

## Tourism Development in Himachal Pradesh: Emerging Dimensions

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*Himachal Pradesh is the ultimate travel destination of India for tourists, artists, pilgrims and adventures since time immemorial. The natural scenic beauty, architecture, fair and festivals, salubrious climate and environment, snow-capped peaks, lakes, rivers, glaciers, adventure sports, temples of the region have emerged as the main tourist attractions in this region. Those who are hungry for the scenic beauty, this region offers its cultural richness and antiquity with amusement and environmental variety. The booming tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh is an engine to economic growth in rural areas of the state. Tourism planners need to moderate the level of risk at the destination through risk avoidance or enhancement policies in an attempt to satisfy tourist's motivations. Tourism has multiplier effect on the economy of Himachal Pradesh. The tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh is making substantial contribution to generation of employment and earning foreign exchange and the government has accorded due priority to ensure its growth over the years. The government of Himachal Pradesh have initiated various developmental plans for the development of infrastructure like railways, air transport, road transport and communication networks in order to promote the tourism in the main tourist destinations. Keeping in view the prime importance of this industry in the state of Himachal Pradesh, through the present study, an effort has been made to study the trend of tourist inflow, assessment of the services/facilities available to the tourists and analyze the attitude of the domestic and international tourists towards these facilities in various tourist destinations.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Eco-tourism, Adventure sports, Artificial rock-climbing, Grass-skiing, Glaciers, Snowfields, Snow-capped peaks*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the main prop of the economy of many countries as the tourism is the major economic activity in the world today. It paves way for the economic growth and major source of foreign exchange. It also plays a vital role as cultural aspects of the nation are concerned. Journeys are undertaken to learn about other people and countries. These journeys are called cultural trips. Culture also provided a strong motivation for the tourism and the relation between culture and tourism thus becomes self evident. Several foreign chains have entered the Indian market since the opening up of economy in 1991 which

have resulted into the improvement of its quality. The overseas players have brought in efficient systems and service standards from Europe and the United States. Competition has forced Indian hotel groups to improve their standards. The customer has benefited in many ways. The influx of foreign players has led to major price wars in the industry. In an attempt to woo customers, Indian hotels have reduced their tariffs significantly.

Himachal" the combination of Him+Anchal( in the lap of snow) and also referred to as the "Magical Showcase of Nature's Splendor" ideal for the travelers to travel, enjoy and relax. Himachal Pradesh was formed into 10 districts and was declared a state on January 25, 1971, with Shimla

as its capital. The 12 districts of Bilaspur, Chamba, Hamirpur, Kangra, Kinnaur, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmour, Solan and Una were re-organized into the districts of the state in 1972-73. It is the ultimate travel destination of India for tourists, artists, pilgrims and adventures since time immemorial. Those who are hungry for the scenic beauty, this region offers its cultural richness and antiquity with amusement and environmental variety. The state of Himachal Pradesh has boundaries with the Jammu and Kashmir in the North, Uttar Pradesh in the Southeast, Haryana in the South and Punjab in the West. The territory of

Himachal Pradesh can be divided into three zones such as Inner Himalayas, Outer Himalayas and Greater Himalayas which are extremely rich in water resources due to heavy rain and snow received almost all parts of the region. The state of Himachal Pradesh have five rivers namely Chinab, Ravi, Beas, Satluj and Yamuna which are fed by vast reservoirs of glaciers and snowfields. Himachal Pradesh is embowered with beautiful lakes such as "Renuka lake" in Sirmour, "Khajyar lake" in Dalhousie (Chamba), "Manimash lake" in Bharmour (Chamba), "Rewalsar lake" in Mandi, "Chander Tal" lake in Lahual, "Chander Nahan" lake in Rohru (Shimla) and "Bhaghasu Nath lake" in Dharmshala (Kangra).

