Analyzing the Impacts of Indigenous Cultural Tourism on the Host Community

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Abstract: *Indigenous communities are enriched with rich cultural assets. Researchers showed that Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) has the potential to have both beneficial and negative effects on the host communities. Thus, this study analyzed the impact of ICT on the host community in Bangladesh. Specifically, this study analyzed the impact based on the three dimensions of sustainability: Economic, Social-Cultural, and Environmental. The study used qualitative methods to examine the effects of ICT. Following purposive sampling techniques, In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data from 16 participants of the indigenous community of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The study remarked Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) as a crucial economic driver for the host community, a way of social cohesion and intercultural understanding, and unfortunately, a substandard for conservation efforts in Bangladesh.*

In the sustainability dimensions, this research found that ICT has positive impacts on economic sustainability, such as poverty alleviation, income & employment generation, demand for local products, and improved standards of living; socio-cultural impacts such as preservation of local culture and heritage, women empowerment, and strengthening communities. In contrast, the authors also highlighted the negative impacts on economic sustainability- price hikes, seasonality, unemployment; sociocultural sustainability- cultural proliferation, hampers on privacy, crowdedness, and crime; and environmental sustainability- littering, habitat loss, soil erosion, and loss of endangered species. This study may function as a comprehensive guide for the development of sustainable tourism practices and policies in Indigenous Cultural Tourism in Bangladesh. These strategies aim to benefit both visitors and the indigenous community by mitigating adverse effects and enhancing positive outcomes.

Keywords: *Indigenous Cultural Tourism; Host Community; Tourism Impact; Sustainable Tourism;*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a dynamic and influential force in the world, shaping not only economies but also cultures, identities, and societies. Among the various types of tourism, Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) stands out as a unique and meaningful way for travelers to engage with indigenous communities. Through ICT, visitors can immerse themselves in the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of indigenous peoples, gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of their rich cultural heritage. For many indigenous communities, tourism offers a valuable platform to share their stories, showcase their traditional craftsmanship, and earn an income. It allows them to preserve their cultural practices while connecting with the outside world on their own terms. However, the intersection of tourism and indigenous culture is complex, with both immense opportunities and significant challenges.

When managed thoughtfully, ICT can drive economic growth by creating jobs, supporting small businesses, and providing a sustainable source of income for communities. It can also help revitalize cultural practices, encouraging younger generations to stay connected to their roots and heritage. On a

social level, ICT fosters cultural exchange, creating a space where both visitors and locals can learn from one another, build mutual respect, and promote understanding.

The influx of tourists can also bring unintended consequences. An increase in visitor numbers often leads to overcrowding, which can strain local resources and disrupt the delicate balance of indigenous life. There is a real risk of sacred traditions being commercialized or misrepresented, leading to the erosion of cultural authenticity. In some cases, communities may find themselves losing control over how their culture is presented, raising concerns about exploitation and the commodification of their identity. The challenge lies in finding a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the preservation of cultural integrity. This study delves into the impact of Indigenous Cultural Tourism on host communities in Bangladesh, particularly those composed of indigenous peoples. It explores how ICT contributes to local economies, creating job opportunities and supporting businesses. Beyond the economic aspect, the research examines the social and cultural effects of tourism, with a focus on the preservation of indigenous identity, traditions, and the relationships within communities. Additionally, the study considers environmental factors, addressing concerns related to resource sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and the ecological footprint of tourism activities. By providing a holistic understanding of these dynamics, the study aims to offer insights into how ICT can be a force for good, benefiting both indigenous communities and the broader global society.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Indigenous cultural tourism poses a special contradiction because, while it can be an effective tool for cultural preservation and economic empowerment, underhanded management can result in exploitation and a loss of authenticity. Numerous communities struggle to strike a balance between the potential for cultural dilution and the economic advantages. Another problem is that while some indigenous tribes prosper from ICT, others may see their customs diminished to tourist attractions while earnings go elsewhere. To make ICT more sustainable and advantageous for host communities, this study attempts to draw attention to these issues and provide workable answers. The study can contribute to making sure that tourism strengthens rather than weakens indigenous cultures by being aware of its effects on the economy, society, and environment. More significantly, this research can investigate methods by which these communities might maintain authority over their stories and cultural manifestations, thereby utilizing ICT as a tool for advancement and preservation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the positive and negative impacts of Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) on host communities and their cultural landscapes. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess the economic impacts of ICT, including its effects on local businesses, employment, and income.

