

# Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor: Its Influence on Tourist Satisfaction – A Case Study of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur

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## Abstract

This study examines the impact of tribal culture as a draw factor on tourist satisfaction, with a particular emphasis on the regions of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur. Tourism is distinguished from mainstream attractions by the authenticity, traditions, and immersive experiences of tribal culture. The study implemented a quantitative design and a primary research approach, employing a self-structured Likert scale questionnaire to ascertain the perspectives of tourists regarding festivals, rituals, handicrafts, architecture, and environmental practices. Data were collected from 60 randomly selected respondents and analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The results demonstrate a robust and statistically significant positive correlation between tourist satisfaction and tribal culture ( $R = 0.812$ ,  $R^2 = 0.659$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the perceived value of tribal cultural experiences accounts for nearly two-thirds of the variance in satisfaction. The appeal of cultural immersion among

experience-seeking travelers is reflected in the preponderance of young, educated participants, as indicated by demographic patterns. The findings are consistent with the existing literature, which underscores the transformative potential of genuine cultural engagement. The study concludes that the preservation and promotion of tribal culture in a sustainable and community-inclusive manner can improve tourist satisfaction while also protecting indigenous heritage. This has significant implications for local communities, tourism developers, and policymakers in the promotion of responsible cultural tourism.

**Keywords:** Tribal tourism, Pull factors, Tourist satisfaction, Cultural heritage, Sustainable tourism

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tribal culture, in the contemporary era of global tourism, serves as a compelling attraction for travelers due to its authenticity, relevance, and immersive experiences within the tourism sector. While sun-sand-sea attractions remain popular, contemporary travelers increasingly desire to engage with unique cultural identities, traditions, and lifestyles, particularly those untouched by the forces of industrialization. At the intersection of tribal culture with tourism, a vibrant tapestry emerges that benefits both tourists and indigenous communities economically, culturally, and socially. This comprehensive exploration examines the allure of tribal culture and its influence on, enhancement of, and challenges to tourist satisfaction in various ways. Attributes of a destination that attract tourists are referred to as pull factors in tourism. These pertain to the tribal context:

- Vibrant rituals and festivities
- Music, dance, and art
- Rural existence and unconventional architectural design

- Handicrafts, indigenous arts
- Distinctiveness of dietary practices
- Narratives, oral heritage, and legends
- There exist spiritual and environmental practices.

For many travelers, especially those accustomed to urban living, tribal sites provide a glimpse into lifestyles connected to environment and culture, promising authenticity and the allure of the unfamiliar[1].

### A. The Magnetism of Tribal Culture: What is the Tourist attraction?

**1. Real Cultural Immerse:** The need to experience raw and uncut experiences is another factor that is slowly appealing to tourists who would love to visit the tribal territories with the aim of observing what many consider to be an untouched lifestyle, which has not been subject to widespread commercialization. The tourist destinations like Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur, the tribal people maintain unique practices in terms of day-to-day dressing, language, cuisine and spiritualism, unlike the normal tourist centers. These factors add authenticity, which provides the visitors with a stronger cultural

experience that satisfies their ambitions towards more meaningful traveling[2].

**2. Festival, Rituals, and Group Assemblies:** Festivals are an active and indispensable part of the tribal life being also strong key attractions to people. Although, examples of such fairs can also be cited like the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland which demonstrates the national popularity of such events, there are also other regions like Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur which also have traditional fairs, dance performance, and religious ceremonies based on centuries old traditions. Such events enable the tourists to engage directly in rituals, commune in communal foods and involve themselves in connections with the local residents, a feeling of belonging, and sharing in the festivities[3].

**3. Forms of Art and Crafts:** They are also attractive to tourists because of the affluent artistic cultures of tribal communities. Be it elaborate woodwork and other crafts, or mass productions of textiles, or local jewelry, they all symbolize their culture as something tangible. The symbolism of handicrafts is common in Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur besides narrating tales of descent, myth and everyday life. To tourists, buying these goods is not mere selling and buying but a means by which they have transported a part of the culture home with them to associate further on the emotional level with the region. [4], [3]

**4. Feeling a part of Nature:** Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur regions are the tribal areas with spectacular scenery of mountains covered with snow, wild rivers and forests. Traditional knowledge systems of local communities practice sustainable practices, which are in harmony with the environment. There are hundreds of travellers attracted to these practices; whether its herbal medicine, farming techniques or even religious approaches to managing the land, nature and culture are interchangeable elements of the travel experience [4].

