

Nature, Problems and Prospects of Rural Tourism in Punjab: An Analysis

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Abstract

The impressive growth profile of the tourism sector observed over the last two decades appears to be continuing. Tourism has become a major and integral part of economic, social, cultural and physical development in all the developing countries. The developing countries, in particular, promote tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange, increasing employment opportunities, attracting development capital, increasing government revenue and enhancing economic independence. Apart from being an instrument for generating employment opportunities, tourism has significant linkages with several other sectors like agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts, and construction and so on. Hence it generates more inclusive growth than other sectors. Tourism is defined as a journey by the tourist on his free will, and in search of enjoyment. Punjab has very attractive heritage sites and religious places, which attract both domestic and foreign tourists and has significant potential for becoming a major global tourist destination. Golden Temple, Amritsar has become internationally famous and popular among the tourists and is being recommended to UNESCO for World Heritage Monument Status. In this context, the problems and prospects of rural tourism in Indian economy is the thrust area of the present study.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Punjab, opportunities, problems.

Introduction

Tourism, which has assumed a phenomenal significance for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas, has become one of the world's largest export industries. The impressive growth profile of the tourism sector observed over the last two decades appears to be continuing. Apart from being an instrument for generating employment opportunities, tourism has significant linkages with several other sectors like agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts, and construction and so on. Hence it generates more inclusive growth than other sectors.

Concept of Tourism

A number of experts have defined the concept of tourism. Lambert (1950) thinks "tourism involves journey by a tourist on his free will,

and in search of enjoyment.” Joviac (1964) describes tourism as “a social movement with a view to rest, diversion and satisfaction of cultural needs.” Burkart and Medlic (1974); Witt et al. (1991) opine, “Tourism is temporary movement of people to destinations outside the place where they normally live work and stay.” Ryan (1991) also sees it from economic angle; “tourism is a study of demand for and supply of accommodation and supportive services for those staying away from home and resultant pattern of expenditure, income creation and employment.”

Section I:

Development of Tourism in India during the Five Year Plans

Tourism development in India has passed through many phases. The development of tourist facilities was taken up in a planned manner in 1956 coinciding with the second Five Year Plan. Our Government's concern for tourism development is reflected in the plan expenditures, which have been increasing over the planning period. The proposed plan outlay for tourism development increased from a bare Rs.2.21 crore in the Second Five Year Plan to Rs. 36 crore in the Fourth Five Year Plan and to Rs. 113 crore in the Fifth Five Year Plan. The proposed plan outlay for tourism development was Rs. 109 crore in the Five Year Plans (1978-83) and in the Sixth Plan, Rs. 187.46 crores were to be spent on tourism in the central, state and union territories (Chadha, 1987). The Sixth Plan marked the beginning of new era when tourism began to be considered a major instrument for social integration and economic development. The other major developments that took place were the setting up of Indian Tourism Development Corporation in 1966 to promote India as a tourist destination and announcement of National Policy on Tourism in 1982. The main thrust of the Policy was aimed at presenting India to the foreign tourists as the ultimate holiday resort. In June 1982, the Planning Commission recognized tourism as an industry. In the Seventh and Eighth Plans, tourism planning got importance.

A National Committee on Tourism (NCT) was set up by the Planning Commission in July 1986 to evolve a plan for the coming years. The Tourist Finance Corporation was also set up in 1989 to finance tourism projects. Later in July 1991, tourism was considered as a priority sector for foreign investment. In May 1992, a National Action Plan was prepared. The objectives of the National Action Plan, 1992 were: (a) Socio-Economic Development of Areas; (b) Increasing Employment opportunities; (c) Developing Domestic Tourism especially for the Budget Category; (d) Preservation of National Heritage and environment; (e) Development of International tourism and Optimization of Foreign Exchange Earnings; and (g) Increase in India's share in the World Tourism. These objectives formed the

basis of Eighth Plan Document. The basic thrust in the Eighth Plan was on encouraging Private-Sector Participation to invest in developing tourist transport and other infrastructural facilities, etc. and enticing high spending tourists from areas like Europe, USA and Japan (website of Planning Commission, Government of India).

