

Abstract

**CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACT OF
TOURISM IN A MEGHALAYA VILLAGE**

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Supervisor
Prof. Kameshwar Choudhary

Submitted by
Jyoti Shukla
(Enrolment No. 376/17)

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SCHOOL FOR AMBEDKAR STUDIES
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY
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Introduction

Nature-Culture dichotomy seems to be an outmoded notion in the contemporary world, where the issue of development finally cannot part ways from the intersection between environment and culture. Culture is a fabric that binds society, and this society lives in a particular environment. In case of the tribal societies, people belong to the land and have their identities; their culture and livelihoods are intrinsically associated with their natural surroundings. Just as the inextricable link between culture and environment, the emergence of tourism activity at any particular place is closely associated with the place's culture and environment. 'Culture', 'environment' and 'tourism' have their respective meanings but can be interpreted through each other's context. Especially, the notion of tourism is highly dependent on different settings of culture and environment. Urry, a prominent scholar in sociology of tourism and famously known for his contribution of the concept 'tourist gaze', holds that a person's desire to visit a specific environment is a socially constructed idea and is highly dependent on the cultural desire for any landscape (cited in Holden 2008). Hence, the inextricable bond between culture, environment and tourism needs to be studied closely. In fact, Mawlynnong, a village of Meghalaya state, is an appropriate destination to understand the theme of culture, environment and impact of tourism in a tribal village setting. The village 'Mawlynnong' is known as the 'cleanest village in Asia' and popular ecotourist destination in India, that prompted the researcher to choose it for study. Mawlynnong is a small village located in a Pynursla Block of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya state with a population of 548 populations only. This small Khasi village is encircled by big trees of forests and double-sided running water from streams near the Indo-Bangladesh border and located a little far from the state capital Shillong (almost 35 kilometres from the border area and approximately 80 kilometres far from Shillong). Hence, it was considered to be a be good idea to explore the present contours of culture and environment in the context of growth of ecotourism in Mawlynnong, a village of Khasi people in Meghalaya.

The present study is academically significant. There is noted a relative dearth of studies regarding the impact of tourism on subsistence agricultural economy as in case of Mawlynnong, which needs attention. Lack of academic inquiry regarding the changes in villagers' indulgence in tourism rather than their traditional subsistence agricultural activity and its possible outcome is also an important rationale to study Mawlynnong. Moreover, understanding of the cultural and environmental implications of tourism, would provide input in proper policy making. Along with this, the present study was meant to help the researcher to have a broader view and equip her in doing research in other such settings in future. Hence, a study on culture, environment and impact of tourism in the context of a Meghalayan village was considered quite relevant.

Theoretically, the present study largely adopts the paradigm of ethnoecology, which requires viewing the natural setting of a community with the eyes of a particular culture and, thus it blends beautifully both culture and environment. Environment in this study refers to both natural environment (like water, air, wildlife) and built environment (e.g., village architecture, pathways). Culture, here, includes food habit, dresses, language and habit of cleanliness. Economic impact of tourism is covered involving variables like employment generation, income, poverty alleviation, and agriculture. Cultural linkages of economic impact of tourism includes the issue of valuational changes and change in approach to cleanliness. And, environmental linkages of economic impact of tourism deals with the issue of decline in the traditional ecological wisdom of the community.

The present study is organised into seven chapters. The introductory chapter (Chapter - 1) begins with a brief observation on the issue of linkages between culture, environment and tourism. Then, it provides details of the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, thematic review of relevant literature, and methodology. Chapter II is based on secondary sources. It offers a general overview of culture, environment and tourism/ecotourism, with a focus on indigenous culture and environment in general and Indian tribal culture and environment in particular, including the traditional Khasi culture and environment. Impact of tourism/ ecotourism on culture, environment and economy is also discussed. Chapter III explains the

context of the study, i.e., the main features of the selected village Mawlynnong, which is a popular tourist/ ecotourist destination in the North- East. Chapter IV discusses in detail the impact of tourism/ ecotourism on Mawlynnong's culture. Chapter V deliberates on the environmental impact of tourism/ ecotourism in Mawlynnong. Chapter VI deals with the economic impact of tourism/ ecotourism and its cultural and environmental implications in Mawlynnong. Chapter I and II are based on secondary sources. Chapter III to VI are based on primary sources of data. Finally, Chapter VII provides a brief summary of the main findings of the study, its conclusion and suggestions.

