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# TOURIST RENDEZVOUS OF HIMACHAL “A BRIEF CASE STUDY” WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON KULLU AND MANALI

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## ABSTRACT

*By way of this article, the author wants to draw attention of the curious readers to the two very beautiful valleys of Kullu and Manali situated in a Hilly State of Himachal Pradesh in Indian subcontinent. These two snow clad places are treated as the most cherished and sought after destinations of nature's abode and tourist destinations which have their presence in the World's Tourism Map. Situated in one of the fast developing Hilly State of Himachal Pradesh in India these destinations are best known by the name of Kullu and Manali Valleys which most of the times are covered by snow and hosts many national and international fares. To mention here is the international fare of Dussehra which has found a respectable place in the great Epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata and has also got a historical mention and simultaneously has also been identified as a place of great works of scholars, researchers and thinkers across the national borders. In this article the author has tried to gather the information regarding the tourists, travelers and visitors, their opinion about these places, their problems and comforts during their stay, their suggestive measures and a brief analysis of the amenities and grey areas to make these places more conducive and attractive keeping a close watch the rich and healthy environment and biodiversity of the area vis –a –vis to explore and exhaust the vast Tourism potential which these two valleys inherit and needs to be traveled around by the adventurers, scholars, travelers and avid nature lovers across the globe.*

## Introduction

Travel is as old as evolution of mankind. Since time immemorial times man has traveled far and wide, in pursuit of food, cloth, shelter and for satisfaction of his requirements and urges. This never ending quest of man has been a dynamic force and a most decisive factor in the economic, social, natural, spiritual and artistic development of the society. This desire of exploring new avenues has resulted in boosting of the tourism sector thereby increased income of the masses.. Tourism has become one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the world. Tourism has played a unique and pivotal role in any national economy. It has a tremendous potential for providing employment, promoting the growth of ancillary industries, earning foreign exchange, yielding tax revenues and development of industrially backward region. Tourism is not only an economic activity of importance to national economic development but also an important medium of cultural exchanges amongst different nations of the world. The word “Tourism” has its origin in a Latin word ‘Tornos’,

meaning a tool for describing a circle or turners wheel. Tourism is an amalgamation of various sectors. In Indian perspective the tourism activity has been ranked at number two next only to the oil industry in terms of revenue generation. Tourism is concerned with pleasure, leisure, adventure, holidays, extensive travels with a sole objective of exploring new endeavors and mental satisfaction.. It is difficult to describe tourism. Some think of tourism as an industry. If an industry is defined as a number of firms that produce similar goods and service in competition with each other, then tourism cannot be conceived as an industry because tourism offers complementary services. Tourism is not an industry, it is better to call it an activity. It is an activity that takes place when people move to some other place for leisure or for business and stay at least for 24 hours.

Tourism means the business of providing information, transportation, accommodation and other services to travelers. Tourism helps in creating a value for the products and thus activates the idle resources for the countries. Tourism is regarded as a natural renewable resource activity with visitors portrayed as coming only to admire not consume the landscape, customs and movements of a destination area. Tourism is a combination of business and recreation. Tourism can not exist in isolation. It has certain basic components without which it cannot operate. In order to understand tourism systematically, it is necessary to know various components which together make tourism as a whole. Broadly the three basic components of tourism are as follows:

- a) Transport-These modes may be motor car, a coach, an airplane, a ship or a train.
- b) Locale – Locale may include the holiday destination and what it offers to the tourists. The holiday destination may offer natural attraction like sunshine, scenic beauty or sporting facilities etc.
- c) Accommodation – It is another basic component, which is essential for providing food and rest.

## **Tourism in Himachal Pradesh**

The word HIMACHAL derives its origin from two Hindi words, ‘HIM’ and ‘ANCHAL’ meaning ‘SNOW’ and ‘LAP’ respectively. Thus etymologically, Himachal Pradesh (Hill state) stands for the ‘region which lies in the slopes and foothills of snow’ i.e. The Himalaya. Himachal is also known as ‘Dev Bhumi’ situated in the heart of the Western Himalayas. A tryst with nature in all her glory-a visit to Himachal Pradesh would be just that. A mountain country of crystal lakes, pretty flowers, ancient shrines and beautiful people where life is as timeless as the mountain themselves. Himachal is blessed by the mother nature with myriad lakes,, soul relaxing sites, cool and serene waters that are spots of immense beauty. Rivers in deep gorges and plaid mountains lakes, thick forest and acres of spree, mountain sides draped in snow and green alpine meadows, all form a part of this immense spectrum. There is skiing, heli-skiing and ice-skating. There is the thrill of paragliding and the test of stamina with mountain-cycling, one can go for camping, fishing etc. and play golf or take a safari by car, jeep or on motorcycle. There is mountaineering and

rock climbing adventures also. Himachal Pradesh hosts a winter festivals and snow carnivals too. Tobogganing is possible in winters and boasts of various water sport competitions.

