

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY: INVESTIGATING LESSER-KNOWN HERITAGE SITES IN MAYANG, MORIGAON

Guptajit Pathak ¹ 

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of History Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Geetanagar-781021, Guwahati, Assam, India



Received 18 July 2022
Accepted 14 August 2022
Published 25 August 2022

Corresponding Author

Guptajit Pathak,
pathakguptajit19@gmail.com

DOI
10.29121/granthaalayah.v10.i8.2022.6499

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

Mayang, in Assam's Morigaon district, has enormous archeological potential that goes well beyond its common connotations of mysticism and black magic. This study explores the region's lesser-known historical landmarks, emphasizing how tangible remnants like ruins, places of worship, oral traditions, and cultural artifacts add to a deeper comprehension of its past. The study makes the case that Mayang is important for recreating local histories that have been obscured by myths and inadequate documentation by placing the area within a larger archeological and cultural context. Through field observations, investigation of local documents, and contact with community elders, the study reveals how these places collectively contain layers of cultural memory that remain largely undiscovered.

In order to reposition Mayang as a historically significant destination in Assam, the study also highlights the necessity of strategic heritage promotion by government agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and local people. Mayang is positioned as a prospective multidisciplinary tourism hub because of its distinctive combination of cultural legacy, natural beauty, and ecological diversity, which is further strengthened by the existence of the endangered river dolphin in the Brahmaputra and the nearby Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. The area can develop into a significant cultural-historical tourism destination with the right infrastructure, conservation, and awareness-raising, supporting both sustainable development and the preservation of Assam's rich legacy (Das, 2019, pp. 112-114).

Keywords: Mayang, Morigaon, Archaeological Potential, Cultural Memory, Heritage Sites, Material Culture, Folklore, Cultural Landscape, Historical Documentation, Community Heritage, Tourism Potential; Assam History

1. INTRODUCTION

India, one of the world's finest stores of heritage, culture, and living traditions, is a prime example of how the past has a significant influence on the present. Here, historical sites, cultural landscapes, and archeological remnants all contribute to an ongoing conversation between the past and present. In addition to preserving cultural memory, Indian historical monuments and artifacts serve as important tourist attractions, bringing in millions of tourists eager to learn about the country's past. Thus, tourism turns history into a consumable good that provides travelers

with educational, cultural, and experiential value. However, differentiating between real history and mythic or legendary stories is a recurring problem in historic tourism, which frequently affects public opinion. Because of this, the work of the historian is vital: they research, verify, and present accurate historical information that influences tourism and heritage interpretation (Singh, 2010, pp. 12-14.)

The study looks at Mayang, which is in the Assam's district of Morigaon, as a potential historical and tourism destination with unrealized potential. Mayang is widely linked to ancient tales of black magic, tales of people changing into animals, magical chairs that attach to one's back, and sorcerers who can pierce human bodies without causing injury. Mayang is a special destination for cultural and myth-driven tourism because of these stories, which are ingrained in local memory and folklore and give it an air of mystery. Its fabled status has long eclipsed other important facets of the area, leading to a limited and frequently sensationalized perception of its identity (Barua, 2017, pp. 88-90).

Beyond these legendary connections, Mayang has enormous potential as a more comprehensive heritage tourism destination. Conveniently close to Guwahati, the region is home to the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, one of Assam's most significant biological areas, which draws a constant stream of visitors and boosts the local economy. This consistent influx benefits many locals who work directly in tourism-related fields. But Mayang's identity goes well beyond magical mythology and ecotourism. The area has significant cultural, historical, and archeological value that is yet mostly unknown and unrecorded. Mayang might become a complex historic site where nature, history, and cultural memory coexist if this hidden potential is acknowledged and developed.

2. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Mayang, in the Morigaon region of Assam, is well-known for its associations with mysticism and black magic, a reputation that has overshadowed its important but largely unrecorded cultural and archeological heritage. Even though the area is home to many lesser-known locations, including historic mounds, holy buildings, artifacts, and culturally significant landscapes, these places are nonetheless understudied, poorly conserved, and not included in popular historical accounts. Both tangible heritage and cultural memory have been eroded as a result of a lack of systematic archaeological research, scant recording, and little scholarly attention. Additionally, how these locations are viewed is frequently influenced by the prevalent legendary narratives of the Mayang, leading to a misunderstanding between historical reality and tradition. This vacuum in academic research limits Mayang's ability to become a diverse cultural destination in Assam and impedes the development of a comprehensive understanding of its past. Therefore, in order to rebuild Mayang's historical landscape and evaluate the prospects for their preservation and sustainable development, the research aims to critically examine the archaeological potential and cultural memory linked with these unknown places.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhattacharyya (1950), Work on early inscriptions from Assam Studies on Assam historical archaeology frequently reference Assamese and Bengali publications on rock and copperplate inscriptions. The epigraphic foundation for recreating early Assam history, particularly political and cultural changes, was established by Bhattacharyya's contributions to the compilation and analysis of

inscriptions. His recording of early inscriptions, rock inscriptions, and copper plates is still important for comprehending settlement patterns, politics, and the establishment of religious institutions in early and medieval Assam, despite the fact that many of his works were published decades ago in Bengali. Bhattacharyya's epigraphic records aid in providing the historical-document background that may correlate to actual archaeological sites in central Assam and regions like Nagaon. His research highlights the fact that material remnants, temples, inscriptions, and textual sources frequently overlap a critical realization for researching "cultural memory." Therefore, Bhattacharyya's study continues to be essential for any more comprehensive archaeological-historical investigation in Assam, even if it is not site-specific to Nagaon.

Choudhury (1985), "Historical Archaeology of Central Assam", extensively referenced in subsequent research on Assam's archaeology. Despite being older, Choudhury's study offers a more comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework for understanding archaeological artifacts in central Assam, such as inscriptions, terracotta art, ancient towns, and temple ruins. The book helps place more recent discoveries, like as those in the Kapili-Jamuna valley, in a larger historical context by mapping older finds and previous surveys, demonstrating that central Assam has long maintained a heritage of religious building and settlement. As a model for interdisciplinary heritage research, the methodological approach that combines archaeology, epigraphy, and art history is still applicable today. Even though the work does not focus primarily on Nagaon, its coverage of central Assam makes it interesting for comparative examination of heritage zones. It highlights a long-overlooked aspect of Assam's pre-Ahom history, which is frequently eclipsed by subsequent, more thoroughly documented eras.

Choudhury (1985), "Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam", The Pre-Ahom period archaeology of the Brahmaputra valley, which spans from the early centuries CE to around the 12th century AD, is the main topic of this book. In order to gather proof of early state formation, temple construction, settlement patterns, and cultural exchanges, Choudhury examines iconography, inscriptions, architectural remnants, coins, and sculptures. The book aids in placing any local history, including that of Nagaon or nearby areas, within a larger historical framework, including pre-Ahom polity, religious geography, and material culture, given that the Brahmaputra valley encompasses central Assam. The monograph also makes the case that there should be more fieldwork and documentation efforts because many of Assam's earlier heritage remains have been neglected or underreported. This work provides important baseline data for your research topic, archaeological potential & cultural memory, and serves as a crucial reminder that many early historic objects still need to be thoroughly investigated.

Choudhury, (1990), "Assam State Museum", by its institutional history, such as background work under a director. As a repository for archeological, epigraphic, iconographic, and numismatic materials for Assam, the Assam State Museum has preserved artifacts from early to medieval times that aid in the reconstruction of early Assam history. What has been gathered is reflected in the museum's collection. There isn't a clear published study from 1989 to 1995 that focuses on uncharted central Assam valleys like Mayang.

