

A Study on Tourists' Perceptions of Tribal Tourism Destinations in Meghalaya, India



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ABSTRACT: This study explores tourists' perceptions of tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya, India, with a focus on their experiences, feedback, and awareness of sustainable tourism practices. The survey reveals that visitors are drawn to the region's rich tribal culture, traditions, and natural landscapes. Tourists largely appreciate the positive impact of their visits on local communities and express a strong willingness to recommend these destinations to others. Awareness of sustainability is high, with many respondents observing efforts towards eco-friendly tourism during their trips. However, the study also highlights areas for improvement, including accessibility, infrastructure, and targeted marketing initiatives. Key suggestions include collaborative efforts between local tribal businesses and government, improved facilities, and increased promotion of sustainable practices. By addressing these areas, Meghalaya has the potential to become a leading example of sustainable tribal tourism, showcasing the balance between cultural preservation and tourism growth.

Keywords: tribal tourism, tourists, perceptions, destination, north-east India, sustainable tourism

INTRODUCTION

Travelling to different places to learn about the historical events, dialects, traditions, and lifestyles of people in different nations is known as tourism. It is a chance to see how other people live, think, and engage with their surroundings while also experiencing cultural attractions like cuisine, beverages, recreational activities, and lodging in general. An intriguing journey to a somewhat simple environment within which one gets to witness a culture distinct from one's own is tribal tourism. It is more reliant on nature and the environment in its most unadulterated state and is significantly less dependent on contemporary technology. This type of travel is becoming more and more popular. It is quickly attracting the interest of regular tourists. In addition to being enlightening, tribal tourism may be a highly enjoyable and educational experience. Tribal villages can be found all over the world. Curiosity-driven tourists visit tribal regions to gain a glimpse of their world, which is typically tucked away in picturesque and pristine surroundings. The environment is dominated by a surprising variety of plants and animals. Enthusiasts who are eager to learn more about tribal life are enthralled with their customs and rituals, which may appear strange but are largely unaffected by the poison that civilisation has spat out. The world's unique tribal population offers a diverse range of cultures. The tribal celebrations, which are adorned with colour and humour, are a spectacular explosion of colour that leaves onlookers in awe. Tribal tourism appears to be the only opportunity to experience the splendour of exquisite cultural practices and tribal festivities.

There are many calming effects of tribal tourism on the mind. Nowadays, travellers are gravitating more towards unusual travel options, and tribal tourism is the most popular option. Since travellers want to engage with and experience different cultures and customs from around the globe, tribal tourism is essential to the growth and expansion of the travel industry. The vast significance of tribal tourism is now recognised by the majority of the tourism industry. Tribal tourism enhances a destination's allure by showcasing its distinct culture and customs. The most significant instrument for promoting diverse cultures and customs and uniting them on a single platform may turn out to be tourism. Tribal tourism in particular has the potential to promote these communities' distinctive customs and culture, which will directly contribute to their general growth. It is possible to argue that tourism has saved many tribal villages, and the majority of people who live in these communities have come to understand the importance of tourism and its associated activities.

India presents a huge and varied nation with many varying customs and cultures, which are represented by the many different tribes who call it home. There are 705 Scheduled Tribes in India, which make up about 8.6% of the total population, according to the 2011 census. The nation's varied background has been greatly influenced by these tribes. Tribes like the Bhils, Gonds, Santhals, and Nagas are among the most widely recognised. Known for their ancient art and mythology, the Bhils are mainly from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur,

Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim make up North-East India. Every state adds to the region's variety with its distinct traditions and histories. The Adis, Apatanis, Buguns, Hrusso, Singphos, Mishmis, Monpas, Nyishi, Sherdukpens, Tagins, Khamtis, Wanchos, Noctes, Yobin, Khambas, and Membas are among the many tribes that make up North-East India's tribal peoples. With over 200 distinct tribes living there, North East India is regarded as one of India's ethnically distinct regions. Through the portrayal of native arcade games, harvesting, hunting, and angling techniques, traditional forms of art depict the daily activities of the inhabitants of the area. Even in ancient times, the tribes were highly inventive with their distinctive goods made of bamboo, cane, clay, stone, varied headdresses, and other materials for everyday use. India is home to traditional music, which has always played a significant role in people's lives. The music of the Northeast is very distinctive. The folktales shown in the paintings by tribal painters have showcased the region's rich textiles. Furthermore, women's contributions to the region's culture—from domesticity to participation in small-scale industries to the nation's freedom movement—are important. For tourism to grow, it is essential to comprehend how visitors view a place. It has an impact on the location's reputation, tourist satisfaction, and sustainability over time. A tourist's view of a destination is influenced by both cognitive and emotional variables, which control their travel experience and their desire to return or suggest the destination, according to Echtner and Ritchie (1991). Given another way, visitors' perceptions of the spot affect their experiences there, as well as their desire to return or recommend it to others. According to Buhalis (2000), to remain competitive in the increasingly globally connected tourism business, places must actively regulate how visitors view them. To differentiate themselves from other travel locations, establishments must endeavour to provide guests with favourable perceptions and experiences. It's crucial to comprehend how visitors view the experience when it comes to tribal tourism. It assists in finding a balance between protecting indigenous cultures and generating income while making sure that local populations are neither exploited nor misrepresented. Visiting indigenous communities to fully immerse oneself in their customs, culture, and natural environment is known as tribal tourism. This kind of experience and eco-friendly travel has grown in popularity (Smith, 1996). Understanding what attracts tourists, how they view authenticity, and what their expectations versus reality are is crucial for a region like Meghalaya, which the Khasi and Jaintia tribes inhabit. These kinds of findings help direct more effective tourism management techniques. Various stakeholders, including local tribal communities, government officials, and tourist

operators, can improve visitor contentment and guarantee that tourism helps tribal communities without losing their cultural identity by researching these perceptions. The growth and the sustainability of tribal tourism are greatly influenced by the opinions of visitors. Gaining insight into the factors that drive tourists to participate in tribal tourism, along with their expectations and experiences, can help develop this specialised tourism industry for the benefit of both travellers and indigenous communities. Tourist opinions are influenced by some characteristics, including cultural curiosity, authenticity, ethical considerations, and the general experience of travelling to tribal locations.

Economic growth, cross-cultural interactions, and community sustainability are all greatly aided by tourism.

Economic Gains for Communities: Economic independence of tribal populations serves as one of the biggest benefits of tribal tourism. Because of their remote location and slow industrial growth, many tribal regions, such as the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya, have little access to mainstream economic prospects. Occupations as tour guides, hospitality personnel, musicians, and facilitators are among both the direct and indirect occupations that tourism generates for locals. Likewise, local small-scale enterprises and entrepreneurs profit from the increasing demand for customary handiwork, textiles and clothing, and regional food. Both residents and visitors gain from the money generated by tourism, which also helps to upgrade infrastructure like roads, electricity, and sanitary facilities.

Cultural Heritage Preservation and Exhibition: Tribal tourism provides an essential framework for conserving and exhibiting traditional cultures that may otherwise be in danger of vanishing as a result of globalisation and modernisation. Tourism enables communities to pass on their knowledge to future generations and take pride in their legacy by promoting traditional dance, music, folklore, and rituals. For example, tourists can hear traditional storytelling sessions, take part in lively events like the Nongkrem Dance Festival, and observe the distinctive matrilineal customs of the Khasi and Jaintia tribes in Meghalaya. In addition to educating tourists, this type of cultural tourism emphasises the value of maintaining ancestors' customs within a tribal community.

Protecting the Environment Through Sustainable Tourism: Many tribal communities coexist peacefully with the environment, depending on rivers, woods, and agricultural land to support themselves. Eco-friendly behaviours that support the preservation of these natural resources are

frequently encouraged by tribal tourism. Since they understand the financial advantages of protecting their ecosystem for environmentally friendly tourism, local communities take an active role in conservation initiatives. Ecotourism projects like wildlife tours, nature camps, and community-led treks provide alternate ways to make money while protecting biodiversity. Tribal families also operate eco-lodges and homestays that promote sustainable living through the use of organic farming, renewable energy, and low garbage generation.

Community Empowerment and Involvement in Tourist Development: Giving local communities authority over the development of tourist attractions is a key component of tribal tourism. Numerous effective tribal tourism models are run by the local community, guaranteeing that the advantages remain in the area rather than being taken advantage of by outside businesses. Tribal groups can establish rules that safeguard their natural resources and cultural integrity by actively engaging in decision-making processes. Training courses in foreign languages, hospitality, and business also give residents the tools they need to succeed in the travel and tourism sector. Cooperative tourism strategies reduce economic inequality and foster inclusive growth by distributing earnings among community members.

Cultural Interaction: Tribal tourism promotes unity in society and cross-cultural awareness despite economic and environmental advantages. Visitors to tribal communities experience traditional practices closely, eliminate myths while encouraging respect for diversity. Furthermore, governments and international organisations frequently support tribal tourist initiatives with finance and policy because they understand how important they are to the achievement of sustainable development.

