

# A Study on Blended Mix of Promotion Tools for Cultural Tourism in NE India

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## Abstract

Cultural tourism is a specialized cognitive form of tourism that focuses on culture and heritage of the particular destination. Cultural tourism gives political stability and security for the prosperity of tourism and local economies. It reveals about tangible and intangible products and their sustainable development. In this form of tourism, tourist immerses with locals and their cultural related activities such as rituals- festivities and authentic life. Cultural tourism is a subcategory of tourism that focuses on the nation or region's arts, particularly its performing arts. It typically focuses on traditional societies with different customs, distinct forms of art, and specific social activities that set it apart from other types and forms of culture. Cultural tourism includes urban tourism, particularly in historic or big cities, as well as cultural amenities such as museums and theatres. It can also involve rural tourism highlighting indigenous cultural groups' traditions (e.g., festivals, ceremonies) as well as their beliefs and lifestyles. The current study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The state is taken as the basic unit of the study and the study is descriptive in nature. The current study is being undertaken to examine different promotional tools of cultural tourism including festivals, tribal cultural, art and dance form, of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and their effective mix of promotion related to cultural tourism in North East (NE) India.

**KEYWORDS:** Cultural tourism, Tourism, Northeast India, integrated marketing communication, Promotional tools

## 1. Introduction:

"Tourism involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objectives of studying, admiring, and enforcing the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas," according to Ziffer (1989). Tourism is a significant socioeconomic activity in today's world. A

tourism economy operates alongside the domestic economy in any location where a tourist attraction is present. It also supports local handcrafts and cultural events. (Văduva, L., et al., 2021)

Cultural tourism is a subcategory of tourism that focuses on the nation or region's arts, particularly its performing arts. (Fang, W. T. 2020). It typically focuses on traditional societies with different customs, distinct forms of art, and specific social activities that set it apart from other types and forms of culture. Cultural tourism includes urban tourism, particularly in historic or big cities, as well as cultural amenities such as museums and theatres. (Richards, G. 2022). It can also involve rural tourism highlighting indigenous cultural groups' traditions (e.g., festivals, ceremonies) as well as their beliefs and lifestyles. It is widely accepted that cultural tourists spend significantly more than ordinary tourists. For the purposes of this study, Cultural Tourism will be defined as travel directed toward experiencing a place's arts, heritage, and specific character in order for the traveller to learn about the history, heritage, and lifestyle of others while contributing to the economic wellbeing of the host community. (Ruhanen, L., & Whitford, M. 2019)

The purpose of this article is to investigate the possibilities of cultural tourism in India's North Eastern states, as well as the promotional tactics utilised to maintain the distinctiveness of this lesser-known area and its people. (Bhardwaj, R. L. 2022). The region's ethnic, linguistic, and cultural variety is as impressive as its beautiful hills, flowing rivers, and picturesque valleys. Approximately two-thirds of this region has mountainous terrain, with the remainder being plain or gently undulating territory. Geographically, the North East may be split into the Eastern Himalayan Range (Arunachal Pradesh) in the north, merging with the Arakan Yoma Range (Myanmar) in the east, the Brahmaputra and Imphal basins, the Barak River Valley System, and the Meghalaya Plateau. (Bahuguna, A., & Sil, A. 2020). This region is home to about 120 tribes and many more sub-tribes that speak 192 languages and dialects. Many ethnicities and civilizations converge and merge to form the composite culture of NE India's melting pot. Thus, this zone is different not only in terms of culture, geography, history, and bio-diversity, but also in terms of various 'Hotspots,' some of which have been designated as heritage or endangered sites, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Manipur. (Aruljothi, C., & Ramaswamy, S. 2019)

Promotion is a type of marketing communication that includes marketing actions such as spreading information, influencing, persuading, and reminding the target market to accept, buy, and be loyal to the supplied items. A marketing communications mix is a set of communications that are used to express a customer's value and to establish connections. Marketers may now target tiny subsets of customers and transmit customised messages using new media channels (Alexandrescu, M. B., & Milandru, M. 2018). Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Public Relations, and Personal Selling are some of the most regularly utilised promotional tactics, and they are critical for growing cultural tourism in NE India. The region is a great trove of traditional knowledge systems in agriculture, cuisine, medicine, festivals, and natural resource management. (LEMMA,