Lahiri (1991), "Pre-Ahom Assam" - Research on Assam's inscriptions from the fifth to the thirteenth century AD. A book about early medieval Assam and inscriptional history Lahiri's research gathers and examines a variety of inscriptions discovered around Assam, such as land grants, copper plates, and rock inscriptions from the fifth to the thirteenth century CE. Many of these inscriptions provide

epigraphic evidence for settlement patterns, political control, religious institutions, and administrative history because they connect to dynasties and kingdoms that had influence over central Assam, such as the Varmanas, Palas, etc. Such inscriptional data serves as an essential historical foundation for areas like the Kapili-Jamuna valley (Nagaon/Morigaon/Hojai), supporting the reconstruction of chronology, politics, and cultural dynamics in conjunction with material remains. Epigraphy becomes essential to anchor sites temporally because the material archaeological record alone frequently lacks accurate chronology. Lahiri's research emphasizes that there is substantial documentary material regarding Assam's early medieval history, which is sometimes overlooked in colonial or post-colonial historiography.

4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Mayang, which is in the Morigaon district of Assam, is well-known as the "land of black magic." This reputation has been established by oral traditions, folklore, and mystical stories that have long captivated the public's attention. Beyond its mythical connections, the area is home to a rich but mainly undiscovered archaeological and cultural legacy that includes prehistoric shrines, temples, rock inscriptions, sculpture fragments, and other artifacts that represent several historical eras from prehistoric to medieval times. Although there aren't many official historical records concerning Mayang, knowledge of these locations is preserved through oral histories, local narratives, and communal memory, illustrating the relationship between tangible and intangible legacy. Significant archaeological potential has been found in recent surveys, but a large portion of this legacy is still unrecorded, unprotected, and obscured by popular myth. In order to document, interpret, and preserve Mayang's lesser-known heritage sites while supporting regional historiography, cultural preservation, and sustainable heritage tourism, a systematic study that combines archaeological research with cultural memory is imperative.

5. RESEARCH GAP

There is no thorough academic documentation or systematic archaeological investigation covering these lesser-known sites, despite anecdotal and folkloric information about Mayang's cultural sites, which include ruins, sculptures, inscriptions, and oral traditions. The majority of the material now available on the area concentrates on Assam's major, well-known heritage centers; Mayang and other "peripheral" towns are either completely absent or underrepresented in academic works. Furthermore, rather than engaging in a fair, academic assessment that treats oral traditions as legitimate components of cultural memory linked to material heritage prior accounts usually treat myths and folklore as either curiosities or spectacular stories. Because of this, little is known about how Mayang's intangible heritage local memory, stories, and rituals interacts with tangible objects like ruins, sculptures, and inscriptions.

Furthermore, there is a dearth of studies on conservation or preservation for these locations. There is no documented evaluation of their condition, the risks posed by natural deterioration, human involvement, or the possibility of sustainable heritage tourism or community-based conservation. All things considered, a study that methodically examines and records Mayang's archaeological remains, evaluates their historical and cultural significance, incorporates them with local oral

and cultural memory, and suggests methods for preservation, heritage recognition, and sustainable development is desperately needed.

5.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify and document the lesser-known archaeological and heritage sites in Mayang, Morigaon.
- To examine how cultural memory, folklore, and oral traditions shape local understanding of these heritage sites.
- To assess the archaeological potential of these sites in reconstructing the historical past of Mayang.
- To evaluate the challenges and possibilities for promoting these sites as part of sustainable heritage tourism in Assam.

5.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the lesser-known archaeological and heritage sites present in Mayang, and what is their current state of preservation?
- How do local cultural memories, myths, and oral narratives contribute to the interpretation and significance of these sites?
- In what ways can the archaeological features of these sites help reconstruct or enrich the historical narrative of Mayang?
- What are the major challenges and opportunities in developing these unexplored heritage sites into sustainable tourism resources?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study uses a mixed-method approach, combining primary and secondary research methods to guarantee a thorough grasp of the history and tourism landscape of the area. In order to gather primary data, locals were guided to a variety of tourist destinations and heritage places, and their perspectives, cultural interpretations, and experience knowledge were evaluated through structured and semi-structured encounters. Additionally, visitor interviews were done to assess visitors' knowledge of the area's historical significance, as well as their motives and familiarity with it. First-hand knowledge of tourist experiences and community viewpoints was obtained through these on-site interactions. In addition, a thorough examination of documentation sources such as brochures, regional literary works, newspaper archives, periodicals, scholarly papers, and research reports was used to collect secondary data. This secondary corpus helped establish the historical background, validate local stories, and place the area's attractions in the context of more general academic discourse. When combined, these approaches made it possible to analyze lived heritage and recorded history in a methodical and triangulated manner.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS OF MAYANG

