Critical analysis of economic impact of spiritual tourism in Haridwar

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Abstract: Spiritual Tourism is one of the fastest growing industry which has vast and unbounded potentials to enhance Regional income, national income, foreign currency and right set of circumstances for the employment in the country. The size and economic significance of travel and tourism have attracted the attention of many countries in actively promoting tourism as a way to promote and enhance their economies. The objective of this research article is to study the satisfaction level of tourist and determinants of spiritual tourism and problems faced by tourist in Haridwar district. The number of samples collected for this study is 100 tourists and the type of sampling used is convenient sampling. Simple percentage analysis, chi-square test have been employed for the purpose of analyzing the data. This study explains and supports the idea that the economic impacts of religious tourism should not be abandoned or underestimated. The findings of this study help us to identify the future strategies in the industry related to promotional and segmentation decisions and also how the spiritual tourism helps in revenue creation and what indispensable improvements are necessary for that destination.

Key words: Tourist, Spiritual Tourism, Economy, Haridwar

1. Introduction

Spiritual tourism is a term that has been recently developed in marketing, sociology and business research. Reason why this term came in use is the importance of foreign tourist to any destination. The hectic schedule and emotional weakness among people would shift their attention towards spirituality which has caused an impact on number of industries other than just tourism. The reason for that is the way it has been marketed as a self-actualization product, as social phenomena and personal well-being, but the most affected industry among all with the concept of spirituality, is tourism beyond suspicion (Brownstein 2008; Fernand & Jackson 2006; Lewis & Geroy 2000; Mitroff & Denton 19990; Cohen 1972: Tilson 2005: Smith & Kelly 2006). Now a day’s tourism is budding service industry in India because 20% of revenue generated from movement of domestic tourist who visit spiritual places. More than 70% of domestic tourist visit spiritual places every year (Cox & Kings 2008-09). Tourist flying in to any nation from another country brings a whole new set of business and foreign exchange. Tourism is considered as one of the largest economic activities in the world, and perhaps the largest in the services sector. It is also one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. Tourism is vital for many countries, due to the income generated by the consumption of goods and services by tourists, the taxes levied on businesses in the tourism industry, and the opportunity for employment in the service industries associated with tourism. Tourism has its own direct and indirect effect on society which is regarded as an effective instrument of country’s economic development. The word spirituality has been derived from the Latin word ‘spiritus’ which means ‘breath of life’ (Principe, 1983) is related to spiritual practices for God. There are two different view about spirituality; One is desire or need to find out the connotation and purpose of one’s own life to exist in the universe; Other is a belief of supremacy of God, who controls the whole universe (Hunsberger & Jackson 2005; Mitroff & Dentan, 1999). The most accepted definition of spirituality is an inner peace or experience of an individual that changes his/her conduct of life (Clark 1958). Religious tourism generates revenue in a way as no other kind of tourism does. It has a distinct edge over other kinds of tourism due to the pull of huge crowds in the form of tourists (Chattopadhyay 2006). The present article of the sacred place Haridwar highlight about the impact of pilgrim tourism with all its multi-dimensional approach as a place of Hindu pilgrimage, which attracts the people from distant places, and disseminate through the generation its cultural tenets which in valuable, being one of the repository of the great Indian cultural heritage. Spiritual tourism has been established as an informal part of the tourism industry for a long time. Throughout history, oral, archaeological and written records document peoples, involvement with spiritual experiences and their journeys to engage in spiritual activities (Holman 2011; Blomfield 2009; Smith & Kelly 2006; Straitwell 2006; Timothy & Olsen 2006; Rountree 2002; Shackley 2002; Burton 1855). Whether spiritual tourism has been to meet self-actualization, for personal well-being, or to satisfy any other needs, fulfilling a spiritual need
appears to be central to human social psychology, irrespective of race, colour creed, religion or any other identified criteria (Smith 2003; Fluker & Turner 2000; Maslow 1943). However, unlike other areas of tourism, there are currently no reliable statistics available for spiritual tourism.

