

DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUAL TOURISM IN KANGRA DISTRICT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract: India with a home to many spiritual activities is considered a tourist's paradise as it comprises a number of unmatched destinations to the visitors for satisfying their spiritual needs. In the recent years tourism has become a competitive industry in India. The location of the region and its prosperity has become a place of attraction for tourism industry. India is having many states which are rich in state-of-the-art infrastructure so as to develop tourism industry to its best. This study aims to find out determinants of spiritual tourism and satisfaction level of the tourists visiting religious places in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh.

Key Words: Spiritual, Unmatched, Infrastructure, Determinants.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Over the past few decades, tourism has accomplished continued growth to become the fastest growing economic sector in the world. Tourism has become a prosperous global industry and is one of the major sectors of the economy round the globe contributing a hefty proportion of the national income and generating huge employment opportunities. Looking at the exceptional potential of this sector almost all the countries are focusing their efforts in promoting tourism and are making policies to draw all types of tourists i.e. outbound, inbound as well as domestic.

India with a home to many spiritual activities is considered a tourists heaven. India comprises a number of incomparable destinations to the visitors for satisfying their spiritual desires, for holidaying and for sporting thrills.

Spiritual tourism is termed as religious heritage tourism. It includes all the religions, religious places associated with, affecting connection to these centers and transportation facilities for the tourists. This also referred to as pilgrimage tourism, as clients are not looking for luxury but relentless journeys to meet the divine goal. The essence of spiritual tourism is internal feeling through love.

Globally, mental strain of the people is increasing. As a result people are looking for relief in spiritual reading, meditation and moments of divine bliss. India is not only known as a place loaded in its culture with diverse attractions but also for many places of worship. Globally, India has become a well-known destination of spiritual tourism. However, India is yet to exploit the potential of this industry of the future.

In the recent years tourism has become a competitive industry in India. The location of the region and its prosperity in multifariousness has become a place of attraction for tourism industry. India is having many states which are rich in state-of-the-art infrastructure so as to develop tourism industry to its best.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ryngnga (2011) focuses on the measures needed to be taken by the Government of India to identify spiritual tourism as a priority sector and promote tourism in the different regions of the country. Uttarakhand featured in the eighth position in the top ten states in India in terms of number of domestic tourist visits (in millions) during 2009, a list topped by the state Andhra Pradesh, which incidentally hosts a number of famous spiritual places.

Calantone and Mazanec (1991), while addressing different marketing management issues, have presented a detailed analysis of role of marketing management in spiritual tourism. They have highlighted the need of management and information analysis tasks of the service providers in tourism like various business and government organizations.

Hu (1996) have analysed at length the diverse developments that are taking place in travel and tourism marketing and categorized these developments into different themes and sub themes.

Major themes and trends evolving in the tourism industry have also been reviewed and discussed by Eccels (1995). The author observes tourism development as a way of improving country's economy and social well being and underlines the need to be proactive so as to stop potential tourists migrating to competing destinations. The author has attempted to classify the major themes as – destination planning, marketing and promotion, new products, sustainable tourism and transport. He further identified the key challenges faced by the tourism industry that would potentially affect the industry's future operations. In an increasingly complex global market system, it is observed, tourism needs to adopt societal marketing strategies that facilitate regional development (Buhalis, 2000).

A review of different literature appearing in the 'Journal of Tourism Management' (during the period 1989 – 1994) focusing on five prime themes has been presented by Eccles (1995). The author has attempted to identify the trends evolving in the tourism industry and hence classified the tourism research into five major themes, namely – (i) destination planning, (ii) marketing and promotion, (iii) new products, (iv) sustainable tourism and (v) transport.

Hing and Dimmock (1997) have classified the literatures that appeared in three major tourism journals in the Asia Pacific region, namely-'Journal of Tourism Studies', 'Tourism Recreation Research' and the 'Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research' from 1989 to 1996 including both the years into five major themes

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This study is conducted primarily to find the dimensions of spiritual tourism in the state of Himachal Pradesh particularly with reference to Brajeshwari Devi, Chamunda & Baghlamukhi temples where various manifestations of goddess are worshiped

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the profile of Visitors/ Tourists
- To identify the determinants of spiritual tourism.
- To access the level of satisfaction of the Visitors/Tourists

5. METHODOLOGY:

5.1 STUDY AREA

The present study is carried out at Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. The study is an attempt to examine the dimensions of spiritual tourism in Brajeshwari Devi, Chamunda & Baghlamukhi temples located in Kangra district which attract a good number of tourists due to their popularity and faith.

5.2 SOURCES OF THE DATA

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been used as the main source of the study and was collected from 60 visitors, visiting Brajeshwari Devi, Chamunda & Baghlamukhi temples. The primary data was collected through a pre-structured questionnaire.

5.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study was conducted on the basis of convenience sampling technique. For developing a sample design, 60 respondents were selected for this study

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The general profile of the respondents is given in Table No.1, 31.66 per cent belonged to the age group of 41-60 years, 63.33 per cent of the respondents are male and 70 per cent of the respondents are married, regarding the educational qualification 60 per cent had studied up to college level, as regards the occupation of the respondents both Professionals and businessman tops the list, 23.33 per cent of the respondents have monthly income of Rs.20,001-Rs.30,000 and 80 per cent of the respondents are Hindu.