Tourism in Meghalaya offers a great chance for both cultural preservation and economic development, especially for the Khasi and Jaintia tribal tribes. These tribes are frequently visited by tourists looking for genuine tribal experiences while travelling because of their rich traditions, distinctive rituals, and close relationships to the natural world. Incorporating native customs into the travel and tourism sector helps tribes maintain their distinct culture and heritage while also reaping financial rewards. Conversely, travellers enjoy a genuine and rewarding journey that promotes cross-cultural communication and a greater awareness of the world. Tribal tourism, which combines environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic growth, is a potent way to make tourism a significant sector. Tribal communities can support themselves, their connection to culture is reinforced, and ethical travel is encouraged.

Simultaneously, tourists gain from unique encounters that go beyond conventional tourism and enable deep connections with native people. Tribal tourism guarantees that, when properly run, travel will continue to be a positive influence that uplifts people, maintains customs, and safeguards the environment for coming generations.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- The study aims to explore how tourists perceive tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya, focusing on their motives, expectations, experiences, and overall satisfaction.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of tribal tourism offerings in Meghalaya from a tourist's perspective.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to provide a clear framework for a more thorough investigation into how tourists perceive tribal tourism in Meghalaya, India. This involves a thorough understanding of the objectives of the tourists as well as their expectations, experiences, and general fulfilment. It looks at how tourists see the legitimacy of participating in cultural events, such as more native festivals, customs, and interacting with the hosts, as well as how they feel about the level of infrastructure, hospitality, and services. The study also aims to investigate certain basic concerns, such as access to tourists, commercialisation, the potential for tribal heritage to be exploited for financial gain, and the awareness of the socio-economic and environmental effects of tourism among tribal groups. The creation of sustainable tourism that strikes a balance between ecological protection, cultural preservation, and economic growth is anticipated to be aided by the examination of these factors. These findings will help the tourism sector, legislators, and local authorities support the development of a comprehensive and considerate tourism policy.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using a combination of secondary and primary data. Secondary data was gathered from published journals, articles, and reputable electronic sources related to tribal tourism, tourist perceptions, and the tourism landscape of Meghalaya and Northeast India. Primary data was collected through a structured survey, incorporating both direct observations and questionnaires. The survey was conducted among tourists visiting key tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya, including Mawlynnong (renowned as Asia's cleanest village), Sohra (Cherrapunji), and Dawki (Crystal-clear River water). This approach provided valuable insights into tourists' motivations, expectations, and overall experiences in these culturally rich locations.

LITERATURE ASSESSMENT

As a travel destination, tourist Perceptions of India evoke a spectrum of perceptions among tourists. While many are drawn to its rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and diverse traditions, poverty, pollution, and safety concerns continue to shape visitor experiences (Khan, 2013). Over time, perceptions have evolved, with increasing recognition of India's cultural appeal. However, political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and socioeconomic disparities remain significant considerations, particularly for business travelers (Rajamohan et al., 2016).

Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction A study on the Buddhist Circuit in India found that both domestic and international tourists generally view service quality favourably, enhancing their overall travel experience (Comparative Analysis of Domestic and Foreign Tourists' Perceptions of Destination Service Quality: Evidence from the Buddhist Circuit in India, n.d.). Factors such as convenience, safety, and access to comprehensive information play a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction and contributing to the industry's growth. Furthermore, different age and income groups prioritize these factors differently, influencing tourism development strategies (Udawat, 2022).

Emotional and Behavioural Influences on Tourism Tourists' experiences at a destination are deeply rooted in emotional and psychological evaluations. These perceptions influence destination loyalty, revisit intentions, and recommendations (Bagchi et al., 2023). Cultural authenticity, in particular, plays a key role in fostering emotional connections with destinations. Positive experiences increase tourist satisfaction and the likelihood of return visits, especially in ethnic village tourism along border areas (Wu et al., 2024). Additionally, destination image is shaped by cultural, social, and marketing factors, which significantly impact tourist behaviour. While positive perceptions enhance a destination's appeal, negative experiences can deter potential visitors (Yuan & Vui, 2023).

Culinary Tourism and Product Perceptions Food experiences are an integral part of tourism, with freshness, transparency, and nutritional value influencing tourists' purchasing decisions and strengthening their connection to local food culture (Baby & Joseph, 2023). Similarly, in destinations like Ciletuh Sukabumi Geopark, the quality of MSME products and services significantly affects tourist perceptions. Among key factors, product quality ranks highest, followed by service quality and product variety, highlighting opportunities for improvement (Tourist Perception of the Quality of MSME Products and Services in Tourist Destinations, 2023).

Tribal and Indigenous Tourism Tribal tourism offers a distinct experience by emphasizing traditional hospitality, community interactions, and cultural preservation. Indigenous communities often integrate tourism with traditional economies, such as barter-based craftsmanship. Cultural preservation efforts are often supported by tourism departments (Introduction to Tribal Tourism in India, n.d.). Tourists' perceptions shaped by authentic experiences contribute to creating a compelling and credible destination image (Khan, 2013). However, tourism policies and marketing strategies frequently focus on visitor interests while overlooking local community perspectives. Although many community members support tourism development, concerns about environmental sustainability and adherence to cultural protocols persist (Falak et al., n.d.). Indigenous tourism remains deeply tied to environmental and cultural heritage, reinforcing tribal rights to maintain and protect their traditions (Huang et al., 2015).

Tourism as an Economic and Environmental Force Tourism is often viewed as a catalyst for economic development, generating employment opportunities and improving local livelihoods. However, its environmental implications, such as waste generation and pollution, remain areas of concern (Wani et al., 2023). Heritage souvenirs, a key component of indigenous tourism, serve as a bridge between tourists and local cultures. However, their cultural significance is often underexplored. Understanding tourist perceptions of indigenous heritage can guide the creation of authentic souvenirs and contribute to cultural sustainability (Janet Chang, Geoffrey Wall & Jui-Cheng (Richard) Hung, 2012).

Tourism Industry and Stakeholder Roles India's tourism industry boasts a diverse range of destinations, attracting travellers from across the globe. Given that tourist satisfaction is directly linked to service quality, tourism service providers play a crucial role in maintaining a positive visitor experience. The commercial success of the tourism industry depends largely on high traveller satisfaction (Udawat, 2022). Additionally, as tourism experiences are highly subjective, individual perceptions vary based on personal characteristics and expectations (Pasaco-González et al., 2023). Tourists' perceptions play a fundamental role in shaping India's image as a travel destination. While the country's deep cultural and historical roots remain a major attraction, ongoing challenges such as infrastructure gaps, environmental concerns, and safety issues cannot be overlooked. Factors like service quality, cultural authenticity, and emotional connections are critical in driving visitor satisfaction and repeat visits. Tribal and indigenous tourism

provides immersive and unique experiences, but it requires sustainable management to ensure cultural preservation and community involvement. Additionally, balancing economic benefits with environmental responsibility is essential to minimize

the negative impacts of tourism. Moving forward, improving infrastructure, promoting responsible tourism, and fostering authentic cultural engagements will be key to enhancing India’s global appeal as a premier travel destination.

Table: Key Aspects Influencing Tourist Perceptions and Engagement in Tribal Tourism

Key Aspects	Description
Motivations for Engaging in Tribal Tourism	Tourists seek authentic cultural experiences, interaction with indigenous communities, and participation in traditional activities. Many are driven by ethical responsibility, choosing eco-tourism, community-run homestays, and guided cultural tours that support local economies.
Interest in Meghalaya’s Tribal Communities	Tourists are drawn to the Khasi and Jaintia tribes for their matrilineal traditions, sacred forests, eco-friendly lifestyles, storytelling culture, and sustainable agriculture practices.
Expectations vs. Reality: The Authenticity Debate	Tourists often expect “untouched” tribal experiences, leading to unrealistic perceptions. The integration of modern influences in indigenous communities can result in disappointment for some tourists. This creates ethical concerns, as communities may feel pressured to stage traditions for tourism. Educating tourists on cultural evolution is essential.
Tourist Satisfaction and Cultural Learning	Tourists who engage in homestays, guided cultural tours, and craft workshops report higher satisfaction. Meaningful interactions with tribal elders, experiencing sacred groves, and learning sustainable practices enhance cultural appreciation and encourage word-of-mouth promotion.
Ethical Concerns in Tribal Tourism	Some tourists worry about disrupting indigenous communities or commodifying tribal cultures. Ethical tourism should be community-led, ensuring fair economic benefits, minimal environmental impact, and cultural sensitivity. Pre-visit orientation can help tourists engage respectfully.
The Role of Social Media in Shaping Perceptions	Social media influences tourists’ expectations through curated images of indigenous communities. While it promotes tribal tourism, it can also misrepresent cultures. Community-led digital storytelling can provide authentic perspectives, counter stereotypes, and encourage responsible tourism narratives.

