



# **Role of Socio-Cultural Activities of Tribal People in Tourism Development in Arunachal Pradesh, with Special Reference to Local Festivals**

**Biplab Tripathy<sup>a++\*</sup> and Subhechya Raha<sup>a#</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> *Arunachal University of Studies, Arunachal Pradesh, India.*

## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Cultural diversity is an asset for a nation. Diverse culture can bring an array of beautiful tradition and socio-cultural activities which becomes a point of attraction for people who comes to travel and explore. India is a country of diversity and North East India is known for its diversity of myriad tribes. Arunachal Pradesh homes 26 type of major tribe and many more sub tribes. Thus obviously Arunachal Pradesh is abundant with cultural asset. Each tribe has their own distinct socio-cultural activities that make them special. Tribal tourism is an important part of sustainable tourism, where the tourists involve in responsible tourism activities. The tribal culture of Arunachal Pradesh had been a tourist attractor since the year the state opened itself for tourism. Along with scenic beauty, tribal lifestyle had been a curious attraction for people who love to explore culture. And what can be

<sup>++</sup> Associate Professor;

<sup>#</sup> Research Scholar;

\*Corresponding author: E-mail: [tripathy.biplab@gmail.com](mailto:tripathy.biplab@gmail.com);

a major display of culture other than the festivals. Tribal festival attracts a lot of tourist from all over the place for their beautiful projection of cultural heritage. Tribal local festivals of Arunachal Pradesh hold a great potentiality of tourism industry throughout the year.

*Keywords: Tribal tourism; sustainable tourism; socio-cultural; tribal festival.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A monotonous life always tries to find recreation in unfolding the unknown. Thus a vacation tour after hectic work schedule has always attracted people from different time and place. In 21<sup>st</sup> century transport being faster and easier to access evoked a hike in tourism interest among the people. There are different types of tourist spots including rural and urban, but what attracts people more in natural scenic beauty. If that is blended with an unique local culture, more people seems to show interest. Arunachal Pradesh was not open for tourism until the decade of 90s, when the state opened its arm embracing tourists from all over the nation. Since the inception of tourism industry in Arunachal Pradesh, the tribal culture of the state made many people curious and interested. Living few days among indigenous people offers some amazing vision experience in one's life [1,2]. Their simple mundane life instils insights on how happiness can be culminated through simple lifestyle. People visiting these places, sharing space with the local people receives a vision of how human being and nature can live harmoniously together. The urban people visiting this areas, carries values of nature along with beautiful memory while they leave [3-5]. Thus tribal tourism is an intrinsic part of sustainable tourism. It not only uplifts local indigenous culture but also boosts local economy through tourist visits. Tribal festivals are actually a grandeur representation of these indigenous cultures [6,7]. Tribal festivals are colourful and pompous. Along with heritage it also projects the religious practices and spiritual values. Each tribal festival has a spiritual significance which is related to their faith, belief and with their lifestyle. Thus tribal festival can be an enlightening experience for someone who had grown up in urban lifestyle. Many people around the planet are pretty much excited about such experience. Thus tribal festival has a whole lot of possibility in boosting tourism industry. Arunachal Pradesh is a state with major 26 tribes and many other sub tribes hosts such exciting and spirit levitating experience. All year around there are different types of tribal festivals that aligns with season, crop cycle and local calendar [8-11]. All these

festivals are a great boost for the tourism industry where tourists literally involve with the socio-cultural activities with the local people.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to comprehend the potentials for the sustainable tribal tourism through socio cultural activities of North East India, and focus on the Arunachal Pradesh festival season. The purpose of the study is to shade light on the tribal tourist hotspots in Arunachal Pradesh while also emphasising the worth and significance of various tribal communities. The study aims to understand the overall relationship between tribal tourism and sustainable tourism. The study also seeks to determine how culture and ecotourism interact.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This work is a qualitative research which is done on the basis of secondary data and information collected from the government and tourism website. The secondary data is reviewed and utilised to elaborate the possibilities of tribal and sustainable tourism in Arunachal Pradesh. Data related to different tribal village is collected and elaborated with special concern to the possibilities of Tribal tourism and Festival.

Few case study areas are visited and the possibilities of tribal tourism are understood. It was observed how different aspects of sustainable tourism are mitigated.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chang, Lin and Chuan [12] in their work Study on Sustainable Development Strategy of Indigenous Tribal Tourism mentioned that tribal tourism include the concept of diet and cuisine, forestry and nature and the environment in which the indigenous people exists. All these implies every possible angle of their lifestyle which is the basic quotient of tribal tourism.

Ryan and Huyton [13] also added that the essence of Tribal tourism lies in the raw exposure of the tourist into the tribal lifestyle.

Apart from scenic beauty the culture, artistic performance, tradition and custom, everything becomes an integral part of tribal tourism.