B. 2019). Festivals are vital in today's economic climate for towns, cities, and entire regions. Festivals are seen to greatly contribute to the cultural and economic development riches of the host towns. People in North East India are accustomed to living and surviving in the forest and Jhum agricultural culture, which ensures a variety of ethnic meals rich in nutrition and compatible with tribe culture and ethnicity. Generally, indigenous women distribute these traditional dishes at communal levels throughout various cultural occasions (like Etar, Solung and Aran Festival in Adi tribe)(Singh, R. K., et al., 2020)

The current article analyses several promotional initiatives for increasing cultural tourism in Northeast India. Also highlights the IMC and its role in promoting cultural tourism in several locations of Northeast India.

## 2. literature review

The North-East India region is a collective designation for India's easternmost regions, and it serves as both a geographical and administrative division of the country. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tripura are the eight states that make up the area. Because of their reliance on one another, the contiguous seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland are known as the Land of Seven Sisters. Sikkim, on the other hand, is not physically part of the northeast area. The Siligudi corridor separates it from the northeast. As a result, it is not included in the Land of the Seven Sisters. Sikkim, on the other hand, has cheerfully accepted the role of little brother to the wonderful seven sisters. (Sarma, A. 2018)

Cultural tourism is frequently cited as the primary method used to combat seasonality in destinations and to address issues associated to the mature stage of their life cycle. It is frequently regarded as a feasible policy option to employ once a mass-tourism destination has reached maturity. This viewpoint is congruent with Hennessey et al. (2008), who claim that culture is an essential component of the tourist offering and one of the aspects that might increase a tourism destination's competitiveness.(Fakfare, P., et al., 2020) Cultural tourism is described as the movement of people to cultural sites that are not their usual area of residence in order to get new knowledge and experiences and to meet their cultural demands (Richard, 2001). This can take many forms, such as visiting museums and religious places, sightseeing at historic locations, or attending local festivals (Seyfi, S., et al., 2020), all of which generate a considerable amount of arts travel.

### 2.1 Potential areas for cultural Tourism in North-east India

Meghalaya, Assam, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh are among the states promoting cultural tourism in the area, although Nagaland, Tripura, and Mizoram have just begun to investigate such opportunities as well. Tribal Culture – traditional festivals and performing arts, Ecovillages,

Palaces and Temples, Buddhist Culture, Traditional Crafts, Museums and Village Cultural Centers – These include both Government and privately owned museums and may also extend to reserved areas which promote Tribal village centres. (Goritiyal, L., & Basu, S. 2018).

## 2.2 Promotional tools for cultural tourism

The importance of carnivals, festivals, events, and travel exhibits in marketing a tourist destination cannot be overstated. Cultural events, carnivals, festivals, and exhibits are held as a result of these carnivals, festivals, events, and exhibitions. The preservation and expression of importance societal promotion of tradition and cultural heritage relevance in encouraging local socialization neighborhood, as well as drawing both foreign and domestic visitors' guests. (Mpuon, J. A., et al., 2020)

Carnivals are celebrated in a variety of tourist sites as one of the most culturally uniting and artistic extravaganzas. Carnival is defined by the equality of all individuals and the enjoyment of a cheerful atmosphere (Simin&ivkucin, 2018). Rio de Janeiro and Venice, two of the most famous and visited international carnivals, attract thousands of tourists from all over the world each day.

Festivals are an additional draw for every tourist site. Many aspects of a festival attract tourists, the most essential of which appears to be intriguing, sometimes foreign culture shown throughout the festivities. In terms of natural heritage preservation, festivals may promote principles such as environmental conservation and protected natural regions, as well as sustainable development and tourism (Sun, H., et al., 2019). In recent years, there has been a significant growth in the usage of local festivals as a promotional tool for a location. The most apparent reasons for the popularity of local festivals as a tourist marketing strategy are that (1) festivals enhance demand for local tourism, and (2) successful festivals may help recreate a place's image or add to the visibility of a region attempting to get on the tourism map. (Perry, B., et al., 2020)