Compiled by the author

OVERVIEW OF STUDY AREA

The northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya is well known for its indigenous tribal populations, idyllic surroundings, and deep legacy of culture. Its name, "Abode of Clouds," accurately captures the area's mist-covered hills, verdant woods, gushing waterfalls, and vast cavern systems, which make it a top choice for adventure and nature travellers (Tiwari & Joshi, 2020). Scholars, tourists, and

cultural lovers have all expressed interest in Meghalaya's rich traditions and cultural practices, which set it apart from other states despite its natural advantages (Chhetri et al., 2004). Three foremost tribes—the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo—live in the state; each has its distinct languages, social practices, and traditional knowledge systems (Nongbri, 2003). While the Garo tribe mostly lives in the western portion of Meghalaya, the Khasi and

Jaintia tribes are mainly found in the central and eastern parts of the state. These communities are an essential component of Meghalaya's tourism appeal since they have preserved their unique cultural identities despite the effects of modernisation (Roy & Sarma, 2019). The Khasi and Jaintia communities are distinguished by their matrilineal system, which traces ancestry and inheritance through the mother's family. In contrast to the patrilineal customs seen in the majority of India, this social structure has drawn scholarly interest and sparked tourists' interest (Chakrabarty, 2013). In these societies, women occupy important social and economic roles and are frequently in charge of the household's assets. The region's cultural diversity is further enhanced by the Garo tribe's customs and social conventions, which diverge from those of the Khasi and Jaintia despite sharing a matrilineal system (Sharma, 2016).

In Meghalaya, tribal tourism gives tourists a chance to interact with and get a personal look at the local way of life. Annual celebrations that highlight regional dance forms, music, and religious rites that have been passed down through the generations include Shad Suk Mynsiem (Khasi festival), Behdeinkhlam (Jaintia festival), and Wangala (Garo festival) (Marak, 2021). The creative and spiritual traditions of the indigenous people of Meghalaya can be better appreciated by tourists owing to these cultural events. Furthermore, the state is well-known for its traditional handicrafts, which provide a significant source of revenue for regional craftsmen. These include exquisitely made bamboo and cane goods, textiles, and jewellery (Bhaumik, 2020). As evidenced by their environmental conservation efforts, Meghalaya's indigenous inhabitants have long maintained a peaceful relationship with the natural world. As sanctuaries for biodiversity and uncommon plant species, sacred groves like those in Mawphlang are valued as places of ecological and spiritual significance (Tynsong & Tiwari, 2020). Deeply ingrained in traditional ideas, these

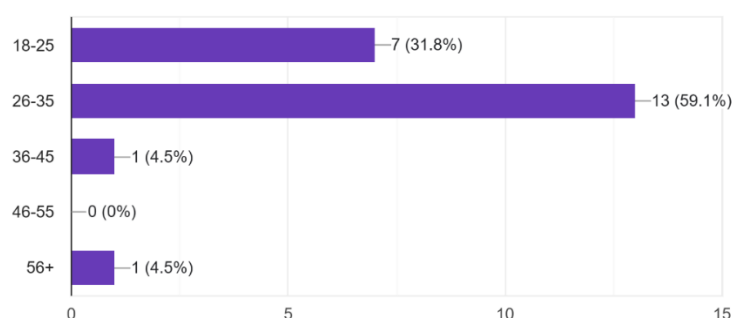
conservation initiatives represent an environmentally sound management strategy that predates contemporary ecological movements (Pathak & Thakur, 2010). With its well-known sites like Mawlynnong (hailed as Asia's cleanest village), Cherrapunji (which belongs to the renowned living root bridges), and Dawki (known for its clear river waters), Meghalaya has become a major ecotourism and cultural tourism destination in recent years (Roy & Sarma, 2019). These locations offer immersive cultural experiences, such as community-led tours, traditional homestays, and involvement in tribal farming and food preparation methods, in addition to stunning perspectives. By guaranteeing that financial gains are fairly shared among local people while protecting their heritage, both natural and cultural, such programs encourage environmentally conscious tourism (Chhetri et al., 2004). The concepts of sustainable and responsible tourist development are being underlined as Meghalaya's tourism industry develops. To guarantee that tribal tourism serves local communities without resulting in cultural commodification or environmental degradation, it is still crucial to strike a balance between economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation (Nongbri, 2003). To preserve the authenticity and integrity of Meghalaya's tribal heritage and establish the state as an example of sustainable tribal tourism in India, tourists and indigenous populations must engage in courteous and knowledgeable interactions (Bhaumik, 2020).

DATA ANALYSIS

A survey conducted among tourists visiting Meghalaya's tribal tourism destinations, such as Mawlynnong (Asia's cleanest village), Sohra (Cherrapunji), and Dawki (crystal clear river water) reveals key insights into their motivations and expectations:

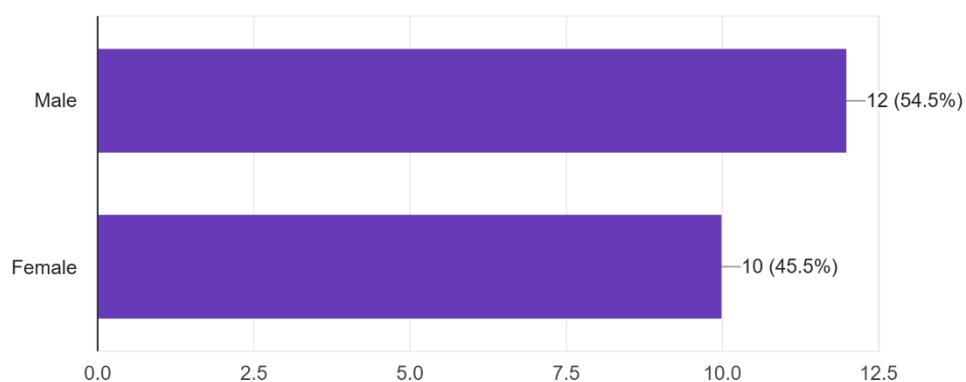
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age:
22 responses



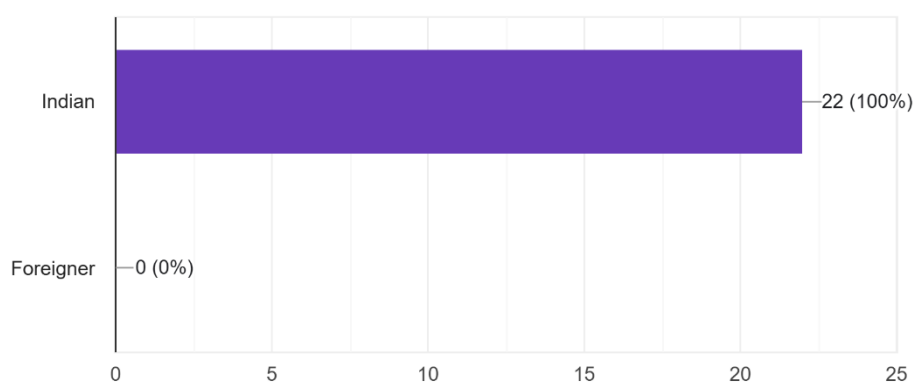
Gender:

22 responses



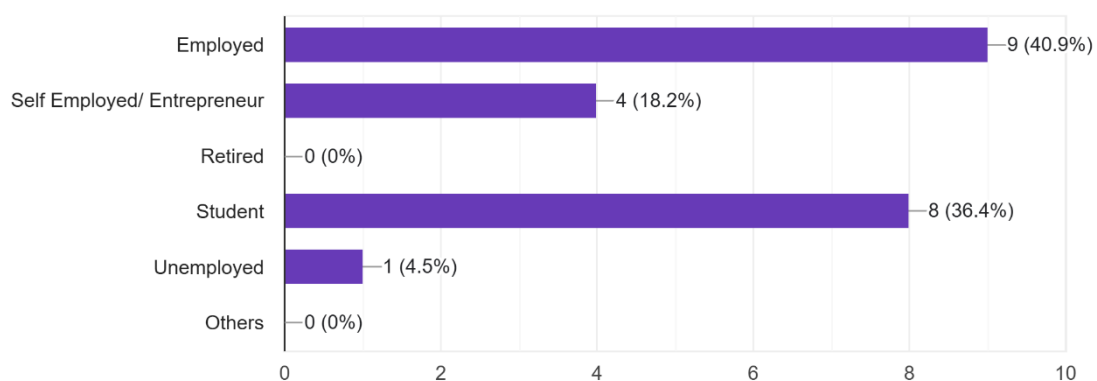
Nationality:

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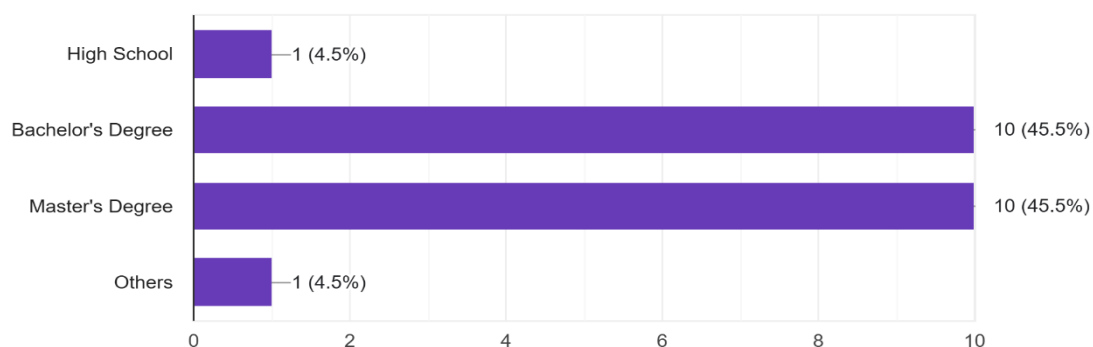
Occupation:

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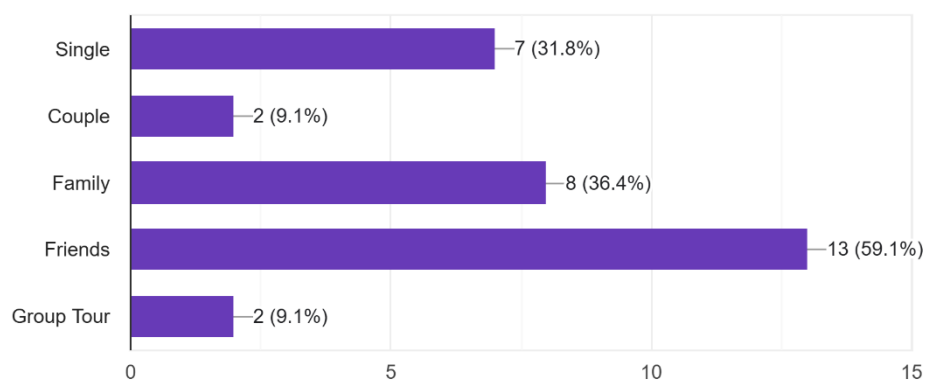
Education Level:

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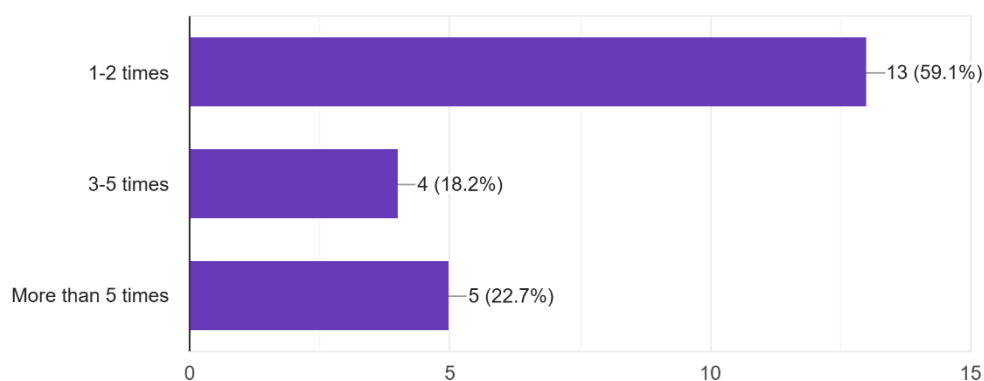
Travel Companions:

22 responses



Frequency of travel (per year):

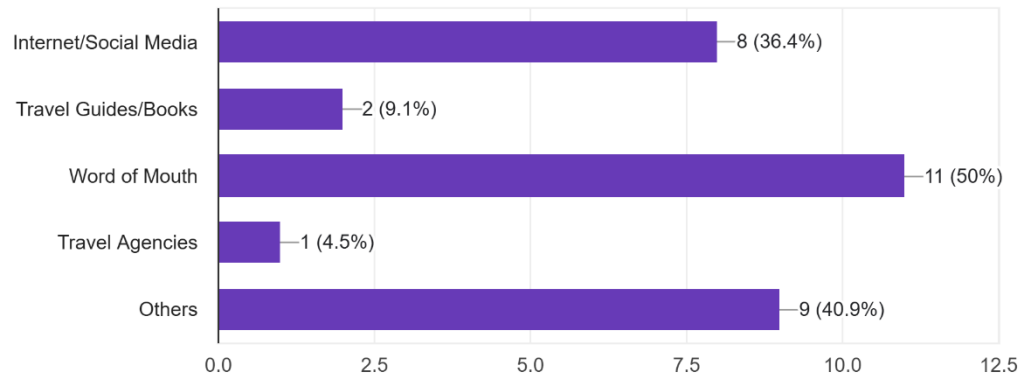
22 responses



TRAVELLING PLANNING AND MOTIVATION

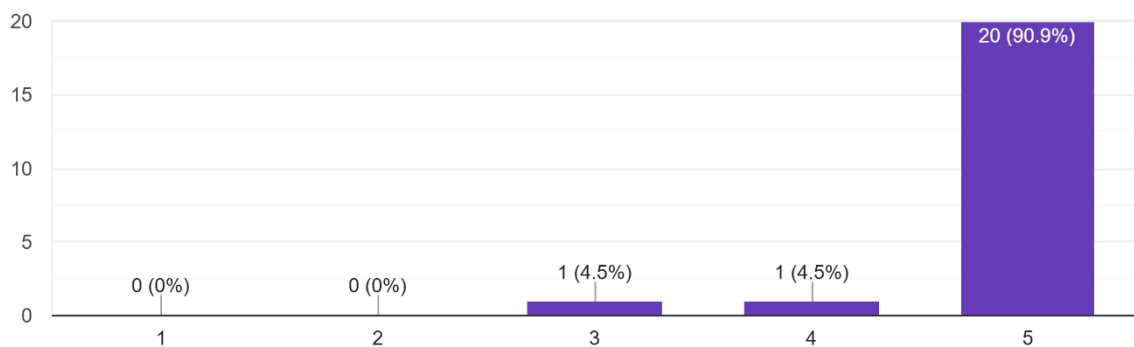
How did you learn about tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya?

22 responses



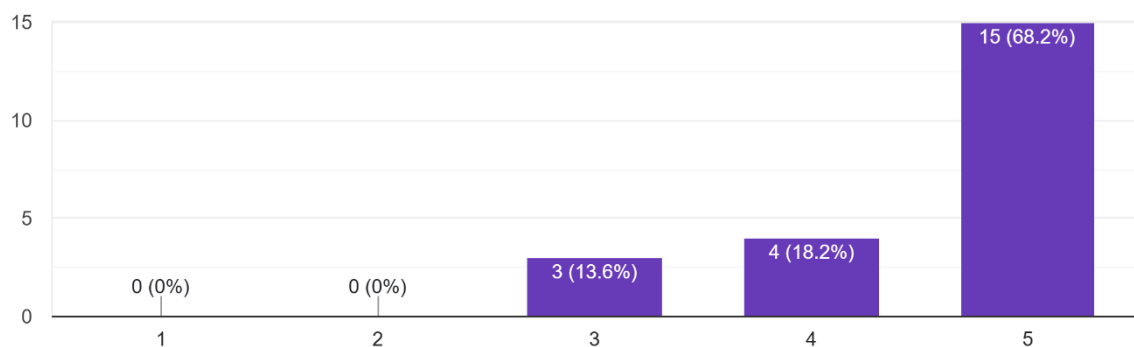
Exploring natural beauty and landscapes.

22 responses



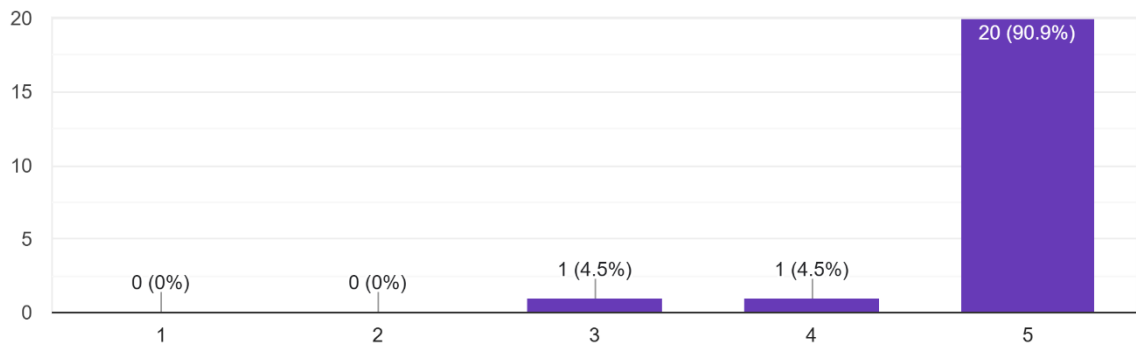
Experiencing tribal culture and traditions.

