Shree Govindajee temple, a Vaishnavite pilgrimage site, is devoted to Lord Krishna-incarnation. Radha's Krishna and Radha are the focus of the Sri Govindajee Shrine, the most important Hindu Vaishnavite temple in North Eastern India. A shrine to Lord Krishna may be found in the state of Assam, at the 'Billeswar Temple. According to folklore, this temple was built around 500 years ago. Meghalaya's Nartiang Durga Temple is one of Goddess Durga's Shakti Peethas. The Shakti temple in the Jaintia Hills district is one of the most sacred in Hinduism. Archaeological remains may be found in the Malinithan Temple, a major Hindu pilgrimage site in India. Kolasib shiva temple in Mizoram is a renowned Hindu temple. The Dimapur Kalibari Temple in Nagaland is dedicated to the Hindu goddess of strength, Kali.

Shakti Peethas in Hinduism include Tripura's Sundari Temple. West Siang's 'Malinithan Temple,' also known as the 'Akashganga Temple,' is another popular Hindu pilgrimage site in Arunachal Pradesh. Building the temple in the Odissa style honours the goddess Durga. Within the temple's walls are intricate carvings depicting Hindu deities, animals, and floral themes dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries AD.

6.2 Buddhist sites

At an altitude of 10,000 feet, Tawang is a Buddhist mountain town in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. There's no better place than Tawang, widely known as the "land of Monpas," to reflect on the immense sacrifices made by the soldiers who guard our country's frontiers. The Tawang Buddhist Monastery, which also bears the town's name, is home to stories of valour and

patriotism. The "Bomdila Monastery" in Arunachal Pradesh's west Kameng district was established in 1965 and is an important Buddhist pilgrimage site in North East India.

Guru Rinpoche's twelfth reincarnation built the monastery in 1965, and the 14th Dalai Lama sanctified it in 1997. • The Tawang Monastery is one of India's most revered Buddhist pilgrimage sites. The monastery, which originates from the late nineteenth century, has the Dukhang (main assembly hall), a court for religious fests and rituals, a library, and dwelling facilities for monks. Iconic paintings showing countless Buddhist saints and Bodhisattvas are the highlight of the Dukhang monastery. A colossal statue of Lord Buddha and thangkas painted with blood taken from the nose of the fifth Dalai Lama are also on display in this hallowed space. Stone and terracotta sculptures of an old prosperous empire highlighted the inscriptional evidence for the patronage of Buddhism in early North-East India

6.3 Jain Sites

The "Sri Surya Pahar" located in the Goalpara district of Assam is one of the most popular pilgrimage and archaeological sites in North East India, showing cultural remains of three major Indian religions: Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Many people come to this location, which is around 140 kilometres from Assam's capital, Guwahati, to visit, pray, and do archaeological research. There are rock-cut Shivalingas, votive Stupas, carvings of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist gods and goddesses, and a lush wooded backdrop to the site's art gallery of sculptures. A number of ancient temple ruins may also be seen in the vicinity, including the "Surya Mandir," or "Sun Temple."

6.4 Muslim Religious sites

One of the most sacred places for Muslims is the Kamrup district's "Powa Mecca," meaning "a small bit" of Mecca; this is a significant pilgrimage site. Other than Pir Giasuddin Aulaya's grave, the shrine is the last resting place for a lump of soil brought here from Mecca by an Iraqi ruler in the 12th century. Pilgrims began coming to this place in 1657 AD, when Shah Jahan's reign began, when a mosque was erected there. Powa Mecca is supposed to award the devoted one-quarter of the merits they would have received if they had made the

journey to Mecca. Major Muslim pilgrimages to this sacred site occur during the Urs holiday, when Muslims from all across India descend in great numbers. On Jaistha full moon night, it is also a favourite location for Hindus.

The people of India are known for their distinct culture and traditional lifestyle. The region's cultural mix, which includes Hindu, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist elements, is dominated by Buddhism. Additionally, there are more Buddhists in the region than any other faith. Each state's indigenous tribes have their own unique tribal culture and traditions, including music, food, and crafts. Inhabitants of the North East Indian area display vivid images of their homeland and way of life. These people have different clothing, lifestyle, and language characteristics because of their Mongoloid appearance. The religious beliefs and musical and dance traditions of the valley people, as well as the cultural traditions of the hill people, are particularly rich.

