



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

FROM TRAGEDY TO TOURIST DESTINATION- A LOOK AT DARK TOURISM IN INDIA

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Abstract: This research delves into the burgeoning field of dark tourism in India, shedding light on its scope, consumer preferences, and managerial implications. Through a comprehensive analysis combining quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and a literature review, the study reveals a significant interest and awareness among Indians regarding dark tourism. Results indicate that approximately 80.1% of respondents are intrigued by the prospect of visiting dark tourism sites, highlighting a substantial market potential. Factors influencing consumer preference, such as historical significance, thrill-seeking, and emotional connection, were explored through regression analysis, revealing a strong correlation between these factors and consumer interest. Additionally, the focus group discussions provided nuanced insights into diverse travel preferences and ethical considerations surrounding the commercialization of dark tourism sites. Managerial implications emphasize the importance of respectful development, market segmentation, and collaboration with local communities to ensure sustainable growth in this industry. While the study offers valuable insights, limitations such as sample size and geographical scope suggest avenues for future research to further enrich our understanding of dark tourism in India. Overall, this research contributes to the discourse on dark tourism, offering practical recommendations for stakeholders in the tourism industry to navigate this complex and evolving landscape responsibly.

Keywords: *Tourism, Dark Tourism, Paranormal activities, Human psychology, Religion, Commercialization.*

INTRODUCTION

India is a land for the curious traveler, a vibrant mix of cultures and traditions waiting to be explored. The beautiful temples and historic forts that display the rich history of India are sure to attract history enthusiasts. India's landscapes are as varied as its people, ranging from the sandy beaches of Goa to the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas. While calm pilgrimage destinations like Varanasi offer a window into enduring spiritual practices, bustling cities like Mumbai and Delhi offer a view into modern India. Whether you're admiring the Taj Mahal or shopping in vibrant bazaars, India provides a life-changing and rewarding experience.

India's past is as rich and multifaceted as its landscape. Beyond the majestic mountains and serene beaches lie stories of both splendor and struggle. Ancient history reveals a civilization deeply rooted in tradition, where sacrifices were made and empires rose and fell. This is the realm of dark tourism, a journey not for the faint of heart, but for those who dare to confront the darkest chapters of our history. The dark chapters of India's history is a captivating blend of triumphs and tragedies. The Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar stands as a solemn reminder of a dark chapter during the fight for independence. Tourists visit this site to pay respects to those who lost their lives and learn about the sacrifices made in the struggle for freedom.

Beyond these somber moments, India boasts captivating historical sites that spark the imagination. Rajasthan's Bhangarh Fort, while undeniably attractive, is shrouded in legends of hauntings that circle around its cursed rulers. This adds to its allure for visitors seeking a glimpse into a bygone era filled with folklore and black magic.

Similarly, the Roopkund Lake, nestled in the Himalayas, holds a fascinating, albeit unsettling, secret. Hundreds of skeletons from a past expedition lie preserved near the lake's edge. The cause of their demise remains a topic of debate and exploration, attracting adventurous tourists eager to unravel the historical puzzle.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a broader spectrum, we review a few worldwide publications.

Considering "Dark tourism: Motivations and Visit Intentions of Tourists" authored by Lewis, H., Schrier, T. and Xu, S. in 2022, this study explores why people visit dark tourism sites (e.g., war memorials, graveyards). It uses a theory (TPB) about planned behaviors along with 4 reasons for dark tourism (dark experience, entertainment, learning, casual interest). Researchers surveyed over 1,000 people and found people are most interested in dark experiences (like paranormal activity).¹

A paper by Te-Yi Chang titled 'Dark Tourism: The effects of motivation and environmental attitudes on the benefits of experience'² explores how people who visit dark tourism sites (like disaster memorials) are impacted. They surveyed visitors to a village destroyed by a typhoon in Taiwan. The study found that strong motivation for dark tourism leads to a better appreciation for the site and greater emotional benefits from the visit. Interestingly, the emotional connection to the site seems to be more important than the desire to learn or socialize when it comes to the benefits people get from dark tourism.

'Dark Tourism: Profile, Practices, Motivations and Well-Being' by Magano, J., Fraiz-Brea, J. A., & Leite, Â published in 2022 suggested that people drawn to dark tourism (disaster sites, etc.) may be more curious and hostile, but knowledge of dark tourism itself doesn't impact well-being. Those visiting tragic sites scored higher in both hostility and well-being than those who don't.³

Now, studying a bit more detail into the Indian audience and locations for Dark tourism, we talk about the most comprehensible and coherent literature published by Sukhpreet Singh, Gurminder Kaur, and Gursimranjit Singh published in as early as 2016 titled 'Dark Tourism in India-Introduction, Places Of Interest, Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them'.⁴ A very straight-forward text it also provides an insight into the aftermath of implementing promotional strategies for Dark Tourism.

Though well-liked elsewhere especially in foreign cities, dark tourism remains uncharted ground in India. The authors of 'Exploration of Potential for development of Dark Tourism in India'- Suneel Kumar, Shekhar Asthana and Kamlesh Attri- offer investigating public opinion and intend to tackle possible obstacles as a means of making dark tourism a profitable venture in India.⁵ They focused on consumer awareness instead of digging on how to attract them to such places.