In order to speed up the development of tourism in the country, several thrust areas had been identified for accomplishment during the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). The major thrust areas in the Ninth Plan were (1) Indigenous and Natural Health Tourism, (2) Rural and Village Tourism, (3) Pilgrimage Tourism, (4) Adventure Tourism, (5) Heritage Tourism and (6) Youth and Senior Citizens Packagers. Recognizing the potential of tourism as an engine of economic growth, the allocation to this sector was increased from 0.27 per cent of total gross budgetary support in the Ninth Plan to 0.71 per cent in the Tenth Plan. The central plan outlay for this sector for the Tenth Plan had been increased to Rs. 2900 crore from Rs. 750 crore in the Ninth plan. Globally India is known for modernity, historical legacy, cultural diversity, natural splendour, wild life, spiritualism, yoga and ayurveda. The growth of tourist industry in India include augmentation of infrastructural facilities, increase in planned expenditure over the planning period, introduction of concessional fares by Indian Airlines and Railways, globalization and liberalization, increased tourist arrivals, increased employment opportunities, tourist-friendly tax regime and more intensive promotional activities abroad (Government of India, 2007). In addition, substantial investments were planned for road, rail and air transport, urban infrastructure and in the culture sector.

The New Tourism Policy of May 2002 envisaged a framework, which was Government led, private sector driven and oriented towards community welfare, with the Government creating the legislative framework and the basic infrastructure for tourism development, the private sector providing the quality products and the community providing active support. The five key strategic objectives during the Tenth Plan Period were: (1) positioning tourism as a national priority; (2) enhancing India's competitiveness as a tourist destination; (3) improving and expanding product development; (4) creation of world class infrastructure; and (5) effective marketing plans and programs (Government of India, 2007).

During 11th Plan, Ministry of Tourism was sanctioned a Plan outlay of Rs 5156 cr. Against this outlay, allocation during the first four years of the Plan period was Rs 4003 cr. Ministry has been able to utilize 99.23 % of the allocation during the first four years of the Plan. During this plan, major emphasis was on three schemes involving (i) Product Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuits (ii) Overseas promotion and publicity and (iii) Central

assistance to IHMs/FCIs and other Institutes. In addition, projects for development of physical infrastructure for promotion of rural tourism were financed under the scheme. Rural tourism projects were also sanctioned under this scheme.

As per the Twelfth Five Year Plan approach paper, India's travel and tourism sector is estimated to create 78 jobs per million rupees of investment compared to 45 jobs per million rupees in the manufacturing sector. To promote tourism, the government has taken many policy initiatives including a five-year tax holiday for 2, 3, and 4 star category hotels located around all United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites (except Delhi and Mumbai) for hotels which start operating with effect from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2013; an investment-linked deduction under Section 35 AD of the Income Tax Act extended to new hotels of 2 star category and above anywhere in India, allowing 100 per cent deduction in respect of the whole or any expenditure of capital nature excluding land, goodwill, and financial instruments incurred during the year; and inclusion of 3 star or higher category classified hotels located outside cities with population of more than 10 lakh in the harmonized list of the infrastructure subsector. The Government of India has also taken the initiative of identifying, diversifying, developing, and promoting the nascent/upcoming niche products of the tourism industry to overcome the 'seasonality' aspect and promote India as a 365 days destination, attract tourists with specific interests, and ensure repeat visits for products in which India has comparative advantage.

Thus India has significant potential for becoming a major global tourist destination and India's glorious traditions and rich cultural heritage are linked with the development of tourism (Bhatia, 1983). No doubt, in the present tourism policy, the government has planned to develop the tourist infrastructure and for this, various projects like the world heritage sites and places of tourists' interests with the highways, provision of clean and inexpensive hotel accommodation for budget tourists, etc. have been initiated by the government (Aneja, 2005), yet there is a need of high level of promotion and publicity to promote and market India overseas as attractive and appealing tourist destination. It is, therefore, necessary for India to strengthen its promotional and marketing efforts continuously even to maintain its existing market share (Tiwari, 2000).

Development of Tourism in Punjab

Punjab has very attractive heritage sites and religious places, which attract both domestic and foreign tourists and has significant potential for becoming a major global tourist destination. Golden Temple, Amritsar has become internationally famous and popular among the tourists and is

being recommended to UNESCO for World Heritage Monument Status. Despite these attractions, the State Government has not made any concerted effort to develop tourism in Punjab in a planned manner. It was only in the year 1996, that the tourism was accorded a special status of being declared it as an 'industry' in Punjab. But, the budget allocation for tourism promotion presents a dismal picture. In an annual budget for 2003-04, an amount of Rs. 81.03 lakhs had been provided which was only 0.25 per cent of the total State Plan Outlay (Punjab State Budget, 2003-04). In an annual plan outlay for 2005-06, the approved outlay for tourism development was Rs. 82.36 lakhs, which was only 0.02 per cent of the total outlay. Similarly, in an annual plan outlay for 2006-07, the approved outlay for tourism development was Rs. 505.35 lakhs being only 0.02 per cent of the total outlay. And further the approved outlay during annual plan for 2007-08 for tourism development was Rs. 1825 lakhs, which was 0.36 per cent of the total State Plan Outlay (Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2006, Government of Punjab).

