



SPIRITUALITY TOURISM

A STUDY ON SPIRITUALITY TOURISM IN RISHIKESH,INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Today tourism era is known as wellness and awareness era, because guest is now more focusing and attract towards the wellness and spirituality of their soul and body. The goal of this study is to look into the experiences of international visitors who come to Rishikesh to visit ashrams to practice holistic and spirituality, as well as to understand more about why tourists come to Rishikesh in the first place. So today holistic and spirituality tourism is one of the best choice for the guest specially the foreign tourist is getting more involved in this type of tourism. Holistic and spirituality tourism has become a new and alternative form of tourism and an important trend among tourists who seek programs and experiences that would allow them to achieve balance between mind, body and soul. Choosing holistic and spirituality tourism means that a tourist can enjoy a different and full experience which goes beyond the simple contact with cultures, people, places or landscapes. It focuses on self-transformation and on an attempt of people understanding more about themselves. It is crucial we understand each person's view about this new type of tourism since this perspective will surely bring potential new investors to this product. Knowing what every tourist values, feels and needs- in terms of personal fulfillment- can turn this new type of tourism into a competitive one.

KEYWORDS : HOSLITIC TOURISM, SPIRITUALITY TOURSIM, TOURIST , RISHIKESH

I. INTRODUCTION

Rishikesh is where Raibhya Rishi is said to have done penance in order to please God, who appeared as Rishikesh, thus the name. Rishikesh is 1360 feet above sea level. It is said that numerous yogis and sages resided and performed penance here. Rishikesh signifies the location where Vishnu defeated the monster Madhu. Rishikesh is a popular destination for Ayurveda, yoga, and meditation visitors visiting India. Life in the modern era has provided us with far too many new things. Rishikesh is renowned for its spiritual significance and attracts a large number of tourists seeking holistic experiences. Its unique blend of spirituality, natural beauty, and adventure activities make it an attractive destination for tourists seeking a holistic experience. The city is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas and is considered the yoga capital of the world. Rishikesh offers a wide range of activities and attractions for spiritual seekers. It is home to numerous ashrams, yoga centers, and meditation retreats where visitors can immerse themselves in spiritual practices and teachings. The Ganges River, which flows through the city, is considered sacred and is believed to have purifying properties. Tourists visiting Rishikesh can participate in yoga and meditation classes, attend spiritual discourses and workshops, and engage in activities like Ayurveda treatments and nephrology. The city also offers opportunities for adventure activities like trekking, white water rafting, and camping, allowing visitors to connect with nature and find inner peace. The holistic and spiritual tourism industry in Rishikesh has experienced significant growth in recent years. The city's serene environment, coupled with its rich spiritual heritage, has made it a popular destination for those seeking spiritual growth and rejuvenation. The local government and tourism authorities have also played a crucial role in promoting Rishikesh as a spiritual tourism hub. Technology has raised the stress levels, complexity, and mental pressures under which we continue to function. What we don't recognize right away is the influence of such a lifestyle on our health. But for those who care about their lives and want to live them in a healthy way, there is no better way to de-stress from life's burdens than to immerse themselves in the soothing and healing balm of India's Yogic and Meditation practices. Many people feel that yoga and meditation are mysterious practices that need total dedication to the exclusion of all else. Meditation at Rishikesh, as well as a plunge in the sacred river that runs through it, are thought to bring one closer to attaining moksha.

II. HOLISTIC AND SPIRITUALITY TOURISM IN INDIA

After COVID People are more aware about their health their living style is getting changed they prefer to choose holistic and spirituality tourism rather than go for party or some other source of enjoyment. When it comes to holistic and spiritual tourism in India, there are several

key destinations worth exploring. Rishikesh, as mentioned earlier, is known as the yoga capital and offers a plethora of ashrams, yoga centers, and meditation retreats. Varanasi, situated on the banks of the sacred Ganges River, is another significant spiritual destination where visitors can witness ancient rituals and immerse themselves in the spiritual atmosphere.