A cardinal opinion on the interpretation of dark tourism of the rural audience is taken into considered by Adnan Gul Baloch, Eduardo Manuel de Almeida Leite, Humberto Nuno Rito Ribeiro, Sandra Raquel Pinto Alves and Elvio Camacho in their paper 'dark tourism in india: significance and challenges' promulgated in 2023.⁶ Their research concludes the colossal potential for dark tourism economically in India- focusing on the remote areas which will eventually lead to its development and an increase in popularity.

Focusing on one of the most important states in this matter and as realized by Jayasree Das and Sudipta Chakraborty in their article 'Scope of Dark Tourism as a Revival Strategy for the Industry- A Study with Special Reference to Rajasthan'- Due to the fatalities, suffering, and conflicts that Rajasthan has seen, this study investigates the potential for dark tourism to increase. Rajasthan and its people are core believers in superstitions which makes its forts, palaces, and villages a more eerie lookout.⁷

LITERATURE GAP

There's a significant gap in our understanding of dark tourism, particularly regarding the lighter end of the spectrum and its impact on the Indian audience. Most research focuses on the darker aspects, like war memorials and disaster sites. However, a vast, unexplored territory lies in "lighter" dark tourism destinations that lean towards education or entertainment, like historical prisons or themed tours of haunted locations.

Another question that arises is how do visitors respond emotionally to these lighter experiences?⁸

Studies acknowledge emotions are involved in dark tourism, but the complex interplay between positive and negative feelings remains underexplored. Tourists might experience a mix of surprise, disgust, and interest on a visit. No literature fully understands how these emotions combine to influence their recommendations for the site. The long-term effects on well-being, especially for lighter sites, are unclear. Do these experiences leave visitors feeling disturbed, or can they spark positive personal growth and reflection?

India presents a unique case study for dark tourism due to its rich history and diverse cultural perspectives.⁹ While some research acknowledges its potential, a deeper dive is needed. The manuscripts are inefficient in interpreting the specific motivations driving Indian tourists to dark sites. There are preferred locations beyond Rajasthan, known for its historical tragedies, but they are yet to be explored. What the publications fail to discuss is the responsible management of dark tourism sites in India to ensure visitor well-being and respect for sensitive topics. Furthermore, public opinion and potential ethical concerns surrounding dark tourism in India, particularly in rural areas, haven't been extensively explored.¹⁰ Understanding these aspects is crucial for developing dark tourism responsibly and ensuring it benefits local communities while respecting cultural sensitivities.

By addressing these research gaps, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of strategies for promoting well-being, managing sites ethically, and ensuring dark tourism becomes a sustainable and enriching experience for both visitors and local communities.

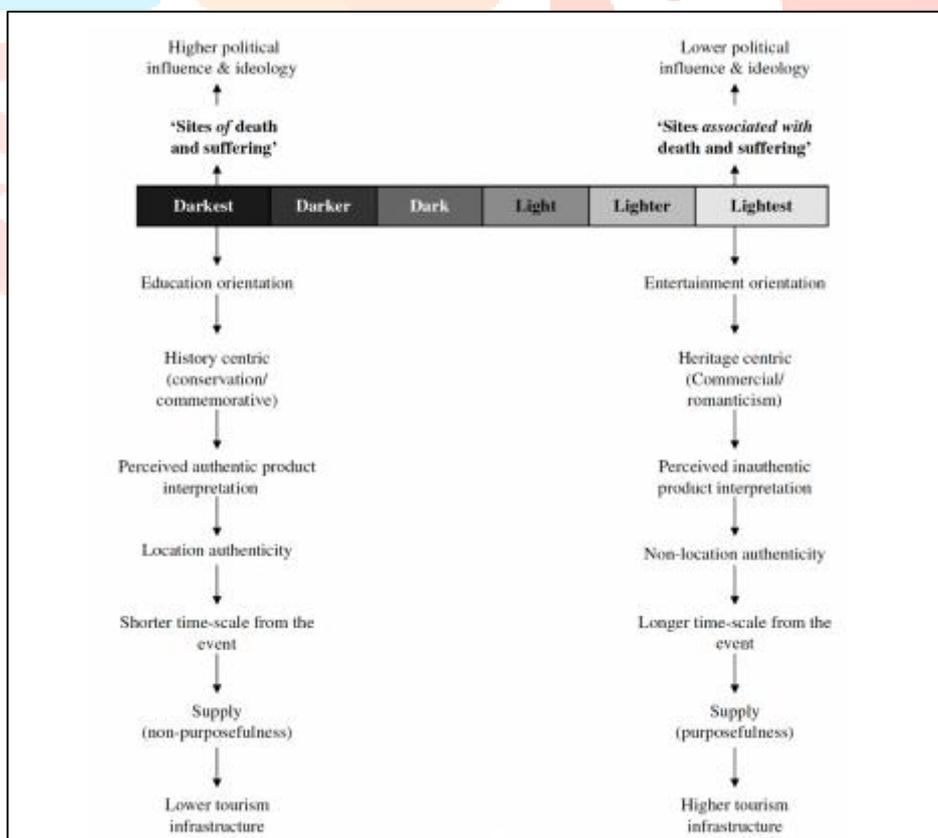


Figure 1: A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Perceived product features of Dark Tourism Within a ‘Darkest-Lightest’ framework of Supply.

