CHAPTER 4

HIMACHAL
PRADESH: THE
LAND OF GODS
CHAPTER 4

HIMACHAL PRADESH: THE LAND OF GODS

About the Chapter:

This chapter studies the brief historical, topographical and religious features in particular of Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh bordering Jammu and Kashmir to north and North West Punjab to the south west Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the south and Utteranchal to the south east is spread in the area of 55653 Sq. K.M. Shimla is the state capital and other major towns are Dharamshala, Kangra, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba, Hamirpur, Dalhousie and Manali. The state boasts of numerous picturesque tourist destinations which are responsible for generating much of revenue for the state, agriculture, textile burgeoning hydroelectric power export industry are the other sources of income in the state. A state in north India Himachal Pradesh literally means a region of snowy mountains. It also referred as Dev Bhumi meaning abode of Gods. The word Hima actually means snow in Sanskrit terminology acharya Dwakar Dutt Sharma an eminent Sanskrit scholar from Himachal Pradesh named the state. Himachal Pradesh is among those states in India which has a good per capita Income. The state sells hydroelectric power to Punjab, Delhi and Rajesthan. The economy of Himachal Pradesh depends greatly on Tourism, Hydro Electric power and agriculture A number of pilgrimage centers and Hindu temples are situated in Himachal Pradesh. There are more than two Thousands temples in Himachal Pradesh. These temples are also magnificent works of architecture. The temples, churches, gurudwaras and monasteries are the centers of attractions for the visitors and tourists. Many of them are also associated with ancient’s legends.

4.1 HISTORY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

The history of human settlement in Himachal Pradesh goes back to the palaeolithic period of which stone tools and flakes have been discovered in the valleys of the Sutlej and Beas rivers and also in the foothill zone of the Shivalik hills. Numerous tribes settled in different parts of the region. The recorded history begins with effect from the Maurya period that is 4th Century B.C., when this part of India was an outlier of Chandragupta’s kingdom. Throughout its history, the present territory of Himachal Pradesh remained segmented into a
number of principalities, usually under the hegemony of an empire centered at Delhi. The area has also been a refuge for several freedom-loving population groups/castes, particularly Rajputs and Brahmins who refused to live under the imperial authority centered at Delhi. They settled in specific parts of this region, which took the form of small/tiny states under the chiefdom of Rajput princes. The colonial empire brought them under the hegemony of the British Crown in 1859. They continued enjoying a degree of autonomy but were essentially in the nature of feudatory states. On the eve of Independence of India, half of the present territory of Himachal Pradesh was divided into 30 princely states and the other half was a part of the Punjab province of the British Empire.

**FIGURE 4.1**

**MAP OF HIMACHAL PRADESH**

Himachal Pradesh acquired its present disposition in phases over time after independence. Himachal now is one of the most dynamic hill states of India. It scores
significantly high on indicators of human development. Its resources of forests, fruits, minerals, health resorts, and hydel power hold the promise of great progress. Natural assets for tourism in the state are ideal. It has its own rich culture, physiography suited to almost all types of crops and fruits, and an independent administrative identity. Its notable accomplishments have been in literacy, agriculture, horticulture, roads, forests, hydel power generation and tourism. The state is called ‘the apple belt’ of India. Its vast potential for hydel power generation, because of its locational advantage, has attracted the attention of the entire nation, as a major resource awaiting full exploitation. Its physical diversity, its climate and its peaceful environment can derive high economic value from the development of the tourist industry.

Himachal Pradesh in the National Context

Himachal Pradesh with an area of 55,673 sq. km. is one of the smaller states of India. It ranks 17th among the States and Union Territories in terms of area, which is one-sixth of the largest state - Rajasthan. With a population of 60.8 lakh, Himachal Pradesh ranks 21st among the States and Union Territories. That its population is 27 times below that of the most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, is an indicator of its smallness. The state accounted for 1.7 per cent of the total area of the country and 0.59 per cent of the total population in 2001. With a density of 109 persons per sq. km., it ranks 28th among the states and Union Territories which is much below the all-India average of 324 persons per sq. km. The urban population constitutes 9.79 per cent of the total population of the state, the lowest among all States and Union Territories.

Evolution of the State

Historically, Himachal Pradesh has not only experienced different stages of social transformation, but has also seen many changes in its size and administrative structure. Comprising 30 princely states, it came into existence as a Chief Commissioners Province in 1948, and graduated through a number of stages of administrative transformation to a full-fledged state of the Indian Union in 1971. To start with, it consisted of four districts — Chamba, Mahasu, Mandi and Sirmaur. Under the rule of the princes, this region suffered from the worst kind of feudal exploitation. The rulers did not consider it necessary to
develop their territories, by utilising the available wealth of natural resources (M.G. Singh, 1985). Since its formation Himachal has, however, attained a high level of overall development. The changes in size and the administrative structure that the state has gone through between 1948 and 1971 have influenced the level and pace of its development. Himachal inherited a primitive economic system from its feudal structure, and an inadequate institutional framework, which constituted a weak base for socio-economic development. Thus, at the initial stages the state was at a disadvantage in relation to the rest of the country in pursuing the process of development. In this context, the institutional task of setting up an integrated administration, transforming a feudal system into a modern democratic one, necessitating the abolition of all feudal practices and laws, was certainly fairly difficult (L.R. Sharma, 1985). The merger of the princely state of Bilaspur in 1954 enlarged the geographical area of Himachal Pradesh and increased the number of its districts to five. In 1960, a new district of Kinnaur was carved out of Mahasu district. The states reorganisation of 1966 transferred parts of Punjab (Ambala, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur) to Himachal Pradesh, adding three more districts, namely, Kangra, Kullu, and Lahaul and Spiti. These areas were under the direct administration of the British Government before independence and were far behind the other progressive regions of Punjab and failed to achieve substantial economic development, until their integration with Himachal Pradesh (M.G. Singh, 1985).

