Heritage Tourism and Its Determinants: An Empirical Study in Himachal Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Submitted to the Central University of Himachal Pradesh for the Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

TOURISM

Supervised by: Dr. Suman Sharma
Submitted by: Arun Sharma

Department of Tourism and Travel
School of Tourism Travel and Hospitality Management, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala, India

August 2016
Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses growing number. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries. This growth goes hand in hand with increased diversification and competition among destinations. Tourism Towards 2030 vision of UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) shows that there is still a substantial potential for further expansion in coming decades. Existing as well as new destinations can benefit from this opportunity, provided they do the necessary to shape the adequate conditions with regard to business environment, infrastructure and facilitation, marketing and human resources. Along with this opportunity challenges also arise in maximising social and economic benefits and minimizing negative impacts. In case of Himachal Pradesh, where we have availability of both cultural and natural resources along with scarcity of employment sources, tourism can act as important economic tool for improving overall human development. The need of the hour is to systematically measure and estimate tourism impacts in order to plan for the holistic development by keeping in mind the various related factors.

The whole state is adorned with lush green valleys, snow clad mountains, limpid lakes, charming rivers, gushing streams, unique flora and fauna. This in combination with esteemed hill culture presents eye catching scenery to every visitor. State is well known for its neat and clean environment and has 12 districts, 75 tehsils, 52 subdivisions, 75 blocks, 57 towns and almost more than 20000 villages’ to its account. For the purpose of tourism, state government has identified four major tourist circuits. However the different theme based tourist circuits are also possible with multiple heritage resources available in the state. Himachal Pradesh has 33 wildlife sanctuaries, 4 national parks, 11 museums, 1 Fossil Park, 1 war memorial, 2 UNESCO world heritage sites and 40 ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) protected monuments. The state is a historic ruled by multiple kings for many centuries and it has contributed significantly in the field art and crafts, culture and yoga to make the rich cultural aura and cultural centre. The study of architectural built form of Shimla, Kangra, Kullu and Chamba districts lead by other historic palaces as landmark and a focal point of state’s elements indicate that the state is meticulously planned and accompanied by distinctive monuments, royal buildings, rock inscriptions, temples, Buddhist monasteries, gompas, lakes, and other rich cultural
attractions. Beside these the distinct natural features like pleasant weather, snow covered peaks, biodiversity, prominent valleys, important mountain passes, charming lakes, hot springs, waterfalls and strategic river system boosts the natural heritage assets of the state.

Along with such wonderful tourism resource base and earlier promoted tourism hub by government even before independence, surprisingly state is not able to occupy a space among top five tourist receiving states in the country. The reason for this may be the lack of proper exploitation of tourism resources. Whilst making a significant contribution to the body of knowledge, studies that have examined visitors’ experiences with heritage site attributes were conducted outside India. However, few studies call for further research in the field of heritage tourism and relationships between interpretation, visitors and place. Therefore, this study begins to fill the gap in research of people’s motivations to visit heritage sites and to contribute to a deeper understanding of heritage tourism consumption and strategic management of cultural heritage sites in Himachal Pradesh. Developing the Himachal heritage experience as a tourist attraction is one of the strategies to diversify the tourism product in Himachal Pradesh that has been predominantly focused on the snow, sun and hills. In addition, this study contributes to the development of awareness and understanding of heritage at sensitive sites those are linked to human being. Finally, the study fills a gap and complements the ongoing efforts of Himachal Pradesh government and other agencies towards heritage conservation and tourism development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The following objectives have been formulated on the basis of major research problem for the present study:

1. To analyze visitor’s perception towards and satisfaction from heritage tourism sites.
2. To identify the factors determining the success of heritage tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
3. To study the role of various stakeholders for the success of heritage tourism promotion.
4. To identify the major challenges and suggest practical measures for the development of heritage tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: Present study is exploratory in nature as it attempts to identify the factors related to heritage tourism site attributes in Himachal Pradesh (tourists) and for identifying factors that measure impact of tourists on destination attributes in Himachal Pradesh (stakeholders).
Research Design: After extensive literature review, key observation collected from different studies and field visit experiences of researcher descriptive research design was considered appropriate for this study.