**5. Transformative Experiences:** Visiting tribal culture may also be more than sightseeing and has plenty of potentials to lead the visitors to self-transformation. Experience in other world views helps to break the preconceived thoughts; it develops cross-cultural knowledge and also promotes tolerance of different lifestyles. When it comes to Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur, experiences of this kind have long-lasting effects as they only raise tourist satisfaction levels, and encourage the desire to visit the places once more. The main purpose of love tourism is that the changing experiences serve as a backbone of the tribal culture that acts as a powerful pull factor in the development of tourism. [2], [3]

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

**Gade et al., [5]** Tribal tourism is a critical intersection of sustainable development and cultural discovery, offering distinctive perspectives on the lifestyles of

indigenous peoples, while simultaneously safeguarding their cultural heritage and generating economic opportunities. This research, which is grounded in the literature, provides an anthropological perspective on tribal tourism in India, examining its implications for community empowerment, sustainable development, and cultural preservation. After conducting a comprehensive review of academic literature, government documents, and industry publications, this research analyzes the primary themes and trends in tribal tourism. It examines the intricate relationships between indigenous peoples and visitors, underscoring the importance of community participation, equitable partnerships, and cultural sensitivity in tourism development initiatives. Additionally, the study examines the role of ethnographic research methodologies in comprehending the sociocultural dynamics of tribal tourism destinations, emphasizing the necessity of ethical considerations and respectful collaboration. Additionally, this investigation investigates the impact of tribal tourism on sustainable development, specifically its capacity to generate revenue, provide employment opportunities, and promote environmental conservation practices among indigenous communities. It also addresses concerns such as the significance of responsible tourist practices in assuring the long-term viability of tribal tourism operations and mitigating negative effects, as well as the loss of authenticity and cultural commercialization. Lastly, this literature-based study contributes to our comprehension of the intricate relationship between sustainable development, culture, and tribal tourism, offering valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners who are interested in fostering responsible and inclusive tourism practices that benefit both indigenous communities and visitors.

**Tripathy & Raha, [6]** A nation's cultural diversity is a valuable asset. A diverse culture can offer a variety of attractive traditions and socio-cultural activities that attract individuals who are interested in traveling and exploring. North East India is renowned for its diverse population of numerous tribes, and India is a nation that is rich in diversity. Arunachal Pradesh is home to 26 main tribes and numerous sub-tribes. Consequently, it is evident that Arunachal Pradesh is replete with cultural assets. The unique socio-cultural activities of each tribe are what distinguish them. Tribal tourism is a critical component of sustainable tourism, in which travelers participate in responsible tourism activities. Since the state's opening to tourism, the tribal culture of Arunachal Pradesh has been a significant draw for tourists. A curious attraction for individuals who enjoy cultural exploration, the tribal lifestyle was in addition to its scenic grandeur. In addition to festivals, what other cultural manifestations can be considered significant?

The tribal festival is a popular destination for tourists from all over the world due to its stunning display of cultural heritage. Throughout the year, the tourism industry in Arunachal Pradesh is significantly impacted by the tribal local festivals.

**Dash**, [7] Our cultural traditions are shaped by a variety of factors, including our spiritual beliefs, languages, localities, ethnicities, and vocations. The challenge of addressing cultural pluralism in architecture is significant. Taking into account the business practices and products of the Santali tribe in Kumari, Similipal (located in the state of Odisha in India), this paper examines the strategies employed by an eco-tourism business to promote sustainable development. Eco-tourism can be beneficial to the local economy and preserve the resource base with the implementation of a growth plan and appropriate planning. The local residents of the Similipal tiger reserve buffer area can retain their resources, including food, fuel, and land tenure, while also benefiting economically from eco-tourism through sustainable development and conservation. This investigation offers a blueprint for the creation of a cutting-edge eco-tourism development in a tribal region that is advantageous to the local populace by researchers and professionals.

