



Tourism in Northeast India: A Comparative Study of Tourists' Satisfaction in Meghalaya and Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is relatively recent India's Northeast region, though the region has witnessed some developments in the tourism sector with the increasing number of domestic as well as foreign tourists. This paper aims to study the demographic profile of the tourists who have visited the select states of Northeast India, viz. Meghalaya and Mizoram, and also to assess their satisfaction level towards tourism attractions of these states. By using purposive sampling method, a sample of 100 tourists each from the two states was selected for the study. The findings suggest that majority of the tourists were males and belonged to age group of 21-35 years; and stayed in the select states for less than 10 days. The study also proved that there was a significant difference between the satisfaction levels of tourists who visited the two states with regard to many attributes of tourism attractions. There is a scope to improve the general perception about the economic importance of tourism as industry and its positive impact among policymakers in the governments.

KEYWORDS: Demographic profile, Northeast India, Tourism, Tourism attributes

I. INTRODUCTION

The Northeast India (NEI) is considered to be one of the regions that have potential to develop as a tourism destination. Tourism has the potential for generating incomes and employment opportunities in the region, as it are not only characterized by the blending of flora and fauna it is also exceptionally

rich in bio-diversity. All the eight contiguous states of NEI are well bestowed with unique characters and beauties with them. This makes them a centre of attraction for tourists and one of the major tourists' destinations in India (Rizal and Asokan, 2013). Further, the strategic location of the region as explained in the Act East Policy (erstwhile Look East Policy) and the 'Incredible India' campaign by Government of India (GoI) are very much important for boosting rural tourism in the region which ensure a mutually stimulating experience between the tourist and the host and also help to uplift the socio conditions of the region (Tariang, 2013).

Tourism as a recognized industry in India is relatively recent and in Northeast India it is in its stage of infancy. However, in the last few years, NEI has witnessed some developments in the tourism sector with the increasing number of domestic as well as foreign tourists.

Table 1 shows that out of the 8 states of NEI, Sikkim (though smallest in terms of area and population) was the leader in receiving the largest share of Foreign Tourists Arrivals (FTAs) in all the years during the period. It also reveals that for the period 2007-2013, Assam ranked second in FTAs while Tripura, the second smallest state overtook the former at the second position during the period 2014-2016.

Table 1
Number of Foreign Tourist Visits to all States of Northeast India during 2007-2016

States	Years									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Arunachal Pradesh	2212 (5.15)	3020 (6.35)	3945 (8.28)	3395 (6.67)	4753 (8.07)	5135 (7.73)	10846 (12.79)	5204 (4.39)	5705 (4.81)	6598 (4.79)
Assam	12899 (30.02)	14426 (30.34)	14942 (31.35)	15157 (29.75)	16400 (27.83)	17543 (26.44)	17638 (20.79)	21537 (18.16)	24720 (20.84)	12685 (9.20)
Manipur	396 (0.92)	354 (0.74)	337 (0.71)	389 (0.76)	578 (0.98)	794 (1.20)	1908 (2.25)	2769 (2.34)	3260 (2.75)	3064 (2.22)
Meghalaya	5267 (12.25)	4919 (10.34)	4522 (9.49)	4177 (8.20)	4803 (8.15)	5313 (8.07)	6773 (7.98)	8664 (7.30)	8027 (6.76)	8476 (6.15)



States	Years									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Mizoram	669 (1.55)	902 (1.90)	513 (1.08)	731 (1.43)	658 (1.12)	744 (1.19)	800 (0.94)	863 (0.73)	798 (0.67)	942 (0.68)
Nagaland	936 (2.17)	1209 (2.54)	1423 (2.98)	1132 (2.22)	2080 (3.53)	2489 (3.75)	3304 (3.89)	3679 (3.10)	2769 (2.34)	3260 (2.37)
Sikkim	17498 (40.72)	19154 (40.27)	17730 (37.20)	20757 (40.74)	23602 (40.06)	26489 (39.92)	31698 (37.38)	49175 (41.47)	38479 (32.43)	66012 (47.90)
Tripura	3181 (7.40)	3577 (7.52)	4246 (8.91)	5212 (10.23)	6046 (10.26)	7840 (11.81)	11853 (13.98)	26688 (22.51)	34886 (29.40)	36780 (26.69)
Northeast India	42968 (100)	47561 (100)	47658 (100)	50950 (100)	58920 (100)	66347 (100)	84820 (100)	118579 (100)	118644 (100)	137817 (100)

