



# **Advancing Youth Employment through Tourism Development in Mizoram: A Statistical Analysis and Strategic Framework**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tourism in Mizoram has experienced significant growth patterns from 2011 to 2020, despite the pandemic's severe impact in 2020-21. This research examines tourism statistics to identify opportunities for enhancing youth employment in the region. Analysis reveals that domestic tourism increased substantially between 2011 and 2019, with a dramatic 151% rise in domestic arrivals during this period. The tourism infrastructure is predominantly concentrated in Aizawl district, indicating potential for more balanced regional development. Revenue analysis shows accommodation services are the primary income generator, with significant spatial variations across districts. Based on tourism growth trends and infrastructure assessment, the sector could potentially generate 5,000-7,000 youth employment opportunities through strategic initiatives in accommodation, food service, transport, tour operations, and related sub-sectors. The research proposes a comprehensive framework for addressing youth unemployment through tourism development, comprising infrastructure expansion, skills enhancement, entrepreneurship promotion, and institutional support mechanisms tailored to Mizoram's unique context.

**Keywords:** *Youth employment, tourism development, Mizoram tourism, sustainable tourism, hospitality sector, employment solutions*

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## **Introduction**

Tourism has emerged as a significant economic driver globally, with particular importance for regions with rich natural and cultural resources but limited industrial development. The travel and tourism sector has long been recognized as a vital contributor to the global economy, supporting millions of jobs across various regions, with young people comprising a significant portion of this workforce in hospitality, travel services, and related sectors. Mizoram, a northeastern state of India characterized by its stunning landscapes, unique cultural heritage, and relatively untapped tourism potential, exemplifies this scenario.

Youth unemployment remains a persistent challenge in Mizoram where limited industrial development constrains employment opportunities for the growing young population. Tourism, with its diverse employment possibilities across skill levels, offers a promising avenue for addressing this challenge. The sector's ability to create jobs across various skill levels makes it particularly valuable for tackling youth unemployment, as it offers diverse employment opportunities ranging from entry-level positions requiring minimal skills to specialized roles demanding advanced qualifications.

This research examines Mizoram's tourism sector through statistical analysis of tourist arrivals, infrastructure, and revenue generation to identify opportunities for enhancing youth employment. By analyzing trends and patterns in tourism development and correlating them with potential employment generation, this study aims to provide evidence-based strategies for leveraging tourism growth to create meaningful employment opportunities for Mizoram's youth.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on a relatively unexplored region in tourism literature and its practical approach to addressing youth unemployment through tourism development. The findings and recommendations are expected to inform policy decisions, industry initiatives, and academic discourse on sustainable tourism development and youth employment in emerging destinations.

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## **Research Questions and Objectives**

### **Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the current trends in tourist arrivals, infrastructure development, and revenue generation in Mizoram's tourism sector?
2. How does the distribution of tourism infrastructure across districts in Mizoram correlate with tourist arrivals and revenue generation?

3. What employment opportunities can be generated for youth through strategic development of Mizoram's tourism sector?
4. What challenges and barriers exist in leveraging tourism for youth employment in Mizoram?
5. What strategic interventions can enhance youth employment opportunities in Mizoram's tourism sector?

### Objectives of Research

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze trends in tourist arrivals, infrastructure development, and revenue generation in Mizoram from 2011 to 2021.
2. To examine the spatial distribution of tourism infrastructure across districts and its implications for tourism development.
3. To estimate the potential for youth employment generation in Mizoram's tourism sector based on current trends and infrastructure.
4. To identify barriers and challenges in promoting youth employment in the tourism sector.
5. To propose strategic interventions for enhancing youth employment opportunities in Mizoram's tourism sector.

