

Exploring the Potential of Eco-Tourism as a means of promoting Rural Development and Improving the Livelihoods To Rural communities for Dehradun District Uttarakhand

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INTRODUCTION

General

- In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the potential of ecotourism as a powerful tool for promoting rural development and improving the livelihoods of rural communities.
- Ecotourism, a form of sustainable tourism that focuses on exploring and conserving natural environments, offers a unique opportunity to harness the natural and cultural assets of rural areas while ensuring the preservation and enhancement of their ecological integrity.
- By attracting visitors who are interested in experiencing the beauty and diversity of nature, ecotourism can generate economic benefits, foster environmental stewardship, and empower local communities.
- Rural areas, often characterized by their natural landscapes, rich biodiversity, and traditional cultural practices, have long been overlooked in terms of development opportunities.
- However, the potential of these areas to contribute to sustainable development is immense.
- Ecotourism provides a means to unlock this potential, as it allows visitors to immerse themselves in the natural beauty and cultural heritage of rural communities while simultaneously supporting their economic growth.

Preserving Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage:

- Eco-tourism offers a sustainable approach to tourism that focuses on conserving the natural environment and preserving the cultural heritage of rural communities.
- By attracting visitors who appreciate and respect the local ecosystem and traditions, eco-tourism can help protect and maintain the resources that are essential for the livelihoods of rural communities.
- Preserving natural resources and cultural heritage through eco-tourism involves adopting a sustainable approach to tourism that prioritizes the conservation of the natural environment and the preservation of the cultural heritage of rural communities.
- Unlike conventional tourism, which may prioritize mass tourism and profit maximization, eco-tourism aims to strike a balance between visitor experiences and the long-term well-being of the local environment and communities.
- One of the primary goals of eco-tourism is to attract visitors who appreciate and respect the local ecosystem and traditions.
- This is achieved by promoting responsible and environmentally friendly practices among tourists, such as minimizing waste generation, conserving water and energy, and respecting wildlife and natural habitats.

Economic Opportunities and Diversification:

- Rural communities often face challenges such as limited economic opportunities and reliance on traditional industries.
- Eco-tourism presents an avenue for economic diversification by capitalizing on the natural beauty, wildlife, and unique experiences that rural areas can offer.
- By developing eco-tourism initiatives, rural communities can create new job opportunities, generate income for local businesses, and reduce the dependency on a single industry.
- Rural communities often encounter economic challenges, such as limited job opportunities and a heavy reliance on traditional industries that may be vulnerable to market fluctuations or technological advancements.
- Eco-tourism provides a potential solution by tapping into the natural beauty, wildlife, and unique experiences that rural areas possess, thereby opening avenues for economic diversification.
- Eco-tourism leverages the natural assets of rural areas, including picturesque landscapes, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, to attract visitors seeking authentic and sustainable travel experiences.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the concept of eco-tourism and its potential as a means of promoting sustainable rural development and improving the livelihoods of rural communities.
- To identify the key success factors for eco-tourism ventures in rural areas and assess their applicability to different contexts.
- To investigate the challenges faced by rural communities in implementing eco-tourism initiatives and propose strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- To assess the economic, social, and environmental impacts of eco-tourism on rural communities and their sustainability.
- To analyze the policies and strategies implemented by governments and other stakeholders to promote eco-tourism in rural areas and identify best practices.
- To propose recommendations for rural communities, policymakers, and other stakeholders to harness the potential of eco-tourism for sustainable rural development and improved livelihoods.

HYPOTHESIS

- **Null Hypothesis:** There is an insignificant impact of ecotourism on sustainable livelihood.
- **Alternate Hypothesis:** There is a significant impact of ecotourism on sustainable livelihood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sr. No	Authors Name	Tittle Name	Findings
1	S.E. Mesencho (2012)	An assesment of the potential of ecotourism and community based natural resource management as a rural development strategy with special reference to Isimangaliso Wetland Park	• This study aimed to analyse the potential and challenges for ecotourism development and how it can be applied as an integrated tool to provide economic incentives and better opportunities for community development, while improving natural resource management and conservation in Isimangaliso. • The capital assets, the context of vulnerability of the local communities along with other significant attributes of the supply side were investigated in-depth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sr. No	Authors Name	Tittle Name	Findings
2	Velan Kunjuraman (2020)	Community-based ecotourism managing to fuel community empowerment? An evidence from Malaysian Borneo	• With the focus on how CBE schemes impact the community empowerment, this study reveals that local community involved in CBE projects are able to transform their livelihoods from the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects. • There is a strong agreement among the CBE project participants that ecotourism exerts positive influences on their livelihoods, in terms of providing green job opportunities, generating income, strong social capital, preservation of local culture, women empowerment and awareness on environmental protection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sr. No	Authors Name	Tittle Name	Findings
3	Lisa M. Campbell (1999)	Ecotourism In Rural Developing Communities	• This paper considers the development of ecotourism at Ostional, Costa Rica, and the potential benets for the local community in the absence of government planning or intervention. • In 1995, only four percent of Ostional households identied tourism as a source of income; however, this was substantial in comparison to that derived from other economic activities. • While most Ostional residents had positive attitudes toward tourism, they had limited awareness of employment or investment opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sr. No	Authors Name	Tittle Name	Findings
4	Ahmad Fitri Amir (2015)	Sustainable tourism development: A study on community resilience for rural tourism in Malaysia	• The paper discusses the resiliency of the rural communities in Malaysia with the help of the sustainability planning in rural tourism. • It covers the rural sustainable development background, the community resiliency elements and the role of the local government. • The methodology includes site observation and extensive literature reviews. • The findings of the research suggest that a sustainable tourism development in rural area will contribute to an improved resiliency within the local community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sr. No	Authors Name	Tittle Name	Findings
5	Tamagn Woyesa (2020)	Potential of coffee tourism for rural development in Ethiopia: a sustainable livelihood approach	• This paper addressed potential and prospect of coffee tourism in the birthplace of coffee, south-western Ethiopian highlands. • It is an extension of theoretical discussion of sustainable tourism in relation to rural community livelihood in the montane forest region bearing in mind the conservation of biodiversity, especially the critical need of sustaining gene pool of wild Arabica coffee. • The critical analysis found the moist Afromontane forest, and the wild Arabic coffee is highly threatened to the extent of extinction mainly due to the expansion of agriculture.