2. Examine the socio-cultural impacts of ICT, with a focus on its influence on indigenous identity, traditional practices, and community cohesion.

3. Evaluate the environmental impacts of ICT, particularly in relation to resource sustainability, biodiversity, and ecological balance.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) has gained global recognition as a powerful tool for economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. While it creates opportunities for indigenous communities to share their traditions with the world, it also brings challenges that need to be carefully managed. Scholars have explored its impact from different angles, particularly focusing on its economic, social, and environmental implications. Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) is increasingly recognized as a development tool that brings both opportunities and challenges to host communities. The literature presents a balanced view of how tourism affects the economic, social, and environmental aspects of indigenous destinations, providing insights that are directly relevant to the current study.

Jayadi and Abduh (2021) researched to investigated the perceptions of leaders in Tana Toraja, Indonesia, towards the social impacts of cultural tourism. The research was done with the help of ethnographic interviews and five key participants as main sample. The ethnographic interviews are a

kind of two or dialogical interview between the researcher and participants. The results of the study indicated that host communities have strong support for the tourism industry in Tana Toraja. They regarded tourists as being very different from themselves but expressed no negative feelings towards them. They demonstrated a predominantly positive feeling towards tourists and towards the industry". People acknowledge that the development of the tourism industry increases the social gaps in society and the loss of sacred values for historical objects. More importantly, the positive impacts that they pointed out were predominantly socio-cultural factors, but included an economic aspect. The positive impacts were the reinforcement of their ancient tradition, the diversification of tourist souvenirs, and the additional income for communities. The study indicated that the impact of tourism can have both positive and negative effects on communities. This study has attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge concerning the key local communities' beliefs on the impact of tourism industry development.

Meena (2020) conducted a qualitative study to analyze and examine tourism development in Pushkar and its socio-economic impacts in a spatiotemporal perspective. The study also identified the responsible factors of social-economic impacts and understood people's perception and reviewed the government policies. Major variables of the study include tourism attractions such as Rajasthan, development of handicrafts and cottage industry, impacts on purchasing power, employment status, occupational shift, impact on folklore. The study found that the people of Pushkar are very hospitable, and the town has a huge tourism potential, especially Brahma Temple, holy town and Pushkar Sarovar (Lake) and is set in the Valley of Aravalli Mountain etc. The research marks that the flourishing tourism has its impacts as- better road network in and around city, development of hotels and guest houses, taxi services, long street market in fort area, increasing employment opportunities and purchasing power, educational opportunities, mode of communication, changing dressing sense from traditional to western styles, dietary habits etc. On the other side, over-exploitation of water resources, huge heaps of garbage and municipal solid waste, threats to wildlife due to increasing tourism, etc., are some of the challenges that need to be addressed. Despite all these findings there is a lot of scope to improve on certain points like- adopting rainwater harvesting techniques, recycling of water resources and proper management of municipal waste, minimum intervention in wild life areas, proper training of guides, opening of information kiosks, rent control for accommodation, maintenance of old buildings, availability of medical services.

Faraj (2020) examined the research to examine Lebanese local citizens' perception of tourism impact. A self-designed survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire and took 430 samples in a Quantitative method. The main variables of the study are the increased personal income of locals, local economic development. Urbanization process in host communities, local agriculture development, local industry development, attracts new investments, and encourages small businesses. Tourism also leads to increased prices and higher living costs in the local Area. The result of the study showed that the community has a positive perception about the ongoing tourism development, and they have more hopes about tourism development in the area and think that it will help to create more employment opportunities, attract new investment, improve the local industry, and contribute to local economic development. Also, they have doubts and fears about some aspects related to socio-cultural and environmental issues like the spread of disease, a decrease in local honesty, pressure on water and electricity consumption, and the discharge of solid and liquid waste to the environment. The community perception of tourism development and its impact is essential for having a balanced tourism development that leads to economic benefits while harmonizing other factors. For that, it's essential to carry out educational and training programs that focus on the local community to integrate them into the tourism industry.