Himachal is situated in the western Himalayas. Covering an area of 55,673 kilometres), Himachal Pradesh is a mountainous state with elevation ranging from about 350 metres to 7,000 meters above the sea level. There is great variation in the climatic conditions of Himachal due to extreme variation in elevation. The climate varies from hot and sub-humid tropical in the southern tracts to cold, alpine and glacial in the northern and eastern mountain ranges with more elevation. The state has areas like Dharamshala that receive very heavy rainfall, as well as those like Lahaul and Spiti that are cold and almost rainless. Broadly, Himachal experience three seasons; hot weather season, cold weather season and rainy season. Summer lasts from mid April till the end of June and most parts become very hot (except in alpine zone which experience mild summer) with the average temperature ranging from 28 °C (82 °F) to 32 °C (90 °F). Winter lasts from late November till mid March. Snowfall is common in alpine tracts (generally above 2,200 meters i.e. in the Higher and Trans-Himalayan region).

The economy of the state is based upon agriculture, horticulture, forests and hydel power. The agro-horticulture produce based industries, wool based industries, sericulture

and herbal based industries are the main industries of the state of Himachal Pradesh. The natural scenic beauty, architecture, fair and festivals, salubrious climate and environment, snow-capped peaks, lakes, rivers, glaciers, adventure sports, temples of the region have emerged as the main tourist attractions from time immemorial. The main tourist centers such as Shimla Kullu-Manali, Chail, Chamba, Dalhousi, Dharamshala, Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti are the main tourist destinations in the state.

### Main Tourist Destinations

**Shimla:** Shimla is the main destination for the tourists in the state. Apart from the capital of the state of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla is known for natural scenic beauty surrounded with temples and beautiful architects. "Ridge" (Scandal Point) and the Mall Road, State museum near Chaura Maidan, Golf course at Naldehra, Mashomra, Craignano and Kufri are the main favorite tourist attractions in and around Shimla city.

**Chail:** Chail is 49 km from Shimla. The Chail Palace is well known for its architecture. The cricket ground and a polo ground which is there at an altitude of 2,444 m was owned by erstwhile royal family of Patiala.

**Kullu-Manali:** Kullu-Manali is also the main tourist attraction centers for both domestic and international tourists throughout the year. These tourist centers offers beautiful sceneries, orchards, natural springs, temples and the international event Kullu Dusseshra. This area is also endowed with beautiful valleys, temples and Tibetan Monastery. Tourism in Kullu-Manali received a boost after the rise of militancy in Kashmir in the late 1980s. This area really offers an alternative of Kashmir to the domestic and foreign tourists.

**Chamba:** Chamba is the northwestern district of Himachal Pradesh. The towns of Dalhousie and Khajjiar are popular hill stations and vacation spots for the people from the plains of northern India.

**Dalhousie:** Dalhousie is a hill station in Himachal Pradesh. Established in 1854 by the British Empire in India as a summer retreat for its troops and bureaucrats. It is built on and around five hills. Located on the western edge of the Dhauladhar mountain range of the Himalayas, it is surrounded by snow-capped peaks. Dalhousie is situated between 6,000 and 9,000 feet above sea level. The best time to visit is in the summer, and the peak tourist season is from May to September.

**Dharamshala:** Dharamshala is a city in the upper reaches of the Kangra Valley and is surrounded by dense coniferous forest consisting mainly of stately Deodars. The village of McLeod Ganj lying in the upper reaches is known worldwide for the presence of the Dalai Lama. On 29 April 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama established the Tibetan exile administration in the north Indian hill station of Mussoorie. In May 1960, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was moved to Dharamshala. Since then, the Dalai Lama along with his people have been residing in Dharamshala.

Keeping in view the great potential in tourism in the state of Himachal Pradesh, the department of tourism is planning to develop new unexplored areas in such a manner where the local community is involved and the benefits accrue to the people of the area. Apart from most popular destinations like Shimla, Kullu-Manali, Chamba, Dharamshala etc. some of the unexplored areas like Janjhali in Mandi, Jalori- Pass and Shoja in Kullu, Rajgharh in Sirmour, Nichar in Kinnour are in the pipeline for the development. The booming tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh is an engine to economic growth in rural areas of the state. In this direction, recently the government has launched a new initiative "Har Gaon Ki Kahani" in order to exploit the tourism potential of historically rich villages with the objective to divert the rush of tourists from the over-crowded destinations like Shimla, Mandi and Dharamshala to lesser known places so that the villages also reap benefits of the tourism industry.

