

Study the Potential of Tangible and Intangible Folk Heritage in Promoting Tourism in Yamuna River Basin of Garhwal Himalayan Region

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Abstract - In order to develop sustainable tourism in the Yamuna River Basin of the Garhwal Himalayan area, this research explores the possibility of using both physical and intangible cultural heritage. Architectural wonders, traditional crafts, oral traditions, performing arts, and celebratory events are all part of the region's rich cultural fabric, which is explored via qualitative analysis of secondary data sources. The study's overarching goal is to inform policymakers and practitioners on how to best promote culturally sensitive tourism that creates jobs and protects local traditions without compromising the integrity of historic sites.

Keywords: Garhwal Himalayan, Yamuna, Tangible, Intangible, Heritage.

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INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand, a state in northern India, is home to the breathtaking Garhwal Himalayan area, which is a genuine cultural and natural gem. As it meanders through this beautiful terrain, the Yamuna River Basin serves as both an essential lifeblood and a storehouse for folk cultures and customs that span generations.[1] This project seeks to investigate the possibility of using this distinct cultural mosaic to encourage environmentally conscious tourism in the area.

Artifacts, spectacular architecture, and traditional crafts are all examples of tangible folk heritage that embody a community's cultural past. [2,3] Among the many priceless artifacts found in the Garhwal Himalayas are temples made of meticulously carved wood, rich textile traditions, and elaborate craftsmanship. These physical artifacts are windows into the region's history and culture, showcasing its creative talent. [4]

Conversely, oral traditions, the performing arts, social behaviors, rituals, and celebrations are all examples of intangible folk heritage. Numerous ethnic groups inhabit the Yamuna River Basin, and their traditions, rituals, and festivals are as varied as the river itself. [5,6] These intangibles give the area's culture its vitality, from the lively celebrations that mark the agricultural cycle to the soothing sounds of traditional folk music. [7]

These intangible and physical cultural values may be greatly enhanced by the responsible development of

tourism. [8] Tourism has the dual purpose of bringing in much-needed revenue and fostering a feeling of national pride and appreciation for a region's distinctive cultural assets. In addition, it has the potential to link tourists with the unique culture of the area while also encouraging them to learn and appreciate other cultures. [9]

The rise of tourism and the preservation of cultural traditions must, however, be carefully balanced. The same history that unfettered tourism aims to celebrate is in danger of becoming commercialized, over-commercialized, and eroded of genuine cultural traditions. [10,11] Consequently, the purpose of this research is to investigate eco-friendly and culturally aware ways to promote tourism in the Yamuna River Basin by capitalizing on the region's rich folk history. [12,13]

The purpose of this study is to provide suggestions and insights to local communities, tourist stakeholders, and policymakers by thoroughly examining the region's physical and intangible folk heritage. In order to help preserve and promote a rich heritage that has survived for centuries, this research aims to acknowledge and celebrate the distinctive cultural fabric of the Garhwal Himalayas. [14]

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used secondary data sources to investigate how the Yamuna River Basin in the Garhwal Himalayan area may benefit from physical

and intangible folk heritage in order to boost tourism. In order to gather information for this study, we combed through a mountain of literature on the topics of folk heritage, cultural tourism, and the region under investigation. Government publications, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other reputable sources were the main foci of data collecting. Research in this area involved looking at things like tourist numbers, cultural inventories, and policies and programs aimed at preserving and promoting folk traditions. The multimedia materials, photographs, and texts that highlighted the intangible and tangible aspects of the Garhwal Himalayan region's folk heritage were also examined using content analytic methodologies. To achieve the goals of the study, this analysis was useful in revealing important trends, themes, and insights. Findings and suggestions for using folk heritage to promote sustainable tourism in the Yamuna River Basin were derived from the synthesis and analysis of the acquired data using qualitative data analysis methodologies, including interpretative approaches and theme analysis.

