



Dark Tourism: The Attractive Dark Side of Tourism

¹Dr. M. Krishna Sumanth, ²Dr. K.V.S. Narendar

Assistant Professors (P)

Department of History & Tourism Management

Kakatiya University, Warangal – 506009

Abstract

Tourism refers to the actions of individuals who go to places and remain there for leisure, business, or other reasons for a period of no more than one year. Tourism, as a component of the service industry, has emerged as a significant source of revenue. Tourism in India has grown rapidly during the last decade. Over the years, specialty kinds of tourism have also arisen; one of these niche tourism markets is Dark Tourism. Dark tourism has been defined as travel to locations historically connected with death and misery. People are drawn to dark places for their historical significance rather than their relationship with death and pain. This type of tourism is sometimes known as "Grief Tourism" or "Black Tourism." In this situation, each traveller has a distinct reason for taking the trip; some of the reasons could be remembering the tragedy and its effects, being interested in the human psychology, being nostalgic, wanting to pay tribute to deceased loved ones, and so on. Dark Tourism in India is not widely known, yet there are numerous locations that fall into this category. Bhangarh Fort Rajasthan, Kuldhara Rajasthan, Jallianwala Bagh Amritsar, Dumas Beach Gujarat, Three Kings Church Goa, Skeleton Lake Uttarakhand, Shaniwar Wada Pune, Cellular Jail Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and other sites are well suited for this tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Dark Tourism, Dark Spots, Tourism in India, Grief Tourism, Black Tourism,

Introduction

People nowadays travel from one place to another, either domestically or internationally, for a variety of reasons, including business trips, leisure, pilgrimage, meeting friends and relatives, attending fairs and festivals, relaxation, adventure and sports, spiritual journeys, or simply to gain experience. The tourism sector is a tremendously dynamic industry that must cope with constantly changing client needs and maintain a consistent focus on customer satisfaction. Tourism creates jobs, has a multiplier effect, aids in infrastructure development, foreign exchange, economic diversity, cultural awareness, natural resource protection, and many other benefits. Tourist preferences in tourism have been developing for decades, and travellers are now gravitating toward special interest tourism. Special interest tourism, as opposed to simply watching or enjoying scenic beauty, focuses on seeing and experiencing something new with a purpose. It offers a variety of tailored tourism activities and caters to groups and individuals with specific interests. It mostly consists of stimulating, satisfying, adventurous, and learning events.

Tourism in India

The Indian tourist industry is a significant contributor to the country's economy. Tourism in India is fast expanding. According to the World Travel and Tourism Organization, tourism generated 16.91 lakh crore in 2018 and supported 42.67 million jobs, accounting for 8% of total employment. India was placed 34th out of 140 countries in the 2019 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report. Tourism is the transitory short-term migration of individuals to destinations other than their place of residence. Tourism is done for recreation, sight-seeing, and pilgrimage. There are other types of tourism, such as sports tourism, adventure tourism, and agro-tourism, but in that study, we focused on dark tourism in India. Dark tourism, sometimes known as mourning tourism, entails people showing a significant interest in visiting locations historically associated with death and sadness. Also, the subset of reminders of human misery and bloodshed through this concept sounds a little strange. It is quickly catching up with trends, and with such a vast history, dark tourism naturally finds a place in India. Curiosity drives people to take the path less travelled in search of answers. Travel has long been associated with journeys and visiting beautiful locations. With this type of tourism gaining traction, it only goes to show how the human mind cannot be tamed.