Particulars	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	Below 20 Years	12	20
	21-40 Years	15	25
	41-60 Years	19	32
	Above 60 Years	14	23.33333333
Gender	Male	38	63.33333333
	Female	22	36.66666667
Marital Status	Married	42	70
	Unmarried	18	30
Educational Qualification	No formal education	6	10
	School level	18	30
	College level	36	60
Occupation	Professional	14	23.33333333
	Students	10	16.66666667
	Businessman	13	21.66666667
	Self Employed	9	15
	Government employee	6	10
	Private employee	8	13.33333333

Monthly Income	Below 10000	5	8.333333333
	10001 - 20000	15	25
	20001- 30000	14	23.33333333
	30001- 40000	10	16.66666667
	Above 40000	8	13.33333333
Religion	Hindu	48	80
	Muslim	0	0
	Christian	0	0
	Sikh	12	20
	Any Other	0	0

Table No-1 General Profile of the Respondents

7. DETERMINANTS OF SPIRITUAL TOURISM:

The pattern of visits by the respondents is given in Table No.2. 40 per cent of the visitors are belonging to the other states. The main sources of information about the spiritual tourist spots to the visitors in the study area are their friends and relatives which is 56.6 per cent. 43.3 per cent of the visitors visit the tourist spots to fulfill their religious obligations. 53.3 per cent of the visitors spent less than 1 day in the spiritual tourism spots, 66.66 per cent of the respondents visit the places by accompanying less than 5 members, 53.3 per cent of the visitors visit the places with their family members, 70 per cent of the visitors used road transport for easy access of spiritual spots, 43.3 per cent of the visitors depends on the Dhabas for their refreshments.

Particulars	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Nativity	Other country	4	6.666667
	Other state	24	40
	Other District	18	30
	Local	14	23.33333
Sources	Friends & Relatives	34	56.66667
	Travel Agents	12	20
	Websites	8	13.33333
	Advertisement from Tourism department	6	10
Purpose	Fulfilling a religious Obligations	26	43.33333
	Pilgrimage	14	23.33333
	Leisure / Recreation	12	20
	Mental relief / relaxation	8	13.33333
No.of Days Spent	Less than one day	32	53.33333
	1 – 2 days	14	23.33333
	3 – 4 days	8	13.33333
	More than 4 days	6	10
No. of Members accompanied	Less than 5 members	40	66.66667
	5 – 10 members	14	23.33333
	Above 10 members	6	10
Members accompanied	Family members	32	53.33333
	Friends	16	26.66667
	Co-workers	12	20
Mode of Transport	Road transport	42	70
	Air transport	4	6.666667
	Train transport	14	23.33333
Mode of Refreshment	Self-cooking	16	26.66667
	Hotels	8	13.33333
	Dhabas	26	43.33333
	Restaurants	10	16.66667

Table No-2 Determinants of Spiritual Tourism

8. LEVEL OF SATISFACTION:

The level of satisfaction of the visitors is the main factor that determines the post-visit conduct as well as the tourism decisions. Visitors' satisfaction level is mainly based on many facilities and support systems which are

available at the tourism spots. To verify this view, nine facilities that establish the level of satisfaction were identified. They are; accommodation, food, transportation, shopping facilities, guidance information services, vehicle parking facilities, peaceful atmosphere, sanitation and drinking water facilities and tourist friendliness of local people.

The Visitors were asked to rate the facilities which cause satisfaction in spiritual tourism spots, on a given scale of 1 to 5. Appropriate weights have been assigned to the different degrees of opinion of the visitors regarding the facilities available at spiritual tourism spots (Excellent– 5, Good – 4, Average – 3, Poor – 2 and Very poor – 1). A weighted mean score analysis on Likert scale was applied to identify the most important factor.

The analysis reveals that peaceful atmosphere in the spiritual tourist’s spot is found to be the most important which is followed by the vehicle parking, Sanitation and drinking water etc.

The Table No.3 reveals the respondents satisfaction level regarding different facilities.

Facilities	Level of Satisfaction					Weighted Mean Score
	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	
Accommodation	12	24	15	5	4	3.58
	20%	40%	25%	8.3%	6.6%	
Food	10	28	14	5	3	3.61
	16.6%	46.6%	23.3%	8.3%	5%	
Transportation	13	27	10	6	4	3.65
	21.6%	45%	16.6%	10%	6.6%	
Shopping facilities	8	22	14	10	6	3.26
	13.3%	36.6%	23.3%	16.6%	10%	
Guidance/Information services	10	20	16	10	4	3.36
	16.6%	33.3%	26.6%	16.6%	6.6%	
Vehicle parking	18	23	9	6	4	3.75
	30%	38.3%	15%	10%	6.6%	
Peaceful atmosphere	24	18	9	6	3	3.9
	40%	30%	15%	10%	5%	
Sanitation and drinking water	18	22	8	6	6	3.66
	30%	36.6%	13.3%	10%	10%	
Tourist friendliness of local people	16	20	10	9	5	3.55
	26.6%	33.3%	16.6%	15%	8.3%	

Table No-3 Level of Satisfaction

9. CONCLUSION:

In spiritual tourism a visitor seeks for peace of mind and a sense of spiritual fulfilment. Even though the visitors to the spiritual tourism spots of Kangra district are satisfied with peaceful atmosphere they experience and vehicle parking facilities, they were dissatisfied with the basic facilities like shopping, guidance & information services, sanitation and drinking water facilities etc. If these problems will address properly and enough publicity is given to the spiritual tourism spots of the Kangra district can be explored to the optimum level.

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