Mayang is exceptionally rich in historical items from the ancient times if we follow the course of history back to that time. In the Mayang region, terracotta sculptures from the eighth century have been found. These stone representations, which are found in nearby villages like Chanaka, Hatimuria, and Kalchila, are mainly

of Shiva-Parvati and Ganesha. The stone inscription discovered in Burhamayang, which is said to be the longest stone inscription in Asia, is another important historical relic from this era (Bora, 2015, pp. 45-47). In addition to their historical and archeological significance, these early stone inscriptions and terracotta figurines are noteworthy for their ability to draw tourists. With careful development, these locations could become important historical and cultural destinations for tourists interested in ancient Assam (Choudhury, 2017, pp. 112-115).

Based on the distribution of these sites, it appears that Mayang previously operated as a multilayered cultural zone that combined river-based livelihood patterns, ritual performance, and settlement activities. Settlement mounds provide evidence of long-term habitation, possibly from the medieval to early modern eras, confirming previous research showing that central Assam had dispersed but culturally diverse population groups (Chaudhuri, 1985, p. 42). The existence of shrine remnants and ritual locations suggests that Mayang's reputation as a "land of magic" is based on a material-cultural environment where ritual experts have historically enjoyed social significance rather than being purely legendary. This demonstrates that micro-regions like Mayang have substantial archaeological potential that has largely gone untapped, extending current archaeological narratives of central Assam beyond major sites.

7.2. MILITARY HERITAGE: KAJALI CHOWKI

Kajali Chowki is a significant medieval historical location that plays a significant role in Assam military history. This is where Lachit Barphukan's army landed before moving on to Guwahati, where the historic Battle of Saraighat took place (Gogoi, 2012, pp. 78-82). The location has produced a number of historical artifacts, such as stone bullets and other weapons, which support its strategic function as an Ahom army military base. The importance of Kajali Chowki as a historical site is confirmed by these relics. Its military past offers special chances to draw visitors interested in the Ahom dynasty, which governed Assam for about 600 years and was well-known for its military might (Barua, 2016, pp. 56-60).

Kashohila Hill

Rising close to the well-known Mayong village in Assam, which is frequently referred to as the "land of black magic," Kashohila Hill plays a significant role in the local mythology and historical memory of the area. The hill, which has long been considered a mystical and enigmatic terrain, is connected to indigenous healing rituals, ancient tantric practices, and oral traditions that depict it as a location where early practitioners sought spiritual strength and a connection to the natural world. With tales of secret cave dwellings, ancient stone artifacts, and ritual places that once attracted mystics from nearby areas, Kashohila became to be associated with Mayong's reputation as a hub of esoteric knowledge over the course of several generations. The hill's persistent presence in Assamese cultural narratives illustrates the close relationship between the region's natural geography and its long-standing legacy of myth, ritual, and traditional belief, despite the paucity of contemporary studies on the subject. (Plate 1 & 2)

Figure 1



Figure 1 Kashohila Hill, Mayong
Courtesy: Photograph by the Author

Figure 2



Figure 2 Kashohila Hill, A Prominent Landmark of Mayong
Courtesy: Photograph by the Author

Ancient Rock-cut sculptures of Ganesha and Uma-Maheshwar (Hara-Parvati)

Although the term "Sonakaraja temple" is not frequently used in search results, ancient rock-cut sculptures of Ganesha and Uma-Maheshwar (Hara-Parvati) can be found in the archeological sites of Burha Mayong and Chanaka in the Mayong area of Assam. These results imply that Shaivism and Shaktism were prevalent in the region in the early medieval era. The sculptures show Mayong's historical significance beyond its reputation as a country of black magic. They are part of a rich archeological landscape that contains many temple remains, stone inscriptions, and relics. (Plate 3 & 4)

Figure 3



Figure 3 Ancient Rock-cut sculptures of Ganesha and Uma-Maheshwar (Hara-Parvati)