Selection of data Collection Techniques: Data in the present study was collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through observation and direct communication (i.e. questionnaire and interviews) and secondary data was collected from public and private organisations and libraries. In addition, with the help of internet, accessible reports from worldwide libraries were used.

Population of Study: The targeted population for present study was tourists (domestic and foreign) visiting tourism sites and tourism stakeholders of Himachal Pradesh.

Sampling: The target participants/respondents of study consist of tourists (domestic and foreign) at heritage tourism sites and key tourism stakeholders (residents, tourism business, government representatives, visitor) in Himachal Pradesh. To select the number of respondents, quota sampling followed by judgement sampling has been used through following stages:

Stage One: Selection of Study District: For obtaining the opinion of tourists and stakeholders at heritage tourism attractions in four districts of Himachal Pradesh, namely Shimla, Kullu, Kangra and Chamba were selected objectively. Three district, Shimla, Kullu and Kangra attracts maximum number of tourists in Himachal Pradesh as per the state tourism department reports table1) and fourth district Chamba represents highest no. of ASI (Archaeological survey of India) protected monuments (Table 3.9 A &3.9B).

Stage two: Selection of Tourist Places: On quota basis 5 destinations from each district has been selected. (On the basis of historic value, attractions, accessibility, accommodation, activities, cultural value, infrastructure available etc.)

Stage three: Selection of Tourist Sample: Finally, the researcher has selected subjects from the various subgroups while taking into consideration the proportions noted in the previous step. On quota basis from each destination 25 Tourists (including foreign) and has been selected.

Selection of Stakeholder Sample: Since the total no. of direct and indirect stakeholders of tourism is not predictable therefore researcher selected on the quota basis 30 stakeholders from each district (at least 6 stakeholders per destination) registered with ministry of tourism including accommodation unit owner, transporter, travel agent, tour
Heritage Tourism and Its Determinants: An Empirical Study in Himachal Pradesh

operator, tourist guide and escorts, professional photographers, other service providers, representatives of government and non-government agencies, resident etc. as shown in stakeholders map chapter two (refer figure no 2.6.2).

Sample size: The present study was focused on four districts. The total sample size and distribution was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Respondent Type</th>
<th>No. of districts (A)</th>
<th>Sites per district (B)</th>
<th>Sample per tourist place (C)</th>
<th>Sample per district (D = B x C)</th>
<th>Total (A x D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>620</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pilot Survey: This study explores the relationship between tourist's satisfaction and destination attributes. The research was conducted with 500 tourists and 120 stakeholders in Himachal Pradesh. In an attempt to validate the data collection techniques, and check comprehensibility, whether the responses received would provide the information sought, a pilot survey was conducted at Kangra Fort in District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh, India in August 2013. The sampling procedure used to pre-test both the questionnaires (for tourists and for stakeholders) was purposive sampling. Questionnaire was pretested for evaluating reliability and validity. For ensuring the content validity of the scale items, items were examined by 2 academicians possessing more than 10 years of experience in the related field of study. Before submitting questionnaire for pilot testing all the suggestions of evaluators/experts were incorporated. For pilot testing questionnaire was administered on 100 tourists and 40 stakeholders respectively from district Kangra. All the items on which respondents faced difficulty were revised in wording. Reliability of scale items were assessed through Cronbach alpha (α).

FORMAT OF QUESTIONNAIRE: Questionnaire was used as research tool to record the responses of respondents. It was developed separately for tourists and stakeholders.

The Questionnaire for Tourist’s: It has been divided into four sections as:

Section A: focused on respondents personal information based on their demographic profile:
Section B: focused on travel behaviour characteristics of tourists. This section contains statements related to tourists travelling behaviour. All the statements were measured with the help of simple percentage method. Beside paying less importance to demographic features statements concentrates more on travel behaviour characteristics such as; purpose of visit, travelling partners, who influenced a tourist to visit Himachal Pradesh? What are his /her visit motivations, do tourists possess any past experience of Cultural/ heritage visit, what sources of information about destination they used, which mode of transport was used by them.