ABOUT TOURISM

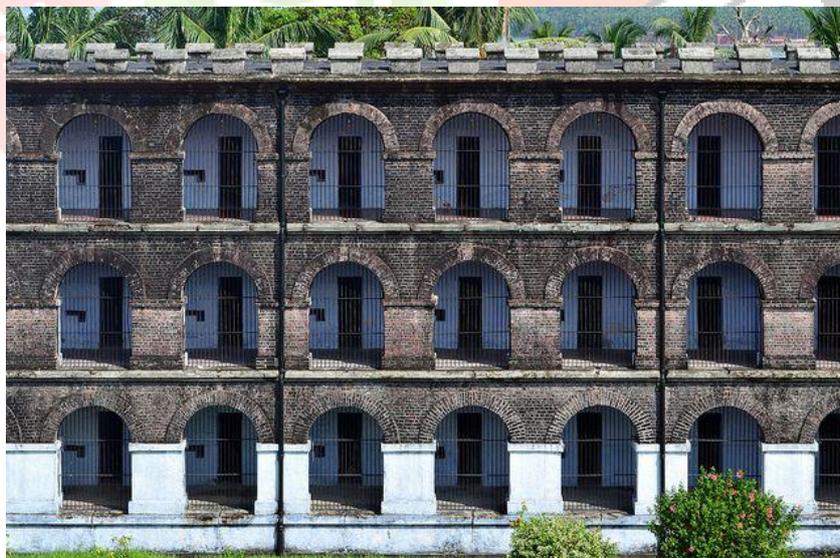
India's wide range of landscapes suits an array of travel preferences. Popular travel locations that are well-known for their serene environment and picturesque surroundings are Goa and Kerala. India is home to historical wonders like the Taj Mahal¹¹ and vibrant celebrations that take place all year long, showcasing the country's rich tapestry of customs and cultures. The country's alluring fusion of business and spirituality is best shown by the Pushkar Fair, a thriving camel market and holy pilgrimage.

There is a growing trend in ecotourism¹² as tourists look for sustainable methods to take in India's natural treasures. With its renowned population of one-horned rhinoceroses, Kaziranga National Park is a brilliant example of a place dedicated to sustainable conservation methods. India's varied habitats also beckon wildlife enthusiasts. India provides many chances to see the country's unique wildlife, from the magnificent Bengal tigers that wander Corbett National Park to the vibrant birds that live in Keoladeo Ghana National Park.

Another emerging sector is medical tourism¹³, which draws travelers from all over the world looking for top-notch treatment at a far lower cost than in affluent countries. A significant amount of this global market for medical tourism is served by Chennai, a city well-known for its cutting-edge medical services.

India's tourism landscape is further expanding to encompass a relatively new concept: Dark Tourism.¹⁴ Such kind of travel involves traveling to places connected to tragedy, death, or suffering in the past. Dark tourism includes a variety of dark locations, such as war and battlefields where past tragic conflicts are investigated, cemeteries providing a window into the past and prompting reflection on mortality, ghost tours offering experiences with the paranormal, prisons offering insights into punishment and incarceration, and disaster sites showcasing the scars of tragedy and human resilience.¹⁵

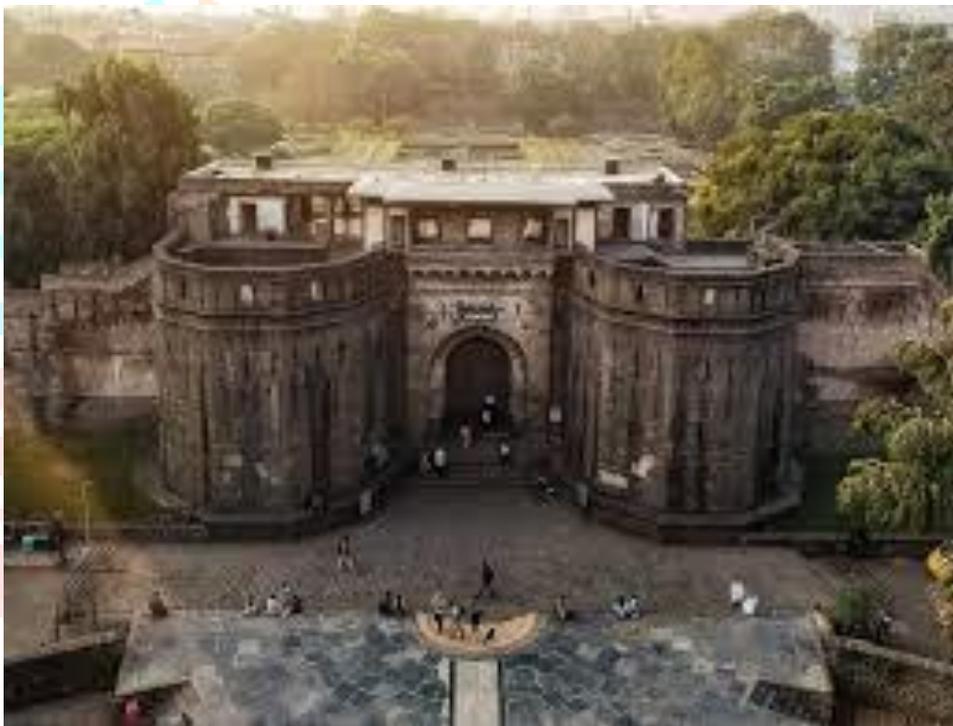
Unexpectedly, there are a lot of sites in India that fit this description. Hidden away and thought to be cursed, the abandoned village of Kuldhara¹⁶ provides a window into a different time. The Cellular Jail¹⁷ is a potent symbol of India's fight for independence and a sobering reminder of the atrocities of British colonialism. Dark tourism promotes a greater understanding of historical events and the enduring spirit of humanity, even though some people may find it uncomfortable. Dark tourism is expected to rise in India as tourists want for more authentic and thought-provoking experiences, adding to the already extensive range of travel options available in the nation.



