

POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: AN ANALYSIS OF TOURIST'S OPINIONS

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Abstract: *Tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh has wide scope to flourish and provide a new direction to the economy of the state. Tourism potential is only next to hydro-electric power potential in the state. There are sufficient opportunities for wildlife lovers and sportsmen. It is a paradise for trekkers, climbers and other ardent devotees of the spirit of adventure on account of its topography and terrain. The adventure sports like trekking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, and heli-skiing, hang gliding, skiing, water sports including water skiing, river-rafting, fishing, golf etc. can be perused here. These sports remained largely undiscovered by adventurers till fairly recently. Even, presently, it has been attracting some enthusiastic sportsmen from all over the world. The focus of the present study is to identify the potential of tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, this study is based on both primary and secondary probes. The primary data for the study has been collected from Indian and foreign tourists. This study has relevance in the present circumstances. There has been a tremendous change in the growth and potential of tourism industry these days.*

Keywords: *Potential, Opportunities, Enthusiastic, Analysis, Industry*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the basic and most desirable human activity deserving the praise and encouragement of all the people and Governments. According to World Tourism Organization, "Tourism is the movement of people away from their normal place of residence and work for a period of not less than 24 hours and not more than one year". The concept of travel generally denotes the movement of people. "It is common practice to use the words travel and tourism either singly or in combination to describe three types of concepts (i) Movement of people, (ii) a sector of economy or an industry and (iii) a broad system of interacting relationship of people, their needs to travel outside their communities, and services which attempt to respond to their needs." The growth of tourism is closely related to the ease and speed of travel, economic growth and political developments. Since the end of the last world war, tourism has developed very rapidly as the world began to settle down after the years of readjustments immediately after the war ended in the year 1945. Since then there has been a remarkable rapid increase in both domestic and international tourism.

THE ELEMENTS OF TOURISM

Tourism does not exist in isolation. It consists certain components, three of which may be considered basic components of tourism namely transport, local and accommodation, there are certain elements of ingredients of tourism. These elements predispose towards tourism development. These elements which are the fundamental attraction of tourism are:- Pleasing weather, Scenic attractions, Historical and cultural factors, Accessibility, Amenities and Accommodation³.

TYPES OF TOURISM

The majority of the demand of tourism enumerates the motives which can prompt a person to make a journey for tourist region. These motives are varied and do exercise a decisive influence on the destination of the journey. Thus, the diversity of touristic motivations generates the various types of tourism. We can divide tourism into broad categories as follows:- Cultural Tourism, Religious Tourism, Educational Tourism, Exploratory Tourism, Commercial Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Eco- Tourism, Health Tourism, Sports Tourism and Cinema Tourism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

The tourism industry has been developed tremendously over the last few decades. Its multifarious benefits, the magnitude of impacts and its future growth prospects have all together made the tourism a subject of extensive study and research. Tourism infrastructure has been a point of concern for several researchers in India. Ram Acharya, O.P.Kandari, K. Kumar, Chib (1983), R.K.Malhotra, Gulab Nabi (2000), A.K. Sarkar, P.N. Dhar and R. Singh concentrated their research and discussion on infrastructure for tourism in India. Ram Acharya made a study on world tourism and evaluated the role and impact of tourism vis-à-vis development in India with reference to 42 other countries having various types of economies. Further, some of researchers have made study on mass tourism, its impacts, eco-tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, sports tourism, challenges of tourism industry, economic

impacts, religious tourism and development of tourism. Most of the studies conducted on Indian perspective are focused on general tourism concepts, impacts of tourism and study of the state's tourism development corporations. Thus, it has been observed from the review of literature on different aspects of tourism, that the studies have been carried on the tourism, its development and its impact on various fields. These studies have relevance in the present circumstances. There has been a tremendous changes in the growth and potential of tourism industry these days.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is mainly concerned with the potential of tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh. The pinpointed objectives of the study are :

1. To identify the main purposes of travel of the tourists in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To identify the potential of tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis has been developed for the purpose of this study:

1. The main purpose of tourists inflow in Himachal Pradesh is its scenic beauty, good climate and peaceful atmosphere.
2. There is a huge potential of tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on both primary and secondary probes .The primary data for the study has been collected from Indian and foreign tourists. The schedule has been developed for the tourists. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the sampling method has been used to collect the primary data from the tourists. The sample consists of 600 tourists.The 15 important tourist places have been selected on the basis of flow of tourists. These places are Shimla, Kasauli, Chail, Manali, Mani Karan/Kullu, Rewalsar, Tabo/Keylong, Sangla, Chamba, Dhalhousi, Dharmshala, Naina Devi/Bilaspur, Deot Sidh/Hamirpur, Jawala Ji and Chintpurni.

