



POTENTIAL OF SPELEO-TOURISM AND ITS ROLE IN TOURISM PROMOTION IN MEGHALAYA

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INTRODUCTION

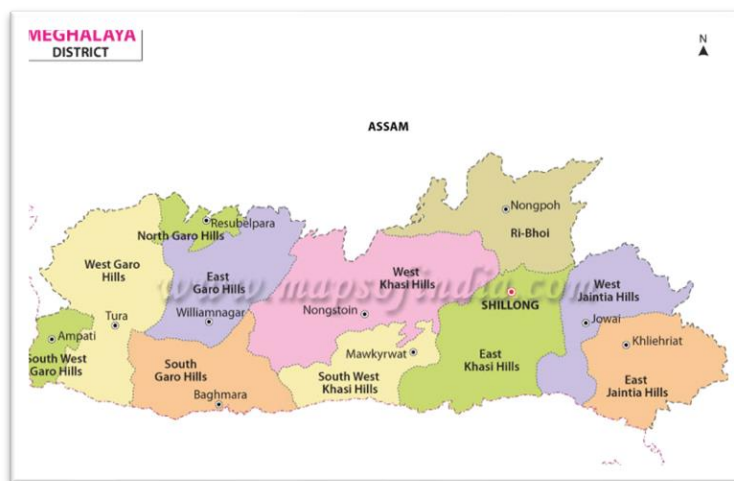
Cave is a special element within a countryside or scenery referred to as “karst” (*Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013*). Caves are large open space situated underground (*Barbara, Brian & Stephen, 1996*) which may have been formed due to underground solution of limestone (*Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*). They were inhabited by humans in ancient times who then left behind ineradicable marks like cave painting and inscription (*Itanyi, Okonkwo & Eyisi, 2013*). Caves are of different types such as solution caves, talus caves, crevice or tectonic caves, sea or littoral caves, ice caves, glacier caves, etc. (*Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*). Caves have captivating scenic landscape that can form a major part of tourism products and attractions that could be exploit for tourism development (*Itanyi, Okonkwo & Eyisi, 2013*). Caves are presently the most important geotouristic target all over the world and they represent an important economic resource for many of the still developing Countries. (*Cigna & Forti, 2013*). Caves are nature’s awesome sight which are naturally augment and possesses touristic potentials (*Taylor, 2001*).

Meghalaya a state located in the corner of North East India is blessed in abundance with unique and rich natural resources ideal for tourism activity. It attracts domestic as well as international tourists from different parts of the world to steal a look and experience the richness of nature the place has to offer. One of the main natural resources of the place is the presence of large number of caves spread through different districts of the state making the place earn the prestige to feature in the world cave map. The presence of extensive number of caves provides the scope for various leisure and recreational activities for tourist with different profiles. Meghalaya has over 1500 caves, out of which very few have been developed for touristic activity and the rest still stands out to be developed. Caves can form an unswerving tourism product for the state owing to the presence of large number of caves with unique and stunning carvings or formations. Meghalaya has a good number of caves such as Krem Mamwsmmai, Krem Lumshynna, Siju Dobhakol, Krem Syndai, Krem Rupasor, Krem Lympu, Krem Liat Prah, Krem Maw Tynghiang, to name a few; but unfortunately most of these caves



are yet to get any tourism development consideration. Tourism growth in the state will boost up if caves are sustainably and cautiously developed for touristic activity.

The paper focuses on caves in Meghalaya and its tourism potentials, its role in attracting tourists to Meghalaya thereby promoting tourism in the state. Methodologically, the researchers adopted an extensive review of literature and participative observation for the study.



Meghalaya Map

Tourist Traffic in Meghalaya

The tourist traffic into Meghalaya especially the domestic tourist has increased over the years owing to the rich tourism resources the state enjoy. However the inflow of foreign tourists has not made any impact on the state tourism due to the insignificant numbers. The table below indicates the number of tourist inflow into the state of Meghalaya over the years.