Punjab's position in tourism has improved significantly in the recent past. It has positioned itself as one of the emerging tourist destinations in the country; offering varied tourism products including rich cultural and natural heritage experiences. During 2009, the State was ranked at 28th (in terms of arrival of domestic tourist visits) by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. It has graduated to the 14th rank amongst the States in 2010. During 2011 it has attained the 12th rank among the States of India. The number of domestic tourist visits has increased from 1,05,83,509 in 2010 to 1,64,16,638 in 2011. (Punjab Govt. Website 2013)

In Punjab, tourism is primarily religious and tourists from all over the world visit Punjab mainly on a religious trip. There are large numbers of Gurdwaras including three Principal Takhts of Sikhs in Punjab. Moreover, there are many important Hindu Temples such as the Ram Tirath and Durgiana Mandir at Amritsar, Kali Devi Mandir at Patiala, which have a history behind them. Punjab also has certain important Muslim religious places like Rauza Sharif in Sirhind, which is considered next to Mecca. Other important mosques are Jamma Masjid, Jalandhar; Moorish Mosque, Kapurthala; Chilla Baba Sheikh Farid, Faridkot, etc. Two major tourism destinations of Punjab are Amritsar and Anandpur Sahib. Punjab government is giving shape to its definite plans to attract tourists into the state, which is known for its craftsmanship, folk dances, cuisine and the holy shrines. Punjab government has identified tourism as the third most important sector after agriculture and manufacturing. It has assured to boost tourism as one of its revenue earners in future and has invited private sector participation.

The Punjab Government had prepared the "Tourism

Development MasterPlan” with the technical assistance of United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2008 for a period of 15 years. It has made huge investment in developing infrastructure, marketing and publicity of tourist sites, monuments, developing tourism products, historical and religious buildings and the hotel sector. The main focus of Punjab Tourism Policy is the domestic tourism for which the policy attempts to concentrate on places of pilgrimage, eco-tourism, recreational facilities, heritage sites, rural and farm tourism, sports and adventure tourism and so on. Attracting NRI investments is another important attempt to boost international tourism in the State.

Section II:

Review of literature

Carlsen (2001) examines the environmental goals of rural, family owned/operated tourism business with a view to evaluating their conservation ethic and commitment to sustainable tourism. From the survey of 198 family businesses in Western Australia, it was determined that about half of them had implemented a range of sustainable management practices. The researcher suggested some management ideas which could encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in rural family businesses. Ghosh (2012) in her study on rural tourism in west Bengal explores that foreign and domestic tourists visit the rural tourist location for religious or recreational purposes. The study assesses the tremendous impact of rural tourism on the local economy, life style and socio cultural changes among the rural people in and around the tourist destination. Rathore (2012), in a study to measure the potential of rural tourism in Rajasthan opines that rural tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on rural as well as urban communities further she stressed that environmental management, local involvement, sound legislation, sustainable marketing and realistic planning are crucial for the development of rural tourism. The government should promote rural tourism to ensure sustainable economic development and positive social change. Kaur (2013) in her study opine that in case rural tourism option is chosen, involvement of NGOs and entrepreneurs with experience in rural development needs to be solicited. She further stressed that any rural tourism project should start with community buy-in and the host community should be involved in planning and implementation from the beginning of the project.