In the southern part of India, Kerala is renowned for its Ayurvedic treatments and wellness retreats. The state offers a serene environment, lush greenery, and opportunities for rejuvenation through yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda.

Other notable destinations for holistic and spiritual tourism in India include Dharamshala, the residence of the Dalai Lama and a center for Tibetan Buddhism, and Bodh Gaya, where Gautama Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment.

It is important to note that while India offers a wide range of holistic and spiritual experiences, it is essential for travelers to research and choose reputable centers and practitioners. Additionally, respecting local customs, traditions, and spiritual practices is crucial when engaging in such tourism activities.

India is a sought-after destination for holistic and spiritual tourism, offering diverse experiences across various regions. From yoga and meditation in Rishikesh to Ayurvedic treatments in Kerala, travelers can find a wealth of opportunities to explore and deepen their spiritual journey in India.

III. ROLE OF RISHIKESH AND SPIRITUALITY TOURISM IN INDIA

People from across the world now come to India for Ayurveda, yoga and meditation in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand that is practiced since centuries. In fact India has fast emerged as a health tourism destination because of these. Since time immemorial, India has been known for its spirituality, religious and yoga tolerance and its secular character. India is called the "Yoga-Bhoomi" and the gateway to the heavens. India is internationally renowned for its ancient healing practices and alternative therapies. For more than thousands of years now, we have followed our own indigenous healing systems and medicinal practices such as Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Pranic Healing to name just a few. It is no wonder then that people from all over the world are turning to the Indian sub continent for guidance towards a more spiritually satisfying way of life.

Places of Interest in Rishikesh

- Triveni Ghat
- Bharat Mandir
- Lakshman Jhula
- Nilkantha Mahadev
- Kaishanand Mission Ashram

IV. ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE :

1) Ashrams

Ashrams are typically set deep in the natural world and at the simplest level are a place of religious hermitage. Typically inhabitants of the ashram are involved in activities like yoga, music, or meditation.

2) Gurus

The role of the guru varies with different religious practices, but they are uniformly respected and revered. Additionally, one need not be in residence at an ashram to follow a particular guru.

3) Yoga

Yoga is a way of life that offers guidelines for behavior and beliefs, and the "asanas" (poses) are one small aspect of these guidelines. Although yoga stems from the Vedas and the Hindu religion, it has been co-opted by those of many different faiths.

V. EXPERIENCE OF TOURIST :

The emic voice is extremely obvious in its concentration on individual self-discovery and wellness maintenance, thus any disagreement about the phrase "spiritual tourism" appears to be mostly an academic construct. Scholarly application of the word has been far less uniform. In an essay on the Camino de Santiago, Donn Tilson, for example, mentions "religious-spiritual tourism (_St_James_and_Spain, 2022)."

Vinnie Jauhari and Gunjan Sanjeev provide a somewhat cursory survey of the business opportunities offered to India by cultural and spiritual tourism, which includes explicitly institutionally religious phenomena such as fairs and saints' days, as well as locations such as the Vatican or Lourdes, but leaves the spiritual part of his term unexplained, and Kanika Gupta and Anju Gulla investigate the use of internet technologies by an Indian shrine.

He has been one of the most prominent authors to use the spiritual tourism term, generally analyzing the economic considerations that come from spiritual tourist occurrences. Haq and John Jackson define a spiritual tourist in the context of the Islamic Hajj as "someone who visits a specific place out of his/her usual environment, with the intention of spiritual meaning and/or growth, without overt religious compulsion, which could be religious, nonreligious, sacred, or experiential in nature, but within the Divine context, regardless of the main reason for traveling (Haq and Jackson, 2009)." Meanwhile, Shalini Singh and Tej Vir Singh offer an unfocused but stimulating essay on the aesthetics of spiritual tourism, proposing transformation of the individual as the distinguishing experience, but that spirituality itself "denies rationalization and theorization as the experience is intensely personal and subjective" (Shradhanjali:2021).