**Zhao**, [8] Cultural tourism is a comprehensive industry that has emerged as the most dynamic, particularly in ethnic regions with rich cultural resources but a relatively underdeveloped economy. The advancement of cultural tourism is of significant economic, cultural, social, and ecological importance. Tourism can be utilized as a means of capitalizing on village culture, which not only has a broad market potential but also can address the fundamental needs of the villagers and encourage the preservation and transmission of ethnic culture. Dashanping village has achieved a significant milestone in the transformation of Yi ethnic culture's value system. It demonstrates that cultural tourism in ethnic villages can assist villagers in overcoming destitution, fostering regional economic development, and safeguarding ethnic culture. The previous protection mode of cultural fragmentation can be transformed into a sustainable protection and development of ethnic communities through the interaction of tourism for poverty alleviation and culture spatial production. In order to alleviate poverty through tourism, it is imperative that we prioritize the preservation of the original ecology of culture and maintain respect for the culture of ethnic communities. We should also prioritize the preservation of the natural environment, the development of the villagers, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

**Barman et al.**, [9] The potential of Cultural Tourism in India to showcase the rich tribal cultures and the associated economic benefits is undeniable. The issue is

how to ensure its sustainability by engaging the local tribal communities in this endeavor through the process of capacity development and related community innovations. If this is accomplished, we would have achieved two objectives of equal importance: the preservation and protection of the distinctive tribal cultures, and economic development. We are unable to make any further assumptions.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology offers a structured framework that directs the whole research process, guaranteeing the reliability, validity, and precision of the results. It delineates the precise methodologies employed to find, select, process, and evaluate material pertinent to the research issue. This study employs a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approach, contingent upon its nature, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. The methodology explicitly delineates the study design, which may be experimental, descriptive, correlational, or exploratory. It delineates the selection criteria for participants or data samples, encompassing the sampling technique, size, and demographic specifics. Data collecting instruments, including questionnaires, interviews, surveys, and observational checklists, are delineated, along by the justification for their application. Moreover, the approach delineates the protocols employed in data collecting and underscores ethical aspects, including informed permission and confidentiality. Statistical methods, such as SPSS, regression analysis, or thematic analysis, are utilized for data analysis to derive significant results and evaluate study hypotheses. The research technique provides a coherent and transparent framework for examining the research issues, so augmenting the study's credibility and enabling future replication

#### A. Research Design

The research design chosen in this study is quantitative research that tries to statistically test whether there is a relationship between tourist satisfaction and tribal culture as a pull factor. The reason why quantitative design has been selected is that it permits measurement variables in numerical terms, hypothesis testing, and the possibility of generalizing the findings based on one sample of data.

#### B. Research Approach

The study carries a primary research orientation, based on the first-hand data, gathered in persons, by bypassing the respondents. The strategy will provide that the information used in the research is relatively modern and without outdated understanding and perspectives.

#### C. Proposed Method

The researcher also used a survey-based approach to gather data and employed self-structured Likert scale questionnaire. This fact was indicated in the design of the questionnaire that sought to obtain the feelings of the respondents concerning the different aspects of tribe culture including festivals, rituals, along with the handicrafts, architecture and environmental conservation and how it affected satisfaction to the tourists. The items showed a five-point Likert-scale that varied between strongly disagree and strongly agree.

#### D. Sample Size

There was a total of 60 respondents with which a random sampling technique was used to eliminate biasness and at the same time make the results representative. The sample was composed of people, who represented a wide range of variables in age, gender, educational level, and other occupational ranks.

#### E. Data Collection

The information was collected on the basis of conducting a face-to-face survey in Lahaul-Spiti tourist destination and Kinnaur tourist destination. The respondents were met in places where they spend time together like in the markets, cultural sites and other local events. Each of the participants was informed about the questionnaire and it was voluntary and confidentiality was promised.

#### F. Data Analysis

The responses gained were coded and entered into SPSS where they were analyzed statistically. A summary of demographic information was undertaken using descriptive statistics. Pearson correlation was used to evaluate the connection between tribal culture as a pull factor and the satisfaction by tourists. To calculate the strength and significance of the predictive relationship was carried out with the help of regression analysis. A level of statistical relevance existent was  $p < 0.05$ .

