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Adventure Tourism- A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract:

Tourism has become a universal sensation. Hospitality industry is also on boom. Destinations in Asia, Oceania are becoming popular day by day. A growing thirst for adventure and a rapidly growing interest in clean nature are generally considered to be the factors that support the region. As India is strategically located and has a tremendous natural and cultural wealth of tourism resources, this is the right time to positively influence the influx of tourists by promoting new and emerging forms of tourism. Over time, adventure tourism is becoming a diverse tourism product. With the source of getting adventure tourists, this study focuses on the support and role of hospitality sector in promoting Adventure Tourism, in this a small survey has been done in various adventure tourist destinations in Kangra, Shimla and Kullu region of Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Tourism, Hospitality, Hotel, Adventure Tourism, Himachal Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

Tourism can be described as the fastest growing industry in the world. The unpredictability of its market, its impulsiveness, the multitude of different tourism products and above all financial and sociological rewards have made the industry one of the most competitive markets in the world. Tourism is entering a new era, with the prospect of permanent expression and a better position in a global economy facing many challenges. The results of tourism are recognized in both developed and developing countries and represent both economic and social change. In fact, tourism has adapted employment, investment, land use and tax structures and has contributed to the capital account of various countries around the world. Human beings have a desire to travel to new places and learn about the uniqueness of each destination by the development of civilization. When we talk about Christopher Columbus, he has risked his life to find new places, Markopoulos' visit to Kublai Khan's palace was no less laborious, and Hyunsheng a better way of life. The infinite desire to know the unknown has made us the only species that have travelled to almost every region of the planet. People are born with an inner longing which the Germans called a wanderer.

The adventure means an unusual and exciting or daring experience, which involves the risk or danger. The adventure tourism refers an outdoor travel activity and can be categorized as a leisure travel activity to which the physical risk and danger is a compulsory aspect. Adventure tourism is a thrill based activity where an adventurer is ready to face high and low level of challenges. The exotic, unusual, wilderness or remote places are the main attractions for the adventure tourism activities where the adventurer explores new areas and expects the unexpected results. The adventure tourism is a unique form of tourism in which tourists are ready to accept the limited infrastructural development or the totally undeveloped destinations where they are getting the authentic experience. In spite of the threats of death and injuries, the adventurers are welcoming and experiencing the adventure activities enthusiastically without negative feelings. "Adventure tourists say they welcome risk and excitement, and they empathize safety, they say they want authenticity, and they want it guaranteed" (Vital Wave Consulting, 2011). The adventurers are the outer world explorers as, they travel exotic and unspoiled regions of the world, and the inner world explorers, as their self-mastery, self-perception and personal challenges reflect it. The adventure tourism can be divided in to two parts as 1) Hard Adventure and 2) Soft Adventure. The Hard Adventure is a travel exercise, which involves higher level of risk elements and physical challenges. It needs higher level of confidence, spirit, expertise, specialized skills to indulge in Hard Adventure activities. This kind of tourism pushes the adventurers from the comfort zone to dangerous areas. The Hard Adventurists are less in number out of total adventurers. Hard adventure includes climbing (mountain, rock and ice) and caving, rafting, mountain biking, aero sports, trekking etc. The soft Adventure is a type of travel exercise, which refers the comfortable adventure. This kind of adventure is very safe form of adventure tourism in which the adventurers have no need to take training or guidance from the experts. Maximum adventurers are indulging in this type of adventure tourism. The Soft adventure includes the cultural art walks, camping, wildlife viewing, fishing, snowshoeing, walking on gradually changing terrain, sunbath, volunteer opportunities, casual bicycle tours, skiing, or simply horseback riding.

In India, there is a huge scope of adventure tourism; there are several virgin Adventure tourism resources. The development of adventure tourism in India is at initial stage. The beaches, deserts, mountains, hill stations, rivers, forests, wild life etc are the best adventure tourism potentials in India. For the development of adventure tourism in country, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India has taken various steps. The Ministry of Tourism, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) are working jointly together for bringing the India on adventure tourism map at global level. Moreover, a set of guidelines were set up by the Ministry of Tourism for safety and quality norms on adventure tourism, which covers the water, air and land based adventure tourism activities. Moreover, government has established outdoor and adventure institutes in India, which are offering several adventure sports courses, and the institutes have all modern training equipments of adventure tourism.