The process of selection of the tourists from each of these places has been computed in stage two. The sample consisted of 30 domestic tourists and 10 foreign tourists from each of these fifteen places. The selection of tourist for the present study has been based on convenient sampling method as it was impossible to use random sampling method. The efforts have been made to select, these tourists in different seasons to make the sample more representative. To make the study more relevant and authentic, various sources has been consulted. These are: Publications of Government of India and Himachal Pradesh, .Books and journals , Research reports, Tourist guides and pamphlets, Publication of H.P. tourism development corporation, Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Magazines, articles and news papers, Existing literature of tourism.

Tools and Techniques

Keeping in view the nature of study, the data collected has been analysed and interpreted with the help of simple mathematical method and statistical method. The following statistical methods has been used to examine the tourist's opinion on the statements regarding the tourism potential in H.P.

- Arithmetic mean
- Median
- Standard Deviation
- Skewness
- Chi-Square Test

Classification and Tabulation

The data collected from the tourists have been first of all placed on the master chart and thereafter, different one way tables and two ways tables have prepared for the purpose of analysis and interpretation.

Table-1. Classification of Tourists on the Basis of Nationality and Purpose of Visit

Nationality	Purpose of Visit In H.P.								Total
	Pleasure Trip	Climate	Business	Education	Pilgrims	Visiting Relatives	Sports	Others	
Indian	183 40.7%	150 33.3%	18 4.0%	12 2.67%	63 14.0%	18 4.0%	3 0.67%	3 0.67%	450 100%
Foreigner	60 40.0%	36 24.0%	-	6 4%	30 20.0%	-	3 2.0%	15 10.0%	150 100%
Total	243 40.5%	186 31.0%	18 3.0%	18 3.0%	93 15.5%	18 3.0%	6 1.0%	18 3.0%	600 100%

Others: For Health, Historical and Cultural, Gaining Knowledge etc.

Source: Primary Probe

$$\chi^2 = 43.005$$

$$P < 0.01$$

The classification of tourists on the basis of nationality and purpose of visit has been presented in table 1. The pleasure trip, good climate and pilgrims in that order are the main purposes of the travel of both domestic and foreign tourists. The other purposes of visit in a small number of tourists are business, education, sports and visiting relatives etc. The main purposes of travel of both domestic and foreign tourists are almost same. However, the domestic and foreign tourists vary considerably with respect to other purposes of their travel. The chi- square value is significant at the one percent level. It reveals that there is a significant difference in the purposes of travel of domestic and foreign tourists particularly in relation to other purposes of their travel.

TOURISM POTENTIAL IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal is known as the 'land of Gods and Goddesses'. Its hundred of temples and shrines provides the great potential for pilgrimage tourism in the state. The wilderness and wild in the state, various national parks, beautiful lakes, festivals, tourism in tribal areas of the state and Himachali cuisine are also rich source of tourism in the state.

The state has various attractive places for tourist interest. The most popular hubs of tourism in the state are; Manali, Shimla, Chamba, Chail, Kasauli, Dharmshala, Dhalausi and Khajjiar, where the tourists inflow is very heavy. However, the state has so many undiscovered new destinations for the tourists which has not been explored till now. These are; Sangla, Kalpa valley in Kinnaur, Pabbar and Daran Valley in Shimla district, Anni in Kullu district, Spiti valley, Bharmour-Pangi region in Chamba district, Janjehi, Shikaridevi and Karsog in Mandi district, Batal region in Solan district, haripurdhar in Sirmour district and Plampur in Kangra district.

TOURIST OPINION ABOUT TOURISM POTENTIAL IN THE STATE

Himachal Pradesh provides huge tourism potential for different types of tourism and have numerous places of tourists interest as discussed above. In this part, an attempt has been made to solicit the opinion of the tourists on it and the other matters related to it.

The responses of tourists on these statements about the tourism potential in the state have been presented in table-II on the five point scale. An overwhelming number of tourists consider that there is considerable tourism potential in the state as most of them either strongly agree or agree with these statements.

To the statement 'Himachal Pradesh is the paradise for the visitors on the natural scenic beauty', 52% of the tourists strongly agree and another 44% tourists agree. There was 4% tourist who did not make their opinion on this statement. Thus, huge number of tourists agrees with the above statement and good climate and scenic beauty of the state attracts tourists to enjoy their vacations. High values of arithmetic means, negative value of the coefficient of Skewness also support it. The Chi-square value is also significant at 1% level also supports statistically that a large number of the tourists agree with this statement. The tourists consider its natural scenic beauty as an asset for tourism development.

The tourists responses to the statement that 'Himachal Pradesh is the spectrum of various cultural heritage' are also equally encouraging and positive. Mostly of the tourists consider the rich spectrum of various cultures of the state also good source of tourism development and 93% tourist either strongly agree or agree with the above statement and the remaining 7% tourists are undecided on this statement. High value of arithmetic mean, negative value of co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-square value being significant at 1% level also statistically prove that the tourists consider its varied cultural heritage as positive sign for tourism development.