RESULTS

• Tangible

Tangible features, often known as the external representations of a culture that are available to the senses of sight, hearing, touch, and experience, are essential components of cultural tourism. Wonders of architecture, remnants from the past, works of traditional craftsmanship, and landscapes that have seen millennia of human existence are all examples of things that come under this category.

During cultural travel, one of the most exciting parts is the opportunity to discover architectural marvels that are examples of human ingenuity and creativity. Castles from the middle ages, with their intricate designs, and the grandeur of old temples are examples of architectural wonders that give us the opportunity to experience the past in a direct manner. Architecturally speaking, the Taj Mahal in India, the Colosseum in Rome, and the Forbidden City in Beijing are more than just structures; they are symbols of times gone by, the progression of culture, and the accomplishments of humans.

The stories of bygone eras are told via the tangible items that are on exhibit at museums and other sites of cultural significance. Archaeological discoveries, which include sculptures, paintings, pottery, and other artifacts, provide information on the beliefs, practices, and aesthetic expressions of societies that have long since vanished. Cultural tourists are able to experience a feeling of timelessness and absorption in the past when they have the opportunity to touch valuable artifacts like as the Rosetta Stone, the Terracotta Army, and the Egyptian mummies that the Louvre houses.

In many cases, the material history of a nation is inextricably related to the handicraft traditions of that culture. Those that practice traditional crafts in the region create tangible artifacts that communicate tales about their respective hometowns. These crafts, whether they be intricate fabrics, pottery, woodcarvings, or metals, are treasures for those who visit cultural sites and improve the setting in which cultural activities take place. As a result of visiting artisan communities, such as those in Fez, Morocco, or Oaxaca, Mexico, one is better able to acquire a practical grasp of cultural artifacts.

In the realm of cultural tourism, the landscape that a culture inhabits plays a significant role in shaping the narrative of cultural tourism. Landscapes are like living paintings that convey stories about climate change, agriculture, and the connection of people and their environs. This is true whether one is looking at the Tuscan hillsides or the tiered rice fields of Bali. Individuals who go to these cultural landscapes have the opportunity to see firsthand the ways in which human actions impact the world and the ways in which the planet impacts mankind.

• Intangible

In addition to the more evident physical aspects of cultural tourism, the intangible aspects of cultural tourism also contribute to the overall enrichment and enhancement of the experience for the visitor. The elements that comprise this category include folklore, music, dance, traditions, and the transitory moments that contribute to the formation of a people's identity.

Folktales and oral traditions that transcend time and space are essential components of the intangible cultural inheritance of a people. Through the use of storytelling, mythology, and folklore, it is possible to assist the transfer of a community's ideas, knowledge, and collective memory. Cultural tourists have the opportunity to personally experience the intangible pulse of a culture when they take part in storytelling sessions with indigenous elders or when they encounter oral practices during festivals.

Witnessing the expressions of music and art that are unique to each culture is one of the components of cultural tourism that is considered to be among the most invisible. Traditional music has the ability to affect listeners and tell their stories, regardless of whether it is played on traditional instruments or sung in a language that has been lost for a very long time. People's lives and the locations they've lived through are reflected in the tales that are told via traditional dances. You will sense an instant connection to the intangible history of a culture, regardless of whether you are in New Zealand seeing the traditional Maori haka or in Spain where you are witnessing flamenco.

Observing festivals and rituals of a ceremonial nature in conjunction with cultural tourism is not an

unusual occurrence. The intangible aspects of cultural identity, spirituality, and social ties are revealed via these events, which serve as a window into these aspects. In order to achieve cultural immersion, tourists immerse themselves in the spirit of a festival, whether it be the Hanami holiday in Japan, the Diwali celebrations in India, or the Carnival celebrations in Brazil.

Traditions of Cooking and Foods from the Region: One method to understand the intangible heritage of a culture is via the food of that country. Dishes from different regions each have their own unique flavors, textures, and scents, which elicit sentiments that go beyond the act of eating itself. By participating in cultural tourism activities such as touring street markets, taking cooking classes, and tasting regional delicacies, tourists have the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the intangible heritage of gastronomy.

