

TOURISM IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: AN EVALUATION OF KANGRA REGION

Manoj Sharma *

Abstract

Tourism in Himachal Pradesh has been recognized as one of the most important sectors of the economy as it is being realized as a major engine of growth and one of the major tourist spots in India. The study analyzed the primary and secondary data collected from the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The major objective of the study included examination of the purpose of tourists' visit in the region and evaluation of the existing facilities available to the tourists. Statistical tools viz Chi square test, standard deviation and arithmetic means were applied for the justification of primary and secondary data. The study revealed that the tourist inflow in state over 2006-2015 period has witnessed increase in both domestic and foreign tourists. In 2014, the tourist arrival from the foreign countries has gradually decreased i.e. (-) 5.93 percent and on the other hand domestic tourist's arrival has recorded continuous increase i.e. 8.22 percent. This study concluded with recommendations on how the tourism industry regulators and policy makers can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the tourism industry in the state and specifically in the Kangra region.

Keywords: Tourist spot, Basic facilities, Domestic and Foreign tourists, Perceptions.

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is one of the leading states in tourism in India. Since, last decade, there had been a very sharp increase in the inflow of tourists to Himachal Pradesh. The main strengths of tourism in the state were its history, tradition, culture and the beautiful spots like Kullu, Manali, Chamba, Dalhousie, Khajjiar (known as mini Switzerland of India), Shimla, Kufri, Naldhera and Dharamshala etc. Himachal is endowed with all the basic resources necessary for thriving tourism activities like geographical and cultural diversity, clean and beautiful streams, sacred shrines, historic monuments besides the friendly, hospitable and peace loving people. From the last one and half decade, Kangra region and Shimla have emerged as 'must visit' tourist destinations in India.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Himachal Pradesh University, Regional Centre, Dharamshala, Email: manojhpu@gmail.com

It is a fact that the state is endowed with abundant natural beauty and attractions, yet there are certain areas, which have remained unnoticed and there is enough scope to tap its potential. Similar observations have also been noticed from the studies conducted by Jayasheela and Hans (2007), Kumar (1992), Dutta (1996) Mishra and Acharya (1981), Jackson and Davis (1997), Singh and Ahuja (2011) that India has vast potential for the development of tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh stands at 9th position in terms of foreign tourist arrivals with a share of 2.41 percent of foreign tourists to India. However, the performance of Himachal Pradesh in attracting tourists had been better than the national average growth rate. Keeping in view the above facts, there was a need to undertake a study to evaluate the purposes of tourists visit and also to evaluate the existing facilities available to the tourists in Kangra region, one of the fast growing tourist destinations of Himachal Pradesh and therefore the present study was conducted with the following objectives

Objectives

1. To study the inflow of tourists in India and Himachal Pradesh.
2. To examine the district wise inflow of tourists in Himachal Pradesh;
3. To evaluate the existing facilities available to the tourists in Kangra region;
4. To give suggestions to improve the tourism in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

Methodology

The sample for the present study consisted of the tourists visiting Kangra region. The process of selecting the sample was multistage in nature. At the first stage, four representative tourist places in Kangra region namely Dharamshala city, Mcleodganj, Kangra City and Chamunda Mandir were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. At the second stage, a random sample of 150 tourists was taken. The sample had 150 tourists which included domestic as well as foreign tourists and these respondents were selected on the basis of convenience. To collect the data, a schedule was prepared and administered to the tourists. In order to explore and tap the issue and concerns related to tourism in Kangra region; tourist guides, social workers and influential personalities of the area were contacted for the opinion survey. Certain information was collected through observations. Consistent with the objectives of the study, different techniques like simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, skewness and chi-square test etc. were used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion:**Tourists' inflow in India**

The data of top ten most visited states of India by foreign tourists has been presented in Table-1. Maharashtra with 24.7 per cent share of foreign tourists was found on 1st place followed by Tamil Nadu with 17.18 per cent share of the foreign tourists. Delhi with 11.32 per cent share of the foreign tourist was observed on 3rd place followed by Uttar Pradesh with 9.62 percent whereas Rajasthan with 7.00 percent share was found on fifth place and Himachal Pradesh ranked 10th position (2.41 per cent) in terms of arrival of foreign tourist in India.