Kaushik (2018) researched to understand the perception of residents of the Nako destination towards the impacts of tourism growth. Quantitative study method was used to conduct research. The main variables of the study include socio-cultural, employment, infrastructure, and environmental development. The findings of the study indicated that the locals seemed to be aware of the environment and its management. They perceived the infrastructure aspects of tourism impacts most favorably. However, some negative points, such as increases in traffic accidents, were evident. In addition, several indications of discomfort were shown, concerning the increased price of land, houses, services, and general commodities. Other negative impacts of tourism development that residents perceived as favorable are commercialized local art, seasonal employment, and migration from other areas such as

Nepal, Bihar, and Kashmir. Further, as an initial stage of tourism, the host communities' attitudes were least favorable to any change in their customs and traditional values. Yet, to combat drug use, alcoholism, criminality, and decay in moral values, the researcher recommends that the existing border control be strengthened to keep drugs out. Simultaneously, there is a need for continuous monitoring of tourists regarding drug abuse.

From an economic perspective, tourism is often seen as a catalyst for growth in marginalized or remote communities. Zaei and Zaei (2013) argued that tourism plays a crucial role in job creation, income generation, and infrastructure development, especially where alternative livelihoods are scarce. Faraj (2020) supported this view by showing that communities in Lebanon perceive tourism as a contributor to local economic stability, though benefits are not always evenly distributed. Wu and Chen (2015) extended this argument, noting that while tourism enhances local business opportunities, it can also lead to increased living costs and economic dependency. These findings suggest that while tourism is economically beneficial, attention must be paid to equitable distribution and long-term resilience.

When it comes to socio-cultural impacts, the literature reveals both uplifting and concerning trends. On the positive side, cultural tourism can revitalize traditions, foster local pride, and promote cross-cultural understanding. Jayadi and Abduh (2022found that tourism helped preserve traditional rituals and cultural identity. Meena's research in Pushkar also showed that tourism offered a platform for cultural exchange and empowerment. However, Shahzalal (2016) warned of the dangers of cultural commodification and the erosion of authenticity, especially when cultural elements are packaged solely for tourist consumption. Singla (2014) and Garau-Vadell et al. (2014) observed that overcrowding, loss of privacy, and rising crime rates were often reported by host communities. These effects may lead to social tension or conflict, as shown by Yang, et. al. (2013), who documented growing resentment among locals in destinations where tourism disrupts social norms or creates inequality.

Regarding environmental impacts, literature acknowledges the double-edged nature of tourism. On one hand, Kalvet et al. (2020) highlighted how innovative tools and impact assessments can help monitor and manage tourism sustainably, especially in culturally sensitive sites. On the other hand, Jangra and Kaushik (2018) found that in Himalayan destinations, increased tourist traffic led to resource depletion, waste accumulation, and biodiversity loss. Carneiro and Eusébio (2015) argued that sustainable tourism practices, when implemented with community participation, can mitigate negative environmental impacts and even lead to environmental improvements. Yet, the literature consistently suggests that without proper planning and regulation, ICT can contribute to habitat degradation and overexploitation of natural resources.