Year	Number of tourists		Total
	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Indian</i>	
1974	2,983	185	3,168
1977	4,484	426	4,910
1980	2,324	252	2,576
1985	65,371	121	65,492
1987	1,78,858	194	1,79,052
1990	1,31,189	277	1,31,466
1995	1,44,529	1,172	1,45,701
1997	1,15,563	1,071	1,16,634
1998	1,36,952	1,055	1,38,007
1999	1,59,730	1,971	1,61,701
2000	1,69,929	2,327	1,72,256
2001	1,78,697	2,390	1,81,087
2002	2,68,529	3,191	2,71,720



2003	3,71,953	6,304	3,78,257
2004	4,33,495	12,707	4,46,202
2005	3,75,911	5,099	3,81,010
2006	4,00,287	4,259	4,04,546
2007	4,57,685	5,267	4,62,952
2008	5,49,954	4,919	5,54,873
2009	5,91,398	4,522	5,95,920
2010	6,52,800	4,200	6,57,000
2011	6,67,504	4,803	6,72,307
2012	6,80,254	5,313	6,85,567
2013	6,91,269	6,773	6,98,042
2014	7,16,469	8,664	7,25,133

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Meghalaya; India Tourism Statistics 2010, 2012, 2014, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

Meghalaya Caves

One of the tiniest states in India, Meghalaya also known as ‘The Abode of the Clouds’, is a picturesque topography of undulating hills, sheer cliffs and magnificent waterfalls fed by the world record precipitation that the monsoon brings. This great and wonderful power of water worked its way through the limestone rock to create a beautiful and mysterious netherworld in its deep and dark underground. Meghalaya is the home of caves- carrying the flagship of the country in the World Cave Map.

The diverse sedimentary rocks (limestone and sandstone) runs almost 300 kilometres along the border with Bangladesh, from Garo Hills in the west to Khasi Hills in the centre and then to Jaintia Hills in the east ending in Mikir Hills of Assam. These are the areas that harbor the wonderful world of darkness, glittering and dazzling with unimaginable formations, carved by the infinite patience of superb craftsmanship that only nature can bestow. And in these dark and tiny ecosystems life forms are constantly evolving – as rare and endemic as that particular ecosystem that prevails in that cave.

In the midst of these mystic limestone caves and caverns, Meghalaya is blessed with one of the world’s longest cave in sandstone, Krem Mawtynhiang. As at the end of February 2013 over 1500 caves and cave locations are known in Meghalaya, of which 892 have been explored yielding over 398.6 km of surveyed passage. Much more remains to be discovered. The top 10 longest caves in India are all located in Meghalaya. The top 10 deepest caves in India are all located in Meghalaya except Pakaw Puk which is in Mizoram. The state is indeed a haven for adventurers, cavers and speleologists and it is left to them to unravel the hidden and mysterious secrets of this sunless and hidden world.

Some of the famous caves of Meghalaya are listed below:

Krem Mawsmi: Mawsmi Caves are a major crowd puller that leaves tourists spellbound. These limestone caves have the distinction of being the only caves in Meghalaya that are lit enough to enable tourists to enjoy the natural formations in awe. The stalactites and stalagmites caves have innumerable forms, shapes and sizes inside leaving one to imagine as many life forms as possible ("*Mawsmi Cave/Sohra/Cherrapunjee*", 2016)



Lumshynna cave: Lumshynna cave lies in the slope of U Lum Lawshynna Hill. It is approximately one kilometre in length. It is adorned with different types of carving and formation designed by nature itself which adds lot of beauty to the place.

Krem Dam: This cave can be entered from the foot of a large blind valley that lies around 1 km to the east of Mawsynram village. The entrance measures 30 m across. A small stream that flows down the valley enters the cave. Krem Dam has been formed in a coarse grained facies of limestone that resembles sandstone. The cave has a very large river passage that ends in a roof collapse. Here the rays of the sun are visible.

Krem Lymput: The cave is located at a distance of almost 6 km. from the village of Nongjri. The entrance of the cave remains hidden within the jungle and covered by boulders. The main trunk of the cave runs for about 1 km with the walls and ceiling located towards west. It then leads into a passage known as 'Way to Heaven.' A series of spacious galleries can be seen here which is rich in calcite formations. Here, the great attraction is the Mughal Room that is more than 25 m wide, 25 m in height and 75 m long. This cave is 6641m in length.