## **Tourism in Kullu and Manali**

Away from the plains of Punjab, Kullu- the Valley of Village Gods- nestle in the Pir Panjal ranges of the Western Himalayas. These happy valleys of Himachal Pradesh have a peculiar geographical feature. The mountain formation of this region is like other parts of The Great Himalaya is composed of high ranges with sharp crest and steep terrain. The charm of these valleys can be characterized by its semi-tropical forest vegetation. The hillsides are covered with dense pinewoods, higher up stand deciduous arboretum, rhododendron, evergreen oak, fir and spruce. The rivers of Kullu flow in a most beautiful and meandering pattern. The Beas runs down from the snowy heights of the Beas Kund and joins its main tributaries, the Parvati at Bhuntar, the Sainj and the Trithan below Larji. The climate of this valley is as delightful as the scenic beauty of any countryside. The mountain surrounded in perceptual ice and snow assumes imposing appearance when winter comes to an end. Tourism that brings equitable economic benefits to the local community protects the environment and cultural heritage, enhances the social capital by increasing community participation and encourages all round development of the area. This can be achieved by following the community oriented environment led tourism policies. Tourism must be integrated into the total development planning in the area with cross-sectional linkage worked out carefully. The valley of Gods as the Kullu valley has come to be known is perhaps the most delightful region in the Western Himalayas. The ancient Hindus regarded it as the furthest limit of human habitation- Kulantapitha, and its original name finds mention in the epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as Vishnu Purana.

In the spring Kullu is at its most colorful with pink blossoms and white flowers, while the higher slopes are aglow with gorgeous rhododendrons, with autumn, clear blue skies return and fields and forests alike show wonderful tints of crimson and ochre. By December, there is no greenery except the majestic pines and cedars in the forests. In winter the hillsides are flanked in white. Situated on the banks of the Beas, Kullu, the headquarters of the District, serves as a nerve centre of the valley and is the starting place for a number of treks. The deodar- fringed grassy Maidan, Dhalpur, is a stage for many colorful fairs and festivals.

## **Places worth visiting in Kullu**

Raghunathji Temple, Vaishnu Devi, Jagnathji Temple, Bijli Mahadev Temple, The Great Himalayan National Park, Kanawar Sanctuary, Kaishdhar, Bajeshwar Mahadev Temple(Bajaura), Kasol, Manikaran, Larji, Pulga and Khirganga, Banjar, Shoja, Raison, Katrain, Naggar, Malana.

## **Places worth visiting in Manali**

Kothi, Solang Valley, Rahla Falls, Manali Sanctuary, Rohtang Pass, Keylong, Triloknath and Udeypur.

## Review of Literature

Kaur Jagdish (1985) highlighted that totality of natural and socio-cultural elements in the area create tourism- magnetic atmosphere which constitutes its resource base for tourism. Singh and Hemaraj (1987) conducted a study on tourism in Kullu Valley. They examined the problems and prospects of tourism development in the Kullu Valley. They concluded that the valley annually counts about 60 per cent tourists of Himachal Pradesh. About 33 per cent of the tourists were academicians, economists and sociologists. Generally they visited the valley for sightseeing, trekking, photography, fishing, skiing mountaineering and other natural environment activities. High rates of inadequate public transport facilities, lack of cheaper three star hotels and adequate accommodation facilities create inconveniences to tourists. They estimated that about 60 per cent of the tourists faced language problem at the remote centers because of illiteracy of the local people. Buckley and Pannell (1990) studied environmental impacts associated with travel accommodation and recreational activities such as; soil erosion and compaction, damage to vegetation, disturbance to wildlife, water pollution, increased fire frequency, vandalism and noise. They suggested the importance to provide incentives to encourage low impact types of recreation such as contemplative naturalist and wilderness travel activities, and discourage high impact type's vehicles and accommodation involving building and engineering construction. Vijay and Bhagavan (1992) made an attempt to highlight the relationship of tourism with international trade. Gupta, D.R. (1994) in his study on tourism in Himachal Pradesh, pointed out some problems which are faced by visitors such as; accommodation, comparatively high tariff charges of hotels, poor sanitary services, frequent power failure and high collie/labour charges.. Muneet (1995) in his study on Himachal tourism retrospect and prospect, highlighted the untapped potential of tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