METHDOLOGY

Research Design:

- This study will utilize a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods.
- The qualitative approach will help in understanding the perspectives and experiences of local communities, while the quantitative approach will allow for statistical analysis and generalization of findings.

Research Objectives:

- To examine the concept of eco-tourism and its potential as a means of promoting sustainable rural development and improving the livelihoods of rural communities.
- To identify the key success factors for eco-tourism ventures in rural areas and assess their applicability to different contexts.
- To investigate the challenges faced by rural communities in implementing eco-tourism initiatives and propose strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- To assess the economic, social, and environmental impacts of eco-tourism on rural communities and their sustainability.

Study Area Selection:

- The study will select a specific rural area known for its potential for ecotourism development.
- The area will be chosen based on its existing natural resources, cultural heritage, and community interest in promoting sustainable tourism.

Sampling Technique:

- The study will employ a purposive sampling technique to select participants, including local community members, tourism stakeholders, government officials, and experts in the field of rural development and ecotourism.
- The sample size 200 respondents determined based on the saturation of information and representation of key stakeholders.

Data Collection

Qualitative Data:

- **In-depth interviews:** Conduct interviews with key informants, such as community leaders, tourism operators, and government officials, to gather rich qualitative data on their experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to ecotourism and rural development.
- **Focus group discussions:** Organize group discussions with community members to understand their aspirations, expectations, and concerns regarding ecotourism initiatives and their potential impact on livelihoods.

Quantitative Data:

- **Surveys:** Design and administer structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data from local communities, tourists, and relevant stakeholders. The survey will assess socio-economic indicators, community perceptions, tourism impacts, and the potential for sustainable livelihood development through ecotourism.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis:

- Transcribe and code interview and focus group data to identify recurring themes and patterns.
- Conduct thematic analysis to explore the perspectives and experiences of participants regarding ecotourism and rural development.

Quantitative Analysis:

- Clean and analyze survey data using statistical software.
- Perform descriptive statistics to summarize socio-economic indicators and community perceptions.

Ethical Considerations:

- Obtain informed consent from all participants before data collection.
- Protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants.
- Comply with ethical guidelines and regulations regarding human subjects research.

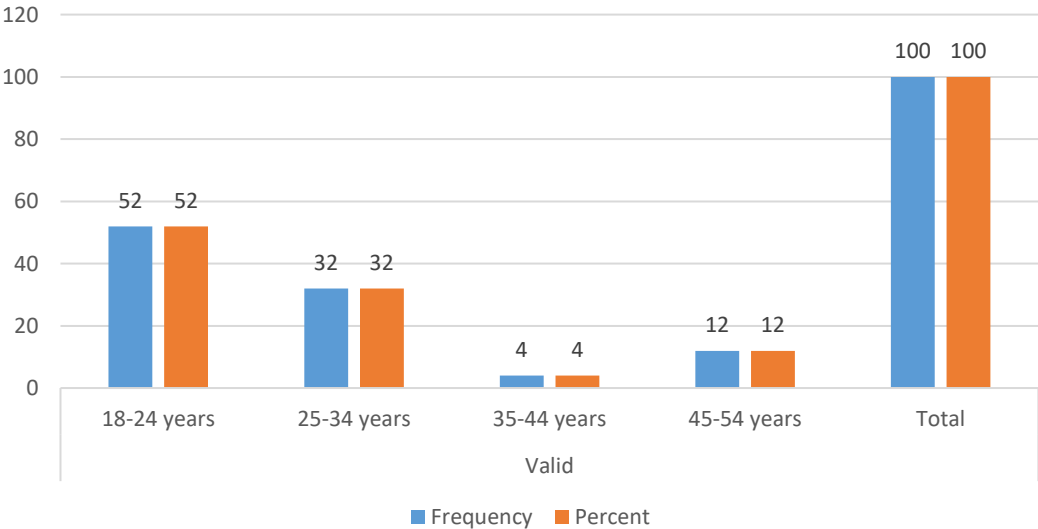
SPSS

- (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a software package widely used for statistical analysis and data management.
- It was initially developed by IBM in 1968 and is now owned by IBM's software division, IBM SPSS Statistics.
- SPSS is highly popular among researchers, data analysts, and social scientists for its extensive range of statistical procedures and user-friendly interface.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

