

# Promotion of Adventure Tourism in Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract – The fact is that adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh has emerged out as one of the most important industries of India. In the recent years it has been observed that there is a lot of potentiality for the development of the adventure tourism and some of its related activities in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Actually, Himachal Pradesh is a boon and bless of nature with its natural beauty, peaceful natural environment, thick forests and wildlife, sacred shrines and historical monuments. It is also a land of mysticism in Himalayan region, which is unique and peculiar in the perspective of promotion of adventure tourism in many ways as it attracts a large number of tourists throughout the world. Therefore, here it is an urgent need to frame out a policy by state government as well as by centre government for the promotion of adventure tourism scenario in the state which may be very convenient and enjoyable for the tourists and travelers. If adventure tourism industry boosts, then GDP of the state will surely increase and will also create more job opportunities for the local residents. However, the state government has also passed Registration Tourist Trade Act, 2002 and Tourism Policy, 2015 to provide clear direction for the development of tourism infrastructure in the state. The government has also initiated new marketing strategy for the development of adventure tourism under the guidance and regulation of tourism department. The present research paper highlights some key aspects of adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh.**

**Keywords: Adventure Tourism, Promotion of Adventure Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Potentials, Opportunities, Challenges, Tourism Policies, Tourism Department.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Himachal Pradesh is a hill state of India with its natural beauty and surroundings. The total population of the state according to the census of 2011 is 68, 56, 509. There is a variety of flora and fauna that attracts foreign tourists as well as Indian tourists throughout the year. The state of Himachal Pradesh is very famous for its adventurous activities like trekking, para gliding, bungee jumping, mountaineering, river running, hang gliding, heli-skiing, etc. these activities attract foreigner tourists and the state of Himachal Pradesh has become a popular tourist destination in the recent years. The state is now the leading state in the field of para gliding and heli-skiing. The tourism department has made a comprehensive adventure tourism promotion plan for the promotion of adventure sports and all other adventurous activities to attract the foreigner tourists. The tourism department is making all possible efforts to promote and set-up adventure sports school at various locations to train more youth in adventure sports. The state tourism policy, 2005 has been very helpful to provide infrastructure facilities for adventure tourism in the state. It has also

been a turning point for economic growth and prosperity of the state by creating new job opportunities for the local community. Consequently Himachal Pradesh has become a leading tourist destination for the adventure sports and such other adventurous activities like mountaineering , trekking, rafting, para gliding, bungee jumping and heli- skiing.

## A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a plethora of literature related to tourism sector in India including some of the famous cited works made in abroad. Some of the research works have been made in the perspective of tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh. It is observed that Himachal Pradesh has been always endowed with abundant natural beauty and peaceful environment. Therefore, the state has always been a famous tourist destination with many potential. Some of the studies have been conducted to find out the availability and potentiality for the development tourism business in the state of Himachal Pradesh as under:

S. R. Chugh (2012) in her study entitled "Tourism Promotion in Himachal Pradesh" has pointed out that tourism has emerged out as an upcoming industry in Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, in this regard a positive image of a tourism industry in the state can be created in the minds of tourists with the help of various promotional techniques. However, the researcher has covered the majority of the tourist destinations visited by the international tourists and this study covers the three districts of Himachal Pradesh namely Shimla, Kullu and Kangra. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that the ultimate sample was selected on convenient cum random basis. The variable which is dealt with is marketing and the tourists' opinions regarding this factor. Therefore, a majority of the respondents (foreigner tourists) gave the opinion that the government should develop unexplored places for tourism since the state has a lot of tourism potential.

Anurag Mahajan (1992) in his study entitled, "Tourism in Kangra Valley: Development, Potential and Problems" has viewed that this region has so many potentialities for a successful implementation of an ambitious programme for promoting tourism. Today this place has become a very popular and a vibrant holiday destination for tourists throughout the globe. The government of Himachal Pradesh has also initiated many programs and schemes to promote tourism activities here. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that we still need to frame out an effective policy for the promotion of tourism in Kangra Valley.