The specific objectives of the present study are:

1. To know the broad linkages between culture, environment, and tourism;
2. To find out the impact of tourism on the culture and environment of Mawlynnong village; and
3. Explore the economic impact of tourism in Mawlynnong village and its linkages with cultural and environmental change.

Methodology of the study

The methodological framework employed in this study is informed by its major research objectives. The universe of study is Mawlynnong village of Meghalaya. The strategy of research is mixed method approach i.e., both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for data collection. The research design of the present study is descriptive. All 113 households of village Mawlynnong formed the sample of the study. However, household-level data could be collected only from 63 households pertaining to their socio-economic status, because 50 households declined to be part of the study. Moreover, 33 villagers were part of in-depth interviews. Around 25 people participated in focus group discussion. Some helped in conducting PRA. Both secondary and primary data sources have been used in the present study. For the collection of data, research tools like questionnaire, in-depth interview, quasi-participatory observation, focus group discussion and PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) were used. Rapport building with the people of the study village was the most critical element in data collection strategy during the fieldwork.

Main Findings and Conclusion

Keeping in view the objectives, the main findings and conclusions of the study are as follows-

Linkages

The first objective of the study was to have a broad understanding of the linkages between culture, environment and tourism with the help of secondary sources. The studies covered here include the context of both tribal and non-tribal world within local and non-local settings. The relationship between culture and environment is discussed covering both theoretical as well as empirical studies. The concern related to theoretical underpinning is majorly drawn from the existing theories of anthropology, which include environmental determinism, historical possibilism, cultural ecology, ecosystem approach, and ethnoecology. This study is more influenced by ethnoecology. Ethnoecology is an approach to see the surrounding natural area with the eyes of a particular culture, and in the backdrop of this study's objectives. The researcher found it more suitable approach to examine the selected village and its cultural and natural surroundings. Apart from this, the relationship between culture and environment is also understood by few indigenous perspective, mentioned by Richardson (2008) and further substantiated with some empirical evidences mentioned in a wider review of existing research. The existing literature related to empirical studies uncovers vivid relationship between indigenous culture and their natural surroundings includes the studies from the Māori people of New Zealand to the Khasi people of Meghalaya.

Concerning the relationship between the culture of the selected village and its environment, this study discovered that the Khasi people of Mawlynnong (non-Niam Khasis) have a different kind relationship with their natural environment as compared to the Niam Khasis who believe and follow their traditional tribal religion. For instance, Niam Khasis still believe in their supernatural origin and associated legend of *seven huts* and related mountain peak *Sohpetbneng*. The traditional Khasi religion is based on the intrinsic relationship with the natural world where the supreme powerful existence (God) has no gender and no form, still can be felt in the form of spirits of the

natural surrounding, like mountains, rivers, animals, forest and others. This religion is not based on scriptures and often follows different rituals on different occasions that are somehow connected with their environment. Even the dances and festivals of Niam Khasis are somehow connected with their natural world.

However, in case of the selected village Mawlynnong, it was found that the whole population of the village follows the Protestant sect of Christianity. According to the villagers, Christianity came in this village in 1887 through the Bangladesh route, and since then their forefathers started following Christianity. Moreover, it was found that villagers do not believe in any kind of rituals or customs related to Niam Khasi. They neither associate themselves with the legend of seven huts, nor they believe in the sacredness of peak Sohpetbneng. Similarly, they do not have faith in the spirits of rivers, mountains and other elements of the natural world and associated rituals and norms. The villagers do not even have faith in their local legend of *Rinkgu Shartiya*, which is supposed to save villagers from evils and often appears in any natural form, primarily as a tiger, and often resides on a the balancing rock. The villagers do not participate in Khasi religious festivals and associated dance festivals like *Nongkrem* and *Shad Suk Mynsiem*. So, unlike Niam Khasi, the villagers of Mawlynnong do not follow any sacred beliefs regarding the nature; instead, they have practical approach towards their natural surroundings. For instance, the villagers maintain the aesthetics of their surroundings with flowery and ornamental plants, which further makes their village more attractive and eye-catching, especially for outsiders like tourists. They have cut the old and big trees for their infrastructural developments, especially for village expansion and to make homestays and other facilities for tourists in the village.