- Age

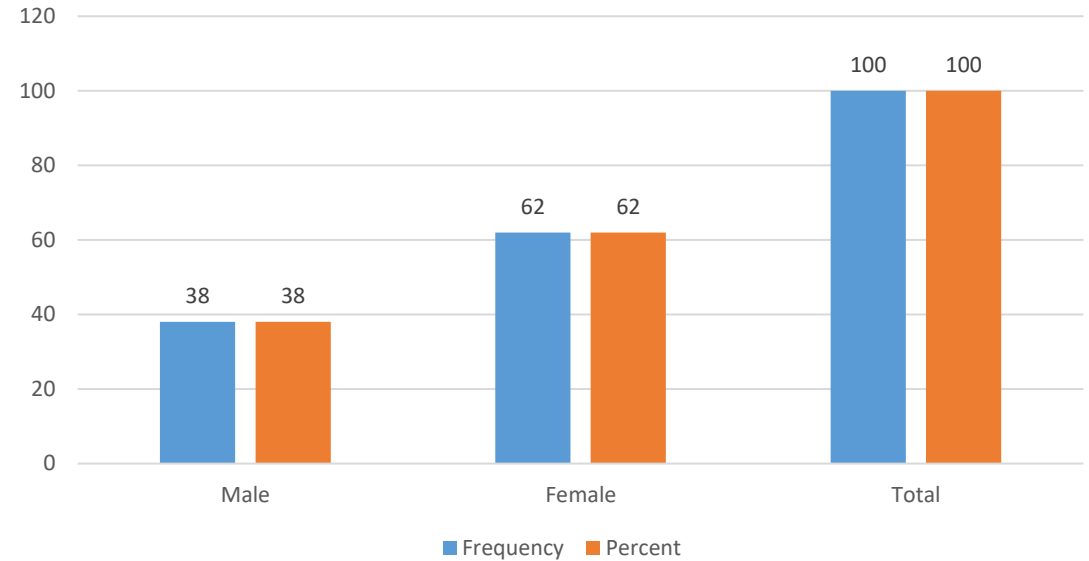
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-24 years	52	52.0
	25-34 years	32	32.0
	35-44 years	4	4.0
	45-54 years	12	12.0
	Total	100	100.0



- The table provides information about the age distribution of a group of respondents.
- It includes four age categories: 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, and 45-54 years.
- The "Frequency" column indicates the number of respondents in each age category.
- For example, there are 52 respondents who are between 18 and 24 years old, 32 respondents who are between 25 and 34 years old, 4 respondents who are between 35 and 44 years old, and 12 respondents who are between 45 and 54 years old.

- **Gender**

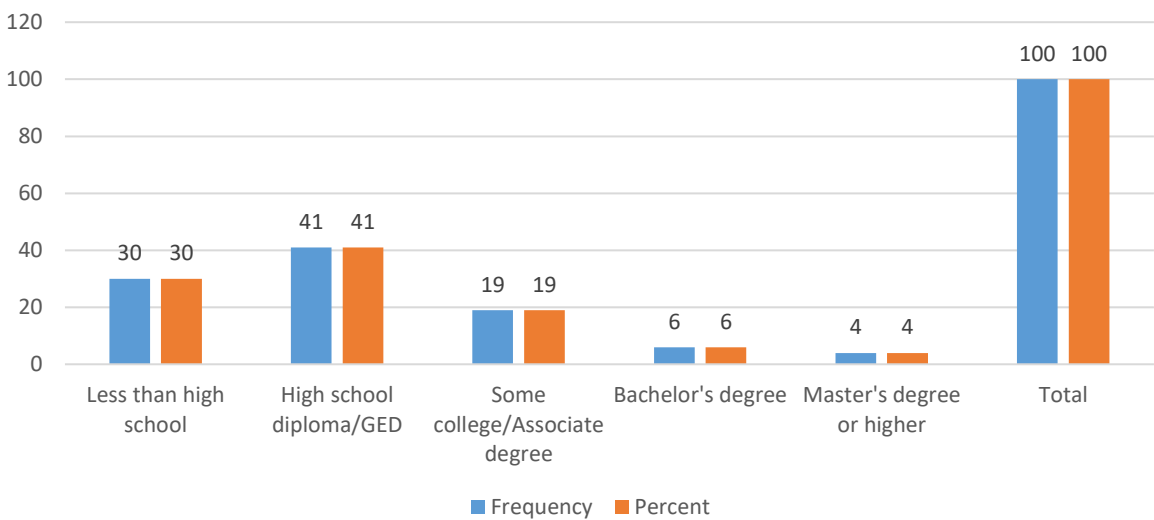
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	38	38.0
	Female	62	62.0
	Total	100	100.0



- The table shows that 100 people in total were considered for the study. 38 of these people, or 38% of the sample as a whole, were categorised as male.
- However, 62 people were classified as female, making up 62% of the whole sample.
- These numbers suggest that the sample is somewhat biased towards females since they represent a larger proportion of the total than do men. It is crucial to remember that this interpretation is simply based on the supplied table and does not take into account any other information or context.