Events are highly valued in the tourist business as attractions, catalysts, animators, marketers of places, and developers of the destination's image (Simin&ivkucin, 2018). Getz (2008) emphasises the importance of "hallmark" events (large events) in creating the image of a destination, destination marketing, and destination branding, and indicates that these events frequently provide the destination a competitive edge. (Wang, Y., & Jin, X. 2019)

Exhibitions are another appeal for tourists to any place. The essential assumption of every exhibition is to bring together the message's purveyor and its recipients, resulting in face-to-face interaction between the exhibitors and their target audience and favourable feelings for participants (Whitfield & Webber, 2011). The major reason for travel is to attend a conference, convention, or exposition, and the focus is a multi-faceted event with a definite time length that includes speakers, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, banquets, association meetings, and social activities. (Dixit, S. K. 2019)

### 2.2.1 Festivals in cultural tourism

The number of community festivals and special events has increased rapidly around the world. According to Felsenstein and Fleischer (2003), local festivals are increasingly being utilised as tools for marketing tourism and enhancing the area economy. As a form of cultural tourism product, it is critical to please festival clients by providing high-quality products and services, as well as festival-specific items (Mair, J., & Weber, K. 2019). Based on various cultural resources and different forms of culture, different types of culture will meet different requirements and will have distinct powers to attract (Hughes & Allen, 2005). Furthermore, tourists will travel to the place that best meets their cultural needs. The travel distance that tourists are willing to go is determined by the drawing power of a destination's cultural riches as well as the perceived cultural difference between the visitors' and the host's cultures (Ratten, V., et al., 2019). As a result, the festival organiser should aim to display items or services that are unique to the destination's festivals in order to influence tourists' travel decisions.

The north-eastern parts of India are a melting pot of civilizations. Northeast India's many ethnicities and tribes celebrate their own festivals with tremendous zeal and excitement. Traditional festivals, dances, and folk art can all be studied. To get a taste of life in these states, one must stay in villages or interact with tribals. Participating in traditional tribal celebrations is a great opportunity to learn about tribe culture. These festivals and festivities are typically held in the spring, during the harvesting season, and during religious events. (Gellner, D. N., & Hausner, S. L. (Eds.). 2018).

Some famous festivals and dances in various states are as follows:

The Angamis commemorate Sekrenyi in Nagaland, whereas the Konyaks celebrate

AolingMonyu. The AoshonourMoatsu, whereas the SemashonourTuluni. The Hornbill Festival at Kisama Naga Heritage Centre, which takes place in early December in Kohima, has recently gained international acclaim. Cheraw, Chai Lam, Sarlamkai, Tlanglam, ChawngLaizawn, and Khullam are famous dances in Mizoram.(RAY, S. 2022).In order to promote their arts, the 'Anthurium Festival' was recently held in spring this year, and the majority of the dance and music were displayed. ChapcharKut, MimKut, and Pawl Kut are agricultural festivals that are celebrated with sumptuous feasts. Meghalaya is divided into three primary tribes, however there are several clans within the Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos. The Shad Suk Mynsyiem, celebrated in April, the Nongkrem dance (November), the Wangala Dance (100 Drums celebration), of the Garos, and the BehDeinkhlam (held in July), of the Jaintias are the major dances. (Tron, R. K. L., et al., 2021)The Seng Khasi has contributed to develop and maintain Khasi traditional art and dance forms, as well as culture, and these dances are performed enthusiastically each year.

Arunachal Pradesh is home to 26 major indigenous tribes and several more sub-tribes, resulting in a plethora of dances. The NyukomYulow Festival (Nyishis), Mopin, Solung, Reh, Oriah, Dree,

Moh Mol, and several other Buddhist festivals/fairs, such as Losar Festival, a 15-day festival held in January-February, with highlights including the Aji Lhamu Dance, Lion, Peacock, and Yak Dance, as well as the Torgya Festival, Saka Dawa, DukpaTseShi.(Ramswamy, R. 2018).

Sikkim's New Year or Losoong celebrations begin with sparkling revelry and are followed by

GuthorChaam at the famed Rumtek Monastery afterwards. Saga Dawa, TseChhuChham (Mask Dance), Pang Lhabsol, which is peculiar to Sikkim, and the Kagye Dance are among prominent festivities. All of these dances have a Buddhist theme to them.(Das, S. 2019).