cellular jail in port blair- kaala paani



roopkund lake in uttaranchal



shaniwaarwada in pune



jallianwala bagh in amritsar

NEED FOR THE STUDY

1. **Gap in Understanding:** There exists a significant gap in the understanding of dark tourism in India, particularly concerning lighter aspects and its impact on the Indian audience.
2. **Unique Cultural Context :** India's rich history and diverse cultural perspectives provide a unique context for studying dark tourism, necessitating focused research to comprehend its nuances.
3. **Potential Economic Impact :** Dark tourism has the potential to become a profitable venture in India, making it essential to explore its scope and feasibility within the tourism industry.
4. **Consumer Behavior :** Understanding the factors influencing consumer preference towards dark tourism destinations is crucial for developing targeted marketing strategies and enhancing visitor experiences.
5. **Ethical Considerations :** With sensitive topics and tragic histories associated with dark tourism sites, there is a need to address ethical concerns and ensure responsible management for the well-being of visitors and preservation of cultural heritage.
6. **Contribution to Tourism Development :** By identifying opportunities and challenges in dark tourism, this study can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in India, fostering economic growth while respecting cultural sensitivities.
7. **Managerial Implications :** Insights from this study can guide policymakers, tourism managers, and local communities in making informed decisions regarding the development and promotion of dark tourism sites.
8. **Academic Contribution :** This research fills a gap in academic literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of dark tourism in India, offering valuable insights for future studies and theoretical frameworks.
9. **Tourism Industry Evolution :** As the tourism industry evolves, there is a growing interest in authentic and thought-provoking experiences, making it imperative to explore the potential of dark tourism as a niche segment.
10. **Empirical Evidence :** By combining quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and literature review, this study aims to provide empirical evidence and holistic understanding of dark tourism in India, contributing to evidence-based decision-making.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. **Scope of Dark tourism in India** - The tourism industry is a clustered industry in India in which dark tourism plays a very important role. So to know what scope dark tourism stands in the Indian market research has been conducted.
2. **Analyze the factors affecting consumer preference in dark tourism** - What are the factors that influence consumers to visit a place that has a dark history to it.
3. **Provide practical Recommendations.**
4. **Contribute to understanding consumer preference, habits, and responses towards dark tourism.**

TENTATIVE HYPOTHESIS

1.	Hypothesis 1
H0	There is no significant scope of dark tourism in the Indian market.
H1	There is a significant scope of dark tourism in the Indian Market
2.	Hypothesis 2
H0	There is no significant impact of factors such as historical background, Religion, thrill, or mystery on the consumer to visit a dark tourism destination.
H1	There is a significant impact of factors such as historical background, Religion, thrill, or mystery on the consumer to visit a dark tourism destination.
3.	Hypothesis 3
H0	There is no significant impact of commercialization on the ethical factor of the dark tourism site.
H1	There is a significant impact of commercialization on the ethical factor of the dark tourism site.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For our research, we triangulated our findings through quantitative as well as qualitative data collection methods. This approach helped us to ensure the validity and reliability of our data. We want to showcase that our findings through the focus group that we conducted and the survey that we circulated lead to the same conclusion, hence enhancing the credibility of this research.

While quantitative data gave us specific answers to 'Would you prefer going to dark tourist locations like Cellular Jail or Chittorgadh?', our focus group led us to deeper insights into 'Why would you want to/not want to visit places like Chittorgadh or the Cellular Jail?'

We had a varied population regarding gender, age, income and occupation. This gave us inputs from a broader perspective and an unbiased base to our research.

QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE

Section		Content
Section one	General	Name , Age ,gender ,Income
Section Two	Dark tourism scope	2 questions were asked in the questionnaire analysis whether consumers are aware about the concept of dark tourism or not and if they are aware will they prefer visiting a dark tourism place or not.
Section three	Factors affecting consumers preference related to visiting a dark tourism place	7 questions were asked in the questionnaire analysis: what are the dark tourism places consumers are willing to travel and what are the factors influencing them. The factors included education or history, thrilling and unique experience, emotional connection or paying respect, popularity, curiosity or fascination.

Survey Questionnaire
Focus Group question pattern

Section		Content
Section one	General	Name , age , profession
Section two	Traveling Habits	How often do they travel, with whom do they travel, where do they travel, which place do they prefer traveling the most,
Section three	View on dark tourism	Places they have visited which are considered as dark tourist places, what was their experience, will they visit these places again, what are the reasons that influence them to visit a dark tourist place.

Input Variable - Demographic Variables , Traveling habits, Location preference, Lifestyle and age, Income

Output Variable - Market research, Place history , Location Uniqueness etc

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

SCOPE OF DARK TOURISM: CONSUMER AWARENESS - A: GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION.

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{(Z\text{-score})^2 \times \text{StdDev} \times (1\text{-StdDev})}{(\text{confidence interval})^2}$$

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.13 \times (1-0.13)}{(0.05)^2}$$

We took our population size as 1300 as we wanted an accurate and unbiased response to our survey. Our confidence interval was 5% because our confidence level was 95% which we represent as the probability of error.

The z-score was set at 1.96

The standard deviation is 0.13, meaning that we got responses from approximately 173 people out of 1300 people who received the survey.

After determining the sample size, a survey was conducted with about 171 respondents. Questions related to their traveling preference and awareness about dark tourism were evaluated. Therefore, we formulated a hypothesis and used consumer responses and represented them in the form of pie charts to assess it to determine whether dark tourism has potential in India. Additionally, a focus group investigation was carried out to investigate people’s perceptions of dark tourism deeply and thoroughly. Following we have the graphical representation of a few of our outputs.

Figure 1.1

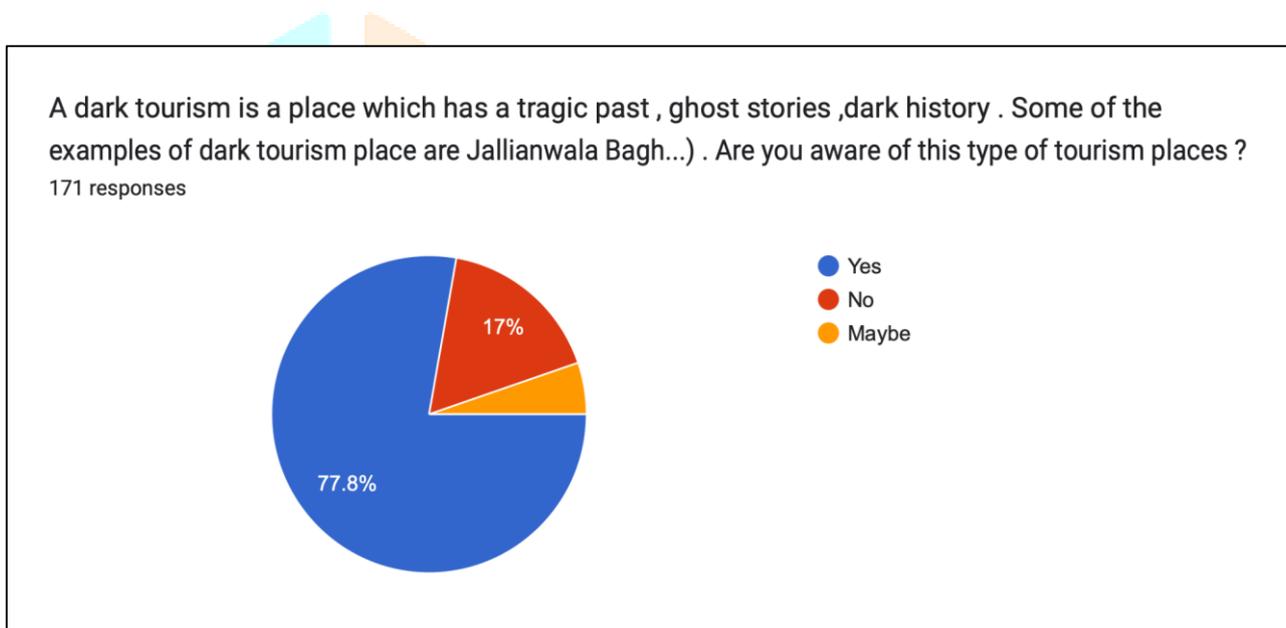
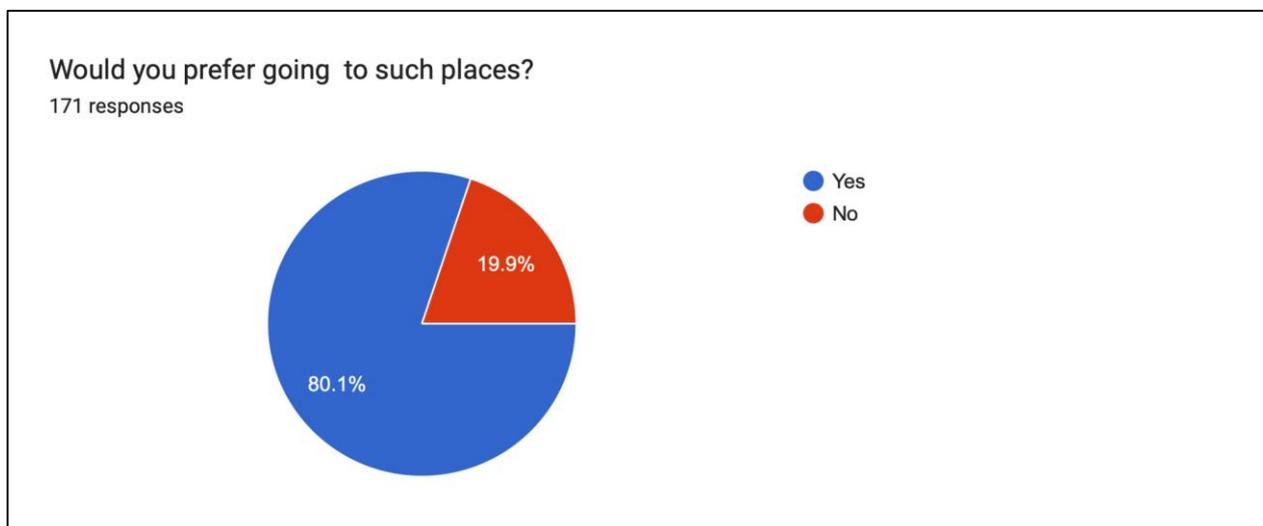