Moreover, the villagers of Mawlynnong have a habit of washing and cleaning their clothes and bathing in their village stream, which leads to its pollution. However during winter time, when the water level in the stream is low, they refrain from this as per the regulations of village ‘Dorbar’. It was also observed that they traditionally have a unique habit of separating bio-degradable and non-degradable waste. Hence, it is found that the villagers have more practical approach towards the conservation of their natural surroundings.

Assessing the relationship between tourism, culture and environment, the present study infers that the culture and environment of Mawlynnong is in line with ecotourism. The cultural habit of cleanliness is the principal rationale for the advent of tourism there. Moreover, the village's natural surroundings have reinforced tourism, which provide pleasing aesthetics to become a tourist attraction.

Tourism and Culture

The second objective of the study, i.e. 'the impact of tourism on culture and environment of Mawlynnong village', is addressed through qualitative and quantitative data, which is mainly discussed in chapters four and five separately. The cultural impact of tourism in Mawlynnong relates to several aspects of cultural life of the village. The findings revealed that the unique culture of cleanliness is the major reason for the growth of tourism in Mawlynnong. However, it was noticed that the process and form of this old tradition of cleanliness has also changed after the development of tourism. Earlier, it was more organic, collective and natural rural habit of the villagers. However, after the advent of tourism and its wider popularity, the approach to cleanliness has got transformed. Instead of the villagers, daily wages workers assigned by village council 'Dorbar' clean the alley and footpath areas in the village. The advent of tourism in the Mawlynnong has made it more attractive to tourists but mechanical in its approach. The transfer of this unique tradition to the new generation is also adversely affected by tourism to certain extent. As one of the female respondents in the field shared, "*I learned cleanliness since my childhood as after coming from school, I had to clean clothes of my family first then we could go for the game. This had become a habit, and till today I continue this good habit of cleanliness. Now I also started teaching my children to keep clean, but it is very difficult to teach them. I am busy in a restaurant, but my children are busy on mobile. They don't know how to work. Now, I am worried about my children's future as they become slaves of mobile phones and try to copy tourists' fashion and their hairstyles only*".

Moreover, the increasing waste generation by the tourists in the village has become too difficult to manage, and more often, it contains non-biodegradables. The data collected by the researcher during the field work show that the amount of waste has increased in the

village after tourism. In fact, all 63 respondents of the village confirmed that waste generation has increased after the development of tourism in the village.

Further, tourism has also encroached upon the personal lives of villagers through their cameras and inquisitive enquiries. During the peak season of tourism, it was observed that tourists often intruded in the kitchens, houses and churches and this encroachment has increased over time which has made the villager's life to be more staged for others. In other tourist places, the case is not the same as a residential area and the tourist area are not the same, and it is easier to maintain a distinction between personal and professional life at the tourist place.

Tourism in Mawlynnong has also negative impact on children of the village. The children of Mawlynnong have a wider encounter with the outer world due to their frequent and direct encounters with tourists and their exposure to mobile phones. Unlike the report of UNICEF about the adverse impact of tourism on the children of Zanzibar, children of Mawlynnong do not encounter child labour or child sexual abuse. However, there are other negative impact of tourism. For instance, tourist photography and increasing access to the mobile world, especially after the development of tourism in the village, have some costs, including children's distraction in studies and attraction towards the virtual world. These negative impacts were also accompanied with helplessness of parents in giving adequate attention towards their children due to their indulgence in tourism activity and its demand for hectic schedules leading to insufficient time.

The cultural impact of tourism on food habits and dress pattern are quite visible in Mawlynnong. Both qualitative and quantitative data has established that. The pursuit of catering the desired food to tourists has resulted in changes in the eating habit of villagers. For instance, the desire for local foods that are majorly related to the wild trees tends to be less, especially in the younger generation of Mawlynnong. The younger generation is more inclined to new packed food, referred to as 'plastic food', which includes biscuits, Maggie, candies and cold drinks. Similarly, the timings of having food are also disturbed due to the occupational preference towards tourism and its busy schedule. The food on plates has been slightly changed, like consumption of

non-local chicken has increased in the village, while wild vegetables have taken a backseat on daily consumption. According to the household-level data, the large majority (85.7%) of villagers opine that the consumption of '*plastic food*' has increased due to the impact of tourism in the village. This change differs by the different age groups. A little less than half of total respondents (i.e. 46%) opine that the impact is on the youth, whereas around one-fourth of the respondents (25.4%) think that the impact is on the children.