Himachal dance forms are varied and some are quite complicated. These dances are an inseparable part of tribal life, which reflects the great perseverance and good humour of the human beings in the face of poverty and death. No festivity here is completed without dancing. The dance forms like Dulshol, Dharveshi, Drodi, Dev Naritya, Rakshas Nritya, Dangi, Lasa, Nati and Nagas are danced all over the state and provide a welcome break in the monotony of life (Singh, 1992). The Himachalis in general have a highly developed sense of art, which is expressed in their objects of daily use. Their metal ware including attractive utensils, ritualistic vessels, idols and silver jewellery; the unglazed earthenware of Kangra; embroidered shawls and other garments which portray both classical and simple folk styles and designs; and traditional jewellery for almost all conceivable uses, are some of their popular crafts. Weaving of wool is a major cottage industry in itself.

Most of the songs require no instrumental accompaniment. The themes are usually common ones like human love and separation of lovers. Some songs are about rituals.
Chhinj, Laman, Jhoori, Gangi, Mohana and Tappe are love songs. Dholru is a seasonal song. Bare-Haren are ballads about warriors, Soohadiyan are songs sung at Childbirth. Losi and Pakkahad and Suhaag songs are all family songs, Karak are songs of praise in honour of the deities and Alhaini is a song of mourning (Bhasin). All these songs follow a specific style of singing and the geographical facts have a deep effect on these. The highlanders of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur weave dresses from it for special occasions such as festivals and weddings. The wool products are made in either the Byangi wool. Sari is the most common garment that Himachali women wear (Kanwar, 1999).

4.2 PHYSICAL SETTING

The state took its name Himachal from the Himalayas. Himachal Pradesh is a hilly and mountainous state situated between 30° 22′ and 33° 12′ north latitude and 75° 47′ and 79° 4′ east longitude. Its neighbours are Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Punjab in the west and southwest, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the south and Tibet in the east. The territory of the state is mountainous, except for a few pockets bordering Punjab and Haryana, which have a sub-mountainous topography. Altitude in different areas ranges from 350 to 7000 metres above the mean sea level. Wide differences in geo-physical features account for considerable variation in the climate and rainfall of different sub-regions of the state. Physiographically, the state is part of the Himalayan system. From south to north it can be topographically divided into three zones:

1. The Shivaliks or outer Himalayas
2. Inner Himalayas or mid-mountains
3. Alpine zone or the greater Himalayas.

The lower hills of Kangra, Hamirpur, Una, Bilaspur and the lower parts of Mandi, Solan and Sirmaur districts are part of the Shivalik range. The altitude of this zone varies from 350 metres to 1500 metres above the mean sea level. The annual rainfall varies from 1500 mm. to 1800 mm. Since it is made up of consolidated deposits, which can erode easily, the zone experiences deforestation and a high rate of soil erosion. It is suitable for the cultivation of maize, wheat, ginger, sugarcane, paddy, table potatoes and citrus fruits.

The altitude of the inner Himalayas or the mid-mountains ranges between 1500 metres and 4500 metres above mean sea level. This zone includes areas such as the upper parts of Pachhad and Renuka in Sirmaur district, Chachiot and Karsog tehsil of Mandi
district, and upper parts of Churah tehsil of Chamba district. The quality of soil in these areas ranges from silty loam to clay loam to dark brown colour and is useful for seed potatoes and temperate fruits. From the horticultural point of view, this area is suitable for stone and soft fruits.

The greater Himalayas or the Alpine zone has an altitude of 4500 metres above mean sea level. This area comprises Kinnaur district, Pangi tehsil of Chamba district and some areas of Lahaul and Spiti. Rainfall is scanty in this zone. The soil has high texture with variable fertility. The climate is temperate and semi-arctic in winter. The climate and the soil are best suited to the cultivation of dry fruits. From October to March-April, this zone remains cut off from the rest of the world. The climate of Himachal Pradesh varies from semi-tropical to the semi-arctic depending on the altitude. It has three seasons, which have an impact on its economic development. The rainy season lasts from July to September, winter from October to March and summer from April to June. During summer, there is an influx of tourists to the state both from within the country and abroad.

Rivers

Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Yamuna flow through the state. The river system in the Himalayas cannot be exploited for irrigation as fully as in the plains, but it is the source of water for the Indus river basin. The undulating terrain limits the utility of these rivers for irrigation. During the rains, the flow in the rivers is heavy and in winter, with snowfall and the water frozen at higher altitudes, they shrink into narrow streams. These rivers, however, provide ample scope for the generation of hydel power.

