

A Critical Analysis on Restrictions at Rohtang Pass and Its Impacts on the Local Economy

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Abstract

Present research study reveals about NGT's restrictions at Rohtang pass and its impact on locals and tourism associated businesses in the particular area. Sustainable tourism concept (eco-tourism) awareness among the local are also the research core area. Domestic and foreign Tourists attitude towards the tribunal restrictions on main snow point (Rohtang) will also measure first time. The purpose of the study is to observe the local scenario of the restricted region and find out the best possible results. Finding of the study will help to the tourism development in the region. Study has also observed that Tribunal ban on all commercial activities is the big threat for the tourism industry because after the tribunal ban, tourism decreased for a greater part. If local administration and state tourism promote these unexplored destinations, it will surely regain the interest of tourists towards this hilly station and also assist to reduce the burden from Rohtang-Pass.

Introduction

The World Tourism Organization stated that tourism is defined by "the set of activities of a person travelling to a place outside his or her usual environment for at least one night, but less than a year, and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." People love to tour, from city holidays to adventure trips, travel can be helpful in a number of ways for the community, the environment and your own well-being. Tourism is a boon for any area, and also gives the huge and huge opportunities to the community. The tourism can deeply saturate a local economy. Because tourism is

a labour-orient industry, and because generally of the participants are micro to small business operators, the effect is felt rapidly and straight through local spending .However, the planet is fragile. The environment, being the most important source of tourist product, should therefore be protected in order to have further expansion of tourism and economic progress in the future .This means doing the least harm possible to the natural surroundings, valuing and protecting the local traditions, and providing as much financial benefits as possible. The study is based on Rohtang pass and its nearby area faced the environmental issues due to huge increase in tourism as per the NGT (National Green Tribunal).According to National Green Tribunal, Rohtang is in very eco-sensitive zone of Himalayan range facing environmental trouble, Environment of eco-sensitive area is affected by the unregulated and unplanned tourism, heavy traffic, carbon emission from the vehicles, open burning of leftovers, and Sky-scraping tourists activities around the Solang Nullah and Rohtang. Recently, Tribunal banned all commercial and tourism activities at famous tourist destination Rohtang and Solang Valley including all dhabas, tea stalls, skiing, sledging, horse riding, photography, snow scooters and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and paragliding. Initially, the NGT had banned every tourist vehicles. Later, it relaxed its direction till November 30, limiting the entry of tourist vehicles to the Rohtang to 1,000 per day. The decision to ban all the activities at Rohtang is a major stroke to Kullu-Manali tourism, which is around 3000 crore industry. Large number of locals they mostly depend on tourism and if the resticrictions continue the rohtang tourism can lose his charm and it will surely affect local people livelihood. The study is all about examine the current scenario at the restricted (Vashishta-Rohtang) area and get the best possible solution or alternate to locals without harming the environment. This case study is mainly spotlight on to develop the sustainable tourism concept in Kullu-Manali. Tourism is the major contributor in the state economy growth. The state has rich natural beauty that easily attracts tourists from across the world. Himachal is famous for its Himalayan landscape and popular hill stations. The state is also very well known for various adventure activities like paragliding (in bir billing, Kangra) Rafting (Kullu), boating, horse riding, biking, hiking, trekking, fishing, ice-skating etc. In Himachal Pradesh, tourists also can go for eco-tourism, visit UNESCO world heritage (Great Himalayan National Park, Shimla-Kalka Heritage railway), and to see the fairs and festivals etc.Tourism is main source of income and employment generator of the hilly state, It contributes the 9.75 percent to state economy.