In the history of adventure sports, Himachal Pradesh became the first state in India to introduce Grass Skiing on the slopes of the Solang valley, 11 kilometers from Manali at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS), which is attracting adventure lovers as well as domestic and international tourists. Similarly, Artificial Rock Climbing Wall in the Solang Valley which have been open to tourists on nominal rates is another centre for attracting adventure sport lovers in the region. The two adventure sports of Grass Skiing and Artificial Rock Climbing are nowadays working as a main source of attraction for adventure tourism in the state. As a result Himachal Pradesh has emerged as a favorite tourist destination as the tourists inflow to the state has increased to 17% as compared to 12% of the national level.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies on the different aspects of tourism development and tourism related activities have been worked out in the past. Moscardo (2008) stated that the community based tourism encompasses the desire to encourage empowerment, gender equity, capacity building, education and strengthening of cultural identity and traditions. Gupta, S.K. et al. (2010) found that the tourism has potential for the overall development of the area and community and it is tool for the community prosperity. It has potential to create occupational and employment opportunities for the locals.

The effective tourism operation and sustainable tourism development practices in the state of Himachal Pradesh need to operate through the implementation of tourism certification practices. Especially in nature based tourism like Himachal Pradesh, tourism certification is necessary. Various evidences indicates that the limited policies infrastructure inhibit the provision of necessary sustainability oriented services from other supporting sectors. For instance, municipal waste, recycling centers and national policies in different destinations and adjoining areas are lacking. Process based approaches focused on sustainability practices, using tools such as environmental management system, while performance-based ones use benchmarks and standards that generally target service and product quality. Tourism certification to date is primarily viewed as a market driven mechanism, usually voluntary, aimed to influence visitors behavior and demand for sustainable products as well as shaping supply of services and industry practices (Buckley 2002, Front and Harris, 2004, Honey, 1999, 2002).

Josph E. et al. (2011) stated that the certification programs represent an increasingly important strategy for encouraging the sustainable production of goods and services. It has potential to reduce tourism's negative environmental and social impacts, not only through the setting of performance standards but also by ensuring that the tourism industry is held accountable to stakeholders (including community residents) and provide marketing benefits to those firms that meet the certification standards.

Allen, Long, Pardue and Kieselbach (1988) asserted that many state and local governments attempt to optimize economic benefits with little regard for the social and environmental costs associated with tourism expansion.

Eadington (1996) expressed that tourism developers and operators and community leaders pay a great deal of

attention to resident's attitude and perceptions because changes in them strongly influence the policy-making process over various tourism development stages.

Carmichael, Peppard and Boudreau(1996) emphasized that resident's attitude were important since such attitudes were rarely expressed in the political and developmental decision making process. If local residents are positive towards the impact of tourism, they are likely to support further tourism development and view tourist favorably( Long,Perdue and Allen1990, Perdue, Long and Allen1990, Allen at el. 1993, Lindberg and Johnson 1997, Mc Gehee and Andereck 2004, all cited in Huili Hao et al.(2011).

Ryan(1997) advocated that tourism planners must moderate the level of risk at the destination through risk avoidance or enhancement policies in an attempt to satisfy tourist's motivations. Noe(1987) found that the challenge for the tourism practitioners is to influence tourist's attitudes and then correctly conceptualize and measure a satisfactory experience once it is understood. The tourist's satisfaction is measured and predicted on the basis of expressive and instrumental attributes. Expressive indicators involve the act of experience itself(e.g. swimming) while instrumental indicators act as facilitators towards achieving that experience(e.g. pool). Mang at el.(2008) found that instrumental factors, which are related to cognitive attributes, create dissatisfaction if they are absent. Ottoand Richi(1995) examined the satisfaction of tourism service and asserted that different level of overall satisfaction was due to subjective, emotional and highly personal responses to various aspects of service delivery. Uysal and Noe(2003) investigated the indicators of satisfaction in an outdoor recreation and tourism setting, and concluded that both instrumental and expressive factors collectively, as well as independently, contribute to overall tourist satisfaction.