Figure 1.2



Figures 1.1 and 1.2 demonstrate that 77.8% of 133 out of 171 respondents are familiar with the idea of dark tourism. And around 80.1% of people would rather visit these locations. From this, we can conclude that

individuals in India are eager to visit these locations in quest of novel or interesting experiences and are aware of what dark tourism is and what it represents.

Hence proven, there is a significant scope of dark tourism India, thus accepting the null hypothesis.

FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER'S DECISION: CONSUMER PREFERENCE : REGRESSION ANALYSIS

We apply regression when we are attempting to ascertain the relation between two variables or the dependent variable's value at specific independent variable points. So to find out what are the factors (independent variable) that are influencing the consumers preference (dependent variable) while visiting a dark tourist place.

SUMMARY OUTPUT								
Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.0822237							
R Square	0.99754902							
Adjusted R Square	-0.0233374							
Standard Error	0.35845393							
Observations	171							
ANOVA								
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	5	0.144308139	0.028861628	0.224622953	0.951464516			
Residual	165	21.2007211	0.128489219					
Total	170	21.34502924						
Factors								
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	1.00508036	0.15649962	6.422254302	1.37381E-09	0.696080367	1.314080349	0.696080367	1.314080349
Education or historical significance	0.04154759	0.090194425	0.460644786	0.645660017	-0.136536397	0.21963158	-0.1365364	0.21963158
Thrilling and unique travelling experience	0.0134326	0.06381242	0.210501403	0.833536083	-0.11256155	0.139426758	-0.11256155	0.139426758
Emotional connection or paying respect	0.04416183	0.079069349	0.558520269	0.577246314	-0.111956297	0.200279966	-0.1119563	0.200279966
Popularity	0.0284603	0.059870724	0.475362549	0.635157266	-0.089751189	0.146671788	-0.08975119	0.146671788
Curiosity or fascination with the unknown	-0.0121179	0.062667704	-0.193367073	0.846909328	-0.135851844	0.111616103	-0.13585184	0.111616103

As we can see in the above table

Y = Dependent variable(consumer preference)

X1= Education and historical significance

X2= Thrilling and unique traveling experience

X3= Emotional connection or paying respect

X4= Popularity

X5= Curiosity or fascination with the unknown

Equation - $Y = 1.005 + 0.042(X1) + 0.013(X2) + 0.044(X3) + 0.028(X4) - 0.012(X5)$

The value of R square is 0.99 indicating 99% variation in the dependent variable, that is the consumer preference is explained by the independent variable (Education and historical significance, Thrilling and unique traveling experience, Emotional connection or paying respect, Popularity, Curiosity or fascination with the unknown).

The value of R square is significant as indicated by the P value (P value > 0.05)

The above table also indicates that as Education and historical significance, Thrilling and unique traveling experience, Emotional connection or paying respect, Popularity increases consumer preference to visit that place also increases. And as Curiosity or fascination with the unknown decreases the consumer's preference to visit that place.