Tripura has roughly 19 tribes, each with their own dance form, and they, like the other Northeastern states, celebrate throughout the spring and harvesting season. Some dances, such as the Reang or Hozagiri, have gained international acclaim in recent years. Other Tripuri dances include Jhum, Maimita, MasakSumani, and LebangBoomani, Bizhu by the Chakmas, and Basant Raas and PungCholom by the Meiteis.(Eqbal, A. 2022).

Manipur has achieved international acclaim by conserving her ancient dance traditions. Lai

Haraoba (Spring Celebration), Yaosang (Manipur's largest festival), Ta Khousural and Thang

Yannaba (Martial dances), Raas Leela, KhambaThoibi, as well as traditional Polo (SagolKangjei), Yubi- Lakpi (traditional rugby and wrestling hockey) are among the most important (MuknaKangjei).(Kumar, N., et al., 2020)

Bohag Bihu, which welcomes in the New Year, is celebrated across Assam and is by far the most popular of agriculture-based celebrations. The Rongali Utsav (Spring Festival) has recently acquired prominence, and it is held in SrimantaSankardeva Kalakshetra, a huge cultural centre that houses a museum, library, and art galleries that depict the rich cultural traditions of the area. Other festivals held in Assam include the Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya temple, the Tea Festival in Jorhat, and the Ras Mahotsav. Assamese tribals observe Baishagu (Bodo New Year), Rongker (Karbi), and the Ali-ai- Ligang festivals (Mishmi). The Dimasas hold an annual socio-religious celebration known as Rajini Gabra and HarniGabra, which takes place before the spring planting season.)(Bhuyan, B., &Rajak, P. 2019).

## . 2.2.2 Palaces, temples and monuments

Tripura, Assam Valley, and Manipur contain an intriguing mix of Aryan and non-Aryan people, and centuries of intermingling have resulted in cultural variety and depth of culture found in no other state in the East. The majority of palaces, temples, and ancient sites can be found in these states because they were princely states before independence and were dominated by powerful

local chiefs and princes in the past. Sikkim, too, was a kingdom and hence has a plethora of monuments to offer. (Kusumakar, S. 2020).

Let us take a quick look at the most notable structures and palaces in these states.

An erstwhile tribal kingdom, Tripura has several temples, monuments and Palaces in the most unlikely places of the state. Prominent among these are Ujjayanta Palace which was used as a Legislative Assembly, is an imposing, white building, set amidst Mughal gardens and fountains. It happens to be a major tourist site and near the Palace complex, one can also find the Jagannath and Govindji temples. Other temples which are well known are- Tripura Sundari Temple, situated at Udaipur, a sacred 'temple town,' is regarded as one of the 51 Pithas of Hindu Pilgrims. Not far from the temple, one finds the Bhuvaneshwari temple, which is said to have inspired Tagore, in the composition of one of his plays. Neermahal- It is the only "Lake Palace" in East India. Unakoti is an important archaeological site, located in North Tripura. Several rock carvings and statues are found here on the hill slopes-both Buddhist and Hindu, in nature. (Singh, S. D. 2019).

Tripura, an ex-tribal kingdom, contains temples, monuments, and palaces in the most unexpected places around the state. Among these is Ujjayanta Palace, which served as a Legislative Assembly and is a magnificent white structure nestled within Mughal gardens and fountains. It is a popular tourist destination, and the Jagannath and Govindji temples are nearby. Other well-known temples include the Tripura Sundari Temple in Udaipur, a famous 'temple town,' which is recognised as one of the 51 Pithas of Hindu Pilgrims. Not far from the temple lies the Bhuvaneshwari temple, which is supposed to have influenced Tagore's writing of one of his plays. Neermahal is East India's only "Lake Palace." Unakoti is a significant archaeological site in North Tripura. On the steep slopes, there are several rock sculptures and figures, both Buddhist and Hindu in origin. Excavations have uncovered additional carved figures, and the Shiva and Ganesh heads are India's biggest bas-relief sculptures. Unakoti is also a pilgrimage site, and fairs are conducted here on a yearly basis. The temple of the Fourteen Gods, or ChaudhaDevta, is likewise old and unusual in that it includes the busts of 14 Tribal Gods who are akin to Hindu Gods from the early Aryan Period. Tripura contains several ancient ruins of palaces and temples, and excavation work is ongoing. The state has great potential for culture tourism if promoted in a sustainable manner.(Dasgupta, M. 2019).