Authors own compilation from various reports of Tourism Statistics
 Figures in the parenthesis indicate proportion of total numbers of Northeast

Source: Ministry of Tourism, GoI

Further, the table reveals that the three states of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland were far behind from the rest as their combined figures were hardly accounted for 5% of the total FTAs of the region in all the years of the period. This may be mainly due to the implication of the requirement of Restricted Area Permit (RAP) for the foreign tourists wanting to visit these three states.

Table 2 has been presented to highlight the state-wise number of domestic tourist visits to NEI during the period 2007-2016.

Table 2
Number of Domestic Tourist Visits to all States of Northeast India during 2007-2016

States	Years									
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Arunachal Pradesh	91100 (1.93)	149292 (2.90)	195147 (3.38)	227857 (3.69)	233227 (3.66)	317243 (4.76)	300968 (4.39)	335974 (4.77)	352067 (4.43)	385875 (4.96)
Assam	3436833 (72.72)	3617306 (70.31)	3850521 (66.71)	4050924 (65.69)	4339485 (68.08)	4511407 (67.70)	4684527 (68.36)	4826702 (68.51)	5491845 (69.16)	5160599 (66.40)
Manipur	101484 (2.18)	112151 (2.18)	124229 (2.15)	114062 (1.85)	134505 (2.11)	134541 (2.02)	140673 (2.05)	115499 (1.64)	146169 (1.84)	150638 (1.94)
Meghalaya	457685 (9.68)	549936 (10.69)	591398 (10.24)	652756 (10.58)	667504 (10.47)	680254 (10.21)	691296 (10.09)	716469 (10.17)	751165 (9.46)	830887 (10.69)
Mizoram	43161 (0.91)	55924 (1.09)	56651 (0.98)	57292 (0.93)	62174 (0.97)	64294 (0.96)	63377 (0.92)	68203 (0.97)	66605 (0.84)	67238 (0.86)
Nagaland	22085 (0.47)	46513 (0.90)	20953 (0.36)	21094 (0.34)	25391 (0.40)	35915 (0.54)	35638 (0.52)	58413 (0.83)	64616 (0.81)	58178 (0.75)
Sikkim	329075 (6.96)	368451 (7.16)	615628 (10.66)	700011 (11.35)	552453 (8.67)	558538 (8.38)	576749 (8.42)	562418 (7.98)	705023 (8.88)	747343 (9.62)
Tripura	244795 (5.18)	245438 (4.77)	317541 (5.50)	342273 (5.55)	359515 (5.64)	361786 (5.43)	359586 (5.25)	361247 (5.13)	363172 (4.57)	370618 (4.77)
Northeast India	4726218 (100)	5145011 (100)	5772068 (100)	6166269 (100)	6374254 (100)	6663978 (100)	6852814 (100)	7044925 (100)	7940662 (100)	7771376 (100)

Authors own compilation from various reports of Tourism Statistics
 Figures in the parenthesis indicate proportion of total numbers of Northeast

Source: Ministry of Tourism, GoI

It can be inferred from Table 2 that there is a wide variation in the total number of tourists' inflow among the states. Data reveals that the total number of Domestic Tourist Arrivals (DTAs) in Assam was much higher as compared to the other states of Northeast India. The state of Assam has emerged as

the central hub for almost all kind of transaction, business, and facilities and so on in the region. This is evident by the fact that 65% to 72% of the total DTAs into the NEI are accounted by the state of Assam during the years of the period. Its neighbouring state Meghalaya has the second



highest share ranging 9-10% of the NEI's share. Among the states, Mizoram and Nagaland have been found as the least visited states with lowest DTAs.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some important literatures that deal with different facets of tourism in Northeast India are reviewed hereunder:

Singh and Singha (2010) opined that the nature has blessed the entire northeastern region and the state of Mizoram in particular with all the facets of cultural-heritage and ecotourism. But, due to the absence of good infrastructural facilities and lack of awareness on tourism among the residents the development of tourism in the region is growing at a snail's pace.