Rebecca Hallet [14] pointed out tribal tourism includes the concept of ethnicity from where the concept of 'Ethno tourism' arises.

Chang [15] again mentioned that aboriginal culture is main aspect of tribal tourism. This includes different types of activities done by the tribal people which is important for bringing people from all over the places.

## 5. SOCIO CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND TRIBAL TOURISM

Socio cultural activities in tourism mean activities which are done by people as a part of regular lifestyle with cultural aspect. This includes every kind of household activities and special activities. Socio cultural activities concern with cooking ethnic food in local way, like using pit fire, bamboo or rural cooking furnace. The food that is cooked would be local delicacy with fresh farm ingredient. Socio cultural activity would involve growing food through natural means, catching fish from ponds and streams, collecting fresh fruits and vegetable from the farm. This also includes observance of local festivals or spiritual functions, where local people would perform traditional dance, song or act. Uses of traditional handmade musical instruments are also seen in this aspect. Wearing traditional attire and even making one in the household is also another interesting socio cultural activity done by the local host. In many occasion traditional dresses are either rented or sold to the tourist, that they often carried as a souvenir. Apart from that ornaments and other handicrafts made by indigenous people that holds the part of its culture is also a very popular socio cultural evidence that tourists like to carry back home as a fond memory of their travel experience. This tourism experience also includes stay at tribal homestead among the local people. Hiking through the wilderness, river rafting, fishing, experiencing orchards and farmland are also part of this tourism package. However festival holds a bigger position when the aspects of socio cultural tourism, where the bright array of colour, beautiful melody of local music and harmony of indigenous dance forms mesmerises the explorers teleporting them to a whole new world.

The primary reason why socio cultural activity draws a large number of tourists is that they get

to experience something absolutely diverse from their daily lifestyle. They get to eat food that they never tried before, or get to witness the style of cooking that they haven't seen earlier. Socio cultural tourism hosted by indigenous people offers a real life experience of tribal lifestyle which appears to be quite exotic to an urban dweller.

## 6. SOCIO CULTURAL TOURISM AND TRIBAL HERITAGE OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

We need an outstanding destination for fantastic vacations. Arunachal Pradesh has a fairly varied selection of tourist attractions. The eastern Himalayas' breathtaking natural splendour is accompanied by Arunachal Pradesh's hot buffet of cultural diversity. The state, which was previously remote and unknown to the rest of the world, started to welcome visitors in 1992. After 25 years, the state—known as a haven for travellers seeking adventure and thrill—celebrated a grand international tourism day on September 27, 2017. Indeed, Arunachal Pradesh has a beautiful array of indigenous communities' unique ethnography and legacy. Tribal tourism is a big draw for adventure seekers, with its 3649 villages serving as the home to 26 major tribes and numerous sub tribes. The option to experience this distinctive and private tribal way of life through a tribal home stay is now phenomenal. Here we will highlight a few of the stunning locations in Arunachal Pradesh that provide a wonderful opportunity to stay in a tribal home while experiencing the local culture. In Arunachal Pradesh, various tribal communities opened their doors to visitors so they may experience a variety of cultural flavours.

- The Lower Subansiri district is home to the Nyshi tribal village of Yazili. From Ziro, it is only a 6-hour journey away. It is situated next to the lovely Ranganadi river. Nyshis do show off a very lovely holistic, natural, and sustainable way of life. They produce all of their own organic, chemical-free food. Yazili is situated next to a magnificent deep forest that is largely undiscovered. Even their faith accepts ghosts connected to the natural world. The tourist's perspective will undoubtedly be affected by his or her brief stay in Yazili, especially if they also adopt a lovely organic way of life.
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- At the Daporijo is a tribal village of the Tagin people. One of the main tribes of Arunachal Pradesh is the Tagin. They are renowned for using forest resources. They are renowned for having outstanding medical and botanical knowledge. They contend that this promotes the preservation and protection of medicinal plants, as well as the preservation of culture, tradition, and biodiversity. The Tagin tribe is renowned for having a pure heart and being warm, hospitable, and pleasant, which is another outstanding characteristic. Therefore, visiting a Tagin tribal village would be a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.
- The Raglam Jungle Range is home to the tribal villages of the Galo people. The settlements of the AdiGallong tribe are situated in the Kombo, Pching region. It is necessary to spend the night at Along in order to visit these communities. The far-off settlements are connected by a cane bridge. Galos are an agricultural tribe, and women are regarded as the foundation of the industry.
- Adi and Adiminiyongs villages are close to Pasighat. Adis are renowned for being accomplished farmers. Their villages, which are made up of lovely bamboo dwellings, serve as examples of their superb bamboo artistry.