The diversity of altitude and climate has given Himachal Pradesh a rich variety of flora. Covering nearly two-thirds of the total area of the state, forests form an important source of income, providing raw material for industries, fodder and nutritious grasses for livestock and resources to meet the needs of agriculturists and other people. They are also a source of herbs and drugs. The physiography of the state also determines its economic potential. Agriculture in general is handicapped by the steep and hilly terrain, hazards of climate, small and scattered holdings, thin stony soil, limited irrigation and a limited cultivated area, only about 10 per cent. There is little scope for expanding the cultivated area. However, the state has overcome absence of adequate land, by resort to horticulture and optimal use of the cultivated area.
4.3 TOURIST CIRCUITS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Beas Circuit

The Beas river, with its clear water gurgles and sloshes through the famous tourist destination, Manali. One sees well-defined snow capped peaks, deodar and pine trees, tiny alpine fields, rocky slopes amid grassy meadows carpeted with wild flowers and fruit orchards across Kullu Valley. The Beas Circuit derives its name from the ancient river Beas. It passes through the highly picturesque Kullu - Mandi regions. The main attractions are the flower filled meadows, terraced fields of paddy, maize, apple orchards and the sparkling Beas river. This circuit covers Delhi, Swarghat, Bilaspur, Mandi, Rewalsar, Kullu, Manali, Rohtang, Naggar, Manikaran etc.

Dhauladhar Circuit

Also known as the Outer Himalaya, Dhauladhar range begins from near Dalhousie of Himachal and extends as a necklace through the state to near the bank of the Beas river in the Kullu before ending near Badrinath. Its distinctive profile is best seen from the Kangra valley as it seems to shoot up vertically.

Satluj Circuit

It starts from the foot hills of Shivalik Mountains, the southernmost and geologically youngest foothills, and extends towards the higher hills. The stone and apple fruit orchards, pine forests, deodars, majestic mountains, snow covered ski slopes and the furious Satluj river make this region a must see for visitors. The Sutlej Circuit derives its name from the ancient river Sutlej. It passes through snow covered majestic Himalayas, forests of pine, oak and deodar, across stone fruit and apple orchards and through the Shiwalik foot hills. This circuit covers Parwanoo, Kasauli, Barog, Solan, Chail, Hatkoti, Rampur, Sarahan, Narkanda, Naldehra, Tattapani, Shimla and Kiarighat. This circuit also includes Renuka, Paonta Sahib and Nahan.

Tribal Circuit

The cold desert mountains, mighty glaciers, icy frozen lakes, high passes, snow capped peaks, spectacular monasteries, lamas and yaks - this region is marked by rich cultural traditions. The breathtaking adventurous terrain remains the prime destination for all
nature and adventure lovers all over the world. Passing through a spectacular terrain of River Valleys, Cold Desert Mountains, High Passes, Snow Capped Peaks, icy Lakes, Mighty Glaciers, an exotic tribal country dotted by monasteries, yaks and lamas. This circuit covers Sarahan, Sangla, Kalpa, Nako, Tabo, Dhankar, Pin Valley, Kaza, Losar, Kunzum, Koksar, Sissu, Tandi, Udaipur, Trilokpur, Rohtang Pass and Manali.

TABLE 4.1
BED NIGHTS SPENT BY TOURISTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH (Year 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Guests checked In</th>
<th>Total No. of Bed Nights Spent by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>44261</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>39544</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamirpur</td>
<td>40257</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>90421</td>
<td>4437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kullu</td>
<td>106270</td>
<td>5714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul &amp; Spiti</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>62368</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>165247</td>
<td>7065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirmour</td>
<td>57450</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>40431</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>49453</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>695702</td>
<td>18157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://himachaltourism.gov.in/)

There is continues increase in tourism in Himachal Pradesh. However tourism is not scattered uniformly in all districts and in all seasons. The major tourism inflow is in Shimla, Kullu and Kangra districts where domestic and foreign tourists prefer to visit. However
other districts are not getting the proper benefits of tourism. State government has launched various schemes like homestay tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, Kahani Har Gaaon ki etc. so as to disperse the benefits of tourism in all corners of the state. It is evident from the table 4.2 that in year 2009 the number of domestic tourists who checked in hotels in Himachal Pradesh is 695702, while this number for foreign tourists is 18157. While the bed nights spent for Indian tourists in Himachal Pradesh is 811139 and for foreign tourists the number is 21777 in year 2007.

Himachal Pradesh has emerged as one of the most sought after tourism destinations on the world map. The State Government has chalked out a three - pronged strategy to harness the tourist potential to the maximum. As a part of the strategy, the government on one hand is focusing upon development of various tourist circuits, strengthening the infrastructure and long term planning whereas on other hand launching schemes to cater to tourists of all classes and categories. Adventure tourism, religious tourism, heritage tourism, rural tourism and eco- tourism are some of the areas which have got special attention in tourism development. Schemes benefiting unemployed rural youth have been launched. Home Stay Scheme' launched in the year 2008 is already a grand success.