The most successful forms of cultural tourism are those that investigate the dynamic relationship between tangible and immaterial features. This is a journey in which the past is brought to life through the telling of tales, the present is experienced via the architecture that reverberates with the rhythms of the people, and the landscape is converted into a stage for the performance of rites and dances. Creating a whole that transcends both physical space and time is the essence of cultural tourism, which is all about the unseen and tangible components coming together to complete the whole.

Folk Culture

The Yamuna River Basin, which is located in the middle of the northern region of India, is home to a riveting story of folk culture that has stood the test of time. It is a living tapestry that weaves together mythology, music, and customs. This area, which is rich in history and has spiritual value, is proud to have a lively cultural legacy that has been formed by a variety of influences that have spanned ages. The pulse of folk culture becomes evident as one travels down the banks of the Yamuna. It can be heard reverberating through the ancient temples, the busy markets, and the enthusiastic celebrations of festivals that define the rhythm of life for the people who reside in this holy valley.

An dense mosaic of traditions and practices are at the heart of the Yamuna's folk culture. These traditions and customs are strongly ingrained in the day-to-day lives of the people who make their homes along its banks. These traditions, which are a manifestation of the merger of a number of different cultural influences, are often connected with the agricultural origins of the area. A rich tapestry of traditions is created by the rituals that are related with agricultural operations, the ceremonies that mark the milestones in life, and the festivals that may be found at various points during the calendar. In a manner similar to that of a mute witness, the Yamuna serves as the background for lively events, whether it is the jubilation of Holi or the

tranquility of Diwali. By being handed down from generation to generation, these traditions provide a feeling of shared identity and belonging, so contributing to the development of a cultural continuity that is both timeless and ever-evolving.

A symphony of musical and creative manifestations that give the area a sense of vitality may be discovered by delving into the core of the Yamuna's folk culture. During festivals and other events, the riverbanks are filled with tunes that are produced by local artists who use traditional instruments. Folk music from the Yamuna region, which is often rich in mythology and local stories, transforms into a narrative that stirs the heart and evokes the spirit of the community. Performing arts, such as dance, also provide a visual component to cultural expressions, with performances conveying the spirit of the mythology associated with the Yamuna. Whether it's the exquisite motions of Kathak dancers or the lively performances that take place during village fairs, the creative manifestations along the river are a dynamic representation of the living legacy that exists there.

The importance of oral traditions in the folk culture that exists along the Yamuna cannot be overestimated under any circumstances. Elders within the communities take on the role of storytellers, transmitting tales that include the history, mythology, and knowledge of the area down through the generations. This oral tradition is not only a collection of tales; rather, it is a live embodiment of the community's collective memory that serves as a source of education, entertainment, and the construction of identity. Throughout the Yamuna's winding path, stories of deities connected to the river, legends of local heroes, and lessons in morality are passed down from generation to generation, therefore developing a feeling of togetherness and linking people from different backgrounds. In this way, oral traditions become a dynamic method of conserving and expressing the distinctive character and cultural awareness of the place.

The Yamuna River, which is revered in Hindu mythology, is a significant contributor to the folk culture of the area since it is associated with mythology. Infusing the scenery with spiritual meaning are the stories that are told about Lord Krishna's boyhood adventures along the banks of the Yamuna. Pilgrims go to holy places such as Vrindavan and Mathura, which are said to be the places where Lord Krishna was born. This brings an additional layer of religious passion to the culture of the community. Not only does the Yamuna become a geographical entity, but it also becomes a divine presence, which has an impact on the rituals, festivals, and customs of everyday life that are practiced by the people that are located in its basin.