Courtesy: Photograph by the Author

Figure 4



Figure 4 Rock-cut sculptures of Lord Ganesha

Courtesy: Photograph by the Author

8. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND KINGSHIP

Mayang's institution of royalty, which may be traced back to the Dimasa rulers, is another important cultural and historical draw. The royal family still upholds a number of traditions and practices that are indicative of their ancestry. The "Gossain Uliowa Utsav," a royal festival established by the Mayang royal dynasty, is a well-known cultural event (Hazarika, 2018, pp. 102-104). The event centers on the five deities, referred to as "Pancha Gossains," whose statues were transported from Navadweep in Bengal by Sharascha Chandra Singha, the tenth ruler of Mayang. The traditional king and royal officials enthusiastically participate in the festival's great procession of the deities. This unique cultural event, which highlights Mayang's living legacy, has a great deal of potential to grow into a popular tourist destination.

8.2. TOURISM POTENTIAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Therefore, Mayang has a rich historical and cultural legacy in addition to its ecological value because of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and its reputation as a hub of "black magic" and traditional medicine. The area might greatly increase its tourism potential by bringing these lesser-known locations into the public and academic spotlight. Heritage tourism, which emphasizes military history, live cultural customs, and old relics, has the potential to boost the local economy while protecting the region's historical legacy. With careful planning, Mayang might become a well-known tourism destination in Assam, fusing tangible legacy, mysterious legend, and scenic beauty.

8.3. CULTURAL MEMORY, FOLKLORE, AND ORAL TRADITIONS

In Mayang, cultural memory serves as a community-based archive that uses narrative forms to preserve historical pieces. Cultural memory frequently uses symbolic language to encode historical or environmental occurrences, according to previous ethnographic interpretations of Assamese folklore (Dutta, 1978, p. 113). The persistence of oral traditions in Mayang, particularly those pertaining to magic rituals, demonstrates how intangible heritage strengthens the importance of physical locations. In order to identify possible settlement zones and ritual landscapes, folklore serves as a reference for archaeological interpretation. The claim that Mayang heritage cannot be understood through archaeology alone and must incorporate memory, myth, and local epistemologies is strengthened by the connection of oral tradition with material remnants.

8.4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL FOR RECONSTRUCTING MAYANG'S PAST

These results show significant archeological potential for reconstructing the local history of Mayang. Similar material patterns discovered in medieval habitation locations are revealed by comparisons with more extensive investigations of central Assam (Choudhury, 1985. p. 189). Mayang was probably a part of a limited cultural and economic network, presumably linked to Brahmaputra river channels, based on the mix of settlement mounds, shrine remains, and material culture. Mayang's archaeological landscape may show ritual-based usage patterns, setting it apart from normal Assamese agrarian or fort-settlement sites due to its distinctive link with magic practices. Therefore, archaeological research in this area can advance regional history as well as broader conversations on the connection between ritual culture and settlement archaeology.

8.5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE TOURISM

Promoting Mayang's lesser-known historical monuments necessitates striking a balance between community involvement and preservation. Assam's past experiences with heritage management highlight how crucial local involvement is to sustainable tourism. (Barpujari, 1992, p. 156). Archaeological interpretation, cultural memory, and living traditions should all be incorporated into the development of Mayang as a heritage-tourism destination. A sustainable tourism strategy can be built on site-based storytelling, ritual performance, and folklore interpretation. However, site degradation will continue in the absence of

archaeological interventions and protective measures. Long-term sustainability requires a cooperative structure encompassing local communities, government organizations, and researchers.

