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## From the desk of Editors

Dear Readers,

The journal of tourism (jot) and its team is happy to present June 2021 issue with quality research papers pertaining to present need and developments in the tourism sector. Among the various research papers received by the team, only five research papers and a research note were recommended by the reviewers for this issue. We strongly believe that the accepted research papers would energize the readers with joy and academic wisdom.

The first paper titled ***"Overview of Tourist Behavior with respect to Environmental Sustainability of Tourism in the context of a developing economy- a case study of Mussoorie, India"*** authored by Mohit Payal and Ashish Kumar Jangid tries to shed light on tourist' behaviour (through transportation and accommodation choices) and their experiences through tourist experience model which divides tourist' activity into five phases to better assign the choices tourist makes in different phases. It also tries to highlight the environmentally unsustainable tourist behaviours consistent or unique to existing tourist behaviour theories established in previous studies .

The second paper titled ***"Smart City to Smart Urban Tourism Destination; a case study approach"*** authored by Pooja Choudhary and Sandeep Walia. The research paper identifies smart technology, smart governance, innovation, smart economy, and human capital as core components of 'smartness' in the context of smart cities and smart tourism development. Understanding 'what constitutes a smart and sustainable tourism destination' holds value for the policymakers and destination management organizations in developing country like India to develop sustainable and smart tourism destinations .

The third paper titled ***"Importance of HR Flexibility in applying HR Strategy and Practices in covid-19; a comparison of uniform versus diversified tourism strategies"*** authored by Mohit Kukreti and Aarti Dangwal explores and compares the differences between uniform versus diversified tourism strategies in the wake of covid-19 pandemic. The paper recommends that the process to monitor assess HRP activities is an area that needs development and attention from the Omani tourism sector. A well-defined policy can play a substantial role to achieve the preferred outcomes in assessing HR flexibility and practices.

The fourth paper titled ***"A Management Development Approach in Halal Tourism Promotion towards Indian Muslim travelers"*** is by contributed Monika Barnwal,

Jahangir Khan, Nimit R. Chowdhary and Vijay Kumar. This paper aims to study sensitivities and acceptance of the expectations placed on the Halal Tourism as a theoretical management approach with the reality of emergent Indian Muslim tourists by examining the responses towards three proposed parameters of Halal Tourism.

The fifth paper titled "*Tourist's Souvenir Purchase Intention at Raghurajpur and Pipli Shopping Destinations*" is authored by Sachin Kumar Behera, Punit Gautam and Sarat Lenka. The results from this study show significant gender differences in the "purchase interest of tourists towards souvenirs. Such findings can form strategies to enhance the management and marketing of souvenirs, souvenir exporters, artisans, retailers, and concerned tourist.

At the last, a research note titled "*Cross-Border Trade Tourism through Nathula Pass in Sikkim*" is submitted by Pramesh Chettri and Jgmie Wanchuk Bhutia. The research note attempts to examine and analyse the impact of Nathula cross-border trade on promoting tourism sector in Sikkim. This research note also aims to explore the current situation of Indo- China trade prospects through Nathula. These six research contributions include a variety of contemporary research problems to enable the readers to understand the ongoing tourism development trends and practices across the world. The views expressed in this issue of JOT are those of the respective authors. On behalf of journal of tourism, we are happy to extend our sincere wishes and thanks to our reviewers who have rendered their services in reviewing the received manuscripts and paving way to come out with this issue successfully. We are firm that this issue would bring immense joy while reading and trigger research interest within you.

With best regards

**S.C.Bagri, Ph.D.**  
**& Suresh Babu Anbalagan, Ph.D.**  
**Guest Editors**

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## Key Words

**Tourist' Behaviour,  
Developing Economy,  
Carbon Emission Rate,  
Environmental Sustainability,  
Climate Change.**

## Abstract

The tourism industry with its significant contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emission has been termed environmentally unsustainable in its status quo. The concentrated efforts are on changing the tourists' behaviour towards a more environmentally sensitive tourism operations like having sustainable transportation and accommodation choices in destination. However, in the case of a developing economy where tourism is one of the major industries, it's difficult to establish the balance between economy and environment. Also, the economically aspiring consumers/tourists tend to be more unsustainable and resistant to any changes. However, most of tourists' behaviour theories are based on the studies of western tourists travelling in western countries, thus this paper tries to case study the tourists' behaviour during their ongoing tourism in the context of a developing economy in Mussoorie, India. The study tries to shed light on tourist' behaviour (through transportation and accommodation choices) and their experience through Tourist Experience Model (TEM) which divides tourist' activity into five phases to better assign the choices tourist makes in different phases. It also tries to highlights the environmentally unsustainable tourist behaviours consistent or unique to existing tourist behaviour theories established in previous studies. The results conclude that the tourists' behaviour in a developing economy are majorly influenced by economic considerations rather than environmental concern. This paper helps in guiding policy towards sustainable tourist destination management by making tourist behaviour and experience central to the discourse as it is quintessential to see how a tourist travels, stays and experiences her tourism activity and how can it implicate the sustainability especially in relation to Climate Change.

# *Overview Of Tourist Behavior With Respect To Environmental Sustainability Of Tourism In The Context Of A Developing Economy- A Case Study Of Mussoorie, India*

**Mohit Payal**

Department of Landscape Level Planning and Management, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India – 248001

**Ashish Kumar Jangid**

Department of Landscape Level Planning and Management, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India – 248001

## INTRODUCTION

### **Tourism & climate change interface**

Tourism as an economic industry has been traditionally seen as the major source of export earnings and employment (Duffy & Stroebel, 2015). It has been seen as a means of direct economic growth and fairly conducive for the development of a country and is even considered to be environmentally sustainable than other competing industries (Fletcher, 2011). However, recent development in the research interface of the Climate Change and Tourism, and their inter-linkages has derived that there are compounding impacts of each other on their status quos (Gössling, 2002; Becken, 2004; McKercher et al., 2010). Tourism has become both a victim and a vector of climate change (Cabrini et al., 2009).

Academically, the spike in interest for researching the aforementioned interface and the consecutive awareness programme among general tourist has especially grown after the watershed year of 2003, when first international conference on Climate Change and Tourism in Djerba, Tunisia was internationally fielded by the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (Gössling et al., 2005; Dubois & Ceron, 2006; Scott, 2011; Peeters, 2013). By the second international conference in Davos, Switzerland in 2007, UNWTO highlighted that CO<sub>2</sub> emission from Tourism industry accounts for almost 5% of total global emission (UN World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2007; UNWTO et al., 2008). It also shared onus of this severe impact on environment by tourism on the basic unit of any tourism activity, i.e., a tourist, thus furthering the tourist' role as quintessential for achieving sustainable tourism model with respect to climate change. It prioritized the research on recognising and changing the unsustainable tourist' behaviours at the tourist destination, which would be needed to reduce their carbon footprint (UNWTO et al., 2008).

### **HIGHLIGHTING TOURIST**

#### **Behaviour and experience**

As the major concentration of studies are on changing the tourist behaviours and promoting environmentally sustainable tourism (Mckercher et al., 2010; Yael et al., 2013), there has been an active advocacy of ensuing sustainable tourist behaviour like short haul travelling to the destination, preferring road and railway public transport over air travel, coming out of 'holiday is a holiday' problem where there is a resistance to follow environmentally sustainable behaviour during a

holiday/vacation by tourists (Barr et al., 2010) and preferring long stay at destination than short stay (Simpson et al., 2008; McKercher et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2011; Yael et al., 2013).

The tourist as a unit to describe her experience in the tourism activity directly entails the notion that, a better and happy tourist experience leads to more tourism activity, which can be unsustainable with current tourist behavioural choices (Yael et al., 2013). It is quintessential to see how a tourist travels, stays and experiences her tourism activity and how can it implicate the sustainability especially in relation to climate change. The tourist “recreational experience” theory which distinguishes the five major phases of a tourist experiences, *i.e.*, anticipation to the tourism, travelling to the destination, on-site experience, travelling back from the destination and the recollection of the tourism activity (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966), comes up as the basic Tourist Experience Model (TEM) (Fridgen, 1984). The further impact on tourist' behaviour is due to the motivation for novelty and change as the demand from tourist for new tourist destinations is always high, thus playing a part in the unregulated growth of new tourist destinations or the expansion of existing ones beyond their carrying capacity (Pearce & Lee, 2005). The TEM comprising of aforementioned five phases of tourism experience can lead to a better modulation of how a tourist undertakes her tourism activity in these different phases of planning, travel, on-site accommodation and experience of tourism. However, the true usage of this model is to portray behaviours and experience, but does not answers the queries like as why people travel and why different tourists engage in different behaviours (Yael et al., 2013).

#### **Sustainability of Tourism Transport Pattern**

Focus on changing tourist behaviour especially when travelling to and from the tourist destination can be crucial to determine the environment sustainability of whole tourism activity. As the travelling part of the tourism relates to the most CO<sub>2</sub> emission, especially if air travel is involved (UNWTO et al., 2008). Transportation induces 75% of total CO<sub>2</sub> emission in a tourism activity, with air transport alone accounting for 54% to 75% of the total tourism transport emission (UNWTO et al., 2008). As the travelling in the case of tourism is both, “the means to an end and integral to tourism experience” (Lumsdon & Page, 2004), thus having a comfortable journey is considered to be a crucial part in the total tourist experience. Also, as the society develops economically, it becomes more mobility promiscuous, thus the usage of air travel, and other luxurious ways of travelling will increase (Weaver, 2011). As there is a constant demand to

put policy imperatives to reduce air travel choice, by putting carbon taxes, it can adversely affect the visitation to developing economies by the tourist from developed parts of the world (Gössling et al., 2008).

#### **Lack of studies in developing economies**

The majority of studies which has gauged tourist behaviour are based on western tourist from the developed economies, with the major 'research rich' regions being European Alps, Australia and Canada (Bergin-Seers & Mair 2009; McKercher et al., 2010). In these cases, both the government and participatory civil societies have economic and political resources to induce these environment friendly behaviour changes in a tourist, either by inducing laws or social marketing techniques (Jamal & Watt, 2011). However, in the case of developing economies making economical sacrifices or investment, to establish a more environmentally sustainable tourism system is not as straightforward. Climate Change is the global problem but the urgency required to adapt and mitigate it is not same across the globe (Paavola & Adger, 2002). The lack of tourist' behaviour studies in developing countries becomes more challenging as the impetus of local tourism policies is on employment generation, tax revenue and foreign currency rather than on tourist behaviour (Gössling et al., 2008).

The role of tourism industry becomes more significant as the quick economy booster for the developing economies in the Global South, and is also recommended by World Bank as a major economy policy recommendation (Fletcher, 2011). Thus, it becomes an economic imperative for developing economies to expand their tourism infrastructure in order to attract more domestic and international tourists. With growing economy, the travelling and consequential tourism demand will increase and it will become the part of the lifestyle, which might not be environmentally sustainable (Singh, 1997). Also, there is no consensus for creating a global scale environmentally sustainable tourism model as there are varied nature of climate change threats and unequal level of knowledge about it from different geographic regions (Gössling & Hall, 2006; IPCC, 2007; Hall, 2008; UNWTO et al., 2008).

#### **OBJECTIVES**

As mentioned above climate change is a global issue, however majority of tourism mobility studies and its relation with it have been done with western tourists in the developed countries context (Hares et al., 2010; McKercher et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2011; Antimova et al., 2012) and therefore, the ability to make inferences about tourist' behaviour in developing economy is limited (Yael et al., 2013). The lack of research in the Climate

Change and Tourism interface which centralises tourist behaviours and experiences during all phases of tourism activity in a developing country context has led to the need of this study. Also, theory testing or exemplification (Eysenck, 1976; McAdams & West 1997, Robinson 2014) of unsustainable tourist behaviours like short stay destination tourism, air transport over road or train transport in a context of a developing economy is the integral research query of this study, thus the research is designed as a case study of  $N = 1$  tourist destination in such context. The main objectives of this study are:

- (1) To profile the tourist behaviour and experience through Tourist Experience Model (TEM) via a case study of a tourism destination in a developing economy,
- (2) To highlight the environmentally unsustainable tourist behaviours consistent or unique to existing tourist behaviour theories.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Area*

Mussoorie, India (30.47747°N 78.04981°E – 30.43455°N 78.09147°E) is selected as a case study to examine the research objectives as it is a famous tourist destination attracting tourists from across India and due to its particular vulnerability against Climate Change impacts like flash floods, cloud bursts as it is a high mountain area in Himalayas (Beniston, 2003; Palomo, 2017). Mussoorie is located on a 15 km long horseshoe ridge with the grand Himalayas as a backdrop at a height of 2,005 metres above sea level in the northern hill state of Uttarakhand; which has been actively promoting tourism as its main revenue and employment source since its annexation as a separate state in year 2000 (Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board [UTDP], 2020). Tourism industry contribution to this small Himalayan state in India is 50% of the total GSDP of the state from 2006-07 to 2016-17 and number of tourists visiting Uttarakhand has consistently increased from around 19.45 million in 2006 to 31.78 million in 2016 (Strategic Government Advisory [SGA] & Yes Bank, 2018). Mussoorie is one of its prominent tourist destinations, attracting 2.8 million local and foreign tourists in the year 2017 with good connectivity of road, train and air transport (Government of Uttarakhand [GoU], 2018). However, even before government policies started favouring the proliferation of the mass tourism in this region, Mussoorie was already popularized as 'colonial hill station' by Britishers in 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kohli, 2002; UTDP, 2020), due to its mountainous topography and colder climate (annual temperature range 1°C to 35°C) in the tropical climate of India (UTDP, 2020). Britishers used Mussoorie as their

summer home and as a centre of rejuvenation or convalescence (Kennedy, 1996), thus increasing both the population and the tourism since colonial times (Bahuguna, 1989). Post-colonial era marked the initiation of mass tourism in this hill station due to the factors like the liberalization of Indian economy in 1990s, democratization of leisure, educational awareness, social mobility, paid holiday schemes, spurts in transport network, and ego enhancement (Singh, 2005; Rao & Suresh, 2013), thus transforming it into a resort and hotspot for sightseeing (Vu & Sato, 2010). Also, the mountain tourism is increasingly espoused as a means of community development that can provide alternative livelihood opportunities, diversify local economies and address problem of poverty (Sinclair & Ham, 2000). However, unsuitable tourism practices have inflicted a two-fold injury on the Himalayan scape of Mussoorie, where unsustainable tourism boomeranged, causing overcrowding, congestion, traffic and environmental pollution and tourists trespassing further into the higher vulnerable zones of the Himalayas (Singh, 2005).

Mussoorie is situated in seismically active and fragile Himalayan range as it is subjected to the ongoing mountain building process due to two prominent geological structures: Main Central Thrust and Main Boundary Thrust, where typical formation of splitting rock structures occurs with characteristic complex folds and reverse faults; while geological development processes are still in a state of adjustments (Pandey, 2013). Also, there is a high-level probability that future anthropogenic induced changes in the climate including enhanced heat waves, glacial retreat, and permafrost degradation are likely to lead increasing slope instabilities, movement of mass, and glacial lake outburst floods in this region of Himalayas (IPCC, 2012).

### *Sample and sampling*

The case study is based on a single tourist destination, Mussoorie, with participants selected and interviewed via non-random and convenience sampling strategy. It was applied in the sample universe delineated along the inclusion criteria of a demographically heterogeneous tourist visiting Mussoorie (Patton, 1990; Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995; Robinson, 2014). The participants interviewed were pre-informed about the voluntary nature of the participation and anonymity involved in the data collected in order to ensure the good ethical research practice (Robinson, 2014). However, this led to the 'self-selection bias', a non-circumventable aspect of voluntary participation in which participants consenting to be interviewed may be different to those who do not, in ways that are not related to sampling criteria (Costigan &

Cox, 2001). A total of 72 tourists participated in the study and were interviewed in the major tourist hot-spots of the Mussoorie town on the basis of accessibility and availability (n=72) (Pegu et al., 2019). Tourists were approached at the main tourist attractions, including the Mall Road, Lal Tibba, Camel Back Road, George Everest and some famous eateries and cafes of Mussoorie. To ensure the sampled interviews were representative of the normal tourist demography and the seasonal nature of tourism of Mussoorie, the study was carried in the summer month of June 2017, when tourist arrival rate is high in this 'perfect summer destination' (GoU, 2018). The study was conducted on two consecutive weekend days in order to garner more diversity of tourist coming from different regions.

#### *Survey Instrument*

The objectives of the case study required a Survey Instrument (SI) designed to gauge various tourist behaviours and experiences during her entire tourism activity. The SI featured two main sections; the first section contained questions related to demographic and socio-economic characteristics of a tourist visiting Mussoorie and second section was classified into five different sub-sections in accordance to five different phases of tourism experience. The second section of the survey was based on the "Tourist Experience Model" (Fridgen, 1984) derived from Clawson and Knetsch' Tourist Recreation Theory (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966) which divides the tourist' experience into five distinct yet interacting phases starting with anticipation, travel to site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection, thus incorporating all the thoughts, plans and memories of a tourist forming an experience (Figure 1).

This section of the survey contained a set of 34 structured closed ended questions divided in the subsections of different phases of TEM. Wherever

tourists were required to rate their experience, a 5-point Likert scale was used, where 1 "Poor", 2 "Fair", 3 "Good", 4 "Very Good" and 5 "Excellent" (Pegu et al., 2019). The subsections included questions pertaining to the specific TEM phases are defined below.

#### *Anticipation phase*

The process of anticipating and deciding a tourist destination for a tourist can be defined by multiple factors like their environmental preferences (Rapoport, 1982), cognitive images of what a destination has in store for them (Downs & Stea, 1977), advertised view of the destination by the travel agencies (Fridgen, 1984), good previous self or borrowed experience of tourism to a particular destination (Yael et al., 2013) and finally the motivation to travel (Iso-Ahola, 1983; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Hussain & Kumar, 2015). Also, in developing society context, the expected expenditure or budget of tourism activities especially accommodation choices can be deciding factor in choosing a particular destination (Lockyer, 2005; Mafi et al., 2019). Thus, questions pertaining to aforementioned factors were asked in this sub-section.

#### *Travelling to/from destination phase*

The travelling phase comprising both travel to and from the destination are viewed as integral part of a holistic tourism experience and not as inescapable costs or marginal events (Yael et al, 2013). The questions were designed to get a quantitative data on the mode of transport used by the tourist in order to arrive to or leave from the tourist destination. The preferred mode of transport of tourist can often form an integral part of her journey and experience, a feature often neglected in the research on tourism (Page, 1999). In case of Mussoorie, road transportation is major mode of conveyance, thus it was highly implicit that tourist would arrive via her personal/rented car, motorbike, or public/private



Figure 1. Tourist Experience Model (Clawson and Knetsch, 1966)

bus; as the destination isn't directly connected to air and train route. The carbon emission of tourists travelling to/from the particular destination can be gauged by their choice of transport(s), distance and time taken to travel to and back from the destination (McKercher et al., 2010). The standard value of each transport mode is taken from DEFRA standard (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs [DEFRA] and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy [BEIS], 2020), as it gives a comprehensive scaling of the carbon emission by each type of transportation choice. The SI also asks participants to rate the travelling infrastructure like condition of road, status of bus station, frequency of relevant milestones, etc., as it gives an important focus on the infrastructure being quintessential to travelling experience of a tourist (Hobson & Uysal, 1993).

#### *On-Site Experience phase*

This phase allows the direct evaluation of the tourist experience associated to the destination. The duration of the stay is one of the most important determinants of the impact of tourism in both the economy and environment, providing a closer look at the travel pattern of the tourists (Molz, 2009; Peeters et al., 2009). Accommodation is the basic need of a tourist in a destination (Timothy & Teye, 2009; Aktaş et al., 2010), thus garnering satisfaction with various services and value-related factors that influence tourist' accommodation choices such as safety, room rates, staff attitudes, cleanliness and services like parking availability, are also crucial (Atkinson, 1988; Ananth et al., 1992; Chu & Choi, 2000; Kuo, 2009; Sohrabi et al., 2012; Hussain & Kumar, 2015; Shah & Trupp, 2020). Also, tourist' experiences of overall destination qualities like cleanliness of tourist' hotspots, pollution management, availability of hygienic food and ambience makes up for having 'authentic' tourist experience which was expected at the decision-making process of anticipation phase (Fridgen & Hinkleman 1977; Wicker, 1979). The quality of modern-day services like mobile networks, internet connectivity and ATM availability were also accounted.

#### *Recollection phase*

In this phase, the anticipated expectations that initiated the activity of tourism are merged with actual experiences of the activity (Fridgen, 1984). As recording the post-tourism experience of tourists after they are back to their origin was beyond the scope of the study and also post-tourism effects have been found to be present only for a minority of tourists and wear off quickly (Nawijn et al., 2010), thus the tourists were asked to rate their on-site experiences in real time in comparison with their anticipated expectations (Hussain & Kumar,

2015). The attributes specific to Mussoorie were distributed in between five destination specific values; Environmental values like climate and weather, Landscape values like greenery and scenic beautifulness (Kaplan, 1978; Fridgen, 1981; Deepanshu & Bhatnagar, 2014), Sight-Seeing & Cultural value especially in archaeological heritage sites (Ismagilova et al., 2015), Security Value related to accommodation (Cobanoglu et al., 2003, Shah and Trupp, 2020), and Recreation Value (Iso-Ahola, 1983). These attributes were comparatively rated on the aforementioned expectations and experiences. Finally, the participants were asked to reflect back on the whole experience of tourism and rate their satisfaction level with the destination which is a major determinant of revisiting value of the destination (Hussain & Kumar, 2015; Chaudhary & Islam, 2020).

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

As the study has been designed for qualitative inferences and theory testing thus descriptive statistics of the data collected was deemed to be sufficient in conveying the scope of the study. STATA 14.2 and Microsoft Excel were used to descriptively analyze the data.