Ryngnga (2011) described Northeast India as almost another world compared to the rest. He portrayed it as a place of magical beauty and bewildering diversity. A land nestled in myth and mysteries, lore and legends and in many tender dreams. All these factors can play an important role in attracting a huge volume of domestic as well as international tourists in the region especially from ASEAN region.

Das (2013) in his paper indicated that the Northeast India is well blessed by nature and it lies at the centre of one of the world's richest bio-geographic areas. He proposed that the foreign as well as domestic investors should be encouraged to set up their export-oriented industries in Northeast India to enjoy the vast potential of contiguous markets of ASEAN countries.

Nayak and Mishra (2013) opined that Meghalaya is endowed with natural assets, ethnic diversity and the societal ethos that hold high tourism potential in the state. Although the state government has taken a number of steps to improve the tourism sector, yet it is at the nascent stage and has a long way to develop. They believed that the main reasons behind the stagnant development of tourism industry in the state are the air and road connectivity, infrastructural facilities at tourist sites in terms of accommodation, sanitation, health care, etc.

Singha and Chakma (2013) pointed out that Mizoram has ample scope to promote and develop various fields of tourism in the state such as rural tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism and particularly eco-tourism. But, some constraints come in the way of tourism development in the state are: geographical isolation, high transportation costs and lack of tourism awareness campaign.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this paper are:

- (i) To study the demographic profile of the tourists visiting the select states, viz. Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- (ii) To make a comparative analysis of the satisfaction levels of the tourists regarding the selected attributes of tourism attractions of the select states.

IV. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated and tested in the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding culture.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding historical heritage.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding scenic nature.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding night life.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding entertainment.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding city tour (sightseeing).

H₀₇: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding adventure.

H₀₈: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding cleanliness of tourism attractions.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By using purposive sampling method, a sample of 100 tourists each from the states of Meghalaya and Mizoram was selected for the study. The tourists (respondents) were contacted at prominent destinations in the select states irrespective of their origin – domestic or foreign. A well-designed structure questionnaire was administered to the



tourists to know their satisfaction levels towards selected attributes of tourism attractions in the select states.

Eight attributes of tourism attractions have been identified for the study. They are culture, historical heritage, scenic nature, night life, entertainment, city tour (sightseeing), adventure and cleanliness of overall tourism attractions. The satisfaction levels of the respondents have been analysed based on the responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “highly dissatisfied” to “highly satisfied”. Statistical tools like frequencies and t-test have been adopted for analysis.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Meghalaya literally means “the abode of clouds” is the third largest state of NEI is a land of immense natural beauty with deep forests, sprawling water bodies, cascading rivers in the hills, the lofty mountain ranges with interplay of lush green valley form an ideal habitat for flora and fauna. The state is recorded as the wettest region of India and has some of the thickest surviving forests in the country that have been preserved by the communities for hundreds of years due to religious and cultural beliefs, and therefore constitutes one of the most important ecotourism circuits. There are several national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and cascading waterfalls that enhance the beauty of this

beautiful state. The state offers adventure tourism such as rock climbing, mountaineering, hiking, water sports etc. It provides the best nature trek through rain forests to the river front at the bottom of the valley, to living root bridges which are exclusive to Meghalaya in the entire world.