Table 1

Table 1 Summary of Archaeological Potential and Cultural Memory in Mayang, Morigaon

Category	Findings / Description
Recognized Historical Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burha Mayong settlement mounds The ruins of Kachamari Than Previous settlement locations along the riverfront Mantra-Ghar (places of ritual practice)
Indicators of Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sherds of pottery (red, grey wares) Blocks of laterite stone (remains of a shrine or temple) Iron implements and ceremonial items Layers of charcoal and structural debris
Oral traditions and cultural memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legends of magic healing associated with Mantra-Ghar Legends about ancient warriors and monarchs Stories about hidden or disappeared temples Beliefs within the community that associate certain locations with supernatural protection
Archaeological Possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of living in the Middle Ages Potential origins of rituals Most likely a member of a local cultural and economic network High potential for identifying patterns of settlement
Obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate recordkeeping and site security Agricultural damage and erosion Low awareness among young people in the area Lack of facilities for tourism
Heritage Tourism Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local interest in cultural identity is strong. Visitors are drawn to the unique ritual-magic history. Being close to Guwahati The potential to incorporate folklore and archeology into tourism

9. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the study are-

- 1) There are many clay sculptures from the eighth century at Mayang, most of which feature Ganesha and Shiva-Parvati. These artifacts show a strong early medieval cultural presence because they are dispersed throughout settlements like Chanaka, Hatimuria, and Kalchila. Their preservation and analysis shed light on the era's artistic and religious customs.
- 2) The historical significance of the area is highlighted by the finding of a sizable stone inscription at Burhamayang that is said to be among the longest in Asia. These inscriptions provide important historical information about early Assam social, religious, and governmental systems. Reconstructing local history and heritage narratives might be aided by accurate documentation.
- 3) The Ahom army and the Battle of Saraighat are associated with Kajali Chowki, a significant medieval military location. Stone bullets and weapons discovered during archaeology attest to its strategic importance. The location has great potential for historical tourism and is a prime example of Assam military legacy.
- 4) Material evidence is supplemented by oral stories and Mayang folklore, such as tales of dark magic and royal customs. These cultural recollections help us comprehend the social context of historical sites and protect intangible heritage. Including these stories improves how archaeological discoveries are interpreted.
- 5) The Mayang royal dynasty maintains some ceremonial customs and may trace their ancestry back to the Dimasa rulers. Celebrations like "Gossain Uliowa Utsav" preserve cultural continuity and highlight living heritage. This emphasizes the importance of both material and intangible cultural assets.
- 6) The royal family's participation in the Pancha Gossains celebration is a singular illustration of ritual legacy. The five deities' procession highlights how enduring historical traditions are. These kinds of activities have the ability to promote community involvement and draw cultural tourism.
- 7) Mayang is a prospective tourism attraction because of its military past, royal customs, historical treasures, and close proximity to the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. These websites may be made accessible while maintaining their authenticity with the right infrastructure and marketing.
- 8) There is a large vacuum in Assam's heritage inventory due to the numerous unreported or inadequately documented archaeological sites in Mayang. These lesser-known locations can be found, preserved, and studied with the use of systematic field surveys. This emphasizes how vital it is to document cultural heritage.
- 9) The study discovers that historical places frequently connect with local mythologies, such as magical rituals. Legends are a reflection of cultural identity and communal memory, even though some of them are fantastical. Contextualizing the region's legacy requires an understanding of this interaction.

- 10) The region has a variety of architectural remnants, such as sculpture fragments, stone carvings, and temple ruins. The region's historical diversity is reflected in these items, which show a variety of artistic styles and religious influences over time.
- 11) Dimasa and Ahom influences were among the larger political and cultural networks in Assam that Mayang was traditionally linked to. A more thorough understanding of Assam's historical geography is made possible by artifacts and inscriptions that show relationships between different locations.
- 12) The study finds that Mayang's tangible and intangible legacy urgently needs to be preserved, protected, and promoted. In order to ensure that these locations endure for future generations, conservation efforts can promote academic study, maintain cultural memory, and boost the local economy.

9.1. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Firstly, despite its rich material legacy, which includes medieval military sites, stone inscriptions, and terracotta sculptures, Mayang is still a little-studied area in terms of archaeology and history. By providing fresh perspectives on the political, religious, and social changes throughout centuries, documenting these lesser-known locations helps close gaps in the historiography of Assam and the larger Northeast area.

Secondly, the study emphasizes how oral traditions and cultural memory shape local identity and protect intangible heritage. This research acknowledges the social and symbolic significance of local narratives while assisting in separating historical facts from legend through the integration of folklore, myths, and community narratives with archeological evidence. This method deepens our comprehension of how societies see, maintain, and engage with their history.