### **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

#### *A short-trip and short stay destination for young Tourist*

Mussoorie majorly attracts young tourists majorly from the nearby regions, as the socio-demographic profile of the surveyed Mussoorie tourists (participants from now on) reflected (Table 1). Almost 58% participants were either from Uttarakhand (20.8%) or from nearby National Capital Territory (NCR) of Delhi (37.5%), which is approximately 250 km from Mussoorie. Out of the remaining participants, 37.5% belonged to other states and only 4.2% were international visitors (all French nationals). This result mirrors demographic profiling of other studies in similar landscapes, which heavily relies on local and regional tourism but fails to attract foreign visitors (Ministry of Tourism [MoT], 2006; Trivedi, 2016; Akihito, 2017; Shah & Trapp, 2020). About 54.2% of the participants were both aged less than 30 years and unmarried, thus making Mussoorie a destination for young tourist segment (UNWTO & World Youth, Student and Educational Travel Confederation [WYSE], 2016). The participants were from diverse occupational background like business (37.5%), student (30%) and services (25%).

Planning wise, over 95% participants prefer to organize their travel planning independently. The word-of-mouth was the main information source about the destination (50%), followed by the information gathered from social media and

internet (45.8%) and the consultation of tourist guides (4.2%). The self-planning and usage of social media and internet have been specific attributes of young tourist's behaviour (Buffa, 2015). Another factor for self-planning can be attributed to a smaller number of first-time tourists (30%) than the 50% tourists who were travelling to Mussoorie for 3rd or more time.

Duration of the stay has major impact on the economy and ecology of the destination (Molz, 2009; Peeters et al., 2009), as 50% participants planned to stay at Mussoorie for an average of 2 to 3 nights. Only 18% participants planned to stay more than a week with same percentage being of one day visitors. These results were consistent to studies done in other tourist destinations of Uttarakhand (MoT, 2006, Shah and Trapp, 2020). As Mussoorie is majorly visited by the tourists from same state or nearby states (Table 1) thus majority of them plan a short-haul stay in Mussoorie. Another reason for short stay in Mussoorie can be attributed to it being a busy town and having a quasi-full year inflow of tourists, thus it can't be held ideal for a long stay (MoT, 2006).

45.8% of the participants took 5 to 10 hours to complete their journey and 41.6% took less than 5 hours, thus indicating that majority of the tourists came from the shorter distances, which is in accordance with the average distance travelled by a tourist in order to reach Mussoorie from their origin, which was found to be between 250 to 500kms (46%) followed by tourists (29.7%) covering less than 100 kms. Thus, indicating

Mussoorie being a short trip destination for its majority of tourists.

On the context of main objective to visit the destination, majority (83%) acquiesced that 'rest/recreation' was the prime motive in choosing Mussoorie as the destination with the distant second objective being 'sport/adventure' (12.5%). These tourist objectives have been associated to other study on high mountain tourism destination (Schirpke et al., 2013).

#### **Travel infrastructure and transport choices**

Mussoorie is directly connected only via road transport, however nearest railway station and airport are only 34km and 58km respectively, in the nearby state capital of Dehradun, thus has been promoted as having a 'holistic travel infrastructure' destination by its destination managers (GoU, 2018). As the road is the dominant transport medium to Mussoorie, thus the participants rating of the road infrastructure attributes like road condition, relevant milestones, availability of fuel pumps and mid-way points were accounted. The rating of all these attributes were majorly between good (30.4%) and very good (23.8%), which reflected in bettering of overall 'travelling experience' to/from Mussoorie between good (41.6%) and very good (45.8%). It has been found in previous studies that better travelling infrastructure and better satisfaction level with overall 'travelling experience' means increase in travel demand but also precarious increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emission leading to Climate Change effects (Metz, 2008; Yael et al., 2013) and the CO<sub>2</sub> emission of a

**Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of surveyed tourists from Mussoorie (n=72)**

Socio-demographic profile of surveyed tourists (n = 72)		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	57	79.2
	Female	15	20.8
<b>Age</b>	<30	39	54.2
	30-40	18	25
	40-50	12	16.6
	>50	3	4.2
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	33	45.8
	Unmarried	39	54.2
<b>Place of Origin</b>	Locals (From Uttarakhand)	15	20.8
	Delhi NCR	27	37.5
	Other Indian States	27	37.5
	International	3	4.2
<b>Occupation</b>	Service	18	25
	Business	27	37.5
	Student	21	29.2
	Others	6	8.3

tourist has been related to their transportation choices (UNWTO et al., 2008; Dubois et al., 2011). 55.5% of the participants stated using cars (owned/rented) as the primary mode of transport to Mussoorie, followed by train (20.8%) and bus (16.6%). Only 4.2% participants who were foreigners used air travel and 2.7% used motorbikes to reach Mussoorie. The tourist's choice on type of car were also accounted as 80% of the cars were normal 5-seater (small) cars with petrol (40%) and diesel (40%) variants and 20% were the 8-seater (large) diesel SUV cars. The standard per person CO<sub>2</sub> emission according to multiple transport mode used by tourists to Mussoorie was taken from the UK Government Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2020 (DEFRA and BEIS 2020), which have been previously applied in same natured studies however in developed economy context (Filimonau et al., 2014) (Table 2).

The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by short-haul airways (at 100% passenger occupancy), trains (at 100% passenger occupancy) and buses (average 20.02 passenger per vehicle occupancy) was computed in kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per passenger km unit, however, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by cars and bikes were calculated as per vehicle per kilometre basis, since they have varied occupancy rate (DEFRA and BEIS, 2020) (Table 2). Thus, to standardize all the mode of transport carbon emission in the same unit of kg per tourist, the tourist group size in case of cars and motorbikes was normalized on the basis of the recurring selection patterns in the participant's responses. A tourist group size in case of large cars was an average of 5.5 tourist group size per vehicle and an average of 3 tourist group size in small cars. In motorbikes the average tourist group size was 2 per vehicle. Also, since tourist origin differed, it became essential to average out the gross total distance travelled by a tourist to visit Mussoorie

and back to their origin. The average distance travelled by all the participants to reach Mussoorie and back to their origin came to be around 600 km to-and-fro which corresponds to the distance majority of the tourists arriving from Delhi NCR and nearby regions (Table 1). Then the carbon emission per tourist was calculated according to the different modes of transportations used to travel Mussoorie by using the formula mentioned below:

CO<sub>2</sub> emission kg per tourist =

$$= \frac{\text{CO}_2 \text{ emission kg per km of a vehicle} \times \text{average distance travelled by vehicle}}{\text{Tourist group size}}$$

The results (Figure 2) yielded the most sustainable mode of tourism transport to/from Mussoorie to be train travel with the lowest emission rate, which corresponds to the idea that train travel produces about one-quarter the carbon emissions per passenger kilometre than flying to short-haul destinations (Becken, 2002; McKercher et al., 2010; Filimonau et al., 2013). The cars especially the large diesel car have the second lowest carbon emission, followed by small diesel cars and small petrol cars (Figure 2). The reason behind lesser carbon emission per tourist due to cars in Mussoorie is due to the short-distance to the destination and a greater number of tourist group size travelling. Motorbikes sit next in the carbon emission list followed by bus travel.

Thus, a policy making impetus on not just creating road infrastructure but also public transport infrastructure and behavioural change among the tourist in their choice of transportation would be highly critical as it has been found highly inductive to growth in carbon emission, thus factoring in the already increasing climate change and unsustainability (Simpson et al., 2008; Dickinson et al., 2010).

*Table 2: Standard CO<sub>2</sub> emission per kilometre by different vehicles (DEFRA and BEIS, 2020)*

Vehicle Type	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission per km
<b>Diesel Car (Large)</b>	0.20419 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Diesel Car (Small)</b>	0.13721 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Petrol Car (Small)</b>	0.14836 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Motorbike</b>	0.11337 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Train</b>	0.03694 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission passenger <sup>-1</sup> km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Bus</b>	0.10312 kg CO <sub>2</sub> emission passenger <sup>-1</sup> km <sup>-1</sup>
<b>Short Haul Airway</b>	0.15298 kgCO <sub>2</sub> emission passenger <sup>-1</sup> km <sup>-1</sup>

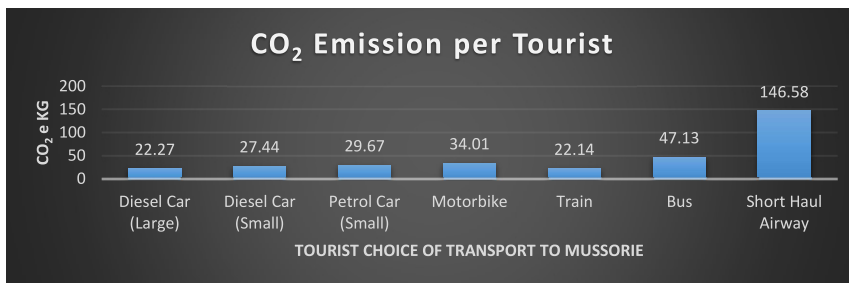


Figure 2. Co<sub>2</sub> Emission per Tourist via different Modes of Transport



Figure 3. Quality of Destination on different ratings

### Accommodation choices and quality of destination

Majority of the participants staying in Mussoorie for a night or more chose hotels (66%) as their accommodation partner followed by homestays (24%). The hotels were preferred as they provide different economical ranges catering to the diverse financial and comfort choices of participants as in anticipation phase it was found majority of participants stated accommodation (30.8%) as a major budgetary expenditure in their planned expenditure, followed by food (29.16%) and travelling (22.7%) expenditures. Participants highly rated the hotel facilities, as the service and price related attributes like cleanliness, behaviour of the staff and the value for the money had very good (27.94%) or excellent (27%) rating respectively. 90% participants stated that their accommodation facilities provided the facilities like AC/heater, generator, parking and water heater, which have been found to be detrimental for a better accommodation experience of the tourist in other tourist accommodation choice studies (Atkinson, 1988; Ananth et al., 1992; Chu and Choi, 2000; Kuo, 2009; Sohrabi et al., 2012; Shah and Trupp, 2020). These facilities were termed to be quintessential in any accommodation by majority of participants. However, the energy intensiveness of these facilities does mark a substantial carbon emission which can make the accommodation as a major player contributing to the climate change apart from the transportation. In terms of quality of destination, 40% of

participants found the destination to be fairly clean but a significant amount (23%) indicated that it can be managed better and wasn't satisfied with the status quo (Figure 3). The management of pollution was on the similar lines as 35% participants indicated a satisfactory level of management. However, the basic modern facility like internet coverage was rated sorely bad as 40% tourists didn't find it to be satisfactory.

Thus, majority of participants' on-site experience reflected hotels being the preferred choice of accommodation as they provided correct information and flexible price ranges. However, it has been found in other studies that this choice can be environmentally unsustainable as the choice of serviced apartments or homestays as opposed to full-service resorts and hotels can reduce emissions by two-thirds (CRC, 2016).

### High revisiting value

Mussoorie as a tourist destination was found to have a good to very good ratings for its different destination values, however all these values decline in its experienced rating in comparison to its expected rating (Figure 4). Environmental value like climate and weather aspects of the destination acquired highest ratings with the mean expected rating of 4.29 against the experienced rating of 4.12, signifying the crucial importance of this asset for tourism in Mussoorie (Figure 4).

91% participants were 'pleased to visit the destination', which was followed by recommending the destination to others (86%), and to speaking highly of the destination (86%). In the

same vein, on whether the visit was 'worthwhile and economical' people largely acceded (80%). Thus, 82% participants agreed on revisiting the destination, making Mussoorie a destination with high revisiting value.

## CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the major stakeholder in tourism, *i.e.*, a tourist and her behaviors and experiences in the five phases of tourism. The role of tourist becomes extra involute when being environmentally sensitive isn't the majorly perceived idea especially in a developing economy like India. In developing economies, tourism is seen as a means to an economic development. Growth in economy tends to encourage more consumption thus it becomes more immediate to gauge what environmentally sustainable or unsustainable behavior is.

This research case study highlights that tourists in Mussoorie, a high mountain tourist destination, tends to be more environmentally sustainable in

terms of their transportation choices as they use more public transport (railways) not because of environmental sensibilities but economical constraints (Table 3). The majority of tourists use cars as the mode of transportation as it is a short distance destination with less net carbon emission per tourist due to large tourist group travelling together. The existing transport infrastructure is fairly conducive to the above-mentioned transport choices (both public and private) and only tourists travelling to Mussoorie via airways are foreign nationals who aren't just exclusively travelling to Mussoorie but India in general. However, the accommodation choices though again restrained by budgetary considerations doesn't lead to environmentally sustainable choices as tourists prefer to have all the modern amenities and energy intensive facilities which leads to proliferation of budget hotels instead of homestays in the destination. The choice of short stay in destination by a majority of tourists makes it a highly

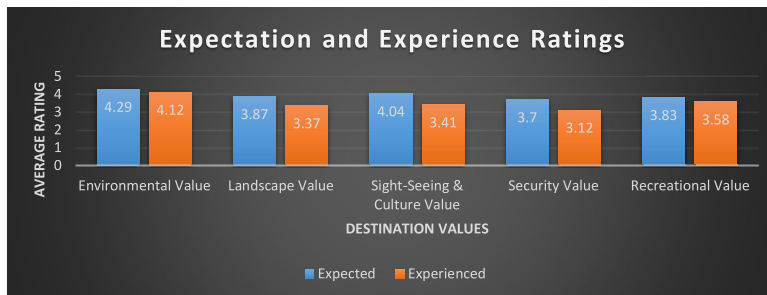


Figure 4. Expectation and Experience Ratings of Different Destination Values Influencing Tourism in Mussoorie

Table 3: Mussoorie Tourist Behaviors in different phases of tourism with respect to existing literature

Tourism Phases	Tourist Behaviours	In Developed Economies (Literature)	In Developing Economies (Current Study)
Anticipation	Short-distance destination	✓	✓
Travelling to/from			
Transportation Choices	Short-haul journey via public transport, <i>i.e.</i> , Railways	✓	✓
	Use of cars (personal/rental)	✗	✓ <sup>1</sup>
Transportation Infrastructure	Public transport infrastructure (Railways and Buses)	✓	✓ <sup>2</sup>
On Site Experience			
Accommodation Choices	Homestays over hotels and resorts	✓	✗
Impression of Destination quality	Long-stay Destination	✓	✗

<sup>1</sup> Tourists were found to be more sustainable in developing society as tourists travel in larger groups, thus bringing down the net carbon emission per tourist

<sup>2</sup> Railway infrastructure not directly connected to the destination

unsustainable behavior, both environmentally and economically. Thus, the tourist behaviors which have been termed to be environmentally sustainable in developed economy context like short distance destination, use of public transportation can easily transform in grossly unsustainable choices if the restraint of budgetary economics are lifted in developing economy.

The developed economies try the carbon offset programmes or do social engineering of average consumer behavior but for a developing economy binding the average consumer in such programmes would be difficult due to low awareness, and low take-up rates (Ellison, 2008). Some high-end tourists may take up these as it can assuage their guilt feelings, but it doesn't cater the major problem of over-consumption (McKercher et al., 2010). It can be argued that the behavior or attitude of an average tourist towards issue of environmentally sustainability of their tourism activity is same as the attitude of inaction about a whole set of environmental concerns by general public (Becken, 2004; Ester et al., 2004).

The present study is a small step to categorize the tourist behaviors impacting the environmental sustainability of tourism in the context of a developing economy. In addition, the tourist experience foretells the destination managers a need to integrate more environmentally sustainable accommodation options, changing the image of short-stay destination and limiting the number of cars coming inside Mussoorie by strengthening bus travel infrastructure for long term sustainability. Potential limitations of the study include a rather small sample size in relation to the annual visitor numbers to Mussoorie. An inclusion of additional destinations at other hill stations could provide a more conclusive generalization about tourist choice in India's high mountain areas.

It must be seen as the very small step towards highlighting the importance of tourist behavior during tourism and its consequence on sustainability of tourism as both the economically rewarding industry and less environmentally damaging process.

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#### DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors would like to confirm that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research study sent for publication.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mohit Payal** is Master in Development from Azim Premji University, Bengaluru and is currently working in the capacity of sociology fellow with Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. His interest lies in socio-economic research in the field of environmental sustainability, ecosystem services and tourism sustainability. [mohit.payal14@edu.in](mailto:mohit.payal14@edu.in); [mohitpayal66@gmail.com](mailto:mohitpayal66@gmail.com)

**Ashish Kumar Jangid** is a wildlife researcher associated with Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. His interest lies in biodiversity conservation using advanced tools and techniques and is an active member of IUCN Butterfly and Bear Specialist Groups and IUCN Species Survival Commission. [ashishjangid22@gmail.com](mailto:ashishjangid22@gmail.com)

## Key Words

**Sustainable,  
Smart City,  
Tourism,  
Smart Tourism Destination.**

# *Smart City To Smart Urban Tourism Destination: A Case Study Approach*

**Pooja Chaudhary**

School of Hospitality and Tourism,  
Lovely Professional University  
Jalandhar, Punjab

**Sandeep Walia**

School of Hospitality and Tourism,  
Lovely Professional University  
Jalandhar, Punjab

## Abstract

The concept of smart city aims to introduce smart policies, smart development and smart governance for sustainable development of the urban area. The present study aims to explore the core components of 'smartness' to contextualize smart tourism destinations development in the backdrop of smart cities plan of India. The study uses a case study approach to determine the components of smart cities and smart tourism destinations. The data on the selected case studies have been collected using the principles of systematic literature review and analyzed using a thematic content analysis in order to explore the components of smart cities and smart solutions for sustainable tourism development in India. The study identifies smart technology, smart governance, innovation, smart economy, and human capital as core components of 'smartness' in the context of smart cities and smart tourism development. Understanding 'what constitutes a smart and sustainable tourism destination' holds value for the policymakers and destination management organizations in developing country like India for develop sustainable and smart tourism destinations. The study also contributes to the existing literature on smart tourism development. The study is one of the first to lay the groundwork for understanding the components for the framework of smart, sustainable tourism destination in the smart cities of India.

## INTRODUCTION

Inventions and innovations are the pillars of economic development of a society (Auvinet and Lloret, 2015). North (1981) economic development of a society is based on the interconnection of technology, ideology, institution and population, and inventors. Urban growth is associated with the development of a society and it is a measure of growth of a country (Alonso-Gonzalez, 2018). Urbanization has become a critical factor for most of the developing countries and while large number of population is shifting towards the cities outstripping the capacity of cities to provide sufficient resources and adequate services for the residents has become challenge (Cohen, 2006). Balancing the relationship between development and urbanization has become a vital concern of policy makers (Turok & McGranahan, 2013). Buhalis (2000) has mentioned that unplanned urbanization leads to unsustainable outcomes and increases the complexity of the ecosystem of the places. It is for this reason that most of the nations across the Asian continent are motivated towards the smart solution for the cities. India is rapidly moving towards urbanization with 40% of the population expected to be urban residents by year 2030 (india.gov.in). Indian cities as a result are actively working to achieve the goal of becoming a smart city. In 2015 the Indian government proposed the development of 100 smart cities in three phases with a total estimated cost of 205018 Cr. (MoUD 2015). The cities were selected on the basis of an evaluation criterion set by the Ministry of urban development in consultation with Indian and foreign experts and the apex committees. In the first phase 20 cities were selected under smart city scheme. In 2015, 100 cities have been enlisted in the smart city project list. The objective of smart city development in India is to formulate and provide solution to overcome the challenges of urban areas such as sanitation, energy, water crises, housing, electricity and environment (MoUD 2015). Apart from infrastructure the smart city project also has an objective to enhance well-being of its citizens. Developing smart cities has paved way for smart tourism development in India.

## SMART CITY

The term smart city was first introduced in the 1990's (Albino et al. 2015) and till yet there is no universally accepted definition of smart city (Grady and Hare, 2012). Initially, the focus was on information and communication technology (ICT) and technology (Albino et al. 2015). California Institute for Smart Communities was the first which emphasized making the community smarter and designed a city with smart information technology (Alawadhi et al., 2012). Critiqued as an urban labeling phenomenon, the label of smart city was diffused in its early stage (Hollands 2008; Albino et al 2015). In marketing Klein &

Kaefer (2008) have explained the meaning of smartness as a concept centered on perception of users. A city in this sense should be more user friendly than intelligent (Nam and Pardo, 2011). It should also have strong governance emphasizing the role of social capital and development (Albino et al 2015). Because a city is inhabited by its people, the indicators of smart people comprises of factors such as social and ethnic plurality, creativity, flexibility lifelong learning, open-mindedness, participation in public life and cosmopolitanism (Nam and Pardo, 2011). A smart city is not an obvious outcome as a result of information and communication technology but also requires human intervention. The whole purpose of smart city is to provide the customized interface and enhance the quality of life (Mitchell,

2006; Taaffe, 2014). A city becomes smart by smart human capital, rather than assuming that technology alone can make smart cities. Table 1 depicts some of the prominent definitions if the smart city articulated and proposed by various scholars and researchers Smart city is measured on the six axes namely: smart economy, smart mobility, smart people, smart environment, smart governance, and smart living. These axes are based on the competitiveness of the region, information and communication technology, social capital, human capital, governance, public participation in governance and the quality of life of residents. These axes are closely connected to the urban development and growth.

**Table 1: Definition of Smart city**

Source	Definition of Smart city
Piro et al. (2014,	“smart city is an urban environment which, supported by pervasive ICT systems, is able to offer advanced and innovative services to citizens in order to improve the overall quality of their life”
Cohen & Obediente (2014)	“cities that through the application of technology in different areas become more efficient in the use of resources, energy saving, services provided and sustainable development, solving major problems that citizens have”.
Montiel-Casas (2015)	“Smart Cities as a concept that integrates the use of new ICT, energy efficiency, e-government (local participatory democracy), transparency in management (open data), effective recycling and urban waste management, forming a technologically advanced structure that should benefit all populations.”
Boob (2015)	as “a transformation of the existing urban development and its infrastructure by using and harnessing ICT to improve economic and political efficiency and enable social, cultural and sustainable urban development to reach a high quality of life, with a sustainable management of natural resources, through people, public and participatory governance”.
Hernandez-Escobar and Perez-Hernandez (2015)	“City with “multilevel systems of innovation where technological mechanisms are deployed in physical, institutional and digital spaces. The mainstays of these Smart Cities are innovation systems complemented by digital spaces providing strategic intelligence, digital media, networking, and collaboration”.
Dameri (2013)	“a well-defined geographical area in which the technology like ICT, energy, logistic, production are available and there is also cooperation to generate benefits for citizens of the place in terms of quality of life and well-being, it is well governed with well-defined pool of subject, policies, and rules for the government and development of the city”
Kourtit and Nijkamp (2012)	Smart cities are the “result of knowledge-intensive and creative strategies aiming at enhancing the socio-economic, ecological, logistic and competitive performance of cities. Such smart cities are based on a promising mix of human capital (e.g. skilled labor force), infrastructural capital (e.g. high-tech communication facilities), social capital (e.g. intense and open network linkages) and entrepreneurial capital (e.g. creative and risk-taking business activities)”.
Lombardi et al. (2012)	“The application of information and communications technology (ICT) with their effects on human capital/education, social and relational capital, and environmental issues is often indicated by the notion of smart city”.