For sheer geographic density, few places in the world are as richly endowed as Himachal Pradesh. Rivers cutting through deep gorges, placid mountain lakes, thick forests, acres of scree, snow capped mountains piercing the skyline, sheep cattered like cotton fluffs over alpine pastures all excite the spirit for outdoor activities, sports and adventure. A stress buster or a challenging adventure, for beginner or an expert, there is an activity, a sport, an adventure for one and all out there. All it demands is a reasonable level of fitness and willing spirit.

Since in the remote areas of Himachal Pradesh where there are no large hotel properties but at the same time those destinations are the heaven for adventure tourists and the travellers who love to be in the nestle green woods of Himachal Pradesh with the approach to live in forests as well as to have accommodation services as well, although camping is one of the common activities of adventure sports but there are many sports and adventure spots where there is no scope of camping and few people prefer to stay in hotels at the same time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jeena Gupta (2015). The author has focused on a number of important factors related to Kullu-Manali, in the Article titled "Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: A Study on Kullu-Manali." The factors discussed are socio economic and political development in the state due to tourism activities, the development of various public utility services like roads, transport services, airports, communication networks and civil amenities etc. The main objective is to know about the facility provided to the tourist and to conduct a SWOT analysis to know about the tourism potential in Himachal Pradesh. The author has also discussed the various problems which occur during tourist's peak season.

Dr. Subhash Chandra (2018). In his article, Potential of Tourism in Himachal Pradesh, the author has explained the various potentials of the adventure tourism and the other forms of tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh has wide scope to flourish and provide a new direction to the economy of the state. Tourism potential is only next to hydro-electric power potential in the state. There are sufficient opportunities for wildlife lovers and sportsmen. It is a paradise for trekkers, climbers and other ardent devotees of the spirit of adventure on account of its topography and terrain. The adventure sports like trekking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, and heli-skiing, hang gliding, skiing, water sports including water skiing, river rafting, fishing etc. can be perused here. These sports remained largely undiscovered by adventurers till fairly recently. Even, presently, it has been attracting some enthusiastic sportsmen from all over the world.

Ashutosh Sharma & Dr. Praveen Chauhan (2020). In the present research paper, Role of Hospitality Sector in Promoting Adventure Tourism – Study of Himachal Pradesh, the authors had provided the information's related to the present scenarios of the Tourism industry. They have mentioned how adventure tourism is becoming popular day by day and how it has become an important aspect for the hospitality and tourism industry. A growing thirst for adventure and a rapidly growing interest in clean nature are generally considered to be the factors that support regions. With the source of getting adventure tourists, this study focuses on the support and role of hospitality sector in promoting adventure tourism.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To analyze the opinion of tour operators towards the adventure tourism in H.P
- To analyze the opinion of tourists towards the adventure tourism in H.P

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A sample of 50 adventure tour operators and 80 tourists was taken from Shimla, Kangra and Kullu Districts. Data was analysed by using percentage method as a statistical tool.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Below mentioned questions were asked from the Adventure tour operators for which a sample of 50 was taken.

Which of the following Adventure Activities you deal in?

| Activities | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Mountaineering | 30 | 60 |
| Trekking | 34 | 68 |
| Rock Climbing | 20 | 40 |
| River Rafting | 20 | 40 |
| Climbing and Hiking | 26 | 52 |
| Mountain Biking | 10 | 20 |
| Paragliding | 8 | 16 |
| Ice Skating | 3 | 6 |

As shown in the above table that 60% of respondents deals in mountaineering, 68% in trekking, 40% in rock climbing, 40% in river rafting, 20% in mountain biking, 16% in paragliding, 6% in ice skating.

Age group generally participates in Adventure Activities

| Age Group | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Less Than 20 Years | 36 | 72 |
| 20Years - 30 Years | 42 | 84 |
| 30 Years - 40 Years | 24 | 48 |
| 40 Years - 50 Years | 16 | 32 |
| 50 Years and Above | 6 | 12 |

As shown in the above table that the Age group of the participants is concerned then 20-30 years of Age group Adventure tourists are more participative as each of the Adventure tour operator stated that this age group is at top in the participation, whereas the tourists with the age group more than 50 Years are also participative as 12% of the respondents stated that maximum are on this age group as well, after that the student age group that is below 20 years, people usually travel most and the students are also more interested in the adventure tourism.