The tourist also consider that there is a vast scope for the development of the domestic and religious tourism in the state as 87% tourists either strongly agree or agree with the statement that 'Himachal's most enchanting churches, temples and gurudwaras has largest potential for domestic and religious tourism'. On the other hand, 1% tourists disagree with this statement and 7% tourists are undecided about this statement. Statistically, the above findings are also held good as the value of mean is significantly high with negative value of co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-square values is significant at 1%.

Table-II
Tourist Opinion on the Tourism Potential in Himachal Pradesh

Particulars	Tourist Opinion					Total	χ^2	Mean	Mode	SD	Skewness
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Known	Disagree	Strongly Disagree						
Himachal Pradesh is the paradise for the visitors on the natural scenic beauty	312 52.0%	264 44.0%	24 4.0%	- -	- -	600 100.0%	238.080	4.48	5	0.57458	-0.55743
Himachal	300	258	42	-	-	600	191.640	4.43	5	0.52108	-0.61366

Pradesh is the spectrum of various cultural heritage	50.0%	43.0%	7.0%	-	-	100.0%						
Himachal's most enchanting churches, temples gurudward has the largest potential for domestic and religious tourism	312 52.0%	210 35.0%	72 12.0%	6 1.0%	- -	600 100.0%	377.760	4.38	5	0.73246	-0.88353	
Himachal is endowed with the immense variety of both flora and fauna	258 43.0%	192 32.0%	90 15.0%	60 10.0%	- -	600 100.0%	167.520	4.08	5	0.98754	-0.78703	
H.P. has a niche of adventure for everyone	186 31.0%	300 50.0%	96 16.0%	18 3.0%	- -	600 100.0%	294.240	4.09	4	0.76346	-0.55974	
Rivers of the state has tremendous range of activities like: boating, swimming & water skinning tourism	72 12.0%	282 47.0%	78 13.0%	120 20.0%	48 8.0%	600 100.0%	295.800	3.35	4	1.16179	-0.55615	
Himachal's indigenous Historical architecture is the most important part of state tourism	156 26.0%	246 41.0%	90 15.0%	78 13.0%	30 5.0%	600 100.0%	232.800	3.70	4	1.13673	-0.74718	
Himachal's wide ranged handcraft products give invitation of shopping to the visitors	96 16.0%	240 40.0%	180 30.0%	60 10.0%	24 4.0%	600 100.0%	261.600	3.54	4	1.00503	-0.52577	
The oldest Buddhist monasteries are the enormous range of its rich architecture	180 30.0%	222 37.0%	156 26.0%	42 7.0%	- -	600 100.0%	118.560	3.90	4	0.91180	-0.35796	

heritage in H.P. which has some of the world's fine examples of ancient architecture?											
The railway track of H.P. provided a great view of sight seeing and excursions in the state.	192 32.0%	240 40.0%	162 27.0%	6 1.0%	- -	600 100.0%	204.960	4.03	4	0.79382	-0.17408

Source: Primary Probe

The tourists have shown significant agreement with the statement that 'Himachal is endowed with the immense variety of flora and fauna', 75% tourists either strongly agree or agree with the statement. On the other hand, 10% tourists don't agree with this statement and the remaining 15% tourists have no idea about these flora and fauna. The Chi-square value is significant at 1% level with arithmetic mean above 4 and negative coefficient of Skewness also provide statistical evidence in accepting this statement that large variety of flora and fauna can also contribute in tourism development of the state.

'Himachal Pradesh has a niche of adventure for everyone, 81% tourists either agree or strongly agree, 16% tourists are undecided and remaining 3% tourists disagreeing with this statement. Thus, a vast majority of tourists consider that there is a good scope for the development of adventure tourism in the state and it is also statistically supported as the arithmetic mean is high with negative value of co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-square being significant at 1% level.

As regard to the statement that 'Rivers of the state has tremendous range of activities like boating, swimming and water skinning tourism, the responses of the tourists are not so much encouraging as 59% tourists either agree or strongly agree with the statement. However, 28% tourists either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement and 13% tourists don't know about these. The Chi-square value is significant at 1% level with arithmetic mean 3.35 and negative value of Skewness co-efficient also shows that majority of the tourists feel that there is a good scope for the development of tourism based on water sports.

About two-third tourists are of the opinion that 'Himachal's indigenous historical architecture is the most important part of the state tourism. Out of these tourists, 26% strongly agree and 41% agree with this statement. However, 18% tourists either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement and 15% of them are undecided. The arithmetic mean (3.70) very close to agree, negative co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-square value being significant at 1% level also statistically prove that large majority of the tourists feel that the historical architecture is also most important part of the development of tourism in the state.