Overall, the reviewed literature reinforces the idea that ICT has the potential to benefit host communities economically and culturally, but it also brings substantial risks if not managed inclusively and sustainably. The findings align closely with the objectives of the present study, which seeks to explore these multi-dimensional impacts within the context of indigenous communities in Bangladesh. Indigenous Cultural Tourism is a double-edged sword it can be a powerful driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and environmental stewardship, but if not managed properly, it can also lead to exploitation, cultural loss, and ecological harm. The key lies in finding a balance that allows indigenous communities to thrive economically, preserve their heritage, and protect their environment, all on their own terms. As ICT continues to grow, policymakers, tourism operators, and indigenous leaders must work together to ensure that tourism benefits those at its heart the indigenous communities themselves. By prioritizing fair economic practices, cultural integrity, and environmental sustainability, ICT can truly become a force for positive change.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1. Nature of the Study

This study followed a qualitative exploratory research design, which is particularly useful when studying complex social issues where little structured data exists. In-depth interviews were selected as the primary data collection method. These interviews allowed for open-ended responses, enabling participants to express their views freely and providing rich, detailed narratives about their experiences with ICT. The research focused on three core dimensions: Economic sustainability, Socio-cultural sustainability, and Environmental sustainability. By structuring the study within these dimensions, the research ensures a holistic understanding of ICT's effects on host communities.

4.2. Sample Selection

The study was conducted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Mymensingh Division, Rajshahi Division, and Sylhet Division of Bangladesh those regions known for their rich indigenous heritage and growing tourism activities. The CHT is home to multiple indigenous groups, each with unique traditions and lifestyles, making it an ideal setting for understanding how tourism interacts with local communities. Like CHT, many other tribes live all over Bangladesh and they also have their own culture and food habits. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 16 participants from the indigenous community all over Bangladesh. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to focus on individuals who have direct experience with ICT and can provide valuable insights into its impact. The sample included:

- Community leaders who oversee tourism activities and cultural preservation efforts.
- Local business owners operating in the tourism sector, including handicraft sellers, homestay operators, and restaurant owners.
- Residents who experience both the benefits and challenges of tourism in their daily lives.

Participants were selected based on their engagement with tourism, ensuring a balanced representation of voices. The goal was to capture diverse perspectives, from those who benefit economically to those who may feel disrupted by increasing tourist activity.

4.3. Data Collection

The primary data collection method was semi-structured in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences openly while providing the flexibility to explore emerging themes. Interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes, and all sessions were recorded with participant consent. The interview questions focused on: Perceptions of economic benefits and challenges linked to tourism, Experiences with cultural exchange and identity preservation, Observations on environmental changes and sustainability concerns due to tourism. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of responses, multiple interviews were conducted with participants from different backgrounds. This helped cross-verify findings and ensure a well-rounded perspective on ICT's impact.

4.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, a popular qualitative research technique for locating patterns and important themes in textual material, was utilized to examine the gathered data. Because the research was done iteratively, prior data were reviewed to improve interpretations as new themes surfaced. Thematic analysis was developed by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) and Braun and Clarke (2006). The method assists in compiling or combining respondents' similar thoughts or remarks into a Microsoft Word and Excel document. To classify and reconstruct the unstructured material, themes and sub-themes were created (Ose, 2016), which are mentioned in the Appendix table. This kind of ongoing comparison made it easier to identify minute variations in participant viewpoints and gave a better picture of how ICT impacts various community members.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to achieve the core objective of analyzing the overall impact caused by Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) on the host community. The study identified multiple variables and grouped them into three dimensions: i) Economic Impacts, ii) Environmental Impacts, and iii) Socio-Cultural Impacts, that directly and indirectly affect host communities. These factors helped the researchers to find out the positive impacts, such as local economic boost, environmental awareness, socialization, and cultural exchanges between the tourists and hosts. This study also found that there are negative impacts present, like soil erosion, plastic pollution, and ecological damage & degradation, and neglecting local customs and beliefs.

5.1. Economic Impacts

Based on the diverse effects that respondents indicated, Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) has a major impact on the financial conditions of host communities. Making job prospects is one of the most notable benefits mentioned. ICT provides direct employment opportunities for locals through tourism-related activities, including guided tours, cultural events, and the sale of handcrafted goods by indigenous people. One of our respondents who lives close to the tourist destination Sajek Valley said that

> *"Our people are selling goods like fruits and crafts to the tourists on the roads while tourists pass through their own area. Our people get direct employment opportunities from that, Sometimes the young people help their guardians on their free time to get extra money as extra income from direct selling, which boosts their employment opportunities".*

This type of employment opportunity improves the financial conditions of the local people and boosts the local economy. It helps lower unemployment rates in the neighborhood in addition to generating revenue. One of the respondents also added that there is also an improvement in local employment by telling.