Tourism industry acts as a powerful agent in both economic and social change. India being rich in culture and heritage travel and tourism has always been an integral part of the country. The country is blessed with plenty of natural resources ranging from Himalayan mountains, Beaches, Valleys, Deserts, Wildlife, Forests etc which has healing abilities and gives a completely different experience altogether. In recent years the country has gained a good growth in tourism industry. Tourism sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to 32.05 lakh crore (US\$460 billion) by 2028 (9.9% of GDP). Today growth of tourism has created an increase in foreign direct investments as well as created jobs in many sectors. Government of India has introduced a program called "Atithi Devo Bhava" (guest is God) to teach all the stakeholders the importance of tourists and tourists places. The program helps in creating the awareness amongst the people towards preservation of natural resources, culture, heritage and hospitality. Government of India has launched an international campaign "Incredible India" since 2002 to promote Indian tourism. The campaign showcased different aspects of country ranging from culture, art and music, yoga, spirituality etc. India being diverse, gives many options for tourists travelling in India according to their interest levels. Different types of tourism found in India are cultural tourism, heritage tourism, spiritual tourism, religious tourism, health tourism, yoga tourism, eco-tourism tourism, adventure tourism, recreational tourism, wildlife tourism, village tourism, sports tourism etc.

Dark Tourism:

Dark tourism involves tourist who visits the site of previous wars and battles, which are revived at the scene of previous violence, and their tour guides cite the examples of heroism, tragedy and personal suffering.

Dark Tourism has been defined as tourism involving travel to places historically associated with death and tragedy. People are gradually attracted to and focus on dark tourism in the past decade mainly because of their strong curiosity about death. India has been blessed with a history of civilizations, kingdoms, and empires. These historical sites have been popular tourist destinations for a long time. But there are historical destinations which have been associated with death, tragedy associated with them. There are sites which can be labeled as dark tourism destinations because of some recent human interventions such as terrorist attacks or some natural calamity like earthquakes. In India, several locations are identified, which could serve the purpose of dark tourism.

It is still a new concept for tourism industry. It can be described as the combination of history, heritage, tourism and tragedy. It was basically expanded from heritage tourism also places that are historically linked to death and tragedy. They are the places of social and political turmoil or conflict or locations and memorial with tragic historical significance and emotional resonance. These places are the

destinations that have been previously home to very violent act in very dark times in history. They are also referred to as black tourism or grief tourism. The Institute for Dark Tourism Research (IDTR)'s Dr Philip Stone opened the world's first academic centre into the subject. Dark Tourism can also be seen in various forms such as:

1. Grave tourism
2. Prison and Persecution site tourism
3. Natural disaster area tourism
4. Modern Political sites
5. Industrial Disasters

Traces of dark tourism were seen in roman era where the audiences use to take keen interest in gladiator fights and enjoy it with full enthusiasm. It is evident from the fact that from medieval period to nineteenth century there used to be large gatherings whenever there was any public execution. Thus, Roman Colosseum were the first dark sites for the people who were interested in tourism associated with deaths and destruction. First research on dark tourism was done in international journal of science of cultural and heritage in 1996. Often pilgrimage tourism is considered similar to dark tourism as it involves psychological journey of a tourist but pilgrimage has a holy significance whereas dark tourism is linked with negative historical events and sometimes it is related to just attain social and economical status. In current scenario dark tourism has become one of the unique forms of tourism. It has gained popularity in market due to its unique nature. Few of the famous dark tourism spots are Auschwitz Concentration Camp, Poland, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, Ground Zero, New York City, USA, Cu Chi Tunnels, Saigon, Vietnam.

Seven suppliers or seven fundamentals of dark tourism are as follows:

1. **Dark Fun Factories:** These are places that provide entertainment by revolving around the superficial deaths by commercial and financial ethics. They are with good tourism infrastructure. Ex: Dracula Park in Romania
2. **Dark Exhibitions:** This concept gives death related attractions to the tourists but only for educational and learning purposes. They are places, sites and exhibitions which portray death and suffering.
3. **Dark Dungeons:** These are the places and sites that include criminal history and injustice. These are again places that purely educate tourists on history of destination. Ex: Prisons
4. **Dark Shrines:** These are not so popular sites. They are located nearby to the sites of death and misery. They seem very brutal and are not at all eye appealing. They are visited only to pay respect to the deceased.
5. **Dark Resting Places:** These are cemetery and graveyards. They are mostly visited to pay respect to the loved ones.
6. **Dark Conflict Sites-** These are places where major battles were fought in the past. These sites have gained popularity as it co-relates to the history. Ex: Battle of Jhansi
7. **Dark places of mass killing:** They are places with suffering, death and atrocities which are categorized into the darkest sites and lightest sites.