There are 56% tourists who consider that 'Himachal's wide ranged handicraft products give invitation of shopping to the visitors with 16% tourists strongly agreeing with this statement. However, 30% tourists have no idea about these products. On the other hand 14% tourists don't agree with this statement. The arithmetic mean in the halfway of agree and don't know with negative co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-square value being significant at 1% level statistically prove that majority of tourists feel that wide range of handicraft products tempt the tourist to buy these products.

Nearly two-third tourists are in agreement with the statement that 'The oldest Buddhist monasteries are the enormous range of its rich architecture heritage in H.P. which have some of the world's fine example of ancient architecture. Merely 7% tourists disagree with the above statement. However, 26% tourists don't have any idea about these monasteries. The arithmetic mean (3.90) is very close to agree (i.e. 4) with negative co-efficient of Skewness and Chi-Square is also significant at 1% level also statistically show that large majority of tourists agree with the above statement. 'The railway track of the H.P. provide a great view of sight seeing and excursions in the state, 72% tourists agree with statement, 27% tourists have no idea about it and merely 1% tourists disagree with it. Thus a vast majority of the tourists feel that railway journey in the state provide them an opportunity of sightseeing and excursions. The arithmetic means (4.03) is high with negative co-efficient of skewness and Chi-square value being significant at 1% level also statistically lend support of the tourists to the above statement.

To sum up, the tourist considers that there is a vast scope of tourism development in the state. Its natural scenic beauty; cultural heritage; religious places; flora and fauna; adventure; railway journey; ancient Buddhist monasteries, handicraft products, Himachal's indigenous historical architecture; and water sports in that order provide ample scope for tourism development.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Tourism is an industry which employs the leisure time of the people in a useful way. People get to know about the marvels of nature. The beauty, serenity, tranquility, calmness and adventurism in this world excite people. It relieves them of their tensions and refreshes them. It also gives better understanding of the human kind, giving more vigour and vitality to unite the mankind. As the

fastest growing and one of the most profitable industries in the world, tourism offers unparalleled opportunities. Socially and culturally, tourism offers the opportunity of providing jobs for minority and disadvantaged groups, creating adequate training in management skills, education and technology to local people and increasing incomes in rural and local economies, thereby contributing to the alleviation of poverty in developing countries. Environmentally, it is essential for tourism to maintain an optimal balance of its natural resources to ensure the ongoing arrival of tourists to destinations.

- ❖ In this study it has been found that the tourists traveling in the state belong to different types of occupations, income groups, each sex and young educated people from different parts of India as well as from foreign countries. The main purpose of their travel are pleasure trip, good climate and pilgrims in that order. The other purposes of travel of small number of tourists are business, education, sports and visiting relatives.
- ❖ The adventure sports like trekking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, motor racing, heli-skiing, hang gliding, skiing, water sports, river rafting fishing, golf etc. can be pursued here. Even, presently, it has been attracting some enthusiastic sportsmen from all over the world.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh provides huge tourism potential for different types of tourism. It has been found in this study that large number of tourists are of the opinion that the good climate, peaceful atmosphere and its scenic beauty attract tourists to enjoy their vacations. The tourists consider its natural scenic beauty as an asset for the tourism development. Himachal Pradesh is the spectrum of various cultural heritage and also equally encouraging and positive. The tourists consider that there is a vast scope for the development of religious tourism in the state. Himachal's most enchanting churches, temples and gurudwaras have largest potential for domestic and religious tourism. The tourists feel that Himachal Pradesh is endowed with the immense variety of flora and fauna and have a niche of adventure for everyone. The activities like boating, swimming and water skinning tourism in the rivers of state has tremendous range of tourism promotion. Himachali indigenous historical architecture and oldest Buddhist monasteries can be the most important part of the state tourism. The majority of tourists feel that wide range of handicraft products give invitation of shopping for them. A vast majority of the tourist feel that railway journey in the state provide them an opportunity of sight-seeing and excursions.
- ❖ The tourists feel that there is a wide scope of tourism based on Health and medical in the state. Now, people are more health conscious and Himachal has to initiate for promoting health and medical tourism .There is tremendous scope to set up spas, health resorts, recuperative centers etc. all over the state. The state has an enormous wealth of medical plants and herbal gardens, therefore Herbal museums may be developed in the state.
- ❖ The overall opinion of the tourists is that the rural and tribal areas of the state provide ample scope for the development and diversification of tourism. There is considerable scope for the development as new tourist destinations.
- ❖ Both domestic as well as foreign tourist highly favoured that 'Special Tourism Zones' like creation of amusement parks (Ski-Village) and natural recreation areas should be initiated to attract more tourists in the state.
- ❖ The large number of tourists has strong feeling that there is a need to more advertisement of cultural heritage (Local fair & festivals) Historical monuments and pilgrimages of Himachal Pradesh to attract more tourists in the state.

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