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Demographic Profile of Respondents

**Table: I Age of the respondents**

| Age      |           |         |
|----------|-----------|---------|
|          | Frequency | Percent |
| Below 20 | 1         | 1.7     |
| 21-30    | 47        | 78.3    |
| 31-40    | 10        | 16.7    |
| 41-50    | 1         | 1.7     |
| Above 51 | 1         | 1.7     |
| Total    | 60        | 100.0   |

The above table discusses the frequency and percentage of Age of the respondents. In Below 20 years age group, frequency is 1 and percentage is 1.7%. In 21-30 years

age group, frequency is 47 and percentage is 78.3%. In 31-40 years age group, frequency is 10 and percentage is 16.7%. In 41-50 years age group, frequency is 1 and percentage is 1.7%. In Above 51 years age group, frequency is 1 and percentage is 1.7%.

**Graph: 1 Graphical representation of Age of the respondents.**

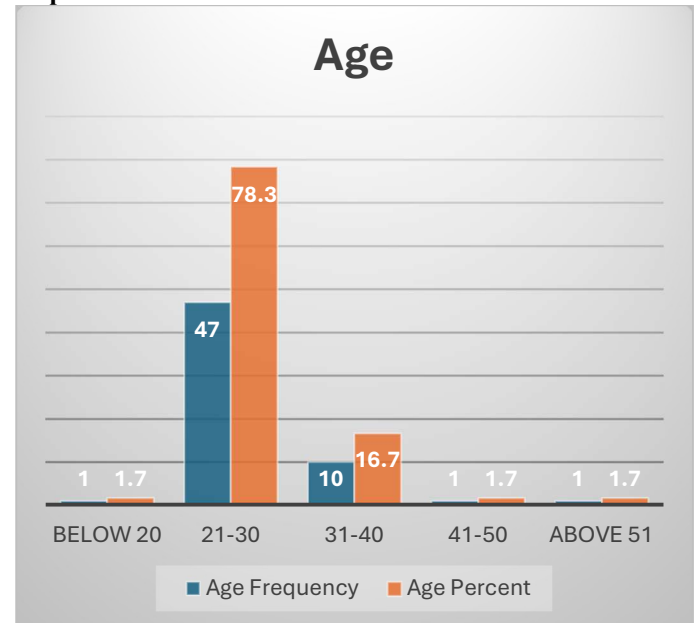


**Table: II Gender of the respondents.**

| Gender |           |         |
|--------|-----------|---------|
|        | Frequency | Percent |
| Male   | 37        | 61.7    |
| Female | 23        | 38.3    |
| Total  | 60        | 100.0   |

The above table discusses the frequency and percentage of Gender of the respondents. In male, Frequency is 37 and percentage is 61.7%. In Female, Frequency is 23 and percentage is 38.3%.

**Graph: 2 Graphical representation of gender of the respondents.**

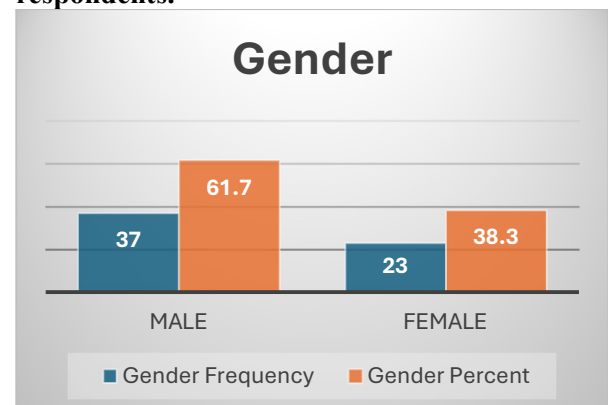


**Table: III Education Qualification of the respondents.**

| Education Qualification |           |         |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                         | Frequency | Percent |
| Higher secondary        | 1         | 1.7     |
| Graduate                | 16        | 26.7    |
| Post Graduate           | 38        | 63.3    |
| Other                   | 5         | 8.3     |
| Total                   | 60        | 100.0   |

The above table discusses the frequency and percentage of Education Qualification of the respondents. In Higher secondary, Frequency is 1 and percentage is 1.7%. In Graduate, Frequency is 16 and percentage is 26.7%. In Post graduate, Frequency is 38 and percentage is 63.3%. In other, Frequency is 5 and percentage is 8.3%.