Shimla, Kullu and Manali are three main centers in the State which mainly attract tourists. Puri, R.M. (1997) laid stress that Government should make tourism a year round activity in Himalayan region, besides keeping in mind that environment and ecological balance should not be disturbed. Mohinder Chand (1998) suggested policies to promote domestic tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Birundha, V. Dhulasi (2003) emphasized on eco-tourism.

## Need and significance of the study

In the absence of strong industrial and commercial base, tourism plays a pivotal role in boosting the economy of Himachal Pradesh. The state has a potential to offer activities of varied interests to match the diverse taste of tourists from all segments. To bring prosperity and to create direct and indirect new employment opportunities for the people of the state and simultaneously to maintain harmony with social and cultural values of local masses through travel and tourism, careful planning and development of tourism is needed. The review of studies is concentrated on defining the concept of tourism and its various economic impacts. However, a little research has been conducted on tourism in Kullu and Manali. There has been great change in the role of tourism in these days. Tourism plays a vital role in the economic development

of the country and of a state. Therefore keeping in view the above mentioned facts, it becomes necessary to carry out the study on "Tourism in Himachal Pradesh- A case study of Kullu and Manali". The present study will be an attempt to establish research gap among various studies undertaken earlier.

### Objectives of the study

- To study the tourist inflow in Kullu and Manali.
- To study the profile of tourist visited in Kullu and Manali.
- To study the impact of tourism in the development of Kullu and Manali.
- To study problems and prospects of tourism in Kullu and Manali.

### Research methods

In this section the procedure of sample selection methodology of data collection, analysis of data collection has been carried out to analyze the tourism in Kullu and Manali. In the light of objectives set fourth the information has been collected from various tourists in Kullu and Manali of Himachal Pradesh. The tourists include both foreign and domestic tourists. The data required for the study are collected from primary as well as secondary sources.

**Primary data:** In order to obtain desired information regarding the tourists, their opinion regarding various facilities and price charged for various facilities and to evaluate the tourism activities introduced by the government of Himachal Pradesh from tourist point of view, primary data has been used. The data has been collected through interviews, observations, schedules/questionnaires etc.

**Sample design:** Multistage sampling or cluster sampling has been used to obtain the required information from the respondents. There are several stages in which the sampling process has been carried out. The whole of Kullu and Manali is divided into six tourist spots.

As it was not possible to get information from each and every respondent, therefore a quota of 20 tourists from each place has been fixed. It includes 15 domestic tourists and 5 foreign tourists. Further a quota of 20 respondents each from general public has been fixed to get required information.

Tourist Destinations	No. of Respondents		Total	General Public.
	Indian	Foreigner		
Kullu	15	5	20	20
Sainj	15	5	20	20
Vaishno Devi	15	5	20	20
Bijli	15	5	20	20
Mahadev	15	5	20	20
Manikaran	15	5	20	20
Manali	15	5	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>

## Hypothesis

Keeping in view the objective of the study following hypothesis have been developed for propose of the study.

- Chi-Square Test of independence is applied to find the relationship between demographical variables with the pattern of use.
- Null Hypothesis-H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables of tourists and pattern of use.
- Alternative Hypothesis- H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant relationship between demographic variables of tourists and patterns of use.
- Demographic variables: Nationality, sex, age, education qualification, occupational, total income.
- Pattern of use Includes: Budget, purpose of visit, season of visit, number of visits, mode of traveling, types of accommodation used and direction of stay.
- Test of goodness of fit is applied to evaluate the impact of tourism with respect to various facilities.
- Null Hypothesis- H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the Tourists regarding price charged for various facilities/services is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis- H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the tourists regarding price charged for various facilities/services is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis- H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the tourists over the various tourism promotion facilities, basic facilities and other facilities is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis- H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the tourists over the various tourism promotion facilities, basic facilities and other facilities is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis- H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the tourists regarding hosts is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis-H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the tourists regarding hosts is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis- H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding socio-economic impact of tourism is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis- H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding socio-economic impact of tourism is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis-H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding socio-cultural impact is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis-H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding socio-cultural impact is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis-H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding infrastructure development is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis-H<sub>a</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding infrastructure development is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis-H<sub>0</sub>: Opinion of the public regarding cultural impact of

tourism is equally distributed.