- **Education Level**

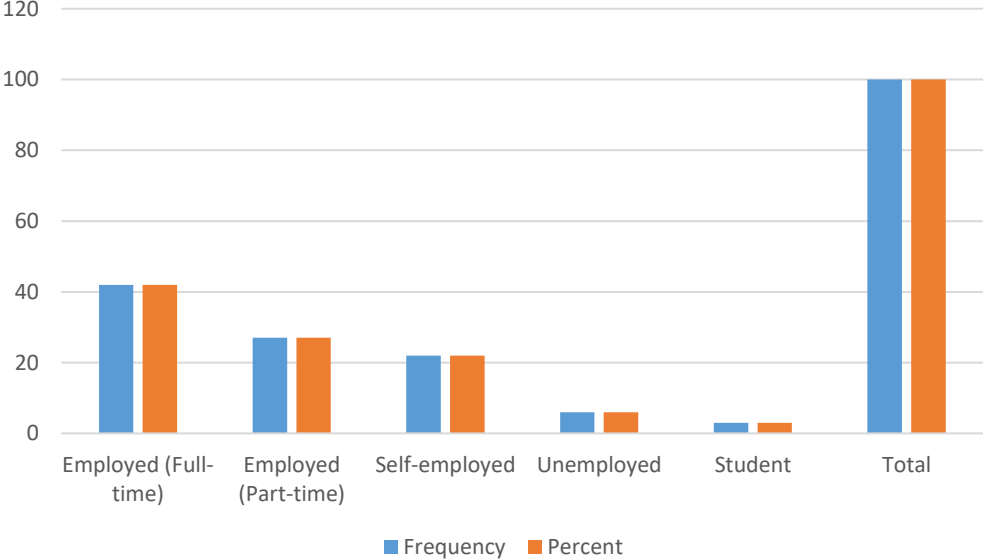
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Less than high school	30	30
	High school diploma/GED	41	41
	Some college/Associate degree	19	19
	Bachelor's degree	6	6
	Master's degree or higher	4	4
	Total	100	100



- The table provided displays information on the education levels within a specific population.
- It categorizes the population into five distinct education levels: "Less than high school," "High school diploma/GED," "Some college/Associate degree," "Bachelor's degree," and "Master's degree or higher." Each category is accompanied by two columns representing the "Frequency" and "Percent" values.

- **Occupation**

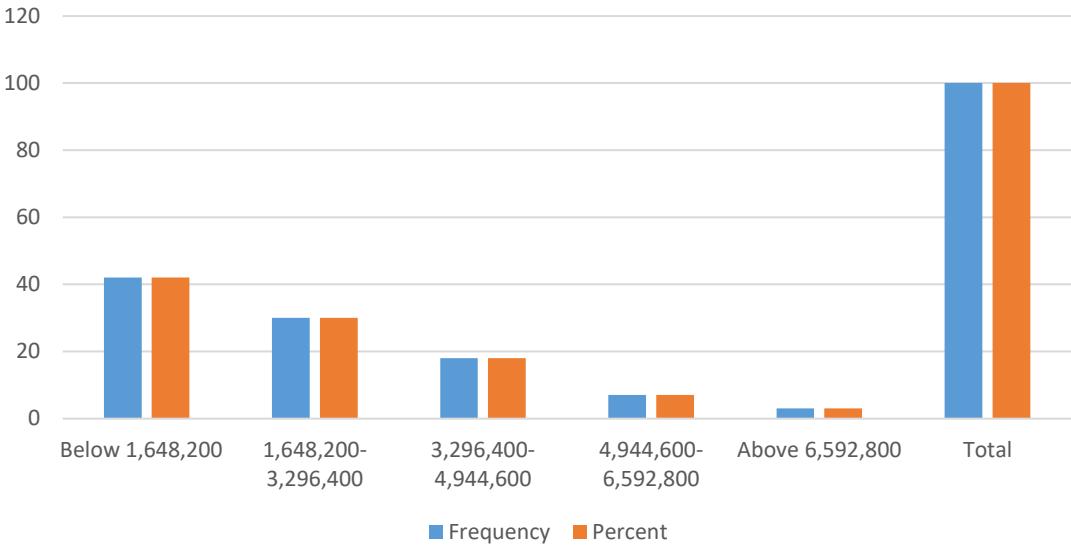
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Employed (Full-time)	42	42
	Employed (Part-time)	27	27
	Self-employed	22	22
	Unemployed	6	6
	Student	3	3
	Total	100	100



- The table that is supplied has information on occupations and has sections for "Employed (Full-time)," "Employed (Part-time)," "Self-employed," "Unemployed," and "Student." The frequency and percentage distribution of people in each group are shown in the table.
- The category with the greatest frequency is "Employed (Full-time)" in the table, with 42 people making up 42% of the total. "Employed (Part-time)" comes in second place with 27 respondents, or 27% of the sample.

- Annual Income**

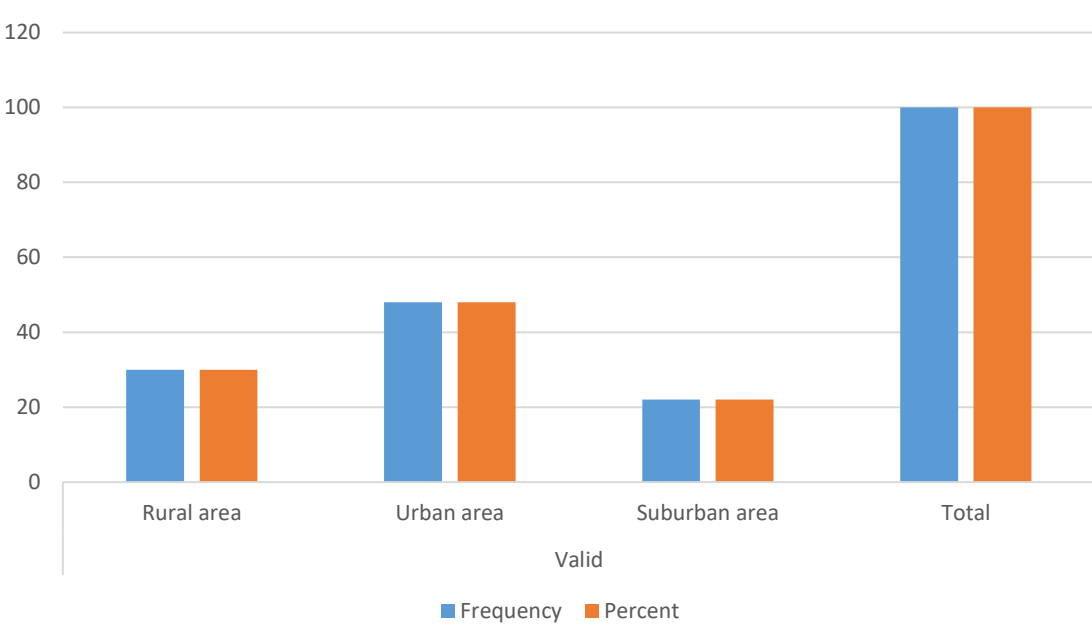
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Below \$20,000	42	42
	\$20,000 - \$40,000	30	30
	\$40,000 - \$60,000	18	18
	\$60,000 - \$80,000	7	7
	Above \$80,000	3	3
	Total	100	100