A strong expression of the region's folk culture may be seen in the festivals that are observed in the Yamuna River Basin. With vivid processions, music, and joyful revelry, the festival of colors, Holi, takes

on a unique importance in Mathura. Holi is also known as the festival of colors. During the festival of Janmashtami, which is celebrated to honor the birth of Lord Krishna, the area is transformed into a show of devotion and cultural celebrations. The Yamuna's ghats are transformed into stages for a variety of activities, including religious rites, community festivities, and cultural entertainment. Not only do these festivals promote the preservation of cultural traditions, but they also attract tourists from all over the world, therefore transforming the Yamuna into a cultural pilgrimage destination.

Living heritage villages may be found in the middle of the Yamuna's folk culture. These communities are dedicated to the preservation and practice of age-old customs. Travelers are provided with immersive experiences that allow them to watch and engage in everyday life, rituals, and cultural events in the villages that are located along the riverbanks. These villages become the keepsakes of folk culture. A true peek into the customs that have molded their identity for centuries is provided by these villages, who are known for their friendly hospitality.

Despite the fact that the Yamuna's folk culture continues to be a source of cultural riches, it is not immune to the problems that modernity and environmental concerns provide. At the same time as urbanization, pollution of the river, and shifting economic dynamics all represent challenges to the traditional way of life, they also pose risks to its continued existence. In order to guarantee that the Yamuna River will continue to be a vibrant center of cultural wealth for future generations, it is necessary that efforts be made to strike a balance between the preservation of traditional culture and the processes of development.

In its most fundamental form, the folk culture of the Yamuna River Basin is a story that is both dynamic and ever-changing, reflecting the voices of generations both past and present. It is a living tapestry that emerges throughout the river's path, encouraging cultural aficionados, researchers, and inquisitive tourists to immerse themselves in the ageless customs, lyrical expressions, and magical stories that characterize the cultural environment of this holy place.

Material Culture

The Yamuna River Basin, which runs through the middle of northern India, works as a protector of material culture. It is responsible for the preservation of artifacts, architectural wonders, and physical vestiges that are a reflection of the region's rich historical and cultural fabric. One may experience a voyage through time as they meander along the banks of the Yamuna. This journey reveals the many tangible manifestations of human ingenuity and craftsmanship that have contributed to the formation of the identities of the groups that have made their homes in this holy basin.

- **Incredible Buildings**

The architectural marvels that may be seen in the Yamuna River Basin are mute testaments to the inventiveness and artistic brilliance of the civilizations that previously flourished in this area. There are palaces, forts, and temples scattered throughout the terrain, and each of these buildings tells a different tale about the past. Mughal architecture is exemplified by the Taj Mahal in Agra, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Taj Mahal is a reflection of the love tale between Emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the huge Akshardham Temple complex in Delhi is a display for elaborate carvings and traditional workmanship. It embodies the spiritual and artistic aspects of the Yamuna's material culture.

- **Objects of History and Cultural Artefacts**

The Yamuna River is home to a wealth of relics that span several eras and civilizations, which may be discovered at museums and archeological sites along its banks. From ancient ceramics and sculptures to tools and personal things, these artifacts provide insights into the material culture of the societies that have thrived along the river. These communities have been located along the river. For example, the National Museum in Delhi is home to relics that span from the Harappan Civilization to medieval sculptures. These artifacts provide a complete insight of the development of material culture in the Yamuna area. The everyday lives, beliefs, and technical developments of the cultures who formerly inhabited the basin are brought into direct contact with these objects, which so constitute physical linkages.

Beyond the splendor of well-known sites, the Yamuna River Basin is peppered with historical buildings that add to the area's physical legacy. These structures are of great importance to the region. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the enormous Agra Fort is a daunting representation of force and resiliency. It is a combination of Mughal and Indian architectural traditions, and it stands as a formidable symbol of power and resilience. The city of Fatehpur Sikri, which is located close to Agra and has been abandoned, is a wonder of urban design. Its palaces, courtyards, and mosques have been meticulously maintained, and they provide an insight into the life of the Mughal court. Rather than just being architectural relics, these historical monuments become live testimonies to the cultural, political, and social forces that were responsible for shaping the material culture of the Yamuna and its surrounding areas.