Krem Mawjymbuin: The cave can be reached by going through a metalled road located half a kilometre before reaching Mawsynram village. The entrance chamber is 50 metres across and 4 metres high. It has a large stalactite placed over a female stalagmite which resembles a Shiva Lingam. On the east side there is a small stream that flows under the left wall of the chamber. A side passage leads to a second rift entrance, known as Back Entrance. The cave is formed in calcareous sandstone and is only 209 metres in height.

Krem Liat Prah: It is the longest natural cave in India. Its current length is about 25 kilometers according to the ongoing Abode of the Clouds Expedition project. The foremost feature of Liat Prah is its enormous trunk passage, the Aircraft Hangar.

Synrang Pamiang: The cave entrance is situated north of the track from Chiehruphi village. It is presently the 3rd longest cave in India with 14,157 m of surveyed passage. The entrance passage of the cave directs to a boulder strewn passage of 500m. It is then followed by one of the world's finest cave passages that are 7.63km. It is probably one of the world's longest single cave passages. The cave has five entrances with the other four being Krem Musmari, Thloolong Cherlamet, Krem Eit Hati and Krem Khlieh Trai Lum.

Krem Lubon: Krem Lubon is a resurgence cave located in the Sakhain area at the foot of a 30m high waterfall. The cave has a rectangular entrance measuring 16 m wide and 8 m high. The entrance of the cave remains hidden behind the waterfall and is resembles the legendary 'Phantom Cave'. The large passage gradually deteriorates in size. The cave is 687 m in length.

Krem Chympe: It is considered as a resurgence cave. It is located at a distance of about 3 km along the track from the village of Khaddum to Sielkan. Krem Chympe is a river cave that requires over 3.5 km of swimming over a series of very large and deep lakes. It is India's 5th longest cave with 10.5 km of surveyed length. Sielkan Pouk which is at the upper reaches acts as a sink to the cave system.

Kotsati Umlawan Cave System: The entrance of Krem Kotsati is located in the centre of Lumshnong village. One needs to swim to enter the cave. The cave remains submerged during the monsoons. Kotsati-Umlawan Cave system acts as a network of many caves like Krem Kotsati, Krem Umtyongai, Krem Umsynrang Liehwait, Krem Wahjajew. Krem Lalit, Synrang Thloo, Krem "Washing Place Inlet," Krem Umshor, Put Lyer, Garage Pot, Thloolong Kharasniang and the thirteen other entrance of Krem Umlawan. The cave has 24 entrances.

Krem Umkseh: The entrance of this cave is used as a washing place by the local people. The cave is located behind a saw mill to the south of the Lumshnong Petrol Station. It measures 1268 m and has several bedding plane passages. These are mostly low but wide are size.



Krem Shrieh (Tangnub Monkey Cave): The cave can be reached from the village of Tangnub and lies at the end of a fluted canyon. The entrance of the cave is a huge vertical shaft of 97 m deep. It gradually moves down into a fine stream way. The cave measures 20 m by 40 m at the surface and opens to 60 m by 60 m at its base. It is the deepest direct shaft known in India and with a surveyed length of 8862 m. It is currently India's 5th longest cave.

Krem Mawshun: The cave lies about 680 m in a direct line east of the church at Lelad but 100 m lower. It master rivers cave that collect several inlets and drains the area east of the village Lelad. The entrance of the cave opens to a 5 m pot that descends into a fine stream passage, which again leads to a 24 m deep pitch. The stream passage gets larger; both upstream and downstream, with the downstream passage measuring 12 m by 10 m. The cave has several very well decorated high level passages. The cave system is 3339 m in length.

Krem Syndai or Krem Jogindra: The entrance of the cave is of stooping height. However, as one enters the cave the passage opens up into impressive proportions, of 25 m or more high and 30m wide. The cave has impressive calcite formations in the form of stalactites, stalagmites and a lot of flowstone. This prompted the British excursion to nickname the cave as "Krem Sooty." This cave is revered by Hindu sages.