**Profile of Haridwar**

Haridwar District is spread over an area of 2,360 sq. km which forms approximately 4.4 percent of the total geographical area of the State. Administratively, the District has 6 blocks and 612 villages. Haridwar is surrounded by Dehradun in the north, Pauri Garhwal in the east and the Uttar Pradesh Districts of Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor in the south and Saharanpur in the west. Haridwar has religious importance for the Hindus and is the gateway to the four pilgrimages of Uttarakhnad. The District has developed as a major commercial hub due to its excellent road connectivity with the neighboring States and its proximity to commercial and manufacturing hubs of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Noida, and the national capital. It is said that Rajputs of Pauri (Garhwal) were the original inhabitants (settlers) and founders of Haridwar city. Raja Islam Singh, son of Mandasur singh, came from Kanesur in 1708 and settled here. He was the founder of Haridwar city. Raja Benu was the last ruler, the remnants of whose building and fort still exists at Mayapur in Haridwar. In course of time, the ruling of the Rajput from Pauri ended in Haridwar, but the Rajputs of Pauri are still distributed in wide areas of neighboring Saharanpur (Distt. Gaz. Saharanpur 1981). Until 1984, Haridwar was not even a tehsil. Haridwar was declared a tehsil of Saharnpur only on 1.1.1984. It took four more years to acquire the status of a district of U.P. on 28.12.1988 and about 12 more years to include as a district of newly formed state of Uttaranchal on 9.11.2000 (now Uttarakhand). With an area of 23358 sq. kms. And a population of 14, 44,213 (according to the Census 2001) Haridwar is included under the Garhwal Circle of Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand).

Haridwar witnesses 8 million religious tourists every year. The total tourist arrival in 2010 was 18,837,125 domestic tourists and 29,555 international tourists. At present there are 180 Dharamshalas, 400 hotels, and 220 ashrams which are not sufficient to accommodate the present influx of tourists. Considering the unlimited tourism potential in the District, there is immense scope of undertaking projects with Public Private Partnership to develop quality accommodation facilities, specialized transport facilities during peak season, and religious fairs. Haridwar witnesses 8 million religious tourists every year. The total tourist arrival in 2010 was 18,837,125 domestic tourists, and 29,555 international tourists. At present there are 180 Dharamshalas, 400 hotels, and 220 ashrams which are not sufficient.
to accommodate the present influx of tourists. Considering the unlimited spiritual tourism potential in the District, there is immense scope of undertaking projects with Public Private Partnership to develop quality accommodation facilities, specialized transport facilities during peak season, and religious fairs. Potential areas of skill development include service providers like cab drivers, waiters, hoteliers and tourist guides. While the demand for these is being met given that religious tourism is thriving in the District, it is seen as imperative to provide better quality services in the hospitality and tourism domain.

II. Literature Review

Frances McGettigan, Corina Griffin, Fiona Candon (2011), “The role of a religious tourism strategy for the West and North West of Ireland in furthering the development of tourism in the region” aims to explain how a bottomup and inter-regional approach was adopted to drive the process to develop a religious spiritual tourism strategy for the region.

Kadir H. Din (2002), “Islam and Tourism: Patterns, Issues, and Options”, described the pattern of tourist arrival in Muslim countries and examines the extent to which the religious factor has a bearing on policy and development strategy affecting tourism. Drawing illustration from where Islam is the state religion, this study suggests that, although the doctrine of Islam encourages travel and hospitable behaviour, it has little influence on the mode of tourism development in Muslim countries. While certain regulations prohibit prostitution, gambling, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages in most Muslim countries, religion does not exert any significant influence on the operation of tourist-related activities. Indeed virtually all ideas and policy precepts which inform tourism planning and management are western-inspired.

Sharpley, R. and Sundaram, P. (2005), “Tourism: a sacred journey? The case of ashram tourism, India” identifies two principal groups of visitors, namely ‘permanent tourists’ who have immersed themselves indefinitely in a spiritual ‘Other’, and temporary visitors. The latter are categorized into sub-groups which point to a variety of spiritual and non-spiritual motives. The paper concludes that there is a continuum of spirituality inherent in tourism, though this is related to tourists’ experience rather than initial motivation.