## SMART TOURISM DESTINATION

The smart city concept has initiated the notion of the smart tourism destination (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2014). This concept was strongly brought forward by Buhalis and Amaranggana (2013). The smart tourism destination takes the advantage of technology such as the internet of thing, intelligent service, smart phone and active use of information technology by all the stakeholders (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2013). Smart tourism destination is a combination of different components of smart tourism and smart city. Smart tourism destination is an innovative destination designed on the modern and high tech technology, infrastructure and people that support the accessible and sustainable development of the area, quality of life of people and enhance tourist experience (Gretzel, et.al 2015). Buhalis (2002) has defined smart tourism destination as a "combination of tourism product integrated out of smart city". Wang (2013) defined smart tourism destination as a place utilizing technology to increase the tourist experience and co-creating values. Huang (2012) explained the smart tourism destination focuses on fulfilling tourist needs by combining the casual culture of destination and information and communication technology. Cohen (2012) identified the dimension of smart tourism destination namely: smart people, smart governance, smart mobility, smart environment, and smart living, making place user-friendly.

A common link among smart city, smart tourism destination and green city is the use of technology, innovation, and people working for sustainable future (Zygiaris, 2013). The smartness model of Jucevicius et al (2013) indicates that sustainability is a major component of the smartness of a city. The ultimate goal of smart tourism destinations is to increase the competitiveness of destinations (Gretzel et al, 2016) and its aim to integrate the tourism stakeholders at micro and macro levels for the effective utilization of resources through sustainable development (Lamsfus et al, 2015). Through integrating information technology with principles of sustainability, smart tourism destination ensures effective management of tourism industry by implementing smart, competitive and sustainable approach (Gretzel, 2015). It paves the way towards sustainable social, cultural, environmental and economic development of a destination.

As tourism in urban area is growing rapidly, as indicated by (Vats, 2019) 'a combination of macroeconomic factors and changing business trends have led to tourists crowding popular destinations'. As a result, this has led to environmental degradation, economic impoverishment and a reported rise in crime rates

at tourism destinations and negative impact on the well-being of locals. This makes a need to address smart cities in India which aim to enhance wellbeing of residents and also smart tourism destinations which aims at sustainable tourism at those destinations or cities. The existing literature indicates that, the smart city functions as a foundation for the smart tourism destination. Based on the principles of smart city concept, tourism stakeholders can develop a smart tourism destination. This will not only increase tourism activates but will also help in having the smart solution for the tourism-related issues. It also provides supporting mechanism for sustainable tourism development and improves the quality of life of the residents. From this standpoint, the present study aims to identify the core components of selected smart cities which supported in their conversion into popular tourist destination

## RESEARCH METHOD

The present research paper is exploratory in nature and adopted the case study approach. The case study method enables holistic insights into the concept of smart city, smart tourism destination and sustainable development through analysis of the reports, documents and the different research articles of a similar field (Kim et.al 2016). Benbasat et al (1987) have suggested that when research was at the formative stage, case study was the best method. The most critical part of this study was the selection of smart cities which are also managing tourism effectively. The selection of cases was done according to Cohen's (2014) list of smartest city of Asia pacific and IESE Cities in Motion Index by (Berrone & Ricart, 2019). Cohen (2014) has listed ten smart cities around the world, based on sustainability and innovation. The listed cities were Vienna (Austria), Paris (France), Toronto (Canada), New York (USA), Tokyo (Japan), London (UK), Denmark (Copenhagen), Berlin (Germany), Hong Kong (China), Barcelona (Spain) (Cohen, 2014). The report of IESE cities in motion by (Berrone & Ricart, 2019) as listed London (UK), New York (USA), Amsterdam, France, Reykjavik, Tokyo, Singapore, Copenhagen, Berlin, Vienna and Hong Kong as top 11 cities in the list of smart cities. In order to contextualize the concept of smart cities in South Asia, three smart cities of Asia Pacific have been selected as a case for the present study naming Singapore, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

## DATA COLLECTION

To fulfill the objectives of the present study, three case studies have been selected to be examined. To find information about selected cases, a systematic five-step method proposed by Denyer and Neely (2004) has been used. The database used to get the information regarding the smart city was google

scholar, google, and official websites and reports of selected smart cities

In the first stage, key phrases were identified. The key phrases found suitable for the present study were “smart cities of Asia”, “smart sustainable cities of Asia”, cases of Asian smart city” and “smart tourism destination of Asia”. After determining the key phrases, the next step was to search sources and relevant documents related to the key phrases derived in the first step. Apart from research paper and reports, the study has also evaluated news articles and project reports of smart cities for a better understanding of the smart cities and sustainable practices adopted by them. This is followed by the assessment of the identified documents, which is the third stage of the study (Denyer and Neely, 2004). In fourth step, data was subjected to thematic content analysis, a method given by (Braun & Clarke's, 2006). This technique is used to make meaningful interpretation of the qualitative data. This is done by following systematic steps of coding the data and generating meaningful themes from it (Boes and Buhalis, 2016; Braun & Clarke's, 2006). The thematic content analysis technique involves six steps: familiarizing with data, assigning primary code to mass content, identifying the theme which describes the content, reviewing them, defining the name themes and finally reporting.

The cases selected for analysis have been assigned as C1 for Singapore, C2 for Tokyo and C3 for Hong

Kong. Coding is done at three different levels as proposed by Bryman and Bell, (2011). In the first stage an in-depth study of the entire documents was done. After analyzing the documents, primary codes were assigned to the paragraph. These primary codes were not the interpretation of the selected paragraph but these were the descriptions. After the first level of content analysis 148 primary codes for C1, 123 primary codes for C2 and 100 primary codes for C3 were derived. After identifying the primary codes, the second level involves deeper understanding of the data. This was done by identifying the secondary codes from the group of codes found in the first stage based on their conceptual similarity. At second level 180 secondary codes were derived from the total of 371 primary codes (C1=76, C2=64 C3= 40). At the third level, more analytical approach has been adopted. The secondary codes identified were cross-examined in order to find out the relationships, interdependencies and the difference among codes (Yin, 2009; Boes and Buhalis, 2016). A total of 32 codes were obtained from analysis at the third level, identified codes are presented in table 2. In the final stage the 32 codes are regrouped under five themes, keeping the objective of the present study in the mind and after analyzing the codes again and again the present study identifies the five themes naming smart technology, smarty economy, innovation, smart governance and human capital which represent 32 codes identified in the third stage of analysis.

**Table 2: Codes generated from analysis**

Smart City	Source	Major Codes
C1: Singapore	MPUIIP (n.d); Berrone&Ricart, 2019	intelligent transport system, building the capacity at system level, Innovative Economy, living laboratory, parking guidance system, web based electronic police center investment in education, resources and recreation of residents, entrepreneurial initiatives, e-governance, mobile application, physical system integration, open data management system, smart nation platform and Geospatial Collaborative Environment (SG-SPACE).
C2: Tokyo, Japan	Fietkiewicz& Stock (2015), Kono& Ahmad (2016), Yamamura & Suzuki (2017); MPUIIP (n.d); Berrone&Ricart, 2019	Sustainable transportation, low carbon activity, energy conservation, Information infrastructure (Ubiquitous city, Knowledge city, creative infrastructure, Smart economy, intelligent mobility, smart living, intelligent people, intelligent planning and gove rnance, smart energy city, knowledge worker, total early -stage entrepreneurial activity, urban planning and governance, innovative waste management and Information technology
C3: Hong-Kong	Becky (2019), Global Innovators: International Case Studies on Smart Cities (2013)	Common Spatial Data Infrastructure, Data sharing, Information and communication technology, digital economy, knowledge based society, e -government, multiple use of space, Segregation of pedestrians and vehicles, quality of life, total early-stage entrepreneurial activity and Smart tourism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic content analysis the present study has determined five themes namely smart technology, smart economy, innovation, smart governance and human capital which explain the core components of smartness and sustainable development of smart cities.

### **Smart Technology: using technology to enhance community well-being**

After analyzing the case study of the smart cities of Asia, it is evident that smart technology is the most important element of smart cities. In most of the studies, the whole system of information and communication systems in particular boundaries have been considered as a part of smart technology. Technology is not only considered as a pillar of the smart city, it is also a societal aspect that can improve the quality of life of the people living there (Berrone & Ricart, 2019). The previous studies point out that smartness is developed on the revolution of technology and innovation (Boes and Buhalis, 2016). The results from case studies analysis also reported that the notion of smart tourism in a particular city is highly influenced by the technology and lack of technology has become the issues of cities (Fernandez-Güell 2015)

In the case study of Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo, the smart and latest technology was found to be a core component of city development. One of the major technological developments identified in the selected cases is the intelligent transport system focused on urban transportation and mobility by one motoring portal, speed signing through the real-time speed of vehicle limit, expressing monitoring and advising the system for the systematic transport in the city smart transport is critical for the smart technology and it also raises the quality of life of the residents (Papa et al. 2013) Singapore and Tokyo are using remote patient monitoring and telemedicine to provide help to the senior citizens. Studies have reported that linking information and communication technology with the transport system will provide the safe and multifaceted environment for the people (Vijayakumar & Mehendiratta, 2011). Cohen and Obediente (2014) have argued combining technology with different components will lead to efficient use of energy, resource and human. The selected case study reveals that the technology and specifically smart technology is the requirement of the sustainable smart city (Cosgrave and Arbutnot, 2013; Casas-Perez, 2014; North, 2005).

### **Smart Economy: Empowering local businesses**

The economy of a place is always considered as the indicator of the development of that place (Giffinger et al, 2007). It is also a key driver of smart city initiatives (Chourabi et al, 2012). Smart economy is one of the important domains of the

smart city (Giffinger et al 2008). In fact, the success factor of smart cities is dependent on the sustainable economic development of the city. After analyzing the selected case studies of smart cities, it is evident that the sustainable and smart development is economic base of the smart cities. The particular finding of the present study signifies that the economic development of selected smart cities is not limited to the financial development of the city but it is a continuous and upward economic development with the improvement in the resident's quality of life.

Smart economy stimulates innovation, interconnection with the local and global economy, entrepreneurship and productivity (Giffinger et al (2008). Smart economic development can be achieved by smartly mapping the local business and providing them opportunity through technology, innovation and governance. Apart of mapping and developing local business, factors like innovation, trademarks, entrepreneurship, flexibility, productivity, labor market and integration of global and local market need to be well-coordinated (Chourabi et al, 2012)

One way of encouraging smart economy in the cities, is through establishing smart nation platform, which was initiated in Singapore to establish connectivity, efficient sharing of data and information and better situation awareness (Lee et. al, 2016). Smart cities should have an economy which can be innovative, flexible for labor market, able to transform it for development, and can promote entrepreneurship (Vanolo, 2014). With respect to smart economy, Hong Kong has established itself as a high-end manufacturing nation and it has sharing economy, support startups, focused on local small and medium enterprises and infrastructural and also provides financial support to the business (Towards Smarter Hong Kong, 2020).

### **Innovation: Democratizing innovation**

After analyzing the selected case studies, it is evident that any city without innovation cannot become smart city. It has remained prominent in all most all the cases selected for the present study. Innovation has always been competitive. In most of the smart cities innovation is the outcome of all the practices undertaken by all the stakeholders (European Union, 2014) and it is also empowered by the information and communication technology (Boes and Buhalis, 2016; Brinkman, 2011). It has been suggested that cities need to put more emphasis on innovation and should turn to innovation frequently to increase the sustainability and efficiency of the services they are providing (Berrone & Ricart, 2019).

Fietkiewicz (2015) has mentioned that a smart city is also called the sustainable city, intelligent city,

innovative city and green city. Innovation complemented by technology, strategic intelligence and collaboration is the mainstay of smart cities (Alonso-Gonzalez, 2018). Rochet and Pinot de Villechenon (2015) discuss that the smart government is possible through economic growth, vibrant policies and availability of support for the innovation. In a smart city, it is very crucial to develop a suitable condition for innovation (Alonso-Gonzalez, 2018).

Boes and Buhalis, (2016) have suggested that innovation in the city can be encouraged through establishing “Living Lab”. It is a “user-centric innovation milieu” which aims towards sustainable value creation through equal participation of the parties and regular research and practices (Boes and Buhalis, 2016). Cities like Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo are characterized by an open innovation system. Singapore has successfully developed an innovative climate. Singapore is ranked high in the Innovation Cities Index (Berrone & Ricart, 2019). The city has used technology and digital innovation to drive livability and sustainability in the nation (Smart Nation Singapore, 2020). The city has adopted different strategies to increase the innovation with the local boundaries such as open data, Living lab, Computational Capabilities and Digital Inclusion (Smart Nation Singapore, 2020). Hong Kong Development Bureau has set up Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI), this allows departments of government, private organization and public units to exchange data: this platform not only beneficial to the government department and private companies but it also enhances the ability of the citizens to create innovative apps based on the available spatial data (Becky, 2019). Tokyo has been ranked well in the list of innovative cities (Berrone & Ricart, 2019). Japanese policy and strategy influencing the innovation with the boundaries of the country involves economic and system support to creative ideas, technological initiatives for renewable energy, liberal energy market and economic initiatives (JICA).

#### **Smart Governance: Participative city planning**

While analyzing the selected cases of smart city, it was clear that without proper governance a city cannot become smarter. A detailed report of R. Giffinger's, describes Smart Governance as an important component of smart city (Giffinger, 2007). Cohen (2013) and Giffinger's (2007) have discussed in detail the elements which combines together and forms smart governance. Participation in making decisions, transparency in governance, social and public services, political strategies and perspectives, (Giffinger's, 2007) open data and transparency, digital and

government, and Information & communication technology (Cohen, 2013) are the factors required for smart governance.

In the last few years, Singapore has outtrived itself in the governance in the city and now the city has developed a strong e-governance system (Lee et.al, 2016). In the year 2000, the Singapore E-government action plan was initiated to provide maximum public services online to the residents. In the year 2003, the second e-government plan emphasized on improvement of in-service experience of consumers (Singapore eGov official website, 2016). In 2006, under iGov master plan government has developed a collaborative government that promotes and facilitates co-creation among government, private parties and citizens and this plan was to shift from “government-to-you to government-with-you” (Lee et.al, 2016). In Hong Kong, government has established common spatial data infrastructure, which allows different government agencies and private agencies to share data (Loo and Tang, 2019). Hong Kong planning department has also established a statutory planning portal for the citizens where they can find out information for planning and zoning (Loo and Tang, 2019). Tokyo has an open data system to facilitate the citizens for information and participation in planning and development.

#### **Smart Human Capital: Invest in Knowledge economy**

Human capital is closely related to the well-being of people (Keeley, 2007). Skill, attributes, competencies and knowledge form human capital (Keeley, 2007). To form smart economy, city need to have smart government, smart people, consequently for a smart system the city needs to have human capital, suitable infrastructure and information (Jucevičius, 2014). Caragliu et al. (2009) have explained the smart city as a place where investment in human capital is high. The human capital theory explains that economic development and prosperity depends on the human capital stock of the nation (Olaniyan, 2008). A progressive smart city always starts from human capital rather than technology (Holland, 2008). While analyzing the smart city, human capital was found core component of the city smartness in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Tokyo. Glaseser and Berry (2006) point out that the rapid growth of a nation is possible only if it has a high share of educated labor. The term “Knowledge city” has been emerged out of the discussion of smart city and it has also become the pillar of the smart development of the city (Edvinsson, 2006). A strong articulation was observed among human capital, smart technology and e-governance while analyzing the cases of the smart cities. Partridge

(2004) has mentioned that a smart city enjoys the numerous chances to exploit and promote the human potential for the creative living of the people.

Even with the scarcity of natural resources and hinterland, Singapore has emerged as one of the strongest economies of Asia because of its highly skilled and creative pool of human resources (Lee et.al, 2016). In the Asia Pacific region, Tokyo is leading in the human capital dimension (Berrone & Ricart, 2019). Japan as a most populous urban agglomeration and Tokyo is the city with the highest labor productivity. This city is considered as the most innovative city and it had invested huge capital in education and skill development of residents (Berrone & Ricart, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

India is a developing country and the country has listed 100 cities for the smart cities project. The organizations are still working on the development of concept and the model of Indian smart city. The present study is a first attempt to understand the antecedents of successful smart cities in the Asian context. It has been evident in the literature that a Smart city has initiated the notion of the smart tourism destination (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2014). Existing literature suggests that a smart tourism destination can be built on the features of smart city. The present study selected three smart cities and also a smart tourism destination to identify the component of smartness required to build a smart city as well as a smart tourism destination.

The findings of the present study infer that smart technology is one of the core elements of smartness in all the selected smart cities. All three smart cities are utilizing technology to the fullest. Smart cities use technology to provide solutions for urban issues and improve the services and quality of life of people. The study also finds the innovation is also an important element of smartness. It has been observed in the selected cases of smart cities that cities are emphasizing innovation by strategically linking technology with resources. Mostly, innovation was observed in the field of transportation, human capital, technology, sustainable practices and interconnection. Further, in addition to smart technology and innovation, a city also needs smart governance to become a smart city and to enhance the quality of life. Governance is comparatively more complicated than any other element of smart city. The selected smart cities provide evidence of successful smart city development based on smart governance and public management. Result also shows that smart economy is also a core element of smartness. The smart economy is sustainable and regular development of the economy of a place. All the

selected smart cities score high on the gross domestic product (GDP), productivity, purchasing power and financial investment. Apart from that cities were also shown to have an easy and systematic system for the starting and developing a business. Smart economy provides a conducive ecosystem for local businesses to grow by enhancing ease of doing business. The fifth theme found in the present study is human capital. High investment in human capital has been observed in the smart cities, and findings support that high expenditure on education, training, research and skill development of the people are helping cities in becoming of a more innovative, sustainable and smart city. Apart from five themes, the selected cities rank high on the environment and urban planning.

From the case study of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, it is evident that for the smart and sustainable development, a need to have the core smart components naming smart technology, smart economy, human capital, innovation and governance. While this research sheds light on the core smartness components in smart cities, these components will function as a pillar for the smart tourism destination and will help in the sustainable development of the place and people. The smartness of a smart city is fostered by sustainable and participative governance, openness for innovation, investment in human capital and contribution in social capital (Boes and Buhalis, 2016). These factors of a city can make a city a smart tourism destination (Boes and Buhalis, 2016).

## FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The study has undertaken only three case studies, so it has certain limitations regarding generalization. More studies can be undertaken for the validation of these results. As the present study summarized the core components of smart tourism destination, further studies can be conducted to find out how these components can be used to develop smart tourism destinations.

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- Pooja Choudhary is presently working as Assistant Professor in School of Hotel Management & Tourism at Lovely Professional
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Pooja Choudhary** is presently working as Assistant Professor in School of Hotel Management & Tourism at Lovely Professional University, India. Her research areas are tourism marketing and tourism education. She has obtained her PhD from Central university of Jammu.  
[poojajha023@gmail.com](mailto:poojajha023@gmail.com)

**Sandeep K. Walia** Ph.D is presently working as Associate Professor and Head of Department in School of Hotel Management and Tourism at Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar, Punjab, India.. He has recently published The Routledge Handbook of Community Based Tourism Management: Concepts, Issues & Implications with Routledge -A Taylor & Francis Group. His forthcoming books are Millennials, Tourism and Spirituality with Routledge, Social Debates in Tourism with Good fellow publishers, Millennials and Tourism: A New Flanged Trend for the Tourism Industry. Dr. Walia has also Guest Edited the special issues of International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage, Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education Foresight & International Journal of Spa and Wellness. ORCID: -  
[orcid.org/0000-0001-5987-6857](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5987-6857)    [sndp.walia551@gmail.com](mailto:sndp.walia551@gmail.com)



## Key Words

**Covid-19,  
Hr Flexibility,  
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Diversified,  
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Oman**

## Abstract

The primary focus of many international business research is toward managing distance and rethinking boundaries as it was developed as a legitimate realm of academic investigation. This paper explores and compares the differences between uniform versus diversified tourism strategies in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. The Data were collected from a sample of 12 Muscat based tourism companies (113 respondents) in Oman and the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was conducted to test the model. This paper found strong evidence in support of the mediation association in which tourism companies in Oman with diversified HR flexibilities tend to adopt diversified HR practices, and consequently impacting financial performance. The findings conclude that HR managers must emphasize on developing flexible HR practices to feel more confident in retaining existing employees and delivering optimum performance. The findings of this paper recommend that the process to monitor assess HRP activities is an area that needs development and attention from the Omani tourism sector. A well-defined policy can play a substantial role to achieve the preferred outcomes in assessing HR flexibility and practices.

# *Importance of HR Flexibility in Applying HR Strategy and Practices in COVID-19; A Comparison of Uniform versus Diversified Tourism Strategies*

**Mohit Kukreti**

University of Technology and Applied Science CAS Ibri Oman

**Aarti Dangwal**

Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali, Punjab, India

## INTRODUCTION

The deep-seated changes faced by individuals, firms, and communities in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic have entirely redevise the world. The organizations both in public and private contexts have emphasized, indicating the immense managerial, economic, and cultural complexities still experiencing to survive on the market and to provide products and services that are essential to customers. (Waheed, Miao, Waheed, Ahmad, & Majeed, 2019).