Regarding the consumption of dress, it was discovered that the people of Mawlynnong have stylish and modern dressing patterns. After the advent of tourism, the consumption of clothes has increased in their day to day life. Majority of respondents (71.4%) stated that the consumption of clothes by the villagers has increased as an outcome of tourism development in the village. And around half of the total respondents (49.2%) think that it has increased across all age-groups. The impact of tourism on dress was not limited only to its increasing consumption, tourism has also influenced the choices of dress. One of the village's oldest ladies shared her thoughts, "*Now girls wear more tight dresses, prefer the traditional Jaiakryisha less. Boys also have different kinds of hairstyles. Earlier, we used to have only two or three clothes, but now young people even match the Jaiakryisha colour with their outfits. Nowadays, few girls wear broad pants like men's pants (Palazzo). And boys no more dress up like a gentleman.*" Moreover, one of the village couples shared that, '*Sometimes when we sit with our parents, and then we see some weird dresses of tourists, we feel shy and can't sit there anymore*'.

There was impact of tourism on the language of the village. The majority of the respondents (i.e. 55.6%) accepted there was influence of tourism on their native Khasi language spoken by them in terms of willingness/desire/learning other language, eg. English and Hindi. However, around one third of the total respondents (31.7%) do not think there was any such influence.

Hence, it can be said that tourism has majorly affected the culture of people of Mawlynnong, including their habit of cleanliness, dressing pattern, food habits and language. The alignment between culture and tourism is a significant aspect of the

tourism industry. In some cases, the culture and tourism both work jointly to enhance community empowerment. In case of Mawlynnong, it cannot be concluded that tourism is the only reason for change in the cultural life of the village. Yet, it works as a catalyst to attract modern urban life in a rural setting. As one of the respondents said, *"We like tourists because we earn from them. We have much variety of food and clothes now. But sometimes, it is tough to avoid them, especially their slang, drinking and shouting activity, their littering habits, even sometimes too much revealing clothes of female tourists make us shy and uncomfortable."* Similar kind of sentiments are also reflected in the study by Bearak, in which one respondent stated; *"This used to be heaven, and now it's hell,"* he said chuckling. *"But we need the money — if it wasn't for these fools. You know, they come here and drink and use slang in front of our sisters and our kids. We have to tell them that this isn't a park. It's a village."* So, it is a little bit difficult for the people of Mawlynnong to maintain their traditional rural life. In case of Mawlynnong, tourist encroaches on villagers increasingly with modern life that it may be 'no more a village'.

Tourism and Environment

The analysis related to the impact of tourism on the environment of Mawlynnong covers the impact on the natural environment as well as the built environment. As regard the natural environment, the findings show that tourism has a negative impact on wildlife of the village. To beautify the village, the villagers started to grow more and more ornamental plants, but the greenery of the village has much increased. As per the household survey, majority of respondents (52.4%) opine that the greenery of village has not increased after getting tourism. Earlier the village was more covered with wild and native trees like Kwai, jackfruits, oranges and other wild fruits. During a visit to a neighbouring village, the researcher's translator (who belongs to Mawlynnong) affirmed, *"Earlier our village was as beautiful and natural as this village is now. Our houses were also surrounded by this kind of tall and big trees"*. The increasing number of ornamental plants and decreasing number of native and wild plants seem to be not only a threat for habitat of wild birds and animals, but also appear to have failed to maintain the village temperature. In fact, in the household survey, overwhelming majority of respondents (88.9%) stated that tourism in their village has

led to decline in the visibility of wild trees . Moreover, the overwhelming majority (93.7%) of total respondents said that visibility of wild animals and birds has decreased very much after getting tourism.

Further, tourism in Mawlynnong has negative impact on natural resources like air and water. As per the household survey, majority (61.9%) of total respondents asserted that the growth of tourism led very much to increase in air pollution. Similarly, noise pollution is also clearly visible impact of tourism in the village. For instance, one of the villager stated, *"Tourists blow their vehicle horns very loudly . Sometimes, when we get sleepy, the loud noises of tourists vehicles disturb us. But what can we do? Tourists should understand that this village is our home!."* According to the data of household survey, the overwhelming majority (87.3%) of the respondents opined that noise pollution has increased in the village due to the impact of tourism.