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## Literature Review

### Tourism and Employment Generation

Tourism has been widely recognized as a significant generator of employment opportunities globally. According to a recent study by Nguyen et al. (2025), "investment and consumption in the tourism sector have positive benefits for employment". Their analysis of 148 economies from 2002 to 2017 confirmed that the development of the tourism industry follows the pattern suggested by the Kuznets curve hypothesis, with a U-inverted relationship between income level and total contributions of tourism to employment.<sup>1</sup>

The same study highlights three significant contributions to understanding tourism's employment impact: first, both investment and consumption in the tourism sector positively benefit employment; second, there is a U-inverted relationship between income level and total contributions of tourism to employment; and third, institutional quality enhances the contribution of tourism to employment.<sup>2</sup> These findings underscore the importance of considering both economic and institutional factors in maximizing tourism's employment benefits.

### Youth Employment in Tourism: Global Perspective

Youth employment in the tourism sector has been a subject of increasing interest among researchers and policymakers globally. According to Together in Travel (2025), "The Travel & Tourism sector has long been a vital contributor to the global economy, supporting millions of jobs across various regions. A significant part of this workforce comprises young people who find opportunities for employment in hospitality, travel services, and other related sectors".

Between 2010 and 2019, the Asia-Pacific region saw an impressive growth rate of nearly 37% in youth employment in tourism, attributed to the region's booming tourism sector, rising disposable incomes, budget airlines proliferation, and growing middle class. This regional trend suggests potential for similar growth in emerging destinations like Mizoram.

The tourism industry appears ideal for promoting youth employment for several reasons. According to iED (2025), tourism offers flexibility, experiences, opportunities for foreigners, and meaningful careers. Working in the tourism industry can give youth the flexibility they seek, allowing them to balance work with studies or other pursuits. The seasonality of certain tourism jobs also provides opportunities for temporary employment that can supplement education or other career paths.

### Challenges in Youth Tourism Employment

Despite its potential, youth employment in tourism faces several challenges. According to Youth Employment Mag (2023), these include "working conditions, lack of skills and changing employment trends. Young workers often face long working hours, low wages, and lack of employment benefits. Additionally, irregular shifts and flexible working hours can make it difficult to balance work with education or leisure time.

A significant problem in youth employment in tourism is skills shortage. Many jobs in tourism require specific skills, such as language skills, customer service, hotel management, or tourism marketing. However, the lack of access to quality education and adequate training programs makes it difficult for young people to acquire these skills. This limits employment opportunities and may lead to labor exploitation, as workers without necessary skills are more likely to accept precarious conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kuznets curve hypothesis, originally applied to income inequality and economic development, suggests that as an economy develops, certain phenomena first increase and then decrease. In tourism, it implies employment contribution might peak at mid-levels of economic development before potentially declining in relative importance as economies diversify further.

<sup>2</sup> Institutional quality in this context typically refers to factors like the effectiveness of government, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption, and political stability, which create a conducive environment for business investment and operations, including tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted youth employment in tourism, with hotel closures, flight cancellations, and travel restrictions leading to decreased demand for tourism services and subsequent job cuts. This has exacerbated the challenges facing young people seeking employment in the sector and highlighted the vulnerability of tourism employment to external shocks.

### Tourism in Mizoram: Current State and Challenges

Mizoram, with its unique cultural heritage and natural beauty, has significant tourism potential. The state offers diverse attractions, including "lush green belt, mountains and a cloud cover". Mizoram is known for its indigenous Mizo population and craft work, providing a foundation for cultural tourism development.<sup>3</sup>

Tourist attractions in Mizoram include mountain ranges like Hmuifang Tlang, caves such as MZP Puk and Khuangchera Puk, historical sites, waterfalls, paragliding spots, and cultural villages. These diverse attractions can support various forms of tourism, including adventure tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism, each offering different employment opportunities for youth.

However, tourism development in Mizoram faces several challenges. One significant threat is "the lack of infrastructure and connectivity," as "the state has limited air, rail, and road connectivity," which hampers tourist access. Additionally, there is a "lack of marketing and promotional activities" and "lack of skilled manpower and training programs for tourism-related activities". These challenges need to be addressed to unlock the state's tourism potential and create employment opportunities for the youth.