**Graph: 3 Graphical representation of Education Qualification of the respondents.**

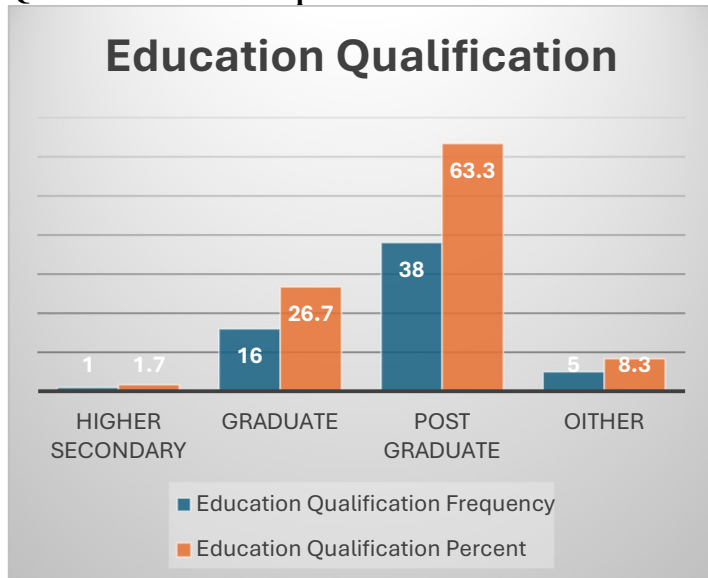


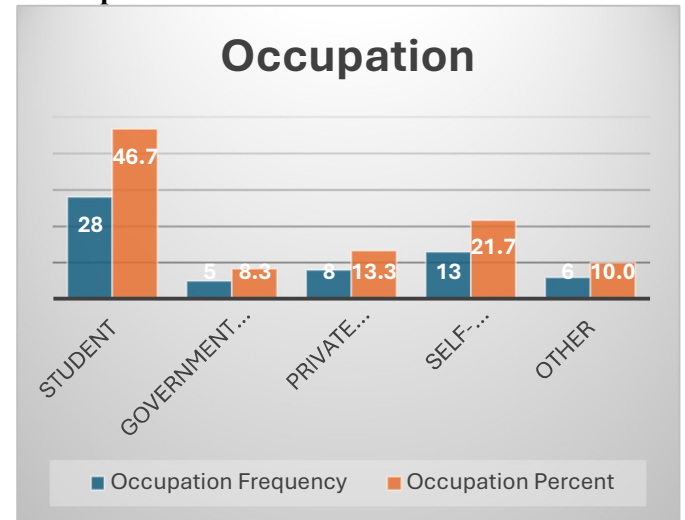
**Table: IV Occupation of the respondents**

| Occupation              |           |         |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                         | Frequency | Percent |
| Student                 | 28        | 46.7    |
| Government Employee     | 5         | 8.3     |
| Private Sector Employee | 8         | 13.3    |
| Self-employed/Business  | 13        | 21.7    |
| Other                   | 6         | 10.0    |
| Total                   | 60        | 100.0   |

The above table discusses the frequency and percentage of Occupation of the respondents. In Students, Frequency is 28 and percentage is 46.7%. In Government Employee, Frequency is 5 and percentage is 8.3%. In private sector employee, Frequency is 8 and percentage is 13.3%. In Self-Employed, Frequency is 13

and percentage is 21.7%. In Other, Frequency is 6 and percentage is 10.0%.

**Graph: 4 Graphical representation of Occupation of the respondents.**



## B. Regression Analysis

**Table: VRegression Analysis of Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor on Tourist Satisfaction.**

| Model Summary                                              |                   |          |                   |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model                                                      | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1                                                          | .812 <sup>a</sup> | .659     | .653              | 2.65457                    |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor |                   |          |                   |                            |

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup>                                         |                             |            |                           |         |                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Model                                                      | Sum of Squares              | df         | Mean Square               | F       | Sig.              |
| 1 Regression                                               | 788.273                     | 1          | 788.273                   | 111.864 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
| Residual                                                   | 408.711                     | 58         | 7.047                     |         |                   |
| Total                                                      | 1196.983                    | 59         |                           |         |                   |
| a. Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction                |                             |            |                           |         |                   |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor |                             |            |                           |         |                   |
| Coefficients <sup>a</sup>                                  |                             |            |                           |         |                   |
| Model                                                      | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t       | Sig.              |
|                                                            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |         |                   |
| 1 (Constant)                                               | 7.697                       | 2.138      |                           | 3.600   | .001              |
| Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor                            | .754                        | .071       | .812                      | 10.577  | .000              |
| a. Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction                |                             |            |                           |         |                   |