> *"Our people are now engaging in the transportation business where they find jobs like driver and tour guide in the tourist area, through employment, they can help their families and additionally generate profits to run their livelihood".*

Additionally, the seasonality of tourism boosts local economies and supports livelihoods by creating extra possibilities for employment during the busiest travel seasons. Local entrepreneurs and handicrafts are able to engage in direct selling to tourists, which raises their income and promotes indigenous cultural products, according to the respondents. Beyond job creation, ICT also contributes to infrastructure development and urbanization. The development of regional infrastructure, including roads, transit systems, and lodging facilities, is frequently supported by income from tourism. Respondent from the community stated that

> *"Villages are turning into mini towns day by day while the tourism development boosts massive infrastructure into the area, locals' subsidiary income helps them to build their home more perfectly the respondent added."* *This clearly shows that the change is happening in the local area due the tourism development.*

By enhancing accessibility and quality of life, this infrastructure development not only benefits the local population but also improves the visitor experience. More investments in tourism-related enterprises might result from further tourism, which additionally assists in helping host communities' incomes and urban areas flourish.

Respondents did, however, issue a warning: in order to stop environmental damage and maintain the cultural integrity of indigenous communities, fast urbanization brought on by tourism had to be properly controlled. However, there are certain difficulties with ICT's economic effects. The possibility of price increases and the unavailability of local commodities are one major concern expressed by the respondents. Prices of local commodities go up due to increased tourism-related demand for products and services, which affects the affordability of these items for locals who depend on them for daily needs. Furthermore, if local supply chains aren't adequately handled, the inflow of tourists occasionally puts pressure on them and results in shortages of necessities for everyday cooking. The combination of increasing prices and supply chain disruptions highlights the necessity for sustainable tourist management solutions that strike a balance between the interests of the local community, environmental preservation, and economic gains. Given that tourism has the potential to impact social dynamics and local politics, it is important to consider the socio-political ramifications of ICT. The respondents reported situations in which the economic benefits of tourism have affected local leadership structures and political decision-making processes. Another respondent describes this matter as

> *"Syndicating to get their own people jobs and economic benefits is a common situation while the powerful ones keep the power in their circle and give extra benefits to their close ones, other local people remain untouched from the economic benefits provided by tourism".*

This impact raises questions about the concentration of power and resources among specific communal groups, even though it may be beneficial in terms of economic empowerment. Furthermore, the advantages of tourism frequently go beyond immediate job creation to benefit social networks and extended families in the community, which strengthens social cohesion but also exacerbates inequality among locals, taking into account the demands of the neighborhood, the environment, and the economy.

In conclusion, while Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) creates jobs, develops infrastructure, and opens up commercial potential for host communities, it also poses issues that need to be carefully considered. To optimize the benefits of ICT while reducing its detrimental effects on regional economies, social structures, and environmental sustainability, sustainable tourist practices, community empowerment,

and cultural preservation are crucial. These findings are supported by Ara et al. (2020), Faraj (2020), Meena (2020), Jangra & Kaushik (2018), Singla (2014), Hritz & Ross (2010), Wu & Chen (2015), Yang et al. (2013).

5.2. Environmental Impacts

The environmental impacts of Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT), as revealed through respondent interviews, underscored a range of challenges and opportunities for host communities. One of the most urgent issues that was brought to light was the incorrect disposal of plastic and polyethylene materials, which suggests that littering and environmental degradation are major problems. One of the respondents said that

> *"Tourists dispose massive amount of sewerage, which blocks waterways and pollutes the water resources in the natural area. Tourists' sewage, like plastic and polythene, also blocks natural waterways like fountains and small canals, which eventually block water flow and create massive problems for the environment."*

The respondents reported occurrences in which both visitors and residents disposed of waste inappropriately, resulting in aesthetic contamination and possible damage to nearby ecosystems. This conduct was indicative of a larger problem of ignorance or inadequate knowledge about proper waste management techniques in tourist environments. Concerns were also expressed over the spread of infectious diseases, particularly in tourist destinations with high population densities where sanitary standards and physical separation may have been lacking. Although there were still difficulties in maintaining consistent adherence to health procedures, the arrival of COVID-19 had raised awareness about cleanliness practices and prompted a move towards increased caution among both residents and visitors.