Methodology for the Study

For the present study, it was planned to have a sample of 500 respondents but due to response error, the effective sample has been reduced to 478. Convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. The survey target was confined to the tourists visiting the rural tourism site of Punjab. The primary

data for the study were collected personally by instituting a structured, non-disguised and pre-tested questionnaire to the respondents selected for the study. To develop a list of information items for framing a questionnaire, the researcher reviewed existing literature on tourism, rural tourism, tourism marketing and religious tourism and consulted the experts in the concerned area. Certain information were gathered through Economic Survey, Government of India; Punjab Statistical Abstract, Government of Punjab; Published Documents on National Tourism Policy, Government of India; Published Documents on Punjab Tourism Policy, Government of Punjab; official websites of Government of India and Government of Punjab and through various libraries of the religious places of Punjab. In order to explore and tap the hidden and neglected potential of tourism, tourist guides, civic authorities, managers of the farm houses and rural tourism places and influential personalities of the area surveyed have also been contacted for opinion survey. The questions were constructed to know the purpose of visit, the factors which are important to promote tourism in the State and the motivations having a positive influence on their decision to re-visit. A simple description of facts in terms of frequencies and percentages has been used for analysis purposes. In order to sharpen the inferences and for the purpose of testing various null hypotheses regarding the differences in the opinion of different types of respondents with determinant attributes, chi-square test has been applied. In order to analyze the responses, weighted average scores have been calculated. To examine the overall difference in category means, ANOVA has also been applied.

Section III:

Results and Discussions

The State of Punjab has tremendous tourism potential offering an ideal destination for both vibrancy and tranquillity in life. The State has very attractive rural sites, religious places and other heritage sites. Therefore, it has a great strength to draw plenty of tourists so far as rural and religious sites are concerned. The present chapter is an attempt to study the aspirations and expectations of the tourists visiting the rural and religio-historical places of Punjab.

For the purpose of research, tourists have been classified as Indians, foreigners and NRIs. Out of 478 respondents, a majority of them (64.9%) are Indians followed by NRIs (21.3%) and foreigners (13.8%). On the basis of age, most of the respondents (59%) fall in the age group (21-40 years); 29.1 per cent fall in the age group of 41-60 years; 10.0 per cent fall in lowest age group up to 20 years and only 1.9 per cent fall in the upper age group of 61 and above. On the basis of education, most of the respondents (45.4%) are graduates;

18.2 per cent are post graduates and 14.2 per cent are professionally qualified. However, 22.2 per cent of the sample surveyed was found to be not even graduates. On the basis of occupation, the respondents fall broadly in the six occupational groups. It is found that 30.1 per cent are business men followed by service class (28.9%); professionals (19.7 %) and students (16.1%). However, the sample includes some housewives (4.0%) and some farmers also (2.3%). On the basis of income, 59.4 per cent fall in income group of more than Rs. 30,000 per month), 24.3 per cent respondents fall in group of more than Rs. 20,000 but less than Rs. 30,000 per month and 16.3 per cent are from income group of below Rs. 20,000 per month. The survey reveals that in terms of religion, majority of the tourists are either Hindus (46.7%) or Sikhs (31.6%) followed by Muslims (15.1%) of the total sample surveyed. Thus, the foregoing sample profile is well representative of all types of tourists and so the results can be generalized for whole of the population.

Purpose of Visit

Although religious motive has always been the prime purpose for the tourists to visit a the state of Punjab yet sometimes they visit with the non-pilgrimage motive, such as, holidaying, business visit, academic tour or attending some social function and so on. The respondents in this regard were asked to specify the purpose of their visit to the State. The responses are presented in Table 1. It has been revealed that out of the total sample surveyed, most of the tourists (34.3%) visit the tourist place for rural/religious purpose followed by the respondents who visit for 'holidaying and pleasure seeking' (26.4%) or 'business/official trip' (16.7%). Tourist category-wise analysis with respect to purpose of visit shows that most of the Indians (32.6%) as well as NRIs (46.1%) visited the State because of purely religious purpose while most of the foreigners (56.1%) visited because of 'holidaying and pleasure'.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents With Regard to Purpose of Visit across Type of Tourists

Purpose	Type of Tourists			Total
	Indian	Foreigner	NRI	
Business/official	64 (20.6)	8 (12.1)	8 (7.8)	80 (16.7)
Holidaying/pleasure	65 (21.0)	37 (56.1)	24 (23.5)	126 (26.4)
Rural/Religious	101 (32.6)	16 (24.2)	47 (46.1)	164 (34.3)
Academic/education	44 (14.2)	5 (7.6)	3 (2.9)	52 (10.9)
Social function	36 (11.6)		20 (19.6)	56 (11.7)
N	310	66	102	478