The scheme focuses on rural tourism to generate employment, income and promote new destinations by exhibiting ancient heritage and culture of the State. More than 400 home stay units have been registered in the State. State Government has launched a scheme known as 'Har Gaon Ki Kahani' to promote rural tourism with a view to exploit tourism potential of non-descript destinations of the State. In order to enlighten the tourists about the bygone golden epoch of the historic Shimla town, Shimla Heritage Tourism scheme 'Har Ghar Kuch Kehta Hai' and 'Shimla Ki Kahani Itihas Ki Jubani' were launched. Tourism industry is benefitting community and other stakeholders by providing employment directly and indirectly in the state. Various stakeholders such as hoteliers, travel agents, photographers, tourists guides registered in Himachal Pradesh is shown in table 4.1. In spite of that thousands of people are indirectly getting the economic benefits in the state from tourism industry. Event based tourism promotion activities are also being undertaken by the state tourism department to capture the attention of tourists round the year.
## TABLE 4.2
NO. OF HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>NO. OF HOTELS/GUEST HOUSES</th>
<th>NO. OF RESTAURANTS</th>
<th>Bed rooms</th>
<th>BED Capacity</th>
<th>TRAVEL AGENCIES</th>
<th>PHOTOGRAPHERS</th>
<th>TOURIST GUIDES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>1288</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>2710</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamirpur</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4201</td>
<td>8568</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kullu</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8646</td>
<td>18682</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul &amp; Spiti</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>1307</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1323</td>
<td>2697</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4448</td>
<td>9981</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirmour</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2662</td>
<td>7157</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2150</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>25863</td>
<td>56023</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>522</td>
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## TABLE 4.3
TOURIST ARRIVAL IN HIMACHAL PRADESH IN 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Domestic Tourists</th>
<th>Foreign Tourists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>1093317</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1093421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamba</td>
<td>817477</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>819668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamirpur</td>
<td>630108</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>630112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangra</td>
<td>1813686</td>
<td>98962</td>
<td>1912648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>467186</td>
<td>17860</td>
<td>485046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kullu</td>
<td>2659527</td>
<td>138488</td>
<td>2798015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahaul-Spiti</td>
<td>470815</td>
<td>73040</td>
<td>543855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi</td>
<td>1184335</td>
<td>9813</td>
<td>1194148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>2818270</td>
<td>134167</td>
<td>2952437</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sirmaur</td>
<td>872597</td>
<td>3142</td>
<td>875739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solan</td>
<td>801234</td>
<td>6464</td>
<td>807698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Una</td>
<td>976336</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>976619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14604888</strong></td>
<td><strong>484518</strong></td>
<td><strong>15089406</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Himachal Pradesh
Graph 4.1
Tourist Arrival in Himachal Pradesh

Tourist Arrival in Himachal Pradesh

- Domestic Tourists
- Foreign Tourists
- Total

Districts: Bilaspur, Chamkila, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmour, Solan, Una
Events like Trekking, Mountain Biking and Para-gliding are also organized for adventure lovers. Himachal Pradesh is registering continuous rise in the number of tourists visiting the state every year. To attract high-end tourists and promote remote destinations, the state government has signed an agreement with three operators of helicopter taxis and identified routes and fixed air fares. It is evident from the table 4.3 and graph 4.1 every district in Himachal is getting huge number of tourists but Kullu, Shimla and Dharamshala has emerged as the most popular tourist destination and thus tourism has become an important contributor to Himachal Pradesh's economic development.

4.4 RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh has numerous picturesque tourist destinations which are responsible for generating much of revenue for the state, agriculture, textile burgeoning hydroelectric power export industry are the other sources of income in the state. A state in north India Himachal Pradesh literally means a region of snowy mountains. It also referred as Dev Bhumi meaning abode of Gods. Himachal Pradesh is among those states in India which has a good per capita Income. A number of pilgrimage centers and Hindu temples are situated in Himachal Pradesh. There are more than two Thousands temples in Himachal Pradesh. These temples are also magnificent works of architecture. The temples are the centers of attractions for the visitors and tourists. Many of them are also associated with ancients legends.

RELIGIOUS PLACES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

1. HINDU PILGRIMAGE

Bajreshwari Temple

Just outside the town of Kangra is the temple dedicated to Bajreshwari Devi. Known once for its legendary wealth this temple was subject to successive depredations by invaders from the north. Destroyed completely in 1905 by an earthquake, it was rebuilt in 1920 and continues to be a busy place of pilgrimage.

Jwalamukhi Temple

Not too far from Kangra is this popular place of pilgrimage. An eternally burning flame that issues from a hollow rock in the sanctum, is considered the manifestation of the goddess Devi. During March-April and September-October every year, colorful fairs are held during the Navratra celebration. Jwalamukhi temple is 30 km. from Kangra.
Chamunda Devi Temple

Chamunda Devi is a famous temple close to Dharamsala (Kangra). It is an enchanting spot with glorious views of the mountains, the Baner Khud, Pathiar and Lahla forest.

Baijnath

The ancient temple at Baijnath is particularly beautiful. Built of stone in the 9th century AD, in the shikhara style, it is a fine blend of sculpture and architecture. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Baijnath is close to Palampur and Kangra.

PICTURE 4.1
SHIVA TEMPLE BAIJNATH

Lakshmi Narayan Temple

The Lakshminarayan group of temples in the town of Chamba are of great archaeological importance. Six stone temples dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu with tall shikaras, finely carved, date from the 8th century AD. The Lakshminarayan Temple is the oldest in this group. Other temples around Chamba town include, those dedicated to Hari Rai, Champavati, Bansigopal, Ram Chandra, Brijeshwari, Chamunda, Narsingh, and Yogi Charpat Nath.
Chaurasi Temples

The 9th century temples at Bharmaur are among the most important early Hindu temples in the Chamba Valley. According to legend, 84 (chaurasi) yogi's visited Bharmaur, capital of King Sahil Varma. They were so pleased with the king's humility and hospitality that they blessed him with ten sons and a daughter, Champavati. A cluster of shrines commemorates that visit. The temple square is the Centre of all activities in the little town of Bharmaur and the Lakshmi, Ganesh, Manimahesh and Narsing temples, the main shrines, are splendidly set off by the dramatic mountainscape.

