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VARIOUS TRIBAL GROUPS – THEIR ROLE IN TOURISM

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Abstract:

The Indian Society is not as simple as it looks from the outside. India includes a sizable amount of tribal folks that still belong to a social set-up, of which little or nothing is understood. These tribes who stay in several parts of the country are still to return out of their traditional way of life and join the mainstream. As per the 2011 census, India contains 705 scheduled tribes (STs) and subtribes and 75 primitive tribal clusters. This study explores tourists' perceptions of tribal tourism destinations in 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. By addressing these areas the potential to become a leading example of sustainable tribal tourism, showcasing the balance between cultural preservation and tourism growth.

Key Words: Tribal, Culture, Sustainable, Traditions, Tourism Growth

INTRODUCTION:

The word “Tribe” is taken from the Latin word “Tribus” which means “one third”. The word originally referred to one of the three territorial groups which united to make Rome. India is known as a Melting pot of tribes and races. After Africa India has the second largest concentration of tribal population within the world. In India aboriginal tribes have lived for 1000 of years in forests and hilly areas without any communication with various centers of civilization. Now, there is a need to integrate tribes in to main stream of the society as a rightful member with respect.

Definition of Tribal:

According to the Imperial Gazetteer of India, a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so.

As per the definition of **Oxford Dictionary** "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor".

Lucy Mair defines Tribe as “an independent political division of a population with a common culture”. While **D.N. Majumdar** defines tribe as “a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes”.

Tribe has been the most salient category used in the study of Indian indigenous ethnic formations: the adivasi societies. It is my contention that the tribal construct in India is a *colonial category* and that it formed part of the colonial legitimizing ideology. As such this category operated as a device to catalogue conquered populations, to reformulate control policies and to facilitate the incorporation of these populations into the colonial system. The ideology of tribe did not disintegrate in India with the end of colonialism. It has been reformulated in the context of the Hindu model of caste-ideology, a context observable in the conceptualization of adivasi "backwardness" and in the alternatives espoused for social mobility.



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A tribe is a territorial community. It means that the tribe has a definite territory in which its members reside. For Example, the Naga, Rengma Naga, Sema Naga and other tribals reside in Nagaland; Garos, Khasis, Khasas live in Assam; Bhils in Madhya Pradesh; Soligas in Mysore; Thodas in Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu, Savara, Konda Reddy and so many of Andhra Pradesh and Chenchu, Lambada, Koyadora etc of Telangana so on. In the absence of a common locality or territory a tribe would lose its uniqueness.

As the definitions of tribe cited above clarify, tribals constitute a collection of families. These collections may have various sizes. These families which normally have blood relationships among themselves could be matriarchal or patriarchal in nature. Every tribe has its own name. Each tribe is known to other tribes by its distinctive name. Example of some Indian tribes: Garo, Khasi, Khasa, Naga, Rengma Naga, Sema Naga, Limbu, Santhal, Munda, Gond, Kota, Badaga, Urali, Thodas, etc.

Language, Life Style and Religion:

The members of a tribe speak a particular language. Different tribes speak different languages. These languages are not only different from the language of the civilised people, but they themselves differ from one another. Common language contributes much to the development of community feeling. Since these languages do not have a script of their own, education of the tribals has become problematic.

Religion plays an important role in the tribal organisation. The members of a tribe usually worship a common ancestor. Also nature worship is common among them. In addition to the Ancestral worship and nature worship the tribals practise other types of faith such as -fetishism, animism and totemism. Magic is also widespread among them. The tribal social and political organisations are based on this religion. Participation in common religious ceremonies functions and festivals contributes to the unity of the group. A sizeable proportion of Nagas, Mizos, Santhals, Oraons and Munda, etc. Have embraced Christianity while some tribals such as Butia, Lepcha Chakma have largely identified with Buddhism.

Each tribe has a way of life of its own. Each tribe has its own way of behaving, thinking, feeling and acting. Each has its own customs, traditions, morals, values, and its own peculiar institutions in brief, its own culture. The very peculiarities of a tribe reveal that it has a distinctive culture of its own.

Archaeological methods help understand the tribal culture as a continuum. Similarly, ethnographic data help explain archaeological facts. Obviously, archaeology and tribal studies have an overlapping area where they complement each other. From the archaeological point of view, the branch of knowledge is called ethno-archaeology while from the tribal studies point of view this could be archaeological ethnography. The only difference is in the approach, whether it is ethnography applied to archaeological facts or vice versa.

The knowledge of archaeology is also necessary for understanding the contemporary tribal situation, as tribal revivalism very often seems to manipulate the archaeological facts for glorification of the past and reconstruction of exclusive tribal history. Recently, archaeological facts have been judiciously used for understanding the ethno-history and this is considered very much relevant in many of the underdeveloped territories which were under colonial subjugation.

Tribal communities provide a rich field of linguistic studies. Many theoretical perspectives in linguistics are linked to the study of tribal communities. Syncretic and diachronic approaches to study tribal cultures are perspectives from linguistics. The perspective in emic-etic debate also has its origin in linguistics. These terms were first introduced by linguist Kenneth Lee Pike, who argued that the tools developed for describing linguistic behaviours could be adapted to the description of any human social behavior. The terms **emic** and **etic** are derived from the linguistic terms phonemic and phonetic respectively.

What is Tourism?