22 responses



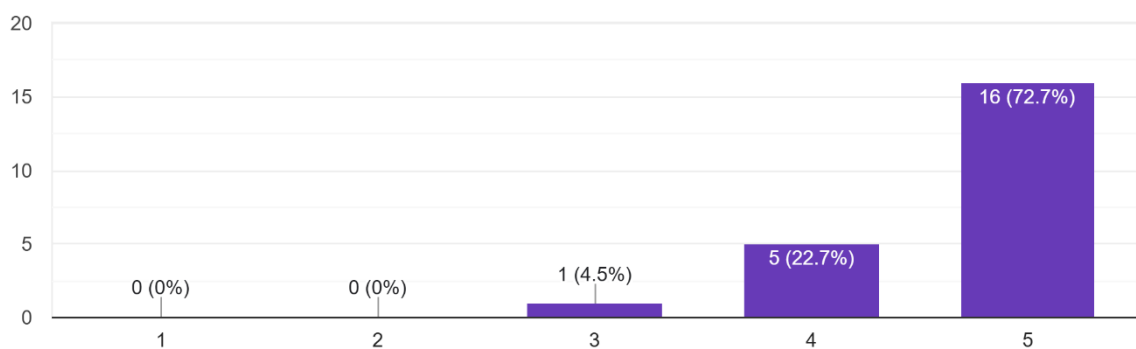
Exploring natural beauty and landscapes.

22 responses



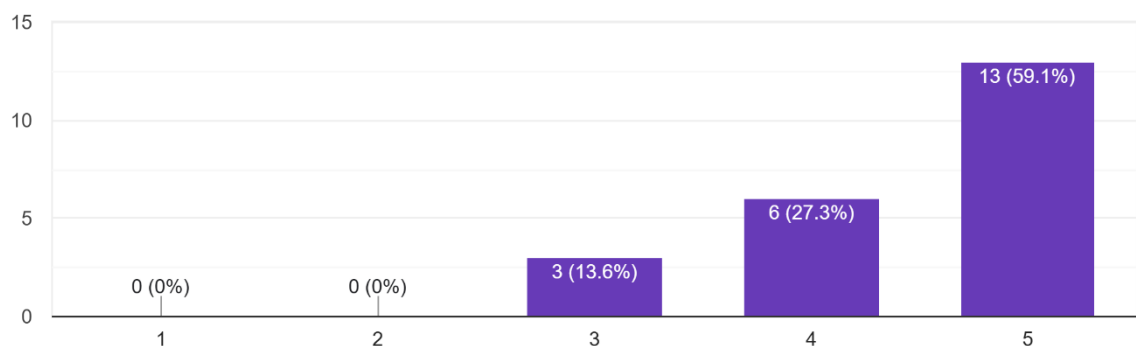
Seeking unique and authentic experiences.

22 responses



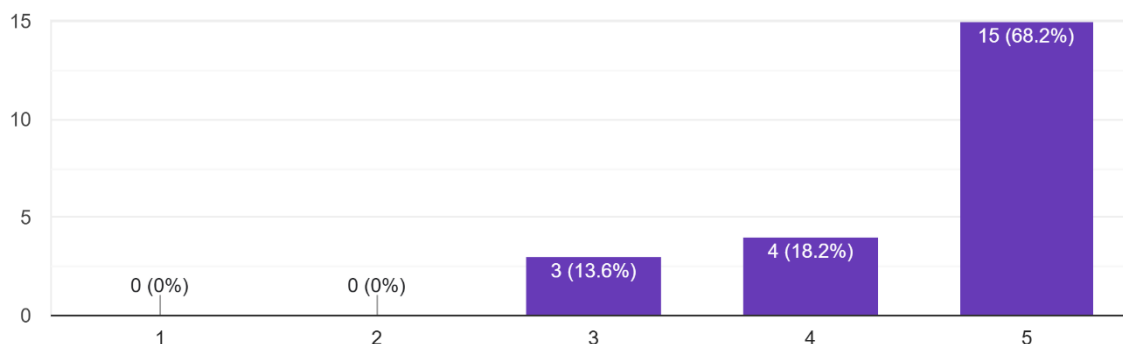
Photography and videography.

22 responses



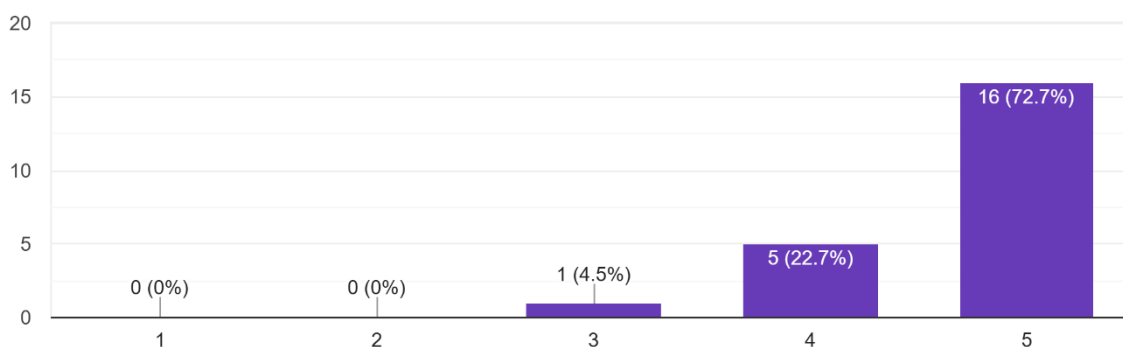
Learning about tribal history and heritage.

22 responses



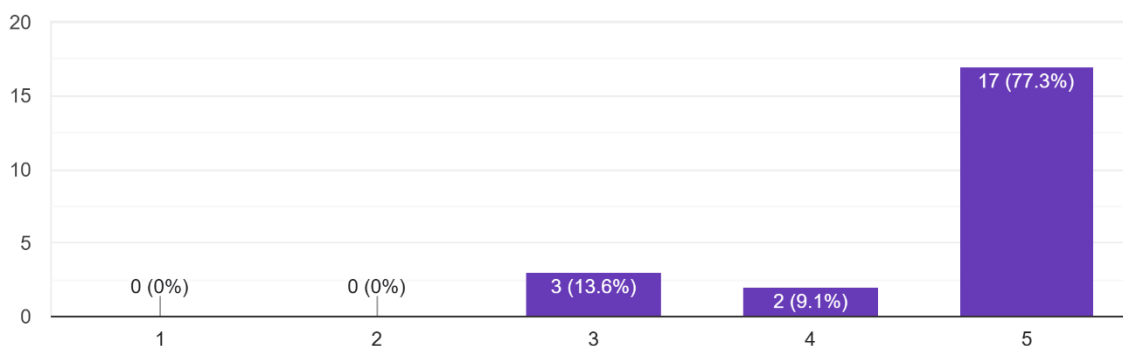
Supporting local communities.

22 responses



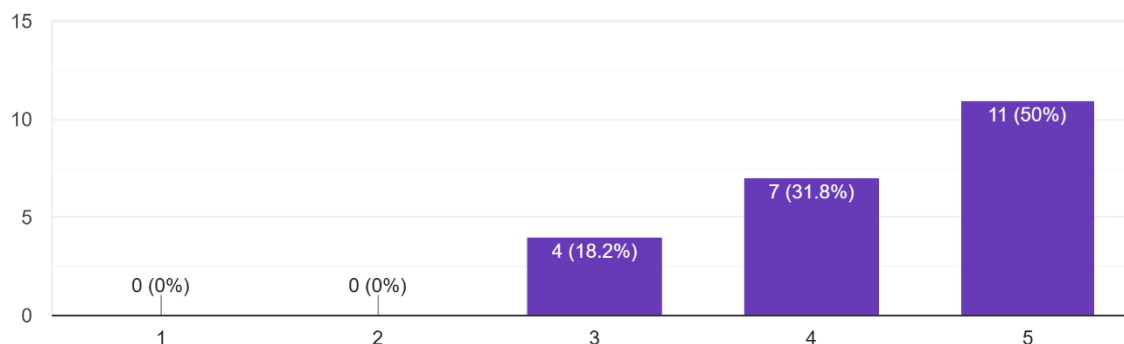
Relaxation and escape from daily life.