Source of Business

| Source | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Nearby Hotel | 36 | 72 |
| Local Taxi | 42 | 84 |
| Social Media | 24 | 48 |
| Friends & Relatives | 16 | 32 |
| Direct | 25 | 50 |

Similarly in the above table, If we talk about the source of business then Almost 72% of respondents stated that majorly their business is dependent on the Nearby Hospitality business, that means the nearby hotels actually approach their in house guests to go for adventure sports and that to the nearby tour operator which is beneficial for both of the in terms of getting more business could be on the basis of a smart fixed commission. Whereas 50% of them stated that they get their business on direct basis, while 84% of the respondents are of the opinion that the taxi union also gives business to them.

Below mentioned questions were asked from the tourists for which a sample of 80 was taken.

Gender

| Gender | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------|------------|
| Male | 52 | 65 |
| Female | 28 | 35 |

From the above table it has been inferred that 65% of the respondents were male while 35% of the respondents were female.

Age Group

| Age Group | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Less Than 20 Years | 21 | 26 |
| 20Years - 30 Years | 29 | 36 |
| 30 Years - 40 Years | 18 | 23 |
| 40 Years - 50 Years | 9 | 11 |
| 50 Years and Above | 3 | 4 |

From the above table it has been found that most of the respondents lies in the age group of 20 Years to 30 Years with 36% while only 4% of the respondents lies in the age group of 50 Years and above.

Preference of Adventure Activities

| Activities | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Mountaineering | 18 | 23 |
| Trekking | 21 | 26 |
| Rock Climbing | 1 | 1 |
| River Rafting | 13 | 16 |
| Climbing and Hiking | 14 | 18 |
| Mountain Biking | 2 | 3 |
| Paragliding | 7 | 10 |
| Ice Skating | 4 | 5 |

It has been observed from the above table that 26% of the respondents preferred trekking as an adventure activity, 23% loves mountaineering, 18% likes climbing and hiking while only 1% of the respondents loves to do rock climbing and considered it as an adventure activity.

Duration of Stay

| No. of Days | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Less than 2 days | 12 | 15 |
| 2- 4 days | 34 | 43 |
| 4 - 6 days | 28 | 35 |
| 6 - 8 days | 4 | 5 |
| more than 8 days | 2 | 2 |

It has been inferred from the above table that 43% of the respondents use to stay in the hilly area from 2-4 days while only 2% of the respondents stay for more than 8 days.

Source of information about the Adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh

| Source | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Direct | 10 | 12 |
| Nearby Hotels | 30 | 37 |
| Local Taxi Operators | 4 | 5 |
| Social Media | 24 | 31 |
| Friends & Relatives | 12 | 15 |

It has been inferred from the above table that 37% of the respondents have used nearby hotels as a source of information while only 5% of the respondents used taxi operators as a source of information about the adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

Opinion towards the promotional measures made by H.P State to promote the Adventure tourism

| Opinion | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Highly Satisfied | 4 | 5 |
| Satisfied | 16 | 20 |
| Average | 26 | 33 |
| Dissatisfied | 14 | 18 |
| Highly Dissatisfied | 20 | 25 |

From the above table it has found that 25% of the respondents were highly dissatisfied from the efforts being put by H.P State to promote the Adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh while only 5% of the respondents were highly satisfied from the efforts being put by Himachal Pradesh for the Adventure tourism.

CONCLUSION

Adventure tourism is booming in India and is considered one of the highest earners in the coming years. Most states have identified locations for the development of adventure tourism depending on their natural wealth. With increasing awareness of the market, safety is rightly given high priority and the industry as a whole is growing at an above-average pace. Adventure Sports has the power to change you, improve your thoughts, give you the opportunity to overcome your fears and emerge victorious. It's so much more than just a vacation activity; it's a chance to grow. Therefore, Adventure has always taken a special place in our hearts and we are very happy that the deep connection between India and Adventure is getting deeper and stronger. Adventure tourism businesses offer significant business opportunities to people in regions of the world where rural economy development programs are often challenged by lack of investment, education, and lack of access to markets. This study also revealed that the nearby hotels also provide some supplementary services to the tour operators such as accommodation, food & beverage to the operators and the storage space for the equipment of the tour operators. This is why the adventure tourism and the hotel industry is experiencing a boom in form of business by helping each other in the various adventure tourism destinations. Consumers are happy and tend to travel more and more. With this increasing influx of tourists as a result of technology advances, industry has also reworked its old ways of functioning.

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