State registered tremendous growth of tourists in past few years. State Government tourism department focus on tourism development in the state and want to make the tourism the prime engine of income or economic growth. “To make tourism the prime engine of economy growth by positioning the state as a leading global destination by the year 2020” State tourism policy

Review of literature

Mishra. P.K. et.al (2011) Proposed that Tourism is a standout amongst the most vital parts on the economy. It is presently considered as a proficient apparatus for advancing monetary development of the host nation. The significance of tourism as a patron to monetary development is so broadly acknowledged that quite a long time all through the world a huge speculation keeps on pouring in its advancement. Tourism helps in local and financial advancement. Late study demonstrates that the globalization and open economy assisted tourism with emerging as one of the greatest FOREX creator for India. It brings the chance of infrastructure development. The advancement of any nation depends particularly on the improvement of road, vehicles, tele- communication, water supply, air terminals and railways. Singh.R. (2013) observed that ourism industry is fast rising service industry of India and its role in term of economic, social and environmental development of country is well documented, Study has investigated the impacts of tourism in Manali. The results showed that tourism is perceived as economic activity in Manali but its social and environmental impacts can be damaging for area if not manage well in time. **Jagdish et.al (2003) found that** environmental situation emerging at two critical areas in North Western Himalaya-Kullu and Manali because of expanding weight of tourism. It takes up the issues of over development of inns, deforestation, air contamination, strong waste, water contamination. Lodging development enrolled its most noteworthy development in this district (around 38%) in 80s because of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. **National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (2012)** Rohtang Pass located at the Pir-Panjal range is the main tourist attraction visited by thousands of tourists. Petrol and diesel vehicles are used as a form of transport. Due to cool climate condition and walls of snow beside the road, the pollutants come through the exhaust get adhered to the glaciers and remain there till melting of snow starts. These pollutants soak up heat and increase

the melting of glaciers and disturb the ecosystem. **Nag.A (2013)** discussed that poverty and climate issues are some major challenges facing by human society. It is very hard to address both troubles at the one time because these two troubles sometimes conflict. Villagers from less developed countries and developing countries have no other choice but to exploit natural wealth around, like trees, it leads to deforestation. Environmental protection is also neglected in these areas. So that is the reason that Eco-tourism is gaining huge attention among conservationists. **Chand and vivek (2012)** inferred that from recent times tourism sector is expanding, every stakeholders including local residents, Government, and other associated with this industry just focused on the performance of the industry in both micro and macro stage. So the tourism industry always gets the attention including contribution of tourism in FOREX, GDP, tax revenues, job creation, contribution in local industries development etc. The paper examines the local perceptions towards the sustainable development, 459 respondents are interviewed, mainstream are male, young, married, all support the tourism development strongly but they are little concerned with the development and promotion in the area. The study shows that for the development of sustainable tourism the local people's involvement should be considered

Need of the Study

Every year lakhs of tourist come from different parts of the world to see the exceptional beauty of Himalaya. At above 13,500 feet from sea level, Rohtang is the most easily reachable high mountain tourist hill station of India. Rohtang is widely known as snow-point and is a major attractions with snow sledger, skiis, trekking and all types of tourism attractions. Rohtang and Solang valley is the most popular among the adventure loving people, tourist can enjoy many adventure sports over their like paragliding, skiing, snow scooter, all terrain vehicles (ATV), horse riding, etc. It is considered as a most important part of district (Kullu-Manali) tourism and state tourism as well. The main economic activities in the region are hospitality and tourism and other linked industries like Handicraft industry, hand-loom. About 35 lakhs tourists visit Manali every year and the town has about 4,000 taxis registered with the authorities. Rohtang is one of the most beautiful gift of the nature visited by 18,000 to 20,000 tourists every day in the peak season time.

Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this research, primary as well as secondary data will be considered. Secondary data has been collected from books, academic journals, papers from professional bodies, research institutes, online articles and tourism related websites. The paper outcomes are conducted through a survey using Likert scale of attitude measurement. Primary data has been collected through both interviews and questionnaire. A random sample technique is selected for data collection. The locals will also be observed by the researcher.

4.1) Objectives of the study

1. To identify the impact of restrictions on local economy
2. Identify the opportunity and challenges for future development in the region.
3. To make some suggestions for sustainable development of the region.

4.2) Hypothesis

1. Tourism activities in larger scale at Rohtang-Pass area affecting the environment.
2. NGT's rules and restrictions affecting the local economy.

4.3) Sample size

The sample size chosen for research is 50, which includes 30 local people and 20 tourists. Age limit of the respondents are above 18 years.

4.4) Data collection method

The data collection method that will be used in the study is Questionnaire. By preparing questionnaire and distributing it to the selected sample size for the research, data will be gathered on the same topic chosen for research.

