

Vol. 13, No. 1, February, 2023

Bi-Annual

ISSN No. 2278-8379

TOURISM INNOVATIONS

An International Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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www.tourismcongress.wordpress.com

Tourism Innovations: An International Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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ISSN : 2278-8379

VOLUME : 13

NUMBER : 1

Publication Schedule:

Twice a year : August-December

Disclaimer:

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Claims and court cases only allowed within the jurisdiction of HP, India

Published by: Bharti Publications in Association with Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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Editor's Note

As of February 2023, the global tourism industry continues its journey towards recovery from the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sector has made significant strides, it remains in a state of flux, with several key trends and developments shaping its trajectory.

The tourism industry has shown resilience and adaptability in the face of the pandemic. Many countries have eased travel restrictions, leading to a gradual increase in tourism activities, both domestically and internationally. However, recovery rates vary across regions. Domestic tourism has been a lifeline for the industry. Travelers have been exploring their own countries, contributing to the revival of local tourism economies. This trend is expected to continue as people prioritize safety and convenience. The vaccination campaigns worldwide have been a critical factor in reopening borders and restoring traveler confidence. Vaccine passports and proof of vaccination are becoming commonplace for international travel.

The digital transformation of the tourism sector has accelerated. Online booking platforms, contactless payments, and virtual experiences have become standard, enhancing both convenience and safety for travelers. Environmental and social sustainability have gained prominence. Travelers are increasingly interested in eco-friendly and responsible tourism options, pushing the industry to adopt more sustainable practices.

Traveler behavior has shifted, with a greater emphasis on health and wellness. Wellness tourism, outdoor activities, and remote destinations have seen increased interest. The integration of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR), has enhanced the travel experience. AI-driven chatbots and AR-enhanced tours are examples of these innovations. The aviation sector has seen a gradual recovery in passenger numbers. Airlines have implemented safety measures, such as improved air filtration systems, to mitigate health risks during flights. Challenges persist, including uncertainty about the emergence of new variants, sporadic travel restrictions, and a need for industry-wide standardization of health and safety protocols.

The tourism industry's recovery journey is ongoing, marked by a mix of optimism and caution. While the path ahead may still be uncertain, the industry's ability to adapt, embrace sustainability, and prioritize traveler safety positions it well for future growth and resilience. Monitoring the evolving landscape and embracing innovation will continue to be essential in the months to come.

Chief Editors

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Manali: Unexplored Places in Western Himalayas

S.P. Bansal & Rohit Thakur

Abstract

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Manali over the past two decades, which is playing a crucial role in improving the living standards of people in the valley. On the other side it also creates opportunities for local residents of Manali. Further plays a crucial role in the economic growth of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Over the past two decades' growth in tourism has helped the valley in economic and socio-cultural growth. Tourism has also positioned Manali as an important tourist destination for both domestic and international tourists in the world map. Tourism has also helped in the growth and development of various public facilities like road networks, communication networks and transport services like airports, civil amenities. Located in the lap of the Himalayas, Manali is one of the most beautiful hill stations in the country. Winding mountain paths, lush green hillsides, gurgling streams and (Gardner, 2007) snow-capped mountains makes Manali more beautiful and picturesque.

Though Manali is not similar to other hill stations in India that are more dominated by British buildings and stories attached to them, rather it is paradise for honeymooners and adventure seekers. Manali has a story related to Hindu mythology. It is believed that in Manali the arch of Rishi Manu stopped after a huge flood that is why, with the name of Manu, Manali got its name. There are a number of adventure activities for the tourists like skiing, trekking, mountaineering, zorbing, rafting etc. (Gardner, 2007)

Manali the "Valley of Gods & Goddesses" is blessed with natural beauty, which attracts travellers from all over the world, Manali is also high in demand for Bollywood too. Movies like Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, Bang Bang, Jab We Met, Dev D, Krrish, etc. have been shot here. This paper focuses on highlighting the unexplored places and scope for various forms of tourism in the coming future.

Keywords: Unexplored Destination, Picturesque, Snow-Caped, Mountaineering, Honeymooners, Bollywood.