- The chart reveals that of the total respondents questioned (100%) the majority had an annual income of under \$20,000, according to the data. 42 respondents, or 42% of all responses, fall into this group.
- Between \$20,000 and \$40,000 is the second-largest income bracket, including 30 responses and 30% of the total.
- There were 18 responders in the \$40,000–\$60,000 income range, or 18% of the total.

- **Residence**

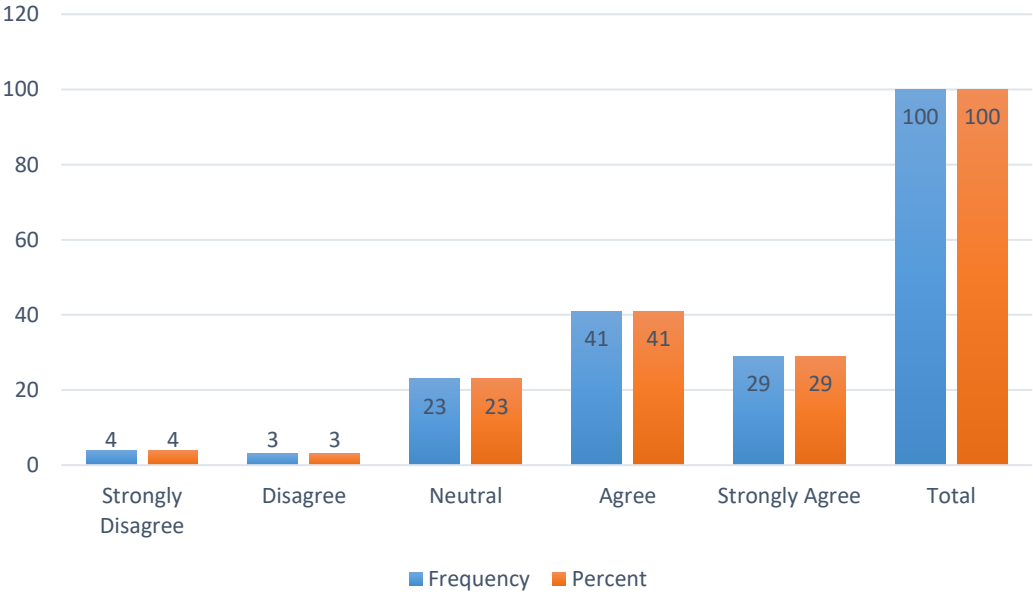
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Rural area	30	30
	Urban area	48	48
	Suburban area	22	22
	Total	100	100



- The table presents data on the distribution of respondents based on their residence in three different areas: rural, urban, and suburban. The table includes two columns: "Frequency" and "Percent."
- In terms of frequency, the table shows that 30 respondents, accounting for 30% of the total, live in rural areas. Additionally, 48 respondents, making up 48% of the total, reside in urban areas. Lastly, 22 respondents, constituting 22% of the total, live in suburban areas.

- Ecotourism activities have improved the economic well-being of the local community**

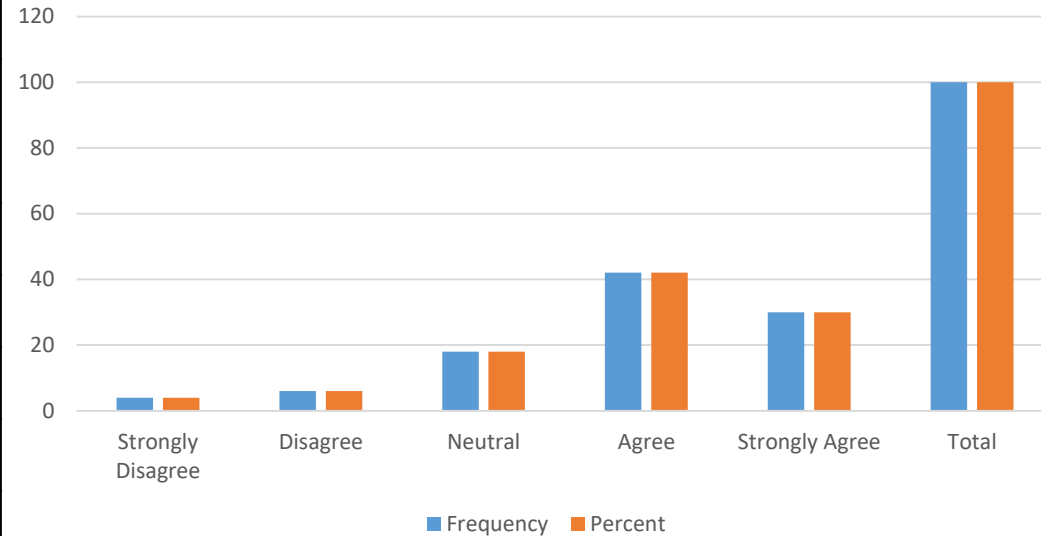
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0
	Disagree	3	3.0
	Neutral	23	23.0
	Agree	41	41.0
	Strongly Agree	29	29.0
	Total	100	100.0