22 responses



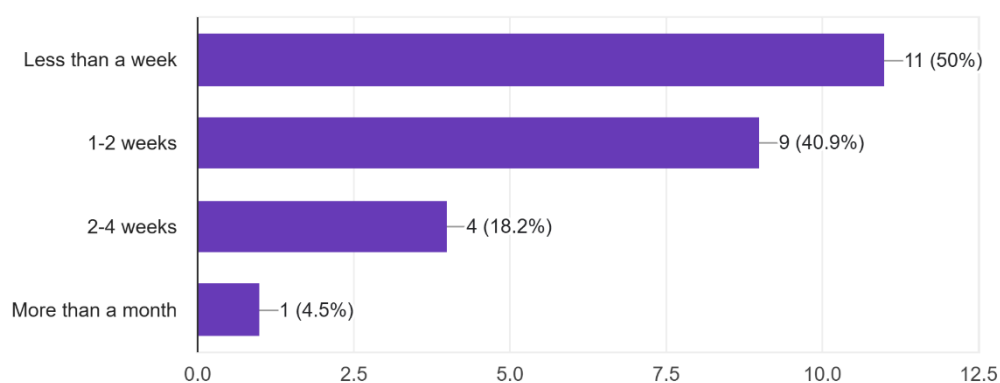
Adventure activities (e.g., trekking, caving).

22 responses



How long did you plan your trip?