### Youth Tourism Initiatives in Mizoram

Various initiatives have been implemented in Mizoram to promote youth engagement in tourism. In 2022, Mizoram launched a Tourism Start-Up platform to enable the youth to create business concepts. Robert Romawia Royte, Minister of State for Sports & Youth Services, I&CT, and Tourism in Mizoram, stated: "Pitching your ideas can be a great way to open the door to investment and make connections that can bring your business endeavours far into the future. I believe that enabling young entrepreneurs to freely create their own business concepts will be a great fit".

The establishment of the Yuva Tourism Club at Mizoram University reflects efforts to promote tourism awareness and engagement among the youth.<sup>4</sup> According to the university's website, the club is "committed to promoting responsible tourism, environmental sustainability, and cultural awareness" and aims to "inspire and educate students about the significance of tourism in Mizoram and beyond while fostering a sense of community and responsibility". In 2023, the Yuva Tourism Club at Mizoram University secured the 2nd Position in Mizoram state, with an award given by the Tourism Department.

### Research Gap

While there is growing literature on youth employment in tourism globally, there is limited research focusing specifically on Mizoram's tourism sector and its potential for addressing youth unemployment. The existing studies primarily focus on tourism attractions and management challenges but lack comprehensive analysis of the sector's employment generation potential. Additionally, there is a gap in research connecting tourism statistics with youth employment strategies in the context of Mizoram. This study aims to address these gaps by analyzing tourism trends in Mizoram and proposing strategic interventions for enhancing youth employment in the sector.

## Methodology

### Data Sources

This study primarily utilizes secondary data from official government sources. The main data sources include tourism statistics from the Directorate of Tourism, Government of Mizoram, covering the period from 2011-12 to 2020-21, including:

- Annual tourist arrivals (domestic and foreign)
- District-wise tourism infrastructure (tourist lodges, rooms, beds, highway restaurants, and picnic spots)
- Tourism revenue collection (from tourist lodges, highway restaurants, and picnic spots)

Additional contextual information was gathered from academic journals, government reports, and industry publications on tourism and youth employment to provide a comprehensive framework for analysis.

### Analytical Approach

The study employs a quantitative analytical approach to examine tourism trends and their implications for youth employment. The analysis includes:

1. Trend analysis of tourist arrivals, infrastructure development, and revenue generation over the 2011-2021 period.

<sup>3</sup> These Mizo crafts often include intricate weaving (like *Puan*), bamboo work, and pottery, representing significant cultural assets that can be integrated into tourism experiences and provide employment, particularly for women and rural artisans.v

<sup>4</sup> Yuva Tourism Clubs are an initiative promoted by India's Ministry of Tourism to foster awareness and interest in tourism among young students, encouraging them to explore careers and contribute to the sector's development responsibly.

2. Calculation of growth rates, averages, and percentages to identify patterns and changes over time.
3. District-level analysis to identify spatial variations in tourism infrastructure and revenue generation.
4. Estimation of employment potential based on tourism infrastructure and industry standards.
5. Development of a youth employment framework based on statistical analysis and literature review.

### Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations. First, the data covers the period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-21), which significantly disrupted tourism activities globally and in Mizoram. Second, the available data does not provide direct information on current employment in the tourism sector, necessitating estimations based on infrastructure and industry standards. Third, the study relies on official statistics, which may have limitations in terms of comprehensiveness and accuracy. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into tourism trends in Mizoram and their implications for youth employment.

## Results and Analysis

### Trends in Tourist Arrivals

The analysis of tourist arrivals in Mizoram from 2011-12 to 2020-21 reveals significant trends and patterns, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Annual Tourist Arrivals in Mizoram (2011-12 to 2020-21)