6.5 Christian Sites

North East India churches deal with the churches in Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. Because these churches are part of the people's history in North East India, they are considered national treasures and sources of pride for the people of the region. They are a symbol of India's secular history and culture. Some important churches are

Christian churches in Meghalaya include Shillong Catholic Cathedral; All Saints Church; Laitumkhrach Presbyterian Church; the Nepali Christian Fellowship Church; William Nagar Baptist Church; and St. Francis Xavier's Church. This includes Mariam Nagar Church (Reformed Presbyterian), St. Joseph Catholic (Catholic), the Agartala Baptist (Baptist), and the Kamlachhera Baptist Church (Baptist).

A wide variety of churches may be found across the state of Nagaland. In Manipur, you'll find churches like the Kumbirei Baptist Church, the Mao Karong Catholic Church, the Motbung Baptist Church, and the Village Church. There are a number of churches in the state of Assam that include Christ Church, Moran Catholic Church, Christian Revivalism, Guwahati Baptist Church, and Dispur Baptist Church. Dobam Baptist Church, the Christian

Revival Church, and the Believers' Church are among the churches in Arunachal Pradesh that are of historical importance. More than a century and a half has passed since significant changes occurred in this region, which is home to many different tribes and civilizations. The Catholic Church has developed in this region as missionaries have been trying to spread the gospel.

A lot of people in Northeast India have said and continue to say that the missionaries and their workers in this area have done nothing short of a miracle, marvelling at what has been accomplished in a lifetime. In today's democratic period, a primary missionary tactic has been to emphasise leadership development, especially through educational efforts, so that these leaders might have a good influence on society [15].

People in the indigenous communities were happy to find that the Catholic Church was concerned about the preservation of their culture. They were more tolerant to tribal rituals and traditions, as well as tribal cultural values including reverence and adoration for the deceased [16].

Manipur, India's far-eastern state, was evangelised by Protestant missionaries in the latter part of the 19th century, and many of the hill people were converted [17]. As a result, the hill people originally resisted the missionaries' efforts to convert them to Christianity because of their customs, habits, and animistic rituals. Only after independence did the Catholic Mission establish itself in various sections of the region. However, despite this, the region was quite friendly to the missionaries, and the expansion of the Church was tremendous.

In North East India, the Catholic Church is divided into three distinct rites, each of which is in full communion with its sister church, as well as with the Pope and the Holy See in Rome itself. There have been a large number of missionaries from the Syriac tradition from South India, who also helped to build the Latin Catholic Church in these regions.

7. Protection and Conservation policies:

It is evident from the historical evidence of north-east India that there are several gaps in the information needed to recreate the past. North-east India's archaeological record is

unique. Indian and South-east Asian cultural features are combined in it, making it unique. Pre-independent archaeology was originally acknowledged in the early nineteenth century, although the majority of work was done by authorities or tea estates that had an interest in antiquity. Post-independence archaeology is characterized by research focused on solving problems and involving institutions. However, there are no archaeology departments at any of the institutions in the region. The post-independence archaeology of north-east India may be viewed as a social phenomenon in a specific historical setting. Now universally accepted that all archaeology is a kind of power relations and modern interventions in the past's fabrication. According to a brand new archaeology approach called "the archaeology of the contemporary past," the discipline of archaeology plays an important role in uncovering previously obscured aspects of history and contemporary experience that are kept secret from the general public by institutions of power or are obscured because no one or no group has any formal authority in the political sphere. As a result, this is known as 'presencing the absence'. It's time to excavate, examine, and analyse data in a disciplined and logical framework in north-east India in order to make clear the lack of people there [18].

The northeastern states were founded under the British Raj in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a result of their geographical isolation from traditional trading partners such as Bhutan and Myanmar. In present-day Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Nagaland, British (Welsh) missionaries were influential in the conversion of numerous indigenous peoples to Christianity, including the Mizo [19]. Despite the fact that many such endeavours are confined to surface sites, research on ancient archaeology in the Northeast suggests that excavations from the Neolithic and even historical times are extremely rare in the region [20].

Historical archaeology's newest tendencies emphasise the transdisciplinary study of all human cultures' cultural artifacts, but they also acknowledge the methodological distinctiveness of societies with written documents [21].