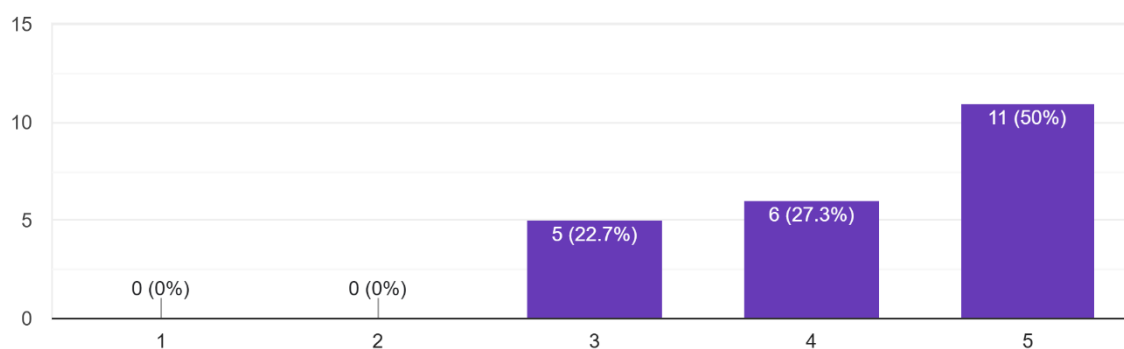
22 responses



EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

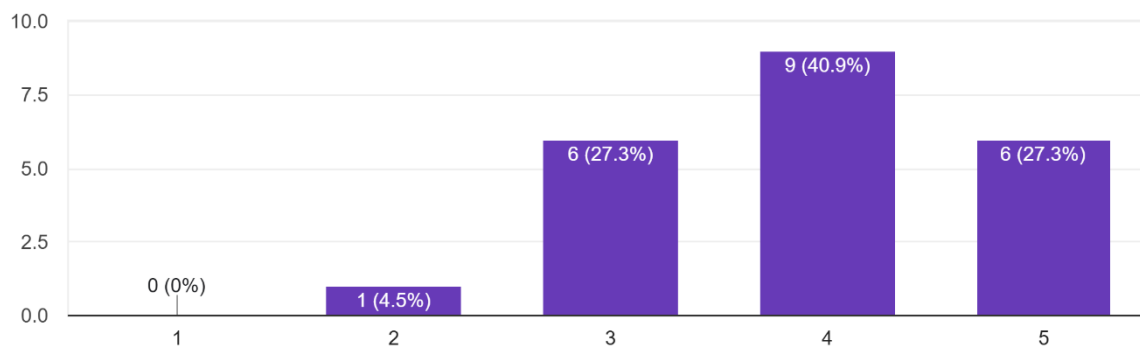
Accommodation

22 responses



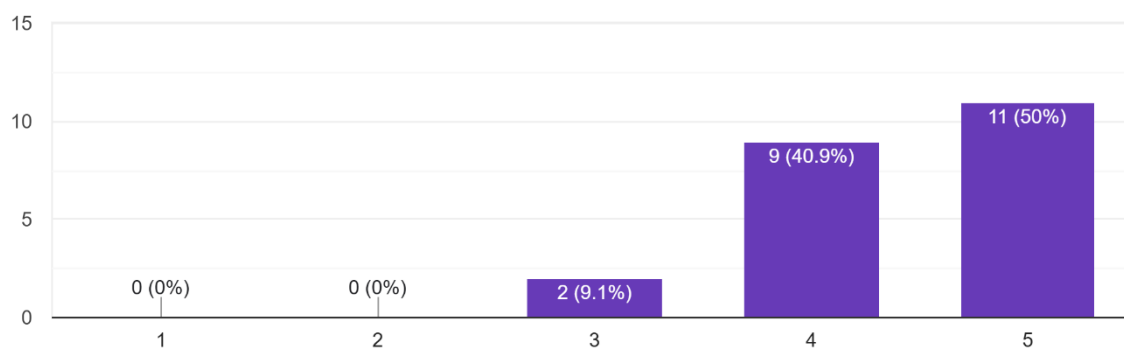
Transportation

22 responses



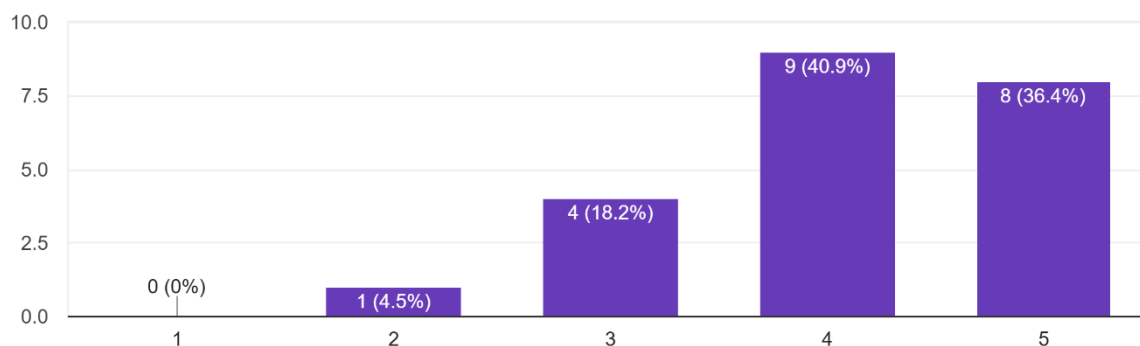
Food and Dining

22 responses



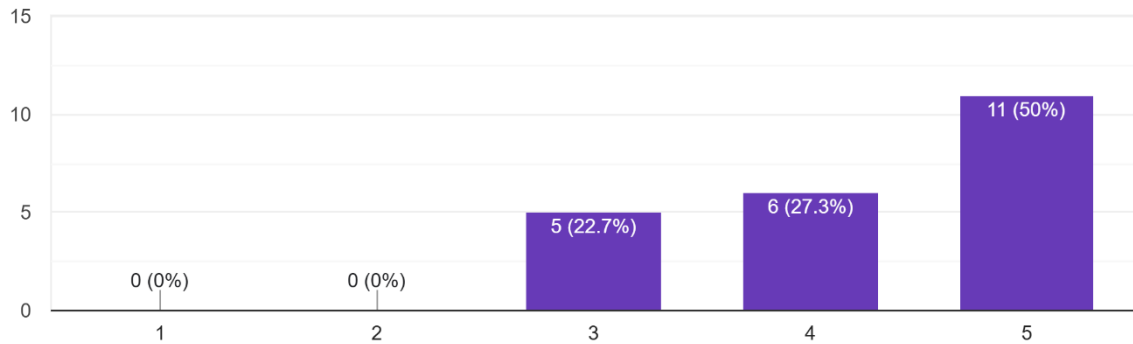
Local Guides

22 responses



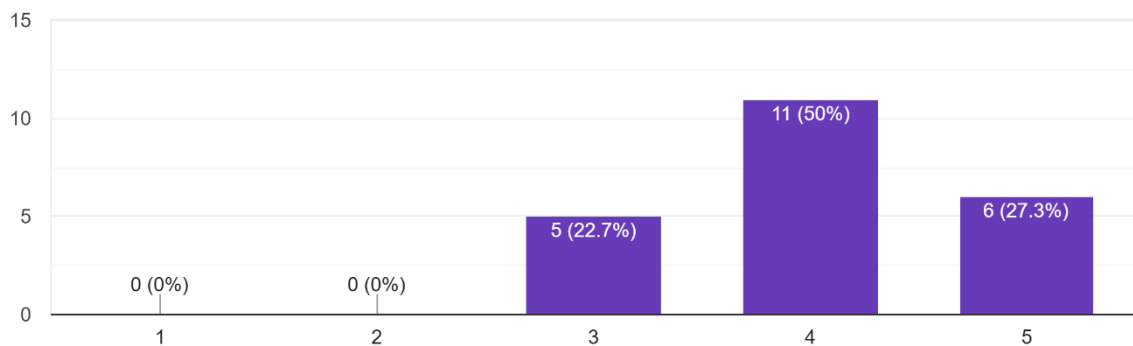
Cultural Performances

22 responses



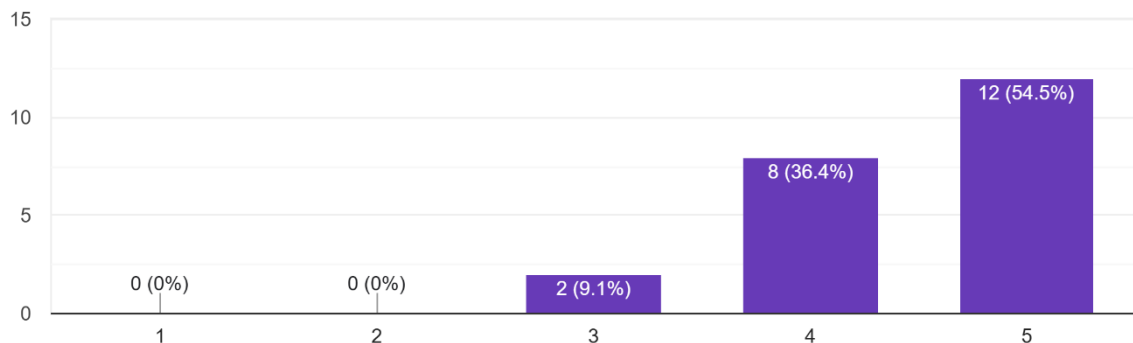
Accessibility

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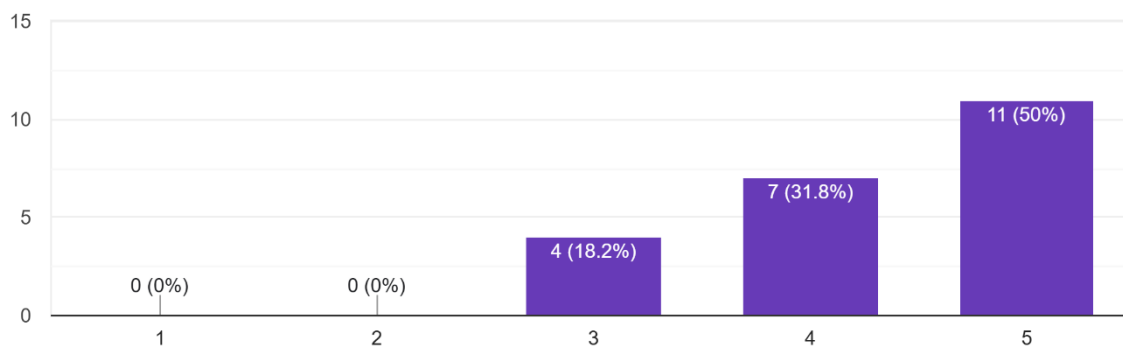
Cleanliness of Destination

22 responses



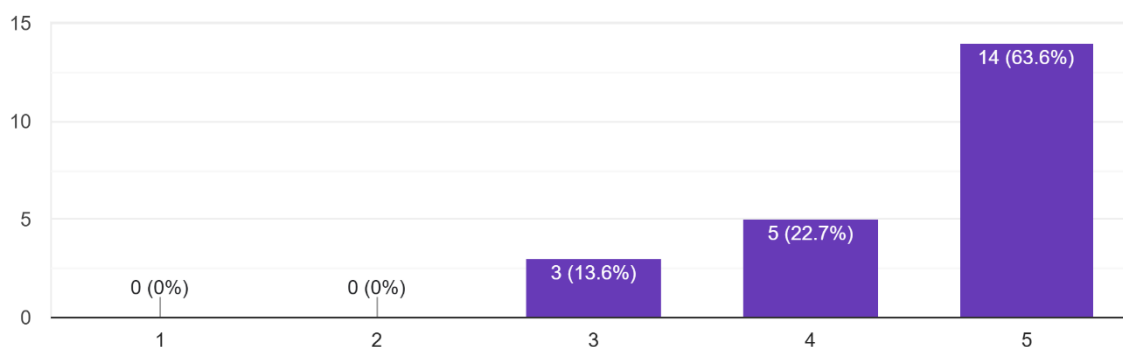
Safety and Security

22 responses



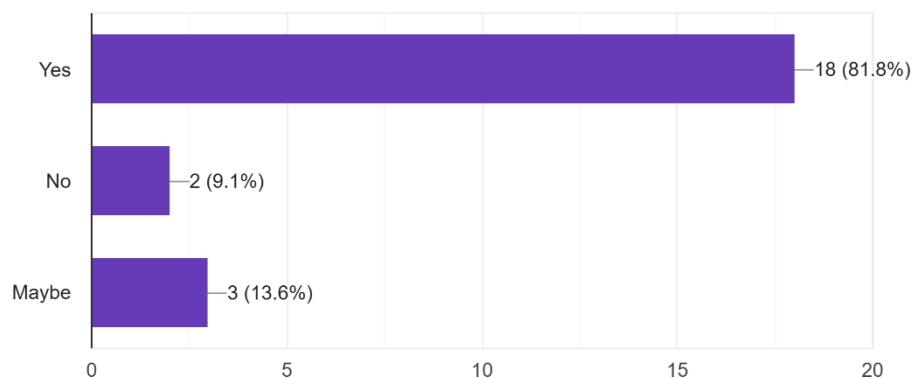
Value of Money

22 responses



Did you feel that your visit positively impacted the local tribal communities? (Yes/No/Unsure)

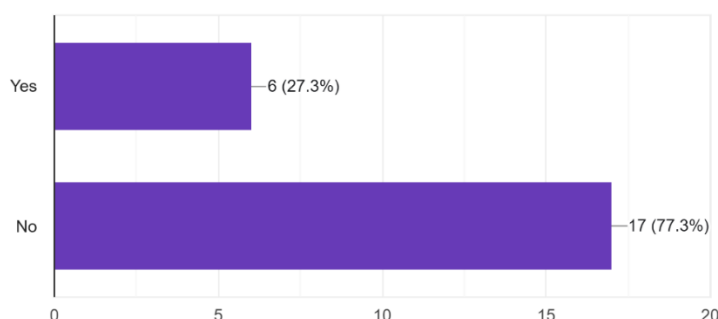
22 responses



Did you encounter any negative impacts of tourism on the tribal communities or environment?

(Yes/No)

22 responses



What aspects of tribal tourism did you find most interesting? 16 responses

Friendly

Culture

Culture and everything being so natural.

Nothing

Cultural heritage

Culture

Tribal tourism is interesting because it exhibits the preservation of traditions and cultures and the practices that offer sustainability.

Traditions and natural landscape.

culture and tradition

The traditional conservation of the destinations without hampering the landscapes.

Local delicacy

The upkeep of the cultural heritage of the state

The culture

Attaining that ethnicity.

The traditions were passed on from one generation to another.

People's hospitality and way of life

What suggestions do you have for improving the tribal tourism experience in Meghalaya? 15 responses

Maintain good dignity

Safety and accessibility.

Nothing

Advertisement

Knowing our roots

1. Promote Authentic Cultural Experiences 2. Sustainable & Eco-Friendly Initiatives 3. Digital & Marketing Support 4. Infrastructure & Accessibility. Accessibility and awareness.

Promote and preserve indigenous tribal culture

Collaboration work between the government and the service providers of the State.

Generate employment opportunities for local communities

Proper local tourism guides

Marketing and advertising

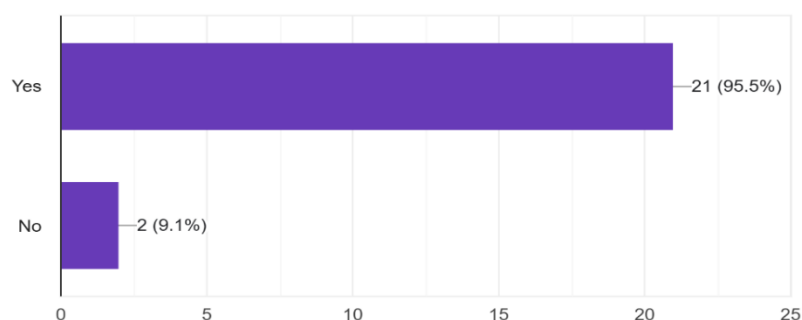
Having a mixed cultural approach and comparative studies are needed for better improvement.

Collective teamwork of local tribal business owners with the government.