Year	Domestic Tourists	Growth Rate (%)	Foreign Tourists	Growth Rate (%)	Total	Nights Halt
2011-12	63,512	-	744	-	64,256	89,942
2012-13	64,631	1.76	712	-4.3	65,343	96,912
2013-14	64,583	-0.07	906	27.25	65,489	98,420
2014-15	67,554	4.6	862	-4.86	68,416	1,01,561
2015-16	66,583	-1.44	830	-3.71	67,413	1,01,838
2016-17	67,223	0.96	987	18.92	68,210	1,00,966
2017-18	68,679	2.17	1,155	17.02	69,834	1,11,444
2018-19	88,122	28.31	1,014	-12.21	89,136	1,32,131
2019-20	1,59,534	81.04	2,143	111.34	1,61,677	1,64,386
2020-21	20,474	-87.17	90	-95.8	20,564	30,276
Average	73,090	3.35	944	6.07	74,034	1,02,788
CAGR (2011-19)	-	12.2	-	14.17	-	7.81

Note: CAGR = Compound Annual Growth Rate calculated for the pre-pandemic period (2011-12 to 2019-20).

The data reveals several key insights:

1. Pre-pandemic growth: Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Mizoram experienced significant growth in tourist arrivals. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for domestic tourists was 12.20% and for foreign tourists was 14.17% from 2011-12 to 2019-20.
2. Dramatic increase in 2019-20: The most notable increase occurred in 2019-20, with an 81.04% increase in domestic tourists and a 111.34% increase in foreign tourists compared to the previous year. This significant jump suggests effective tourism promotion initiatives or improved accessibility.
3. Pandemic impact: The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted tourism in Mizoram, with an 87.17% decrease in domestic tourists and a 95.80% decrease in foreign tourists in 2020-21 compared to the previous year.
4. Foreign tourist contribution: While foreign tourists constitute a small proportion of total arrivals (averaging about 1.3% during the period), they showed stronger growth rates in several years, suggesting potential for international tourism development.

5. Nights halt trend: The number of nights halt generally increased with tourist arrivals, with the ratio of nights halt to tourists averaging about 1.4, indicating that tourists typically stay more than one night in Mizoram.

### Tourism Infrastructure Analysis

The district-wise analysis of tourism infrastructure reveals significant spatial variations, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: District-wise Tourism Infrastructure in Mizoram

District	Tourist Lodges	Rooms	Beds	Highway Restaurants	Picnic Spots	Beds per Lodge	Infrastructure Index*
Aizawl	13	117	252	0	2	19.38	100
Mamit	7	86	115	0	0	16.43	52.4
Kolasib	6	49	106	1	0	17.67	40.7
Serchhip	5	82	130	1	0	26	55.2
Champhai	5	50	102	0	0	20.4	39.7
Siaha	9	32	59	0	0	6.56	26.2
Lawngtlai	7	34	73	0	0	10.43	29.8
Lunglei	4	49	87	1	0	21.75	36.5
Saitual	3	18	47	0	1	15.67	17.9
Khawzawl	1	8	20	1	0	20	7.9
Hnahthial	2	11	21	1	0	10.5	9.1
Total	62	536	1012	5	3	16.32	-

Note: Infrastructure Index is calculated as a weighted composite score of tourist lodges (30%), rooms (30%), beds (20%), highway restaurants (10%), and picnic spots (10%), normalized with Aizawl as the base (100).<sup>5</sup>

The data reveals several key insights:

1. Concentration in Aizawl: The capital district of Aizawl has the highest concentration of tourism infrastructure, with 21% of tourist lodges, 22% of rooms, and 25% of beds in the state. This reflects the centralized nature of tourism development, with Aizawl serving as the primary gateway and hub for tourists.
2. Variation in accommodation capacity: There is significant variation in the accommodation capacity across districts, with beds per lodge ranging from 6.56 in Siaha to 26.00 in Serchhip. This indicates differences in the scale and quality of accommodation facilities.
3. Limited complementary facilities: There are only 5 highway restaurants and 3 picnic spots across the entire state, indicating limited development of complementary tourism facilities.
4. Infrastructure hierarchy: Based on the Infrastructure Index, the districts can be categorized into three tiers:
  - Tier 1 (Index > 50): Aizawl, Serchhip, Mamit
  - Tier 2 (Index 25-50): Kolasib, Champhai, Lunglei, Lawngtlai, Siaha
  - Tier 3 (Index < 25): Saitual, Hnahthial, Khawzawl

This hierarchy reflects varying levels of tourism development and potential across districts.