Krem Umthloo: The cave system of Krem Umthloo has several entrances of 50 or 60 m deep potholes like Krem Myrliat, Krem Moolale, etc. to a dendritic pattern of stream cave passage, which all resurges at Krem Ticha. It is a magnificent river cave with equally magnificent formations that would leave one spellbound.

Krem Iawe: The cave is situated on a spur protruding from the eastern flank of the Shnongrim-Tangnub Ridge into the upper reaches of the Litién valley. The cave has a small entrance, measuring 10 by 15 m wide and 15 m deep. It leads to a wet horizontal main passage that further leads to a very wet but incredible maze of passages. The cave has several beautiful fossil passages. It is 3398m in length.

Tetengkol Balwakol: The cave is located four kilometres north of Nengkhong village. The two adjacent 1 m diameter circular entrance of Tetengkol Balwakol leads to 5.7 km of dendritic river cave. The cave also has a maze of stooping to walking size passages.

Siju Cave: Siju Cave is located 132 kms from Tura in Meghalaya. The cave is also famous as Dobakkol or the bat cave that has impressive stalagmites. It is the third longest (4,772 m) cave in the Indian sub-continent; it is situated on the bank of the Simsang River just below the village of Siju. It contains some of the finest river passages in the world. The cave has magnificent limestone rock formations inside, especially named Princes Di's chamber.

Dangedikol Chiningkrikol: The cave located in Meghalaya has an entrance that is 18m wide and 12m high. It leads to a largish meandering stream passage. The cave houses a large population of bats. With 1352 m of surveyed length, the cave is still ongoing.



Mawsmai Cave



Lumshynna Cave



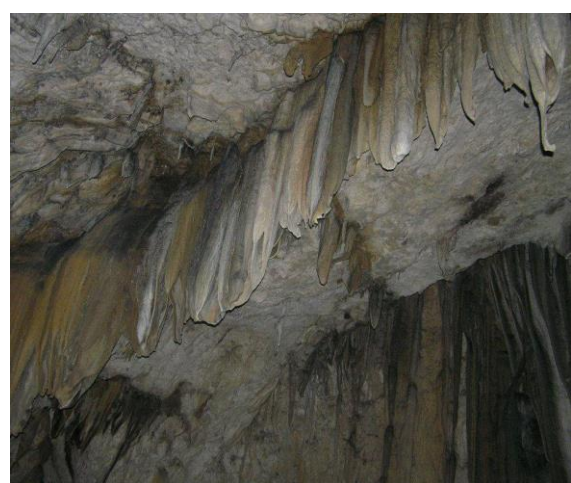
Mawjymbuin cave



Liatprah Cave



Lymput Cave



Syndai Cave



Siju Cave

SPELEOTOURISM OR CAVE TOURISM

Tourism in caves or speleotourism as it is called in Brazil (*Lobo & Moretti, 2009*) is a recent concept given to tourism that involves speleological formation (*Knežević & Žiković, 2011*). Karst sites have a particular use in tourism and human recreation, thus form the basic components of tourist attraction (*Rachmawati & Sunkar, 2013*). Speleo-tourism may be defined as venturing into caves for various touristic activities. It is one segment of tourism which is growing rapidly in recent years. The utmost development of speleo-tourism occurred in the second half of the 19th century; from which new caves were developed and selected for commercial (*Hamilton-Smith, 2004*). The year 1886 is considered the beginning of the development of cave tourism, including promotional activities (*Knežević & Žiković, 2011*).