Table 1: Tourists inflow in India

Rank	State/UT	Foreign Tourist Visits in 2012	
		Number	Percentage Share (%)
1	Maharashtra	51,20,287	24.7
2	Tamil Nadu	35,61,740	17.18
3	Delhi	23,45,980	11.32
4	Uttar Pradesh	19,94,495	9.62
5	Rajasthan	14,51,370	7
6	West Bengal	12,19,610	5.88
7	Bihar	10,96,933	5.29
8	Kerala	7,93,696	3.83
9	Karnataka	5,95,359	2.87
10	Himachal Pradesh	5,00,284	2.41
	Total of Top 10 States	1,86,79,754	90.1
	Others	20,51,741	9.9
	Total	2,07,31,495	100
Mean	1.86		
Std. Deviation	1.47		

Source: *India Tourism Statistics 2012*(Government of India, Ministry of Tourism, Market Research Division).

The performance of Himachal Pradesh in attracting tourists was found better than the average share in number of tourists across India. However, the rank of 10th in terms of number of tourists visiting the state in 2012 indicated that there was further potential which may be leveraged by showcasing the state as an important tourist destination. The value of mean 1.86 which was found very least and on the other side standard deviation was 1.47 which indicated large variations about the scope of tourism among different states of India.

District wise tourists' inflow in Himachal Pradesh

It was revealed from the Table no. 2 that Kullu with 19.35 per cent share in domestic tourist inflow was on the top followed by Shimla with 19.04 per cent, Kangra with 13.99, nearly 8.33 per cent of the tourists visited Una district, Chamba was visited by 6.55 per cent followed by Mandi, Solan, Sirmour, Hamirpur, Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti districts during 2015.

Table No 2: Tourists' arrival for the year 2015

District	Domestic tourist	Foreign tourist	Total
Bilaspur	13,68,807 (7.99)	350 (0.086)	13,69,157 (7.809)
Chamba	11,22,894 (6.55)	1,197 (0.295)	11,24,091 (6.411)
Hamirpur	8,55,263 (4.99)	4 (0.000)	8,55,267 (4.878)
Kangra	23,96,970 (13.99)	1,12,843 (27.78)	25,09,813 (14.316)
Kinnaur	1,17,216 (0.68)	2,695 (0.664)	1,19,911 (0.683)
Kullu	33,14,463 (19.35)	1,09,468 (26.95)	34,23,931 (19.53)
Lahaul & Spiti	86,591 (0.506)	4,612 (1.135)	91,203 (0.520)
Mandi	10,86,231 (6.34)	10,478 (2.580)	10,96,709 (6.256)
Shimla	32,61,152 (19.04)	1,54,155 (37.95)	34,15,307 (19.48)
Sirmaur	10,16,060 (5.93)	3,377 (0.821)	10,19,437 (5.815)
Solan	10,72,486 (6.26)	6,692 (1.648)	10,79,178 (6.155)
Una	14,26,912 (8.33)	237 (0.58)	14,27,149 (8.141)
Himachal Pradesh.	1,71,25,045 (100)	4,06,108 (100)	1,75,31,157 (100)

Source: Himachal Pradesh Economic Survey Report 2015-16; Figures in parentheses show the percentage to total

Further, the above data on foreign tourists revealed that, Shimla was visited by 37.95 per cent foreign tourists, followed by Kangra with 27.78 per cent of the tourists, and Kullu was found at third place about the arrival of foreign

tourists during the year 2015. Mandi was visited by 2.58 per cent of the tourists, followed by Solan with 1.648 percent, Lahaul & Spiti with 1.135 percent, Kinnaur with 0.664 percent, Una with 0.58 percent and Hamirpur was not a priority place for foreign tourists.