Some of the experiences that have comprehensively deteriorated work procedures, job demands, performances, and roles distribution include temporary production interruption, forced remote working, and staff reduction (Dwyer, Cvelbar, Edwards, & Mihalič, 2014). The employees and managers were completely unprepared for coping this affective, behavioral, and cognitive stress that asked both develop or portray soft skills such as adaptability, resilience, optimism, and innovation to manage with the unanticipated (Manuti et al., 2020). In this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic could be considered as a crisis circumstance for organizations that ultimately have been stressed for making instant decisions and for performing adequate behaviors in coping catastrophic occurrences (R. Yawson, 2020).

As such, a crisis cannot be simply emphasized from only financial viewpoint. It encompasses very essential implications with respect to Human Resource Management (HRM) specifically during these pandemic moments (Collings, McMackin, Nyberg, & Wright, 2021). In this regard, a crisis is featured as a disruptive event that could adversely impact attitudes and perceptions of employees towards the organization, hampering its reputation for external and internal stakeholders (Caligiuri, De Cieri, Minbaeva, Verbeke, & Zimmermann, 2020). A connection between employees and employer is represented through this aspect as they serve goals and preferences, that are neither personal nor organizational but something between the employees and organizational management (Xiu, Liang, Chen, & Xu, 2017).

The Strategic HRM is conceptualized as the trend of planned human resource deployments and activities aimed for facilitating the firm in accomplishing its objectives (Wright & McMahan, 1992). Since then, the focus of strategic HRM research is overwhelmingly on the association between firm performance and HR practices or the effect of those practices on mediators between these two determinants (Boxall, Guthrie, & Paauwe, 2016; Huselid, 1995). On the contrary, this pandemic, globally, identified how myopic such research has been to address the strategies of firms in managing its workforce.

The COVID-19 pandemic brings radical changes for HRD research and practice. Surprisingly, HRD research and practice has been affected by the pandemic and its related reactive and mitigation policies globally, and; thus, needed to predict its effects (R. M. Yawson & Greiman, 2017). The HRD should be predictive for producing such forecasts, developing the competence in understanding how organizations and human capital systems will behave post-COVID-19 pandemic (R. M. Yawson & Greiman, 2017). The lack of evidence on tourism diversification remains fragmented with a core emphasis on the regional scale. The previous studies have witnessed minimal attention to the national scale emphasizing on success factors of tourism diversification and some scope on the international scale in the diversification context. In recent period, studies on tourism have merely emerged with respect to tourism sustainable development, resilience, and sustainable economic development. This study is novel in being the first to offer an explicit theoretical framework for the study of strategic HR diversification in tourism at the Omani market/product, regional, and sectoral levels. It further contributes to the knowledge on the appropriateness to the strategic HR diversification process by recommending a new policy framework for the integration of the diversified tourism. It explores, at the regional level, the particular elements of tourism and emphasizes how the accuracies of tourism can be used with respect to diversified HR strategies in tourism.

This precise focus restricts our understanding of fundamental questions brought about during COVID-19. COVID-19 has also exposed some stress among stakeholders and challenges the shareholder's primacy, which has dominated thinking in strategic HRM (Crane & Matten, 2020; Hitt, Arregle, & Holmes Jr, 2020). Lastly, pressures around this role have been exposed throughout the pandemic whereas HR has initiated a strategic role to emphasize the pre-requisites for both tactical and strategic contributions.

This study aims to understand the diversified HR strategies that allow strategic flexibility for tourism stakeholders to strengthen firm's performance at both the destination and firm level. The contributions of this study are four-fold. Firstly, it emphasizes the challenges experiencing destinations to accomplish competitive edge in their tourism services. Secondly, this paper argues that the uniform HR strategies of tourism competitiveness should avoid the important role

that diversified HR practices can play to facilitate tourism suppliers in fulfilling the difficulties of successful firm performance. Some of the more essential drivers or facilitators of strategic flexibility were determined, which include: strategic new product development, enhanced customer focus, establishment of core competencies, improving networking competence, enhancing risk management and supporting sustainable development, and improving networking competence. Thirdly, this paper explores the significance that is attributed to these enablers by Omani tourism industry stakeholders and their performance in executing these enablers through importance of performance analysis. Fourthly, the implications of these findings were evaluated in this paper for tourism management to provide insights into the competence of the Omani tourism industry to be strategically flexible.

## **THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES**

### **Strategic Flexibility and Diversified HR Practices**

The Strategic flexibility is the ability to respond to an emergent environment via continuous change and systemic activities (R. M. Yawson & Greiman, 2016). The Strategic flexibility was defined by Sanchez (1997) as a condition to have strategic options that are constructed through the collaborated effects of firm's coordination flexibility to obtain and use flexible resources.

The existing studies have focused on the strategic flexibility's effectiveness in the context of environmental uncertainties and dynamism such as experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic (Brozovic, 2018; Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010; Sanchez, 1995; Stieglitz, Knudsen, & Becker, 2016). The Firms can improve their competitiveness in dynamic environments by implementing strategic flexibility in establishing alternative options or strategic practices (Sanchez, 1995).

The research coming from the positive organizational behavior perspective has supported this evidence, highlighting the contextual and subjective circumstances that facilitate individuals and firms to feel productive and satisfied at work, and lastly to generate competitive edge for firms (Kianto, Sáenz, & Aramburu, 2017). As such, employee motivation and engagement might be increased through a consistent number of scientific contributions, which significantly influence the performance and productivity (Agarwala, 2003; Cook, Murphy, & Thomas, 2018; Delery & Doty, 1996; Tai & Chuang, 2014; Zoogah, 2018).

The previous research has examined perceptions of employees regarding the achievement of the mutual expectations integrated in the employment relationship based on the social exchange theory (Armbruster, Bikfalvi, Kinkel, & Lay, 2008; Damanpour & Aravind, 2012; Donate & de Pablo, 2015; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Mortensen & Bloch, 2005; Zheng & Lamond, 2009). On the contrary, organization studies majorly emphasized on the effect that effective practices can have on organizational performance, implicating a managerial perspective (Bagri, Babu & Kukreti, 2010; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Nkhoma, Dang, & De Souza-Daw, 2013). From this perspective, very minimal emphasis was given to the concrete implications that a positive employment association could have for firms between organization and employee (Awa, Ojiabo, & Emecheta, 2015; Gangwar, Date, & Rao, 2014). On the contrary, scholars maintained the need to overcome a control approach in preference of a commitment approach in managing people, supported by excessive scientific evidences emphasizing the gains of a people-based approach to HRM (Eze, 2013). A series of HR practices also forwarded that HRM could effectively influence organizational and individual positive behaviors, undertaking interdependence between mutual investments and benefits (Chen & Huang, 2009; Sels et al., 2006). The HRM is interpreted by employees in different ways and their insights of HRM are possibly to be more strongly associated to their behaviors and attitudes as compared to the actual HR practices (Kukreti, 2004; Poorkavoos, Duan, Edwards, & Ramanathan, 2016). The scholars and practitioners revised many ways to people management emphasizing on the improvement of what has been termed high-commitment practices and policies such as performance appraisal, team-based work, training and development, career opportunity, employee engagement in managerial decisions, and socializing activities, throughout the past decades (Barney, Ketchen Jr, & Wright, 2011; Barney & Wright, 1998; Chowhan, 2016; Krishnan, Teo, & Lymm, 2017). Nonetheless, HRM practices had influenced importantly the individual/organizational associations including job satisfaction, retention intention, and affective commitment, innovation activities, employee creativity, work engagement and commitment, job embeddedness, organizational citizenship behavior, and knowledge-sharing behavior (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009; Brettel & Cleven, 2011; Chen & Huang, 2009; Kazlauskaitė

& Bučiūnienė, 2008; Kumar & Mathapati, 2015; Le Bas, Mothe, & Nguyen-Thi, 2015; Leonard & Waldman, 2007).

*H1: HR strategic flexibility is positively associated to the use of diversified HR practices*

### **Diversified HR Practices and Firm Performance**

The innovation is a constant condition of post-modern firms. In particular, innovation, conceptualized a number of changes to the current work routines/schedules and practices that influence an overall organization, has become a focal point in the change and strategic management literature (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 2007; García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, 2012; Salavou, Baltas, & Lioukas, 2004; Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008). The use of additional measures including job contents, formal and informal relationships throughout the workplace, layoffs, the mitigation of working hours, and the instigation of remote and smart working contributed to restructure work procedures, majorly influences attitude and behavior of employees (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

The research anticipated that firm's changes failed in delivering anticipated outcomes and in fulfilling aimed objectives, when committed to change (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Torokoff, 2010). Such a high failure rate can be justified through a number of motivations; however, employee usually play an important role throughout this process, owning the responsibility for success or failure (Kianto, 2011). The previous studies have confirmed that resistance and reactions to change of employees could be undertaken important factors throughout the change management procedure, affecting its course either negatively or positively (Tödtling, Lehner, & Kaufmann, 2009). Particularly, commitment to change of employees received commendable attention as an essential antecedent of change-related organizational findings (Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & De Lange, 2010). In general, employees are quite hesitant to organizational change as it could be associated to the rise in workloads, to the implementation of new activities on the top of the current ones, to the new strategic objectives, and to the need for adjusting to new work associations (Veth, Korzilius, Van der Heijden, Emans, & De Lange, 2019).

On the contrary, positive attitudes can be created when the innovation is positively introduced and perceived as an opportunity for development (Xing, Liu, Tarba, & Cooper, 2016). This attitude is majorly associated to the support that employees

and managers offer to change management and integration (Ross & Koys, 1987). To be precise, the perception of the outcomes and implications is the level to which employees assume that organizational change could be an advantage, a chance, and an opportunity for development (García-Morales et al., 2012). In particular, a cognitive and affective restructuring of most certainties throughout the organizational context can be fulfilled by involving employees in a change management plan and creating positive attitudes and feelings toward this behavioral initiative (Alexy & Leitner, 2011). The employees should be more positive toward innovation if proactively engaged in its implementation (Dent & Powley, 2002). The development of organizational trust has been positively influenced through employees' participation to change (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004) whereas Weller and Van Gramberg (2007) found that successful change procedures were related with the quality and level of employees' engagement to such actions. Similarly, employees' coping behavior is another important variable toward innovation that is related to conscious physical and psychological efforts in improving resourcefulness of an employee to deal with stressful events or in reducing external demands (Anshel, Kim, Kim, Chang, & Eom, 2001).

*H2: Diversified HR practices strongly mediate the relationship between HR strategic flexibility and firm performance*

### **The Impact of Diversified Climate**

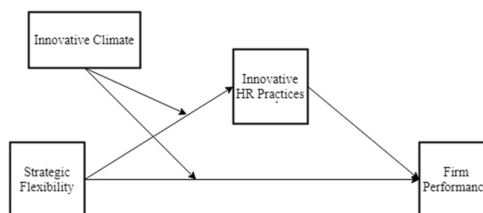
The organizations define a work environment for employees in promoting the perception of accepting challenges, offering the appropriate techniques in competing for the risk factor, and allocate challenging work for using diversified work approach (Sarros et al., 2008). The employees have an important aspect in the modern environment as their creative perception is established on diversified climate (Sarros et al., 2008). Furthermore, firms can be positively engaged with diversified climate and expressed challenging work behavior of employees with the work distribution (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 2007; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Moreover, employees are supported by organization in providing a calm, safe, motivational, and impulsive diversified climate, but employee's diversified behavior has substantially developed the diversified climate in a firm, and their diversified concepts produce active contributions in the diversified climate process (Torokoff, 2010).

The Firms establish opportunities for employees in polishing their skill by satisfying them and

challenging risk-taking work, which are the fundamental demand of the competitive climate (Masterson et al., 2000). Adaptation, adjustment, flexibility, and liveness represent the diversified climate (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Therefore, a supportive diversified climate should be developed by the organization for supporting employees in providing organizational innovation (Chen & Huang, 2009). Following figure presents the overall conceptual framework (Figure 1).

*H3: Diversified climate strongly moderates the relationship between HR strategic flexibility and diversified HR practices*

*H4: Diversified climate strongly moderates the relationship between HR strategic flexibility and firm performance*



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

### **Population, Sample, and Data Collection Procedure**

This study intends to explore and compare the differences between uniform versus diversified tourism strategies in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism industry in Oman. The Data were gathered from 12 Muscat based tourism firms, including tour operators and travel companies in Oman within a six-month period from January 2021 to June 2021, for representing the population of the tourism industry. A total of four measures were undertaken to test the hypotheses of this study: strategic flexibility, diversified HR practices, diversified organizational climate, and firm performance.

The informal telephonic interviews were conducted to ensure the validity of the questionnaire from the managers of HR departments before the questionnaire was disseminated in the tourism firms. A structured questionnaire was prepared on SurveyMonkey and a survey link was disseminated between targeted participants through the e-mail and WhatsApp. Moreover, face-to-face or in-person data collection was restricted due to lockdown imposition for COVID-19 in the overall country. However, online data collection was suggested because of its instant speed, convenient, and error-free for both researcher and respondent.

The questionnaires were disseminated during a six-month time period amongst the 269 employees from which 113 completely valid responses were obtained against the distributed questionnaires, making a response rate of 42%. Furthermore, the roles of core knowledge employees were conceptualized as the most important with respect to introducing new knowledge and creating innovation in tourism firms. Primarily, scholars emphasize on core knowledge employees throughout the investigation of HR practices and

diversified since these were the most essential employees for innovation objectives in tourism industry and, therefore, contributes essentially for study.

The questionnaire included two parts. First part encompassed demographic questions (gender, education, age, managerial level, marital status, and experience in firm) and the second part comprised questions related to strategic flexibility, diversified HR practices, diversified climate, and firm performance. A complete description of

**Table 1: Demographic Statistics (n = 113)**

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	91	80.53
	Female	22	19.47
Age Group	25 years – 32 years	11	20.8
	33 years – 38 years	69	61.5
	39 years – 45 years	12	11.7
	Above 46 years	21	5.38
Experience in firm	1-5 years	25	22.3
	6-10 years	55	49.1
	More than 10 years	33	28.7

## RESEARCH DATA MEASURES

The previously well-validated and existing scales were used to extract measures of main constructs. The questionnaire was in English since the mostly target respondents were well-educated and had good understanding and command of English, but the questionnaire was translated in Arabic for facilitating understanding of some participants of the measures. Additionally, the content validity and generalizability of the survey was inspected by core knowledge employees, two supervisors, and four senior HR executives. Additional refinements and improvements were made on the basis of this feedback.

### Strategic Flexibility

Nadkarni and Herrmann (2010)'s five items scale were adapted to measure strategic flexibility. The scale comprised of five items and were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The validity and reliability of this measurement model was evaluated through confirmative factor analysis. Adequate level of fit was demonstrated from the goodness of fit statistics ( $\chi^2=22.751$ ,  $CFI=0.937$ ,  $RMSEA=0.073$ ), and the loadings of five factors vary from 0.70 to 0.93. The coefficient  $\alpha$  reliability for the scale was 0.849.

### Diversified HR Practices

The modern HRM practices and theories are still

comparatively novel to an economic system in recruiting, compensation, and training where state-owned enterprises dominate. These practices are even more essential to transition economic development of Oman to the extent that the targeted contributions are considerable for the field of HRM and tourism management. The intricacies in the national retirement systems and unstable laws calls for diversified implementation of these HRM practices whereas a significant deregulation of the employment system has called for individual companies in implementing HRM practices to attract and hire talents (Zheng & Lamond, 2009). Therefore, HRM practices in Oman are represented through high performance work systems (HPWS).

This study has constructed a scale that measures the implementation of diversified HR practices by adapting Pfeffer (1998) measure on HPWS scale and Zheng and Lamond (2009) measure on diversified HR practices undertaking the unique context of Oman. Particularly, the scale comprises of eight items that measure different elements of diversified HR practices: Free market recruitment and selection, the use of self-managed teams, decentralized decision making and employee participation, extensive training and development, job rotation, information sharing and open

communication, compensation contingent on performance, and competitive compensation. The factor loadings vary from 0.65 to 0.83. The coefficient  $\alpha$  reliability for the scale was 0.826.

#### **Firm Performance**

Nine established firm's performance measures were used and measured on a five-point Likert scale. The factor loadings vary from 0.69 to 0.82. The coefficient  $\alpha$  reliability for the scale was 0.817.

#### **Diversified Climate**

The four-items scale of Oke, Prajogo, and Jayaram (2013) was operationalized for measuring the level of using the fundamental practices in supporting an appropriate culture in the organization for new concepts, creativity, and knowledge sharing. The participants were asked to evaluate each statement (from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The factor loadings vary from 0.71 to 0.96. The coefficient  $\alpha$  reliability for the scale was 0.946.

### **RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS**

The statistical software of IBM Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to analyze all the study variables including strategic flexibility, diversified HR practices, firm performance, and diversified climate. This study has used Cronbach's alpha for testing the reliability of the questionnaire; the higher reliability of the tested factor is represented through the greater value of Cronbach's alpha ( $>.8$ ), indicating the

favorable internal consistency. The factor loading technique was utilized for evaluating convergent validity and was shown to be significant since the average variance extracted and composite reliability were more than 0.5. The ratios of 0.5 and 0.6 are relied on better convergent validity. The confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were used to examine discriminant validity of the variables. CFA and construct validity was plotted using the software IBMAMOS 20.

### **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The pilot study using Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis has been provided initially. Moreover, this section further provides respondent's profile, data screening for univariate and multivariate outliers, confirmatory factor analysis including construct, convergent, and discriminant validities using Partial Least Square (PLS) methodology for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS version 3.2.7. Moreover, path analysis has also been provided as primary data analysis technique.

#### **Pilot Study**

In prior to final data collection, it has been considered important to execute pilot study with 50 responses to estimate internal consistency of the instrument. In this concern, reliability of individual study variables and overall reliability of the instrument has been evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis.

**Table 2: Pilot Study (N = 50)**

Variable Name	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic flexibility	5	0.849
Diversified HR practices	8	0.826
Firm performance	9	0.817
Diversified climate	4	0.946

In above table, all the reliability coefficients for individual variables and overall instrument were found considerable. The threshold for Cronbach's Alpha was taken 0.60 as suggested by (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994).

#### **Discriminant Validity**

The discriminant validity mainly aims to highlight discrimination and level of individuality among study variables for their better representation. The

discriminant validity basically estimates the extent of difference among the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Following table 3 provides Fornell and Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity, whereas Table 4 provides Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio for extent of discrimination or differences among study variables.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity using Fornell and Larcker (1981) Criterion**

	Strategic flexibility	Diversified HR practices	Firm performance	Diversified climate
Strategic flexibility	<b>0.891</b>			
Diversified HR practices	0.651	<b>0.914</b>		
Firm performance	0.124	0.212	<b>0.863</b>	
Perceived Trust	0.070	0.126	0.094	<b>0.867</b>

Table 3 provides correlation among constructs and the correlation of individual variables basically presents the Square-Root of its AVE coefficient.

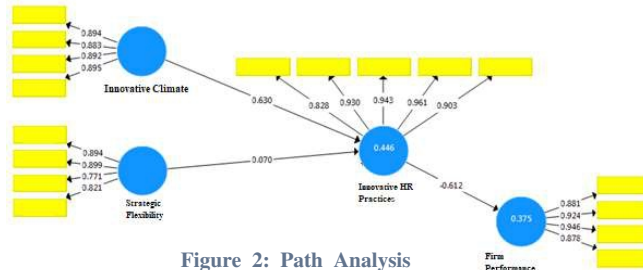
Hence, Table 3 showed that all the variables have met uniform criterion for discriminant validity.

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity using Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio**

	Strategic flexibility	Diversified HR practices	Firm performance	Diversified climate
Strategic flexibility	0.785			
Diversified HR practices	0.694			
Firm performance	0.133	0.232		
Perceived Trust	0.075	0.127	0.111	

HTMT ratio basically provide criterion for discriminant validity and postulates that all the values in HTMT ratio should be less than 0.85 or

0.90. Hence, the result of HTMT ratio in Table 4 provides that all the constructs have met HTMT criterion for discriminant validity.

**Figure 2: Path Analysis**

### Path Analysis

Table 5 and Figure 2 provide result of path analysis using structural equation modeling for assessing

relationship amongst variables in accordance with the structural model of the current study.

**Table 5: Path Analysis using Structural Equation Modeling**

	Estimates	S.E.	Prob.	Results
Strategic flexibility → firm performance	0.630	0.044	0.000	Significant
Strategic flexibility → Diversified HR practices → Firm performance	0.128	0.048	0.008	Significant
Diversified Climate → Diversified HR practices → Firm Performance	0.070	0.036	0.053	Significant
Diversified Climate → strategic flexibility → Firm Performance	0.075	0.372	0.289	Significant

It has been manifested by the results in above table that job satisfaction (0.630,  $p < 0.001$ ) has significantly positive influence on perceived organizational performance. Likewise, strategic flexibility (0.128,  $p < 0.01$ ) has been found as positively and statistically significantly related to firm performance. While, diversified climate

(0.070,  $p < 0.10$ ) has significantly positively mediated the relationship between strategic flexibility and firm performance.

#### **Predictive Relevance**

Following Table 6 provides statistical inferences of predictive relevance of the endogenous variables in the structural model.

**Table 6: Predictive Relevancy**

	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Adjusted</b>	<b>Q Square</b>
Firm Performance	0.446	0.439	0.346

It has been provided in the above table that firm's performance can be predicted upto 44.6 percent by the combine effect of its respective exogenous variables. Furthermore, the Q-squared coefficients were found greater than absolute zero and thereby, in accordance with the provided guidelines of (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011), the structural model has proven considerable predictive relevance of all endogenous variables.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The core objective of this study was to examine the role of strategic HR practices as an essential mechanism through which firm's performance is affected by strategic flexibility, and the role of diversified climate in this relationship. Firstly, the findings offer support for the mediated relationship in which strategic flexibility was related with diversified climate indirectly via diversified HR practices. The study has further identified that firm performance can be affected by strategic flexibility directly via diversified HR practices with respect to the platforms revealed in previous studies including market orientation, product markets, contingent alliance development, and diversified organizational forms (Brozovic, 2018; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Chowhan, 2016; Cook et al., 2018; Crane & Matten, 2020; Dent & Powley, 2002).