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

The focus group consisted of 8 members-

Sr No.	Name	Profession
1.	Dr. Mukund Madhav Tripathi	Associate Dean, SOC, NMIMS.
2.	Dr. Rakhi Raturi	Assistant Professor, Branding and Digital Marketing, NMIMS.
3.	Mridul Thapar	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS
4.	Siddhi Borgaonkar	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS
5.	Jaanhvi Mehta	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS
6.	Shreyans Sheth	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS
7.	Sarrah Vohra	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS
8.	Keshav Bhutra	3rd Year UG student completing their BBA from NMIMS

The moderator commenced the focus group with a very simple question ‘How often do you travel?’ to understand the movement patterns of our members. We delved deeper into the tourism topic by questioning the places they liked to visit, have visited and would want to visit in the near future. It differed from person to person. For instance, Dr. Mukund preferred visiting religious places with his family whereas Siddhi Borgaonkar was inclined towards solo treks. This allowed our focus group to gather a diverse set of opinions that varied through experiences, professions, age, and other factors.

The discussion gained momentum when we asked if they were aware of what dark tourism is and if they would want to visit such locations. Throughout the conversation, Dr. Rakhi gave us major insights about her knowledge on the topic. She was the first one to understand how there are various segments under dark tourism and not just paranormality. All of them shared their experiences in locations like Jallianwala Bagh, Mazhar-e-Fakhri Dargah in Galiakot, Aarey Colony Road and various forts.

One of the most crucial observations was that a lot of the members mixed religion and dark tourism, which may be the case for a lot of other consumers as well. Although all of them were curious about such places and their history, only a few wanted to visit.

Out of 8 of them, 5 were for the argument that dark tourist locations must be commercialized. The remaining agreed to commercialize the places only if there were going to be proper guides for the tourists, proactive safety measures, and a methodology followed so as not to disturb the sites.

All of them believed that each location had a past that must be respected no matter what. When asked what are the top two or three words that come to their mind when they hear ‘dark tourism’, they responded with the following. We made a cloud map for the words that they gave us.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has unveiled the surprising scope and depth of the dark tourism industry, shattering the notion that dark sites cater solely to a morbid fascination. Our research reveals a complex web of reasons why travelers choose to visit these frequently unpleasant locations. The data demonstrates a high level of awareness and openness to dark tourism in India. It's evident that Indians are ready for new and intriguing experiences, as 80.1% of respondents said they would be interested in visiting such places and 77.8% of respondents said they were familiar with the notion.

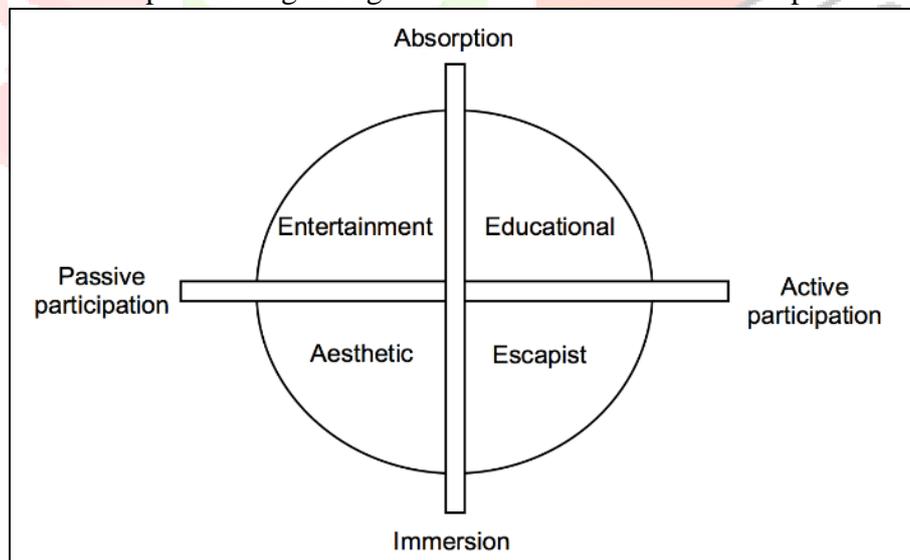
This fact was underlined even further by the focus group talks, which highlighted a range of travel tastes, from Siddhi Borgaonkar's solitary treks to Dr. Mukund's family-friendly religious excursions. However, the discussions also revealed a crucial aspect: many participants, like Dr. Rakhi, recognized the various subcategories of dark tourism beyond just the paranormal. It's interesting to note that for certain customers, the group talks revealed a possible link between dark tourism and religion. All of the participants showed an interest in learning more about the past of these places, yet some of them were reluctant to go there. This suggests a potential need for sensitive marketing and experiences that acknowledge the somber nature of these sites.

On the topic of commercialization, the group was divided. Support was voiced by five members, but with the important proviso that appropriate tourist guides, proactive safety precautions, and a process that preserves the integrity of the sites be used. This emphasizes how crucial responsible development is for the dark tourism industry. Ultimately, the focus group emphasized the importance of respecting the past at these locations.

Dark tourism offers a special opportunity as it continues to grow. Through critical analysis of the past, empathy building for individuals affected by adversity, and respectful growth, this sector can help to create a future that is more compassionate and knowledgeable.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Implementation of the Gilmore and Pine framework to the field of dark tourism¹⁸** -This strategy has the potential to improve and give significance to the dark tourism experience for consumers.



