Chapter-IV

Brief Description of Study Areas and Community Based Tourism Activities
The study areas are two districts of Himachal Pradesh namely Shimla and Kullu. Himachal Pradesh is one of the hilly states in Northern part of India. It is spread over 21,495 sq. mi (55,673 kms.) and bordered by Jammu and Kashmir on the north, Punjab on the west and south-west, Haryana and Uttarakhand on the south-east and by the Tibet Autonomous region on the east. Himachal Pradesh is famous for its abundant natural beauty. Himachal Pradesh is spread across valleys and 90% of the population lives in villages and towns.

**Map 4: Geographic Map of Himachal Pradesh**

*Source:* Official website of Maps of India.
Currently, the economy of Himachal Pradesh is one of the fastest growing economies in India. Abundance of perennial rivers enables Himachal to sell hydroelectricity to other states such as Delhi, Punjab & Rajasthan. The economy of the state is dependent on three sources: hydroelectric power, tourism and agriculture. During the past decade the contribution of tourism sector to state’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) has significantly enhanced up-to approximately 10%. The enhancement in tourism share to GDP is significantly increasing due to enhanced tourism activities across the state. Tourism could benefit local communities only if it is planned according to locality i.e. community based tourism business. Thus, for planned growth of tourism sector in the state, the best solution is community based tourism. Shimla and Kullu districts were selected for the study because of maximum tourism activity in these districts and growing need for planned tourism growth benefiting local communities in these two districts.

The two districts are attracting majority of tourist inflow in every calendar year as per available tourist statistics. Shimla district has been home to popular hill stations of India including “Shimla”- the former summer capital of British India. Contrary to this, Kullu district is occupied by numerous beautiful valleys including the famous tourist hub “Manali” nested in laps of Pir Panjal and Dhauladhar ranges. The Kullu district has numerous high altitude peaks which are providing a strong ground for adventure tourism activities. There are numerous community based tourism initiatives and activities in operation in both Shimla and Kullu districts in order to benefit local people and their surrounding environment. Thus, the role of local stakeholders in community based tourism activities, perceptions of local community members towards community based tourism activities and impacts of community based tourism in various tourist destinations of Shimla and Kullu districts are investigated during the research. Brief descriptions about the geographic conditions and tourism status of the two districts are given ahead.

4.1 Shimla District

Shimla district of Himachal Pradeshis lying between the longitude 77.00" and 78.19" east and latitude 30.45" and 31.44" north, having its headquarters situated at Shimla. It is surrounded by Mandi and Kullu in the north, Kinnaur in the east, Uttarakhand in the south-east, Solan to the south-west and Sirmaur in the south.
The elevation of the district has been ranging from 300 metres (984 ft) to 6,000 metres (19,685 ft). As of 2011 it has been the third most populous district of Himachal Pradesh (out of 12 districts), after Kangra and Mandi. It is the most urbanized district of the state. The most commonly practiced religion in the district is Hinduism. Hindi and Pahari are the two main languages spoken in the entire district. Tourism and Agriculture / Horticulture are the major sources of income for the people of the district.

Map 4.1: Geographic Map of Shimla District

According to the 2011 census Shimla district has a population of 813,384, roughly equal to the nation of Comoros or the US state of South Dakota. This has given it a ranking of 483rd in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 159 inhabitants per square kilometer (410/sq. miles). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 12.58%. Shimla has a sex
ratio of 916 females for every 1000 males and a literacy rate of 84.55%. It has highest urban population of all districts in Himachal. Urban population forms 24.77% of the district.

4.2  Kullu District

The Kullu district is stretched from the village of Rampur in the south to the Rohtang pass in the North. Kullu valley is the largest valley in the district, which is also known as the valley of the Gods.

Map 4.2: Geographic Map of Kullu District

Source: Official website of Maps of India.

There is also a town namely Kullu, situated on the banks of the Beas river in the central part of the valley. Another important valley in the district is the Lug valley.
Farther north has been occupied by the home to famous tourist spot namely Manali. Since the onset of the most recent unrest in Kashmir, Manali and the Kullu Valley in general, have become important destinations for tourists escaping the summer heat in India.

According to the 2011 census, Kullu district has a population of 437,474, roughly equal to the nation of Malta. This has provided it a ranking of 553rd in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 79 inhabitants per square kilometer (200/sq. miles). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 14.65%. Kullu district has a sex ratio of 950 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 80.14%.

4.3 Community Based Tourism in Shimla and Kullu District

Shimla and Kullu districts have received the maximum number of tourists over the last decade and hence community based tourism is the much needed affair for better and sustainable tourism development benefitting local communities in these districts.