Evolution of tourism in the world has taken thousands of years to reach the present level. It has been the product of various kinds of interactions of human being with their environment and surroundings and has evolved in different stages. Since the ancient times education and religion have been seen as factors for the growth of tourism. Tourism also got impetus



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due to growing need of trade and commerce. Hence, we hear of the silk and spice trade routes which took place in the past and are getting attention once again in the present times. The development of tourism can be seen through a historical perspective. It has a wide variation from the beginning to present times. Since the early times, people have been travelling from one place to another in search for food, for trade, for religious purposes and even for education. But this travelling was limited and restricted to places which were close by due to many reasons. There were lack of roads, unavailability of food, insecurity on the roads and even lack of knowledge of places as well as routes. At times travelling became easier when it was given royal patronage.

A very good example of such travelling may be traced back to Maurya times in 262 BC. Because of royal patronage from emperor Ashoka, people could travel to far flung places like Patliputra (Patna), Lumbini, Kapilvastu, Sarnath and Gaya. At each place, memorials and rest houses were set up where travellers could rest. Trees were planted along the road to provide a comfortable journey to travellers. Harsh Vardhan was also a great supporter of Buddhism. He built many Dharamsalas for the travellers. A number of monasteries were also built for the pilgrims. This shows how travel facilities were being improved and travel was made easier.

Benefits for Tourism Through Tribals:

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.

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.

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 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.

As tribal groups are located in rural areas, many tribal tours combine cultural tourism with outdoor exploration and hiking, or visits to national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves. When a tourist is planning a tribal tour, one must look for opportunities to sample local cuisine, hear live music, attend a festival or see traditional folk dancing. Some village's house small museums containing tribal artifacts and others may offer educational tours for tourists to learn about traditional agricultural methods.

The intangible heritage that the tribal population possesses including the traditional knowledge system contains many positive and productive elements that are really precious for the entire humanity. Tourism can be one of the tools through which, the rich cultural heritage of the tribes manifested in its folklore, costume, jewellery and lifestyle, their harmonious and sustainable ways of living, indigenous practices by tribal healers and medicinal plants can be offered as a unique attraction to the potential visitors. In this process the economic benefits can be reaped by the tribal community.



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Tourism may act as a motivation for cultural preservation and promotion and can prevent cultural facets from fading into oblivion.

Tribal tourism refers to a form of travel in which tribes allow tourists to experience authentic indigenous life (tribal habitat, heritage, history and handicrafts, culture, values and traditions) by allowing the tourists to visit their villages for them to be exposed to a culture completely different from their own. In India, this concept is in its nascent stages but it popular in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya in Africa; Ecuador, Peru, Brazil in South America, etc. Ethnic Tourism, Tribal tourism, Indigenous Tourism, Rural tourism, Eco-tourism, Nature based tourism, Agri Tourism, Community based tourism, Responsible tourism are few terminologies which are all closely aligned and used in academia to explain the concept of travel to tribal areas. These concepts are a part of the wider umbrella of Alternative Tourism which in essence means tourism activities or often defined in opposition to large-scale mass tourism to represent small-scale sustainable tourism developments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This is a secondary research based on the pre available facts and figures in already published journals and books. This also required a deep online research on the internet to obtain and get the recent and latest fact as well as information. So, for this research I choose to do a secondary research by gathering data and information from various books and internet website. Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. I took reference from various books as well as various government or university sites that showcase the need and importance of first aid in the work place. I also took information from some peers as well as referred papers done by some other scholars in the field. Various government and non-government websites were also very helpful and informative to get the data for the use in this research.

Objective of study:-

1. To create opportunities of employment by developing tourist centers.
2. To provide various a transportation facilities as well as special protection of the tourist.
3. To adopt varies govt. scheme to developed tourism in Tribal areas.

Tourist Activities:

As tribal groups are located in rural areas, many tribal tours combine cultural tourism with outdoor exploration and hiking, or visits to national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves. When a tourist is planning a tribal tour, one must look for opportunities to sample local cuisine, hear live music, attend a festival or see traditional folk dancing. Some village's house small museums containing tribal artifacts and others may offer educational tours for tourists to learn about traditional agricultural methods.

Tribal tourism is one of the newest and most upcoming forms of tourism experienced and appreciated by travellers to want a change of prospect from their regular form of travelling. This has led to a steep rise in the number of people opting for tribal tourism rather than any other form of tourism.

The tribals in India are the pro-environmental communities that are fighting to protect rivers, lands, and forests that make for their livelihood. The congruities that exist between local tribals and nature only help in making tribal territories full of exotic bio-diversities. This way the government is taking measures to promote and provide measures to boost the tribal tourism in India.

CONCLUSIONS:

The study on tourists' perceptions of tribal tourism destinations in India or outside 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.



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If one wants to explore a unique tour and unique face of our country one should take Tribal Tours in India. They will get the most amazing experiences of their life in the Tribal Tours. They should explore something completely different and take back superb memories of the holiday. With these tours, travelers can get the opportunity to learn and know about India's tribal heritage and culture. We will be amazed to see that each region and state in India features its own unique tribes and its arts and culture. Tribal tourism is one of the newest and most upcoming forms of tourism experienced and appreciated by travellers to want a change of prospect from their regular form of travelling. This has led to a steep rise in the number of people opting for tribal tourism rather than any other form of tourism.

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.

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, India has the potential to emerge as a leading example of sustainable tribal tourism.

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