On the basis of these studies, it can be stated that the collective efforts of the local communities, government and the positive attitude of the visitors are very important in order to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism in any region.

## THE STUDY

Tourism is the largest economic activity in the world today. It is considered an engine for the economic growth and major source of foreign exchange, which is badly needed for the development of the underdeveloped

economies. Tourism has multiplier effect on these economies. It is not a single industry but a combination of many components. In India millions of people earn their livelihood from direct and indirect employment in this industry. It can be used as an instrument for the promotion of national integration, international understanding, friendship and peace. The tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh is making substantial contribution to generation of employment and earning foreign exchange and the government has accorded due priority to ensure its growth over the years. Himachal Pradesh is endowed with natural scenic beauty with snow covered mountains, holy lakes, hot springs, golfing, water sports, mountain climbing and a real paradise for trekkers, skiers, heli-skiers, hang-gliding, para-gliding, adventures, flora and fauna, beautiful valleys and cultural rich fairs and festivals. The government of Himachal Pradesh have initiated various developmental plans for the development of infrastructure like railways, air transport, road transport and communication networks in order to promote the tourism in the main tourist destinations. Keeping in view the prime importance given to the tourism industry and the efforts of the government, governmental agencies and entrepreneurs engaged in this industry, the need for present study was felt in order to understand what strategies and approaches being followed by the government to exploit the vast potential of tourism in the state and which are the areas that needs priority and attention. Through this study, an effort has been made to study the trend of tourist inflow, assess the services/facilities available to the tourists and analyze the attitude of the domestic and international tourists towards these facilities in various tourist destinations.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following objectives:-

- To study the trend on the flow of the tourists in the state.
- To assess the various facilities and services provided by the tourism department in the state.
- To analyze the attitude of tourists towards the quality of services provided by the tourism department.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out to understand the attitude of tourists towards the facilities and services provided by the various government and non-governmental agencies to them in the different tourist destinations of the state. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary study was conducted in Shimla, Kullu and Manali which are the main tourist destinations in the state. The sample of 75 tourists has been selected on the basis of convenience sampling from different tourist destinations like Mall Road, Railway station, Advanced Study, Potters Hill, in Shimla and Kullu, Manikaran and Manali. In order to obtain the required information, a well designed questionnaire was administered to different domestic and international tourists. The questionnaire covered different aspects of tourists such as the demographic characteristics of tourists, purpose of their visit in a particular season, accommodation facilities, transport facilities, the attitude of tourists towards the quality of services provided to them during their stay at different tourist destinations. The information thus collected was analyzed with the help of statistical tools and techniques. The attitude of the respondents was analyzed with the Likert Type Scale. Through the Likert Type Scale the score was calculated, with the help of WAS (Weighted Average Score). For Strongly Agree(SA), five marks were allotted, four marks were allotted to Agree(A), three marks for Neutral (N), two for Disagree(D) and one for Strongly Disagree(SD).

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Tourist Inflow in Himachal Pradesh

The number of visitors in Himachal Pradesh are increasing every year (table-1). Tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh is emerging as a major contributor to the gross state domestic product. It is clear from the table that 132.66 lacs tourists visited in the state during 2010 as compared to 114.38 lacs recorded in 2009 with the growth rate of 15.98%. The increase is 36.07% over the year 2008. In 2005, there was total inflow of 71.36 lacs tourists, which has increased to 132.66 lacs in the year 2010 with the increase of 85.90%. The number of foreign tourists also

increased 4.01 lacs to 4.54 lacs over the year which has shown an increase of 13.22%. If we compare the trend of increase to the year 2005, it shows an increase of 118.26% during the year 2010.