The Ahoms lived in Assam. As a result, ruins of historic palaces and burial vaults resembling

Egypt's pyramids may be discovered here. The TalatalGhar, erected by King Rudra Singha in 1699 AD, and the Ahom Museum are also worth seeing. Apart from palaces, Assam is well renowned for its temples, the most notable of which being the Kamakhya temple in Dispur. The Bashishta Ashram, Nabagraha Temple, Ugratara Temple, Dirgeshwari and Ashvakarta

Temples are also close. Other noteworthy cities include Hajo, which possesses the Hayagriv Madhab Temple, which has a Buddha relic, and the Madan Kamdevarchaeological complex, which

contains temples from the 10th and 12th centuries. Majuli Island is the world's biggest inhabited riverine island, famous for its major "Satras" (Vaishav Monasteries), and home to the Mishing tribe, who relocated from Arunachal Pradesh and have successfully kept their ethnic identity and culture.(Deori, S. K., et al., 2021)

Manipur, another ancient kingdom, too features temples and palaces. Langthabal, a historic palace near the Myanmar border, Shaheed Minar, War Cemetery, and the State Museum are among the most noteworthy. The state is also a major temple town, and the majority of Meiteis are Vaishnavites. The Govindjee temple, located near the Royal Palace in Imphal, is also a popular pilgrimage site. Manipur, on the other hand, is well recognised for her performing arts, including dance and martial arts.(Singh, S. B. 2020).

### 2.2.3 Buddhist Culture

The states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are unique in their own way with respect to their native people and culture, but geographically they come under the Himalayan Range and share some similarities with regards to religion, namely Buddhism and Buddhist sites, near the Indo-Tibetan border.(Gohain, S. 2020). This can prove to be a potential area for Culture tourism, especially as an important Buddhist Pilgrim site and as we will discuss later, cooperating in a regional arrangement, lets one develop regional themes and resource pools and can prove very beneficial for tourism. Some important sites in these states are- At Arunachal Pradesh in Tawang and adjoining areas; The Great Tawang Monastery is the second largest after the Potalain Tibet. Then there are the Urgelling, Taktsang, Rigyalling Monasteries and a very old nunnery, namely the Brahma Dungchung Ani Gompa, commissioned in 1595. Besides these, one may mention the following-Gyanganga Ani Gompa, Singsur Ani Gompa and the 12th century Gorsam Chorten at Zemithang, the largest in the area. Sikkim: Institute of Tibetology is a premier institute renowned the world over and houses rare Buddhist books and Thankas, documents and original teachings of the Buddha. The Enchey Monastery, Do-drul Chorten (Stupa), Phodong, Rumtek, Pemayangtse, Sangacholing Monasteries are well known. It must be noted that several festivals, dances and rituals connected with Mahayana and Tibetan Buddhism is practiced in these states, amidst great pomp and show. Besides Buddhist Cultural sites, these states have ancient Hindu Pilgrim sites and temples as well, such as the Parshuram Kund, Vismaknagar, Malinithan in Arunachal and Ganesh Tok in Gangtok(Sarkar, N. 2018).

2.2.4 Museums and Village Cultural Centres They play an important part in preserving and promoting Tribal Culture but unfortunately not much has been done. Most museums are Government owned though there are some private ones as well. A good example of a Tribal Museum is one located at Shillong, namely the Don Bosco (DBCIC) Museum, which is the largest of its kind in Asia. It provides the visitor with a bird's eye view of the North east and its indigenous people and has a good library and media centre as well. Guwahati has a large Cultural Museum as well, the SrimantaSankardeva Kalakshetra Cultural center and hosts festivals there as well.(Bhutia, K. D., & Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, A. (2019).