Manimahesh

The Manimahesh Lake, high up in the mountains near Bharmaur, is an important place of pilgrimage. The solitary Manimahesh Kailash Peak - the legendary abode of Shiva, is reflected in its still waters. A little temple in the shikhara style with an exquisite brass image of Lakshmi Devi as Mahishasuramardini stands near-by. Every year, following Janmashtami, the annual Manimahesh Yatra is undertaken. The pilgrimage starts from Chamba from the Lakshaminarayan Temple and devotees wend their way up the arduous track from Bharmaur to take a sacred dip in the waters of the lake.

PICTURE 4.2
MANI MAHESH LAKE
Mandi

Mandi has a picturesque group of ancient stone temples with tall vimanas, splendidly located below the town on the banks of the foaming river. The Tarna Devi Temple (Mandi), a new shrine up on a hill, overlooks the town and valley.

Rewalsar

Around a natural lake with a floating island are a Shiva temple—the Lomesh Rishi Temple, Guru Govind Singh’s gurdwara and a Buddhist monastery founded by Guru Padmasambhava. A spot that is revered by people of three faiths (Mandi).

Prashar Temple

This temple, built in the 14th century, is a shrine where the rulers of Mandi once worshipped. The pagoda-style temple stands in the little green hollow around the Prashar lake, above the town of Pandoh. The views of the mountains are spectacular.

PICTURE 4.3
PRASHAR TEMPLE

Shikari Devi

Shikari Devi temple is accessed from Janjheli and Karsog (Mandi). Hunters in the area once prayed to the Goddess for success in their hunt— and here, perhaps, lies the origin of the name 'Shikari Devi'. The Goddess is worshipped in the form of a stone image. Interestingly, the temple which is said to have been in existence since the time of the
Pandavas, has no roof - for local legend has it, that all attempts to build one have been unsuccessful.

Raghunathji Temple

Built in 1651 by the Raja of Kullu, the temple has an image of Raghunathji that was brought from Ayodhya. During the Kullu Dussehra, all the temples in the area send their deities to pay homage to Raghunathji at Kullu.

Bijli Mahadev Temple An unusual temple dedicated to Shiva-the Lord of lightning, is located on a height overlooking the Kullu and Parvati valleys. A 60ft staff above the temple attracts divine blessing in the form of lightning and breaks the stone linga in the sanctum.

Dhoongri Temple

This four tiered pagoda, embellished in finely carved wood, stands sheltered in grove of tall deodar at Manali (Kullu). It is dedicated to Hadimba Devi, wife of the Pandava, Bhim.

Bhimakali Temple

A marvelous example of hill architecture, the temple complex at Sarahanis set against the incredibly beautiful backdrop of high ranges and forested slopes. Built in a
mixture of the Hindu and Buddhists styles, it was the temple of Bushair rulers of Rampur (Shimla). The palaces of the royal family are adjacent to the temple. From Sarahan there is a view of the Srikhand Peak, revered as the home of goddess Lakshami.

**Hatkoti**

Along the River Pabbar, 104 km from Shimla, is the temple dedicated to Durga and Shiva. The gods are said to have fought a pitched battle at this spot.

**Naina Devi Temple**

On a hill, close to Bilaspur and Kiratpur (34 km), is famous shrine of Naina Devi. A colourful fair, the Shravana Astami Mela is held in July-August.

**Chintpurni**

A winding road goes up to the temple dedicated to Bhagwati Chinmastika or Chintpurni—the goddess who grants all wishes. A popular place of pilgrimage, Chintpurni is about 75 km from the town of Una and 100 km from Jalandhar.

**Renuka**

The temple, dedicated to the immortal Renuka, stands near the picturesque Renuka Lake (Sirmour).

**Trilokpur**

About 25 km from Nurpur (Kangra), at the confluence of the Bohar and Bhali streams, is another sacred spot popular with pilgrims of various faiths. There is a Hindu temple, a Buddhist monastery, a gurdwara and a mosque at Trilokpur.

**Baba Balak Nath Temple**

A cave temple located in Deothsidh, in the Dhaulagiri Hills of Hamirpur, is a noted place of pilgrimage. People come here to seek the blessing of Baba Balak Nath whose image is located in the cave. Shahtalai, 46 km from the district headquarters of Hamirpur and accessible by road, is about 10 km from Deothsidh.

2. **BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGES**

The remote valleys of Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur have strong Buddhist traditions. Splendid gompas, Buddhist monasteries, built along bare mountain-sides seem to be a part of the rugged terrain. These are the repositories of a wealth of Buddhist art and culture. The dim, cool interiors of ancient monasteries glow with the brilliance of painted murals, stuccos
and elaborate thangkas framed with rich borders of silk. In Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama has settled in exile, is a marvelous Tibetan township where an entire cultural tradition is being nurtured. It is a centre that attracts scholars, pilgrims and tourists.

**MONASTRIES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH**

The monasteries of Himachal Pradesh are highly significant and revered by the people of all religion. These monasteries do not just preserve the rich Buddhist culture in the state, but also make for an attractive tourists destination. Quiet a few of these monasteries have gained fame on international level, while many others are popular just locally.