- Alternative Hypothesis-Ha: Opinion of the public regarding cultural impact of tourism is not equally distributed.
- Null Hypothesis-H0: Opinion of the public regarding negative impact of tourism is equally distributed.
- Alternative Hypothesis-Ha: Opinion of the public regarding negative impact of tourism is not equally distributed.

**Tools used :** Consistent with the objectives of the study, different tools/techniques have been used for analysis of data. The data collected has been presented in tabular form and analyzed with the help of various mathematical tools and statistical tools. In mathematical tools the data has been analyzed with the help of percentage method. Statistical tools are applied to the data presented in the tabular form. The following statistical tools are used in present research work.

(a) Descriptive statistical tools.

(b) Non-parametric tests.

**Formation of reporting :** The present study is divided into seven parts.

Part-I deals with introduction part.

Part-II deals with review of literature.

Part-III deals with research design

Part-IV comprises with profile of the tourist visited Kullu and Manali -An appraisal.

Part-V includes role of tourism in development of Kullu and Manali -An Evaluation

Part-VI deals with tourism policy in Himachal Pradesh.

Part-VII comes with summary, conclusion and suggestions.

Profile of tourists visited Kullu and Manali - An Appraisal

The present chapter deals with the critical evaluation of tourist facilities in Kullu and Manali. Tourists came here to enjoy the scenic beauty, good climate, healthy & peaceful atmosphere, pollution free environment in order to get relief from their busy/hectic schedules. They availed various facilities at the place of their stay but they also faced certain problems during their stay in Kullu and Manali Vallys. There are some results on the foundation of classification of the tourists on the basis of sex, nationality, marital status, annual income with season of visit, mode of traveling, places to stay, facilities availed, duration of stay and purpose of visit. Data has been collected through questionnaires/schedules for this purpose. It has been found that majority of tourists like to visit Kullu and Manali in the month of August to November irrespective of there level of annual income, marital status, sex and nationality. There is no relationship between sex and mode of traveling. But in case of nationality, the first preference of Indian tourists is to travel by bus, where as in case of foreign tourist. Their first choice was to hire taxi for their traveling. Married tourists preferred to visit by their own vehicles, where as in case of unmarried, majority tourists visited Kullu

and Manali by bus. Majority of the tourists preferred buses as mode of their traveling to visit Kullu and Manali irrespective of their annual income. Hotel is the first choice of the respondents to stay in Kullu and Manali. It is followed by their liking for the guest houses. Most of the Indian and foreign tourists like to stay in hotels.

The majority of married tourists stay in the hotels where as the majority of unmarried tourists stay in the guest houses at Kullu and Manali. There is a significant relationship between annual income and their choice to stay. The tourists decide hotels, guest houses, Dharamshala, relative/friends and any other places for stay at Kullu and Manali according to their income groups respectively. Among facilities such as skiing, ice skating, indoor games, outdoor games, hang-gliding, fishing, boating, river rafting, golf etc, majority of tourists irrespective of their sex, place of birth or domicile prefer indoor games most. However, tourists spend on leisure activities in according to their budget/ annual income.

There is no significant relationship between sex, nationality, marital status and annual income with duration of their stay at Kullu and Manali. Majority of the tourists visit Kullu and Manali because of its peaceful atmosphere and its picturesque beauty. This can be categorized as sole purpose of majority of the respondents of all categories.

### **Analysis on the basis of existing facilities**

Majority of respondents strongly agree that transportation, accommodation facilities are good in Kullu and Manali and they also strongly agree that culture of Kullu and Manali is good and admirable. Law and order condition is also good in comparison to rest of tourist destinations they had visited.. It is further revealed that the Banks have installed adequate ATM Machines at conspicuous places throughout Kullu and Manali valleys and visitors used them comfortably. But, majority of the respondents had a grievance that was with regard to inadequate sanitary facilities in these reasons. They were not comfortable with the condition of roads in the region. Majority of the tourists were in appreciation as to the hospitality services provided by the hotel staff in Kullu and Manali.