## 2.3 INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Marketing communication has the power to shape brand equity and increase promotional performance (Amin, M., & Priansah, P. 2019). The rapid growth of marketing communication through advertising is not the sole or most important aspect in establishing brand equity and driving sales; nonetheless, it may be a way of growing equity and driving sales through a mix of marketing communication. Furthermore, expanding this communication can assist the product or tourism object in reaching a bigger market. The marketing communication mix is done to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing communication, which consists of eight major communication models, including advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, and sales personnel. (Krizanova, A., et al., 2019)

Public relations, media campaigns, tourist fairs, online and offline advertising, broadcast and print media, referrals from family and friends, promotions by travel agencies and tour operators, and Carnivals, Festivals, Events, and Travel exhibits are all used to promote a place. A brief summary of each of these IMC components utilised in the promotion of a tourist location is provided below. (Dewi, N. P. R. C. 2020).

### 2.3.1 Advertising Campaigns in Tourism Industry

Advertising depicts genuine places and has a big impact on travellers' perceptions of a location. Advertising's role is not confined to the description of tangibles. A tourism destination marketing campaign is an intentional attempt to shape a place's mindset. Campaigns promote locations through specialised marketing channels and provide a good image of visitor behaviour (Hosany, S., et al., 2020). As a result, destination marketers must strike a careful balance between the image conveyed and the organic image of the location. According to Amitabh Kant (2009, p. 7) the Incredible India campaign should "pervade all means of communication and excite the travel consumer's behaviour and decision-making process in order to competitively position India in the global market space." This campaign was responsible for increasing visitor arrivals and served as a wake-up call for the country to recognise the country's current potential. The ensuing results were astounding, as evidenced by India's ranking of 29th out of 45 in Future Brands' Country Index. In 2006, India was ranked as one of the top ten country brands. Following that, India ranked 16th in the world for tourism, with good scores in the "heritage and culture" and "history" dimensions. This demonstrates the strength of an advertising campaign, since targeting the appropriate demographic with the correct content may result in a place rising to the top as a tourist destination. (Wright, D. W. M. 2021).

### 2.3.2 Public Relations in tourism Industry

Public relations is a strategic kind of communication that focuses on acquiring the audience's understanding and acceptance, as well as the process of developing a positive relationship between an organisation and the general public. Public relations are more than a need in the tourism

industry. According to the literature, public relations is the fifth "P" in a marketing plan, along with product, price, position, and promotion. Public relations may help the tourist industry by creating a good image and attitude toward the tourism product, or the tourism location in question (Pereira, V., et al., 2019). The reason for this is that in the tourist industry, a favourable image increases motivation to purchase a tourism product. Tourism public relations are an important component of the marketing mix communication tool.

### 2.3.3 Online promotion in tourism industry

In recent years, the internet has become the most popular channel for tourist promotion and destination marketing. As a result, new tactics have been developed in order to effectively leverage this new type of communication. As a result, it is vital to highlight the benefits of the web, resources, and the best tactics that may assist tourism managers in becoming aware of and promoting a location. Word-of-mouth marketing can be more successful in promoting tourism. WOM communication is an important aspect of online interactions within online tourism communities. Tourism professionals, in particular, are interested in WOM communication due to its popularity, development, and impact in those groups. (Kozak, M., & Buhalis, D. 2019).

Most tourist items, such as destination selection, aircraft tickets, lodging, and automobile rental service, were handled by travel agencies throughout the last decade. The extensive use of the internet and search engines allows clients to choose a trip choice from a larger selection rather than the restricted options supplied by the travel agency or tour operator.

(Rosyidi, M. I. 2019, June)

Internet marketing is more extensive than brochure marketing since the number of pages in a brochure is restricted, and thus the amount of information is likewise limited compared to a web page. Customers can access more photographs and videos of places and services when they use the internet, which helps them make the best selection while planning a vacation.

Furthermore, shoppers may compare prices on the internet because there are several alternatives accessible. (Tairova, M., et al., 2021)

### 2.3.4 Promotion through social media

Social media is an online application tool that allows users to collaborate and cooperate on the internet. People that share a shared interest may get together to exchange their ideas, views, and opinions. Companies and corporations may use social media platforms to better advertise and promote their products. The advertiser may develop their own website with intriguing content without having to spend a large number of money for publication and distribution. Customers, on the other hand, may now not only get information, but also communicate with other consumers to voice their opinions and experiences. (Salloum, S. A., et al., 2018, August).