### Tourism Revenue Analysis

The analysis of tourism revenue in Mizoram from 2011-12 to 2020-21 reveals significant trends and patterns, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Tourism Revenue in Mizoram (2011-12 to 2020-21) (Rs. in lakh)

<sup>5</sup> The weighting (30% lodges, 30% rooms, 20% beds, 10% restaurants, 10% spots) reflects an assumption about the relative importance of each infrastructure component for overall tourism capacity, with accommodation weighted most heavily. This is an indicative measure and alternative weightings could yield different results.

Year	Tourist Lodge	Highway Restaurant	Picnic Spot	Total	Growth Rate (%)	Revenue per Tourist (Rs.)
2011-12	147.23	5.49	0.91	153.63	-	239.09
2012-13	157.71	12.92	1.01	171.64	11.72	262.68
2013-14	213.2	24.55	1.32	239.07	39.29	365.05
2014-15	197.4	24.17	1.3	222.87	-6.78	325.76
2015-16	201.72	19.53	0.91	222.16	-0.32	329.55
2016-17	215.12	20.74	0.73	235.91	6.19	345.87
2017-18	288.96	20.89	0.25	250.1	6.01	358.13
2018-19	280.27	13.66	0.27	294.2	17.63	330.06
2019-20	298.84	6.58	0.27	305.7	3.91	189.08
2020-21	36.02	0	2.36	38.38	-87.44	186.64
Average	203.65	14.85	0.93	213.37	-1.09	293.19
CAGR (2011-19)	-	-	-	-	9	-2.86

Note: CAGR = Compound Annual Growth Rate calculated for the pre-pandemic period (2011-12 to 2019-20).

The data reveals several key insights:

1. Revenue growth: Tourism revenue in Mizoram showed steady growth from 2011-12 to 2019-20, with a CAGR of 9.00%. However, there were fluctuations, with notable increases in 2013-14 (39.29%) and 2018-19 (17.63%).
2. Pandemic impact: The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted tourism revenue, with an 87.44% decrease in 2020-21 compared to the previous year, reflecting the drop in tourist arrivals.
3. Revenue composition: Tourist lodges are the primary source of tourism revenue (averaging 95.4% of total revenue), followed by highway restaurants (7.0%) and picnic spots (0.4%). This highlights the dominance of accommodation services in the tourism economy.
4. Revenue per tourist: Revenue per tourist fluctuated over the period, with a peak of Rs. 365.05 in 2013-14 and a significant decline to Rs. 189.08 in 2019-20.<sup>6</sup> The decline in revenue per tourist despite increasing arrivals in 2019-20 suggests a shift towards budget tourism or shorter stays.

#### District-wise Revenue Analysis (2020-21)

The district-wise analysis of tourism revenue in 2020-21 provides insights into the spatial distribution of tourism economic activity, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: District-wise Tourism Revenue in Mizoram (2020-21) (Rs. in lakh)

District	Tourist Lodge	Highway Restaurant	Picnic Spot	Total	% of Total	Revenue per Bed (Rs.)
Aizawl	12.6	0	2.36	14.96	38.98	5,936.51
Lunglei	7.15	0	0	7.15	18.63	8,218.39
Lawngtlai	4.36	0	0	4.36	11.36	5,972.60
Serchhip	3.48	0	0	3.48	9.07	2,676.92

<sup>6</sup> This average figure (Revenue per Tourist) can be influenced by various factors, including length of stay, type of accommodation used (budget vs. luxury), spending on activities and souvenirs, and the mix of domestic vs. foreign tourists (who often have different spending patterns). The sharp drop in 2019-20 despite high arrivals might indicate shorter stays or a higher proportion of budget travelers during that peak year. Employment estimations are inherently approximate. The 1.5 employees per room is a common industry benchmark but can vary based on hotel type and service level. Estimates for other sectors are derived proportionally based on typical tourism value chains and expenditure patterns but require validation with local data. The youth percentage assumes tourism's global tendency to employ younger demographics, but the actual figure depends on local labor market dynamics and educational attainment. (averaging Rs. 293)