Along with these impacts, the quality and quantity of water have also been affected by the growth of tourism in village. It is clearly depicted in the words of one of the villagers, who said, *"Because of the tourist, we have a water shortage, For us this water is enough. Suppose 500 litter water is enough for the whole family in one day, but 500 litter is not enough for five tourists. The tourist uses lots of water. Like yesterday, only two tourists visited our homestay and as a result we had no water in the morning. When a tourist comes, we have to wash extra clothes like bed sheets and covers, so we need more water. We generally face the water shortage in winters, especially up to March. After that, when we get rain, then the water problem is solved."* This impact of tourism is not only confined to water consumption but also related to the pollution of the nearby stream too. Traditionally, the villagers habitually used to take baths and wash their laundries in the stream. After the advent of tourism, the frequency and amount of washing clothes in stream has increased which has led to more water pollution in streams. As per the household data, a little less than half (44.4%) of the total respondents opined that the frequency and amount of washing clothes in the village stream has increased with the growth of ecotourism in the village. Thus, the quality of both air and water has been affected adversely by the growth of ecotourism. The village also faces the issue of increasing plastic waste and its management after tourism has peaked in the village, which contribute further to the air and water pollution.

Along with the natural environment, tourism has also adversely affected the built environment of the village. After getting involved in tourism, the traditional Khasi architecture, which majorly consists of bamboo houses, is negatively affected. The traditional houses has gradually taken a back seat and the architecture of the village turned into concrete or metaled roof houses. Unlike tourist destinations like Chokhi Dhani in Rajasthan and Sir Bani Yas Resort in Abu Dhabi, tourism in Mawlynnong does not promote its traditional architecture. The economic benefits of tourism in Mawlynnong does not account for the preservation of the traditional architecture of Khasis. The new kind of infrastructure is also not aligned with the environmental needs there. The existence of huts and bamboo houses are good for maintaining the temperature of the village, but the new cemented development seems to have failed to achieve this.

Besides the village's traditional architecture, the old stone footpaths are now replaced by cemented and bitumen footpaths to further facilitate tourism-related activities. The findings suggest that the new footpaths are a threat to both village aesthetics as well as for the natural environment of the village. The villagers themselves are not fond of these footpaths. For instance, one of them said, *"Now, new footpaths are not good for children and old people, especially during the rainy season, as people often slip and get hurt. Walking on the traditional natural footpaths did not have such negative experiences."* A group of women expressed their emotions by saying, *"These new footpaths are not good. This new one is hotter in summer, and we feel so much heat. Our old footpaths were beautiful. We miss our old footpaths."* While tourism-oriented changes have these negative outcomes, the growth of tourism in the village has positively improved the transportation facility in the village. Almost all (98.4%) of the respondents agreed that the transportation facility has increased and improved after tourism has made inroads in the village.

Thus, these findings indicate that the ecotourism driven improved economic status of people of Mawlynnong is not well aligned with the sustainability of its natural and built environment. Ecotourism is known for its conservational value along with economic growth. However, lack of proper regulations, planning and awareness in Mawlynnong led to failure of ecotourism in environmental terms. Tourism and environment conservation can go hand in hand with each other, as is evident in one of the neighbouring states of

Meghalaya, Nagaland, wherein the village Khonoma is widely known for its conservational values and also popularly known as India's first green village (Dey 2020, Rodrigues 2019). Similarly, Penglipuran, a village in Bali (Indonesia) which was also declared one of the cleanest villages in the world in 2016, also has more sustainable and greener success story. Unlike Mawlynnong, Penglipuran is not only acknowledged as the cleanest village but is also known for its achievement of receiving the award Kalpataru from the Indonesian government for maintaining seventy-five hectares of bamboo forest (Adi 2017, Rustandi 2020) and is often acknowledged as a village with the values of environmental sustainability (Lakshmi & Wisnumurti 2018). This village is known for its cultural sustainability and for maintaining traditional and eco-friendly housing patterns (Sudarwani & Priyoga 2018). Both Mawlynnong and Penglipuran have been recognised as the cleanest villages, however cultural and environmental sustainability is more visible in the case of Balian village, especially its achievement in conserving forest and maintaining the traditional building structure that is more eco-friendly to the environment.