III. Methodology

Objectives of the Study
1. To find out the satisfaction level of tourists in haridwar district.
2. To find out the motivational factors of spiritual tourism among the tourists.
3. To find out the difficulties faced by the spiritual tourists in the study area.
4. To offer investigation and recommendation in the study area.

Area of the Study
In this study an effort had been taken to examine the dimensions of spiritual tourism in Haridwar Region

Sources of the Data
This empirical and exploratory study is based on both primary data and secondary data. Primary data has been used as the main source of the study and it was collected from 100 visitors of spiritual tourist spots in haridwar district. The primary data was collected through a pre-structured interview schedule carefully designed after a pilot study and several discussions with scholars and officials of tourism. The secondary data has been collected from books, journals, published and unpublished materials and also from websites. The survey was conducted on the basis of convenience sampling method. For developing a sample design, totally 100 respondents were selected for this study.

Analysis and Interpretation
The chi-square analysis is an analysis which is used to test the independence of two factors. In other words, the chi-square test is used to test whether one factors has analysis reveals that calm and pleasant atmosphere in the spiritual tourist’s spot is found to be the most important factor causing pleasure and gratification to the visitors which is
followed by the socializing and communication facilities. Tourist hospitableness and approachability of local people, food, cash and transaction services, vehicle parking, stay facility, shopping facilities, transportation, sanitation and drinking water and guidance and information services follow suit in the above order.

IV. Suggestions

In the context of above findings the researcher gives the following suggestions to overcome the problems involved and to promote spiritual tourism in Haridwar district.

1. The spiritual tourism centres of the district have not gained enough publicity and therefore the visitors to the spots from and other states are less in number. Therefore, it is suggested that intensive publicity is to be given by the tourism department of the state like other states about the spiritual tourism spots like Ganga Ghat, Bharat Mata Temple and occasions like khumbh mela in Haridwar district.

2. The infrastructural facilities such as availability of transportations, cleanliness and state owned stay facilities are not enough in the spiritual tourism centres of the study area. Lack of cleanliness and beggars’ nuisance are the most important problems faced by the tourists in the study area. Therefore, the government authorities especially the local authorities should pay the special attention on their inconveniences and make necessary arrangements to correct them.

3. The quality of the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests in the study area is found to be poor in the spiritual tourism centres of the study area. Therefore, it is suggested that the government authorities should take necessary steps to enhance the quality of the the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests.

4. Since spiritual tourism contributes to the development of locality the local people are to be oriented in tourist friendly- values and a tourist-supportive-system is to be evolved. The nuisance by local people especially by the misuse by beggars and the exploitation by the local vendors and service providers are to be checked seriously by the Government authorities and the authorities of the worship places.

5. The awareness programmes on cleanliness, spitting near to devotional area, throwing the garbage, dumping of some obstruct able harmful solid waste, unreligious activities and clean ganga must be spread by the government.

6. The government should take strict action towards those factories which are spreading pollution to the spiritual area and damaging the sculpture, architect and holiness of spiritual monument and spoiling river Ganga.

7. The tourism minister must also appoint some skillful person upgraded with latest tools and technology to provide awareness camps and presentation through camps and nukked skits to spread awareness regarding spiritual tourism.

V. Conclusion

The study has clearly demonstrated that spiritual tourism is playing a major role in economic development. Among other observations, it has shown that, for many countries of the region, the economic significance of spiritual tourism is very large when measured in terms of GDP and foreign currency. For developing countries in general like India, Spiritual tourism is a sector in which they have amazing economic prospective. The study revealed that the economic significance of spiritual tourism, measured in terms of employment, is very large. It has also illustrated that appropriate spiritual tourism-related interventions can play a role in raising the standard of living and in reducing poverty in local communities.

VI. References

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