1. Introduction

The world is becoming a global village due to globalisation. People have started to visit and explore new tourist destinations around the globe, Himachal Pradesh being one of the most beautiful states in the country and have been attracting tourists from far off lands in the past couple of decades. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the state of Himachal Pradesh. On the other side the industry has a great impact viz, environmental, social and economic in the state. Tourism has created enormous opportunities for job creation and

revenue generation for the state, about 6.6% of state GDP is contributed by the sector. In short, the tourism sector offers opportunities for tourists to escape from their daily routine life and visit Himachal and relax in various quaint hill stations and beautiful towns of Himachal. There is a growth in development of various public infrastructure like connectivity, communication network, hospitals, parks etc in the state due to increasing tourists each year. Kullu valley has turned out to be an ideal destination for both international and domestic tourists, here lies a spellbound Mesmerised Hill Station Manali, a paradise for many.

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“Manali is a Blissful hill station in the foothills of the Indian State of Himachal, situated in Kullu district north of the state capital Shimla. There is Hindu belief about this blissful town of Manali, as legend says this town is named after the name of lawgiver Manu, it is also called as Valley of the Gods & Goddesses or Abode of Manu. Manali is easily accessible from some of the major cities like Delhi, Chandigarh and Shimla, with ample of options as to reach their road/rail/air transport. Manali is full of natural beauty while exploring the beauty of Manali surely one will be captivated by the view of Snow clad Himalayan mountains, flower garden and orchards with green and red apples, it is said that British were the one who planted the apple trees and trout, apart from apple, plum and pear are also major source of income for the majority of inhabitants. Manali is full of popular roadside eateries, cafes, hotels, restaurant and shops, both in old Manali and the main markets, one can enjoy hot momos, chats, sweets too, many buying options one can have, from woollens to local produce like jams preserve, baked goodies and Souvenirs. (Devashish, 2011) May to October is the best time to visit, but tourists can enjoy winters too for Christmas and New Year celebration, as this place really has enchanting beauty of the mountains, valleys and natural novel surroundings. Manali served as an ultimate dweller (heaven) for the adventure sports lover: Paragliding, Fishing, Trekking, Skiing, River Rafting and Camping at hills too. There are many good hotels, Cottages, and Resorts available for all kinds of tourists. Apart from that Manali offers untouched trails in the nearby valleys which tourists would definitely love to cover. One of the important points for tourists is the Mall road with a bunch of good shopping areas and restaurants. The amazing options for trekking trails attract tourists from far off lands. Treks like Malana trek, Brighu lake trek, Beas Kund Trek, Lama dug trek, Chanderkhani trek etc. The ancient 15th century Hadimba Devi temple surrounded with deodar forest and the most famous Solang Valley are amongst the major tourist attractions.

2. Review of Literature

S. Doganer (2013) in his paper titled “Cultural heritage tourism research: a sustainable community-based design project for the San Antonio Mission Historic District” speaks of the economic impact of tourists visits at a destination, by identifying the cultural and historical assets, existing monuments, structures, buildings, landscapes and renovating and reusing them for the tourists can bring out both socio-economic benefits. Culture and historical artefacts can be used to attract the potential visitors from all over the world.

Vijayanand (2014) in his paper titled “The issues and perspectives of Pilgrimage tourism development in Thanjavur”. Religious tourism is one of the most growing trend across the globe. A huge number of tourists are travelling across the globe which is generating millions

of job opportunities and also generating income for the host community. A distinction between a pilgrim and a tourist was specified wherein it was stated that a tourist travels for recreation and a pilgrim travels for faith and devotion. This study clearly highlights the need for government and private stakeholders to develop transportation, parking facilities, accommodation units, drinking water, medical facilities, proper banking system and other related services. The government and private stakeholders must make arrangements at the time of festivals so that pilgrims did not face difficulties at the destinations.

Jeena Gupta (2015) in her paper titled “ Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: A study of Kullu Manali” clearly mentions that there is a great potential in Kullu Manali to tap more tourists from all parts of the world, new destinations can be explored, new form of tourism can be developed, but various factors should be kept in mind like carrying capacity, increasing traffic problem, over pricing etc. the government along with local stakeholders should come up with sustainable tourism policy in order to tackle the weak areas and new opportunities can be found. more focus should be given to promotion and marketing.

G. Anjaneya Swamy (2016) in his paper titled “Rural Tourism, scope and challenges in Indian Context” has mentioned Rural tourism as very simple to define, but very complex in nature and has different forms. Rural tourism in India is at an emerging stage and can be explored more as rural India is very rich in culture and heritage. Proper marketing research is required to increase rural tourism activities which can bring socio-economic benefits to villages of India, without people leaving their villages. Rural tourism can eradicate poverty, create new jobs, development of basic infrastructure, environmental conservation and host community empowerment.