Apart from concerns regarding waste management and health, the respondents brought attention to issues relating to infrastructure that are made worse by tourism. Among them were traffic jams, especially during rush hours, which not only caused delays for local transit but also raised the danger of accidents and pollution. Water and energy supplies were also under stress due to increased demand from tourism-related activities, which put further strain on the region's infrastructure. Respondents reported cases where development associated with tourism resulted in water pollution and obstructions in streams, impacting aquatic ecosystems as well as nearby people who depend on clean water supplies for agricultural and everyday needs. Practices like hill cutting and soil erosion, which can disturb natural landscapes and increase the danger of landslides during times of seasonal traffic, further exacerbated the environmental effect. As per respondent statement, one said

> *"Local leaders and Powerful Peoples are cutting hills to build tourism infrastructure to gain massive revenue from the tourism and the heavy rain eventually causes hill thrashing into people's home and nearby areas which causes environmental damage as well as cost people's lives".*

Despite these challenges, there were still signs that tourism was having a beneficial impact. According to the respondents, there is a growing need from visitors for environmentally friendly activities and appropriate trash disposal options, including dustbins in limited scale. The movement in tourist habits towards responsible practices offered host communities a chance to successfully minimize environmental consequences through the implementation of educational programs, enforcement of rules, and collaboration with stakeholders. Furthermore, the presence of visitors who were more conscious of their environmental impact encouraged local companies and government agencies to implement eco-friendly policies that promoted environmental sustainability over the long run. These findings are supported by Sardar & Islam (2024), Faraj (2020), Jangra & Kaushik (2018), Garau-Vadell et al. (2014), Hritz & Ross (2010), Wu & Chen (2015).

5.3. Socio-Cultural Impacts

Based on interviews with respondents, the socio-cultural consequences of Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) were found to have a wide range of both beneficial and detrimental effects on host communities. The cultural interchange between residents and visitors, which promoted mutual knowledge and respect of indigenous traditions, languages, and practices, was one of the noteworthy beneficial effects seen. One of our respondents living in Sherpur area said

> *"Tourists are trying to gain deep cultural knowledge about local customs, foods, cultures, festivals etc and try to mix their own culture with host community by sharing their own beliefs and customs which clearly reflects the cultural exchange by tourism."*