**Dhankar Monastery**

The monastery is located around 25 km from Kaza in the Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh. An image of "Vairocana" or Dhayan Buddha consisting of 4 complete figures seated back to back is the highlight of this monastery. The monastery has Buddhist scriptures in Bhoti language as well as relics in the shape of paintings and sculptures as its belongings. Two Gompas are housed in this monastery - Lha Opa Gompa & Lkhang Gompa. The former is supposed to date back to 12th century. The second gompa is more prominent with its splendid mural that represents the life of Buddha.

**PICTURE 4.5**

**DHANKAR MONASTERY**
Guru Ghantal Monastery

Around 800 years ago at a place where Chandra and Bagha river met, a monastery was established by Padmasambhava. The monastery was located atop a hill above the Tupchiling village and came to be known as the Guru Ghantal Monastery. The highlight of this monastery is that unlike the other monasteries of the state, the idols here are made up of wood and not clay. Within the monastery there are idols of Padmasambhava and Brajeshwari Devi along with numerous other lamas. However, one thing is for certain, and that is the workmanship of the gompa, which is definitely much better than many other monasteries of the state. The monastery is also known as the Trilokinath.

Namgyal Monastery

This one is located in Dharamshala and is also known by the name of Namgyal Dratsang. Its history states that it was founded by the third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso in the year 1575. The monastery was established with an intention to help the Dalai Lama carry on his public religious activities as well as perform prayers for the betterment of Tibet. Within the monastery premises, there is a monastery, an institute and few temples. The monastery is not open for public, and only His Holiness, the Dalai Lama and his students can gain entry into it. The institute admits students for thirteen years of training in Tantra and Sutra.

Kii Monastery

PICTURE 4.6
KII MONASTRY
Situated at an altitude of 13,500 feet and in a place that is known as the 'Little Tibet' is Kye Monastery. The monastery is one of the most frequented religious destination for the Buddhists in the state along with the Tabo Monastery. Infact, people from all over the country as well as outside the country come over to this state just because they wish to pay a visit to the Kye Monastery. The monastery is around 12 km north of Kaza in the Spiti valley (the Middle country or the Little Tibet) above Kye village. Today, the monastery is renowned religious training center for the Lamas who can be seen dancing, singing and playing on their pipes and horns.

Tabo Monastery

Located in the valley of Spiti at an altitude of 3050m, the Tabo Monastery (Picture 4.7) is quiet often referred to as the Ajanta of the Himalayas. Founded by an eminent scholar Richen Zangpo in the 996 AD, as an advanced centre of learning, this is basically a complex that houses a number of small gompas, temples and monasteries. It spreads over an area of 6300 sq m and is surrounded by high boundary wall. Even today, the monastery is keeping up its image of an efficient and effective learning centre by opening up schools to impart modern education to the newer generation.
Kanum Monastery

The Kanum monastery is located in the Kanum in the Kinnaur area of Himachal Pradesh. The village of Kanum, in the erstwhile era, was a place rich in scriptural learning. It was during this period (in the 11th century) that 'Rin-Chen-Bzang-Po' founded a school of scholastic learning here.

Kardang Monastery

This monastery is located at an altitude of around 15000 feet in the village of Kardang. Kardang is the erstwhile capital of Lahaul and the monastery here is one of the biggest and the oldest one. It was constructed around 900 AD. The possessions of the monastery includes beautiful thangka paintings, musical instruments and old weapons. There is also a library of Kangyur and Tangyur volumes of Buddhist scriptures in Bhoti language. Infact the collection here is considered to be the largest one. The lamas of this monastery are allowed to marry. During summers they put up with their family and work in fields while in winters they return to the monastery. The monastery is extremely important for the Durga - Pa sect.

Shashur Monastery

In 17 th century AD, Lama Deva Tyatsho of Zanskar founded the Shashur Monastery, a little distance away from Keylong. Lama Deva Tyatsho was a missionary of the King of Bhutan. The present structure of the monastery is because of renovation work carried out by Deva Gyatsho. The attractions of the monastery, which belongs to the Red sect of the Tibetan Buddhist, are the 15-feet 'Thankha' and precious wall paintings presenting all the siddhas of Buddhism. Another highlight of the monastery is the devil dance performed by the lamas during the Chham celebration in the month of June - July.

Tayul Monastery

Established by Dogpa Lama, Serzang Richen of Kham region of Tibet, in the 17th century AD, the Tayul Monastery is located around 6 km from Keylong in the Bhaga valley. The highlight of the monastery is the 12 feet tall statue of Padmasambhava. Apart from this, there is a hundred million Mani wheels which is believed to turn by itself on extremely sacred events. The last time when the wheel turned on its own was in the year 1886. There is also a library in the monastery which houses 'Kangyur' and 'Thankas' reflecting the life of Lord Buddha.
Thang Yug Gompa
This monastery is located around 13 km from Kaza in the Spiti Valley. The lama here usually belongs to Tibet.

Other Monasteries
There are also other monasteries in Himachal Pradesh such as Kungri Gompa, Lippa, Nechung Monastery, Pooh, Tashijong Monastery, Tilasangh Monastery.

Guru Ghantal Monastery

3. SIKH PILGRIMAGES
The Sikhs came to the Shivalik Hills, in Himachal Pradesh in 1695, at the invitation of the ruler of Sirmaur, to help him fight the Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh with his army, settled in Paonta Sahib in the foothills. During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, at the end of the 18th century, many of the western hill states also came under Sikh sovereignty.