3. Objective of the Study

1. To explore the untouched attractions in Manali.
2. To highlight the potential of different forms of tourism in Manali.

4. Methodology

The present paper is based on the previous research works available of various relevant journals, books, websites, documents, magazines and local dailies of the state. Field study is also done whenever required.

5. Background of Manali Town

Manali is the home to the great Rishi Manu as per the Hindu mythology and Manali got its named after Manu. Manali also means “Manu-Allaya” which means “Abode of Manu”. As per the legend it is believed that Manu took care of a tiny fish, who asked him to take care of her as she would do a great favour to him someday. One day after the fish grew up and Manu sent the fish into the sea. The

same fish warned him about the world being submerged and told him that he would be a worthy ark. The flood completely deluged everything and the fish (Matsya) rescued Manu and the Gods. As the water slowly decreased Manu's ark rested in the town, which was then called as Manali and there is belief that he recreated Human life in Manali, that is why it is also called as "End of Habitable world" or "The valley of Gods". A temple dedicated to Rishi Manu is located in Old Manali a small village near the main town. Manali is also the land of Saptrishis (the seven sages) which makes this place as an important cultural heritage site. After late 1980s this town started to get promotion and slowly tourists started travelling to this beautiful hill station due to its pleasant climate and natural beauty. Lush green deodar forests, snow capped mountains, apple orchards and fresh trout fish in river Beas started to attract both international and domestic tourists, away from the din and noise of the cities.

7. Untouched Tourist attractions in Manali:

Jogni waterfalls

One of the best waterfalls in the north of Himalayas is the breath-taking Jogni Falls situated between village Bahang and Vashisht, Jogni waterfall is a lesser known and untouched tourist attraction in Manali. Covering panoramic views on both sides, covered with a thick deodar forest. Jogni waterfall has huge potential to attract a good number of tourists and can be paradise for many adventure lovers and backpackers.

Gayatri temple

Gayatri temple is one the prominent temples located in the ancient capital of Kullu, Jagatsukh village. The temple premises house an idol of Goddess Gayatri made with stone. The temple is built in the traditional vernacular architectural style called as Katkhuni style of architecture with elaborate woodwork on the main structure of the temple. Few more temples are part of the temple premises, the Shiva temple.

Arjun Gufa

A mythological natural formation in Manali. This cave is a narrow path into a hill and a perfect picnic spot for locals, also famous for the creation from inside. located on the left bank of river Beas in Shuru village. The cave is surrounded by picturesque landscape and snowy mountains, lush green meadows on both sides of the valley. The Gufa (cave) has a story linked to the legendary figure, one of the Pandava brothers from the Hindu legend Mahabharata. Arjun, the Pandava brother meditated here for years facing the mighty river Beas. Later Lord Shiva blessed him with the Pashupata Astra (weapon) seeing his dedication and devotion.

Gauri Shankar Temple

Located in the historical village of Naggar also famous for rural tourism. The temple is dedicated to the Hindu God Lord Shiva. This temple is a small structure out of stones but has an immense historical significance in the region. The temple is built in the Nagara style of architecture. The temple has a positive vibe in its premises. The architecture style of the temple attracts researchers from different places. The temple houses the ideal of Gauri and Shankar with amazing carvings on the inside of the temple. The religious importance and tranquil environment around the temple can be a great opportunity for attracting a good number of tourists.

Museum of Himachal Culture & Folk Art

Established in the year 1998, the museum of Himachali culture & folk art has a unique collection to showcase which includes indigenous jewellery, metal Utensils, wooden furniture, traditional household items, handlooms, music instruments, models of ancient temples and Katkhuni houses etc. A good collection of traditional handicrafts from the ancient times which consists of wooden work, painting (chitarkala), old wooden masks etc. this place can be a perfect place to get a glimpse into the ancient times and the way of life of the indigenous people of Himachal. Vintage artefacts on exhibition may give insights into the long forgotten handicraft, art and the prehistoric culture of the state. (Anand, 1997)

Sethan

A small hamlet with a predominant Buddhist culture and habitable only during summers.

The view of the majestic Dhauladhar ranges surrounding the village and the Beas flowing at its feet. Sethan is a perfect escape for the slow traveller's and mountain lovers who wish to be in the lap of Himalayas, located just 10 km away from the main town of Manali. With less than a dozen households, the inhabitants of Sethan, have migrated from Tibet a few decades ago and represent the Buddhist community and share their roots being horse herders in their past. Sethan turns into a perfect camping site and ski destination in summers.

