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Tourism Innovations: A Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC) is a bi-annual international referred research Journal focusing on academic perspectives in Tourism and Hospitality. Being an journal of inter-disciplinary field, the journal focuses on various aspects of tourism and hospitality like, Tourism Issues, Tourism Impacts, Eco-tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Medical Tourism, Health Tourism, Culture Tourism, Culinary Arts, Service Operations and other tourism, travel and hospitality areas. The objective of the journal is to have a comprehensive collection of research articles and dispersal of updated knowledge and information about tourism sector.

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Abstract

The term untapped means “if the availability of something valuable is unused, it is not yet used or taken advantage of”. In tourism, untapped tourist destination means “a destination which is identifiable as a tourist destination but not used to gain economic benefits due to lack of development and promotional activities”. The main objective of this paper is to identify the untapped tourist destinations in Punjab. To meet the objective 200 domestic and 100 foreign tourist respondents were requested to mention any unexplored area in the questionnaire, which they have come across during their visit to Punjab. From the present research, it is found that there are as many as sixteen untapped destinations, which are gradually fading out physically as well as metaphorically for want of proper care, maintenance and promotional activities. The state of Punjab is home for vast array of tourist attractions that are available in the form of cultural, historical and archeological resources. If these resources are properly exploited, the tourism sector can offer a lot to support the state economy.

Keywords:

Untapped, metaphorically, exploited, potential

Tourism in Punjab: The Untapped Potential Destinations**Dr. Manju Mittal**

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Introduction

Punjab is a congregation of myriad tourist attractions-forts, pilgrim centers, monuments, archaeological sites, palaces, wetlands, cultural festivals and many others. Its native's life style, cultural heritage, colorful fairs and festivals held enduring attractions for the tourists. The other attractions include wild life sanctuaries and landscapes for eco-tourism, rivers for adventure tourism and science museums for science tourism, but the state has been benefiting little from the tourism sector. The state's diversified historical and cultural resources have not been well promoted and changed into economic values in a way that they can support nation's development efforts.

Review of Literature

Hyma and Wall (1979), in their study, discussed the potential for development of tourism in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. It was found that because of low priority formerly ascribed to tourism, fragmented responsibilities and lack of supporting infrastructure, the full potential of these

activities has yet to be realized. Batra and Chawla (1995), in their research paper entitled “New Vistas in Developing Tourism- A Case Study of Punjab State in India” highlighted the fact that impact of tourism on national economy is becoming increasingly important today because of growing size of tourism market and global business changes taking place. Kumar (1995), in the study entitled “Himachal Tourism in Retrospect and Prospects” highlighted that a great potential in the state is still untapped and provides ample scope for growth. Raina (2001), conducted a research entitled “Tourism Development in Jammu & Kashmir- A Case Study for Decentralized Planning”. The study was primarily concerned with the structuring of destination zones of attraction clusters in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The study identified several unexploited attractions of tourist appeal in the three provinces of Jammu & Kashmir. Ortege (2002), discussed the heritage management of the destinations at Madrid and its tourist attractions to analyze, what are the main challenges that managers have to face and how they can overcome. The study carried out a comparison between the heritage experience of both the United Kingdom and Spain. Henderson (2006), in the research paper, investigated how Dubai overcame the various barriers in destination development. It was observed that barriers relate to poor accessibility, a perceived lack of conventional attractions and limited promotion. Kumar (2008), conducted a study entitled “Growth and Development of Tourism in Rajasthan: Associated, prognosis and Strategic Considerations”. The study analyzed the tourism resource potential and existing tourist plant facilities in study area.

Research Gap

The development of tourist destinations is a central theme in the tourism literature and researchers approach the subject from various perspectives and disciplines. The in-depth review of literature reveals that none of the tourism studies conducted so far did attempt to identify the untapped tourist potential in a particular state like Punjab. Hence a need is felt to carry out a comprehensive study on “Tourism in Punjab: The Untapped Potential Destinations” in order to identify the untapped tourism destinations in the state.

Rationale of the Study

Punjab tourism has vast potential for generating employment and earning large sums of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the state's overall

economic and social development. Thus the present study is an effort to identify the unexplored tourist destinations in Punjab. These destinations if properly developed and promoted can provide several benefits to the state economy as well as enhance the satisfaction of tourists and visitors to the state.

Objectives of the Study

Followings are the objectives of the study.

- To identify the untapped tourist destinations in Punjab.
- To study the basic requirements for the development of a tourist destination.
- To make suggestions for exploring the untapped tourism potential in Punjab.