The innovation has a commendable contribution in tourism firm's performance and it is essential for retaining a competitive edge in the wake of COVID-19. The significance of diversified climate has further been validated as its moderating role was proved between firm's performance and new diversified HR practices. These findings were similar to previous studies, which explain that a strong diversified climate leads towards firm's performance (Dwyer et al., 2014). Lastly, the moderated-mediation results contribute to the body of knowledge and the literature of HRM. The mean effect of new HR practices on firm's performance

was positively stronger when the diversified climate would be higher. Thereby, the finding explained that there might not be direct associations between firm's performance and new HR practices, as witnessed earlier.

The study findings showed that tourism firms that focus on strategic flexibility depend on HR practices for accomplishing competitive gains. This outcome is of significant importance to tourism industry highlighting strategic flexibility in their firms. The Flexibility almost becomes an important aspect for sustaining and maintaining their competitive edge in today's surge of COVID-19. From managerial perspective, the findings implicate to elevate tourism firm's performance specifically in Oman. The impacts of diversified climate suggest identifying new market trends, technologies, and customers' preferences. Furthermore, supporting new HR practices in tourism firms will be diversified aspect for promoting novel skills, removing barriers for learning, and boosting the swiftness of working competencies. Therefore, new HR practices stimulate employees for performing noteworthy working experiences in the tourism firms.

On the other hand, it is found out that the compensation carries high level of importance in creating customer satisfaction. The employees are the most important part (pillars on which a firm stands on) of any company and right and timely compensations creates immense level of positive working environment. When an employee receives recognition for his contribution the moral of an individual goes sky high. The tourism Firms have to design a strong reward management system that keeps employees' performances and motivation level in a required level at which they could give their hundred percent. The results of researches have shown that there is a strong bond between compensation and customer satisfaction because it has a positive impact in creating better working

environment and higher employee performance. The on-time delivery performance in an overall HR operation relies highly on the rightly implemented evaluation program that a firm incorporates in itself. The evaluation program aims to help overall improvement of employee's performances by identifying the weak points and the areas having room to be improved and performances uplifted. It plays a part that grab employees' attention and make them realize that on what grounds they have been measured and what expectations the firm have from them. The effective job performance evaluation system implementation helps in the betterment of employees' performances and meeting firm's expected performance and improved performance leads to timely deliveries and better customer organization relationships.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that the diversified HR practices, strategic flexibility, and diversified climate play an essential role in improving and promoting the performance of tourism firms of Oman. The core emphasis of this study was to identify the role and impacts of diversified HR practices considerably towards the achievement of firm's performance. Thereby, this study concludes that diversified strategic HR practices is an essential policy mechanism in the tourism industry and tourism firms in developing effective HRM strategy by encouraging diversification in all units of a tourism firm. The effective HRM policy can trigger tourism firm's performance and can help in stabilizing diversified climate.

An actively managed human resource department can bring in a great deal of competitive advantage to the organization. No matter how well the firm's strategy is, the implementation of such strategies would not work accordingly until a set of talented employees performs that particular task. Evidently, the studies have shown that for achieving a superior supply chain performance relies heavily on human resource management practices (discussed above) such as training programs, compensations and timely delivery system. The implementation of right system and practices can help an organization in gaining better understanding and outcomes with respect of supply chain operation and ultimately better results.

On the contrary, every study has few limitations, as this study has, that must be presented for future studies. Firstly, data of this study sample was cross-sectional and explanatory in nature; future studies can carry-out longitudinal research for checking the evolutionary insight of diversified HR

practices' effect on firm performance. The Qualitative method can also be a possible study, undertaking opinions of professionals for providing different perspectives of diversified HR practices. The study framework can be validated in other regions and sectors, including service, manufacturing, and automobile industries. In addition, the study findings can be validated in other similar developing countries. Secondly, innovation can be updated with the passage of time for new knowledge insights by investigating the role and effects of diversified HR practices on firm's performance. Further empirical evidence is required for obtaining precise findings. The main procedures of diversified HR practices should be investigated in terms of firm's performance. Thirdly, the diversified climate was examined as a moderating role on the relationship of firm performance and strategic flexibility. This study has discussed internal diversified climate, but future studies can emphasize on external factors too. For future implementation, studies have to discuss both internal and external factors of the diversified climate. In particular, it is assumed that tourism firms in Oman do not undermine the diversified aspect, and will take innovation as an emerging insight. Therefore, the perspective of this study can be re-investigated with increased strength.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Mohit Kukreti** is a PhD holder in Human Resource Development. He was the Program Director of the IBA Program with the DG CAS at the Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman. He is now associated as a senior faculty member with the new government University in Oman - University of Technology and Applied Sciences (CAS Ibri). His research areas are HRD, Tourism Development Planning, and Luxury Tourism etc.  
[mohit.ibr@cas.edu.om](mailto:mohit.ibr@cas.edu.om)

**Aarti Dangwal** is a PhD holder in Management. She is working as an Assistant Professor with the University School of Business, Department of Commerce, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Punjab. Her research areas are Tourism, Finance and Business etc.  
[aartidangwal13@gmail.com](mailto:aartidangwal13@gmail.com)



## Key Words

**Halal tourism,  
Sharia law,  
Indian Muslim Tourist,  
Destination management**

# *A Management Development Approach In Halal Tourism Promotion Towards Indian Muslim Travelers*

**Monika Barnwal & Jahangir Khan**

Corresponding Author  
Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi

**Nimit R. Chowdhary and Vijay Kumar**

Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi

## Abstract

The concept of Halal tourism is getting support from Muslim as well as non-Muslim destinations along with substantial influx in the number of Indian Muslim travelers towards Halal tourism destinations across the world. This paper aims to study sensitivities and acceptance of the expectations placed on the Halal Tourism as a theoretical management approach with the reality of emergent Indian Muslim Tourists by examining the responses towards three proposed parameters of Halal Tourism. A Sample of 150 respondents has been collected through online structured questionnaire with the help of simple random sampling technique and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical tools by SPSS. Moreover, in order to develop the theoretical and conceptual management framework, extensive review of literature has been done. The paper will help destination management bodies to project their image as Halal friendly by finding out the intentions and expectations of Indian Muslim travelers.

## INTRODUCTION

In Islam, there is mention of *Tawaf* (circling around the Kaaba) for those who commit Haj to Mecca, the sacred place of Mohammad (PBUH) receiving first revelations from *Allah*. Earlier, Muslims were obliged to visit Mecca and Medina once in their lifetime, traveling only for religious purposes. But, with globalization, traveling has become more convenient. There is abundance of information and availability of Halal based food, products and services making Muslims attracted towards traveling to other destinations for non-religious purposes. There are about 1.7 billion Muslims around the world who are getting enthusiastic about traveling outside their comfort zone along with their family and friends, offering service providers a new niche market (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Halal tourism sounds very close to Islamic Tourism where Muslim faith and religion play an important role. But it offers a more diversified concept which is not entirely dependent on religiosity. As per Battour and Ismail (2016), the definition of Halal refers to any product, work, service or place which is accessed as per Islamic teachings on the basis of *Sharia law*. The law clearly states what is permissible and what is not permissible (also known as *Haram*) during the course of travel. In 2016, Muslim spending on traveling was recorded approximately USD 169 billion and it had been estimated to cross USD 283 billion by 2022 (Mastercard and Crescent Rating, 2019).

The pandemic Covid-19 has put a halt to the growing number of Halal tourists and Halal tourism destinations. Nevertheless, the acceptance of Halal Tourism as niche segment emerges as lucrative segment as it strongly supports sustainability in traveling to destinations. As per Crescent Rating, 2019, Singapore and Malaysia are top destinations providing Halal based tours and products in Asia. India offers a promising market of Halal based tours for Muslim travelers which needed to be studied further (Prayag, 2020). Indian Muslim travelers are getting more enthusiastic about their travel. They are focusing on destinations offering Halal based services especially Halal food. The high number of Indian Muslim population makes them good customer segment to be targeted by Halal friendly destinations. However, the perception and expectations of Indian Muslims towards Halal tourism varies as per their belief. The paper proposes different parameters of Halal tourism focusing on the needs and expectations of Indian Muslim travelers by collecting online data from them with a structured questionnaire. The objectives of the study would be:

Objective 1: To examine Halal based motivations on Indian Muslim travelers.

Objective 2: To examine Halal tour products and services preference on Indian Muslims.

Objective 3: To analyze the decision making of Indian Muslims towards OIC (Organization of Islamic countries) and Non-OIC (Organization of Islamic countries) countries.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Halal Tourism

The acceptance of Halal tourism as niche market by destinations has made it a new sector to be properly studied on. Many researchers till now have given and perceived their own definition of Halal tourism. According to Battour et. al (2016), “any tourism object or action which is permissible according to Islamic teachings to use or engage by Muslims in tourism refers to Halal tourism”. Expansion of this concept, the term Haram also comes in the picture which means the practices, products, food and services that do not go with *Sharia law* and are objectionable. This definition is further expanded to include the likes of Non-Muslim consumers as well who get influenced by the Halal based lifestyle and want to experience it (Henderson, 2010; Aji, 2019; Mohsin et.al., 2020). Halal tourism is often termed and accepted globally for Islamic lifestyle that is welcomed by Muslim as well as Non-Muslim destinations due to its closeness towards sustainability. Shakona et. al. (2015), states 6 main pillars of Halal tourism that is fundamentally accepted in any Muslim belief which are: Prohibition of Alcohol, Availability of Halal food, Gender based services and segregation, Prayer facilities, Restriction of movement by women individually and following a dress code to avoid any form of nudity. The Crescent Rating (2019), identified similar fundamentals with preference for Halal food, water-friendly washrooms, Ramadan services, Avoidance of Haram products, Consideration of privacy among genders and Prayer facilities. A Halal holiday is mostly referred to a travel package covering holiday services according to Islamic beliefs and values. These Halal holidays may include services like providing Halal food and non-alcoholic drinks. The services may also include female only pools, gyms etc, swimming with Islamic dress code, Muslim prayer facilities and many more as referred by Battour and Ismail (2016). In simple words, Halal is anything permissible in Arabic as per Islamic teachings and not only applies to food but hospitality, dress code, financial transactions, cosmetics and other items.

### 2.2. Indian Muslim Travelers

During holiday in summer, Atiq Khan, one of the respondents recalled that he and his wife kept looking for Indian and Pakistani restaurant in Singapore as they were sure, they would get Halal food there and the restaurants could be trusted. The demand of Muslim customers like Atiq has opened a new door through Halal tourism to cater the needs

of Muslim travelers and to provide services according to *Sharia law*. India is among top 5 Muslim populated countries and has around 200 million Muslims which could be easily around 10% of the whole Muslim community (Census, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2017; World Population Review, 2021). It has the largest Muslim population for a non-Islamic country. The position of India, strategically, historically, economically and culturally is well connected with Gulf countries and other OIC countries especially UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia and Nigeria. This gives India an advantage of providing good travel opportunities to its Indian Muslim citizen who wants to explore other destinations and want Halal services. As per Secretary General of International Halal Accreditation Forum, H.E. Mohammed Saleh Badri, India is the home of millions of Muslims. They would like to have good trade relations and support from India to promote Halal tourism. Recently, in 2017, India signed its membership with IHAF making collaborations with member countries for better products for Indian Muslims (HalalIndia.com, 2017). Moreover, in support of Halal financial transactions, new Chartered Accountancy Course curriculum has been launched on 01<sup>st</sup> July 2017 after implementation of GST. This has brought better acknowledgement of Islamic finance among Indian Muslim travelers, traveling to outbound destinations and seeking Halal transactions for payments.

Several tour operators are nowadays providing Halal-based Outbound tour packages to OIC and Non-OIC countries. According to Gurdeep Sahni, president of Outbound Tour Operators Association of India, Halal tourism is always in picture and Indian Muslim travelers are picky about getting Halal food and services while their visit to other destinations (Salaamgateway.com, 2018). Halalbooking.com, a Halal travel booking site said Halal tourism is growing with 6 percent per annum which is much higher than any other travel trends. Whether an Indian Muslim traveler looking for Honeymoon packages in Dubai, a Muslim friendly destination or a full inclusive tour package in China by booking through Halal certified tour operators, the outbound travel is becoming a trend among Indian Muslims which extends their mentality of traveling abroad only for religious purposes. For Indian Muslim travelers, the certification would bring more trust-ability and relaxation in managing their tours. Organizations and Events like World Halal Travel Summit 2015 in Abu Dhabi declaring Indonesia Halal tourism Hub, Halal Quality Management System run by Majlis Ugama Islam (MUIS) giving certification (2019), Singapore Halal Directory (2019), and many more give credit

to service providers and help in destination management according to *Sharia law*.

### **HALAL TOURISM PARAMETERS**

On the basis of extensive literature review, three parameters are identified (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Mohsin et.al., 2016; Global Muslim Travel Index, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral, 2019; Aji and Muslichah, 2020) as Halal Tourism parameters which are further sub divided in detail covering the Muslim tourist expectation, need and desire while going for Halal based tours.

#### **3.1. Halal Based Motivation**

##### **3.1.1. Religious Based Motivations:**

Islamic religion is based on the basic concept of Iman (creed), Aqidah (faith) and Tawhid (monotheism) (Battour and Ismail, 2016). The guidelines, rules and regulations of practicing the religion are well formulated in *Holy Quran and Sunnah*. Muslims have been traveling since medieval period with religious purposes to Mecca. Indian government, work along with Haj Committee of India (HCOI) to offer easily available facilities and amenities to Indian Muslim travelers who are on voyage to Mecca and Medina which go on for around 5 days. There is record breaking visit of Indian Muslim travelers with 124852 visits in 2017, 128690 in 2018 and 139987 in year 2019 through authorized PTOs and government run operators (Haj Committee, 2021). This shows the tremendous increase in the number of Indian Muslim travelers traveling to outbound destinations for religious purposes. The Ministry of Minority Affairs has vocalized and encouraged women traveling without Mehram (Male companion) making it easier for less privileged gender to travel outbound and pay their homage (Haj.gov.in, 2018). The hypothesis for the parameter is assumed to be:

H1: There is motivation of Indian Muslims towards Religious based outbound travel.

##### **3.1.2. Non-Religious Motivations:**

As per El-Gohary (2014), the main motivations of Halal tourism is often inspired by cognitive and effective values. In cognitive value, the focus is on quality, quantity, price, and availability of services where as effective values often represent emotional, social, economical and Islamic values that Muslim travelers keep in mind while traveling to destinations. Destinations like Japan, Singapore are seeing growth in Muslim travelers. The non Islamic countries are focusing their strategy towards utilizing the new customer segment (Yamagata, A., 2019). The hypothesis for the parameter is assumed to be:

H2: There is motivation among Indian Muslims towards non-Religious based outbound tour

#### **3.2. Availability of Halal Resources**

Muslim travelers are growing according to Global

Muslim Travel Index, 2019 stating that by 2026, there will be more than 200 million Muslim travelers traveling worldwide contributing around US \$300 billion to tourism sector. As per Jafari et.al. (2014), the satisfaction of Muslim travelers is influenced by their religious choices which is not limited to food but extends to alcohol restriction, proper Islamic dress codes, Islamic morals, entertainment complying *Sharia laws*, proper prayer facilities and clean surroundings. The studies carried out by various researchers (Preko et.al., 2020; Putra, Hati, & Daryanti, 2016) advocate about physical attributes of Halal resources such as prayer facilities, availability of Quran in accommodation, proper toilet facilities complying *Sharia laws* and non-physical attributes such as Islamic television channels, dress code of hotel staff, gender based facilities etc.

The hypothesis for the parameter is assumed to be:

H3: There is correlation among availability of Halal resources and satisfaction of Indian Muslim travelers

#### **3.3. Compatibility towards destinations**

The destinations are inclined towards providing Halal themed tour packages whose demand is growing among Muslim travelers who are getting encouraged to travel for leisure rather than religious purposes.

##### **3.3.1. OIC countries**

Islamic countries like UAE are considered to be First world countries who offer Halal tourism (Zaidan, 2016). The Islamic countries have advantage of having Islamic way of infrastructure, Halal based facilities, accommodations, Halal based food and drinks which ultimately become first choice among Muslim travelers. The Halal tourism is still very much connected to Islamic religion which creates strong sense of relatedness among Muslim tourists regarding trust, satisfaction, familiarity, no language barrier and safety in OIC countries. Thus, these factors encourage Islamic destinations to channel their attention towards Halal tourism more and offer more tour services, tour packages with good deals to Muslim tourists. The hypothesis for the parameter is assumed to be:

H4: There is compatibility between Indian Muslim travelers expectation with OIC countries

##### **3.3.2. Non OIC countries**

The growing Halal tourism market is estimated to reach US\$9.71 trillion by 2025 (Thomson Reuters, 2018). Many Muslim minority countries are now implementing Halal tourism as one of the new form of tourism. Non-OIC countries like Japan has issued Halal certification guidelines provided by NGOs and partnered with private companies to offer trusted Halal tour packages to Muslim tourists. Also, Japan is providing free Visa (Samori

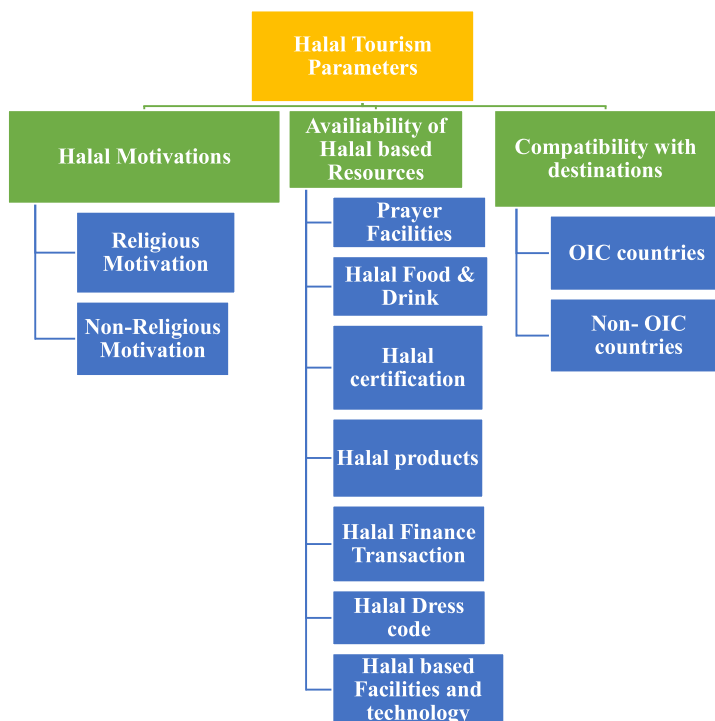
et.al., 2016) to Muslims coming from Malaysia and Indonesia which further encourages Muslims to consider Japan as Muslim friendly destination and encourages Muslims from other countries as well to travel to the country. The current Global Crescent rating (2019) has shown that Non-OIC countries like Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and many more are leading destinations for Halal tourism and some of them are getting Muslim tourists more than OIC countries like UAE. The results of various studies and surveys show promising future of acceptance of Halal tourism market and support the need of marketing the concept more to popularize the correct meaning of Halal tourism and gain the trust as well as loyalty of visiting Muslim tourists. The hypothesis for the parameter is assumed to be:  
H5: There is compatibility between Indian Muslim travelers expectation with Non-OIC countries

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Research Design

This research study design is descriptive towards Halal tourism and its parameters. A quantitative method is used to find out the relationship among parameters as variables. The data is collected via online questionnaire method being distributed through social media channels mostly through e-mail and Whatsapp. The online survey was conducted on January 2021 and is designed using Google online form. The data is collected from 150 respondents who strictly are Indian Muslims studying/teaching in Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi and were willing to travel to outbound destinations. A Pilot study is done among 50 respondents before online survey. The respondents belong from 16 years to 50 years age group. All questions are analyzed and assessed by using 5-Likert scale method ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree,” 2 = “disagree,” 3 = “neutral,” 4 = “agree” and 5 = “strongly agree.”

**Figure 1: Halal Tourism Parameters**



*Source: Authors*

#### 4.2. Items measurement

The parameters perceived through extensive literature review in this study are being used as variables to determine the inclination of Indian Muslim travelers towards Halal tourism which are:

1. The Religious based motivation is measured by three items:

- a. X1: Do you prefer to go outbound destination only for Haj, Umrah, etc?
- b. X11: Do you prefer your hotel rooms nearby a Mosque?
- c. X12: Are you inclined towards Muslim-operated hotels and restaurants?

2. The Non-Religious based motivation is measured by four items:

- a. X2: Do you feel attracted to other countries having different cultures and lifestyles?
- b. X4: Are you comfortable, if your tour service providers are Non-Muslims?
- c. X10: Do you prefer your hotels and restaurants located near touristic populated areas?
- d. X13: Do you feel comfortable staying in Muslim-friendly hotels that also accommodate Non-Muslim tourists?

3. The availability of resources is measure by 14 items:

- a. X5: Do you always look for Halal-certified hotels, restaurants, and products at the destination of the visit?
- b. X6: During your stay, do you only prefer to have Muslim Staffs/workers/guides, etc?
- c. X7: During your stay, do you prefer to have Non-Muslim Staffs/workers/guides at your service?
- d. X8: Do you prefer to have hotel staff in a dress-code according to *Sharia law*?
- e. X9: Do you always prefer to have prayer facilities like a Prayer mat, Prayer direction signs, Availability of Quran, Prayer display time, etc., in hotels & airports?
- f. X14: Do you prefer Halal food being served every time during the entire course of travel?
- g. X15: How much are you inclined to use Halal-based products like shampoo, soap, etc.?
- h. X16: Are you uncomfortable due to the unavailability of gender-based hotel facilities like Gym area, swimming pool, etc.?
- i. X17: Are you inclined towards Halal-based entertainment' like TV Channels?
- j. X18: Do you enjoy arts in major attractions if they are in Human form in anyways?
- k. X19: Do you prefer Halal-based financial transactions?
- l. X20: Do you prefer toilets/washrooms according to *Sharia law*, like having bidets, water-based facilities, etc.?
- m. X23: Do you depend on modern technologies

like smart-phones, GPS, etc., to be guided for Halal-based restaurants and hotels?

n. X25: Will you prefer a Halal-based tour irrespective of cost?

4. The Compatibility with OIC countries is measured through one item:

X21: During planning your holiday, do you feel more assured of Halal-based products in a Muslim majority destination?