Cave tourism is becoming an exciting and sort after touristic activity among the youths due to the adventurous nature it put forward. Due to the unique characteristics it offers such as labyrinths, narrow passages, high humidity and the lack of natural light, this form of tourism has been incorporated in adventure tourism segment (*National Caves Association, 2010 in Knežević & Žiković, 2011*). The number of tourists opting for cave tourism is on the rise in recent years making caves an ideal product to be promoted. A recent evaluation of the number of show cave visitors all around the world (*Cigna & Burri, 2000*), based on data obtained for about 20% of all show caves, estimate a global number of more than 150 million visitors per year. The figures provide a strong statement supporting the potential of speleo-tourism in the tourism industry and the rising numbers of tourists visiting caves as part of their touristic activity enhance the tourism growth of a place or region thereby increasing the economy of the place.

RESOURCES AND POTENTIALS OF SPELEOTOURISM IN MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya is blessed with over 1500 caves of which 892 have been explored yielding over 398.6km of surveyed passage (*Department of Tourism, n.d.*). Caves in Meghalaya are blessed with incredible formations carved by terrific craftsmanship that nature only can bequeath (*Department of Tourism, n.d.*). The caves in Meghalaya are present in plenty spreading across different districts of the state. Each cave is blessed with different rich natural and non-renewable resources ideal for touristic activity, scientific study and educational purpose. The resources comprises of stalactite, stalagmite, unique flora and fauna, crystal clear running water



flowing through nook and corner of different caves. The Mawjymbuin cave located in Mawsynram (wettest place on earth) has a stalactite hanging over a female stalagmite giving an intuition that of a shiva linga. This cave provides a scope not only for caving activities but also for religious purpose. Siju cave located in South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya the famous and well known cave in India (*Department of Tourism, n.d.*) houses tens of thousands of bats. A major river also passes through this cave. The cave can be an attraction for zoologists who wish to study the different bird species taking shelter in this cave.

Speleothems (stalagmites, stalactites, etc.) have long drawn visitors underground to visit limestone caves throughout Europe, and since the start of the twentieth century many public show-caves have been established. For example, in the British Isles today there are over 20 show-caves; the most visited may receive in excess of 5,00,000 visitors annually (*Baker & Genty, 1998*). Meghalaya being blessed with unique and attractive speleothems can attract large number of tourists every year who wish to see and experience the uniqueness and wonderful carvings of different caves.

Recently cave exploration has taken place in Meghalaya and has been an attraction for many adventure sports enthusiasts, thanks to the Meghalaya Adventures Association who step up and took the initiative to venture into the unexplored caves. Caving then started to become trendy and well-known drawing the attention of international cavers. However, the concept of merging cave and tourism together in Meghalaya is seen only in few places which make speleo-tourism a not so popular form of tourism in Meghalaya. This is due to lack of awareness given to the local people about the potential of cave tourism, less initiative taken by the stakeholders for cave tourism development, less government intervention for cave tourism development and promotion.

The unique and plethora of cave resources available in Meghalaya can elevate its potential as a cave tourism destination. The setting or landscape of many caves is well suited for both soft and hard adventure tourism activity such as site camping, bird watching, trekking, rappelling, kayaking, etc. There is high chance of speleo-tourism becoming the sort after form of tourism in the state provided safe and reliable equipments such as gloves and boots, helmet with lights, steel ladder, ropes powerful torch lights etc. are provided to the participants or tourists who venture into caves for different activities. Adventure sport competition can also be organized in and around the cave zone.

Meghalaya bears the title of having the longest caves (Krem Liat Prah) and deepest caves (Synrang Pamiang) in India (*Department of Tourism, n.d.*). This has the potential of pulling caving enthusiasts who love to venture and explore the hidden treasure that lies underneath the sunless and hidden world. Bearing the title of carrying the flagship of the country in the World Cave Map makes Meghalaya an ideal destination for organizing caving expedition even in the International level. The legends and myths associated with some caves like that of Um Lawan cave (*Oldham, 2003*) is another unique subject that draws attention from many people who are curious to know the history connected with the cave.