Paonta Sahib

PICTURE 4.8
GURUDWARA AT PAONTA SAHIB
This is the main centre of Sikh pilgrimage in Himachal. The gurdwara picturesquely located on the banks of the River Yamuna in district Sirmour, is venerated due to its association with Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th Sikh Guru. In March, an important fair is held and the holy Granth Sahib is taken out in procession.

**Manikaran**

The serene location and the seemingly mysterious hot springs made Manikaran (Kullu) a place of pilgrimage in earlier times. Guru Nanak, the first Guru of the Sikhs, visited this place to spend time in meditation. A gurdwara that was built to commemorate his visit, is now a place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.

**PICTURE 4.9**

**GURUDWARA AT MANIKARAN**

**Rewalsar**

The gurdwara at Rewalsar, near Mandi, is located on the periphery of a lake sacred to both the Hindus and Buddhists as well.
Guru Ka Lahaur

Guru Ka Lahaur, a cluster of three Gurdwaras near Basantgarh village in Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh and about 12 kilometers north of Anandpur Sahib in Punjab, is related to Guru Gobind Singh's marriage.

Gurdwara Triveni Sahib

Enclosing a spring formerly called Karpa (lit. spear) Baoli, creating according to popular legend, by the Guru with a blow of his spear, is a domed square hall with a pavilion over the spring in front of the hall.

Gurdwara Gurpalah Patshahi Dasvin (Bathu):

Bathu village in Una district is 15 kilometers west of Nangal in Punjab along the Nangal-Garhshankar road. Guru Gobind Singh once visited this village.

Gurdwara Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Patshahi Dasvin (Saluri)

Saluri village is 16 kilometers north of Una along the Una - Amb road. Guru Gobind Singh stayed here on his way to Nadaun in 1691. The commemorative shrine on top of a small hillock on the left bank of Suan River is a small domed room built in 1829 by mason Naudh Singh with funds provided by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is named Gurdwara Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Patshahi Dasvin.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib Patshahi Dasvin (Nagrauli)

Nagrauli, 20 kilometers from Una along the Una-Panjawar road, was visited by Guru Gobind Singh in 1691 during a hunting excursion launched from Saluri on the opposite bank of Suan. The memorial set up to the west of the village was called Guru Ki Vari (lit. Guru's garden) or Damdama (lit. halting place).

Gurdwara Dasvin Patshahi

Nadaun is a town along the Una-Amb-Kangra road, about 30 kilometers from Kangra and 70 kilometers from Una. It was the scene of a battle in which Guru Gobind Singh took part to assist Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur and some other hill chiefs against the Mughal general Alif Khan. The battle was fought on 20th March 1691.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib (Rawlsar)

Rawalsar is a natural lake with floating islands, about 15 kilometers west of mandi town. The habitation that has grown around it is also named Rawalsar. Guru Gobind Singh
visited it once on the occasion of Baisakhi festival. It was here that Raja Siddh Sen of Mandi met the Guru and took him to Mandi with him.

4. CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGES

Christianity made a late appearance in Himachal Pradesh, after the arrival of the British. The churches here are not more than 150 years old. Tall churches— the relics of the Raj, are to be found mainly in the small hill stations that the British created as summer retreats.

Kasauli

Kasauli (Solan) has a fine old Christ Church, a typically Anglican structure. Its foundation stone was laid in 1844. Well proportioned, its spires, buttresses and gothic arches are framed against the stately deodars.

Shimla

The Christ Church, with its tall spire dominates the ridge in Shimla. This imposing structure is visible from as far away as Tara Devi, 8 km away.

PHOTO 4.10
CHRIST CHURCH, SHIMLA
It was built in 1844, when Shimla was slowly coming into its own as the premier hill station of India, the Christ Church was designed to accommodate the entire Shimla congregation. Various memorials and stained glass windows fill the somber interior with colour and light. The first Catholic edifice of Shimla, St. Michael's Church, was built in 1850, at the western end of the Lower Bazaar. Later additions have made it an unusual piece of architecture. Inside the church are five marble altars, all brought from Italy in 1855 and fine stained glass windows.

Dharamshala

The stone church of St. John lies on a motorable road between Mcleodganj and Forsyteganj 8 Km from Lower Dharamshala (Kangra). It has a monument of Lord Elgin, one of the viceroys of India, who died in Dharamshala and was buried here.

PHOTO 4.11

ST. JOHN CHURCH, DHARAMSHALA
Dalhousie

Dalhosie (Chamba) is another hill station with a number of old churches. The church near the G.P.O. looks untouched by time. It has an angular roof of inter-leafed hexagonal slates. The Catholic church of St. Francis, built in 1894, is set against a backdrop of tall pines overlooking the Subash Chowk.

St. Michael’s Cathedral, Shimla

The town’s Catholic community built St. Michael’s Cathedral in 1886 with a partial though elegant vocabulary of the French-Gothic style. The exterior is of dressed grey stone. The floor plan follows a cruciform and the church can seat 400 persons. The interior was designed with a nave and two aisles, a vestry, a baptistery and a confessional. The organ was built in 1913 and was considered to be among the finest in north India.

Kotgarh St. Mary’s Church

This small wooden church rests in the heart of Himachal’s apple growing country and dates back to the time when this temperate fruit was still a century and a couple of continents away. A School was established at here in 1843 and the church built in 1872. This was run by the Moravian missionaries and the Church Missionary Society.