5. The compatibility with Non-OIC countries is measured through three items:

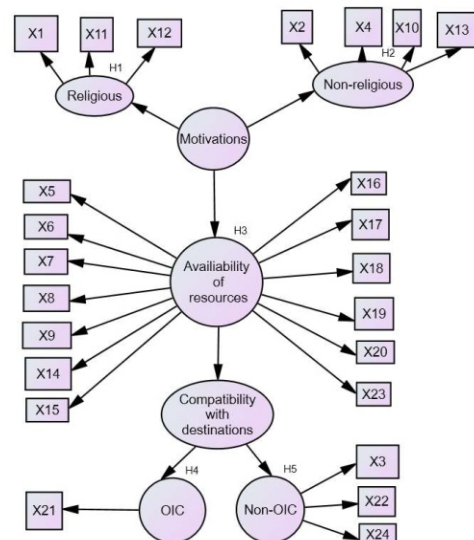
- a. X3: Are you comfortable traveling to Muslim minority countries?
- b. X22: Do you find difficulty in getting Halal-based food and products in Muslim minority countries?
- c. X24: Do you feel safety and security issues while traveling and interacting with people in Muslim minority destinations?

#### RESEARCH DATA INTERPRETATION

##### 5.1. Data collection and sampling technique

The data is collected one time using Random sampling method. The objectives of the study are followed throughout with 150 respondents limited to Indian Muslims only from Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.

**Figure 2: The Figure shows the items distributed as per the defined Halal parameters.**



### 5.2. Respondents' demographic characteristics

In the total sample of 150 respondents as shown in figure 3, 67.2% (101) respondents are male and 32.6% (49) are female. Respondents in this study are dominated by those aged less than 25 (74.1%). The 26-40 age group is next, depicting 19% respondents and respondents having age above 60 are very less interested with percentage of 5%. The data shows that most respondents are from post-millennial generation who are willing to explore their travel needs. The data also shows the companion with which respondents are willing to take Halal tour to outbound destinations. About 46% respondents want to travel with their family to Halal tours while about 36% respondents choose to travel with friends. Traveling alone/solo is also surfacing among young minds to explore new things without the need of any companionship with

percentage of 8%. Very less respondents are willing to travel with unknown companions or travel as a couple to outbound destinations.

### 5.3. Factor Analysis Test

An inferential factor analysis has been conducted taking each question represented with items using SPSS software. Overall, the measurement has been significant and has valid data through Bartley test. There are majorly five factors that emerged as strong variables. We have 25 items as variables in which each item represents the response of questions being asked to respondents. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.677 which is  $> 0.5$  and shows that data is reliable and acceptable. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has p-value 0.000 which is  $< 0.001$  showing data is significant.

**Frequency Table**

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	105	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Female	45	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 25	108	72.0	72.0	72.0
	26-45	33	22.0	22.0	94.0
	46-60	9	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

**Your preferred traveling companion during trips**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Family	68	45.3	45.3	45.3
	Friends	58	38.7	38.7	84.0
	Unknown travellers as a tour member	6	4.0	4.0	88.0
	Couple	6	4.0	4.0	92.0
	Alone	12	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: Online Survey (2021)

**Figure 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test for validity of data**

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.677
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		2223.543
	df		300
	Sig.		.000

Figure 5: Descriptive statistics of Factor Analysis

Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean	Std. Deviation <sup>a</sup>	Analysis N <sup>a</sup>	Missing N
X1	2.47	1.432	150	0
X2	4.35	.890	150	0
X3	4.24	.833	150	0
X4	3.95	1.012	150	0
X5	4.52	1.047	150	0
X6	2.70	1.340	150	0
X7	3.03	1.212	150	0
X8	3.20	1.164	150	0
X9	4.32	1.172	150	0
X10	4.36	.943	150	0
X11	4.11	1.106	150	0
X12	3.23	1.368	150	0
X13	4.17	1.138	150	0
X14	4.55	1.046	150	0
X15	4.02	1.167	150	0
X16	3.42	1.317	150	0
X17	3.24	1.174	150	0
X18	3.49	1.128	150	0
X19	3.97	1.135	150	0
X20	4.46	1.097	150	0
X21	4.31	.977	150	0
X22	3.37	1.383	150	0
X23	4.11	1.075	150	0
X24	3.10	1.389	150	0
X25	3.84	1.159	150	0

Figure 6: Total Variance Table for major factors.

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.533	30.133	30.133	5.652	22.607	22.607
2	2.153	8.611	38.744	2.671	10.684	33.291
3	1.989	7.958	46.702	2.189	8.757	42.048
4	1.948	7.793	54.495	1.857	7.430	49.478
5	1.385	5.541	60.036	1.767	7.070	56.548
6	1.194	4.776	64.813	1.620	6.482	63.029
7	1.106	4.422	69.235	1.551	6.206	69.235
8	.964	3.858	73.092			

#### 5.4 Hypothesis Testing

By running factor analysis, given below is the descriptive statistics through which we can analyze the opinion of the 150 respondents and test our hypotheses:

For the Hypothesis 1: Items X1, X11 and X12 having means 2.47, 4.11 and 3.23 respectively. Thus, the hypothesis H1 is accepted with average mean of 3 items which is 3.27.

For the Hypothesis 2: Items X2, X4, X10 & X13 having average means 4.35, 3.95, 4.36 & 4.17 respectively. Hence, the hypothesis H2 is well accepted with average mean 4.20 of 4 items.

The Hypothesis 3 is to find out the likelihood and

acceptability of resources by Indian Muslims is measured through items: X5, X6, X7, X8, X9, X14, X15, X16, X17, X18, X19, X20, X23 & X25. The average means are: 4.52, 2.70, 3.03, 3.20, 4.32, 4.55, 4.02, 3.42, 3.24, 3.49, 3.97, 4.46, 4.11 & 3.84 respectively. Hence, the hypothesis H3 is accepted with average mean 3.77 of 14 items.

For the Hypothesis 4 which is to examine preference and compatibility with OIC countries, we have used item X21. Thus, the hypothesis H4 is well accepted with one item of average mean 4.31.

For the Hypothesis 5 which is to examine the preference and compatibility with non-OIC countries, we have used items X3, X22 & X24. The

average means are 4.24, 3.37 & 3.10 respectively. Hence, the hypothesis H5 is narrowly accepted with average mean 3.57 of 3 items. The Total variance of the Factor analysis test in Figure 6, states that there are total 7 strong factors but we will be considering first five factors which matches our hypothesis. With factors having Eigen Value greater than 1, component 1 has the highest Eigen value.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result of the study has found that for item X1, the Indian Muslims are quite neutral on their choices of going to outbound destinations only for religious purposes with average mean 2.47. In item X11, the mean 4.11 shows that Indian Muslims would prefer to have their hotels near mosque and from X12, the mean 3.23 shows that the respondents would like to have fully Muslim operated hotels but are liberal towards it. The items X2, X4, X10 & X13 which have average means 4.35, 3.95, 4.36 & 4.17 which clearly shows that the respondents are open towards experiencing different culture of outbound destinations. With mean of 3.95 of item X4 which is above the neutral value, the respondents are alright with their service providers being from different community or religion. Also, with average mean of 4.36 of item X10, the respondents prefer to have their hotels near tourist populated areas showing their willingness to have an open mindset towards tourist attractions and meeting other people. The result is also supported by the fact that the respondents would be comfortable staying with people from other communities in the same hotel. The item X5 has average mean of 4.52 which clearly shows the respondents' inclination towards wanting Halal Certified services and facilities while going for outbound tours. With low mean of 2.70, the item X6, shows that the respondents are not restricted to only having Muslim staffs/guides. With average mean of 3.03, the item X7 shows that the respondents will be comfortable with Non-Muslims staffs/guides which show their open mindset while traveling. The item X8 with mean 3.20 shows the comfort of Muslims if the staffs they are interacting with would keep their dress code according to Islamic rules. The average mean 4.32 of X9 showing the availability of prayer facilities is required. The item X14 has mean of 4.55 showing that Halal food is preferred by Indian Muslims during their course of travel. Also, with mean of 4.02, item X 15, the respondents are highly interested in using Halal based products like shampoo etc. The mean of item X16 is 3.42 depicting that the respondents are little uncomfortable with unisex facilities. The same is the case with items X17, X18, X19 & X20 having means 3.24, 3.49, 4.46 & 4.11 respectively

showing that respondents would be more comfortable and prefer to have Halal based entertainment, art, financial transactions and washrooms according to *Sharia law*. The average mean of item X23 is 4.11 stating the dependency towards technology friendly applications and equipment of Indian Muslims is 4.11 which is quite high. The item X25 has mean of 3.84 showing that respondents while wanting to have Halal tours are also concerned about the cost of the Halal tour package. Overall, the availability of Halal based resources is co-related with satisfaction of Indian Muslim tourists. The mean of item X21 is 4.31 showing high support of the fact that Indian Muslims would prefer OIC countries for the surety of Halal based products and food. Overall, there is significant compatibility of Indian Muslim in traveling to OIC countries. For items X3, X22 & X24 the average means are 4.24, 3.37 & 3.10 respectively. The comfort of Indian Muslims preferring to travel to Non-OIC countries is rather high which clearly supports our secondary data findings and Global Crescent Index. With the mean of 3.37 of item X22, respondents somehow agree that they find it difficult to get proper Halal based food and products in Muslim minority destinations. Also, with mean of 3.10 of item X24, respondents seem to be concerned about their safety and security while traveling to Non-OIC countries. Overall, there is significant compatibility of Indian Muslim

### DISCUSSION

The study highlighted the existence of a gap between the expectations of Indian Muslim travelers and the realities they faced during their course of travel to outbound destinations towards proposed three parameters of Halal Tourism namely (a) Halal based Motivations; (b) Availability of Halal based Resources and (c) Compatibility towards destinations. The findings of the paper provide significant inputs for Halal tourism and further describe it in more extensive manner on the proposed parameters. This is critical for better understanding of Muslim tourists in current situation and for the theoretical foundation of analyzing their needs and expectations for other stakeholders as well. The statistical data analysis shows that the parameters of Muslim Tourism behavior will be useful for destinations to study and develop their products and services on the basis of Halal practices.

### Limitations and Further Research Opportunities

The study has been concentrated towards Indian Muslim respondents from Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi and the result of the study is according to their opinions. The present study is applied and limited to studied variables,

respondents, destinations and travelers; therefore it is not generalized to all Muslim Tourists traveling to Inbound and Outbound destinations. Although, the proposed parameters of Halal tourism from the study could be applied for future research works. The requirement of equal distribution of Indian Muslims as respondents is the main challenge of the study. Since, it is not in the hand of researcher, there is uneven distribution of respondents in terms of gender, age and to whom they are willing to travel with. It is suggested that the result of the study could be taken as a base for taking opinions and feedbacks of Muslims around the world. The future study is recommended to analyze the inclination of Non-Muslims towards Halal tourism and its ever changing market. Also, the present study would give defined Halal parameters on which future research works on Halal based tourism can be performed.

### CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Halal tourism is gaining popularity and acceptance among Muslim majority as well as Muslim minority destinations because of its positive outlook towards sustainability. Halal products and services based on *Sharia law* are been available in many popular destinations making the Muslim travelers experiences satisfactory. Muslim minority countries like South Korea, Japan, Singapore, European countries etc are taking the segment with more seriousness to offer Halal based tour packages to Muslim travelers. The research study has identified 25 kinds of Halal motivations. These motivations are driving Indian Muslims travelers towards traveling to outbound destinations in a positive way. With the study, it is concluded that there is a big market segment of Halal based travelers in India which is needed to be properly attained by different countries. The result of the study would help the destinations to manage Halal tourism more efficiently by following the proposed parameters and responses of Indian Muslims. Also, the study suggests that the management of Halal Tourism need to be more organized and coordinated. There is need of government intervention for setting up of universal guidelines, policies and rules in various destinations to insure proper conduct of Halal Tourism.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Monika Barnwal** is currently pursuing her PhD along with JRF fellowship from Jamia Millia Islamia and published research papers in UGC Care journals and in Scopus listed journal. Her tourism interests are in Sustainability, Destination branding and Smart Tourism. She has authored Ready Reckoner Tourism Guidebook for UGC Net Aspirants  
[monk638barnwal@gmail.com](mailto:monk638barnwal@gmail.com)

**Jahangir Khan** is currently pursuing his PhD from Jamia Millia Islamia University and the major filed of his interest is Consumer behavior.  
[jahangir10390@gmail.com](mailto:jahangir10390@gmail.com)

**Nimit Chowdhary** is a Professor of Tourism in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Jamia Millia Islamia University. He has more than 27 years of the academic experience in India, China and Mexico. A recipient of many academic awards and recognitions, he has authored 13 books and more than 140 academic papers.  
[nchowdhary@jmi.ac.in](mailto:nchowdhary@jmi.ac.in)

**Vijay Kumar** is working as an Assistant Professor in Jamia Millia Islamia University and has published a number of research papers besides publishing a couple of books  
[vkumar@jmi.ac.in](mailto:vkumar@jmi.ac.in)



## Key Words

**Tourist Behavior,  
Purchase Interest,  
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Tourist Destination,  
Gender Biases**

# *Tourist's Souvenir Purchase Intention at Raghurajpur and Pipli Shopping Destinations*

**Sachin Kumar Behera**

(Corresponding author)

Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong

**Punit Gautam**

Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong

**Sarat Lenka**

Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, Bhubaneswar

## Abstract

The popularity of tourist shopping has enabled a wide variety of products to be offered to tourists. Souvenirs and handicrafts are purchased mainly by tourists for various reasons. Gender biases exist in general consumer behavior and in souvenir shopping by tourists as well. The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationships between purchase interest, importance, and behavioral intention to purchase souvenirs in light of the moderating effects of tourists' gender and age. The questionnaire survey method was used for this study. Data were collected from tourists visiting Raghurajpur and Pipli in Odisha. A total of 450 surveys were distributed. Once the invalid replies were excluded, a total of 400 effective samples were recovered and analyzed using cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests. The results from this study show significant gender differences in the "purchase interest of tourists towards souvenirs." The various purchase interests encourage local Artisans, gifts, memory, self-use, and social obligation. There were significant differences in the level of importance assigned to each reason for purchase. Such findings can form strategies to enhance the management and marketing of souvenirs, souvenir exporters, artisans, retailers, and destinations.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumer Behavior is one of the most researched areas in the field of marketing and tourism, with the terms 'travel behavior' or 'tourist behavior' typically used to describe this area of study. (Cohen et al., 2014) Shopping has been considered a significant activity from the perspective of both tourists and destination. Since shopping tourism is trending, many travel agencies try to lure tourists by creating various travel packages solely for Shopping –(Tömöri, 2010.). Shopping is an inseparable activity from tourists' stays in a destination. "(Lehto et al., 2016). Shopping is a major source of revenue for many tourist destinations (Murphy et al., 2010). Shopping options availability acts as an essential factor in tourists' destination choice "(Moscardo, 2004). Many tourists travel primarily for Shopping "(Lehto et al., 2016). Shopping not only serves the utilitarian purpose with a focus on acquiring daily necessities but also enables to obtain reminders of the travel experience from the destination, understand the local culture, and strengthen social networks(Timothy 2004). '(Hu & Yu, 2007) stated that tourists purchase souvenirs to mark a pleasant travel experience and investigate tourists' behaviors towards craft souvenirs. (Littrell et al., 1993) stated that souvenirs function as a lens that mirrors the society and culture at the destinations and considered craft souvenirs a symbolic unit.

Men and women in different age groups differ in behavior towards purchasing various commodities. Various studies have proved that gender and age are significant factors in determining purchase behavior and intentions. Determinants such as mode of travel, age, the purpose of the trip, and gender were significant predictors for the money spent on shopping and the types of purchased souvenirs "(Lehto et al., 2016). Younger tourists such as bachelors and newly married tourists without children spend higher at a destination than those older and married with children (Bojanic, 2011). Expenditure on accommodation was seen most by young singles, and spending on shopping mainly was recorded from young couples (newly married) and solitary survivors(Lawson, 1991). A study conducted by (Peterson, 2007) on vacation behavior in relation to age and income found that persons below 75 years of age exhibited different vacation behaviors than persons above 75. Travel decisions are affected by gender over the life cycle of a person. Women travelers tend to travel more than men (Collins & Tisdell, 2002). Tourists also tend to show specific purchase behavior towards purchasing souvenirs in a destination based on gender and age group. This study focuses on the two factors, age, and gender, of tourists towards souvenir shopping.

Despite the close link between tourism and Shopping, relatively little attention has been devoted to substantive issues and questions surrounding this theme (gender-specific buying behavior in tourism research. The present paper seeks to critically examine the literature on tourist shopping and gender differences in consumer behavior to synthesize it holistically.

This study scrutinizes whether or not extreme gender ideologies and age influence souvenir-purchase behaviors. If so, purchase intentions of two extremes in gender ideologies could be used to identify behavioral groups of tourists for advertising emphases. Therefore, the current study reviews the progress in shopping tourism research based on gender and age to identify trends and research gaps and propose future research directions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Gender differences in Consumer Behavior:*

The age and gender of consumers are the most critical factors that shape the knowledge or intentions of consumers to purchase commodities. (Wekeza & Sibanda, 2019) Gender differences exist in each antecedent's relative influence in the decision-making process for consumer purchase (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003). (Pascual Miguel et al., 2015) concluded that effort expectancy and social impact on purchase intention are significantly stronger for female shoppers than for male shoppers and investigated gender differences in the influences of emotional factors. (Zhang et al., 2014) found that the moderating effect of inconsistent reviews in the association between emotional trust and purchase intention in the online shopping context is more robust for female consumers than for male consumers. Attitude, beliefs, and behavior differ significantly between males and females on several dimensions when purchasing products. (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003) Females buy more often and were substantially different from males on yearly expenditure, fashion fan ship, attitudes, and impulse buying. (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010) Many studies have proven the relations between age and tourist behavior (B. B. Anderson & Langmeyer, 2016; L. F. Anderson & Littrell, 1995). (Kong & Chang, 2016) have concluded that a tourist's souvenir purchase intention is related to souvenir attributes. (Mitchell et al., 1999) have concluded that shopping risk perceptions directly affect purchasing and purchase intentions but limited studies specify the effects of age and other demographic variables on purchase intentions. (Littrell, 1990) in her research concluded that found that the meanings attached to crafts are associated with tourists' age. Tourists under the young category related the importance of textile

crafts with their shopping experiences which often involved action-oriented travel to remote villages. Still, older tourists seemed to value the aesthetic pleasure taken from owning, contemplating, and using a textile craft over time. In their study, (F. Anderson & Littrell, 1995) distinctly classified souvenir-purchasing styles between female tourists of different age groups. Unplanned souvenir purchases were carried by Tourists in early adulthood, and Shopping was mostly done with their children at the destination. Planned Purchases were carried out by older tourists, and they mainly shopped with their friends or husbands.

### **Tourist Shopping**

From the perspective of both the tourist and the destination, Shopping and tourism are inseparable and vital (Kim & Littrell, 2001). Shopping tourism, tourism shopping, and tourist shopping are the three terms that frequently appear in shopping-related tourism research. Although Shopping has captured more attention in tourism academia in recent years, there exist few, if any, conceptual analyses of these terms. (Jin et al., 2017) identified main themes in tourist shopping research based on a "4W2H" framework that examines who (segmentation), what (product), why (motivation), where (setting and service), how (behavior and experience), and how much (expenditure). In this study, Why and who are examined.

Several studies with the primary purpose of identifying the dimensions were undertaken that are used by consumers in evaluating souvenirs (Littrell, 1990). Further down the years, in a separate study, the subjects (in this case, international tourists) were asked to describe the meanings associated with their favorite textile crafts acquired during travels. The content analyzed responses resulted in the summation Shopping experiences, associations with place or culture, personal memories of travel, and intrinsic qualities are all connected with a particular textile. The mid western US tourists were found to reconfirm the importance of aesthetic qualities, including appealing colors and designs. The product quality, use, and uniqueness were reconfirmed as the additional criteria valued by these tourists. The easiness to pack or carry a product on a trip also held important to these shoppers (Littrell et al., 2016). While evaluative criteria have been studied and identified in the past, minimal research has sought out concerning attitudes toward the importance of souvenir attributes in relation to tourists' intentions to purchase. To comprehend the dynamics of gift-giving multiple studies have been conducted which provide insights on popular gift choices, motivations of givers, and the gendered nature of

gifting behavior. The researchers found the symbolic and motivational characteristics were worth taking a look at. To further illustrate, (Sherry, 1983) identified the primary reasons for gift-giving as either altruistic (maximizing the pleasure of the recipient) or agonistic (maximizing the donor's personal satisfaction). (Belk & Coon, 1993) underlined the significance of recognizing gift-giving as a statement of unselfish or agape love. Be that as it may, fellow researchers, including the likes of (Goodwin et al., 1990), found that gift-giving motives are either obligatory or voluntary. In addition to souvenir items, tourists frequently purchase gifts for their personal use (Rucker et al., 2015). (Litirell et al., 2016) identified that nearly 70% of the Midwestern US tourists purchased gifts for family and friends during their travels. The literature on consumer behavior suggests that consumer decisions are affected by situational factors such as gift-giving. Inconsistent findings were a theme revealed in studies concerning gift giving vs. buying for one. For example, (Vincent & Zikmund, 1976) found that consumers viewed the risk in buying a wedding gift as greater than if the identical item was being bought for them. Specifically applied to tourism, (Rucker et al. 1986) noted that more planned purchases were made by tourists for others than for themselves, indicating their higher involvement in the former type of situation. However, (Heeler et al., 1979) observed that information is sought in a gift-giving situation than in a personal situation in the case of college students. Despite inconsistency among the findings from previous gift-giving research, it seems that factors influencing the intention to purchase for self vs. others may not be equivalent and calls for attention in the tourism venue. This research integrated understanding of tourism shopping, souvenirs, and gift buying by asking two questions:

- For various categories of textile souvenirs, in tourists, which characteristics serve as predictors of their purchase intentions?
- Whether relationships between predictor variables and purchase intentions are being influenced by the situational variable of buying for oneself vs. buying for others?