The potential of speleo-tourism in Meghalaya is enormous owing to the unique physical characteristics in and around the cave zone. It offers scope for challenging activities in which the young generation are geared up to participate. The extensive presence of caves across different districts presents an opportunity for Meghalaya to be the hub for cave research in India. The many unexplored caves that are yet to be travel around can pull cavers, adventurers and speleologists from around the world who are curious enough to find out what lies inside the dark, sunless and hidden world. The need of the hour is for someone to step up and take the initiative to tap the available resources and convert it into a tourism product. Since most of the caves in Meghalaya are located in close proximity with the famous tourist spot, they can be incorporated in the tour



itinerary so as to draw more number of tourists to the cave zone. Creativity and innovation in the form of products and services offered (*Rindam, 2014*) can further enhanced the potential of speleo-tourism of a place.

DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGIES FOR SPELEO-TOURISM AND ITS' ROLE IN TOURISM PROMOTION

Developing any form of tourism requires a thorough planning and effective developmental strategies should be kept in place for the successful execution of the development intended. An analysis of natural factors and social circumstances (*Knežević & Žiković, 2011*) is required before embarking on any speleo-tourism development as it will enlighten the effects it may have on the society and nature.

Depending on the sites where caves are located, development can either be an adventure cave tourism development or conventional cave tourism development. Development of adventure cave tourism is most suitable rather than conventional cave tourism in area that is not easily accessible (*Knežević & Žiković, 2011*). Adventure speleo-tourism development is most suitable in Meghalaya as most of the sites are not easily accessible and it mainly includes rough terrains.

For speleo-tourism to be developed sustainably, efficient and sufficient human resource management needs to be put in place to professionally cater to the tourist needs and the local community should be part in the overall development and management of caves. Effective and efficient management should be setup right from the stage of development to the stage of operation so to meet the expectation of the visitors. (*Jamieson & Noble, 2000 in Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*) observed that tourism development will be more motivated and sustainable with community input. Developing infrastructural tourist facilities and amenities such as accommodation, transport and recreation facilities is essential as they are the key components of a tourism destination (*Warnken, 2002*). Proper maintenance of the environmental surrounding should be encouraged to keep the exteriors as well as the interiors of the cave efficient and eye-catching and also carrying capacity of the cave should not be exhausted (*Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*) and must be put into consideration when developing speleo-tourism to ensure sustainability of the development. The development should not disturb the movement of fauna in and around the cave zone and the plethora of flora present in the cave zone should be taken care to avoid natural degradation. The construction of footpaths inside the cave to provide an easy access for the visitors should not hamper or disturb the different formations, deposits and structure of the cave. Technology can tune or add extra flare to the caves through lighting that can be fitted inside the cave to enable visitors to witness the speleothems, flora and fauna present in the cave, etc but again lighting should be fitted only in the visitors' area to avoid disturbing the ecosystem and should be lit up only when needed. Signages should clearly and accurately point out the direction in which the visitor needs to proceed to reach the intended tourist site.

The surrounding needs to be well maintained and preserved. Cleanliness upkeep is essential to meet tourist expectation which may also result in tourist revisiting the place.

With youths craving for adventure activities nowadays, introducing or offering adventure sports in the cave zone may attract good number of tourists who wish to explore and experience the risk and excitement associated with the activities. However these activities needs to be offered and guided by well trained professionals who has in-depth knowledge about the activities and are expert in using the equipments required



for the activities. The adventure activities offered should not disturb the ecosystem of the place to ensure sustainability of the cave.

Souvenir shops selling indigenous products can be setup for the tourist to purchase which in turn benefits the local community. Visitor information centers and interpretation centers are essential to educate the tourists about the delicate nature of different formations, cave paintings and what the visitors need to do during their visit. The co-operation and support of public at large can together help in conservation and posterity of paintings of Ajanta (*Singh & Arbad, 2013*). This calls for co-operation and support of each individual for the conservation and preservation of any caves.

Facilitating the marketing of speleo-tourism in Meghalaya is the need of the hour. Various marketing strategies need to be look upon and put into action according to the feasibility of the place. This calls for the need to adopt efficient marketing concept (*Okoli, 2001 in Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*) for speleo-tourism development in Meghalaya. Result-oriented research and development should be adopted towards improving the marketing viabilities of a place (*Okoli, 2001; Chisnal, 1975 in Oguamanam & Nwankwo, 2015*). Other form of marketing strategies such as advertisement, public relations, documentaries, social media, printed communications such as brochures, flyers, pamphlets, etc would add value to the place and promote Meghalaya as a speleo-tourism destination.