Section C: emphasized on the operational information. This section contains statements related to tourists satisfaction from heritage tourism site attributes in Himachal Pradesh were processed through exploratory factor analysis.

Section D: focused on general attitudes of tourists towards heritage tourism in Himachal Pradesh:

The Questionnaire for Stakeholder’s: It has been divided into four sections as:

Section A: focused on respondent’s personal information based on their demographic profile:

Section B: emphasize on general attitude of stakeholders towards tourism. This section consists of multiple sub-items related to satisfaction from work, income and government policies towards tourism development, business registration and seasonality. Statements in this section assess the role of government in development of tourism and its importance to the community, coordination among residents and government in terms of community participation for tourism planning.

Section C: records the responses regarding the tourism Impacts on the destination as perceived by stakeholders.

Section D: focused on the overall satisfaction of stakeholders with selected sites.

DATA ANALYSIS: SPSS was used for analysis of primary data in the present study. Descriptive analysis of data has been done with frequency distribution, percentage, bar charts and summated score ranking. For inferential analysis independent sample and dependent sample t-test, one-way independent ANOVA, post-hoc contrasts following turkey HSD (for groups with equal variances) and Games Howell (for groups with
unequal variances) were performed to compare differences between groups. Factor analysis was performed for identifying the factors related to heritage tourism site attributes in Himachal Pradesh (tourists) and for identifying factors that measure impact of tourists on destination attributes in Himachal Pradesh (stakeholders). Averages, variance, kurtosis and skewness were applied for normality test and outlier detection. Levene’s test was applied to test assumption of homogeneity of variance among groups.

CONCLUSION: Present research concludes that tourist satisfaction and resident’s acceptance of tourism is the key to the destination survival, therefore, it is suggested that government should ensure tourist as well as local community satisfaction together while planning for tourism development. Close mentoring and monitoring mechanism for the tourism activities and initiatives by government may contribute towards holistic tourism development. The tourism sector is a major economic engine and generates a large part of the employment and business opportunities to the residents worldwide. To link the commitment from within the society to cultural heritage and use it for tourism attractions, could be an opportunity to boost the tourism sector and therewith employment levels. Furthermore, it would increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the entire Himachal Pradesh Tourism. The findings of the present study are in consistence with various reports (KPMG, World Bank, PHDCI, MoT-GOI, and Department of tourism-Government of Himachal Pradesh etc.) and other studies those have reflected that inequality exists regarding tourism development schemes in HP. Maximum of the domestic tourism is represented by few selected districts and the minimum is represented by other districts. This factor needs to be tackled out by equal sustainable development of tourism in all the districts having tourism potentials and opportunities. Himachal Pradesh Government should realize that tourism is most important sector for the socio-economic development therefore state should not only be promoted as merely tourist destination but a high quality tourist destination. For the same authorities need to create excellent infrastructure at par with international standards while preserving the heritage and environment, creating employment opportunities to its natives and assuaging poverty. However, preserving the world’s cultural heritage for the enrichment and education of present and future generations is crucial. A great deal of tourism relies on places with natural, indigenous and historic significance which tourism products are based. In order to respect the cultural significance of the destination, people involve in tourism industry need to be sensitive to cultural groups who have a special interest in them and they need to directly involve in the planning and promotion of the destination. More importantly,
different sectors have to recognize that heritage resources are the key for their own sustainability and they are not exogenous factors. It has been observed that worldwide destinations relays on the resident’s accord towards any kind of tourism activity either developed or proposed. Local community may oppose any tourism developments due to multiple human stakes and beliefs. Therefore, before suggesting tourism development, it is mandatory to keep in mind the local factors, satisfaction of tourist and the community stake towards tourism development. Also, there has been a growing body of literature that addresses tourism as a viable economic option for local community development. However, there is little evidence on the literature that depict the nature of interaction between local communities and tourism development which is one of the core elements for developing a viable tourism industry in a destination. While the literature recognizes that the inclusion of the local community in tourism development is considerable, there have been some debates about their role.