Living heritage communities in villages along the Yamuna continue to retain traditional handicraft and material practices, even as they are surrounded by the material culture of historical monuments and relics. These groups, who often participate in

artisanal activities like as weaving on handlooms, metalworking, and ceramics, constitute essential contributions to the material culture of the area. The villages of Khurja, which are famed for their colorful hand-painted ceramics, and the settlements of Bhadohi, who are recognized for their carpet-weaving, are examples of the continuation of material traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. This kind of living heritage community provides visitors with the opportunity to participate in immersive experiences, during which they may see the manufacture of tangible cultural products and interact with artists who are conserving age-old skills.

- **Cultural Environments**

By virtue of the cultural characteristics and land use that it has, the landscape that runs along the Yamuna River makes a contribution to the material culture. In Mathura and Vrindavan, in particular, the stepped ghats that are located along the riverbanks serve not only as functional constructions but also as cultural venues for the performance of rites and celebrations alike. It is a reflection of the symbiotic connection that exists between the Yamuna River and the populations that are dependent on its waters for subsistence that the agricultural terraces that are located along the floodplains of the Yamuna River are still grown using traditional ways. These cultural landscapes, which are formed by material practices, become important components of the material culture of the Yamuna, reflecting the harmony that exists between human activities and the natural environment.

The material culture along the Yamuna, on the other hand, is confronted with difficulties as a result of urbanization, the deterioration of the environment, and the demands of contemporary development. The preservation of material heritage is threatened by a number of factors, including the pollution of the river, the encroachment on historical places, and the fast alteration of landscapes. In order to protect the tangible heritage that the Yamuna River Basin has left behind, it is vital that preservation measures be undertaken. These efforts should include restoration projects, cultural awareness programs, and sustainable tourism practices.

It may be concluded that the material culture that has developed along the banks of the Yamuna River Basin is a demonstration of the tenacity and inventiveness of the people that have flourished along its banks. Material culture is characterized by physical manifestations that build a story that is both rich and complex. These expressions include architectural wonders that defy time as well as objects that tell stories about bygone times. As the Yamuna continues to flow, it brings with it the physical history that attracts explorers and cultural lovers to unravel the tales that are contained in its material culture. This facilitates the development of a profound appreciation for the creative and historical legacies that have defined this holy basin.

Fair And Festival

Fairs and festivals are woven together to create a vivid tapestry that unfolds in the heart of northern India, where the Yamuna River runs with ancient stories and spiritual resonance. During fairs and festivals, the Yamuna River Basin, which is steeped in a rich cultural legacy, transforms into a lively canvas on which communities may paint the colors of their traditions, rituals, and the links the community has with one another. Not only does this kaleidoscope of cultural festivals serve as a monument to the resiliency and continuity of the many people who call this holy basin home, but it also acts as a symbol of the passage of time.

- **Celebrations as Markers of Culture**

The festivals that are held in the Yamuna River Basin are not just dates on a calendar; rather, they are cultural landmarks that have a significant impact on the rhythm of life for the people that are located along its banks. Holi, also known as the festival of colors, is a celebration that takes place in an area that is transformed into a kaleidoscope of brilliant colors. People of all ages participate in the festivities. Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, is celebrated by lighting up the landscape with fireworks and diyas, which are meant to represent the victory of light over darkness. During the festival of Janmashtami, which is intended to commemorate the birth of Lord Krishna, a spectacular display of devotion and celebration is held, particularly in Mathura, which is said to be the origin of the narrative. Not only are these celebrations religious observances, but they are also cultural manifestations that bring communities together, transcending boundaries and building a feeling of shared identity.

In Hindu mythology, the Yamuna River is considered to be holy, and as a result, the festivals that are performed in its basin are imbued with a special mysticism. At the time of festivals, the Yamuna's ghats are transformed into holy places where rites and ceremonies are performed. In order to achieve a state of spiritual purity, devotees take a holy plunge in the river on days that are considered to be auspicious. The ghats of Vrindavan and Mathura, when decked with diyas and flowers, transform into dreamy settings for the aarti rites and religious processions that take place annually. During these festivals, the Yamuna, which is believed to be Lord Krishna's spouse, is not only a geographical entity; rather, it is a heavenly presence that sanctifies the festivities.