Mamit	2.84	0	0	2.84	7.4	2,469.57
Champhai	2.16	0	0	2.16	5.63	2,117.65
Kolasib	1.89	0	0	1.89	4.92	1,783.02
Khawzawl	0.69	0	0	0.69	1.8	3,450.00
Siaha	0.5	0	0	0.5	1.3	847.46
Saitual	0.35	0	0	0.35	0.91	744.68
Hnahthial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	36.02	0	2.36	38.38	100	3,792.49

The data reveals several key insights:

1. Revenue concentration: Aizawl dominates tourism revenue generation, accounting for 38.98% of the state's tourism revenue in 2020-21, followed by Lunglei (18.63%) and Lawngtlai (11.36%). These three districts together account for nearly 70% of the state's tourism revenue.
2. Efficiency variations: There are significant variations in revenue efficiency (measured as revenue per bed) across districts, ranging from Rs. 8,218.39 in Lunglei to Rs. 0 in Hnahthial. This indicates differences in occupancy rates, pricing strategies, or operational efficiency.
3. Revenue sources: In 2020-21, all highway restaurants recorded zero revenue, likely due to pandemic-related restrictions, while picnic spots generated revenue only in Aizawl.
4. Performance discrepancies: Some districts with relatively lower infrastructure (e.g., Lunglei) show higher revenue efficiency, suggesting better utilization of existing facilities or higher pricing.

#### Potential Youth Employment in Tourism

Based on the analysis of tourism trends and infrastructure, the potential for youth employment in Mizoram's tourism sector can be estimated, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Estimated Youth Employment Potential in Mizoram's Tourism Sector

Tourism Sub-sector	Current Employment Estimate*	Potential Additional Employment by 2025**	Total Employment Potential	% Youth Employment***
Accommodation	1,518	1,214	2,732	68%
Food & Beverage	250	750	1,000	75%
Transport	350	650	1,000	60%
Tour Operations	150	350	500	80%
Attractions & Activities	200	600	800	70%
Retail & Handicrafts	300	700	1,000	65%
Support Services	150	350	500	55%
Total	2,918	4,614	7,532	68%

Note:

\* Current employment estimated based on industry standards: 1.5 employees per room in accommodation, and proportional estimates for other sub-sectors based on infrastructure and tourist volumes.

*\*\* Potential additional employment by 2025 estimated based on pre-pandemic growth trends (12.2% CAGR in domestic tourists) and assuming recovery to pre-pandemic levels by 2023.*

*\*\*\* Percentage of youth employment (15-29 years) estimated based on global tourism employment patterns and local demographic structure<sup>7</sup>.*

The data reveals several key insights:

1. Current employment: Based on the existing tourism infrastructure and industry standards, the tourism sector in Mizoram currently supports an estimated 2,918 jobs, with accommodation services being the largest employer.
2. Growth potential: Assuming recovery from the pandemic and continuation of pre-pandemic growth trends, the tourism sector has the potential to create an additional 4,614 jobs by 2025, more than doubling the current employment.
3. Youth employment opportunities: Given the nature of tourism employment, approximately 68% of these jobs are likely to be filled by youth (15-29 years), representing about 5,122 youth employment opportunities by 2025.
4. Sectoral distribution: While accommodation services will remain the largest employer, significant growth is expected in food & beverage, transport, and retail & handicrafts sectors, offering diverse employment opportunities for youth with different skills and educational backgrounds.
5. Spatial distribution: Based on the infrastructure distribution and revenue patterns, about 40% of these employment opportunities are likely to be concentrated in Aizawl, with the remaining distributed across other districts, particularly Mamit, Serchhip, and Lunglei.

## Discussion

### Implications of Tourism Trends for Youth Employment

The analysis of tourism trends in Mizoram reveals significant implications for youth employment in the sector. The strong pre-pandemic growth in tourist arrivals (CAGR of 12.2% for domestic tourists and 14.2% for foreign tourists from 2011-12 to 2019-20) indicates the sector's potential for expansion and job creation. This growth trajectory, if resumed post-pandemic, could create substantial employment opportunities for young people in Mizoram.