According to the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, it is critical that further monuments and sites from the North-Eastern region be included to the list of monuments and sites that are centrally protected. "An Archaeological Study from Manipur" aimed to uncover a set of feedback processes connected to culture and environment that favour or limit the genesis, development, and continuation of the art of pot building among an indigenous Mongoloid community living in the Manipur valley.

In archaeology, the post-independence period is distinguished by problem-oriented study with institutional engagement [22].

Assam had a slew of construction projects throughout the mediaeval period. Archaeologically, Manipur is a treasure trove. Remains have been scattered over the hills and valleys of Manipur, India. There is evidence that Manipur was inhabited by prehistoric man, as evidenced by archaeological finds. The hills and valleys of this region are home to several prehistoric communities. Archaeological evidence like as coins and megalithic sculptures reveal a wealth of information about Manipur's socio-economic and political landscapes as well as its religious and artistic traditions. The hill regions, such as Mao, Ukhrul, and Tharon, are home to the most megalithic sites. The valley is home to a slew of other historical sites and landmarks. Ruined palaces, forts, temples, gateways, samadhis, and coronation halls are among the structures found here. The ancient capitals of Kangla and Imphal, as well as a third capital, were the primary locations where these monuments were discovered. The temples and the Samadhi were in fine shape, as were the rest of the structures. In Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland & Mizoram, Buddhist & Animist beliefs impacted tribal leaders and monarchs. Because of this, grandiose architecture was overlooked. However, we found several monuments and relics in various sections of the region that allowed us to construct a clearer picture of the art's scope and maturity.

An archaeological research department was established in Arunachal Pradesh; the Directorate of Research in Assam; the Department of Higher Education in Meghalaya; and the Department of Archaeology was

established in Nagaland in the Nagaland province. Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1958, any construction, edifice, or monument, including a tumulus or place of burial, cave, rock carving, inscription, or monolith, of historical or aesthetic value, is deemed an Ancient Monument.

Heritage tourism makes use of pre-existing resources, such as historic, cultural, and natural ones. A heritage location is one that contributes to a better knowledge of the past, as well as the present and the future. There is no cultural legacy without people and their activities in sites of historical significance (Ahmed, 2006). Natural, landscape, monuments, artefacts and activities are some of the categories of heritage destinations [23].

The Government of India has established the NEZCC in Dimapur and the EZCC in Kolkata in order to safeguard and promote the region's numerous cultural legacies (autonomous organisations under Ministry of Culture). It is a member state of both the NEZCC and the EZCC (Kolkata) of the Northeastern Economic Development Council (NEDCC), Dimapur and Assam respectively. On a regular basis, these ZCCs organise cultural events and programmes throughout the North-East region. ZCCs have enlisted the help of local artists from the North East to show off the region's diverse cultural history. Many other programmes, such as the Award for Young Talented Artists, Guru Shishya Parampara and Theatre Rejuvenation are also being implemented by ZCCs. A whopping 93% of the money given to the ZCCs goes to support folk and tribal art.

North Eastern Region traditional art and culture is being preserved and promoted by the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies.. Aside from that, the Ministry of Culture offers financial aid to individuals and organizations working to preserve and promote various forms of art and culture, especially those present in the Northeastern States. The advancement of the North East area is one of the focal points within the Plans of North East, according to NEC General Guidelines 2020. This programme provides funding for regional art and cultural activities.

Archaeological excavations from the Neolithic and even the historical periods are extremely uncommon in the Northeast, according to the vast majority of research. The annual "Destination North East" event has been hosted in numerous locales to attract people from other parts of the country, including Chandigarh (2017), Delhi (2018), Varanasi (2019), and Kolkata (2019). (2019). (2019). It was necessary to move the COVID-19 conference to a virtual environment in 2020 because of the outbreak. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – NEIS programme, which was formed in 1961, has been doing research and development in a wide range of sectors. One of the disciplines is the efficient use of material residues. As far as materials and energy sources are concerned, most North Eastern vernacular building is environmentally friendly and cost-effective.

A well-planned heritage tourist industry might become a significant source of revenue and employment, while also serving as a catalyst for increased cultural participation and understanding, all of which would have a plethora of positive consequences for society. In addition, it is necessary to examine the many contexts in which Northeastern archaeologists develop archaeological knowledge worldwide. The kings of North Eastern India, notably Tripura, Assam, and Manipur, were some of the greatest architects in the country. They built great structures, some of which are still standing today as a testament to their achievements. To build their homes and other structures throughout the early stages of human civilizations, inhabitants in the region employed bamboo, thatch, and other natural materials. Stone and brick, as well as other durable materials, were used in lieu of the perishable materials in the later eras. Tripura's historic monuments provide evidence to its regal heritage. Throughout Tripura, the Maharajas of Tripura commissioned the construction of magnificent religious and secular structures for the people of the realm.