Table 4.3: Tourist inflow to Shimla and Kullu district from 2004 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Himachal (Indian + foreigner)</th>
<th>Shimla (Indian + foreigner)</th>
<th>Kullu (Indian + foreigner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6549413 (6345069+204344)</td>
<td>1652628 (1597246+55382)</td>
<td>1546973 (1477324+69649)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7135532 (6927742+207790)</td>
<td>1822059 (1757307+64752)</td>
<td>1708940 (1641007+67933)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7953471 (7671902+281569)</td>
<td>2061824 (1971417+90407)</td>
<td>1957735 (1867984+89751)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8821397 (8481988+339409)</td>
<td>2194785 (2095946+98839)</td>
<td>2065078 (1962424+102654)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9749433 (9372697+376736)</td>
<td>2174456 (2061539+112917)</td>
<td>2114584 (2001674+112910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11437155 (11036572+400583)</td>
<td>2284295 (2175314+108981)</td>
<td>2344163 (2224649+119514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>13265602 (12811986+453616)</td>
<td>2613301 (2485564+127737)</td>
<td>2529697 (2395990+1133707)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>15089406 (14604888+484518)</td>
<td>2952437 (2818270+134167)</td>
<td>2798015 (2659527+138488)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>16146332 (15646048+500284)</td>
<td>3354003 (3195332+158671)</td>
<td>3226445 (3082545+143900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>15129835 (14715586+414249)</td>
<td>3156997 (2992991+164006)</td>
<td>2886050 (2766709+119341)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Official website of Himachal Tourism.
Decadal increase in tourist inflow in lakhs has revealed the need for community based tourism, so that tourism business may be decentralized from Shimla hill station and Manali of Kullu valley to other parts of the two districts. Community based tourism business ensures equitable distribution of tourism income among each community members, so that the positive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts through tourism business may be ensured in Shimla and Kullu districts.

4.4 Community Based Tourism Initiatives and Activities in Shimla and Kullu Districts of Himachal Pradesh

In both the districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e. Shimla and Kullu, there is maximum inflow of tourists during one calendar year. Both the districts are occupied by tourists throughout the year on priority basis. In order to tackle mass tourism and provide maximum benefits to local communities in these two districts, the State tourism department i.e. Himachal tourism has started numerous tourism initiatives and activities across the state. Out of them home stay scheme, rural tourism, orchard tourism are popular tourism trends in these two districts under community based tourism initiatives.

Under home stay schemes, local residents have been provided opportunities to get economic benefits from tourism business at residential basis i.e. no extra taxes like hotels and residential electricity and water connections. There are around 123 home stays registered under DTDO (District Tourism Development Office) Shimla and 184 home stays registered under DTDO Kullu at Manali till March, 2014. Due to

Photographs 4.4.1 & 4.4.2: Shimla hill station and Kullu valley

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stay of tourists in these home stays, the local cuisines like siddu, rajmahchawal and malpue etc. are being consumed by tourists. The tourists on the other hand are getting homely environment away from actual home and at cheap rates in comparison to different categories of hotels.

Photographs 4.4.3 & 4.4.4: Home stays in Shimla and Kullu districts

Interiors of home stays in Shimla and Kullu have been displayed as follows:

Photographs 4.4.5 & 4.4.6: Interior of home stays in Shimla and Kullu districts
Local cuisines in Shimla and Kullu have been displayed as follows:

Photographs 4.4.7 & 4.4.8: Local cuisines in Shimla and Kullu districts

Local transporters likewise are getting opportunities of earning by being engaged with different tourists in these two districts. There are numerous transporters and taxi drivers, who are earning handsome money through tourism activities within locality through tourism business. However, some of them have managed to register themselves as travel agents with district tourism boards. With the passage of time they have made linkages with big travel agencies and also personal relations with tourists.

Photographs 4.4.9 & 4.4.10: Local transporters in Shimla and Kullu districts
Local people have started their tour and travel business as **tour operators** and many as **travel agents** depending upon the nature of their work. There are around 588 travel agencies registered under DTDO (District Tourism Development Office) Shimla and 728 travel agencies registered under DTDO Kullu at Manali till March, 2014. These local travel agents are working as ground operators for many multinational travel agencies and as tour operators for many of their specialized tour packages. They are employing local people in their offices and generating multiplier effect in these two districts especially in district headquarters.

**Photographs 4.4.11 & 4.4.12: Local travel agents and tour operators in Shimla and Kullu districts**

Those local people, who have their properties at popular tourist spots in these two districts have constructed their own **hotels** and are operating successfully. However, many of them have given their properties on lease to ensure hotel occupancy. Both self-operated hotels and leased hotels are providing employment to many skilled and semi-skilled people of the locality. There are around 406 hotels in Shimla district and 613 hotels in Kullu district till March 2014 registered under DTDO offices at Shimla and Kullu.
Photographs 4.4.13 & 4.4.14: Hotels in Shimla and Kullu districts

Many of the natural sites within these two districts have been leased for eco-tourism business activities. Local people have given these sites for running eco-tourism camps and allied tourism business. Some of the local people have ownership of these sites and are running successfully. These natural eco-tourism camps are not only generating sources of income for local people but also providing tourists with unique nature treat with calmness and peaceful atmosphere away from congested places within these two districts. These eco-tourism camps are also generating a sense of respect among visiting tourists towards nature and its natural resources.

Photographs 4.4.15 & 4.4.16: Eco-tourism camp sites in Shimla and Kullu districts

Thus, numerous community based initiatives and activities have been initiated in Shimla and Kullu districts on priority. These initiatives are motivating local people
to show more participation in tourism business decisions within the locality and stand for the safeguarding of local community interests.

Thus, community based tourism is one of the most beneficial approach for sustainable tourism development not only in Shimla and Kullu districts but also in other districts of the state. The next chapter highlights demographic profiles of samples undertaken during the research work.