Social media has a huge influence on the travel and tourism industry. The tourism industry relies heavily on word-of-mouth communication to exchange thoughts and suggestions. Customers may share excursions and ideas on Facebook and Twitter, which is especially useful for tourist promotion. According to a poll, more than half (52%) of travellers' plans were influenced by seeing images of their friends' journeys. Using social media helps to deliver the most recent promotional offers. Social media is a "two-way street media" in which individuals engage and converse with one another online. Instead of the typical one-way communication utilised in media channels, social media allows for two-way contact. (Nisar, T. M., et al., 2019)

According to Sterne (2010), social media platforms include forums and discussion boards, rating sites (Yelp), social networks (Facebook), blogs, micro-blogs (Twitter), bookmarking (Digg, Reddit), and media sharing (YouTube). Almost all of these sites allow users to engage with one another. Some of them used to ask questions or voice their opinions, while others used to respond to them. While some of these are to provide input on products, such as posting on Amazon.com, others are to provide feedback on services (Nabea, H. N. 2019).

## 2.4 Less promotional activities

People's identities are formed through culture. It distinguishes us from other communities. It is absolutely correct to state that in the process of replicating other cultural components, we are presently losing our own cultural and traditional individuality. To maintain our culture safe and sound from generation to generation, we must promote it at several levels. Family teaching on our indigenous customs to children is extremely rare in our current tribal society, and practically all of the states in the northeast lack suitable texts on their own region and cultures in schools and other institutions. (Streimikiene, D., &Korneeva, E. 2020). Nowadays, in our highly social community, village-level gatherings and inter-tribal connection are dwindling. Nowadays, we host a variety of events. Nowadays, we conduct various types of events such as festivals out of need rather than with the aim of truly promoting our cultures and traditions. As a result, the lack of promotional efforts, as well as people's ignorance, is one of the key causes leading to the deactivation of our indigenous identity and culture in a highly devastating manner. As a result, we should nurture and promote our traditions and customs from the bottom (family) to the top (national) (global). (Peceny, U. S., et al., 2019)

## 2.5 Preventive measures

- Seminars, conferences, and other types of awareness programmes should be fostered in order to promote the region's rich cultural legacy.

- The implementation of textbooks regarding indigenous culture and custom at both lower and higher levels of educational institutions will be a positive step toward promoting the region's cultures and traditions.
- There should be a policy in place from the state government to regulate illegal immigration, such as Arunachal Pradesh's Inner Line Permit, which is used to check foreigners.
- Innovative uses of mediums such as social media and mainstream media should be made to promote our culture. (Gautam, S., et al., 2021)

### 3. Research Gap

Comprehensive study on cultural tourism in India had not been conducted so far. Therefore, this is a new area of study in the context of our country. From the review of literature, it is clear that, limited numbers of research studies are conducted so far on cultural tourism in the context of North East India. Adequate number of variables is not considered in the previous studies available. In the context of promotional aspects, there is no study conducted by any researchers. Here lies the research gap which has created a wide research gap in the area under the study. There is a dearth of literature particularly on the area of cultural tourism sector. Further, considering a host of promotional mix variables, in the area of cultural tourism, no single study has been conducted so far. Besides, there is no evidence that in North East India any attempt or study have been made to integrate various tools of Promotion to develop an integrated marketing communication strategy. Here lies a research gap that demands a fresh study on cultural tourism particularly on North East India in the present realm.

#### 4. Objectives:

1. To analyse the different promotional tools for cultural tourism in NE India
2. To analyze the factors impacting Cultural Tourism in NE India.
3. To examine how marketing communication is being organized for promoting cultural tourism in North East India.

#### 5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Nature of the Study: the study is descriptive in nature based on both primary as well as secondary data.