ICT frequently gave local communities the chance to exhibit their cultural heritage through handicrafts, plays, and guided tours, which increased visitor happiness and increased the destination's appeal. In addition to improving the tourist experience, this cultural exchange encouraged indigenous tribes to take pride in and preserve their traditions.
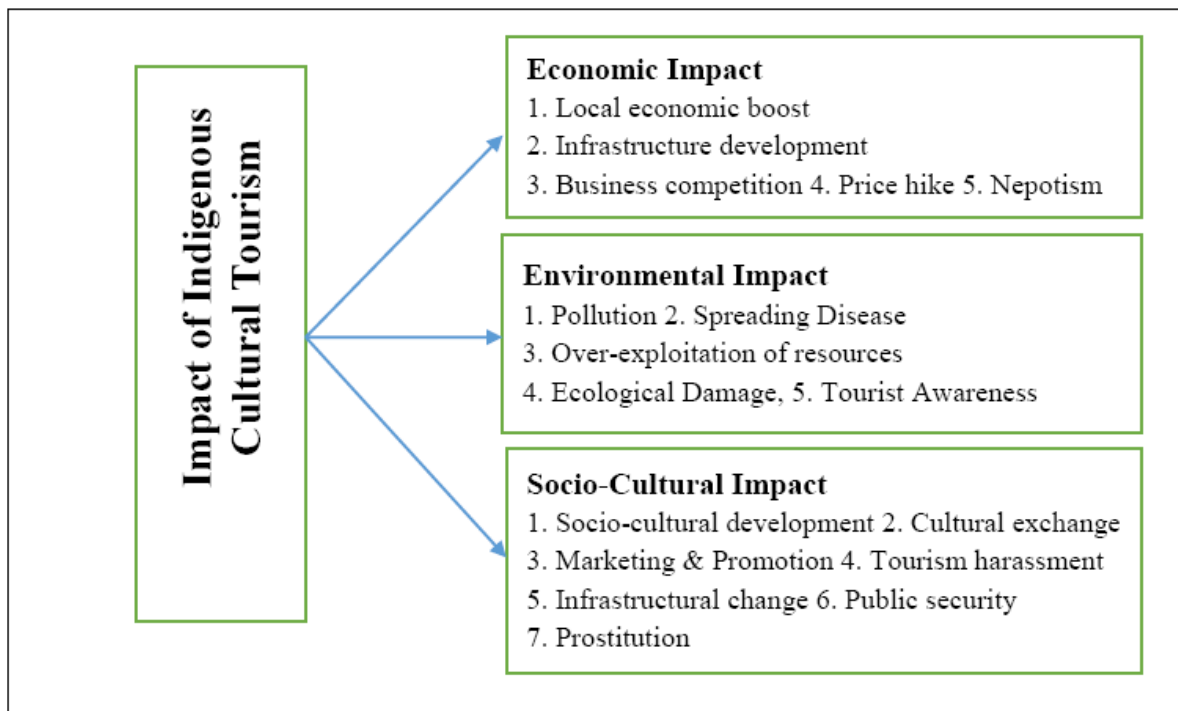
Alongside these advantages, respondents also noted a number of socio-cultural difficulties related to ICT. The effect of tourism on traditional ways of life and community dynamics was one of the main worries. Local populations frequently shifted as a result of increased tourism because some residents moved or changed their means of subsistence to meet the needs of visitors. In addition to creating economic possibilities, the rise of urbanization also put social cohesiveness and cultural continuity at jeopardy. The respondents emphasized instances of how tourism has affected society and put political pressure on authorities. They also mentioned how contacts with visitors have changed people' beliefs and habits. The rise of digital sharing platforms and social media has had conflicting effects on host communities. It gave communities a stage to showcase their indigenous cultures and draw tourists, but it also brought difficulties including unfair media coverage, harassment of residents, and demeaning representations of regional cuisine and customs. Respondents voiced worries about the commercialization of traditional customs, citing instances of unethical visitor conduct such as trespassing into forbidden regions, insulting holy places, and capturing pictures or recordings without permission. These activities not only violated cultural sensitivities and local privacy, but they also helped to spread false beliefs and prejudices about indigenous peoples. One respondent from Bandarban area said

> *"Negativity spreading about the local culture and food habits take place on media by yellow journalism which eventually hampers rich heritage of indigenous culture, sometimes tourists call the destination at bad language which eventually hampers local mindset about the tourists".*

Local peoples are nowadays very aware of social media negativity. The effect on gender dynamics and safety in host communities was another important sociocultural problem that was discovered. Reports of incidents involving the eve-teasing and harassment of women in the community underscore the necessity for strengthened security protocols and educational initiatives to shield citizens against such misbehavior. One of the notable statements from the respondents was

> *"Tourists do videography and take photos without permission of the local peoples which makes locals insecure about their daily life, tourists also spread negativity and bully local people by calling them in bad manner. Teasing local young girls also take place in the host area which also give negative perception about the tourists themselves." which affect host peoples very negatively.*