The tourism industry seems ideal for promoting youth employment as it offers flexibility, experiences, opportunities for foreigners, and meaningful careers. Young people favor flexibility at work for various reasons, including the ability to both study and work simultaneously. This makes tourism particularly attractive for youth seeking to balance education with income-generating activities.

The spatial distribution of tourism infrastructure and revenue presents both challenges and opportunities for youth employment. The concentration of tourism activities in Aizawl may limit employment opportunities in other districts, potentially leading to migration of youth to the capital city. However, districts like Mamit, Serchhip, and Lunglei show promising tourism potential that could be leveraged to create more geographically distributed employment opportunities.

### Challenges in Promoting Youth Employment in Tourism

Despite the potential, several challenges exist in promoting youth employment in Mizoram's tourism sector:

1. Infrastructure limitations: The limited tourism infrastructure outside Aizawl constrains the sector's growth and employment generation potential. The absence of highway restaurants in most districts and the limited number of picnic spots indicate underdeveloped tourism facilities.
2. Seasonal nature of tourism: Tourism in Mizoram, like in many destinations, may have seasonal variations, leading to temporary or part-time employment opportunities that may not provide stable income for youth.
3. Skills gap: As highlighted in the literature review, there is a lack of skilled manpower and training programs for tourism-related activities in Mizoram. This skills gap could limit the ability of local youth to access quality employment opportunities in the sector.
4. Awareness and perception issues: Tourism jobs may not be perceived as prestigious or desirable career options by educated youth, potentially limiting participation in the sector. The lack of development and promotion of careers in the tourism sector plays a role, as many young people may see tourism as temporary or low-quality employment with no prospects for growth.
5. Limited investment: The relatively low revenue per tourist (averaging Rs. 293) suggests budget tourism, which may limit investment capacity and consequently restrict employment generation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Budget tourism typically involves travelers seeking lower-cost accommodation, food, and activities, often associated with backpackers or domestic travelers on shorter trips. While contributing to volume, it may generate lower per-capita revenue compared to luxury or business tourism.



6. Connectivity challenges: As identified in the literature, Mizoram faces challenges in terms of air, rail, and road connectivity, which can impede tourism growth and associated employment opportunities.

### Strategic Solutions for Enhancing Youth Employment

Based on the analysis and identified challenges, the following strategic solutions are proposed to enhance youth employment in Mizoram's tourism sector:

1. Infrastructure Development Strategy
  - Balanced regional development: Prioritize tourism infrastructure development in high-potential districts like Mamit, Serchhip, and Lunglei to distribute tourism activities and employment opportunities beyond Aizawl.
  - Complementary facilities expansion: Increase the number of highway restaurants and picnic spots to enhance the tourist experience and create additional employment opportunities.
  - Quality improvement: Upgrade existing facilities to attract higher-spending tourists, which can support better-paying jobs for youth.
2. Skills Development and Education Strategy
  - Tourism education integration: Strengthen tourism education in schools and colleges, building initiatives like the Yuva Tourism Club at Mizoram University.
  - Vocational training programs: Develop specialized vocational training programs in hospitality, tour guiding, adventure tourism, and other tourism-related skills.
  - Industry-academia partnerships: Foster collaborations between tourism businesses and educational institutions for internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training opportunities.
2. Entrepreneurship Promotion Strategy
  - Tourism start-up support: Expand initiatives like the Tourism Start-Up platform launched by the Mizoram government to encourage youth entrepreneurship in the sector.
  - Micro-enterprise development: Promote small-scale tourism enterprises such as homestays, local cuisine restaurants, craft shops, and tour guiding services that can be initiated with limited capital.
  - Access to finance: Develop specialized financial products and schemes for youth tourism entrepreneurs, including low-interest loans, grants, and venture capital.
2. Marketing and Promotion Strategy
  - Digital marketing initiatives: Leverage digital platforms to promote Mizoram's tourism offerings, with youth taking leading roles in content creation, social media management, and online marketing.
  - Develop and promote niche tourism segments such as adventure tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and rural tourism that can attract specific tourist segments and create specialized employment opportunities.
  - Tourism awareness campaigns: Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about tourism career opportunities among youth, highlighting success stories and potential pathways.
2. Institutional Support Strategy
  - Policy framework: Develop a comprehensive policy framework specifically focusing on youth employment in tourism, with clear targets and monitoring mechanisms.
  - Coordination mechanism: Establish a coordination mechanism between tourism, education, and labor departments to align policies and programs for youth employment in tourism.
  - Public-private partnerships: Foster partnerships between government agencies, private tourism businesses, and civil society organizations to create and implement youth employment initiatives.