$\chi^2 = 63.50$, Significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

In addition to this, almost an equal number of Indians (21 %) as well as NRIs (23.5 %) visited for holidaying and pleasure. 64 Indian tourists (20.6%) combine business visits with tourism. The chi-square value indicates that there is a significant difference among tourists belonging to different categories with respect to the purpose of visit at 5 per cent level of significance. The analysis of income groups with respect to purpose of visit reveals that the proportion of respondents visiting Punjab for religious purpose is almost

the same among the respondents of I2 and I3 income groups as depicted in Table 2. It is 31.9 per cent for I2 and 32 per cent for I3. For respondents belonging to I1 income category also, the primary purpose of visit is rural/religious tourism (46.2%). It has also been found from the table that many of the respondents belonging to higher income groups I2 (23.3%) and I3 (31.3%) come for holidaying and pleasure.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents With Regard to Purpose of Visit across Income Groups

Purpose	Income Groups			Total
	I2 (15.4)	I1 (13.8)	I3 (18.3)	
Business/official	10 (12.8)	16 (13.8)	52 (31.3)	80 (16.7)
Holidaying/pleasure	10 (12.8)	27 (23.3)	89 (31.3)	126 (26.4)
Rural/Religious	36 (46.2)	37 (31.9)	91 (32.0)	164 (34.3)
Academic/education	9 (11.5)	21 (18.1)	22 (7.7)	52 (10.9)
Social function	11 (14.1)	15 (12.9)	30 (10.6)	56 (11.7)
N	78	116	284	478

$\chi^2 = 22.43$, Significant at 5 per cent level of significance.

The chi-square value indicates that statistically, there is a significant difference in the responses of respondents belonging to different income categories regarding the purpose of visit to the tourist places at 5 per cent level of significance.

Motivation for Tourism

The foregoing discussion reveals that the prime motive of the tourists visiting the State is rural/religious. Still there is

a need to step up publicity and promotional efforts to encourage repeat visits, so as to increase overall volume of tourist traffic in the State. In this context, the respondents were asked to indicate the effect of factors on a 5-point scale (where 1=to a very small extent; and 5=to a very large extent), which would be helpful in promoting tourism in the State of Punjab. The responses in this regard with mean values are exhibited in Table 3.

Table 3
Rating of Factors Helpful in Promoting Tourism in the State

Factors	To a very Large Extent	To a Large Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Small Extent	To a very Small Extent	Mean scores	S.D.
More tourist offices in other States	140 (29.3)	228 (47.7)	91 (19.0)	11 (2.3)	8 (1.7)	4.01	0.85
More publicity abroad	170 (35.6)	177 (37.0)	105 (21.9)	18 (3.8)	8 (1.7)	4.01	0.94
More advertisements in reputed magazines or papers	169 (35.4)	168 (35.1)	107 (22.4)	32 (6.7)	2 (0.4)	3.98	0.94
Installing posters at airports, railway stations etc.	174 (36.4)	127 (26.6)	107 (22.4)	56 (11.7)	14 (2.9)	3.82	1.14
Print publicity material in different languages	175 (36.6)	164 (34.3)	101 (21.1)	21 (4.4)	17 (3.6)	3.96	1.04
Regularly updating the website for tourism places	190 (39.7)	188 (39.3)	65 (13.6)	19 (4.0)	16 (3.4)	4.08	0.99

As shown in the table for promoting tourism in the State 'regularly updating the websites for tourism promotion' (79.0%), 'opening of more tourist offices in other States' (77.0%) and 'doing more publicity abroad' (72.6%) are considered helpful 'to a large extent'. Next in importance, are the factors such as 'printing of publicity material in different languages' (70.9%); 'giving more advertisements in reputed magazines or newspapers' (70.5%) and 'installing posters at airports and railway stations etc.' (63.0%). Weighted average scores also show that the respondents give more weightage to 'regularly updating the

website' for the promotion of tourism in Punjab with the mean score 4.08. They give equal importance to opening up of 'more tourist offices in other States' and 'doing more publicity abroad' with the mean score 4.01 in each case. The responses were further cross-classified by the types of tourists and with respect to income categories of respondents visiting tourist destinations. The tourist category-wise mean values and F-ratios are presented in Table 4 and incomes-wise mean values and F-ratios are presented in Table 5. To examine the overall differences in category means ANOVA has been applied.