The present study seeks to conclude in geographical context of an Indian hill state, Himachal Pradesh. These results are important to academicians, researchers, government and tourism marketers as they provide a base for segmenting tourists on the basis of their overall satisfaction from the heritage site attributes and reflects stakeholder’s opinion towards tourism development in general and heritage tourism in particular. Results of the study indicates that there is no significant difference in the satisfaction of tourists from various districts (only four here: Shimla, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu) from heritage tourism site attributes in Himachal Pradesh. This difference was tested on four identified factors named as destination charm/appeal, available heritage resources, availability of facilities and value for money. Result reflects that there exists an equal opportunity to develop all the districts for heritage based tourism in the state covered under this study. It was also found that the satisfaction of tourists from heritage resources from Shimla, Kullu and Kangra district was significantly higher than from Chamba district. Therefore, it is suggested that though district Chamba is credited with highest no. of ASI protected monuments (13) yet it requires immediate attention towards its existing heritage resources. Being the historic district dating back to 900 BC, it has huge potential for heritage based tourism development. However, majority of stakeholders thinks that Shimla district has been more successful in developing heritage tourism and activity based tourism then other districts of the state. These results are important for government to develop equal tourism infrastructure and facilities in other districts also.

Implications for Theory: From a theoretical perspective, the concept of expectancy-disconfirmation theory was introduced to guide this study. Expectancy-disconfirmation theory is one of the most commonly adopted approaches used to examine the customer satisfaction of consumers. Furthermore, it currently dominates the study of consumer satisfaction (tourist and stakeholders in present research). Therefore, this study used expectancy-disconfirmation theory as a guiding framework.

Implications for Practice: The implications for practice have been identified from tourist as well stakeholder’s perspective as mentioned below:

From Tourist Perspective:

- Tourist visits Himachal Pradesh for rest and relaxation followed by visiting friends and relatives and depends upon them as key sources of information, so there is a need to educate the people through heritage campaign. It may be achieved by making heritage as essential part of curriculum in schools and other institutions, celebrating the world heritage day (April 18th) like world tourism day (27th Sep.), and assigning a state heritage day may play a significant role towards heritage awareness.
- Authorities should work on the sources of information about tourist places, by generating the inventory of resources. A “State Heritage Register” on online and offline mode is suggested to record the heritage asset of the state. Publishing monthly magazines on destination specific attributes targeting unexplored heritage destinations inside the state can record and advertise the destinations.
- Majority of tourists visits HP with their families and friends and marked spiritual places as their foremost attraction followed by events or sports, culture & heritage. Therefore authorities need to maintain the aesthetic and spiritual value of the holy places by minimizing negative human impacts. The crowded shrines and mismanaged traffic along with shortage of parking facilities needs to be tackled out carefully. The parking of vehicles on highway should be avoided as it doesn’t pollutes the environment only but also create trouble for the smooth flow of traffic.
- Being naturally and culturally blessed destination Himachal Pradesh have very week transportation infrastructure compared with adjoining states. The week air link and poor railway tracks at the corners of the state are the hurdles for tourist
flow and reasons for seasonality factor. Establishment of an international airport and expansion of railway line are highly recommended in order to improve the connectivity. Along with a strong base of helipads (161), existing airports (3) there is no international flight available in the state. However, recent government recently authorized heli-taxi from June 8th 2016 onward after 4 years of isolation. Heli-taxi service can play a vital role towards increasing quality tourist flow rather than backpackers. ‘The Himachal Himalaya Heli- Tour through heli-taxi on the line may boost tourism inside the state, provided that the tourism product price must be in reach of a common man.