Meghalaya possesses great number of speleological attractions that can draw tourist from different parts of the world for touristic activity. Caves are a natural attraction that catches the eye of many people if developed appropriately. With the development of some caves into a show cave taking the example of Arwah cave in Sohra, Meghalaya it can be seen that good number of tourists are visiting caves for touristic activity such as nature walk, bird watching, cave expedition, trekking, adventure sports, etc. Developing such caves for touristic purpose has led to the increase in the flow of tourists in the region. Tourist from across the world may visit the place for speleo-tourism only but on reaching at the destination they may want to experience other forms of tourism thus stimulating the growth of tourism in the region. Infrastructural development around the cave zone has also taken place to cater to the tourist demands thereby improving the tourism infrastructure of the state. The recently inaugurated Arwah -Lumshynna tourist hub, Sohra by the state government are positive signs that tourism development are being taken seriously by the government to attract tourists from across different spheres. According to *The Shillong Times (dated 26th October 2014)*, the Deputy Chief Minister of the state Mr. Rowell Lyngdoh inaugurated the Arwah -Lumshynna tourist hub in which a cave is also a part of it (*The Shillong Times, 2014*). He encouraged the gathering to take up tourism as an alternative source of employment and improvement of the economy of the community. People residing near the cave zone are being given awareness about the tourism potential of the place and through such awareness programs they are able to understand the concept of tourism and how caves can promote tourism in the region. Speleo-tourism no doubt is contributing greatly to the growth of tourism in the region as the number of tourists visiting the region for such form of tourism is impressive. As per the information given by the tour guide of Arwah cave, he explained that the cave is receiving around 800 tourists a day during peak season and around 200 tourists during lean season. The number is evident that speleo-tourism thus play a vital role in the tourism promotion of the state.

CONCLUSION



Meghalaya also known as the land of caves (*Department of Tourism, n.d.*) has the potential of developing itself as a speleo-tourism destination owing to the presence of extensive number of caves with unique picturesque landscape and amazing speleothems present around the cave zone. The interest among the youths for adventure activities makes cave one of the ideal spot for such activities to be carried out. The tourist inflow to the region opting for speleo-tourism is impressive due to the latest development carried out in some cave zone providing ample number of activities for the tourist to participate and experience. However the potential can be enhanced through innovative developmental works that can be carried out in other cave zone that is less known to the public or those that are yet to be explored. The government should initiate such developmental works and encouraged entrepreneurs, local communities and other stakeholders to come forward to be part in developing Meghalaya as a speleo-tourism destination. The developmental works require rigorous planning to know its feasibility and also the attitude of natives towards such developmental works.

The presence of extensive number of caves spreading through different districts in the state drew good number of tourists to the region in the past for various purposes. The reasons for opting speleo-tourism include the desire to undertake risk and excitement through adventure activities, to explore and research the unexplored caves and to have a look at various formations formed inside the cave. The inflow of tourist for speleo-tourism has raised the tourism spending in the state which in turn contributes to the growth of tourism in the region. Tourism infrastructure has also improved to some extent due to speleo-tourism. The issue that concerns the author is the lack of marketing strategies to promote speleo-tourism in the state despite the state possessing rich resources for speleo-tourism. Innovative marketing strategies like advertisement, public relations, documentaries, social media, printed communications such as brochures, flyers, pamphlets, etc would definitely help in promoting speleo-tourism in Meghalaya.

The interest shown by the tourist for speleo-tourism should be taken as a positive sign in which the government, entrepreneurs, local communities should come up with an improved and well developed show cave along with effective marketing strategies to attract more number of tourists to the region. Speleo-tourism can also be included as one of the product in a tour package sold to the tourists to enable the tourist to experience different types of tourism including speleo-tourism. It can be concluded that speleo-tourism will definitely play a vital role in promoting tourism in Meghalaya if appropriate and judicious attention is being given for its development.

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