The ultimate dependent variable examined in this study was the intention to purchase souvenirs. Purchase intention provides a link between consumers' reactions to souvenir and their acquisition or use of the souvenirs. Thus, the intention has been used as an alternative measure to purchase behavior. While a number of studies in tourism have described souvenir-purchasing behavior, no studies have examined tourist's intention to buy souvenirs in relation to their gender and age towards souvenirs. In the present

study, it was expected that tourists. A favorable attitude toward souvenirs would predict their intention to purchase the souvenirs.

## **STUDY AREA**

### **Raghurajpur Tourism Village**

A small village in the Puri district renowned for pattachitra, a traditional form of painting in Odisha. There are around 311 artists residing in around 131 households in the village. The village is located on the southern banks of the river Bhargavi and around 14 km from the holy town of Puri. In every family of the village resides an artist who is an expert in making at least any one of the crafts, such as Patta paintings, tusser paintings, palm leaf engravings, papier-mache toys and masks, and cow dung toys.

The chitrakaras (painters) are the most famous and numerous among Raghurajpur artists. They paint brightly colored mythological stories about Lord Jagannath and other deities, especially Krishna. Derived from the Sanskrit word Patta (canvas) and Chitra (painting), pattachitra originated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Raghurajpur was recognized as a Heritage Village in 2000 by the Government of India. Since 2000, institutions such as INTACH, ICCI, NORAD, and the India Foundation for the Arts, have worked in tandem to develop Raghurajpur as a craft village. These institutions trained artists to relearn traditional techniques and apply them in their artworks. To boost rural tourism, the artists painted their homes to showcase and display their art.

### **Pipli Tourism Village**

This block is also located in the Puri district of Odisha famous for its colorful appliqué crafts. In accordance with the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 the applique work of Pipli has received Intellectual Property Protection (Abraham, 2010). Pipli is the hub for all the activities of manufacturing, trade, and export of appliqué items from Odisha to the international market. The applique craft due to its unique selling point (USP) and its pool of talented artisans, the village was brought under the Rural Tourism Project. Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with GOI-UNDP, is implementing the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) in Pipli. All the Gram Panchayats in Pipli Block, as well as the N.A.C., have been brought under the Rural Tourism Scheme. Pipli is located at a distance of 40 km from Puri and 16 km from Bhubaneswar. It lies at the junction where the Konark Road branches out from the Puri-Bhubaneswar Highway.

Pipli is well-connected with all three modes of transport – roads, railways, and airways. The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar. It is also the most convenient railway station for tourists visiting the

destination, although Khurda Road is closer. Pipili was previously located on N.H. 203, the highway running between Puri and Bhubaneswar. Recently, a new highway has been constructed connecting the two cities.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Objectives of the study

Following are the broad objectives of the study:

- To know whether there is an effect of gender and age on souvenir purchase intention.
- To know the souvenir purchase intention of tourists of different gender and age group.
- To contribute towards the literature of souvenir buying intention.

## HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant association exists between genders, age of the respondent with respect to purchasing the interest of souvenir.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant association exists between gender, age of the respondent with respect to purchasing the interest of souvenirs.

## THE POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Tourists visiting Raghurajpur and Pipli villages are taken as the population in the study. Respondents were selected based on their domicile outside the village and come with a motive of adventure, handicrafts and souvenirs culture, leisure, religion, history, spending leisure time with families. Only one tourist was asked to respond to the questionnaire if tourists were in a large family group.

## QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A questionnaire was designed as a survey To collect data from tourists visiting Raghurajpur and Pipli of Puri district in Odisha, a survey instrument (questionnaire) was designed with both open and closed-ended questions.

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Tourists visiting Raghurajpur and Pipli of Puri were interviewed at the end of their trip to the village. They were asked to be a part of the survey at the exit of the village. In Raghurajpur, the data was collected at the exit point of the village. In Pipli, tourists were requested to respond when they exited from souvenir shops after shopping as shops are located on the main road and there is no proper entry and exit point in the village. In both the villages, the samples were

randomly selected. The respondents were interviewed personally, and they were requested to fill their responses in the questionnaire. The survey was intended to check the association of gender and age to souvenir purchase intention. The survey also asked for information on age, gender, qualification, and income level. Specifically, the survey asked for information on the purchase intention of male and female tourists in the village during their visit. Purchase intentions include memory, self-use, gift, encourage local artisans, and social obligation. Souvenirs included Patta paintings, tusser paintings, palm leaf engravings, papier-mâché toys, masks, and cow dung toys of Raghurajpur Village and appliqué work of Pipli village. These handicrafts are the ones that are most often prepared in the villages to sell to tourists. Tourists were asked to indicate purchase intention that influenced their decision to purchase the souvenirs.

## SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size has been drawn using the “Slovin Formula”.

This formula was proposed by Michael Slovin in 1960. Where the error is calculated by subtracting the confidence level from 1 to get the error.

Using the following formula the sample size has been computed:

$$n = N / (Ne^2)$$

Where,

N= Total Tourist Arrival

n = Number of samples

e = Error Tolerance level

The sample size from the statistics of 5, 36,608 at 95% significance (tolerance error is 5%) can be calculated as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$n = 5, 36,608 / (1 + 5, 36,608 * 0.5^2)$$

$$n = 5, 36,608 / (5, 36,609 * 0.0025)$$

$$n = 5, 36,608 / 1341.52$$

$$n = 400$$

The sample size for the study will be 400 tourists from both the study area.

A total of 430 domestic and international tourists visiting the two rural tourism villages were interviewed, of which 400 questionnaires were finally accepted for analysis. The ground for rejection of 30 questionnaires was incomplete and improper responses. Data were collected only from those tourists who purchased at least one souvenir from the villages.

## Sample Size

Total Tourist Arrival (Odisha)	Tourist Arrival (Puri)	Tourist Arrival (Pipli)	Tourist Arrival (Raghurajpur)	Total of Pipli and Raghurajpur
1,29,19,260	43,08,842	4,01,642	1,34,966	5,36,608

Source: Odisha Tourism Statistics 2016

Note: The total tourist arrival given is excluding day visitors but includes domestic and foreign tourists.

### SAMPLE VALIDITY

Depending upon the aims and objectives of the study, sample items are selected using a specific pattern, i.e., only those tourists visiting the village and purchase at least one souvenir were asked to fill the questionnaire. As the study area is vast and coverage of all the tourists visiting the village is not possible, randomly tourists were selected for data collection.

### ANALYTICAL TOOLS

Microsoft Excel was used to compile the database. While entering (raw data) into the database, necessary data checks and validation techniques have been used. The database was converted into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) format to employ proper analysis techniques. A proper definition of variables, data type descriptions, value label descriptions is performed on the SPSS databases. In order to determine if differences existed for individuals that visited the two villages, demographic items were also analyzed. To highlight the representation of the

population to the sample, frequency tables were also developed. Cross-tabulation between Gender and Age with respect to Purchase interest of souvenirs was done, and the Chi-square test was finally done.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary data is obtained through a well-framed questionnaire circulated among different tourists from other parts of India and the world to Raghurajpur and Pipli of Odisha. The questionnaire comprises personal details to be filled by the respondents. The frequency and percentage analysis are applied to identify different categories of tourists and their backgrounds.

Among the tourists, 57.5% were female, and 42.5% were male. They ranged in age from 18 to older than 61 years, with the highest percentage (34.7%) being between the ages of 40 and 60. This age group was followed by those 25 to 40 years (26.3%). The highest percentage of tourists, 43%, reported family incomes of below two lakhs. This was followed by 20.1% reporting 2-5 lakhs and

**Table 1**  
**Demographic Profile of the respondents (N=400)**

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	170	42.5	42.5
Female	230	57.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Age</b>			
Below 18	16	4.0	4.0
18-25	71	17.8	21.8
25-40	105	26.3	48.0
40-60	138	34.7	82.5
Above 60	70	17.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Qualification</b>			
Higher secondary	71	17.8	
Graduate	222	55.5	63.3
PG	76	19.0	100.0
Doctorate degree	31	7.8	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>			
Business	22	5.5	5.5
Dependent	88	22.0	27.5
Government employee	51	12.8	40.3
Home maker	88	22.0	62.3
Private sector employee	138	34.5	96.8
Self employed	13	3.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Income			
Below 2 lac	172	43.0	43.0
2-5 lac	80	20.1	63.1
5-10 lac	79	19.8	82.8
10-20 lac	44	11.0	93.8
Above 20 lac	25	6.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: developed from the survey data

19.8% reporting 5-10 lakhs. Referring to education, tourists (55%) had completed college or university and had a graduate degree, followed by

19% having Post Graduate degree, and 17.8% had completed higher secondary education. Only 7.8% had a doctorate degree. Coming to occupation,

**Table 2:**  
**Cross-tabulation between Gender and Age with respect to Purchase interest of souvenir**

gender				Purchase Interest					Total
				Encourage local Artisans	Gift	Memory	Self-Use	Social Obligation	
Female	Age	18-25	Count	2	19	9	9	8	47
			%	0.0%	42.2%	20.0%	20.0%	17.8%	100.0%
		25-40	Count	8	24	23	11	5	71
			%	11.9%	35.8%	34.3%	10.4%	7.5%	100.0%
		40-60	Count	14	18	19	1	17	69
			%	22.2%	23.8%	25.4%	1.6%	27.0%	100.0%
		ABOVE 60	Count	1	8	26	5	0	40
			%	2.6%	18.4%	68.4%	10.5%	0.0%	100.0%
		BELOW 18	Count	0	4	0	1	0	5
			%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Total	Count	25	73	77	27	30	232
			%	10.1%	32.0%	33.8%	11.0%	13.2%	100.0%
Male	Age	18-25	Count	8	8	1	4	3	24
			% within Age	33.3%	33.3%	4.2%	16.7%	12.5%	100.0%
		25-40	Count	2	16	9	8	0	35
			% within Age	6.3%	50.0%	28.1%	15.6%	0.0%	100.0%
		40-60	Count	15	17	12	20	5	67
			% within Age	23.8%	19.0%	19.0%	30.2%	7.9%	100.0%
		ABOVE 60	Count	2	13	3	12	1	31
			% within Age	6.5%	41.9%	9.7%	38.7%	3.2%	100.0%
		BELOW 18	Count	5	6	0	0	0	11
			% within Age	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		Total	Count	32	60	25	44	9	168
			% within Age	18.8%	35.3%	14.7%	25.9%	5.3%	100.0%

most tourists were privately employed (34.5%), followed by dependents and homemakers, making equal 22%.

The above table shows the cross-tabulation between gender (Male, Female), Age (below 18, 18 to 25, 25 to 40, 40 to 60, and above 60) concerning purchase interest. The table reveals that the female purchase number is more than the male purchase of souvenirs. In the female, the purchase age group is 25 to 40, and 40 to 60 is higher, and they purchase souvenir maximum for memory purpose 33.80 percent (77 no's) then coming for gift purpose 32.0 percent.

Similarly, in the case of males, the purchase age group is higher similar to 25 to 40 and 40 to 60 years. They purchase maximum for gift purpose 35.30 percent (60 no's) then coming for self-use 25.90 percent (44 no's).

In the above table, the significant value of chi-square is coming to 0.000, which less than 0.05. So the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, i.e., there is a significant association exists between genders, age of the respondent with respect to purchasing the interest of souvenir.

**Table 3:**  
**Chi-Square Tests (Gender and Age with respect to Purchase interest of souvenir)**

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>
Female	Pearson Chi-Square	109.209	32	0.000
	Likelihood Ratio	107.245	32	0.000
	N of Valid Cases	228		
Male	Pearson Chi-Square	63.484	32	0.001
	Likelihood Ratio	70.641	32	0.000
	N of Valid Cases	170		
<b>Total</b>	<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>118.191</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	<b>118.994</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	<b>400</b>		

*Source: developed from the survey data*

## CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that differences exist in souvenir purchase intention between men and women. Many women in the villages shopped in various shops and homes with their children and made unplanned souvenir purchases for memory and others as gifts. Many men in the villages shopped more frequently for gifts and high-quality souvenirs, primarily for personal satisfaction and self-use. This section summarizes and discusses the main findings of the work. Based on the results, we make the following observations.

Shopping to experience local culture through an engagement with local products, local craftspeople, and a desire to purchase something which genuinely 'belongs' to and is 'from the destination. Raghurajpur and Pipli function as a one-stop place for all needs of a tourist would have and being called the souvenir shopping destinations of Odisha.

Gendered advertising can be preferred over traditional advertising. Since males have a higher utilitarian approach while purchasing souvenirs, sellers need to improve the utility aspect of the

souvenir to increase sales. Since women purchase more than men, gender-specific marketing should be adopted. For higher purchases, shopkeepers need to attract women with appropriate strategies. Women purchase souvenirs mainly for memory and gift, so the quality of souvenirs is directly proportional to satisfaction among tourists. The more satisfied a tourist is, the more word of mouth advertising is spread. Most men venture out of the shop when women purchase, so local stakeholders should tap the opportunity by providing appropriate services. Males purchase mainly for gifting to others, so the quality of the souvenir is directly proportional to the word-of-mouth advertising. It is observed that most middle-aged tourists visited the village's marketing should be done to attract other gender groups as well. To attract tourists of various age groups towards souvenirs, the retailers should provide better availability of discounted souvenirs, assortment of discounted souvenirs, transaction safety, comparison of discount prices by sellers, and a tourist-friendly approach with the correct information. All stakeholders need to use the

findings of research in preparing marketing strategies for souvenirs. Stakeholders must understand tourists and meet their needs. The age and gender of tourists need to be taken seriously. The results of this work unravel and shed light on the understanding of gender and age influence on purchase intention and provide a new perspective on specific marketing strategies. The key findings are discussed, and recommendations are provided for future research. Further work to improve on these new developments is suggested.

## LIMITATIONS AND

## FURTHER RESEARCH SCOPE

This study is not without some limitations. Time constraints and the cost involved in getting samples across districts are some of the limitations of this study. This study is conducted only in two villages of Odisha, so the findings of the study cannot be applied across Odisha or India. Regardless of these limitations, this study does offer an enriched direction for the marketing of souvenirs. A future study can be conducted across India to analyze the gender and age differences towards souvenir purchases. Future studies can be performed to examine the gender and age differences towards specific tourist purchases like hotels, accommodation, etc. Future research can be conducted to investigate the income, occupation, and education qualification differences towards specific souvenirs. Studies can also be conducted to analyze the demographic differences towards souvenir buying by comparing India and neighboring countries.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Sachin Kumar Behera** is a PhD research scholar in the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya. His research interests include tourist shopping, tourist behavior, and transportation management.

[journeversachin@gmail.com](mailto:journeversachin@gmail.com)

**Punit Gautam** is Associate Professor in the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya. His research interests include Ecotourism, Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Policy, Planning and Impacts and Tour Operations with 27 years teaching experience

[pg20120301@rediffmail.com](mailto:pg20120301@rediffmail.com)

**Sarat Kumar Lenka** is Professor at the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. His research interests include sustainable tourism management with 33 years teaching experience

[saratlenka62@gmail.com](mailto:saratlenka62@gmail.com)

## Key Words

**Nathu La,  
Sikkim,  
Cross-border Trade,  
Tourism**

# *Research Note* *Cross-border Trade Tourism Through Nathula Pass In Sikkim*

**Pramesh Chettri**

**Assistant Professor**

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtok,

**Jigmie Wanchuk Bhutia**

**Assistant Professor**

Department of Tourism Sikkim Central University, Gangtok,

## Abstract

Nathu La is one of the three open trading border posts between India and China; the other two being Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh and Lipulekh (or Lipulech) in Uttarakhand. After the re-opening of India-China cross-border trade on 6th, July 2006 through Nathu La Pass, it has enhanced benefit in both the growth of trade and tourism in Sikkim. The resumption of Nathu La trade, has proved to be a means of livelihood for the people of Sikkim and adjoining areas. This paper attempts to examine and analyse the impact of Nathu la Cross-Border Trade on promoting tourism sector in Sikkim. This article also aims to explore the current situation of Indo-China trade prospects through Nathu La. This research is both descriptive and analytical in nature using both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been acquired through observation and interview and secondary data has been acquired through the information sought from Department of Commerce and Industries and Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Sikkim. The rising trend of exports along with import in trade through this region has brought immense positive impact on the livelihood of Sikkim, India. The export of Indian goods to China from this region has increased from ₹ 8.87 lakhs in 2006-07 to ₹ 1604.43 lakhs in 2014-2015 and ₹ 6338.36 lakhs in 2016-2017. Despite these positive aspects, the Nathu La border trade has faced many impediments such as language barrier, fragility of land, lack of infrastructure, lack of trade knowledge in local aspirants, duration of trade, climatic conditions and limited numbers of commodities which are only allowed to be exported from this region. The present situation of the Nathu La trade requires a new study, not only on trade, but on all dimensions. Thus, this research recommends that the political, economic, social and security aspects have to be explored as well to lead to regional development with benefits for all stakeholders.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on in-depth research about the the impact of re-opening of cross-border trade through Nathu La on tourism promotion in Sikkim. Nathu La is the world's highest mountain highway trade pass located at 4,310 meters above sea level. It is 56 km from the Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, 52 km from the Chinese border town of Yadong, and around 400 km from the Tibetan capital, Lhasa. It is an ancient Silk Route and also one of the better conditioned trade passes between India and China. Nathu La is one of the three open trading border posts between India and China; the other two formal border trade are located in Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh and Lipulekh (or Lipulech) in Uttarakhand. This study will critically examine and analyze the overall view of Nathu La border trade since its re-opening in the year of 2006. The re-opening of the Nathu La cross-border trade in July 2006 after the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict marked a new direction in bilateral relations between India and China. Trade via Nathu La has a long history of more than ten decades. The re-opening of Nathu La for trade after a long gestation period of 45 years on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 between India and China proved highly beneficial to the Himalayan region of Sikkim and its local people. The objective of this paper is to make a brief analysis of trend in export and import within the last thirteen years of cross-border trade. This study, therefore, is an attempt to explore the impact of re-opening of cross-border trade through Nathu La on tourism promotion in Sikkim. The role of tourism in economic and social development of communities around destination is empirically established both in developing and under developed countries across globe (Zaffar and Neetu, 2019). The re-opening of the pass was expected to bolster the economy of the region. Currently, agreements between the two nations limit trade across the pass to 36 types of goods from India and 20 from the Chinese side. The major mountain peaks and high-altitude lakes in the Himalayan region of Sikkim such as Kanchenjunga (8,586 meters), Pauhunri (7,128 meters) and Tso Mgo (3,658 meters) have made the region a major tourist destination (Chettri, 2018). Sikkim and neighbouring states are keenly looking forward to using this route for various opportunities related to trade, tourism and investment. This study will also focus on findings and the prospect of cross-border trade via Nathu La. The increasing inflow of tourism and trade through Nathu La also has economic impacts on the livelihood of the Himalayan region of Sikkim and its local people. Tourism is a human resource based activity; its expansion will not only create employment, but also give a fillip to other sectors like transport, telecommunication and retail selling (Chakrabarti, 2009). "The Re-opening of the Proposed Sikkim-Tibet Trade via Nathu La: A Policy Study on Prospect, Opportunities and Requisite Preparedness" (NTSG 2005) made the following major policy recommendations, with special

emphasis on the order in which these should take place:

2005–2010: Initiation of trading actions on both sides backed by basic existing infrastructures, and start building wider and deeper infrastructural facilities

2010: Trading on a larger scale to start, based on upgraded and developed infrastructures

2012: Integration of Trade and Tourism activities and a fresh bilateral arrangement made to facilitate the movement of tourists across the border

2012–2015: Package tours and open tourism activities

2015: Inclusion of movement of freights to and from the neighbouring countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal through this route

2018: SAARC Tourism, integrate with other tourism activities of third countries of the region including Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

By looking at policy options and recommendations, the proposed volume of cross border trade between the two countries looks impressive via Nathu La. The re-opening of Nathu La trade has generated employment on both sides of the border of India and China in areas such as hotels and restaurants, transport, communication, road construction, banking, insurance, packaging, etc. Despite the positive aspects, the Nathu La cross border trade has faced many problems such as duration of trade, lack of infrastructure, fragility of land, limited trade knowledge in local aspirants, language barriers among the traders, challenging weather and limited numbers of allowed export commodities to name a few.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section attempts to review important studies on Nathu La Border Trade. There are a number of studies which focuses on different aspects of the Nathu La trade.

Hasija, 2013 explored the India, China and the Nathu La in three segments- past, present and the future, in terms of the trade before 1962, the trade that exists today and its future potential. Nathu La route became a pathway of not only trade but exchange of ideas, cultural, beliefs and rise of a cosmopolitan culture along which new towns and cities came into being. Since late 1970's, efforts were made to increase trade between both the countries. Both countries agreed that trade routes like the Nathu La have immense potential. Nathu La was reopened following numerous bilateral trade agreements in 2006 which coincided with the "Year of Friendship" between the two countries. The trade will be boosted if the government revises the obsolete list. The illegal trade at least in these items has been stopped and traders are very enthusiastic about the new items. Lastly she explored Nathu La potential in following manner -

the profitability of the trade during 1950-62 was mainly because of the range of items involved in the trade.

Pazo, 2013 observed that the serious measures should be taken to check poaching and deforestation practices. Besides Gangtok, there are several other smaller towns which functioning as commercial hubs but are limited in scope due to lack of proper infrastructure. He also analysed and observed that by giving proper development, these towns could facilitate to be manufacturing centres as well as market for indigenous agro based products in the region. According to him securing the trade and safeguarding the Eco-system should be run simultaneously. Lastly he pointed out that the state government needs to revisit their existing policies and launch initiatives which should involve private, government, partnerships, group based micro financing policies, capacity building projects and similar other projects which would empower the local communities.

Chettri, 2018 in his article on "India-China Border Trade Trough Nathu La Pass: Prospects and Impediments" has found that after the re-opening of Nathu La trade, there have been huge gains to stakeholders on both sides of the border. He observed that Sikkim and its adjoining regions can become a tourist hub if proper road connectivity, amenities and communication facilities are provided. Siliguri, being a hub of commercial and transportation activities that also shares borders with four foreign countries, could prove a confluence of great importance.