Perceptions of Tourists Regarding Basic Facilities/Services

The perceptions of tourists were collected against eight services indicted in Table No. 3 on five scale criterion. The responses of the tourists towards the quality of food available in Kangra region and its surrounding places reflected that 12 per cent tourists rated the quality of food as poor while 26.7 percent respondents kept their opinion reserved over the issue of quality of food available at tourist spots. Mean score and standard deviation also supported the fact that quality of food on an average was good. The chi-square value (26.93) was found significant about the perception of tourists on the quality of food in the region.

Table No. 3: Perception of Tourists about the Facilities/Services

Services	Perception of Tourists about the Facilities					Total	Mean	S.D.	Chi-square	P-Value.
	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor					
Quality of Food	20 (13.3)	50 (33.4)	40 (26.7)	18 (12)	22 (14.6)	150 (100)	2.81	1.24	26.93	.000
Sanitary Services	18 (12)	48 (32)	50 (33.4)	20 (13.3)	14 (9.3)	150 (100)	2.73	1.09	45.86	.000
Water Supply	15 (10)	62 (41.4)	45 (30)	10 (6.6)	18 (12)	150 (100)	2.69	1.12	67.26	.000
Road Condition	12 (8)	58 (38.6)	30 (20)	25 (16.7)	25 (16.7)	150 (100)	3.02	1.32	17.26	.002
Power Supply	55 (36.7)	60 (40)	10 (6.6)	15 (10)	10 (6.6)	150 (100)	2.12	1.22	81.73	.000
Banking Services	35 (23.3)	45 (30)	30 (20)	25 (16.7)	15 (10)	150 (100)	2.59	1.28	17.06	.002
Police Services	28 (18.7)	30 (20)	15 (10)	47 (31.3)	30 (20)	150 (100)	3.13	1.43	15.20	.004
Medical Services	40 (26.7)	70 (46.6)	10 (6.6)	20 (13.3)	10 (6.6)	150 (100)	2.26	1.18	86.66	.000

Source: Field Survey 2015-16; Figures in parentheses show the percentage to total.

About 33.4 per cent of the respondents were found neutral about the quality of sanitary services. A large number 32 per cent of the respondents considered it good, followed by 13.3 per cent poor, while 12 per cent considered it excellent and the remaining 9.3 per cent considered it very poor. The opinion of the tourists' reflected a wide variety of responses regarding the quality of sanitary services at different tourist destinations. Mean score also supported the findings, while standard deviation was found more than one which indicated more variation among the perception

of the respondents. The value of chi-square (45.86) brought out that there was a significant difference among the perception of respondents.

Availability of safe drinking water gives boost to the development of tourism at any place and it was revealed from the study that 41.4 per cent tourists considered water supply as good, 30 per cent noted to be neutral and 12 per cent found it to be very poor. 10 per cent tourists found the quality of potable water as excellent and only 6.6 per cent of the tourists considered it poor. Mean score also supported the findings while the standard deviation was found 1.12 which indicates large variation among the perception of the respondents about the drinking water at Kangra region. Calculated value of chi-square (67.26) revealed that there was a significant difference in the opinion of tourists regarding the availability of services of drinking water and uninterrupted supply of quality water.

The good network of roads plays a vital role in tourism development with a network of good condition roads to ensure smooth traffic of tourists. It was found that 38.6 per cent tourists had perceived that road were in good condition, 20 per cent noted to be neutral, 16.7 per cent considered poor and equal number of tourists found it very poor and about i.e. 8 per cent considered it excellent which was also supported by mean and standard deviation.

Electricity and power supply facility was considered satisfactory at different tourist destinations under the study. Nearly 40 per cent of tourists considered power supply good, 36.7 per cent found it to be very good, 10 per cent noted it to be poor, 6.6 per cent neutral and equal number considered it very poor. Mean score and standard deviation also supported the above responses and showed that there was a significant difference in the opinion of tourists regarding the electricity and power services available at different places in the study area.

Further, it was noticed from the study that about 30 per cent of the respondents considered the banking services as good, almost 23.3 per cent considered it excellent, nearly 20 per cent were neutral on this issue while 16.7 percent and 10 percent revealed it to be poor and very poor, respectively. Mean and standard deviation also supported the fact that banking services in the region were good. Calculated value of chi-square 17.06 was more than table value at 5% per cent level of significance and indicated that there was a significant difference in the opinion of tourists regarding the banking facilities available in the study areas. Police services were considered as poor by 31.3 per cent tourists while 18.7 percent

tourists considered it very good. Medical services were rated well by the tourists as majority chunk of the tourists (46.6 per cent) considered it good.