## **7. TRIBAL FESTIVALS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH AND POTENTIALITY OF TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Festivals are an integral part of the Tribal society. They are the symbolism of the speciality and distinction of culture a tribal society holds. Every tribal community do have their special festival or

celebration. And every festival has their own set of colour and vibrancy. These festivals are part of their lifestyle which demonstrates their beliefs, faith and practices as a whole. Tribal festivals are an excellent part of sustainable tourism. Tribal festivals are so magnetic that they can attract visitors from faraway places with their magnetism of vibrant colour. Since Arunachal Pradesh is endowed with thick evergreen forests covering more than 80 percent of its total area and has five major river:- Kameng, Subansiri, Lohit, Siang and Tirap winding their way through the Sylvan hills, it is an ideal place for Tracking, Angling, Boating and Rafting. The upper reaches offer landscape for adventure tourism. Arunachal Pradesh is home to at least 26 major and more than 100 sub-tribes, each with its distinct tradition and customs. The majority of the population, comprising of tribes like Adi, Galo, Aka, Apatani, Nyishi, Tagins etc are rooted to their ancient beliefs and indigenous practices of worshipping "the Sun and the Moon". The religion is known as Donyi-Polo (which literally means Sun and Moon). Being a distinctly tribal state, festival is an essential and integral part of the socio-cultural life of the people in the state. Most of these festivals are connected with agriculture and celebrated with ritualistic gaiety either to thank God for his providence or to pray for a bumper harvest. The festivities mirror the culture, the artistry and skill of the people in music dance.

- The Nyokom is the Nyshi tribe's annual festival. Every year, it is observed in Itanagar from February 24 to 26. The celebration of Nyokom is one of peace, wealth, and harmony. So, via this celebration, a picture of a harmonious neighbourhood and globe is depicted.
- The Apatani Tribe celebrates Dree. At Ziro Valley, it is observed. On the Fourth and Fifth of July each year. This is a harvest festival.
- A Galo Tribe festival is called Mopin. Every year, it is observed in Along from April 4 to 5. Mopin is a celebration of agriculture.
- A Tagin tribe festival is called Si-Donyi. Every year, it is observed in Daporijo from January 4 to January 6. The purpose of this festival is to promote wealth.
- Festival of Aran for the Adi Tribe. Celebrations take place in the Along Valley. Every year, it is observed around March 7. This is mostly a harvest celebration.
- The Adi Tribe's festival is called Etor. Every year, it is observed in Along Valley

around May 15. The crop cycle and etor are connected.

- Every year, between the first and third of September, Pasighat and Boleng host the Adi Tribe's Solung festival. The Adi tribe also celebrates agriculture during this time.
- PodiBarbi is another Adi Tribal Festival. Every year, it is observed in Along Valley around September 5. This harvest festival serves more as a kind of gratitude to mother nature.
- The Monpa Tribe is the host of the Torgy festival. Every year, it is observed in Tawang from January 10 until January 12. There is a religious importance to this occasion. It lasts for three days and features stunning, vibrant costume dances that are performed in an effort to banish evil spirits and ensure happiness and prosperity.
- Reh is the Mishmi Tribe's annual festival. Every year, it is observed in Roing and Anini from February 15 to February 17.
- There are numerous more celebrations, like the Myoko festival of the Apatanis, the Boori Boot festival, and the Donjinn festival of the Adi tribe, which are all held in March.

All these festivals represent the heritage of the tribal culture of Arunachal Pradesh. Each of these festivals holds the beauty of each tribe it is related with. Festivals are an overall representation of cultural significance of a community. Thus through tribal festivals a tribal community display the beauty of their heritage which they are very proud of. Hence such grandeur obviously attracts a lot of tourists all thorough the year along with its seasonal agricultural cycle and local religious calendar.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Tribal festivals have lot of potentiality to attract tourists from different part of the planet. To harvest this potentiality properly some initiative needs to be taken by the government. Some suggestions on tourism development through tribal festivals are: -

- i. Identifying the tribal areas where home stay and tourism is possible with tourist attraction sites.
- ii. Government investments to integrate the tourist attraction sites.
- iii. Locating the tribal tourism areas and sharing geo-location.
- iv. Proper advertisement and publicity.

- v. Sharing the yearly calendar and festival schedule in website for everybody to access.
- vi. Building proper accommodation for extra tourists.
- vii. Helping local business through investments and loans.
- viii. Investing on transport and communication to communicate with places.

Tribal tourism related to socio cultural activities and festivals also has huge impact on local culture and economy.

- i. Such tourism helps to uplift indigenous culture.
- ii. It helps indigenous people display their beautiful cultural heritage, protecting it from the tide of modernisation.
- iii. It helps boosting local economy.
- iv. Educate outside people about the beauty of tribal lifestyle.
- v. Positive impact on urban people about nature human relationship.

Indigenous festival indeed has the potentiality to pull people with its mundane beauty. Festivals show cases how tribal lifestyle is connected with the nature. And the integrity of this connection is instilled among the visitors who are lucky enough to witness this beauty.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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