- The table shows answers to "Ecotourism activities have improved the economic well-being of the local community." Table columns are "Frequency" and "Percent."
- The data shows that 29% of respondents strongly agree with the assertion. 41% of respondents—41 people—agree. 23% of respondents were undecided.
- Only 3 (3%) and 4 (4%) strongly Disagree with the statement.

- **Ecotourism initiatives have created job opportunities for the local residents**

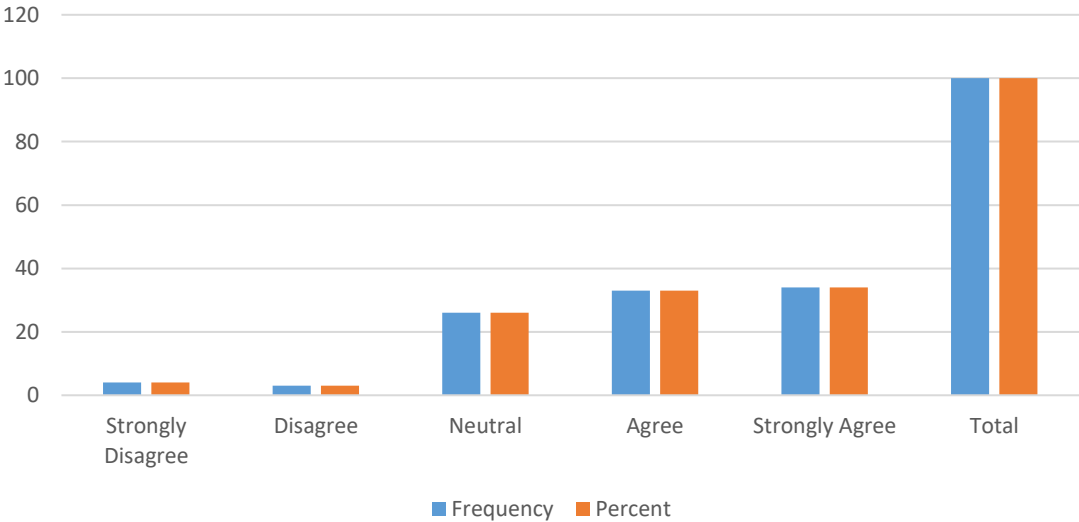
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	4	4
	Disagree	6	6
	Neutral	18	18
	Agree	42	42
	Strongly Agree	30	30
	Total	100	100



- Ecotourism efforts and local employment prospects are surveyed in the table. All 100 survey replies were legitimate. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with "Ecotourism initiatives have created job opportunities for the local residents."
- The table shows respondents' different opinions. 30% of genuine respondents strongly agreed. 42% agreed, 18% indifferent. However, only 6% and 4% strongly Disagreed that ecotourism had produced jobs.

- **Ecotourism has enhanced the preservation and promotion of local cultural heritage.**

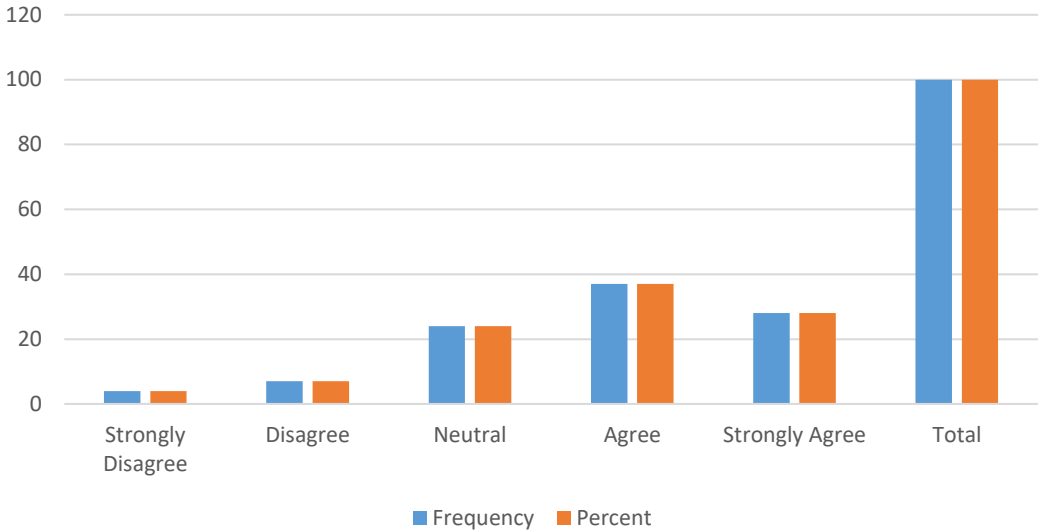
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	4	4
	Disagree	3	3
	Neutral	26	26
	Agree	33	33
	Strongly Agree	34	34
	Total	100	100



- Your table shows answers to a survey or questionnaire on whether ecotourism has helped preserve and promote local cultural assets. The table lists "Valid," "Frequency," and "Percent."
- "Valid" means all table replies are relevant to the subject.
- "Frequency" displays how many respondents selected each option. 34 strongly disagreed, 33 disagreed, 26 neutrals, 3 agreed, and 4 highly agreed.