• The length of tourist stay in Himachal Pradesh can be increased with development of additional tourism activities. As water based activities were reported to be the most preferred activity by tourists in Himachal Pradesh followed by nature based, land based, air based, recreational and intellectual. Therefore, Himachal Pradesh, being a hydro energy destination should utilize its stored water base among Dam’s towards water based activities. It may be achieved under CSR (corporate social responsibility) and joint ventures of HPTDC with other hydropower corporations.

• The landscape and spiritual seats spread across the state boost this destination for yoga and meditation. The state is well known among majority of budget tourists those visit spiritual sites and strongly agreed that religious sites are properly managed. But the multiple field visit experience of researcher found difference in the ground situation. The famous spiritual places in the state are facing seasonality. They are full of long queues of devotees during selected months of Hindu Pilgrimages. Rest of the year there is limited number of visitor’s at such sites. The peak season of tourist’s in summer’s results into crowd and congestion near tourist places. This is apparently visible from unorganized parking, overbooked accommodation, overloaded coaches and mismanaged infrastructure. Moreover, the scarcity of water and poor parking facilities destinations like Shimla and Manali is a common observation. The other issues observed was that even though government is able to control certain temples and holy shrines under its control but there are so many other existing famous shrines and temples those are working as independent and government has no control on them. These issues require serious attention to manage the heritage tactfully.

• The results of research opined that development of cultural or heritage villages increases tourism. Though the schemes of state tourism department, ‘Har Gaun Ki

Kahani’- every village has a story, ‘Har Ghar Kuch Kahta He’- every house speaks something identified villages for tourism, but not able to channelize the tourist flow to rural areas except a few e.g. Pragpur- 1st heritage village of India, due to lack of tourism infrastructure. To channelize the rural heritage based tourism mechanism state authorities should work very closely with the rural community and market it to the outer world along with creative industries. Authorities must seek lessons from the Ski village and Pong Wetland tourism projects where local community refused the tourism development. However, the concept of cleanest and greenest villages is suggested towards development of rural heritage.

• The preference of domestic tourist’s to recommend Himachal Pradesh to others boosts the opportunities available in the state for tourism development. The availability of mega traditional events like Mahashivratri, Dushehra Festival, Lavi Fair, Minjar Fair etc. should be tapped in terms of increasing quality tourist rather than crowd. Therefore an international marketing campaign like Dubai Shopping Festival is recommended for all the mega traditional events of the state.

• The result of survey reflects that tourist destinations in the state present genuine work of art to the tourists. This further boosts the authenticity of local handicraft and cultural products. Therefore, it is suggested that nearby every tourist clusters HPTDC should establish local souvenir shops. It will provide the platform for local handicraft and at the same time will contribute towards the revenue generation. On the lines of Haryana highway tourism HPTDC should aim at establishment of key stoppage point and tourist complex on highways for tourist coaches.

• The Overall satisfaction of the tourists found to be greater than overall perception towards heritage tourism site attributes In Himachal Pradesh. However, overall satisfaction of domestic tourists found to be greater than overall satisfaction of foreign tourists towards heritage tourism site attributes in the state. The results are important to consider for increasing the foreign tourist satisfaction. Therefore, improvement in basic infrastructure and facilities along with sanitation standard is recommended in order to motivate the foreign tourist for revisit and recommend this destination to others.

- The factor destination charm has significant impact on tourist while selecting their destinations for travel. The indicators of destination charm are

destination appeal, unspoiled nature, natural wonder and scenery, availability of sightseeing packages, trained tourist guides, tourist privacy, accommodation facilities and airport efficiency. All these require immediate attention to tap the tourism potential available in the state towards developing economy with tourism.

• District wise results revealed that overall satisfaction of tourist from Kangra district was greater than overall satisfaction of tourists from other famous tourist districts; Shimla, Kullu and Chamba. Which reflects that potentials available for tourism in Kangra valley should be better utilized towards developing heritage based tourism. Kangra being the historic district can be better benefited with Dharmshala as a proposed smart city. The available heritage resources along with adventure and sports activities potential needs to be tapped in right direction. It can be done through developing theme based eco-heritage circuits and customizing the tourist needs in terms of tourist packages.