Despite these obstacles, the respondents recognized that certain tour operators and local authorities were making attempts to lessen adverse effects and encourage sustainable behaviors. Community-led tourism projects, visitor education initiatives, and the creation of conduct guidelines to control visitor behavior were among the initiatives. These initiatives attempted to protect cultural authenticity, promote polite relations between visitors and residents, and guarantee that tourism improved villagers' quality of life and livelihoods. In summary, the use of Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) presented notable socio-cultural obstacles for host communities, although providing prospects for cultural interchange, economic expansion, and communal advancement. To minimize negative effects and optimize the positive effects of tourism, effective management solutions that were based on community engagement and stakeholder collaboration were crucial. By promoting responsible tourism practices, respecting indigenous cultures, and prioritizing community well-being, ICT could contribute to sustainable development and cultural resilience in indigenous regions worldwide. These findings are supported by Ray et al. (2023), Jayadi & Abduh (2022), Meena (2020.), Faraj (2020), Jangra & Kaushik (2018), Shahzalal (2016), Garau-Vadell et al. (2014), Hritz & Ross (2010), Carneiro & Eusébio (2015), Wu & Chen (2015), Yang et al. (2013).

Impact of Indigenous Cultural Tourism

Economic Impact
1. Local economic boost
2. Infrastructure development
3. Business competition 4. Price hike 5. Nepotism

Environmental Impact
1. Pollution 2. Spreading Disease
3. Over-exploitation of resources
4. Ecological Damage, 5. Tourist Awareness

Socio-Cultural Impact
1. Socio-cultural development 2. Cultural exchange
3. Marketing & Promotion 4. Tourism harassment
5. Infrastructural change 6. Public security
7. Prostitution

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1. Theoretical Implications

By analyzing the effects of Indigenous Cultural Tourism (ICT) on host communities, this study adds to the expanding corpus of research on the subject. It supports the notion that ICT is a complex social and environmental phenomenon in addition to being an economic driver. The results support sustainability frameworks by highlighting the fact that, although ICT promotes economic development and cultural preservation, it also poses problems, including environmental damage and cultural commodification. This research fills a gap in the literature on tourism that frequently concentrates on the quantifiable economic benefits rather than the lived experiences of the host community by using a qualitative approach to create a nuanced picture of how indigenous cultures view tourism and its effects. This study also lends credibility to notions of cultural exchange by showing how encounters between indigenous groups and visitors can result in both cultural dilution and enrichment. The research's conclusions may be used as a starting point for further investigations into eco-friendly travel strategies in various native settings throughout the world.

6.2. Practical Implications

The results of this study have important applications for community leaders, tourism developers, and legislators. Since ICT has both positive and negative effects, it is crucial to develop tactics that optimize advantages while reducing disadvantages. Community involvement in tourism planning should be given top priority by governments and tourism partners to guarantee that development is in line with indigenous values and goals. One important lesson is the necessity of laws that promote equitable economic distribution to guarantee that local people, not foreign investors, gain from tourism-related income. likewise, priority should be given to cultural preservation projects such encouraging genuine indigenous experiences and avoiding cultural commodification. A sustainable approach to infrastructure development is also necessary to protect the environment and improve the traveler's experience. Responsible tourism practices, like supporting eco-friendly lodging, reducing waste, and honoring local traditions, should be promoted to travel agencies. Additionally, educating travelers about environmental preservation and local customs might encourage responsible traveler behavior.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SCOPES

The economic landscape, social fabric, and environmental surroundings of host communities are all shaped by Indigenous Cultural Tourism, as this study has illuminated. ICT has given indigenous populations new ways to express their culture and earn money, but it has also brought up problems that need to be carefully handled. One of the biggest challenges facing ICT stakeholders is striking a balance

between financial gains, cultural integrity, and environmental sustainability. Beyond qualitative approaches, future studies should employ mixed method approaches that blend in-depth storytelling with statistical analysis. Studies with a longitudinal design may offer important new perspectives on how ICT affects change over time. Comparative research comparing various indigenous cultures in various nations or areas may also be useful in determining the most effective approaches to sustainable ICT development. To ensure that tourism continues to be a positive influence in indigenous communities, future research may steer the sector toward a more accountable and reciprocal model by encouraging a comprehensive approach to Indigenous Cultural Tourism.

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