Mizoram, “Land of the Hill People”, is one of the eight states of Northeast India. The state has the highest concentration of tribal people among all states of India Mizoram is considered by many as a beautiful place due to its dramatic landscape and pleasant climate. With a wide array of festivals, dances, handicrafts, flora and fauna, natural scenic beauty and pleasant climate, Mizoram has much to offer its visitors. It is a mountainous state teeming with vibrant wildlife dotted with unique landmarks of myriad folklores and picturesque villages of houses built on stilts, a land of dramatic seas of morning mists that enfold islands of hills and peaks. The hilly terrain of Mizoram with excellent flora and fauna makes a unique destination among the tourists.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Age

Table 3 shows the age-wise classification of tourists visiting Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Table 3
Age Group of the Respondents

Age (in years)	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Less than 20	10	9	19 (9.5)
21-35	41	48	89 (44.5)
35-50	32	24	56 (28.0)
51-65	9	14	23 (11.5)
Above 65	8	5	13 (6.5)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Source: Primary Data

State-wise comparison shows that tourists belonged to the age group of 21-35years occupied the largest share (41%) in Meghalaya and in Mizoram (48%). The second place was registered by the age group of 31-50 years that accounted for 32% in Meghalaya and 24% in Mizoram. The tourists whose age group was less than 20 years were only 10% in Meghalaya and 9% in Mizoram.

Even though the select states are endowed with abundant of natural beauty for a complete leisure of all people of different age groups, the reason behind the less traffic volume of old-age people in

the region may be its inaccessibility and geographical isolation from mainland India. In other words, the aged people tend to have less inclination towards travelling to remote hilly terrain due to physical strain.

Marital Status

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents (59%) were married while over 38% of the respondents were unmarried. The table reveals that there are no significant differences between the respondents of the select states in respect of marital



status. The researcher observed that the reason of higher percentage of married tourists is obviously because in general people prefer to go for tourism with family members.

Table 4
Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Unmarried	38	39	77 (38.5)
Married	58	60	118 (59)
Divorced/Widowed	4	1	5 (2.5)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Source: Primary Data

Nationality

To study the nationality of the respondents, two types of tourists were identified, viz. Indian (domestic) and Foreign as shown in Table 5. It reveals that 93% of the respondents were Indians and only 7% were foreigners.

Table 5
Nationality of the Respondents

Nationality	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Indian	91	95	186 (93)
Foreign	9	5	14 (7)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Northeast India has a great potential to emerge as a tourism hub of India but due to poor road and air connectivity in the region – both within the region and to the places outside NEI makes it difficult for outside tourists to reach out the tourism destinations in NEI. In addition to the constraints relating to the physical connectivity, the Northeast states suffer from a negative perception of people belonging to other states of India in terms of safety, difficult terrain and low quality of logistics.

Gender

Table 6 indicates that 29.5% of the respondents were female tourists and the remaining 70.5% were males. The percentage share of males was much higher than that of females both in case of Meghalaya and Mizoram. The same gives us a hint that the select states have not been able to attract a good number of female visitors in spite of the perceived gender equality in the region.

Table 6
Gender of the Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Male	68	73	141 (70.5)
Female	32	27	59 (29.5)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Source: Primary Data

There is a general perception that Northeast India is known for frequent strikes, bandhs and law and order problems. This may be the prime reason behind less inflow of women tourists in the region. It was also observed that most of the women feel relatively safe when they travel along with their family. The marketers, therefore, need to address

this issue while marketing and promoting the tourism destinations.

Religion

Table 7 shows the classification of respondents by religion. Nearly 50% of the respondents were Hindus, 21.5% were Christians and 19.5% were





Muslims. The residual 9.5% belonged to other faiths such as Buddhism and Sikhism.

Table 7
Religion of the Respondents

Religion	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Hindu	48	51	99 (49.5)
Muslim	18	21	39 (19.5)
Christian	24	19	43 (21.5)
Others (pl. specify)	10	9	19 (9.5)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage
Others include Buddhism and Sikhism

Source: Primary Data

Although both the states predominantly follow Christianity, the majority of the respondents were Hindus by religion. Thus, it can be inferred that tourists like to visit the tourist destinations irrespective of their religion, and, therefore, religion has a limited role to play in selection of

tourism destination in case of the select states under the study.

Length of Stay

The respondents were asked to indicate the length of stay during their visits to the select states.