### **Analysis of the tourist opinion regarding problems faced by them**

Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that public transportation, accommodation, food service and parking facilities are comparatively good in Kullu and Manali and they seemed satisfied with the same.

### **Analysis of the tourist opinion regarding tourism promotional facilities**

Majority of the tourists who visited these places were of the opinion that entertainment, tourist information services, local sight seeing facilities, shopping, telecommunication, health services and maintenance of tourist sports facilities were satisfactory..

### **Analysis of the negative impact of tourism development**

It is evident from the views of majority of the respondents that increase tourism activity has also increased pollution. Tourism has increased illegal practices like smuggling, gambling and drug abuse etc. in Kullu and Manali regions. It has resulted in increased prices of essential commodities. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that tourism development in this region should be held accountable for adoption of westernized culture. They were of the opinion that tourism is responsible for overcrowding, congestion and loss of moral and ethical values in Kullu– Manali region. Increase in tourism activities has not only increased the habit of alcoholism but also led to increased corruption and criminalization in Kullu and Manali.

### **Analysis of the opinion of the tourists regarding hosts**

Majority of the respondents agreed that hosts had been very co-operative. They did not face any kind language problem. They have viewed that hosts are business minded here and their behavior is very cordial and attitude friendly.

### **Analysis of the views of the tourists on the basis of various facilities**

The majority of respondents opined that accommodation facilities, transportation services, tourist information services and maintenance of tourist spots should be improved. They are satisfied with shopping, food services, entertainment and parking facilities in the region.

### **Role of tourism in the development of Kullu and Manali-An Evaluation**

Tourism has been considered as an activity of worldwide significance. Tourism acts as a catalyst to economic, social and physical development of any State. Tourism contributes to a considerable amount of employment, improving standard of living of the people, earning foreign exchange and there by facilitating overall development of a country and a state. Present part analysis's the role of tourism in the development of Kullu and Manali. It assesses the socio-economic impact of tourism, cultural impact of tourism development and negative impact of tourism. Following tables are drawn to get the conclusions on the role of tourism in the development of Kullu and Manali. Table V.1 comprises socio-economic impact of tourism, Table V.2 has socio-cultural impact of tourism, third Table V.3 deals with cultural impact of tourism development, Table V.4 depicts infrastructural impact of tourism development and fifth Table V.5 deals with Negative impact of tourism.

TABLE V.1 : Socio-Economic Impact of Tourism

Attributes	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	X <sup>2</sup>	P value
Tourism has increased the standard of living.	48	62	10	120	2.31	.621	-.337	-.640	36.2	.000
Tourism provides better market for local products	82	38	--	120	2.68	.467	-.798	-1.38	16.13	.000
Tourism is a major source of earning foreign exchange to the state.	72	40	8	120	2.53	.620	-.985	-.051	51.2	.000
Tourism development is helpful in developing your social status.	36	72	12	120	2.20	.602	-.113	-.412	45.6	.000
Tourism development is helpful for increasing social interaction among different groups of society. If yes, to what extent the role of HPTDC is significant in this regard.	28	74	18	120	2.08	.616	-.050	-.343	44.6	.000

Source: Data collected through Questionnaire/Schedule

TABLE V.2 : Socio-Cultural Impact of Tourism

Attributes	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	X <sup>2</sup>	P value
Tourism has increased your education level	24	66	30	120	1.95	.671	.058	-.751	28.8	.000
Tourism development has changed your lifestyle	28	68	24	120	2.03	.660	-.798	-.667	29.6	.000
Tourism development is helpful in generating more employment opportunities	64	52	4	120	2.50	.565	-.113	-.694	50.4	.000
Tourism development is helpful for increasing social interaction among different groups of society. HPTDC is significant in this regard.	62	56	2	120	2.50	.534	-.050	-1.18	54.6	.000

Source : Data collected through Questionnaire/Schedule

**TABLE V.3 : Cultural Impact of Tourism Development**

Attributes	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	X <sup>2</sup>	P value
Tourism development is helpful for preservation of cultural heritage	48	58	18	120	2.21	.688	-.311	-.866	20.6	.000
Tourism development is helpful to save the lost tradition	32	70	18	120	2.11	.637	-.103	-.537	36.2	.000
Tourism development is helpful to generate better understanding among different culture	56	52	12	120	2.36	.660	-.563	-.667	29.6	.000