Hallan

Hallan village lies on one of the tiniest valleys in Himachal located 17 kms from the main town of Manali. Beautifully inhabited by locals with a landscape full of unspoilt biodiversity, unique culture and lifestyle. This place guarantees an undisturbed environment. In the past few years a bunch of homestays have been started by the locals.

Bhrigu Lake

Brighu lake is one of the picturesque lakes in Kullu valley. This place offers a panoramic view of the valley. The route to the lake passes through some of the entrancing meadows that can be compared with alpine meadows

found in the high altitude location of Switzerland. Located 7km from 'Gulaba village'. The name of the lake is derived from the name of Maharishi Brighu. One unique feature of this lake is that it doesn't freeze even in the extreme cold conditions. According to a legend, the lake never freezes completely because Maharishi Bhrigu meditated near it. This place can be a special treat for campers and night gazers. (Shabab, 1996)

8. Potential for various types of tourism in Manali

Manali is one of the most visited and famous tourist destinations in India which attracts various types of tourist from all parts of the country and abroad each year. Manali with its abundance of natural beauty and natural resources like snow-capped mountains, pine forests, apple orchards, lakes, rivers, waterfalls and its unique culture like its art and craft, fair and festivals and temples dedicated to Hindu God & Goddesses has true potential to attract different types of tourist and promote and focus towards various types of tourism: (Dar, 2014)

Adventure Tourism

Manali is a true paradise for adventure lovers as it offers a wide range of adventure activities for all type of tourist like skiing and snowboarding in Solang valley and Hamta pass, rafting and kayaking through grade II and grade III rapids in the Beas river, paragliding and zorbing in Solang Nallah trekking and Bijli Mahadev, camping in Snowy peaks, gravelly cliff sides and rolling greens various places like Hamta Pass, Brighu lake, Lama Dugh, Chanderkhani Pass etc. Mountaineering courses at The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering is one of the country's best places to learn. (Kohli, 2002) If that sounds a bit daunting, don't worry, you can do day trip versions of these and try rock climbing and rappelling. However, if you are keen on taking it up a notch, you can sign up for intensive training treks and hike up to base camps to glaciers for ice and snow craft training. You can hire equipment at the institutes and will be accompanied by excellent guides and trainers. For an added edge you can even go ice climbing, where the glaciers of Malana, Beas Kund and Chandratat provide ample challenges.

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is a very dynamic form of tourism, India being a country of Villages has a great potential for development of rural tourism in its villages, in recent years the government of himachal have proposed to develop different villages in the state as model rural tourism villages, out of them one important village is located in the valley, village named as Old Manali. It is an important tourist spot for especially for international tourists. Under the scheme "Adarsh Gram Yojna" started by Government of Himachal Pradesh, the member of Parliament Sh. Ram Swaroop Sharma has sanctioned an amount of 40 lakhs INR for the development of the

village. The village is surrounded by Apple orchards a on one side of the valley. On the other side surrounded by river "Manalsu" and a thick deodar forest which can be a great opportunity for Rural tourism in the village. (Drayer, 2014)

Naggar another small village, located on the left bank of river Beas of the Kullu Valley is one of the best sites identified for rural tourism in Manali, this tiny village once the capital of Kullu Kingdom, home to the famous Russian painter and explorer Nicholas Roerich (Nikolai Rerikh) settled here in the early 20th century. Naggar village is one of the most beautiful villages in the upper Beas valley having an interesting view of Dhauladhar ranges, trekking trails, authentic Kulluvi food, good options of homestays and welcoming hosts. (McCannon, 2002)

Religious Tourism

Manali holds its aesthetic beauty not only in terms of geography but also in divinity. It is actually believed that the hill station got its name after sage Manu. Still reverberating with divine vibrations, the religious places in Manali manage to draw a lot of tourists to this address in the Himalayas.

To suffice this statement, Manali has an abundance of religious places which include Temples, Monasteries, Gurudwaras, Churches etc. Prominent religious places to visit in Manali are Vashisht temple, Manu temple, Hadimba Devi temple, Krishna temple at Thava, Gauri Shankar Temple, Shristi Narayan (Brahma temple) in Aleo village, Maa Sharvari Temple in Shuru village, Raghunath Ji temple in Sarvari, Bijli Mahadev temple, Nyingma Monastery, Dhakpo Shedrupling Monastery.