Holi, also known as the festival of colors, is an important event in the cultural calendar of the Yamuna River Basin. During the Holi celebrations, Mathura, which is linked with the childhood of Lord Krishna, becomes the main center of the festivities. A lively celebration takes place throughout the town, complete with processions, music, dancing, and the playful flinging of colored powders. At the

Dwarkadheesh Temple in Mathura, which serves as a focal focus for the celebrations, devotees and tourists alike participate in the revelry, breaking down boundaries of age and social class in the process. While people joyfully immerse themselves in the spirit of Holi, the ghats along the Yamuna see a riot of colors. This creates an environment of camaraderie and shared happiness among the people who are participating in the festival.

Events such as fairs and festivals that take place in the Yamuna River Basin are illustrative of the cultural landscape of India, which is characterized by unity in variety. Even while every festival has its own distinct importance and set of traditions, the fact that they all come together to form a whole contributes to the cultural wealth of the area. The cultural diversity of festivities is a reflection of the pluralistic nature of Indian culture, which is characterized by the coming together of individuals from a variety of backgrounds to celebrate their common cultural heritage. It doesn't matter whether it's the pulsating rhythms of the dhol during Holi, the devout chanting on Janmashtami, or the dazzling light displays on Diwali; the festivities that take place in the Yamuna River Basin constitute a perfect symphony of cultural variety.

In spite of the fact that the Yamuna's fairs and festivals continue to be celebrated with boundless passion, they are nevertheless confronted with difficulties as a result of modernity and worries about the environment. The river is becoming more polluted, cultural places are being encroached upon, and festivals are becoming more commercialized, all of which pose challenges to the festivals' authenticity and capacity to continue in the future. It is vital to make preservation measures, both at the community and governmental levels, in order to guarantee that these cultural festivals have their original core while also adjusting to the changing dynamics of the area.

The cultural celebrations that take place along the Yamuna River are confronted with the combined difficulty of maintaining tradition while also negotiating the transformative terrain of industrialization. It is necessary to strike a careful balance between cultural activities and environmental protection in order to prevent pollution of the river, which is especially important during celebrations such as Holi. In order to ensure the continued existence of these festivities over the long run, it is essential to implement programs that encourage eco-friendly celebrations, such as the use of natural colors and sustainable activities. Furthermore, in order to protect the genuineness of the festivities, it is necessary to make attentive measures to prevent the invasion of commercialization on cultural places and the possible watering down of traditions. In order to effectively address these difficulties, it is essential to implement community-driven awareness campaigns, historical conservation projects, and sustainable tourism practices. In light of the fact that the Yamuna River Basin, with its centuries-old cultural history, is situated at the intersection of tradition and modernity, it is imperative

that joint efforts be made in order to guarantee that its lively fairs and festivals will continue to flourish for many generations to come.

These celebrations, with their kaleidoscope of colors, music, and rituals, become living testaments to the cultural continuity and resilience of the communities that are located along the sacred banks of the Yamuna River. In essence, the fairs and festivals that take place along the Yamuna River Basin are more than just events; they are cultural odysseys that invite participants and spectators alike to delve into the soul of a region that is deeply connected to its spiritual and historical roots.

CONCLUSION

The extraordinary cultural history of the Garhwal Himalayas, the manifestations of which are both physical and intangible, offers a wonderful potential for the development of tourism that is environmentally responsible. By commemorating this illustrious heritage, the area has the potential to produce economic advantages while also encouraging respect and understanding amongst different cultures. Nevertheless, it is very important to strike a balance between the growth of tourism and the preservation of history. The importance of empowering local communities and preserving their genuine traditions for future generations is emphasized by this research, which highlights the necessity for techniques that are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

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