Most of the monuments are located in Agartala, which serves as the capital city. Some of the most significant historical sites in the area are Ujjayanta Palace, Malancha Niwas, Neermahal, and Kunjaban Palace. Religious

sites including Old Agartala's Fourteen Goddess Temple, the Mata Tripureshwar Temple, Benuban Vihar and the Bhuvneshwar Temple in Agartala and Udaipur are well-liked. A few of the early-era monuments were destroyed by natural factors, while others were destroyed by foreign invaders, either because of their iconoclastic zeal or because they needed building materials.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Guwahati Circle played a significant role in the preservation of historical monuments and archaeological sites in North-East India. The Ministry of Development of North East has made several attempts to promote development in the region through various development measures and projects funded by the Indian government's social economic infrastructure building initiatives.

8. Conclusion:

Northeast India is a great place to study human diversity because of its rich cultural diversity. The North East of India, which comprises the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim, is a treasure chest of natural resources and wildlife as well as a blending of different tribes and cultures. In the northeastern part of the country, there is a plethora of historical sites and artefacts. Particularly, the people's style of life in certain geographical locations, their history, their art, architecture, religion, and other characteristics that contributed form their way of life, indigenous culture that has remained mostly independent from the surrounding majority. Improved collaboration with local populations and academics is needed between the Archaeological Survey of India and historical sites scattered throughout the northeastern area.

The Archaeological Survey of India must take active and decisive steps to prevent encroachments around centrally protected sites. "Heritage of North-East India" highlighted the region's archaeological riches, including excavations in Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Nagaland emphasising the region's rich archaeological past. Monuments are recognised as the most important archaeological evidence. This form of archaeological evidence has a high illustrative value and substantially

aids in understanding the might and splendour of some of the ancient dynasties. Living megalithic traditions, potter's work, terracotta plaques, and art themes shed insight on the region's diverse cultural heritage and historical history. Fortresses, temples, mosques, tombs and churches are among the many types of monuments to be found, as are ancient mounds, rock-cut caves and other forms of secular architecture.

These ruins are now regarded as one of the most significant tourist attractions in the area. Numerous historical structures, monuments, caverns, inscriptions, coins and Rock shelters may be found across the region. Archaeological evidence from the NorthEastern area has shed insight on the region's ancient history and culture. The discovery of archaeological sites in regions like Nagaland, Assam, and Tripura brought home the importance of oral tradition and archaeology. An indigenous Mongoloid population in the valley has a set of cultural and environmental feedback processes that either support or hinder their creation, development, and continuation. In light of transdisciplinary conceptions of material culture, there is a need for an archaeological study of all human cultures and the methodological peculiarity of examining societies with written records.

This region's nature, lifestyle, and economics are all affected by the main rivers that flow through the area. New Stone Age sites were uncovered as a result of the engagement of prehistorians in archaeological study. Meghalaya, the North Cachar Hills, Manipur, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh were among the states where expeditions were carried out. By the late 1980s, every state in the northeast had an archaeological department. The study of historical sites in North East India offers a virtually unstudied and unexplored research area. Modernity's impact on archaeology can now be felt throughout the discipline. Young researchers may be inspired to do more study in historical archaeology and tourist development in the North-East Indian area due to the region's archaeological riches.

Thus the historical sites in north-eastern India are unique in their appearance and spirit. We need a community's willingness to share their cultural heritage with visitors, an intact

cultural resource base that can support a community's cultural heritage product and an accessible travel market for its growth and development for indigenous heritage tourism in the historical sites of North India. Even more important is that these sites receive the attention and support of both the central and state tourism departments in order to become a popular tourist destination. A study of Indian monuments would be incomplete without a thorough examination of historical places and their preservation in North Eastern India and the need of the hour is to protect and preserve the ancient historical sites in this region.

Equally important, it is time that we must also look into the varied context within which archaeological

knowledge is produced in the present by archaeologist

of the Northeast region.