Kuei-hsiang Hsu, 2005 portrays an overall picture of the impact of Nathu La on China – India border trade. He observed that there are three possible reasons behind India's decision to differ the opening of Nathu La. The first one is the turnover of ruling regime. The second one is security reasons and the third reason was the lack of infrastructure at Nathu La. The opening of border trade activities will be beneficial to Sikkim, Darjeeling and West Bengal along the route and even the entire North East region.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine and analyze the impact of re-opening of cross-border trade through Nathu La on tourism promotion in Sikkim.
- To make a brief analysis of trend in export and import within the last thirteen years of cross-border trade through Nathu La.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the stated objective, this study involved descriptive and analytical research design using secondary data. The secondary data has been acquired through the information gathered from Department of Commerce and Industries,

Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Sikkim. The data has also been generated from other secondary sources like journals, published articles, annual reports, previous research works etc. The data related to total number of Tourist (Domestic) visited to Nathu La & collection of revenue as an environmental fee has taken from the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Sikkim. Similarly, the detailed report on export and import from the year 2006 to 2019 was taken from Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of Sikkim. For analyzing the data of export and import, descriptive statistics were used with the help of statistical software SPSS 20.00 and Microsoft Excel. This present study was conducted from 2019 to 2020.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

he impact of re-opening of Nathu Lapass for trade between India and China is not only results in economic benefits from trade but also

results in the promotion of tourism in the region and its impact on tourism.

In the era of globalization, the issue of border trade has attracted the attention of governments, planners, bureaucrats, development agencies, politicians and academics in India. The promotion of tourism after the re-opening of Nathu La cross-border trade in Sikkim is imperative because its expansion will create an employment in the areas adjoining India and China. The signing of a memorandum between the Government of India and China on the re-opening of trade route via Nathu La is of critical importance to their political-economic relations (Chettri, 2018). The total No. of tourist (domestic) visiting to Nathu La and collection of revenue as an environmental fee are highlighted below:

It is clear from Table-2 that tourism is indeed an important industry that cannot be neglected at present. From the above Table 2 and Figure 1, it is

**Table 1: Total No. of Tourist (Domestic) visited to Nathu La & collection of revenue as an environmental fee from the visitors:**

Sl. No.	Years	Destination	Total No. of Tourists	Total Revenue (₹)
1.	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2010 to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2011	Gangtok to Nathula	55,522	1,11,04,440
2.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Gangtok to Nathula	41,521	83,04,250
3.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2013	Gangtok to Nathula	44,209	88,41,800
4.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	Gangtok to Nathula	51,744	1,03,48,900
5.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015	Gangtok to Nathula	68,727	1,37,45,400
6.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	Gangtok to Nathula	81,667	1,63,33,400
7.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	Gangtok to Nathula	1,46,244	2,92,48,800
8.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018	Gangtok to Nathula	1,34,445	2,68,89,000
9.	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019	Gangtok to Nathula	1,47,386	2,94,77,200
10..	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	Gangtok to Nathula	1,32,659	2,65,31,800
11.	For the month of December 2020	Gangtok to Nathula	10,174	20,34,800

Source: Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Sikkim, 2021

**Table 2: Detailed Report on Cumulative No. of Tourist Visited to Nathu La and Percentage of Growth from the year 2010-11 To 2020**

Year	Total No. of Tourist visited to Nathula (in Lakhs)	Cumulative No. of Tourist visited to Nathula (in Lakhs)	% of Growth
2010-11	0.555	NA	NA
2011-12	0.415	0.97	-25%
2012-13	0.442	1.412	7%
2013-14	0.517	1.929	17%
2014-15	0.687	2.616	33%
2015-16	0.816	3.432	19%
2016-17	1.46	4.892	79%
2017-18	1.34	6.232	-8%
2018-19	1.47	7.702	10%
2019-20	1.32	9.022	-10%
2020*	0.101	9.123	-92%

Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

clear that total number of tourist visits to Nathu La has increased tremendously. The total number of tourist visited to Nathu La in the year 2010-11 was 55,522 and it has increased to 1,46,224 in the year 2016-17. There was slightly decreased in total number of tourist visited to Nathu La in the year 2019-20 and 2020 because of outbreak of COVID-19 and road blockage. The road to Nathu La was closed since January 2020 to till 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. From the above analysis it can be concluded that increasing in total number of tourist visiting to Nathu La has increased total revenue collection from the same region. The re-opening of Nathu La

trade between India and China after a long gestation period of 45 years on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 has generated more employment on both sides of the border in areas such as tourism, transport, communication, road construction, restaurants and hotels, banking, insurance, packaging, etc.

From the above Table 3 and Figure 2, it is clear that the total collection of revenue from Nathu La permit from the tourist as an environmental fee has increased after the re-opening of Nathu La Pass. In the year 2010-11, the Tourism Department of Sikkim has collected the sum total of Rs. 111.044 lakhs as revenue from the Nathu La permit from the

**Fig 1 Detailed Report of Total Tourist (Domestic) Visited to Nathula from the year 2010-11 to 2020**



Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

**Table 3: Detailed Report on Cumulative value of Revenue Collection and Percentage of Growth from the year 2010-11 to 2020**

Year	Revenue Collection (₹) in Lakhs	Cumulative Value of revenue collections (₹) in Lakhs	% of Growth
2010-11	111.0444	NA	NA
2011-12	83.0425	194.086	-25%
2012-13	88.418	282.505	6%
2013-14	103.489	385.994	17%
2014-15	137.454	523.448	33%
2015-16	163.334	686.782	19%
2016-17	292.488	979.23	79%
2017-18	268.89	1248.12	-8%
2018-19	294.772	1542.892	10%
2019-20	265.318	1808.21	-10%
2020*	20.348	1828.558	-92%

Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

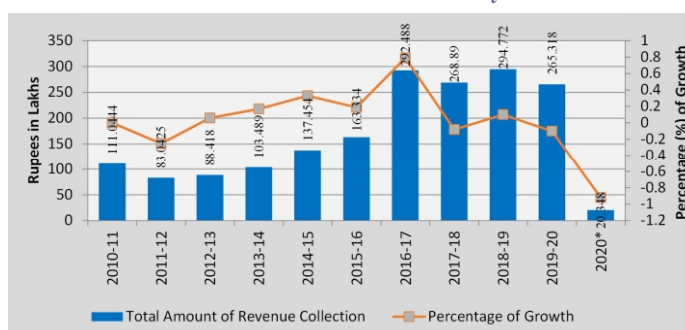
tourist. In the year 2018-19 the revenue generated from Nathu La permit rose to Rs.294.77 lakhs and the collection of revenue slightly decreased in the year 2019-20 because of road blockage and outbreak of COVID-19 from the month of January, 2020 to till 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. The increase in revenue collection from Nathu La permit has not only proved the economic benefit for the region but it also indicates the growth/promotion of tourism in the region and it definitely leads to increasing inflow of tourists in and around the area of Nathu La and Tsomgo in the near future.

### INDIA-CHINA CROSS-BORDER TRADE TOURISM

The resumption of the Nathu La cross-border trade in July 2006 after the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict marked a new direction in bilateral relations

between India and China. At the time of the Nathu La pass's re-opening in 2006, the Government of India had declared only twenty-nine items for export and fifteen items for import, but later on the list of items for promoting border trade was found to be obsolete. As a result, the expected momentum of trade could not gain. Keeping in mind about the situation of trade the repeated requests made by Indian and Chinese traders for a revision of the tradable items list a revised list of five items of import and seven new items of export were added to the existing list in 2012, and the items were also made duty free. Agreements between the two nation limits trades across the pass to 36 types of goods from Nathu La Region (India) and 20 from Tibet Autonomous region (China) and are listed below.

**Fig 2 Detail Report of Total Revenue Collection from Tourist (Domestic) Visited to Nathu La as an Environmental Fee from the year 2010-11 to 2020**



Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

**Table 4: List of Exports-Imports Items through Nathu La Trade**

Exports		Imports
1.Agriculture Implements	21. Dyes	1. Goat Skin
2.Blankets	22. Spices	2. Sheep Skin
3.Copper Products	23. Watches	3.Wool
4.Clothes	24. Shoes	4. Raw Silk
5.Cycles	25. Kerosene	5. Yak Tails
6.Coffee	26. Stationary	6. China Clay
7.Tea	27. Utensil	7. Borax
8.Barley	28.Wheat	8. Yak hair
9.Rice	29.Textiles	9. Szaibelyita
10.Flour	30. Processed Food Items	10. Butter
11.Dry Fruits	31. Flowers	11.Goat Cashmere(Pasham)
12.Dry and fresh vegetables	32.Fruit and Spices	12. Common Salt
13.Vegetable Oil	33. Religious Products	13. Horses
14.Gur and Misri	34.Readymade Garment	14. Goats
15.Tobacco	35.Handicraft and Handloom Products	15. Sheep
16. Snuff	36.Local Herbal Medicine	16. Readymade Garments
17. Cigarettes		17. Shoes
18. Canned Food		18. Carpets
19. Agro Chemical		19. Quilt/Blankets
20. Local Herbs		20. Local herbal medicine

Source: Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of Sikkim

The above list is heavily biased towards exports. In addition to the above list, the state can export horticultural and agricultural products, dairy products and forest products. For instance, these items include ginger, cardamom, flora and fauna, bamboo chopsticks, dry chili, orchid, handlooms, bamboo saplings, woolen carpets, wooden carvings and thanka paintings etc. However, this list has yet to be finalized for trading by the two countries.

From the above data Table 5 and Figure 3, it becomes clear that the surpluses from the cross-border trade at the Nathu La pass have increased significantly after its re-opening. This rising trend of exports shows the positive impact of Nathu La

trade on the livelihood of people especially to the Himalayan region of Sikkim, India and promoting tourism sector in this region. The data also show that the exports of Indian goods from the Nathu La pass to China are more than imports. The export of Indian goods to China has increased from ₹8.87 lakhs in 2006-07 to ₹6025 in 2015-16 and ₹6338.36 lakhs in 2016-17. In the year 2010-11 to 2011-12 the import was reported as nil, which strengthens the need of broadening the list of tradable commodity items. Later the import was increased in 2015-16 and 2016-17 but comparatively lower than the export. In the first year after its re-opening the trade shows deficit figures of (₹1.96 lakhs) but later the trade surplus

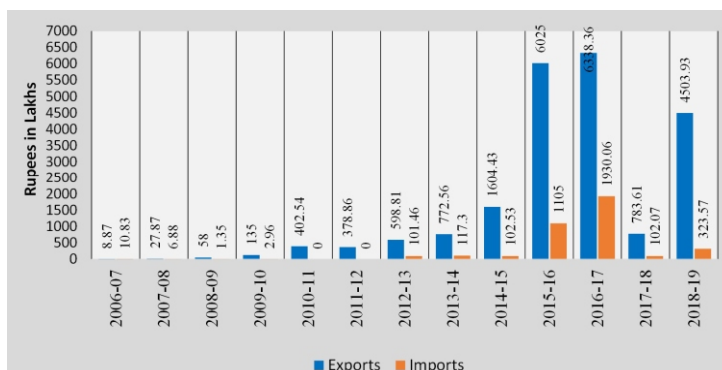
**Table 5: Detailed Report on Export and Import from 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 to 30<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2019.**

Date	Export from India to TAR* (Rs. in lakhs)	Import from TAR to India (Rs. in lakhs)	Trade deficit/surpluses (Rs.in lakhs)	Total Trade (Rs. In Lakhs)	% of Growth
2006-7 (July-Sept)	8.87	10.83	-1.96	19.7	NA
2007-8 (May-Nov)	27.87	6.88	20.99	34.75	76.4%
2008-9 (May-Oct)	58	1.35	56.65	59.35	70.8%
2009-10(May-Nov)	135	2.96	132.04	137.96	132.5%
2010-2011(May-Nov)	402.54	NIL	402.54	402.54	191.8%
2011-12(May-Nov)	378.86	NIL	378.86	378.86	-5.9%
2012-13(May-Nov)	598.81	101.46	497.4	700.27	84.8%
2013-14(May-Nov)	772.56	117.3	655.26	889.86	27.1%
2014-15(May-Nov)	1604.43	102.53	1501.9	1706.96	91.8%
2015-16(May-Nov)	6025	1105	4920	7130	317.7%
2016-17(May-Nov)	6338.36	1930.06	4408.3	8268.42	16.0%
2017-18(May-Nov)	783.61	102.07	681.54	885.68	-89.3%
2018-19(May-Nov)	4503.93	323.57	4180.36	4827.5	445.1%

Source: Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of Sikkim, 2016 & 2021

\*Tibet Autonomous Region

**Fig 3 Details of Indo-China Trade at Nathu La Pass (Year Wise Growth)**



Source: Department of Commerce and Industries, Government of Sikkim, 2016 & 2021

has increased tremendously to (₹ 4920 lakhs) in the year 2015-16. After the addition of list of items in both export and import in year 2012, there was a slight increase in the trade volume. The cumulative

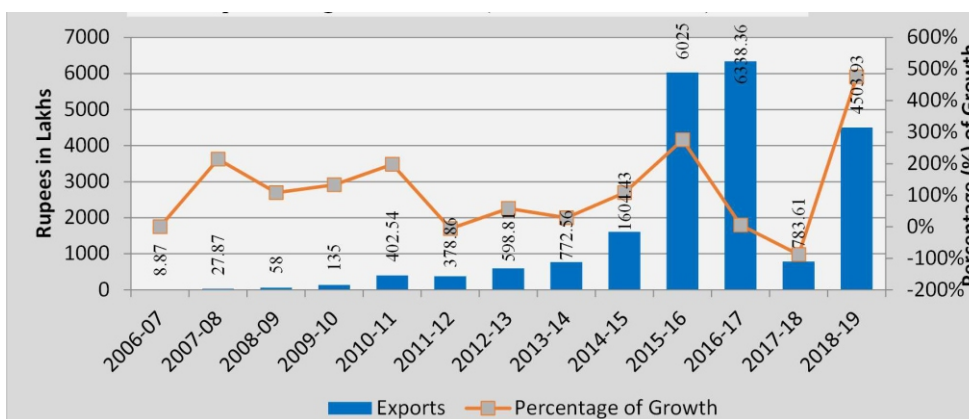
value of Exports in the year 2018-19 was Rs. 21,637.84 (Lakhs). Similarly, the cumulative value of Imports in the year 2018-19 was Rs. 3804.01 (Lakhs).

**Table 6: Detailed Report on Cumulative Value of Export and Percentage of Growth (2006-07 to 2018-19)**

Year	Export (Rs.) in Lakhs	Cumulative Value of Exports (Rs.) in Lakhs	% of Growth
2006-07	8.87	NA	NA
2007-08	27.87	36.74	214%
2008-09	58	94.74	108%
2009-10	135	229.74	133%
2010-11	402.54	632.28	198%
2011-12	378.86	1011.14	-6%
2012-13	598.81	1609.95	58%
2013-14	772.56	2382.51	29%
2014-15	1604.43	3986.94	108%
2015-16	6025	10011.94	276%
2016-17	6338.36	16350.3	5%
2017-18	783.61	17133.91	-88%
2018-19	4503.93	21637.84	475%

Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

**Fig 4 Detailed Report on Cumulative value of export and percentage of Growth (Year Wise Growth)**

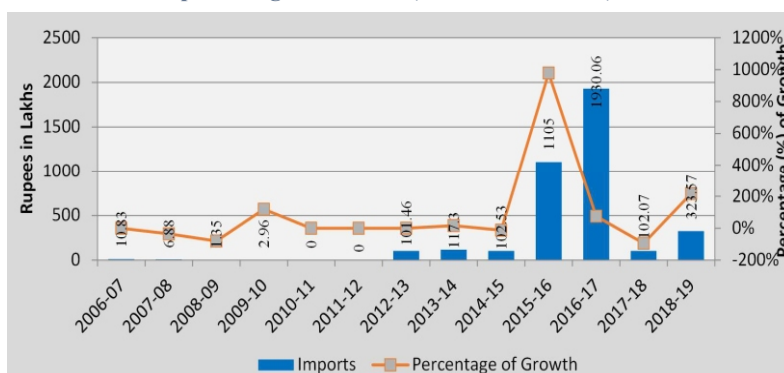


**Table 7: Detailed Report On Cumulative Value of Import and Percentage of Growth (2006-07 To 2018-19)**

Year	Import (Rs.) in Lakhs	Cumulative Value of Imports (Rs.) in Lakhs	% of Growth
2006-07	10.83	NA	NA
2007-08	6.88	17.71	-36%
2008-09	1.35	19.06	-80%
2009-10	2.96	22.02	119%
2010-11	Nil	22.02	NA
2011-12	Nil	22.02	NA
2012-13	101.46	123.48	NA
2013-14	117.3	240.78	16%
2014-15	102.53	343.31	-13%
2015-16	1105	1448.31	978%
2016-17	1930.06	3378.37	75%
2017-18	102.07	3480.44	-95%
2018-19	323.57	3804.01	217%

Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

**Fig 5 Detailed Report on Cumulative value of import and percentage of Growth (Year Wise Growth)**



**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Export and Import from 2006-07 to 2018-19**

Descriptive Statistics	Export (Lakhs)	Import (lakhs)
Mean	1664.449	292.616
Standard Deviation	2331.262	576.115
Variance	5434784	331908
Minimum	8.87	1.35
Maximum	6338.36	1930.06
Range	6329.49	1930.06
Kurtosis	.453	5.674
Skewness	1.434	2.449
No. of Observation	13	13

Source: Data calculated by the Authors, 2021

The above Table 8 exhibits, the descriptive statistics for the study period from 2006-07 to 2018-19. During the given period the export through Nathu La region reached the maximum level of ₹ 6338.36 Lakhs in the year 2016-17 and a minimum level during the study period was ₹ 8.87 Lakhs. During the study period average value of export was ₹ 1664.449 lakhs with the standard deviation of  $\pm 2331.262$  Lakhs. Similarly, during the above period, the import through Nathu La region was reached the maximum level of ₹ 1930.06 lakhs in the year 2016-17 and the year 2010 and 2011 the import was nil. During the above mentioned aforesaid period the average value of import was ₹ 292.616 Lakhs with the standard deviation of  $\pm 576.115$  Lakhs. Nathu La cross-border trade route became a pathway for not only for promoting trade and tourism but also exchange of ideas, beliefs and cultures etc.

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

After re-opening of the Nathu La trade has strengthened growth of tourism in Sikkim. From the above Table 2 and Figure 1, the total number of tourist visited to Nathu La in the year 2010-11 was 55,522 and it has increased to 1,46,224 in the year 2016-17. Similarly, in the year 2018-19 the revenue generated from Nathu La permit as an environmental fee from the visitors was Rs.294.77 lakhs. From the given facts, it makes more clear that the total number of tourist visited to Nathu La and revenue generated as an environmental fee from Nathu La permit has increased tremendously after re-opening of the Nathu La trade. Neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal could use this route for both trade and tourism. The major mountain peaks and high-altitude lakes in the Himalayan region of Sikkim such as Kanchenjunga, Pauhunri and Tso Mgo have made the region a major tourist destination. Sikkim could be an ideal destination for Mahayana Buddhist tourist coming from foreign countries. The rising trend of exports along with import in trade through this route has brought an immense positive impact on the livelihood of people especially to the Himalayan region of Sikkim. Border trade through Nathu La has a significant impact on promoting new entrepreneur for setting the homestay in adjoining areas of Nathu La. The re-opening of the trade of this region lead to large scale of employment generation on both sides of the border in transport, road construction, communication, packaging, to name a few. The majority of the North Eastern Indian people continue to look at these borders as massive opportunities for trade and related services (Kumar 2000). Ample knowledge of trade in local aspirants would lead to more employment opportunities in this region.

There is huge revenue generation in transport sector from movement of vehicles from Siliguri to Gangtok and from Gangtok to Nathu La trade route. Sikkim and its adjoining regions can become a tourist hub if proper road connectivity, amenities and communication facilities are provided. There is huge employment generation (including drivers, cleaners, mechanics, loaders and warehouse keepers, etc.) in transport sector from movement of vehicles to Nathu La trade route. Nathu La trade could have major impact in the region including the establishment of machinery outlets, banks, hotel and restaurants, petrol pumps and administrative amenities along the route. If locally produced goods are promoted for export through this region, the regional growth of Sikkim could be better ensured. Locally produced goods can play a dominant role in economically uplifting of people in Sikkim through this route. The opening of the trade route through Nathu La would not only benefit the landlocked state of Sikkim, but also its adjoining regions like the north east region and West Bengal.

### CONCLUSION

There has been a significant increase in both export and import from China in the last few decades, which reveals that there is a huge scope in trading with China in the future. After the re-opening of India-China cross-border trade on 6th, July 2006 through Nathu La Pas, it has not only enhanced benefit in trade but has also strengthened growth of tourism in Sikkim. The re-opening of Nathu La trade between India and China after a long gestation period of 45 years has generated more employment on both sides of the border in areas such as tourism, transport, communication, road construction, restaurants and hotels, banking, insurance, packaging, etc. The potential of the cross-border trade through this region also enhances the motivation for leading a new channel for the upcoming China-India trade relations. The resumption of the Nathu La cross-border trade after the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict has also marked a new direction in bilateral relations between India and China. Despite these positive aspects, the Nathu La border trade has faced many impediments. Some of the impediments are language barrier, fragility of land, lack of infrastructure, lack of trade knowledge in local aspirants, duration of trade, climatic conditions and limited numbers of commodities which are only allowed to be exported from this region. The potential of cross-border trade through Nathu La will enhance the demand for new innovations and infrastructural development in the state such as warehouse facilities, transportation and communication, which will aid in successful trade with China and increase the volume of trade and

tourism in the near future.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Pramesh Chettri** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sikkim Manipal University, Sikkim. He has more than 6 years of experience in teaching and conducting research. Chettri has published a number of research papers in many reputed international and national journals and has authored two books.

[chettripramesh11@gmail.com](mailto:chettripramesh11@gmail.com)

**Jigme Wanchuk Bhutia** is working as an Assistant Professor and In charge, Department of Tourism, Sikkim University. His area of interest includes Sustainable Ecotourism and Community Based Tourism. He has more than 13 years of experience in teaching and research and has published research papers in many reputed national and International journals.

[jbhutia@cus.ac.in](mailto:jbhutia@cus.ac.in)



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