### Tourist Accommodation

The tourist accommodation in the form of hotels and bed capacity has also shown a tremendous increase over the year (table-2). The table reveals that the state had 1768 registered hotels with bed capacity of 39214 in the year 2005, which has now increased to 2150 and 56023 respectively. The number of registered hotels during 2005-2010 has shown an increase of 21.61%. Similarly, bed capacity has also witnessed a growth of 42.86% during the same period. Besides it, the different tourist centers have made available the seasonal camping accommodation for the tourists throughout the state.

### Demographic Profile of the Tourists

In order to collect the information to analyze the quality of services / facilities available on the different tourist centers vis-a-vis the expectations and the behavioral aspects of the domestic and international tourists on these aspects, a face to face survey was conducted. The demographical characteristics of the respondents was collected keeping in view the five variables such as gender, age, educational qualifications, income and occupation. The sample units were selected on the basis of convenience and judgment sampling methods. The sample units comprises businessmen / industrialists, students/researchers, government and private sector employees and retired employees. Table-3 makes it clear that the respondents were 84% male and 16% of female in the age group of 15-25(32%), 25-35(28%), 35-45(12%) and 45 and above were 28%. In the sample 40% of the respondents were undergraduate, 20% graduates and 40% were post graduate. The majority of the respondents were government employees (32%) followed by students / researchers (28%) and 24% business / industrialists. The maximum number of respondents (52%) were from the income group of more than 3 lacs.

**Table-1** Tourist arrival in Himachal Pradesh (in lacs) (2005-2010).

Year	Domestic	Percentage increase/decrease	Foreigner	Percentage increase/decrease	Total	Percentage increase/decrease
2005	69.28	8.42	2.08	1.96	71.36	08.96
2006	76.72	10.74	2.82	0.36	79.54	11.46
2007	84.82	10.55	3.39	20.21	88.21	10.90
2008	93.72	10.49	3.77	11.21	97.49	10.52
2009	110.37	17.77	4.01	6.37	114.38	17.32
2010	128.12	16.08	4.54	13.22	132.66	15.98

Source: Directorate Of Tourism and Civil Aviation Government of Himachal Pradesh

**Table-2** Tourist Hotels and Rooms in Himachal Pradesh(2005-2010)

Year	No. of Hotels/ Guest houses	Percentage increase/decrease	Bed capacity	Percentage increase/decrease
2005	1768	3.39	39214	3.34
2006	1852	4.75	41511	5.86
2007	1899	2.54	45345	9.24
2008	1992	4.90	48233	6.37
2009	2139	7.38	51928	7.66
2010	2150	0.51	56023	7.89

Source: Directorate Of Tourism and Civil Aviation Government of Himachal Pradesh

**Table-3** Demographic profile of the sample ( N=75)

Items	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	63	84.00
	Female	12	16.00
Age (years)	15-25	24	32.00
	25-35	21	28.00
	35-45	09	12.00
	45 and above	21	28.00
Education	Under- graduate	30	40.00
	Graduate	15	20.00
	Post-graduate	30	40.00
Income(000)	Below -100	21	28.00
	100-200	09	12.00
	200-300	06	08.00
	More than 300	39	52.00
Occupation	Business/industrialist	18	24.00
	Students/researcher	21	28.00
	Private employee	09	12.00
	Govt. employees	24	32.00
	Retired employee	03	04.00

### Sources of Information

Sources of information relating to the various tourist destinations plays a very important role in tourist inflow in any region. The sources of information categorized to the tourists were newspaper, magazines, internet, travel

agencies, travel agents, friends and relatives and others. The data regarding this have been presented in table-4. The table shows that the majority of the respondents have used the modern sources of information i.e. internet(24%) and newspaper(24%). This may be due to the fact that the government of Himachal Pradesh is making ample

investment on the promotion of tourism through internet, newspaper and magazines for last many years. The government through these sources are disseminating the information about various tourist destinations throughout the state especially about main tourist centers such as Shimla, Kullu-Manali, Chamba and Dharmshala. The travel agencies and friends and relatives have been used by the 16% of the respondents respectively. Whereas only 8% have used the travel agents for the source of information in order to get the clear idea of various tourist destinations in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

