

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS ROLE IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

One of the pillars of the tourism industry has been mankind's inherent desires to see and learn about the cultural identity of the different parts of the world. In domestic tourism, cultural heritage stimulates national prides in one's history. The state of Himachal Pradesh is one of the most diverse states in India in terms of cultural heritage. It has now the deep roots of world's major religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Shikhism etc. Cultural heritage attractions are, by nature unique and fragile. The present paper evaluates the role of cultural heritage in the development of tourism in the state. For accomplishing the goal of present research 300 tourists (200 domestic and 100 foreign) were taken as subjects of the sample. It was found that most of respondents opined that fairs and festivals, historical monuments, and culture and heritage have played much greater role in the development of tourism in the state.

KEYWORDS: *Fairs and Festivals, Historical Monuments, Culture and Heritage.*

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality sector has a number of positive benefits in terms of increased incomes, increased employment, and added avenues for upward mobility for locals, increased revenue and increased foreign exchange earnings. However, there are also some socioeconomic and environmental impacts associated with these benefits that need to be highlighted. It is a dynamic industry which boosts economies by generating income, employment, investment and exports, thus stimulating economic growth. But it also generates valuable spin-off benefits, either by developing infrastructure that other industries can use or by creating positive publicity for individual countries and destinations. India is a rich land which has attracted invaders from Central Europe and Asia who left their imprint on this land, its religions and its lifestyles over 40 centuries. As a result today, Indian celebrates more festivals than any other country. Nonetheless, Indians are known to celebrate all the festivals with great fanfare and importance. Festivals in India are determined by the Solar & Lunar positions & they may fall in a different month as specified here. The Ministry of Culture has a mission to preserve, promote and disseminate all forms of art and culture. The colorful mosaic of Indian festivals and fairs due to their diversity is an expression of the spirit of celebration that is an essential part of the country. The various festivals in India are like gems, ornamenting the crown of Indian culture. Every season bring along new festivals, each a true celebration of the bounties of nature. The birthdays of Gods and Goddesses, saints and prophets have great historical happenings and the advent. Himachal Pradesh is known for its rich cultural heritage and values. Folk music and dances are an integral part of the people and they have their own custom and traditions pertaining to their communities. Himachal Pradesh is a beautiful hill state nestled in the Western Himalayas. The high altitudes mountain capes with dense green deodar forests, apple orchards, terrace farms, snow fed lakes and crossing rivers, make it a popular tourist destination for thrill seekers. The state has its exceptional set of festivals and fairs and these are very much helpful to the state for making its own unique selling proposition in world as a tourist destination. The local people celebrate the festivals with their families and dress up in colorful clothes to exhibit joy and happiness. The famous fairs and festivals include Kullu Dussehra, Minjar fair at Chamba,

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