- **Ecotourism has led to an improvement in community infrastructure and services.**

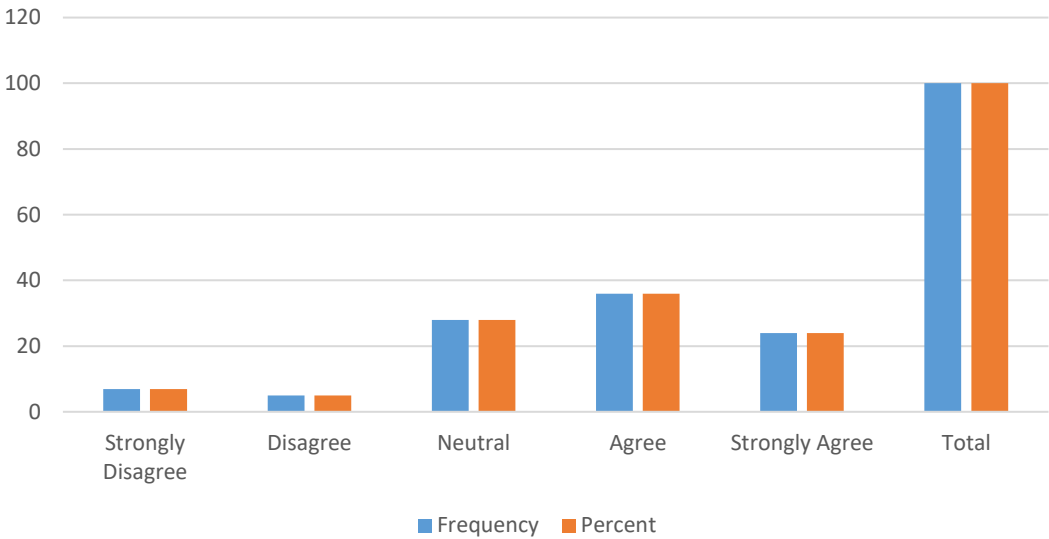
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	4	4
	Disagree	7	7
	Neutral	24	24
	Agree	37	37
	Strongly Agree	28	28
	Total	100	100



- The table presents responses to the statement "Ecotourism has led to an improvement in community infrastructure and services." Out of 100 respondents, the majority (65.0%) expressed disagreement or strong disagreement.
- Only 11.0% Disagreed or strongly Disagreed, while 24.0% remained neutral.
- These findings suggest a skeptical or negative perception regarding the impact of ecotourism on community infrastructure and services, highlighting a need for improvement.

- **Ecotourism has positively contributed to the overall well-being and quality of life of the local community.**

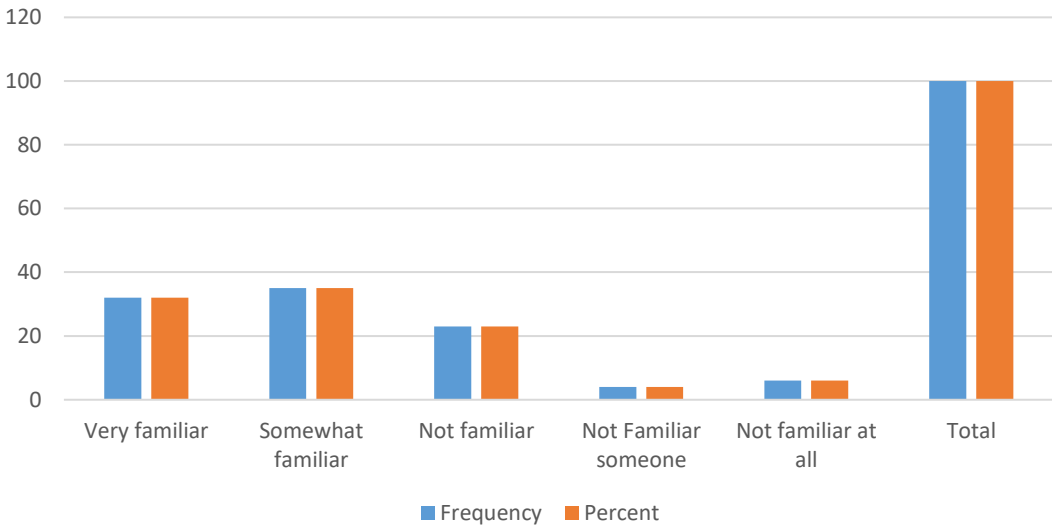
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	7	7
	Disagree	5	5
	Neutral	28	28
	Agree	36	36
	Strongly Agree	24	24
	Total	100	100



- The table represents the responses to a survey about the impact of ecotourism on the well-being and quality of life of the local community. Out of 100 valid responses, 60% of participants expressed some level of agreement, with 36% agreeing and 24% strongly agreeing.
- In contrast, 12% of participants agreed or strongly Disagreed that ecotourism has had a positive contribution.
- Additionally, 28% of participants remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- These results suggest that a significant number of respondents do not believe that ecotourism has positively affected the overall well-being.