Gastronomy Tourism

"Kullui Dham" is the traditional food that is served in the upper Beas Valley, it not a form of feast it is a story of social acceptance and love of the local communities. People in the valley equally participate in the Dham during the festivals of life, like marriage, baby shower or any other Holy occasion in the villages of the valley. (Bhalla, 2006) Kullui food is another important element of Kullui cultural heritage. The mouth-watering smell of the feast shows the richness of the culture. People in villages love to enjoy Dham on various occasions. "Kullui Dham" is very popular feast in the Manali town and surrounding villages which is usually prepared and served during various fairs and festivals. Apart from Kullui Dham there are many traditional foods like Siddhu (Fermanted wheat flour with different stuffing), Baturu (kind of chapati made out of flour and fried in hot oil), Babroo (pancakes made with Gur and flour), Lingdi ki sabji (fiddlehead fern stems cooked with spices and curd), Patrode (dumplings made of layers of leaves of Kachalu (colocasia esculenta leaves) with spices and gram leaves etc. There is ample

amount of opportunities for gastronomy tourism in the town and surrounding areas. (Sivaraksa, 2015)

9. Threats in the Town

1. Increases in level of air pollution have resulted in climatic change and the level of snow has started declining and glaciers have started melting at a high speed.
2. Over pricing on goods and services is one of the major problems for the locals.
3. Overcrowding in the town has started creating problems of traffic and accidents.
4. Increase in crime rate i.e. murder, rape and prostitution. (Albanese, 1985)
5. Changes in climate have affected fruit production in the valley like apples, plums, apricots etc.
6. Untreated water coming from hotels has affected Beas river. (Kuniyal, 2003)

10. Suggestions

Over the past few years Manali has turned into a bustling tourist destination from a small lazy town which was once a gateway to Lahaul & Spiti valley and Ladakh region. With the growth and development in transportation facilities and tourist services in and around the town, Manali has turned into a hotspot for Honeymooners and adventure seekers. Still there are a number of unexplored tourist sites full of historical tales and magical sceneries. In order to promote various types of tourism in the valley. With the aim of getting positive impacts of tourism in terms of economy, socio-cultural and as well as ecology, the following suggestions can be taken: (Nazar, 1993)

1. The local tourism authority should focus on creating new attractions for the tourists so that the crowd can be segregated and the carrying capacity of tourist destinations doesn't get affected.
2. Improvement of road network to less known destinations.
3. Proper facilities for sanitation and garbage disposal should be provided to more popular tourist sites.
4. In order to create ecological balance and control pollution use of motor vehicles should be minimised and electric vehicles should be introduced.
5. Restriction on entry and exit of tourists should be imposed, so that carrying capacity of the tourist sites can be maintained and traffic can be controlled within the town.
6. Proper licensing of hotels, homestays, restaurants and cafes etc. should be done so that illegal practices can be stopped.

7. More focus should be given in promotion and marketing of rural tourism, gastronomy tourism, indigenous art & craft, fairs and festivals held in the valley each year.
8. Restriction of construction or well-planned infrastructure of hotels should be done so that natural beauty of the town can be maintained. (Inkson, 2018)
9. Govt. licensed tourist guides should be appointed so that fraudulent activities can be controlled.
10. Development of parking facilities should be taken into consideration so that parking problems can be tackled during the peak season. (Spenceley, 2014)
11. More events and cultural shows should be organised that would portray the historical importance of the place.

11. Discussions

Manali, the abode of the Sage Manu is a mythological town and a popular Hill station is a precious gift of God's creation, once called as the beginning and end of habitable world is full of natural beauty, snow clad mountains, thick pine forests, gushing river flowing in the valley, apple orchards and so on. (Kohli, 2002) has mythological, historical significance and cultural aesthetics, indeed one of the most popular destinations amongst domestic as well as international tourists in the world. However, due to increase in the flow of tourists and greed and ignorance of humans has led to a disproportion in ecological balance which has led to overcrowding in few of the famous attractions in the town. The increase in tourist arrivals and tourist activities has a greater negative impact on the environment, society, culture and lifestyle of the people in the few areas of the town to a great extent. (Rana, 1997) Failure in the planning, mismanagement and poor policy of the local administration and locals have led to hazardous effects. Which further have ignored many beautiful attractions which are unexplored and have a true potential to offer a unique experience to various types of tourists travelling to the valley. (Shabab, 1996)

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