Pine and Gilmore's Framework:

This framework categorizes experiences into four types:

- Entertainment: Passive consumption, being entertained. (e.g., Watching a historical documentary)
- Education: Active learning and acquiring knowledge. (e.g., Attending a lecture on a historical event)
- Aesthetics: Sensory and emotional engagement with an experience. (e.g., Feeling the weight of silence in a concentration camp memorial)
- Escapism: Immersing oneself in a different reality. (e.g., Participating in a historical reenactment)

Implementation in Dark Tourism:

- **Entertainment:** While not the primary focus, some dark tourism experiences have a hint of entertainment in the form of guided tours with storytelling components, interactive exhibitions, or even historical reenactments (be careful).
- **Education:** An essential component of dark tourism is this. Tours might be planned to show off the human spirit's resiliency, draw attention to social injustices, or provide historical context. The educational impact can be further enhanced by interactive features such as victim testimonies or augmented reality tours.
- **Aesthetics:** Dark tourism sites often evoke strong emotions through their somber atmosphere, powerful visuals, and soundscapes. These components can be used, with careful curation of the visitor experience, to establish a respectful yet powerful emotional connection.
- **Escapism:** Dark tourism is not primarily focused on providing an escape from ordinary life, despite what some may claim. But if done carefully, role-playing games or simulations can serve both instructional and escapist functions.

2. Use of Experiential Marketing in Dark Tourism

- **Focus on Resilience:** Showcase the courage and spirit of the Indian people overcoming adversity. Role-playing scenarios could involve citizens aiding resistance movements or rebuilding after disasters.
- **Interactive Exhibits:** Create immersive exhibits that use multimedia to tell stories of historical events. Visitors can interact with timelines, listen to survivor testimonies, or solve puzzles related to historical figures.
- **Thematic Tours:** Design tours that explore specific themes like colonialism, natural disasters, or social injustices. These tours can use storytelling, historical reenactments (conducted respectfully), or visits to relevant memorials.
- **Augmented Reality:** Utilize AR technology to overlay historical events onto real-world locations. Imagine witnessing a battle unfold virtually on a battlefield or seeing a city transformed by a historical disaster.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Managers of potential and current dark tourism locations can learn a lot from this research on dark tourism in India. Here are some important conclusions to think about:

1. **Market Potential:** There is a considerable business opportunity given the high levels of interest (80.1%) and awareness (77.8%) in dark tourism. Managers can capitalize on this by creating carefully chosen experiences that satisfy a range of objectives.
2. **Segmentation:** The talks in the focus groups brought to light the range of interests in dark tourism. Managers should segment their audience according to their motives, such as education or thrill-seeking, and customize their experiences accordingly. For example, while thrill-seeking excursions may include participatory components, educational tours may concentrate on historical accuracy and knowledgeable guides.
3. **Respectful Development:** The focus group discussions' emphasis on appropriate behavior highlights the significance of respectful development. Priorities for managers to set are:
 - **Historical Accuracy:** To preserve the site's integrity and inform visitors, make sure every information is true and sensitively told.
 - **Trained Guides:** Make an investment in knowledgeable guides who can control visitors' behavior politely, give context, and intelligently respond to inquiries.
 - **Strong safety precautions** should be put in place to guarantee the wellbeing of visitors, particularly at catastrophe or combat areas.
 - **Site Preservation:** Create plans to reduce the effects of visitors and guarantee the site's long-term protection.

4. **Cooperation with Local Communities:** Take part in the creation and upkeep of dark tourist destinations in conjunction with local communities. This guarantees cultural sensitivity, develops a feeling of communal ownership, and might even have positive economic effects.
5. **Marketing Strategies:** Create tactful marketing plans that take into account the sites' sober nature. Instead of concentrating only on the dramatic elements, emphasize the educational value and opportunity for interpersonal connection.

Dark tourism places in India can meet the increasing demand for this unusual kind of travel while maintaining responsible growth and treating these delicate sites with care by adhering to these managerial implications. This strategy can advance historical understanding as well as economic progress.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Although this study provides insightful information about dark tourism in India, it is crucial to consider a few limitations:

- **Sample Size and Generalizability:** A total of 171 respondents made up the study's sample. While informative, a larger sample size could provide more statistically generalizable results applicable to the wider Indian population.
- **Focus Group Composition:** Although the focus group discussions offered qualitative depth, the group's particular makeup (e.g., occupations, demographics) might not accurately reflect the wide spectrum of possible dark tourists in India. Focus groups with a wider range of participants could improve our comprehension of preferences and motivations.
- **Quantitative data limitations:** The research methodology did not examine the specifics of the quantitative data that was gathered from the 171 respondents. Deeper insights may have been obtained from further examination of this data, such as investigating relationships between demographics and interest in certain dark tourism subcategories.
- **Geographical scope:** The research was conducted at a pan India level. Investigating the reasons and motivations of people from different regions to visit the dark tourist place could be a valuable avenue for future research.
- **Emphasis on Awareness and Interest:** Although the study looked at awareness and interest in dark tourism, it passed on studying real visitor behavior. A more comprehensive picture could be obtained by following up with respondents who indicated interest to determine if they convert that interest into visitation.

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