Research Methodology

To identify untapped tourism destinations in Punjab, the data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. To collect the primary data, the 200 domestic and 100 foreign tourists were requested to mention in the questionnaire any unexplored area, which they have come across during their visit to Punjab. The destination, which was described as untapped tourist destination by more than three tourists has been considered in the study. To get the information about the importance of destinations, published and unpublished material on historical, geographical, cultural and ecological personality of Punjab, travelogues, travel brochures, tourist guide maps and industry reports etc have been referred. Wherever possible, physical survey has been carried out to authenticate the secondary data.

Untapped Tourist Destinations in Punjab

From the present research, it is revealed that there are as many as sixteen untapped destinations, which are gradually fading out physically as well as metaphorically for want of proper care and maintenance and promotional activities. Out of a sample of 200 domestic tourists, 152 tourists mentioned different places in Punjab as unexplored or untapped destinations. Out of a sample of 100 international tourists, only three tourists answered this question and they stated about the unused beautiful villages in Punjab. The list of untapped destination is as follows.

Table 1.1
Untapped Tourist Destinations in Punjab

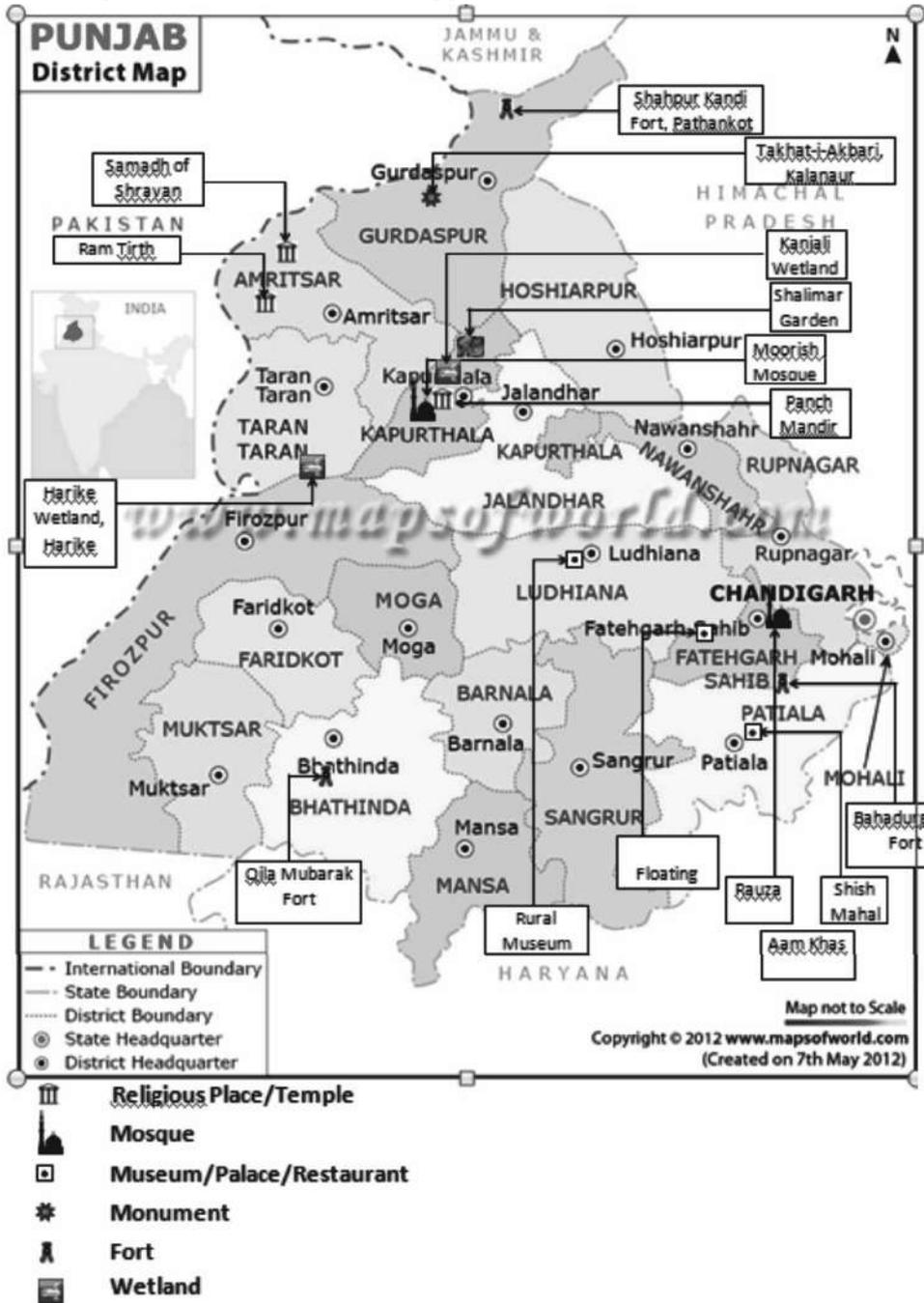
Sr. No.	Destination	District	Category
1	Aam Khas Bagh	Fatehgarh Sahib	Historical
2	Rauza Sharif	Fatehgarh Sahib	Religious/Historical
3	Floating Restaurant	Sirhind	Leisure/Recreational
4	Sheesh Mahal	Patiala	Heritage/Archaeological
5	Bahadurgarh Fort	Patiala	Heritage/Archaeological
6	Museum of Rural Life of Punjab	PAU, Ludhiana	Cultural/Heritage
7	Qila Mubarak Fort	Bathinda	Historical/Archaeological
8	Shahpur Kandi Fort	Pathankot	Historical/Archaeological
9	Moorish Mosque	Kapurthala	Historical/Spiritual
10	Panch Mandir	Kapurthala	Religious/Historical
11	Shalimar garden	Kapurthala	Heritage/Historical
12	Kanjli wetland	Kapurthala	Ecological
13	Takht-i-Akbari,	Kalanaur	Heritage/Historical
14	Harike Wetland	Harike Pattan	Ecological
15	Samadh of Shravan	Amritsar	Religious/Heritage
16	Ram Tirath	Amritsar	Religious/Historical