**Table-4** Sources of information

Sources of information	No. of respondents	Percentage
Newspaper	18	24.00
Magazine	03	04.00
Internet	15	20.00
Travel agencies	12	16.00
Travel agents	06	08.00
Others	21	28.00
Total	75	100.00

### Mode of Transport and Pattern of Travelling

Transportation facilities for the tourists remain the most important determinants as far as the tourist inflow in any destination is concerned. Keeping in view the topography of the state of Himachal Pradesh, the hilly roads are wearing and time consuming. Therefore, limited means of transport and communication can be the main deterrent in the way of promotion of tourism potential in the state. The movement of tourists in the different tourist destinations throughout the state requires adequate and well established passenger facilities which have direct impact on the perceived quality of the service and product. There are limited air flights, rail services and luxury buses plying under the control of Himachal Pradesh Tourism development Corporation. In order to know the mode of transport that the tourists have preferred during their visit in different tourist destinations in the state, it was found that 72% of the respondents preferred road transport, 24% of them were interested in railways and the air transport were found popular among only 4% of the respondents (table-5). The information presented in the table-6 shows that the majority of the respondents (60%) were keen to travel with their family and only 8% of them adopted the pattern of travelling in various tourist centers

in Himachal Pradesh with their friends. Similarly, 16% of the respondents stated that their preference of travelling was with the spouse. On the basis of this information, it is clear that in majority of the cases the tour are organized by the "family" basis instead of other agencies.

**Table-5** Mode of Transport

Mode of transport	No. of respondents	Percentage
Road	54	72.00
Railways	18	24.00
Airways	03	04.00
Total	75	100.00

**Table-6** Pattern of Traveling

Pattern of Traveling	No. of respondents	Percentage
With spouse	12	16.00
With family	45	60.00
With friend	06	08.00
With family and friend	12	16.00
Total	75	100.00

**Table-7** Types of accommodation

Accommodation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Hotel	51	68.00
Guest house/Rest house	12	16.00
Youth hostels	03	04.00
Friends and relatives	09	12.00
Others	00	0
Total	75	100.00

**Table-8** Duration of Stay

Duration of stay	No. of respondents	Percentage
1-2 days	15	20.00
2-4 days	27	36.00
4-6 days	21	28.00
More than 6 days	12	16.00
Total	75	100.00

### Types of accommodation and duration of stay

When someone have preferred to visit in any place for leisure, recreation and holidays, they expect an accommodation which provides all comforts of home. As

mentioned earlier, the state of Himachal Pradesh have shown an increase in registered hotels and rooms in various tourist destinations over the years. The type of accommodation in main tourist places in the state preferred by the tourists have been presented in table-7. The table shows that the large majority of the respondents(68%) have preferred to stay in hotels, 16% in guest houses/rest houses, 12% in friends and relatives and 4% in youth hostels. The duration of stay of the tourists have been shown in table-8. The information presented in the table shows that the majority of the visitors stay in different tourist places in Himachal Pradesh is less than one week. 36% of the tourists stay were for 2-4 days, 28% for 4-6 days and only 16% preferred to stay here for more than 6 days.

### Purpose and Frequency of Visits

While assessing the purpose of visit of the respondents, the different options like leisure, recreation, holidays, visiting friends and relatives, business, pilgrimage, adventure sports was given to the tourists. The information presented in table-9 reveals that the large majority of tourists(76%) stated that their purpose of visit in the state of Himachal Pradesh was leisure, recreation and holidays. 8% of them expressed that they have visited their friends and relatives and pilgrimage respectively. Whereas only 4% visited for the purpose of their business meeting. Adventure sports was found the purpose of visit for only 4% of the tourists. Hence, it can be stated that the different tourist centers located in Himachal Pradesh are most preferred destinations for the visitors for their leisure, recreation and enjoy their holidays.