Table 8
Length of Stay

Length of Stay	No. of Respondents		
	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Total
Less than 5 days	57	62	119 (59.5)
6-10 days	32	26	58 (29)
11-15 days	7	5	12 (6)
16-30 days	2	5	7 (3.5)
Over a month	2	2	4 (2)
Total	100	100	200 (100)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 reveals that over 59% of all the respondents have stayed for less than 5 days while 29% have stayed for 6-10 days during their visit to study states. It can be stated from the table that 57% of the Meghalaya tourists have stayed for less than 5 days while 32% of them have stayed for 6-10 days in the state. In case of Mizoram, 62% of the respondents have stayed for less than 5 days while 26% of them stayed for 6-10 days.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

For a comparative study on the satisfaction levels on selected attributes of tourism attractions in the select states, the five-point Likert scale was used ranging from "highly dissatisfied" to "highly satisfied". Accordingly, statistical tools like mean values and weighted means have been calculated to compute the rankings of the selected attributes to

understand what attribute(s) tourists considered more satisfactory. Supposition is adopted by "the higher the mean score, the more satisfied are the respondents".

Table 9 reveals that among the selected attributes of tourism attractions scenic nature has been the most satisfactory attribute for the tourists (4.40 mean score in Meghalaya and 4.37 in Mizoram). The attribute city tour (sightseeing) has been ranked second in both states. However, the analysis shows that service availability for city tour (sightseeing) in Meghalaya (4.24) is more advanced than that of Mizoram (3.89). Adventure has been the third most satisfying attribute in Meghalaya (3.77) while culture has been ranked third in case of Mizoram (3.65).

On the other hand, the tourists were found least satisfied with entertainment (3.35 in Meghalaya



and 3.05 in Mizoram) and with night life (3.34 in Meghalaya and 2.98 in Mizoram) in both the select states.

Table 9
Comparative Analysis of Satisfaction Levels on Tourism Attractions

S. No.	Elements of Perception	Meghalaya			Mizoram		
		Mean Value (out of 5)	Rank	Weighted Mean	Mean Value (out of 5)	Rank	Weighted Mean
1	Culture	3.52	6	3.75	3.65	3	3.49
2	Historical Heritage	3.71	4		3.39	4	
3	Scenic Nature	4.40	1		4.37	1	
4	Night Life	3.34	8		2.98	8	
5	Entertainment	3.35	7		3.04	7	
6	City Tour (Sightseeing)	4.24	2		3.89	2	
7	Adventure	3.77	3		3.37	5	
8	Cleanliness of Tourism Attractions	3.65	5		3.20	6	

Source: Primary Data

(The higher the mean score, the more satisfied are the respondents)

State-wise comparison shows that the weighted mean score of selected attributes of tourism attractions of Meghalaya (3.75) is fractionally higher than the weighted mean score of Mizoram (3.49) which shows that in terms of maintenance and promotion of tourism attractions, Mizoram is slightly behind as compared to its counterpart. However, from the analysis it can be also be inferred that the policymakers of both states have lots of homework to do to develop its night life activities, besides developing other attributes and take the opportunity to showcase its unique cultural image to the outside world; thereby encouraging more tourists to spend more money in these states.

VII. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

To study if there is significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the respondents in Meghalaya and Mizoram on selected attributes of tourism attraction, t test is used. Usually, t-test is based on t distribution and is considered as an appropriate test for judging the significance of difference between the means of two samples. t-test is used when the researcher compares average responses of two groups on one variable.

Table 10: t-Test

Attributes of Tourism Attractions	Meghalaya		Mizoram		t	df	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Culture	3.52	.77172	3.65	.74366	-1.213	182	.227
Historical Heritage	3.71	.78232	3.39	.97333	2.563		.011
Nature	4.40	.68165	4.37	.76085	.294		.769
Night Life	3.34	.86713	2.98	1.01484	2.697		.008
Entertainment	3.35	.86894	3.04	.93117	2.434		.016
City Tour	4.24	.72641	3.89	.94168	2.943		.004
Adventure	3.77	.78951	3.37	.84871	3.451		.001
Cleanliness of Tourism Attractions	3.65	.75712	3.20	.85280	3.946		.000

Source: Primary Data

The results of the hypotheses testing are highlighted below:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding culture.

The t static value is -1.213 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .227.

Significance value (.227) is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding historical heritage.

The t static value is 2.563 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .011.