Source: Compiled from information provided by the tourist respondents

Table 1.1 exhibits the various destinations described by the respondents as unexplored destinations. The table mentions the district and the category of tourism to which a destination belongs. All these destinations have been further presented in the map to show their location in the state. (See Fig.1.1)

Figure 1.1

Map showing Location of Untapped Tourist Destinations in Punjab

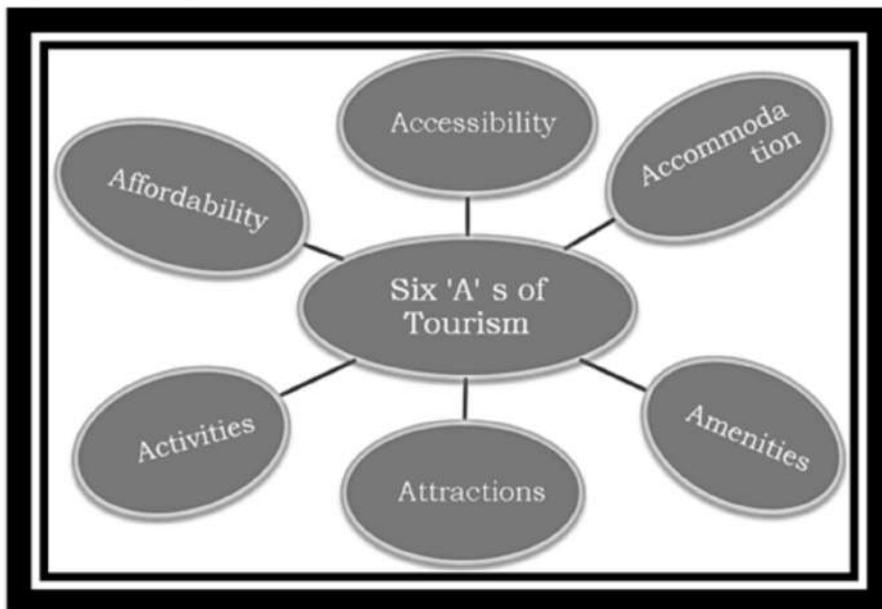


Basic Requirements for Tourist Destination Development

It's a well known fact that there can be no tourism without a destination. When people travel, they go to some particular place and the choice of place depends upon the importance and attraction of the destination. For a destination to develop and sustain itself there must be a presence of certain elements. These elements are interrelated and have to function properly with coordination of each other. Roday et al (2010) have provided the six elements of destination development which are extremely vital to the success of any destination. These elements are popularly known as six A's of Tourism.