• **How familiar are you with the concept of eco-tourism?**

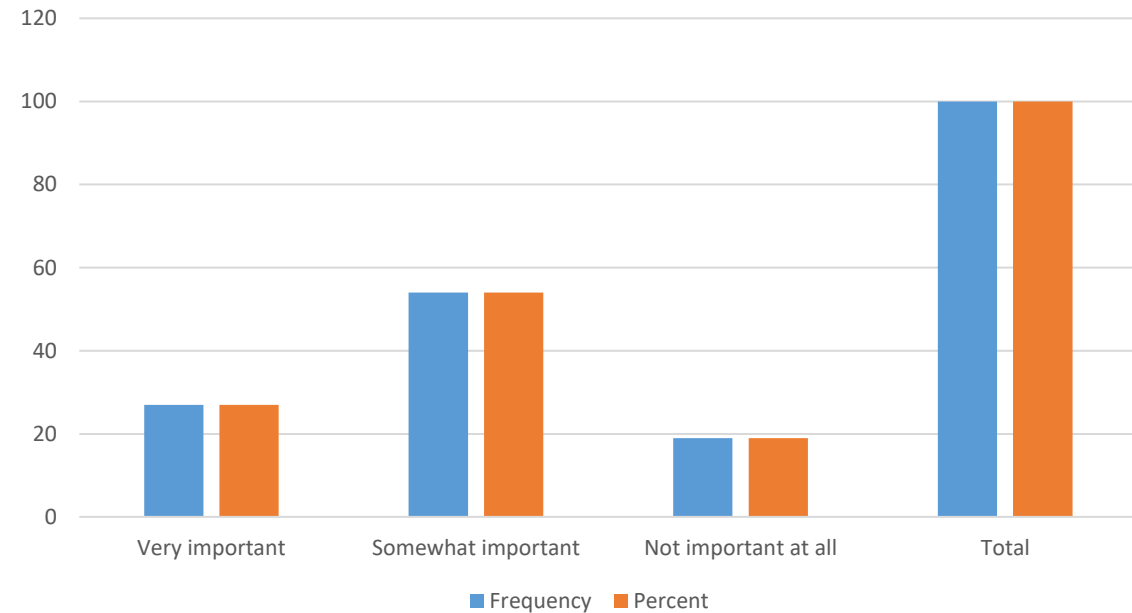
Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Very familiar	32	32
	Somewhat familiar	35	35
	Not familiar at all	23	23
	4	4	4
	5	6	6
	Total	100	100



- Eco-tourism awareness is seen in the table. It shows familiarity frequency and proportion. 32 (32.0%) of the 100 participants said they were extremely acquainted with eco-tourism, showing a large fraction of the group understands it.
- 35 respondents (35.0%) were somewhat acquainted with eco-tourism, showing a bigger group with some expertise but less than those who were extremely aware.
- 23 people (23%), however, said they knew nothing about eco-tourism.
- However, the table contains two items labelled 4 and 5 without explanation, leaving their significance unclear.

- How important do you think eco-tourism is for promoting sustainable rural development and improving the livelihoods of rural communities?

Valid		Frequency	Percent
	Very important	27	27
	Somewhat important	54	54
	Not important at all	19	19
	Total	100	100



- The table purports to show survey results on the relevance of eco-tourism for sustainable rural development and rural livelihoods in Para.
- The table lists "Very important," "Somewhat important," and "Not important at all," along with the frequencies and percentages of respondents who selected each option.

Nonparametric Tests

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories of Education Level occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The categories of Ecotourism activities have improved the economic well-being of the local community occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The categories of Ecotourism initiatives have created job opportunities for the local residents occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The categories of Ecotourism has positively contributed to the overall well-being and quality of life of the local community. occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The categories of How important do you think eco-tourism is for promoting sustainable rural development and improving the livelihoods of rural communities? occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

From the above table we can say that Null hypothesis has been rejected and Alternative hypothesis accepted which is showing that Ecotourism has a significant impact on rural development and livelihood generation

SUGGESTIONS

- Conduct a thorough evaluation: Start by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the rural area's natural and cultural resources. Identify distinctive characteristics, such as national parks, wildlife reserves, historical sites, traditional art forms, and cultural heritage, that can attract ecotourism travellers.
- Develop sustainable infrastructure: Invest in the development of sustainable infrastructure to support ecotourism. This could involve constructing eco-lodges, visitor centres, nature trails, or camping facilities with minimal environmental impact.
- Encourage community involvement: Involve local communities in ecotourism planning and development. Engage them in decision-making processes and empower them to play an active role in administering ecotourism activities and reaping their benefits.
- Provide training programmes for local communities to improve their skills in hospitality, customer service, tour guiding, and environmentally sustainable practises. This will allow them to provide visitors with high-quality services and experiences while preserving their cultural heritage.
- Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organisations, and tourism operators, to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks.

CONCLUSION

- The conclusion draws attention to the fact that rural regions have, on many occasions, been disregarded in terms of development chances, despite the fact that their potential for sustainable development is enormous. Ecotourism offers a mechanism to realise this potential by diversifying communities' sources of income and so making them more resistant to the adverse effects of economic shocks.
- By providing incentives for the protection and restoration of natural resources and cultural heritage, it also makes the process of preserving and conserving these types of assets easier.
- In addition, the conclusion emphasises that ecotourism functions as a catalyst for sustainable development by bringing together economic interests with environmental and cultural stewardship.
- This aligns economic stewardship with economic interests. It places a strong emphasis on the significance of responsible tourism practises that place a priority on the health and welfare of the surrounding environment and communities.
- In a nutshell, the result reaffirms that ecotourism has a tremendous potential for contributing to the development of rural areas and increasing people's standard of living.

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Thank You