Raj Kumar (1992) in his study entitled "A Study on Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: A Case Study of Kullu and Manali" has concluded that there are so many possibilities to promote tourism sector in this region. But the existing tourist facilities available are not satisfactory. Therefore, here it is an urgent need to analyze the current situation and the tourism potential in these places of Himachal Pradesh.

Archna Tyagi (1989) in her study entitled, "A Study of Tourism Marketing in Himachal Pradesh" has pointed out that there are so many possibilities to develop tourism industry in the state of Himachal Pradesh. She has also highlighted many tourist attractions such as cultural traditions, natural beauty, natural environment, etc. which may be managed and marketed to boost the tourism industry in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight the concept of adventure tourism.
2. To identify various adventurous activities in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

3. To point out recent trends in adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
4. To trace out some major challenges or problems in the promotion of adventure tourism in the state and to point out some suggestions.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary sources of data collection and most of the research data has been collected from various articles already published in reputed journals. Moreover, the researcher has also used data from reference books and official websites of tourism department. To pace the study, the researcher has also used some observational facts related to the adventure tourism as experienced by various tourists who visited for the adventurous activities in the various destinations in the state of Himachal Pradesh. To conclude, the nature of the study is exploratory and analytical.

## THE CONCEPT OF ADVENTURE TOURISM

Adventure tourism is one of the emerging segments of our and travel industry and it is a type of niche tourism involving exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveler should expect the unexpected. Today adventure tourism is rapidly growing in popularity as tourists seek unusual holidays, different from the typical beach vacation. Mountaineering expeditions, heli-skiing, trekking, bungee jumping, rafting and rock climbing are frequently cited as an examples of adventure tourism in the perspective of tourism industry at the global level. Moreover, adventure tourism is about connecting with a new culture or a new landscape and being physically active at the same time. It is not about being risky or pushing your boundaries. In fact, here it is an urgent need to work out on risk management techniques to promote adventure tourism anywhere throughout the world where natural climate and infrastructure for adventurous activities are easily available.

## ADVENTURE TOURISM ACTIVITIES AT THE GLOBAL SCENARIO:

Some of the adventurous tourism activities are:

**Climbing:** It is a classic example of an adventure tourism activity which combines physical activity and allows tourists to take in the beauty of nature. But make sure to check the safety record and accreditations of rock climbing guide before heading out.

**Rafting:** It provides all the excitement of battling a rapid and one can also sit back and enjoy the view during the calmer sections of the river. The best

season for rafting usually depends on the particular area for this specific purpose and desired level of adventure. Generally speaking, the water levels are usually higher earlier in the season and lower later in the season. Higher water levels provide bigger rapids and more thrills, while lower levels are more subdued.

**Mountain Biking:** It is an outdoor activity which offers a great workout and a fun way to experience nature. Many locations have trails that range from beginner to advanced.

**Skiing:** The western United States is known for its exceptional skiing up and down the Rocky Mountains because there are many amazing slopes all the way from Alaska down to Utah, Colorado and even northern New Mexico.

**Day Hiking:** Day hiking is a good option for most anyone that loves the outdoors. For example if a tourist is in Costa Rica, he/she can take a guided hike up to the top of Cero Chato, a dormant volcano.

**Backpacking:** It is more suitable for people who are more adventurous and have the proper equipment, to extend day hike into a backpacking trip which allows to stay out in nature longer and to see more things. It is also more important to have the proper survival knowledge and gear. For example The Gore Range Trail is a great way to explore the mountains outside Silverthorne, Colorado.

## **ADVENTUROUS TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

The tourism department of Himachal Pradesh makes all efforts and provides full supports to promote adventurous tourism activities. The Ministry of Tourism in its guidelines has identified the adventurous tourism activities which include mountaineering, trekking, river rafting/running, hang gliding, para gliding and bungee jumping.

**Adventure Sport:** The adventure sport opportunities are being offered in various parts of the state. The trekking routes have been started from Bara to Bhangal trek, Kinnaur to Kailash, Spiti to Gharwal, Bharmour to Padum, etc. the camping opportunities are also available in Lahaul, Sangla, Kalpa and Kazza.