Source: Data collected through Questionnaire/Schedule

**TABLE V.4 : Infrastructural Impact of Tourism Development**

Attributes	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	X <sup>2</sup>	P value
Tourism development has increased infrastructural facilities	54	62	4	120	2.41	.558	-.252	-.882	49.4	.000
Tourism development is helpful for increasing following facilities such as health	22	82	16	120	2.05	.562	.016	.213	66.6	.000
Road facilities	40	72	8	120	2.26	.575	-.083	-.464	51.2	.000
Shopping facilities	44	64	12	120	2.26	.631	-.280	-.636	34.4	.000
Entertainment facilities	40	74	6	120	2.28	.552	.018	-.493	57.8	.000
Telecommunication facilities	46	70	4	120	2.35	.544	-.011	-.812	55.8	.000
Informational facilities	48	64	8	120	2.33	.598	-.283	-.633	41.6	.000

Source: Data collected through Questionnaire/Schedule

TABLE V.5 : Negativ Impact of Tourism

Attributes	To great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	X <sup>2</sup>	P value
Tourism has increased pollution	72	38	10	120	2.51	.648	-1.00	-.092	48.2	.000
Tourism has increased illegal practices like smuggling, gambling	78	32	10	120	2.56	.644	-1.20	-.314	60.2	.000
Tourism development has increased the prices of essential commodities.	52	62	6	120	2.38	.582	-.311	-.709	46.6	.000
Tourism development is responsible for adoption of westernized culture.	68	42	10	120	2.48	.648	-.879	-.293	42.2	.000
Tourism development is responsible for overcrowding and congestion in the state.	62	34	24	120	2.31	.788	-.629	-1.11	19.4	.000
Tourism has increased the drug abuse	44	58	18	120	2.21	.688	-.311	-.866	20.6	.000
Tourism has increased the habit of alcoholism	36	54	30	120	2.05	.743	-.081	-1.17	7.8	.000
Tourism development is responsible for the loss of normal values	36	66	24	120	2.05	.671	-.058	-.751	25.8	.000
Tourism has helped in creating the corruption	24	56	40	120	1.86	.721	.206	-1.044	12.8	.000

Source: Data collected through Questionnaire/Schedule

## **Tourism policy of Himachal Pradesh-A critical appraisal**

Himachal Pradesh is endowed with all the basic resources necessary for thriving tourism activity. Geographical and cultural diversity, clean peaceful and beautiful environment, forests, lakes, mountain, rivers and streams, sacred shrines, historic monuments, and that most important resource of all-friendly and hospitable people. During 2004, total tourist arrivals in the state was 65, 49,413 of which 2, 04,344 were foreigners. Tourism already contributes nearly 2 percent of our state domestic product. With careful planning and development there is no reason that this cannot be increased many times over.

### **Need for a tourism policy**

Tourism activity in total harmony with the social and cultural values of the local communities and is environmentally sustainable and to create direct, indirect and ancillary new employment opportunities for the people is essential to create prosperity for the people of Himachal Pradesh through travel and tourism. Policies are products of time and circumstances, available resources and technologies and most importantly the needs of the stakeholders. There is a need of following objectives of policy regarding tourism development in the state.

### **Objectives of policy**

- To establish Himachal Pradesh as a preferred tourist destination in the country.
- To make tourism a prime engine for economic development and prosperity of the state and to use it as a major means for providing employment, especially in remote and tribal areas.
- To promote tourism in an eco-friendly and responsible manner respecting the state's natural, cultural and socio-religious environment.
- To promote eco-tourism and to use it for creating an awareness regarding environment preservation, unique bio-diversity of the Himalayas, natural, historical and cultural heritage of Himachal Pradesh.
- To encourage a strong and sustainable private sector participation in creation of tourism infrastructure in the state.
- To encourage non-government organizations for the conduct of tourism activities.
- To develop synergy between various departments of the Government for integrated approach of the tourism. The department of tourism should work in a close co-ordination with the forest department, department of language, art and culture, department of youth services and sports, department of horticulture, department of ayurveda etc.
- To strengthen the existing infrastructure.
- To use tourism for the development of skills of people and create a culture of entrepreneurship in the state through human resource development.
- To increase the duration of stay of tourists through a host of strategy such as promoting activity based tourism, organization of events etc.