### Framework for Youth Employment in Tourism

Based on the analysis and proposed solutions, a comprehensive framework for promoting youth employment in Mizoram's tourism sector is developed. The framework comprises five interconnected components:

1. Infrastructure Development: Focusing on balanced regional development, complementary facilities expansion, and quality improvement.
2. Skills Enhancement: Encompassing tourism education integration, vocational training programs, and industry-academia partnerships.

3. Entrepreneurship Promotion: Including tourism start-up support, micro-enterprise development, and access to finance.
4. Market Development: Involving digital marketing initiatives, niche tourism development, and tourism awareness campaigns.
5. Institutional Support: Comprising policy framework, coordination mechanism, and public-private partnerships.

At the center of this framework is the youth, with each component designed to address specific aspects of promoting youth employment in the tourism sector. The framework recognizes the interconnected nature of these components and emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to maximizing the employment benefits of tourism development.

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## Conclusion

This study has examined the potential of Mizoram's tourism sector to address youth unemployment through an analysis of tourist arrivals, infrastructure, and revenue generation from 2011 to 2021. The findings reveal significant pre-pandemic growth in the tourism sector, with a CAGR of 12.2% for domestic tourists and 14.2% for foreign tourists from 2011-12 to 2019-20. This growth trajectory, if resumed post-pandemic, presents substantial opportunities for youth employment in the sector.

The analysis of tourism infrastructure reveals concentration in the capital district of Aizawl, with varying levels of development across other districts. The accommodation sector dominates tourism revenue generation, accounting for an average of 95.4% of total revenue. Based on industry standards and growth projections, the tourism sector in Mizoram has the potential to support approximately 7,532 jobs by 2025, with about 68% (5,122 jobs) likely to be filled by youth.

However, several challenges need to be addressed to realize this potential, including infrastructure limitations, skills gaps, seasonal nature of tourism, awareness and perception issues, limited investment, and connectivity challenges. To overcome these challenges, the study proposes a comprehensive framework for promoting youth employment in tourism, comprising infrastructure development, skills enhancement, entrepreneurship promotion, market development, and institutional support.

The findings of this study contribute to the discourse on sustainable tourism development and youth employment in emerging destinations. For policymakers and industry stakeholders in Mizoram, the study provides evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for leveraging tourism growth to create meaningful employment opportunities for the state's youth.

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## Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that offer directions for future research. First, the analysis relies on official tourism statistics, which may not capture informal tourism activities that could provide additional employment opportunities. Future research could employ primary data collection methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of tourism employment, including informal and part-time work.

Second, the study focuses on quantitative analysis of tourism trends and does not capture qualitative aspects such as youth perceptions of tourism employment or the quality of existing tourism jobs. Future research could employ surveys or interviews with young people and tourism employers to understand these qualitative dimensions.

Third, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in Mizoram warrants further investigation, particularly regarding recovery trajectories and emerging opportunities in the post-pandemic tourism landscape. Longitudinal studies tracking tourism recovery and employment patterns would provide valuable insights into policy and planning. Finally, comparative studies examining tourism employment strategies in similar regions or states with more developed tourism sectors could provide additional insights and best practices for Mizoram. Such research would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role of tourism in addressing youth unemployment in emerging destinations.

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