Table 4
ANOVA Table Showing Means and F-ratio with respect to Factors Helpful in Promoting Tourism in the State across Types of Tourists

Factors	Type of Tourists			F-ratio
	Indian	Foreigner	NRI	
More tourist offices in other States	4.07	3.71	4.01	4.807*
More publicity abroad	4.06	4.00	3.85	1.969
More advertisements in reputed magazines, papers	4.00	4.14	3.83	2.231
Installing posters at airports, railway stations etc.	3.86	3.89	3.65	1.499
Print publicity material in different languages	4.04	4.02	3.70	4.282*
Regularly updating the website for tourism places in the state	4.10	4.11	4.02	.253

*Significant at 0.05 level

As depicted in table 4 all the factors are considered helpful 'to a large extent' by different types of respondents—Indians, foreigners and NRIs, as the mean scores range between 3.6 and 4. F-ratios reveal that statistically, significant differences exist at 5 per cent level

of significance, among the various types of tourists with respect to factors 'opening up of more tourist offices in other States' and 'printing of publicity material in different languages'.

Table 5
ANOVA Table Showing Means and F-ratio with respect to Factors Helpful in Promoting Tourism in the State across Income Groups

Factors	Income Groups			F-ratio
	I ₁	I ₂	I ₃	
More tourist offices in other States	4.04	4.08	3.97	.742
More publicity abroad	4.15	3.92	4.01	1.429
More advertisements in reputed magazines, papers	3.97	3.96	4.00	.077
Installing posters at airports, railway stations etc.	3.78	3.90	3.80	.370
Print publicity material in different languages	4.04	3.97	3.94	.297
Regularly updating the website for tourism places	4.12	3.97	4.12	1.044

Income-wise information in Table 5 depicts that, irrespective of the income differences, the mean scores calculated for all the factors are almost the same (nearly 4) for the respondents belonging to I₁, I₂ and I₃ income groups. This reveals that in the opinions of the respondents all the factors are helpful in promoting the tourism in the State 'to a large extent'. F-ratios also reveal that statistically, no significant differences exist among respondents belonging to different income groups with respect to rankings given to various factors that are helpful in promoting tourism in the State of Punjab.

Motivators Influencing the Decision to Revisit

The respondents were further asked to rate the factors on a

5-point Scale (where 1=most unimportant and 5=most important), which would have a positive influence on their decision to revisit the religious destination. The responses are depicted in Table 6. The table reveals that the most important consideration motivating the respondents to revisit is 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage' as 92.3 per cent of the respondents consider this as the important factor. This is followed by 'Punjab's hospitality' (77.2%). Besides, 'religious celebrations and the way these functions are conducted' (72.7%), 'friendly and cooperative behavior of the local people in the region' (69.2%) and 'helpful behavior of the staff at tourist complex' (68.9%) are the other important factors influencing their decision to revisit the State of Punjab.

Table 6
Rating of Factors having Positive Influence on Tourists' Decision to Revisit

Statements	Most Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Most unimportant	Mean Scores	S.D.
Punjab's rich culture and heritage	205 (42.9)	236 (49.4)	30 (6.3)	7 (1.4)	-----	4.34	0.66
Punjab's weather	67 (14.0)	173 (36.2)	171 (35.8)	51 (10.7)	16 (3.3)	3.47	0.97
Punjab's shopping	55 (11.5)	154 (32.2)	186 (38.9)	68 (14.3)	15 (3.1)	3.35	0.97
Punjab's hospitality	80 (16.7)	289 (60.5)	86 (18.0)	21 (4.4)	2 (0.4)	3.89	0.74
Cooperative behavior of locals	87 (18.2)	244 (51.1)	116 (24.3)	24 (5.0)	7 (1.4)	3.79	0.85
Helpful behavior of staff on duty	71 (14.9)	256 (53.6)	119 (24.9)	25 (5.2)	7 (1.4)	3.75	0.82
Religious celebrations and arrangements	195 (40.8)	149 (31.2)	94 (19.7)	26 (5.4)	14 (2.9)	4.01	1.04

Weighted average scores also reveal that respondents give the maximum weightage to 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage' (4.34) followed by 'religious celebrations and other arrangements' (4.01) and 'Punjab's hospitality' (3.89). This indicates that tourists are attracted to Punjab's rich culture and heritage and enjoy the religious celebrations. The responses were further cross-classified

with respect to types of tourists visiting religious destinations and income categories. The tourist category-wise means and F-ratios are presented in Table 7 and income groups-wise means and F-ratios are presented in Table 8. To examine the overall difference in category means ANOVA has been applied.