According to the regression analysis results, there is a robust positive correlation between Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor and Tourist Satisfaction, with a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.812 and a R Square value of 0.659. This implies that tribal culture as a pull factor accounts for 65.9% of the diversity in tourist satisfaction. The model's robustness is confirmed by its statistical significance ( $F = 111.864$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Tourist satisfaction increases by 0.754 units for every one-unit increase in the perception of tribal culture as a draw factor, as indicated by the unstandardized coefficient ( $B = 0.754$ ). The strong positive impact is further supported by the standardized coefficient ( $Beta = 0.812$ ), while the constant value (7.697) illustrates the baseline tourist satisfaction in the absence of the pull factor. The excellent model fit is also suggested by the low standard error of estimate (2.65457). All in all, the results underscore the fact that tribal culture has a statistically significant and substantive impact on the satisfaction of tourists.

### C. Pearson Correlation Analysis

**Table: VI Pearson correlation analysis between Tribal Culture as a Pull Factor and Tourist Satisfaction.**

| Correlations                       |                     |                                       |                         |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                    |                     | Tribal Culture<br>as a Pull<br>Factor | Tourist<br>Satisfaction |
| Tribal Culture as a Pull<br>Factor | Pearson Correlation | 1                                     | .812**                  |
|                                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                                       | .000                    |
|                                    | N                   | 60                                    | 60                      |
| Tourist Satisfaction               | Pearson Correlation | .812**                                | 1                       |
|                                    | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                                  |                         |
|                                    | N                   | 60                                    | 60                      |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The strength of this correlation indicates that tribal culture is a significant factor in the overall experience of tourists, and the significance level ( $p = 0.000$ ) affirms that this relationship is highly unlikely to be the result of chance.

### D. Discussion

In Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur, the study's discussion underscored the fact that tribal culture is a substantial draw factor that significantly contributes to the satisfaction of visitors. The regression test demonstrated a positive relationship with a high coefficient of correlation ( $R = 0.812$ ) and coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.659$ ). This implies that the variance of tourist satisfaction can be accounted for by the perceived value of tribal culture, which is nearly two-thirds of total variance. This aligns with the findings of the preceding literature, which suggested that the immersive

experience of the culture, authenticity, and distinctiveness are essential components of appealing to culturally inclined travelers.

According to the statistically significant findings ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the high value of beta (0.812), the level of satisfaction among visitors is significantly higher when they perceive a greater cultural richness in terms of festivals, rituals, art forms, indigenous cuisine, and shared harmony with nature. In addition to passively acquiring the culture, tourists require active participation in the cultural practice, which strengthens their sense of connection to their destination.

In addition, the demographic trends observed in the sample, which is primarily composed of young adults, educated individuals, and students, may suggest that tribal tourism is particularly appealing to a demographic that is interested in self-development and experience. In addition, the findings are consistent with the principles of sustainable tourism, which suggest that the ethical exploitation of tribal culture may be advantageous to visitors and detrimental to the preservation of indigenous culture. However, the literature also refers to threats associated with cultural commodification and the loss of authenticity, which underscore the importance of well-regulated tourism strategies that both involve and empower local communities.

### V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study establish that tribal culture is a statistically significant and potent pull factor that affects tourist satisfaction in the Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur regions. The overall tourist experience is significantly enhanced by the distinctive traditions, festivals, art forms, environmental harmony, and authentic lifestyle of these tribal communities, as evidenced by the regression and correlation analyses, which account for a significant portion of the variance in satisfaction levels. This suggests that the immersive cultural engagement is what generates enduring impressions and encourages subsequent visits, rather than scenic landscapes. Stakeholders can simultaneously protect indigenous heritage and promote local economic development by preserving and promoting these cultural elements in a sustainable and respectful manner. Consequently, it is imperative to prioritize community engagement, cultural preservation, and responsible tourism practices in order to guarantee that tribal culture remains an enduring and vibrant component of the region's tourism appeal.

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