**Heli-Skiing:** These adventurous tourism facilities have been made available at Deo Tibba, Rohtang Pass, Chanderkhani Pass, Hanuman Tibba and Chandrakhani Pass.

**The Mountain Biking:** It is one of the most popular adventurous activity in Himachal Pradesh. There are some mountain biking routes such as Leh-Manali

Highway, Manali-Damphug, Tabo-Kaza, Kaza-Losar, etc.

**Mountaineering and Rock Climbing:** These facilities are available in many parts of Himachal Pradesh but Manali is very famous for mountaineering and rock climbing.

**Rappelling:** Himachal Pradesh tourism department has offered an opportunity for rappelling at Manali, Shitidhar peaks, Beas Kund region, Pirpanjal, Deo Tibba, etc.

**Paragliding:** The government of Himachal Pradesh has developed world class paragliding facilities at Bir in Kangra valley, Bijli Mahadeo, Manali and Solang valley in Kullu district.

**River Rafting:** The tourism department of Himachal Pradesh has provided and offered river rafting and some other water sports activities in different rivers of the state. The tourists who are lovers of adventures enjoy water sports there.

## **RECENT TRENDS**

The National Tourism Policy, 2002 had pointed out some suggestions to lay thrust on development and promotion of adventure tourism in the Himalayan region. Consequently the state of Himachal Pradesh framed out its tourism policy in 2005 and focused on adventurous activities in the state. Furthermore, many steps were taken in this regard by the state government as well as by the state government to promote adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh. The Ministry of Tourism launched a campaign 777 days of 'Incredible Indian Himalayas' on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to promote the tourism potential of the Indian Himalayas. Recently aiming at promoting the adventure tourism potential in Himachal Pradesh, The Tourism Development Corporation & Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation in collaboration with the Indian Air Force has organized a joint adventure expedition from 12-17 June 2017 to promote adventure activities in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The skydiving and parasailing was held at Jubber Hatti airport Shimla and The Mountain Terrain Bike expedition from Shimla to Tattapani was witnessed by a large number of tourists and local community. Some other adventurous activities like para gliding, trekking, river rafting, mountain climbing, rappelling and river crossing were also conducted during this period.

## **CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS**

There are some challenges and problems in the way of adventure tourism as under:

- Inadequacy of transport facilities.
- Lack of good infrastructure facilities.
- Weaknesses in marketing system.
- Lack of funds and information channels.
- Overcrowding of popular tourist centers.
- Climate change and environmental imbalances.
- Lack of co-operation between local community and tourism department.
- Risk factors and lack of safety measures.
- Lack of trained and professional guides.

## SUGGESTIONS

There are some suggestions to promote the adventure tourism in the state as under:

- To develop apps with features including maps, list of visiting places, contacts of taxi operators, information about hotel booking etc.
- To facilitate some safety features in apps and taxis.
- Availability of booklets for famous tourist places.
- Availability of travelling cards for tourists.
- To improve infrastructure facilities like washrooms, roads, hotels, taxis, parking, etc.
- To ensure the facility of trained and educated professional guide.
- To frame out strict rules to make the adventure tourism eco-friendly.

## CONCLUSION

Now it can be pointed out that Himachal Pradesh is emerging as a hub of adventure tourism in the recent years. Moreover, it is the most important economic sector of the state, which has a potentiality to create new job opportunities for the unemployed youth. Today the state receives a dismal number of foreign tourists. But there is a lack of proper marketing strategy which creates a hinder to the promotion of adventure tourism in the state. Therefore, it is suggested that Himachal Pradesh can be made an attractive destination for adventurous tourist

activities. The state has a great potential for adventure sports. Recently, a joint adventure expedition was organized in the state which has witnessed various adventure activities. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that there is an urgent need to spread out adequate information among the various segments of the tourism industry and the planners should try to focus on marketing and promoting the adventure tourism by adopting some new and innovative techniques which maybe goal oriented.

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