**Table-9** Purpose of Visit

Purpose of visit	No. of respondents	Percentage
Leisure, recreation, holidays	57	76.00
Visiting friends and relatives	06	08.00
Business	03	04.00
Pilgrimage	06	08.00
Adventure sports	03	04.00
Total	75	100.00

Frequency of visits made by the tourists in Himachal Pradesh has been given in table-10. The table reveals that the majority of tourists(44%) were first timers, however, a

good number of tourists(28%) have visited the region second time. Whereas only 12% stated that they are visiting this place third time. On the basis of this information, it can be observed that the visitors are generally satisfied with the facilities provided to them by various promotional agencies in the state and the region possess the unique features for attracting the tourists which are not easily matched by other regions of the country.

**Table-10** Frequency of visits

No of times	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	33	44.00
2	21	28.00
3	09	12.00
4	06	08.00
5	03	04.00
More than 5	03	04.00
Total	75	100.00

### Attitude of Tourists on the Status of Tourism

The attitude of the tourists towards the services and facilities provided to them at various tourist centers in Himachal Pradesh has been analyzed in table-11. The analysis reveals that the large majority of the respondents(52%) were found strongly agreed and 28% agreed with the statement "*The general environment of Himachal Pradesh is conducive for the growth of tourism in the state*". The WAS for this statement was worked out as 4.16. Similarly, 44% of the respondents were found agreed and 32% strongly agree with the statement "*Adventure sports have resulted into increase in tourist inflow in the state*". The WAS for this statement was calculated as 4.00. The statement "*Hospitality is the trait of Himachalis*" was agreed by 40% and strongly agreed by 36% of the respondents(WAS=3.96). The statement "*Himachal has emerged as one of the best religious destinations in India*" was also agreed by 40% and strongly agreed by 28% of the respondents(WAS=3.92).

While assessing the attitude of respondents towards the transportation facilities in the region, the majority of the tourists expressed their agreement with the statements "*The road transport is adequate to meet the requirements of main tourist centers in the state*" and "*Himachal has good Railway network*". The WAS for these statements were worked out as 3.64 and 3.56 respectively. In order to assess the opinion of the tourists on the growing impact of

tourism in various centers in the state the statement *"The growth of tourism has resulted into increase in pollution in the main tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh"* was given to the respondents. A good number of the respondents(36%) were found agreed with this statement(WAS=3.40). Similarly for the statement *"The growth of tourism industry is responsible for crowding and congestion in the state of Himachal Pradesh"*, 36% of the tourists express their agreement. The WAS for this was found to be 3.08. A large majority of the respondents(60%) were found agreed with the statement *"The accommodation facilities are adequate in different tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh"*(WAS=3.56). For the statement *"Tourism is responsible for the diffusion of Western culture*

*indifferent parts of Himachal Pradesh"* there was a mixed opinion of the tourists where 24% were found agreed and the same number (24%) expressed their strong disagreement with this statement.

On the basis of this analysis, it can be inferred that the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious environment of Himachal Pradesh is conducive for the growth and development of the tourism in the region. The visitors were found satisfied with the services and facilities available for them in various tourist centers in the region like accommodation, transportation, hospitality, development of religious destinations and adventure sports, pollution free environment etc.