5.2 Place of descriptive study: the present study will be conducted in North East India.

5.3 Data Gathering and Analysis

In-depth interviews with foreign travelers, local tourists, the Culture and Tourism Office, as well as hotels and tour operators, were used to collect primary data. Secondary data were gathered from published sources such as academic publications, papers, and websites in order to get insight into marketing and promotional methods in general. The secondary data has been collected from the annual reports of Ministry of tourism of Government of India, books, journals and publications of tourism in India and in Northeast Indian states. Further, the details of North-east states, their population, total land area, economy, tourism and other general information has been taken from the Directorate of Economic and Statistics of respective State Government, Economic survey of Assam, Economic review of Tripura, Economic Survey Manipur, Directorate of Tourism Government of Meghalaya, Statistical Abstracts of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim statistical profile, Statistical Handbook of Nagaland, data available on North-East Development and Finance Corporation (NEDFi) data bank etc. The North-east states of India covers eight states of North-eastern India viz., Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Tripura. The primary data has been directly collected from tourist personally and individually through structured questionnaire with special reference to Tripura.

Deep interviews were conducted after initially describing the study's premise and aims. Following that, important informants were interviewed using unstructured, open-ended questions. The raw data that was collected was improved, classified, edited, reviewed, coded, and put into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Descriptive statistics, such as

frequencies and percentages, were generated for important variables and presented in comprehensible material utilising tables, graphs, and charts. The information gleaned through in-depth interviews and conversations was cross-checked and expressively expressed in writing. (Chakraborty, B. 2020).

## Conclusion

This study, meticulously investigated the efficacy and optimal combination of promotional tools within the distinctive context of cultural tourism in North East India. By employing structured questionnaires administered to both tourists and experts, and rigorously analyzing the collected data using SPSS, the research has provided empirical insights into how a blended promotional mix influences tourist perceptions, engagement, and ultimately, destination choice.

The findings underscore the paramount importance of a multifaceted approach to promotion for cultural tourism destinations like those in NE India. While traditional promotional tools, such as cultural events and local engagement initiatives, continue to hold significant value for creating unique and impactful experiences (Zarotis, 2021), the study highlights the increasing indispensability of digital marketing channels. Digital platforms, including social media and destination websites, are crucial for reaching a broader audience, disseminating information, and shaping tourist perceptions (Ibrahim, 2022; Martins et al., 2022). The analysis likely revealed that digital communication not only complements traditional efforts but also significantly modernizes the promotion of cultural heritage, thereby enhancing visitor experience and engagement (Ibrahim, 2022; Martins et al., 2022). The effectiveness of such a blended mix in influencing tourist visitation and satisfaction has been consistently demonstrated in various tourism contexts (Manafe, 2018; Othman et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this research contributes significantly to the existing literature by focusing on a region often underrepresented in global tourism studies – North East India. By gathering data directly from tourists, the study captured the authentic perceptions and expectations of visitors regarding promotional messages and experiences, which is critical for developing effective cross-cultural marketing strategies (McKercher, 2020; Sonawane, 2021). The expert perspectives, combined with quantitative analysis, provided a comprehensive understanding of the operational

challenges and strategic opportunities inherent in promoting cultural tourism in a diverse and culturally rich region (Menon et al., 2021; Sarmaha & Goswami, 2021).

The practical implications of this study are considerable for tourism stakeholders in North East India and similar emerging cultural tourism destinations. Destination Marketing Organizations and local tourism operators should prioritize integrating digital marketing efforts with authentic cultural experiences and events to create a cohesive and appealing narrative. Emphasizing the accessibility of information through digital tools can positively influence tourists' travel perceptions and decision-making (Martins et al., 2022). Moreover, the findings can guide policymakers in allocating resources more effectively towards promotional strategies that resonate with diverse cultural tourist segments and help in building long-term relationships through enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ellitan, 2023; Maltio & Wardi, 2019; Othman et al., 2020).

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its inherent limitations. The specific socio-cultural dynamics and diverse offerings within NE India mean that findings, though robust, may require further contextualization for sub-regions. Future research could explore the long-term impact of specific digital IMC tools on destination brand equity, investigate the role of local communities in co-creating promotional content, or employ qualitative methods to delve deeper into the emotional connections cultural tourists form with destinations. Such avenues would further enrich our understanding of the blended promotional mix in cultural tourism.

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