With these one can understand that threat, insecurity, love, humanity, empathy and superiority are some of the psychological factors that pushes tourists to visit dark places and sites.

Sites and Scope of Dark tourism places in India

India having such a vast history, dark tourism automatically finds its place. India has seen various situations right from natural calamities, wars, civilizations, poverty, cultural diversification, kingdoms and empires, superstition, fight for independence and many more unfortunate events. Thus there is a lot of scope for dark tourism in India. Many destinations can be promoted as dark tourist spots which will add to the economic growth of the country by creating large movement of domestic and foreign travelers. Many places in India have seen some or other event in the past, considering this the places can be promoted as dark places for tourists.

Places of Dark Tourism in India:

Dark Tourism Sites in India - almost every type of tourism exists in India because of the diversity of culture, festivals, religions, and social conditions. The existence of dark tourism in India not much aware, but many sites fit in the dark tourism category.

1. **The Cellular Jail, Andaman & Nicobar** - the cellular jail is a constant reminder of our horrendous past when the British empire forcibly ruled the country and tortured thousands of innocent peoples who were fighting for freedom. During British rule, people who were sent to prison were known to be given the punishment of Kala Pani as there was no scope of escaping the isolated island, let alone the tight security. It is famous for the incarceration of Indian freedom fighters (including veer Savarkar) who were brutally tortured and forced to death.
2. **Jallianwala bagh, Amritsar** - talk about dark tourism in India and jallinwala bagh tops the list. Bloodstained walls, bullet-laden walls, and the gloomy ambiance of jallianwala bagh speak of the unfortunate tragedy it went through on 13 April 1919; on this dreadful day, people gathered to demonstrate peaceful protest against the arrest and deportation of two national leaders Satyapal and Sifuddin Kitchlew. Little did they know that they will be fighting for their lives and die a horrible death. On command of general dyer, the troops of the British army open fired without warning protestors and blocked entry and exit points to the place, leaving people stuck. Today, it is seen as a memorial of those who sacrificed their lives.
3. **Kargil War Memorial, Ladakh** - it is famous for the war between India and Pakistan in 1999 (Kargil war Drass war memorial is a place to soak the feeling of patriotism and valor of brave Indian soldiers who risks their lives to protect the nation from external threats, the saga of Kargil war started when Pakistan invaded some parts of Indian territory across the LOC threatening the only route connecting the place to Srinagar, to gain back the territory Indian army launched "operation Vijay" and gave a neck-to-neck fight to the enemies.
4. **Bhangarh Fort, Alwar, Rajasthan** - known as the most haunted fort in India, Chandigarh fort is a popular dark tourism place in India with a scary past. Legend has it that the place was cursed by a tantric priest who fell in love with princess Nanavati and attempted to woo her. But the princess didn't fell for him and got to know about his evil plans to have her. It sites famous for being a hotspot of paranormal activities.
5. **Bhopal Disaster, Madhyapradesh** - Bhopal has witnessed one of the world's worst industrial disasters, the case study of which is often done in reputed institutions and universities of the world. This gas leak incident happened in 1984 in the union carbide plant exposing over five lakhs people to toxic methyl isocyanate, the after-effects of which can still be seen in the area. It was famous for

the leakage of methyl isocyanate from the union carbide plant.