**Table-11** Attitude of tourists towards the status of tourism in Himachal Pradesh (N=75)

S.No	Particulars	SA	A	NAND	D	SD	TWS	WAS
1	The general environment of Himachal Pradesh is conducive for the growth of tourism in the state.	39 (52.00)	21 (28.00)	06 (08.00)	06 (08.00)	03 (04.00)	312	4.16
2	Hospitality is the trait of Himachalis.	27 (36.00)	30 (40.00)	12 (16.00)	00	06 (08.00)	297	3.96
3	The growth of tourism has resulted into increase in pollution in the main tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh.	09 (12.00)	24 (32.00)	36 (48.00)	00	06 (08.00)	255	3.40
4	The growth of tourism industry is responsible for crowding and congestion in the state of Himachal Pradesh.	03 (04.00)	27 (36.00)	30 (40.00)	03 (04.00)	12 (16.00)	231	3.08
5	The accommodation facilities are adequate in different tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh.	03 (04.00)	45 (60.00)	21 (28.00)	03 (04.00)	03 (04.00)	267	3.56
6	Adventure sports have resulted into increase in tourist inflow in the state.	24 (32.00)	33 (44.00)	15 (20.00)	00	03 (04.00)	300	4.00
7	The road transport is adequate to meet the requirements of main tourist centers in the state.	12 (16.00)	33 (44.00)	21 (28.00)	06 (08.00)	06 (08.00)	273	3.64
8	Himachal has good Railway network.	21 (28.00)	21 (28.00)	18 (24.00)	09 (12.00)	06 (08.00)	267	3.56
9	Himachal has emerged as one of the best religious destinations in India.	21 (28.00)	30 (40.00)	21 (28.00)	03 (04.00)	00	294	3.92
10	Tourism is responsible for the diffusion of Western culture indifferent parts of Himachal Pradesh.	09 (12.00)	18 (24.00)	21 (28.00)	09 (12.00)	18 (24.00)	216	2.88

Note: 1 Figures in brackets show percentages to the total number of respondents (75) 2. WAS (Weighted Average Score) was calculated by giving scores as 5 for Strongly Agree (SA), 4 for Agree (A), 3 for Neither Agree Nor Disagree (NAND), 2 for Disagree (D), and 1 for Strongly Disagree (SD).

## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is playing a very important role in the socio-economic development of the state of Himachal Pradesh. As a smokeless industry it is contributing in improving the economic condition of the state on one side and on the other it is resulting into earning foreign exchange. Considering the immense potential of tourism in the state, the government needs to develop efficient strategies to exploit new unexploited areas in such a manner where the local community is involved and benefit accrue to the people of the area. The public involvement in tourism related developmental activities is necessary so that the local community and the villagers realized the importance and benefits from tourism related activities. Therefore, the government need to frame policies which encourage public-private participation in the creation of quality tourism infrastructure to facilitate tourists throughout the state.

Apart from popular destinations like Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Dharmshala and Chamba the thrust should be to develop some of the unexploited areas like Janjhali in Mandi, Rajgharh area in Sirmour, Shoja and Jalori-Passin Kullu and Sangla valley in Kinnour. Execution of sub-plan by putting together of the various departments will assist in providing the adequate infrastructure for attracting adventure, heritage, pilgrim and wildlife tourism throughout the state. The various regions of the state offers a vast scope for the development of eco-tourism. Besides Narkanda in Shimla district and Jalori in Kullu district the government need to plan and identify more such places like Shoja valley in Kullu district which is ideal for starting the eco-tourism activities.

The main tourist destinations like Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Dharmshala and Chamba are usually over crowded, which are resulting into climate change in those regions. Similarly, The global warming and climate change is resulting into less snowfall and erratic monsoon which are resulting in floods and dry spells in these tourist places. Therefore, the government need to initiate necessary steps in order to restore and sustain the conservation of green forests in all these places for the sustainable development of tourism in the state.

Although the majority of the respondents were found satisfied with the infrastructure and other facilities/services available in the different tourist centers in the state, yet keeping in view the topography of the region the

transportation and accommodation plays a very important role in the development of the tourism. Himachal Pradesh is not capable of attracting high-end tourists because of the fact that the state has only three helipads at Shimla, Kullu and Dharmshala, where the flights are very erratic. Moreover, the state has very poor air and rail connectivity. Hence, the government need to arrange the Heli-taxi services on more frequent basis for those tourists who do not prefer to spend long hours on hard road journey. Visitors face difficulty in visiting temples and other religious places because of inadequate road network. Government should build link roads to all such places so that every tourist can easily visit these places.

Adequate accommodation and catering management need to be strengthened in various tourist destinations. More tourism reception centers need to be identified and organized with the objectives to cater the budget and high class tourists travelling by road to visit different locations. These tourism reception centers should provide beverages, food items and snacks at the restaurants at reasonable prices to the tourists. Hence, the state of Himachal Pradesh has vast potential for the tourism throughout the region but there is a need for an effective strategy towards holistic development of tourism in thoroughly integrated way.

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