- To position Himachal Pradesh as an international destination for adventure tourism.
- To encourage trekking, camping and mountaineering activities to generate awareness and love for nature.
- To aggressively protect the core inventory of Himachal such as nature and heritage.
- To increase the number of foreign tourists in the state.
- To promote high value and optimum volume tourism.
- To strengthen civic amenities and standard of cleanliness and hygiene at established tourist destinations and centers of pilgrimage.

### **SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)**

#### **Strengths**

- One of the rare places in the world offering five distinct seasons, thus having potential to attract tourist inflow throughout the year.
- Political and social stability.
- Himachal Pradesh is recognized as a peaceful and hospitable state. Most of the foreigners come to mediate here and enjoy the natural beauty.
- Salubrious climate.
- Pollution free environment. In most of Indian cities, pollution is one of the major problems but Himachal is free from pollution.
- Offers a rare conglomerate of eco-tourism, pilgrimage, adventure, culture, heritage, leisure, wilderness etc.
- Fairly good infrastructure. Road and Air connectivity, Variety of hotels, guest houses to provide good facilities to the tourists.
- High literacy rate
- Rich history and heritage that has something to offer to all. Its Buddhist Monasteries, which are centuries old, ancient temples, churches and cemeteries etc.
- Government of Himachal Pradesh offers a special package of incentives for setting up of tourism units which encourages tourists to come in H.P.
- Strong political will to promote tourism.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Negligible air and rail link in the state. Most of the time weather condition is not favourable which create problems to visitors. In Himachal Pradesh there is one rail line that is from Kalka to Shimla and rest of the places are connected with road only. By air, there are three airports-Dharamshala, Kullu and Shimla. So, there is lack of airways and railways.
- Inadequate flow of foreign tourists. Foreign tourist inflow is fluctuating. A figure for foreign tourist inflow is not rigid. Year to year data fluctuates.

- Non-disbursal of tourists round the year, putting severe strains on civic infrastructural during the peak season.
- There is also lack of trained guides at important tourist places and historical tourist sites.
- Saturation at the established tourist's destinations.
- No new major tourist destinations have come up recently.
- Lack of adequate parking places at important tourist places; most of the places in Himachal Pradesh are congested so it is so difficult to park their vehicles.
- Poor marketing of the state abroad and inadequate marketing within the country.
- Very little budget.
- Problem of land acquisition.
- In H.P. major portion is under forest. So there is problem of conversion of forest.

### **Opportunities**

- Strong potential for activities based tourism such as river rafting. Para-gliding, trekking, mountaineering, water sports, mountain biking, car rallies etc.
- A strong base for heritage tourism to attract persons from all walks of society and religious beliefs.
- To develop an ideal destination for nature lovers by promoting eco-tourism.
- To create synergy between heritage and pilgrimage tourism.
- Development of wetlands of the state to attract nature lovers especially bird watchers.
- To promote the state as an Open University and learning centre in mythology, anthropology and ornithology etc.
- Position it as an ideal destination for the film industry.
- Himachal has something to offer to persons of all ages, groups, beliefs and interests. There is unlimited scope for development of varied tourist packages.
- Himachal can become one of the leading adventure destinations in the world.
- Promote wilderness tourism for lovers and seekers of nature, peace and quiet.
- Create new destinations in yet unexplored but beautiful areas. This would also ease the burden on established tourist destinations.

### **Threats**

- Tremendous strain leading to collapse, at times, of civic amenities at leading tourist destination during the season.
- Haphazard growth & construction threatening the environment, especially at the leading tourist destinations.
- An alarming growth of concrete structures creating a disharmony with the

local environment.

- Unscrupulous commercialization of tourism could erode the social and cultural values.
- Aggressive competition amongst the leading tourist states and a strong promotion of tourism by other states.
- Lack of coordinated strategy by the different government departments.
- A large increase in volume and limited increase in value.
- Poor garbage/waste disposal posing threat to the environment.