Economic Impact of Tourism and Cultural and Environmental Changes

The third and last objective of this study was to explore the economic impact of tourism in Mawlynnong village and its linkages with cultural and environmental change. This is examined through both qualitative and quantitative data.

Regarding the economic context of Mawlynnong, it was noticed that before tourism development, the villagers largely depended on a subsistence agricultural economy. Almost 67% of households own private agricultural land holdings. However, after tourism made inroads, the villagers got more inclined towards tourism-related activities. The household survey data demonstrate that tourism has the highest share (30.2%) in the occupational distribution of families. Moreover, 22.2 % of respondents' families are involved in both agricultural and tourism activities. Thus, tourism has emerged as an occupation with which the majority of the respondents' families ($30.2 + 22.2 = 52.4\%$) are engaged in the village. There are both pull and push factors to have a more positive attitude toward tourism as tourism leads to easier and regular cash flow, which was not possible in agriculture. The agricultural activity becomes less profitable due to climate change. As one of the respondents shared, "*The changing weather and rain have affected the plantation. In the*

past, we used to get a lot of production from our cultivation, but now we get lesser production due to the change in climatic condition. Earlier, we got lots of rains, but now we get less rain. The pattern of rain has affected the plantations a lot as the rain comes late during the season, and when it comes it comes with heavy showers. ”

Further, the findings also show that tourism has played a significant role in employment generation. As per the household survey data, the overwhelming majority (93.7%) of total 63 respondents confirmed that tourism provided more jobs/employment to the villagers. These findings are also echoed in Marbaniang’s study (2017), in which 97% of respondents (out of 66 respondents) asserted that tourism provides ample job and employment opportunities to the villagers. While sharing some personal anecdotes, one of the respondents of Mawlynnong stated, *“I love tourism because it changes our life. Earlier my family was big, and we did not have sufficient food to eat. After getting tourism, we earn more money by selling handicrafts to the tourists. Now, my son is studying in Shillong because of the income my family and I get from tourism”*.

During discussions around gender-based opportunity in tourism industry, the women of Mawlynnong now feel more empowered on many fronts. The findings reveal that tourism in Mawlynnong seems to have played a positive role in women's economic position unlike findings of some other tourism studies. The issues of low paid jobs, as mentioned in studies by Stronza (2001) and Zambrano et al., (2010) is not seen in the case of Mawlynnong as the village belongs to Khasi tribe wherein women are equally engaged in economic activities like men and most of the shops and restaurants are operated under female control. However, the findings also suggest that women’s involvement in tourism makes them overburdened, which often creates psychological as well as personal family issues for them.

Further, regarding tourism's impact on income generation in Mawlynnong, the large majority (87%) of respondents shared that their family income has increased as an outcome of tourism-related activities. The income on the community level has also increased as the in-charge who collects the entrance fee from tourists said, *" The maintenance fee collected from tourists is given to the dorbar (village headman), who uses that amount for the development of the village. So this way, our village gets more developed after getting*

tourists. Tourists are important for us as they give us jobs, money and recognition". Along with this, tourism has had positive effects regarding poverty reduction, as an overwhelming majority of respondents (90%) reported a reduction in their poverty due to tourism.

Thus, tourism has played a vital role in changing the village's economic profile, where tourism has improved job opportunities, household income, and poverty reduction in a positive way. However, tourism also has negative economic impacts in Mawlynnong, such as decreasing involvement of villagers in agricultural activities post tourism. The majority of respondents (62%) opined that involvement in agriculture has decreased. Some of the respondents also stated reasons behind this trend which included the decreasing size of land holdings, increasing weather uncertainty and its negative impact on agricultural productivity and the possibility of earning more and easy money in the tourism industry. One of the male respondents said, *"I like working in my field. I am young and fit because of this. However, my children do not like to work in the field as agriculture needs lots of handworks and have no quick money as tourism gives them"*.