Findings

On the basis of above analysis, the following conclusions are derived:

- The tourist inflow in the state over 2006-2015 period has witnessed increase in both domestic and foreign tourists. In 2014, the tourist arrival from the foreign countries has gradually decreased i.e. (-5.93) percent in 2014, and on the other hand domestic tourist's arrival has noticed continuous increases i.e.8.22 percent.
- A large number of tourists were attracted towards Kangra region by its natural beauty, cool and pleasant climate. Hence, the charm of natural images such as good climate, scenic beauty and hilly terrain are the main causes which brought tourists to Himachal Pradesh.
- The majority of tourists visited Kangra region for the purpose of pleasure and holiday relaxation.
- Food was considered good by about one third of the tourists.
- Electricity and power supply position was considered satisfactory.

Suggestions

In order to strengthen the tourism in the region, the below noted initiatives are suggested:

- The measures to check the exploitation of tourists by locals to be initiated.
- Entertainment facilities should be enriched in order to ensure a longer stay of tourists. More playgrounds and parks must be made available.
- Basic infrastructural facilities have to be developed further. Condition of roads should be improved.
- Adequate parking space may be made available to the tourists at the tourist places.
- Entry fee and other dues charged by the local authority at tourists place need to be curtailed in order to boost tourism.
- Provision for safe drinking water at all tourist destinations as well as to ensure uninterrupted supply of water.
- The roads to be kept in good condition throughout the year.
- Parking space as well as basic necessities must be provided with diverse range of culinary must be provided to cater to the needs of tourists from various places.
- Information must be available to tourists at all places and local culture and handicrafts must be promoted.
- Good, fast, economical and easily accessible banking, medical and police services should be made available in different tourist destinations to avoid any hardships to the tourists.

References

- Davies E.T. and Gilbert D.C. (1992) "A case study of the development of farm tourism in Wales" *Tourism Management* 13 (1), 56-63.
- Dutta D.M. (1996) "Step to Reduce the Conflict between Tourism & Environment in India, in *Tourism in 21st Century*" Edited by Professor G.S. Batra, Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi.
- Dutta Sanjeev (2012) "Manali's Growing popularity with Tourists" and "Kullu Manali Home Stay, Tourism with A Difference" online article available at hillspot.in, May 27 and June 7, 2012.
- Jayasheela and Hans V. B. (2007) "India's Tourism Industry – Is a Take-off Round the Corner?" *Asian Economic Review*, 49(3), 459-474, 2007.
- Jutla R. S. (2004) "Visual Image of the City: Tourists' Versus Residents' Perception of Shimla, A Hill Station in Northern India", *Tourism Geographies*, Vol.2, No.4, pp.404-420.
- Kaur Jagdish (1985) "Himalayan: Pilgrimage and the New Tourism", Himalayan Books, New Delhi, 1985.
- Kumar M (1992), *Tourism Today - An India Perspective* Kanishka Publication, New Delhi.
- Mishra R.P., S.S. Sharma and Ram Acharya (1981) *world tourism*, Jaipur: Delta International.
- Singh Narendra, Ahuja Sunaina and Nedelea(2011) "Comparative Analysis between Centralized and State-wise Tourism Campaigns in India" , *Journal of tourism*, Issue 13,pp 14-20 pdf file available at <http://www.revistadeturism.ro/rdt/article/view/7/3>.
- Sinclier, D. and T. Huybers (2005): "Tourism and Economics Development: A Survey", *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.45, No. 12, pp. 22-28.
- P.K. Mishra, and Himansu B. (2010): "Casuality between Toursim and Economic Development": Empirical Evidence from India, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 12, pp. 201-205.
- Kreishan, F. M (2008): "Tourism and Economic Development": The Case of India, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.34, No.8, pp. 255-259.
- Economic survey of Himachal Pradesh 2015-16 economics and statistics department.