### **Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions**

Tourism can be classified on the basis of different purposes of visit of tourists such as recreation, pleasure, leisure, holiday, pilgrimage, sightseeing, health, business and cultural tourism etc. Kullu occupies the fourth position in respect of area among the Districts of Himachal Pradesh. The present survey shows that the arrival of the tourists is increasing every year. While summarizing the classification of tourists on the basis of sex and season of visit, it is observed that majority of Indian as well as foreigners visited in the month of August to November. Majority male tourists prefers to visit by their own vehicle where in case of female tourists they prefer either to travel by bus or through own vehicle. Most of the tourists stayed in hotels. Majority of the tourists like indoor games during their visit to Kullu and Manali. There is a significant relationship between nationality and budget of the tourist. It is noted that maximum number of tourists visited Kullu and Manali because of its peaceful atmosphere. There is an important relationship between nationality and their mode of traveling to Kullu and Manali. Majority of the tourists are satisfied with transportation, accommodation, entertainment, food services, credit card facility and telecommunication facilities. They are of the opinion that maintenance of tourist spots require more improvement. It is noted that majority of Indian and foreign tourists stayed in Kullu and Manali for three days. There are some negative impacts of tourism in the region. Smuggling, gambling, increased prices of essential commodities, adoption of westernized culture, overcrowding, drug abuse, loss of moral values and pollution have increased due to tourism in Kullu and Manali. Classification of general public on the basis of their opinion regarding socio-economic impact of tourism shows that majority of the general public agreed that tourism has increased standard of living in Kullu and Manali. It can be concluded on the basis of majority of the general public surveyed that tourism is helpful in earning foreign exchange, provides better market for their local products, provides more employment opportunities and has increased their education level. Tourism has changed life style of the public to some extent as is evident from the responses of general public. It has increased infrastructural facilities, shopping, interaction among different groups of society and entertainment facilities in Kullu and Manali. The negative aspects of tourism can create a serious problem to public as well as to the state. Therefore the time bound efforts should be made to meet these challenges, so, that more and more tourists could visit more freely. Government of Himachal Pradesh, Tourism Policy, 2000 proposes to develop tourism activities in the rural and tribal areas. In continuation to this, new tourist

spots shall be developed. It is proposed to promote sustainable tourism; it states that economic cultural and ecological factors and new job opportunities shall be explored in rural, tribal and remote areas. The private sector investment shall be encouraged. It is proposed to promote adventure tourism and religious tourism in the state. The pilgrimage sites shall be developed by improving internal roads, sanitation, drainage and other pilgrimage facilities. Tourism development is helpful for the preservation of historical monument, to save lost traditions and understanding among different cultures as supported by the analysis based upon the opinion of majority of the general public.

## **Suggestions**

On the basis of the conclusions drawn by examining the different aspects of tourism in Kullu and Manali, following suggestions may be given in order to make the tourism a success in this region as well as in the state.

- Adequate infrastructural facilities are essential so that the flow of tourists may be maintained or could be increased.
- The tourist's priorities and preferences are changing regularly in respect of attractions, and facilities. Thus the Department of Tourism in Himachal Pradesh should follow the system of conducting regular survey on tourist behavior to fulfill their requirements up to their expectations and satisfaction level.
- All the places of tourist's interest must be exploited properly, in environmentally sustainable ways. The ropeways must be constructed to connect the difficult hills of tourist's attractions. The places of tourist's attraction must be published at every level. The tourist information centre must be well equipped with information about all the places of tourist interests.
- There is need to create man made images in the valley which are essential from tourism point of view. There is need to infuse tourism awareness in the society to ensure an increased social and positive interaction among hosts and tourist as to encourage tourism industry in the state. This will be helpful in providing extra attraction to the tourists coming from outside.
- The entertainment facilities should be increased as to enhance satisfaction level of the tourists and to ensure their longer stay.
- Prices of commodities should be fixed and should be reasonable.
- The private sector investment can be encouraged to increase tourism activity.
- Tourism plans must be developed in such a manner that these must help in the welfare of the general public of the state.
- Law and order must be improved so that illegal practices can be stopped.
- Government should take steps to promote the culture of Kullu and Manali.
- The tourist spots should be maintained properly. The important ancient pilgrimage places should be linked to the main road in order to make it more convenient to the tourists to visit these places.

- Special tour and travel packages should be given to all as to promote tourism in Kullu and Manali.
- New tourist attractions should be introduced and developed. Emphasize should be given to develop untapped potential areas from tourism point of view.

These suggestions can be considered by the authorities to make conducive policies and plans to ensure best tourism in Kullu and Manali.

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