- **Primary data:** Primary data is going to be collected through questionnaires and interviews.
- **Secondary data:** Secondary data was collected from books, academic journals, papers from professional bodies and research institutes, online articles and tourism related websites.

Research Gap

There are some research already taken place over the environmental degradation at Manali and Rohtang. All study reveals the negative impacts of tourism activities at this Himalayan region. This will be the first research study on NGT's restrictions at Rohtang pass and its impact on locals and tourism associated businesses in the particular area. Through this study I am going to find that how much tourism is affected in the region and how much the locals, those are associated with tourism/hospitality industry are affected, and what locals thinking about the restrictions imposed by tribunal. Sustainable tourism concept (eco-tourism) awareness among the local are also the research core area. Domestic and foreign Tourists attitude towards the tribunal restrictions on main snow point (Rohtang) will also measure first time.

Variables- The variables for study will be:

Independent variables:

Occupations, Nationality, Organisations, Attraction sites, Number of tourists arrivals, popularity of the destination.

Dependent variables:

Tourism development policies, rules & restrictions, accommodation sectors, transportation facilities.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This questionnaire is specially designed for the local people of the region. It covers all the necessary questions related to the objective of the study. Questionnaire is based mainly on 1(*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) rating scale, called Likert scale. i.e.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Don't know
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

All the fourteen questions are in clear and simple way so respondents can response easily without getting bored. The responses collected from our variety of respondent are put together in SPSS to analyse the data which in turn gives relevant information about the current situation of the region. Age of respondents. 26.67% of respondents are in between 18-25 age group, 40.00% respondents are in between 25-35, 26.67% are in between 35-45 and only 6.67% of respondents are above 45 age. Whereas the gender of the respondents in respect of their age. In the age group of 18-25, we have 6 male and 2 female respondents, 10 male and 2 female respondents are belongs to 25-35 age group, 6 male and 2 female respondents are belongs to the age group of 35-45 ,and only 2 male are above 45 age. Further, adding the education level of respondents. 20% respondents are Matriculate, 6.67% respondents are Intermediate, 60% respondents are Graduate, and 13.33% respondents Post Graduate. Graduate respondents are in the higher side with the percentage of 60.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The National Green Tribunal imposed the ban on all commercial activities in Rohtang-Pass and also restricted the movement of vehicles to main snow point. The decision comes after when they found the unplanned and unregulated tourism activities at eco-sensitive area (Rohtang-Pass) and

adverse impact of tourism on environment. But local people of Manali region are mainly associated with tourism industry from last three decades are directly damaged with the Tribunal decision. Adventure activities and snow are the major attractions at Rohtang-Pass and considered as the most desirable place among tourists. The destination is mostly visited by the young tourists to enjoy the adventure activities. Study also reveals the careless role of local administration and State government, because there was no proper planning introduced towards the sustainable development and a huge number of tourist vehicles were going to main snow point without any control during the peak season. People accepted that Rohtang-Pass is affected due to heavy traffic but they are totally against the ban on all commercial activities at restricted area.

After deeply investigation of the case it is very clear that tourism is the major earning source for the local people, tourism improved their life style and infrastructure of the region. Due to Green Tribunal ban the tourism is decreased drastically, it is undoubtedly the major stroke for the tourism and hospitality industry, small home industries and especially for those who are totally dependent on tourists. After analysing all aspects, the study says that Tribunal ban on all commercial activities is the big threat for the tourism industry because after the tribunal ban, tourism decreased for a greater part. Economy of the region is mostly dependents on tourism; if some essential steps are not taken on time then it will surely affect the Manali charm in upcoming days. To overcome from this situation, there is need to develop new strategies towards the further development of tourism industry. There are many other alternate tourist destinations available in the Manali region. Due to lack of promotion, these destinations are not getting the tourist attention. If local administration and state tourism promote these unexplored destinations, it will surely regain the interest of tourists towards this hilly station and also assist to reduce the burden from Rohtang-Pass. Most of people are not aware about the sustainable concept of tourism. So, It is also necessary to make people aware about the sustainable tourism concept for further development.

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