Further, it may be noted that the above mentioned tourism-driven economic changes have also affected the traditional socio-cultural fabric of the village - its peace and serenity, patterns of interactions, social bonds and feeling of oneness, and their values. Due to the shift from agriculture to tourism activities, villagers' patterns of social interaction and social bonds have changed. The communication within the village community has been weakening. In this regard, a middle-aged woman respondent shared, *"Nowadays, everyone is so busy. So, they just say- 'oye.... none.... mo' only from the footpath"* (here, *oye* denotes hi, *none* stands for how are you, and *mo* means bye). As per the household survey data, the majority of respondents (71.4%) agreed that the villagers have become busier and money-minded after tourism development. Half of the respondents (52.4%) opined that the villagers are more concerned about self-interest and ignore village's interest after the advent of tourism. However, the village unity, interaction within family members and interaction within villagers got less affected by tourism activity. As per the household survey data, more than half of the respondents (65%) agreed that the village unity has not got affected due to tourism. More than half of respondents (57.1%) asserted that the behaviour of family members towards each other has also not changed after the advent of tourism. Three-fourth of

respondents (75%) said that the villager's behaviour towards each other has not changed after getting tourism. Thus, it can be stated that the valuational changes are seen to certain extent in the village due to the growth of tourism.

Along with these cultural implications, there are both negative and positive ecological implications of economic impact of tourism. The findings indicate that the villager's inclination towards tourism activity leads to a long-term threat for the intergenerational transfer of ecological wisdom. Unlike earlier times, presently environment issue is limited only to formal education as parents' busy schedule in tourism industry makes them unable to train their children in the agricultural field and impart ecological wisdom. Now, the children are less attracted to agriculture as it demands more hard work and dedication. However, the findings of also show that tourism has a positive impact on preservation of some of the natural objects of the village, particularly the 'maws' (big stones) that refers to name of the village and the 'the balancing rock' which has unique natural attraction.

Finally, in popular media, Mawlynnong is acknowledged as the 'cleanest village in Asia' where the cleanliness habit has its cultural context and has been maintained by the collective efforts of the villagers since around 100 years ago. This achievement is a significant drive in attracting the tourism industry in this remote and bordering area. Similarly, the clear crystal water of Dawki and the single 'living root bridge' connecting Nohwet and Riwai are also important tourist destinations that add to the tourist attraction of this village. Further, it is apparent that although tourism has significantly contributed to economic growth of villagers of Mawlynnong, there are also some negative impacts of tourism on traditional socio-cultural fabric and environment of the village. This analysis is also echoed in Mbaiwa & Stronza's (2010) study of the rural setting in Okavango Delta, which share similarities with the present study as both places started community-based ecotourism in 2005. Before tourism, both were dependent on a subsistence economy. Mbaiwa & Stronza (2010) identified that before tourism, the villages in Okavango delta were dependent on hunting, gathering, livestock and crop farming. However, after tourism, these villages shifted to cash economy in which the villagers are mainly involved in tourism-based jobs like lodging, crafts, and collecting and selling grass thatching to tourist operators. They

further found that most villagers were positive towards these changes due to tourism's economic benefits like employment, income generation, availability of facilities like transport services and services for the poor and orphans. They observe that tourism led to modernisation in these traditional villages along with changes in the socio-cultural life of villagers. For instance, the hut houses of villagers have turned into modern houses, the use of communication tools like TV and radio has increased, and assistance for other social services (services for orphans, poor's, and old age people) has improved. The role of money and the money market became more pronounced. Similarly, in Mawlynnong also, villagers seem to be satisfied with their economic benefits and identity-based achievements related to tourism. However, the cost of these economic gains are reflected in the words of one of the key persons of the village who has played a profound role in growth of tourism in Mawlynnong: *“Before 15 years, people were so poor. It is my pleasure to witness that people's lives are now changed from poor to better. I am so happy. Better houses, better life. All are my brothers and sisters. Earlier, they were very poor but at the same time, when I compare the past and present village life, my tears never stop....”* (eyes filled with pain). While ending the interview, he said *'thiyasuk'* (which means goodnight) with a heavy heart. Thus, the key findings of the present study, based on both qualitative as well as quantitative data, indicate that Mawlynnong is a economic success story with some cultural and environmental costs.

So, the study suggests that the economic success of Mawlynnong does not align with its cultural and environmental sustainability. In this context, the idea of sustainability of culture and environment needs to be blended in order to have properly planned tourism in a remote area like Mawlynnong which can be successful in a true sense and be a model village in every aspect, like the village Penglipuran in Bali, which Indonesia, is not only known for its tag of the cleanest village, but also for its cultural sustainability and for maintaining traditional and eco-friendly housing patterns (Sudarwani & Priyoga 2018).