Subathu

The low-hills village of Subathu was among the first positions to be retained by the British during the course of the Gurkha Wars. This grew to become a fairly large military establishment. It was here that the ‘Nasiri Battalions’, or ‘battalions of friendlies’ from among the Gurkhas were first raised. This is still a recruiting and training centre for Gurkhas in the Indian Army. Subathu faces the Kuthar valley and the stream of the same name – and the town was along the old road to Shimla. This was where Captain Kennedy – who is credited as the first European to have built a house in Shimla – was based as the ‘Political Agent to the Hill States.’ A small Roman Catholic Church was first built in Subathu while Services for the Protestant community were held in a school house. Today, apart from the small bazaar, Subathu still has a major presence of the army.

Churches in Kasauli

Christ Church held high by stone revetments and shaded by cedars and huge horse-chestnut trees, at Kasauli’s main crossroad stands Christ Church. This stately nineteenth
century structure was church of the Anglican Communion and is now under the Church of North India. This has a cruciform floor plan and the stained glass windows over the altar depict the Crucifixion where the image of Christ is flanked by those of Joseph and Mary. This was opened for divine service on 24 July 1853 by the Chaplain Thomas John Edward Steel M.A., St. John’s College, Cambridge at Evensong. This was consecrated on 8 January 1857 by Authority of the Bishop of Calcutta.

PHOTO 4.12
CHRIST CHURCH, KASAULI

Dagshai

In 1847, in sight of Kasauli, a barren hill was transferred by the Maharaja of Patiala to the British for the purposes of creating a military station or cantonment. This had five small villages named Dabbi, Bughtiala, Dagshai, Chunawag and Jawug and the place began to be called ‘Dagshai’ after one of the villages. It was believed that the name came as the result of the original village being where prisoners were branded with hot irons and thus the phrase, ‘Dagh i Shahi’, or the ‘mark of the ruler’. Under British rule, Dagshai grew to hold a substantial army presence and also had a large prison. While it was at it, Dagshai played the role of a guard parked in Shimla’s periphery. Barring a limited presence of the army and a
couple of schools, today’s Dagshai is quite a deserted place. The Roman Catholic Church was built soon after Dagshai became a cantonment while a school house initially served as the Protestant Church. Among the other graves at Dagshai, there is that of Mary Rebecca Weston who was buried along with her unborn child in December 1909. Some renovations were done to the cemetery in 1968 when the 11th Battalion of the Bihar Regiment was posted at Dagshai.

**St. Andrew’s Church, Chamba**

An expression of India’s secular tradition, the church at Chamba was built by its Hindu rulers at state expenses and then gifted to the town’s Christian community. Much of this was in appreciation for the work done by Dr. John Hutchison, a medical doctor who also co-authored the standard work, History of the Punjab Hill States. Raja Sham Singh of Chamba had developed a great liking for Dr. Hutchinson and himself set the foundation stone on 17 February 1899. The church was completed on 7 May 1905 and then presented to the people of Chamba by his successor, Raja Bhuri Singh. Built of dressed stone which was quarried at Rajpura, about ten kilometres from Chamba, the structure has lancet windows and as a ‘low church’ epitomises a bare minimum of decorative devices used in Scottish churches.

**St. John’s Church**

This church is the oldest in Dalhousie. The stone structure of St. John’s stands near the General Post Office and its solid stone walls took the place of flimsy wooden planks after the Rev. Pratt visited the place in 1863 and exhorted the Christian community to something ‘more suitable’.

**St. Francis’ Church**

The Catholic church, St. Francis’ is on a rise above Subash Chowk and was built in 1894. This has an even tenor of dressed-stone on the facade and elaborate woodwork in rich, dark tones in the interior - and some remarkable stained-glass windows.

**Memorial in St. James church, Kangra**

In loving memory of the Honourable Florence Mary Macnaghton who died at Bushmills Ireland on 26th January 1941. The greater part of her 39 years in India as a medical missionary was spent in the Kangra Valley where she was greatly beloved and
affectionately known as the "Buddhimai". "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done unto me."

Nahan

The town of Nahan was the capital of the erstwhile princely state of Sirmaur. Today, this is the headquarters of the district of the same name. At one point of time, Nahan was considered to be among the best planned towns in the country. Like a series of interlocking circles, its roads trace the low hills over which it is built. Its palaces, temples, gateways and water tanks hark back to yesteryears. The state of Sirmaur also bore the brunt of the Gurkha invasion in the nineteenth century. When the British declared war on the Gurkhas, a column led by Major-General Gabriel Martindell attacked their stronghold at Jaitak. Four British officers were killed during the course of this campaign. They were buried at Nahan by its main tank. An obelisk was raised to mark the spot.

Summary

Himachal Pradesh has a huge potential for religious tourism. Himachal Pradesh has numerous picturesque tourist destinations which are responsible for generating much of revenue for the state, agriculture, textile burgeoning hydroelectric power export industry are the other sources of income in the state. A state in north India. Himachal Pradesh literally means a region of snowy mountains. It also referred as Dev Bhumi meaning abode of Gods. Himachal Pradesh is among those states in India which has a good per capita Income. A number of pilgrimage centers and Hindu temples are situated in Himachal Pradesh. There are more than two Thousands temples in Himachal Pradesh there are variety of churches, Gurudwaras, temples, Shakti peeths and monasteries which attract tourist from all corners of the world. Despite that Himachal is rich in natural resources, historical buildings, cultural heritage, religious places, and adventure activities.

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