6. **Ramojirao Film City, Hyderabad** - it, is the second-largest film city in India. It was inaugurated by producer Ramojirao in 1996. This film city is regarded as a creepy site in Hyderabad. According to claims of witnesses; mirrors are scribbled in weird Urdu words, leftover food is scattered all around the floor. The girls are seen as ghosted favorites are scary images make their changing rooms and bathroom doors are knocked continuously.
7. **Taj Palace Hotel, Mumbai - (2008 Mumbai Terrorist Attack)** - one of the iconic jewels of India, taj palace hotel is an epitome of beauty, luxury, grace, and grandeur all rolled into one known for its high-end amenities and accommodation; this hotel is the apple of Mumbai eye. However, in 2008 this grand hotel witnessed an abominable act against humanity when terror organizations lakshar-e-taiba attacked it along with other locations of Mumbai. These series of terrorist attacks in Mumbai shocked the nation.
8. **The Lambi Dehar Mines, Mussoorie** - is famous recreational destinations for tourists, is also a place where dark tourism exists. The lambi Dehar mines in Mussoorie is one of the spookiest places in India. Millions of workers died in mine while working. Unusual deaths and activities have also been observed at this place.
9. **Three Kings Church, Goa** - is also famous for its paranormal activities. It is believed that three kings killed each other to rule over the property of this church, and people believe that the spirit of these kings in the premises.
10. **Wagha Border Crossing Points and Ceremonies, Punjab** - the border between India and Pakistan showcases every evening ceremony where troops from both the nations on their side of the border march and display their might. The beating retreat ceremony has become a major tourist attraction in India, which attracts foreign tourists and domestic tourists in large numbers.
11. **Shaniwarwada Fort, Pune** - there is believed that a prince was unkindly murdered, and there have been various supernatural activities experienced by people nearby so; because of these situations, this place is considered as a part existence of dark tourism in India.
12. **Dumas Beach, Surat, Gujarat** - the beach covered with black sand, and various paranormal activities have been observed here. It is believed the person's walking around the beach at night has been dispersed .this is also conspired as a dark spot in India.

Challenges faced by Dark Tourism in India

Dark tourism being the places of death and destruction are assumed as negative places by the society. India being rich in cultural and spiritual destinations has always portrayed positive sides of the places and sites. The psychology behind the motive of tourist is questioned and thus this concept is really difficult for people to accept. There is lack of understanding and knowledge with respect to the concept of dark tourism and there is a dilemma with respect to the cultural ethics, values and morals of the people in India due to which it has not been marketed well. The places of dark tourism are not well developed and there are no proper services for tourists at destinations. As the places are not well promoted they are quite not accessible for the tourists. Department of tourism in India has not included policies for promoting dark tourism sites.

1. Main problem of dark tourism in India is the lack of publicity and low publicity level.
2. Dark tourism is a new type of tourism, so very fewer people aware of these tourist sites, so many travel agencies are not able to provide proper service to visitors.
3. The dark destinations are inaccessible to the tourist due to less connectivity.

4. The government of tourism does not get enough support from the local's side to boost dark tourism and enhance the satisfaction level of dark tourists.
5. Also lack funds for the expansion of the tourism industry is also among the major obstructions faced by dark tourism.
6. The dark tourism sites remain to be maintained, making them worst condition year by year, losing the charm and genuineness of the place it becomes more hunted and unacceptable.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to help you grasp the notion of dark tourism and its seven fundamentals. The growing interest of travellers in dark tourism is boosting tourism and contributing to countries' socioeconomic progress. Tourists generally combine one type of tourism with others. Dark tourism encompasses a diverse spectrum of locations with little or no relation to one another. According to the report, there is still an ethical and value problem when it comes to marketing black tourism in India. With its expanding popularity, dark tourism is now incorporated in the curricula of tourism graduates and undergraduates. Dark tourism has caught media attention has become a quite often topic for articles and write-ups in magazines, newspapers, journals etc. Places which do not have tourism potential because of various factors can promote dark destinations as a tourist place which will help the place to boost the economy through tourism. As literature available on dark tourism is very limited a limited study was done on dark tourism especially in terms of Indian tourism scenario.

Suggestions for the Development of Dark Tourism in India

- The first step to promote dark tourists in India with the help of audio-video as well as print media.
- For the development of dark tourism, organizations develop a proper circle of providing services to tourists like accommodation, food, providing them a guide, etc.
- Three people living near the dark tourism sites must have proper knowledge of places, and also, they must be protective and supportive toward tourists of the nearby places.
- The level of reaching and exploring the spot can be done when a circle is created for the tourists visiting the places, so there must be created proper circuits to get access to all the spots they want to.
- The citizens, travel organizations relating tourism activities must approach the government to change the existing policies and create new ones.

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