.011. Significance value (.011) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding scenic nature.

The t static value is .294 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .769. Significance value (.769) is greater than .05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding night life.

The t static value is 2.697 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .008. Significance value (.008) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding entertainment.

The t static value is 2.434 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .016. Significance value (.016) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding city tour (sightseeing).

The t static value is 2.943 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .004. Significance value (.004) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₇: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding adventure.

The t static value is 3.451 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .001. Significance value (.001) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₈: There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram regarding cleanliness of tourism attractions.

The t static value is 3.946 and degree of freedom is 182. The 2-tailed significance value is .000. Significance value (.000) is lesser than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

VIII. MAJOR FINDINGS

Following are the major findings that derived out from the present study:

- Over 44% of the respondents who happened to have visited the select states belonged to the age group of 21-35 years.
- 59% of the respondents were found to be married while over 38% were unmarried.
- 93% of the respondents were of Indian origin while the rests were foreigners.
- Over one-third of the respondents were males.
- With respect to religion, nearly 50% of the respondents were Hindus while over 20% were Christians.
- Over 88% of the respondents had opted to stay in the tourism destinations for a period of less than 10 days.
- There is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram with regard to culture and scenic nature.
- There is a significant difference between the level of satisfaction of respondents in Meghalaya and in Mizoram with regard to attributes like historical heritage, night life, entertainment, city tour (sightseeing), adventure and cleanliness of tourism attractions.

IX. CONCLUSION

The main attractions of the NEI include the mighty Himalayas, the hilly terrains, picturesque destinations, wildlife, cultural diversity, and unique customs and colourful lives. The region portrays a landscape of vibrant anthropological, cultural, heritage and spiritual mysticism. It is a land of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islamism and so on (Barman, 2013). With more than a hundred and fifty tribes speaking a variety of languages, this region is a melting pot of variegated cultural mosaic of people and races, an ethnic tapestry of many hues and shades. The primitive culture of at least the Neolithic age now co-exists with the modern and post-modern lifestyle (Kumar and Ram, 2013). The region reflects its numerous dispositions, such as art, national identity elements, cultural extravaganza, and the diversity would certainly mesmerize the tourists.

Therefore, the tourism industry is one of the few industries in Northeast India that has a lot of potential to develop. Its importance has been growing considerably over the recent years. The Northeast India, with its wide range of attractions and *Paradise Unexplored* theme, is trying to



project as quality destination, which can offer tourists a unique experience. As noted, the NEI possesses varied tourism resources such as ecological, cultural, rural, adventure and wildlife tourism which could bring up benefits and welfare for the people of the region and contribute to enhance the economic development process. In spite of this, the NEI hasn't got its share of the total India's receipts for tourism. It is unfortunate that due to socio-political and geographical reasons, the entire NEI has remained neglected and backward from the development point of view. In spite of very high literacy rate in the region (around 80%), progress and benefits have not fully reached the region even today.

The concept of tourism development is very recent in the region and is in its infancy. A few states like Sikkim and Assam have taken strides in developing tourism, with emphasis on ecotourism, wildlife tourism, cultural tourism and adventure tourism, whereas, the other states have commenced their efforts during the last decade only. Hence, the tourism development of NEI needs to be targeted via a regional approach rather than an individual state approach. The development of a tourism

industry largely depends upon the cooperation of the people in the region since tourists are interested not only in exploring the beauty and culture of the region but also to interact with the local people. The people in general are not aware of their own role to play for the development of tourism in the region. There is scope to improve the general perception about the economic importance of tourism as an industry and its positive impact as a source of foreign exchange and employment among the policymakers in the governments.

The basic needs for the development of tourism in Northeast India are efficient infrastructure, good connectivity between the states and peace in the entire region. The entry permit formality, popularly known as Inner Line Permit (ILP) which is required for a few states even for domestic tourists coming from other states of India appeared to be a major deterrent to the region's tourism attractiveness. In fact, the tourism industry in the region suffers from many other problems, but the root cause for all such problems is the lack of marketing orientation on the part of state governments and other marketers in many part of the region.

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