Thirdly, this study has a great deal of practical significance from the standpoint of development and tourism. Mayang's heritage sites have the potential to become a popular destination for cultural and heritage tourism if they are methodically documented and promoted. In addition to its natural attractions like the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, showcasing the area's historical artifacts, royal customs, and military history can promote sustainable tourist practices, local economic growth, and job possibilities.

Finally, historic conservation initiatives are supported by the study. It can support local stakeholders, NGOs, and governmental organizations in safeguarding and managing Mayang's tangible and intangible heritage by offering thorough documentation, analysis, and recommendations. Overall, because it closes the gap between archaeological research, cultural memory, and regional development, the study is important for academics, decision-makers, and tourism entrepreneurs.

10. CONCLUSION

India, a country rich in culture and legacy, is a prime example of how the past has a significant impact on the present. The ways that historical events, customs, and artifacts connect with modern society especially through tourism show historical continuity. In addition to being essential for presenting India's cultural heritage, historical relics and archaeological remains are often the main draws for visitors who want to interact with the physical remnants of the past (Choudhury,

2017, pp. 45-48). In this way, history serves as a resource and a bridge, tying the present to its forebears while also providing tourists with a consumable experience. However, a recurring issue in heritage tourism is the fuzziness of the distinction between myth and history, as local folklore and stories are frequently confused with historical truths that have been documented. As a result, historians are essential in identifying authenticity and delivering thoroughly researched stories that inform tourists and uphold historical integrity (Bora, 2015, pp. 102-106).

This historical richness is best demonstrated by the Mayang region. It contains a large number of stone images that represent early religious and artistic practices, mostly of Shiva-Parvati and Ganesha. Burhamayang is a location of great archeological and historical value, as evidenced by the fact that its stone inscription is thought to be the longest in Asia (Hazarika, 2018, pp. 88-91). These locations have significant tourism potential in addition to shedding light on Mayang's past. These heritage assets can be transformed into well-known tourist sites that promote the area on national and worldwide stages and promote economic, cultural, and historical development with concentrated attention and strong community involvement.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Barpujari, H.K. (1992), *Heritage and Society in Assam*. Spectrum Publications, p. 156.
- Barua, M. (2016), "Military Sites of Medieval Assam: Kajali Chowki." *Assam Historical Review*, pp. 56-60.
- Barua, R. (2017), "Folklore and Identity in Assam." *Northeast Culture Studies Review*, pp. 88-90.
- Bora, R. (2015), "History, Myth, and Tourism in India." *Assam Heritage Journal*, pp. 102-106.
- Bora, R. (2015), "Terracotta Sculptures of Assam." *Assam Heritage Journal*, pp. 45-47.
- Chaudhuri, N. (1985), *Historical Archaeology of Central Assam*. Gauhati University Press, p. 42.
- Choudhury, A. (2017), "Stone Heritage and Historical Tourism in Assam." *Journal of Northeast Archaeology*, pp. 45-48.
- Choudhury, A. (2017), "Stone Inscriptions and Early History of Assam." *Journal of Northeast Archaeology*, pp. 112-115.
- Choudhury, R.D. (1985), *Archaeology of the Brahmaputra Valley: Pre-Ahom Period*. Assam State Museum, p. 89.
- Das, M. (2019), "Tourism Potentials of Morigaon District." *Assam Heritage Review*, pp. 112-114.
- Dutta, B. (1978), *Folklore and Cultural Memory in Assam*. Assam Sahitya Sabha, p. 113.

- Gogoi, A.(2012), "The Battle of Saraighat and the Ahom Military Strategy." Historical Studies in Assam, pp. 78–82.
- Hazarika, B. (2018), "Archaeological Sites of Morigaon: Documentation and Preservation." Northeast Culture Studies Review, pp. 88–91.
- Hazarika, B. (2018), "Royal Festivals and Cultural Heritage in Assam." Northeast Culture Studies Review, pp. 102–104.
- Singh, U. (2010), "Cultural Heritage and the Indian Past." Journal of Indian History, pp. 12–14.