Preservation of the unique cultural identity of the people

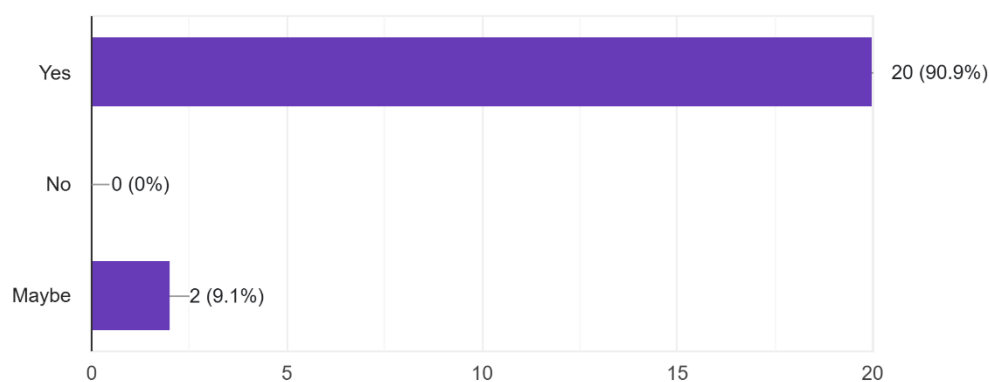
Would you recommend tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya to others? (Yes/No)

22 responses



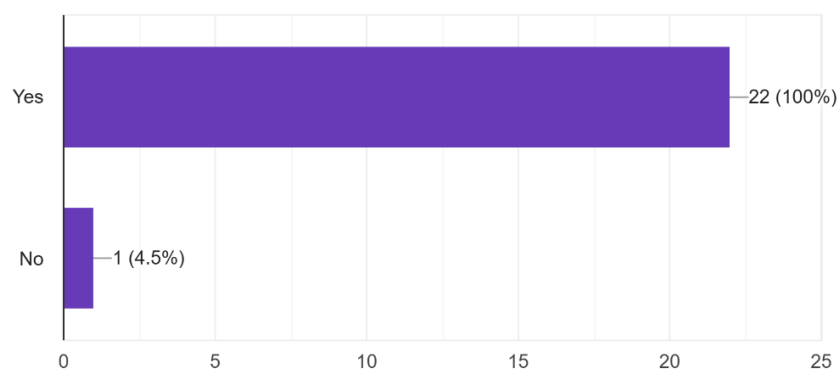
Are you aware of the concept of sustainable tourism? (Yes/No)

22 responses



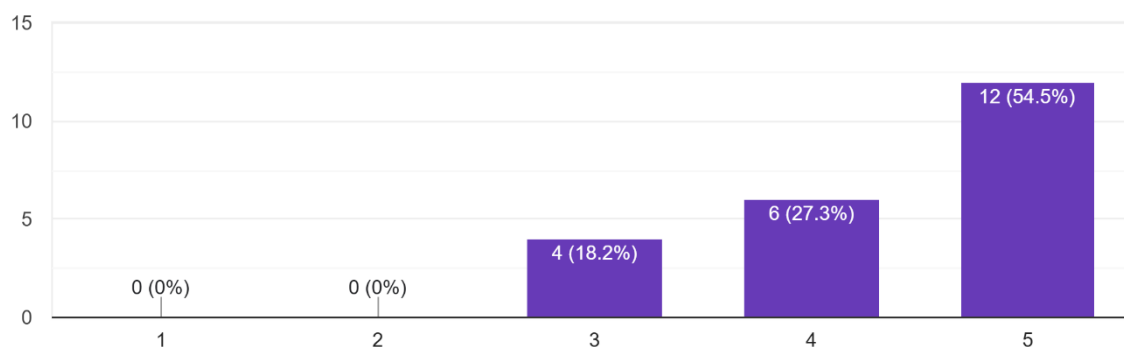
Did you observe any efforts towards sustainable tourism practices during your visit? (Yes/No)

22 responses



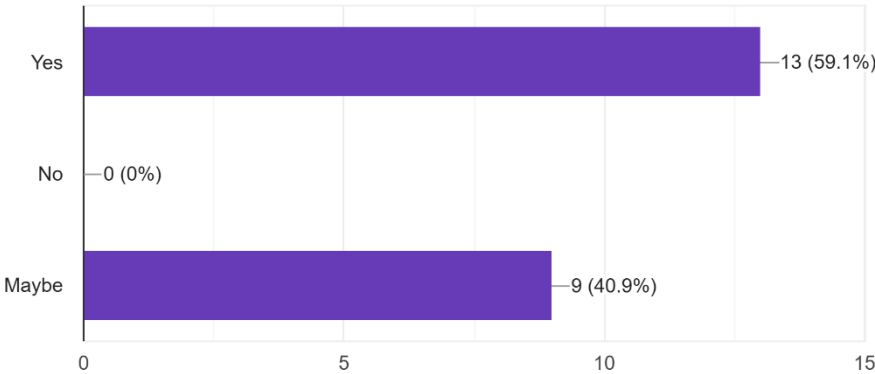
How important is it to you that tourism in tribal areas is conducted sustainably and responsibly?
(Rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1=Not at all important and 5=Extremely important)

22 responses



Would you be willing to pay a premium for tourism experiences that directly benefit local communities and promote sustainability? (Yes/No/Maybe)

22 responses



SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT Analysis (Based on Survey Data)

1. Strengths

- **Rich Cultural Heritage:** Tourists are attracted to the preservation of tribal culture, traditions, and heritage, which creates a unique and authentic experience.
- **Sustainable Tourism Awareness:** Many respondents are aware of the concept of sustainable tourism and observed efforts toward it during their visits.
- **Positive Impact on Communities:** Most respondents felt that their visit positively impacted local tribal communities.
- **Recommendation by Visitors:** Visitors would recommend tribal tourism destinations, showcasing satisfaction and interest.

2. Weaknesses

- **Accessibility Challenges:** Suggestions for better accessibility and infrastructure highlight existing gaps.
- **Negative Environmental Impacts:** Some respondents observed negative effects of tourism on tribal communities and the environment.
- **Awareness and Advertisement:** Limited awareness and advertisement reduce visibility and potential engagement.

3. Opportunities

- **Promoting Sustainability:** Efforts can be enhanced to implement eco-friendly initiatives and promote sustainability as a unique selling point.
- **Digital Marketing Expansion:** Increasing the reach through online platforms, social media, and word-of-mouth could boost tribal tourism.
- **Improved Facilities:** Suggestions for transportation, accommodation, local guides, and

cultural performances provide opportunities for enhancing visitor experience.

4. Threats

- **Overtourism Risks:** The fragile balance between preserving culture and catering to tourism could lead to commercialization or degradation.
 - **Community and Environmental Impacts:** A lack of stringent guidelines for sustainable practices might result in adverse effects on local communities and the environment.
 - **Competition:** Other tourism destinations with similar offerings could overshadow tribal tourism in Meghalaya if not marketed well.
- This analysis combines insights from survey responses to identify key factors influencing tribal tourism.

FINDINGS

1) Positive Impact on Local Tribal Communities: A significant majority of respondents felt that their visit positively impacted tribal communities, indicating that tribal tourism fosters community development and cultural pride.

2) Sustainable Tourism Awareness and Practices: Most participants were aware of sustainable tourism practices and observed efforts to implement these during their visit. Sustainability was rated as highly important by respondents (average rating of 4-5 on a 5-point scale).

3) Visitors' Interests: Key aspects of tribal tourism found appealing by respondents included:

- Experiencing tribal culture and traditions.
- Learning about tribal history and heritage.
- Natural beauty and landscapes.
- Supporting local communities.
- Unique and authentic experiences.

4) Suggestions for Improvement: Feedback emphasized the need for:

- Enhanced accessibility and transportation.
- Better infrastructure and accommodation.
- Promoting local tribal businesses and their collaboration with the government.
- Increased marketing and advertising efforts.

5) Willingness to Pay for Sustainability: Many respondents expressed a willingness to pay a premium for tourism experiences that directly benefit local communities and promote sustainability.

6) Recommendation of Tribal Tourism: A majority stated they would recommend Meghalaya's tribal tourism destinations to others, showcasing overall satisfaction and enthusiasm.

7) Observations on Tourism Impacts: While most respondents did not encounter negative impacts of tourism, some highlighted concerns regarding environmental degradation and risks to cultural authenticity.

These findings illustrate the potential of tribal tourism in Meghalaya to thrive through strategic improvements in accessibility, marketing, and sustainable practices.

CONCLUSION

The study on tourists' perceptions of tribal tourism destinations in Meghalaya reveals valuable insights into the potential and challenges of promoting sustainable tribal tourism. Tourists highly appreciate the unique cultural heritage, traditions, and natural beauty offered by these destinations. Many respondents observed efforts towards sustainable tourism practices and emphasized their importance for preserving tribal culture and fostering community development.

Tourists recognize tribal tourism as an opportunity to support local communities and experience authentic traditions, with most expressing satisfaction and willingness to recommend these destinations. However, the survey highlights areas for improvement, including accessibility, infrastructure, and marketing initiatives. Respondents also suggested enhanced collaborations between local communities and the government to better promote and preserve the cultural richness of Meghalaya.

The findings underscore the importance of balancing tourism growth with sustainability to protect the environment and cultural authenticity. By addressing the concerns and recommendations shared by tourists, Meghalaya has the potential to emerge as a leading example of sustainable tribal tourism in India.

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