Figure 1.2

Diagram showing Basic Requirements of Tourism Destination Development



- **Accessibility**–This refers to the transport and transport infrastructure to reach the destination. Tourists look for comfort and hassle-free travel. There are many important factors such as comfort, cost, convenience, time for travelling, and safety which need to be considered before undertaking a journey. Tourists look forward to smooth travel in terms of regular schedules, well developed network of roads, railway lines, airports and adequate means of safe transport.
- **Accommodation**–It plays a central role in the development of tourism. Every tourist needs a place to stay and relax. Tourists look for clean,

hygienic and well maintained accommodation with a comfortable bed, clean linen, and sanitary facilities with adequate hot and cold water supply. Without suitable accommodation there would be no tourism as accommodation is the temporary home of the tourist at the destination.

- **Amenities**–It refers to the facilities available at the destination which help in meeting the needs and wants of tourists. Tourist amenities include food and beverage facilities, drinking water, electricity, good communication network, local transport, automatic teller machine (ATMs), proper garbage and sewage disposal system and medical facilities etc.
- **Attractions**–This is the principle reason for undertaking travel to a particular destination. Attractions are classified into four categories such as Natural attractions, Human made attractions, Cultural attractions, Social attractions. Attractions form the core of tourism experience and the reason people travel to a particular destination.
- **Activities**– People takes a break because they want to see and do different things. A number of activities may be available at the destination to suit various age groups and social backgrounds. Tourists may be attracted to a destination for any activity which helps them to spend their time with pleasure.
- **Affordability**–Tourist should be able to afford the trip in terms of transport cost, accommodation charges, entrance fees and other expenses. It means that the trip should be affordable in both time and money. Tour operators should prepare the package tours keeping affordability in mind. These group tours work out cheaper than individuals booking their own tickets and making itineraries for themselves.

A successful destination should have a good balance between these six A's and ensure that there is something to see and do for people of different ages and backgrounds so that a large number of people visit the destination (Roday, 2010).

Initiatives Taken by the Government

Department of Tourism and PHTPB with the help of funds from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the loan from Asian Development Bank is conserving the numerous monuments across the state in order to

preserve the heritage of Punjab. Asian Development Bank has conducted a feasibility study to identify the tourism potential sites in the state. ADB has identified a list of projects to be executed under “The India Inclusive Infrastructure Development Project” on behalf of Government of India. An array of projects for tourism development is to be carried out in the next five to ten years on the basis of recommendations from UNWTO Master Plan. Table 1.2 depicts the amounts sanctioned by the central government that has provided for the preservation and promotion of untapped tourist destinations.

Table 1.2
Amounts Sanctioned for the Development of Destinations

(Rs. in lacs)

Sr. No.	Year	Name of Destination	Amount Sanctioned
1	2005-06	Development of Sheesh Mahal	145.77
2	2005-06	Quila Chowk	13.04
3	2006-07	Moorish Mosque	26.62
4	2006-07	Shalimar Bagh	155.16
5	2006-07	Panchmandir	27.7

Source: Compiled from Project Documents, Department of Tourism, Punjab.

Findings of the Study

It is observed from the literature of these destinations that all the destinations are of national importance having glorious history. Though the state government has taken several initiatives to tap the untapped potential of the state, but it is mostly in an unsystematic way and the destinations are crumbling for want of care and patronage. Some amounts have been sanctioned by the central government for the preservation and promotion of untapped tourist destinations. However the funds were so thinly distributed that it was not possible to fabricate all the necessary elements for the successful destination development. The successful development of a destination requires easy accessibility, clean accommodation, basic amenities, special attractions and ample activities for visitor from different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds, besides being affordable in terms of time and money. It is therefore desirable to apply this theoretical framework of five A's for the development of these untapped destinations.

11.0 Suggestions of the Study

- Punjab as a state has been considered largely as a transit point by the domestic and foreign tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, but it is much more than that. If properly developed and supported by requisite infrastructure, Punjab has considerable potential to be promoted as an important tourist attraction, and a destination point rather than a transit point to both the domestic and foreign tourists visiting northern region of India.
- The state government must allocate the required funds to tap the untapped destinations identified by present research work.
- It should conduct special research to identify other untapped tourist destinations in different parts of the state.
- While destination development, the government should pay attention to all the six A's of destination development in order to make it a successful tourist destination.

Conclusion

Punjab tourism has vast potential for generating revenue and employment besides giving a fillip to the state's overall economic and social development. Much has been achieved by way of investments in tourism destinations. But much more remains to be done. There are so many destinations which are not looked after seriously. If these destinations are properly developed and supported by requisite infrastructure, Punjab has considerable potential to be promoted as an important tourist attraction, and a destination point rather than a transit point to both the domestic and foreign tourists. These destinations lack any of the required six A's of destination development. Punjab Tourism should give due importance to the overall destination development and promotion to fully tap the potential of these destinations.

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