Table 7
ANOVA Table Showing Means and F-ratio with respect to Factors having a positive influence on their decision to Revisit across Type of Tourists

Factors	Type of Tourists			F-ratio
	Indian	Foreigner	NRI	
Punjab's rich culture and heritage	4.35	4.20	4.40	2.002
Punjab's weather	3.55	3.38	3.28	3.186*
Punjab's shopping	3.40	3.15	3.31	1.889
Punjab's hospitality	3.92	3.88	3.78	1.343
Cooperative behavior of locals	3.78	3.95	3.75	1.418
Helpful behavior of staff on duty	3.79	3.77	3.62	1.719
Religious celebrations and arrangements	4.08	3.61	4.07	6.007*

*Significant at 0.05 level

As shown in Table 7 both Indian and NRI respondents have rated these considerations almost in the similar manner. They have rated 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage' as the most important consideration with the weighted average scores 4.35 and 4.40 respectively. Next in importance, they have given more weightage to 'religious celebrations and other arrangements' with the weighted average scores 4.08 and 4.07 respectively. This is followed by the rating for 'Punjab's hospitality' with the weighted average scores of 3.92 and 3.78 respectively. The most important consideration for foreigners to visit again is also 'Punjab's

rich culture and heritage' (weighted average score = 4.20). 'Friendly and cooperative behavior of the locals with weighted average score of 3.95 and 'Punjab's hospitality' with weighted average score of 3.88 are also other important considerations for the foreigners to revisit in future. The results of ANOVA highlight that statistically, significant differences exist at 5 per cent level of significance with respect to factors 'Punjab's weather' and 'religious celebrations and arrangements' across the different type of tourists with F-values of 3.186 and 6.007 respectively.

Table 8
ANOVA Table Showing Means and F-ratio with respect to Factors having a positive influence on their decision to Revisit across Income Groups

Factors	Income Groups			F-ratio
	I ₁	I ₂	I ₃	
Punjab's rich culture and heritage	4.37	4.31	4.34	.202
Punjab's weather	3.63	3.52	3.40	1.811
Punjab's shopping	3.33	3.52	3.28	2.478
Punjab's hospitality	3.74	3.97	3.89	2.279
Cooperative behavior of locals	3.87	3.82	3.76	.556
Helpful behavior of staff on duty	3.92	3.79	3.69	2.743
Religious celebrations and arrangements	4.42	3.93	3.94	7.338*

*Significant at 0.05 level

The analysis with respect to different income groups as shown in Table 8 reveals that the respondents belonging to I2 and I3 income groups have rated the decision-making factors almost in the same manner. For respondents belonging to both income groups, 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage' and the 'religious celebrations and other religious arrangements' have an important influence on their decision to revisit with mean scores revolving around 4. The respondents belonging to low income group I1 have given more importance to 'religious celebrations' (4.42) followed by 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage' with mean score 4.37. All the respondents belonging to different income groups have given less importance to 'Punjab's shopping' with mean scores marginally higher than 3. This infers that there is a great need to open more shopping centers with items of tourist interest so as to satisfy the needs of all kinds of tourists. The results of ANOVA as presented in table 8 highlight that statistically, significant differences exist at 5 per cent level of significance, across income groups with respect to 'religious celebrations and arrangements' with F-values of 7.338.

Section IV:

Suggestions and Policy Implications

On the basis of the salient findings of the study, the following suggestions and policy implications emerge:

1. An effective tourism promotion strategy should strongly focus on promoting and attracting the flow of domestic tourists from across different parts of the country. Since the analysis also revealed that Indian domestic tourists, particularly belonging to affluent classes visit Punjab primarily with 'religious motive' — thus a direct policy implication is that a 'tourism promotion policy' must target rich domestic Indian tourists, who are keen to visit Punjab. At the same time, foreign tourists can be profitably targeted keeping into consideration their 'holidaying motive'.
2. There is a strong need to construct specialized pavilions like malls containing shops and sale outlets for specific items such as, pavilion for State art and craft, pavilion for food, pavilion for clothes, pavilion for folk items, pavilion for religious items and so on, so that the tourist's
3. Desire for a specific item can be satisfied within one enclosure. In addition, there is a strong need to refurbish and expand Government emporiums selling diversified traditional cultural items of Punjab at fixed prices.
4. For tapping the optimal tourism potential, particularly of domestic tourists, the proper record of the vacation schedule of administrative and educational institutions in different regions of the country have to be maintained. Tourism promotion and publicity should be stepped up during vacation time by offering 'special holiday packages' for the potential tourists. The Government of Punjab can organize youth and cultural exchange programs for the domestic tourists from neighboring States. One may also suggest a 'joint regional advertisement and publicity' with a view to promote travel to the region.
5. Integration of excursion outings with rural tourism and thus to develop and professionally manage scenic picnic spots like Harike and Kanjli which are in the vicinity of some of the most revered religious shrines such as, Sultanpur Lodhi, Goindwal Sahib. Hence, the promotional strategy 'diversify reasons to visit' can be adopted by linking sacred sites with other attractors / motivators and to re-value the holy place through its cultural identities. (Similar recommendation has also been given by Fernandes, 2006).
6. Proper information, including publicity of the places of tourist attractions public tourist information centers; road signs, signboards and road maps; published tourism information literature strongly needs to be augmented. An integrated set of services: hotel reservations, transport facilities, tourist guides, tourist police, shopping facilities, tour agents and visa facilities, etc., must be provided at one place, preferably at the 'Golden Temple' and 'Anandpur Sahib' or at the airport terminal itself.
7. The respondents in the present study report gross dissatisfaction with respect to banking, medical and other facilities available. Therefore, physical infrastructure and other infrastructural services, including multi-level car parking, elevated roads, traffic management, state of the art banking facilities, mobile dispensaries, general cleanliness of the places of stay and food and catering services need to be upgraded. Additionally, eating places with reasonably priced, hygienically cooked and diverse type of food items should be made available.
8. Public-Private sector partnership is now witnessed

in the development of infrastructure services for prime tourist destinations. Such partnerships should also be undertaken for other important destinations as well. The private sector, as it is by the motive of profit, has the advantage in providing competitive services, running facilities and thereby strengthening tourism with local development.

9. The present study puts forth that respondents feel largely dissatisfied with the extent of information sources available and a very small proportion of tourists have actually gathered information from websites of various Tourist destinations in Punjab. There is a great need to maintain such sites as it can emerge as a widely sought and user friendly medium for promotion of information dissemination related to rural activities.
10. Adequate promotion of tourist destinations is possible if the associated management bodies tie-up with tour and travel operators who can importantly serve to promote religious destinations. They can serve the tourists by offering a suitable package as well as impart required information, thus facilitating tourist travel and visit.
11. Friends and Relatives' has been emerged as the major source of information for the tourists. This word-of-mouth referral channel can be developed as a promotional strategy. Thus, there is a need to provide true knowledge and information, about the historical significance of the religious places as well as the services and facilities available for the pilgrims, to these opinion leaders so that these referrals can spread reputations and up-to-date information to their friends and relatives. In this way the recommender can potentially benefit the service provider as well as the service seeker.

Section V:

Conclusion

In the conclusion, it may be re-emphasized that the concerned bodies, the Government and NGOs should make a concerted effort to professionally promote and support programs to strengthen various services and facilities available for the tourist, such as, efficient local transport system, clean and hygienic food and accommodation at reasonable rates, joint regional promotion and publicity specifically during vacations, more diverse type of eating

places and shopping pavilions at reasonable and stipulated prices, modernized banking facilities, multilevel car parking, efficient dispensation of religious services and cleanliness of the surroundings of the destinations and so on.

Further, it can be said that 'Punjab's rich culture and heritage'; the way the 'religious celebrations' are conducted and 'friendly and helpful behavior' of the people of Punjab are the main motivators for repeat visits of the tourists. The State Department of Tourism should make a systematic effort for the collection of statistics as proper detailed promotional strategy can only be designed when proper facts are known about the profiles and need pattern of the visitors from different States. In addition, the role of the Government lies in creating a policy environment, in the formulation and enforcement of rules and regulations, in providing financial incentives and infrastructural support in the areas such as human resource development and in the promotion and marketing of tourism, both domestically and internationally. The above recommendations are based on the conclusions drawn from our study which were, no doubt, narrow in scope. The emerging conclusions are pointers to the direction in which government and tourism management bodies need to focus their attention, and do not, in any way, lend themselves to generalizations. These findings and conclusions will be beneficial for the policy makers and tourism management bodies in multiple ways in formulating promotional strategies. These results can be taken as a tentative hypotheses for conducting suitable research and thereby, framing appropriate marketing strategies for promoting tourism in Punjab. Using the findings of the study as its primal force after testifying their validity and reliability, the policy makers may carry out detailed studies on tourist behavior, especially regarding their changing needs and expectations to bolster up rural tourism in the culturally and historically hallowed State of Punjab.

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