Given the rich repositories of traditional

knowledge systems, on ethnoarchaeological ground,

the traditional knowledge pertaining to agricultural

practice (farmer's knowledge), dwelling and storage

structure, technological knowledge etc. in Northeast

India becomes crucial tools for reconstructing the past

subsistence system based on present day parallels.

Another important aspect which can be addressed is –

an understanding of man and environment relationship

in the region that can be drawn from modern

d. Culture & Architecture are heritage of any country. They are precious gems. They need to be studied, understood & promoted because sociological studies act as a base for several further studies.

References

1. Nag Subhanka, Architecture of North East India: Vernacular Typologies, <https://www.academia.edu>, September 7, 2016. P.1
2. P. Deb Burman, L. Cajee & D. D. Laloo, Potential for Cultural and Eco-tourism In

- North East India: A Community-based Approach, WIT Press, 2007, pp 1-10.
3. Rajesh Verma, History of North East India, Raj Publications, 2013. pp 1-15.
 4. Amit Baishya, Contemporary Literature from Northeast India: Deathworlds, Terror and Survival, Routledge (Manohar), 2019, pp 1-20.
 5. Col Ved Prakash, Encyclopaedia of North-East India, Vol. 1, Atlantic, 2006. pp1-5.
 6. Tiatoshi Jamir, Archaeology of Northeast India, [lockedhttps://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.646](https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.646) , Published online: 23 March 2022.
 7. N. D. Choudhury; Historical Archaeology of central Assam, B.R. Publishing corporation, Delhi, 1985 p.57
 8. Dr. S. Dharmen Singh, An overview of the monuments of North – East India, International Journal of Research in Social Sciences Vol. 9 Issue 7, July 2019, pp 1-13.
 9. Pradesh Joydeep Singh, An Archaeological Evidence of Neolithic Culture in Arunachal , JHSR Journal of Historical Studies and Research Volume- 1, Issue- 1 (January-April 2021), pp.92-100.
 10. Amir, Tiatoshi and Manjil Hazarika, eds. 2014. 50 Years after Daojali-Hading: Emerging Perspectives in the Archaeology of Northeast India. New Delhi: Research India Press.
 1. 2014, Research India Press, p 5.
 11. Raile Rocky Ziipao, “Roads, tribes, and identity in Northeast India”, Asian Ethnicity, 2020, VOL. 21, NO. 1, 1–21
 12. Sindhu Phadke, Women's Status in North Eastern India, Decent Books, 28 Feb 2009, pp1-50.
 13. Neeladri Bhattacharya and Joy L. K. Pachuau. Landscape, Culture, and Belonging: Writing the History of Northeast India, Cambridge University Press; First edition, 2019 .
 14. Higham, C.1972. Initial model formulation in terra incognita, in Models in Archaeology (D.L. Clarke Ed.), London: Methuen, pp. 453-476.
 15. C. Becker SDS, History of the Catholic Missions in Northeast India, (1890- 1915), (trans. &ed.), G. Stadler SDB & S. Karotemprel SDB, Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1980, p 39.
 16. Jessy Janet Sequeira History Of Catholic Missions In northeast India: A Case Study Of Thebethany Sisters, 2014, p 128.
 17. Karama Manimohana Simha, History of the Christian Missions in Manipur and Neighbouring States, Mittal Publications, 1991 pp 1-50
 18. Gautam Sengupta and Sukanya Sharma, Archaeology in North-East India, The Post-independence Scenario, Ancient India New Series, p 353.
 19. Nausheen Chhipa, Culture & Architecture of North East India - A Study of Arunachal Pradesh October 2017, pp 1-05.
 20. Manjil Hazarika, Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India: Multidisciplinary Investigation in an Archaeological Terra Incognita, Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: May 2017, P 3.
 21. P.P.A. Funari, S. Jones & M. Hall, Introduction: Archaeology in history, in P.P.A Funari, M. Hall & S. Jones (eds), Historical Archaeology, Back from the edge, Londres, Routledge, 1999,
 22. Sindhu Phadke, Women's Status in North Eastern India, Decent Books, 28 Feb 2009.
 23. Nilanjana Chakrabarty Dr. Juthika Konwar, Heritage Tourism Destination:-A Review of Select North Eastern States of India, Inspira-Journal of Commerce, Economics & Computer Science (JCECS) Volume 04, No. 04, 2018, pp. 84-92.