• There is significant difference in the satisfaction of tourists from various districts from heritage resources. The indicators of heritage resources are monuments, museums and art galleries, historical sites, heritage villages, artistic feature, heritage preservation efforts, local culture and life style. Government must ensure preservation and presentation of such resources. Which can be better managed by making district wise tourism development councils like Kerala state of India to tap the heritage potential of the state.

• Satisfaction of domestic tourists from charm of the destination is significantly higher than foreign tourists. Therefore Himachal Pradesh tourism requires improvements in destination charm factor from foreign tourist perspective. It can be improved by improving destination appeal, offering more variety of heritage based itineraries, providing trained manpower, improving accommodation facilities and ensuring strong air transportation link.

From Stakeholder’s Perspective:

• Majority of Stakeholders considered lack of information about tourist places as the foremost important problem in Himachal Pradesh tourism followed by parking facility, lack of trained manpower, poor availability of air transport, poor management of tourism resources and service standard of hotels. All these factors need to be tackled on priority basis.
• Economic effects of tourism show significant difference in the opinions of stakeholders from various districts. Therefore Government should prefer the natives of the destination for tourism related jobs as per requirement. It is suggested that local residents must be given preference for developing and managing tourism related projects.

• As there is no significant difference in the opinions of stakeholders from various districts for role of government in providing support to establish tourism product, but the district wise comparison of resources reflects the unequal development of the tourism product across the districts. Therefore Government must ensure equal sustainable development of tourism in all the identified districts with potential.

• E-Travel Trade Recognition scheme launched by Government was found beneficial for tourism related enterprises. But there are so many tourism related enterprises those are still not registered with the ministry of tourism. Authorities should encourage people to start their start-ups for tourism related business which can be achieved with the help of developing tourism entrepreneurship programs along with universities and other higher and technical institutions.

• Significant difference across districts was shown for role of government in developing religious/pilgrimage tourism. Results indicate that, opinion of stakeholders towards Shimla districts is significantly different from Kangra district and stakeholder’s opinion from Kullu districts is significantly different from Kangra district. Therefore there is a need to tap the available heritage potentials of Kangra and Chamba districts for expansion of well-developed heritage tourist clusters.

• More importantly, Himachal Pradesh has abundant heritage resource base but no systematic excavation has been done so far in the state. It is suggested that state must ensure systematic excavation in association with Anthropological Survey of India and Archeological Survey of India. It can be done through establishing a centre for anthropological, archeological and heritage research in close association with the universities and institutions of higher learning towards strategic heritage management.

The review of concerned literature reflects that tourism industry in India is based on certain core nationalistic ideals and standards which are: Swaagat or welcome, Sahyog or cooperation, Soochanaa or information, Sanrachanaa or infrastructure, Suvidha or
facilitation, Safaai or cleanliness and Surakshaa or security. Therefore care must be taken to develop the destinations as per these ideas for their long term sustainability without affecting the sentiments of any community or individual. The ancient past of India has ensured that the present and subsequent generations have abundant of historical and cultural heritage to be proud of. Himachal Pradesh has rich heritage, culture and traditions evident through the rich variety of customs, rituals, clothes and handicrafts of this state. Tourism is known as the backbone its economy. Despite its importance, tourism in this region is losing its charm, due to negligence of important tourism resources. The charming monuments and heritage sites in the state stand apart mutely today to paraphrase their story of delight, grief, bravery and sacrifice before visitors. The restoration efforts to safeguard valuable heritage assets at government’s end in association with various agencies and organizations are visible at few places of historic significance. But there are so many heritage sites those still stands apart and require immediate attention. Therefore this research concludes that preserving the past is the key for better future as heritage is not merely to recreate or celebrate but also to educate and entertain the generations and can be utilised towards tourism development which will create vibrant economies.

(Supervisor) (Research Scholar) (Head of the Department)