Others researchers do not use the term "spiritual tourism," but they are speaking directly to the issue; this reflects not just the newness of the area, but also the extent to which tourism studies has historically been excluded from the field of religious studies (Norman, 2008).

Similarly, both Norman and Strauss observed visitors in Rishikesh participating in yoga classes and ashram getaways experimenting.

Sarah Macdonald, This might be interpreted as a self-conscious, empathetic definition of the field. Furthermore, books and biographies—those fantastic exercises in narcissism and self-promotion— provide comparable empirical evidence. As she tries, heals, searches, and discovers herself via India's religious traditions, Sarah MacDonald's memoir, *Holy Cow!*, comes as close to the ideal-type of varied spiritual tourist experience as one can get (Alqahtani, 2019).

This state attracts a sizable number of tourists, both domestic and foreign. While its century-old spiritual sites have drawn visitors, it is quickly becoming a destination for certain spiritual gurus who operate from the state and have a global following.

This category includes tourist experiences geared toward practices that seek to correct or improve problematic aspects of daily life. Tourists examining the status and value of relationships are included in this category. Such travellers will utilize their time away from home, generally engaged in religious traditions, to do self-analysis in a manner similar to therapy. As has been documented on the Camino de Santiago, this might take the form of psychological healing (Foley, 2000).

Of course, a meeting with local cultures may be part of the experimental tourism experience, and as Huxley points out, this is an important feature in casting alternatives to the tourist's ordinary environment. In this sort of spiritual tourism, the experience is defined as one of escape from the mundane, holy time, or ritual rejuvenation. This type is frequently associated with well being, but this is not always the case, since visitors frequently seek socio-geographic escape rather than emotional or psychological restoration, even if the vocabulary used to describe the after-effects may be comparable (HUXLEY, 2004).

The travel experience with this sort of spiritual tourism may alternatively be regarded as a refuge from a troubled world (rather than a troublesome self of the 'healing' variety). As a result, retreat spiritual tourists will coexist with healing spiritual tourists in locations such as meditation retreats, health spas, and ecotourism adventures. This component has begun to be demonstrated through research. Fly-fishing, for example, has recently been treated as a religious activity in which communing with nature allows the angler to discover significant personal revelations that are not conceivable in everyday life (Snyder, 2007).

VI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- Research is done by the secondary method.
- A physical presence is absent.
- For the research, many sources and papers were used.
- The duration of research is limited

VII. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This paper is a compilation of materials that were obtained after a comprehensive literature study; the majority of the content is taken directly from numerous websites. The purpose of this article is to acquaint the reader with the terminology related to the methodology, sample, and data gathering instruments. The research aims to highlight the importance, impact, revival, and decline of spiritual tourism in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. It aims to understand the developments that need to be made to carry out the full potential of the spiritual tourism in Rishikesh. The research methodology used in this study is qualitative and secondary data. The Source of Data Collection Secondary data was gathered from both published and unpublished sources in order to comprehend, substantiate, and validate the key facts, concepts, theories, roles, functions, issues, challenges, problems, and prospects of weekend tourism, tourist expectations, and tourist experiences. National and international journals, books, periodicals, databases, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, state and central government tourism reports, World Travel and Tourism Council reports, and United Nations World Tourism Organization reports were the primary sources of secondary data. These secondary sources provided information and statistics on the origin, evolution, expansion, and contemporary trends in the tourism sector, domestic tourism, religious tourism, visitor expectations, experiences, and satisfaction.

VIII. FINDING OBJECTIVE :

To study the tourist behaviour on spiritual tourism in Rishikesh.

- The majority of international tourists who visit Rishikesh feel spiritually fulfilled and at peace after visiting holy sites. They choose to travel to religious locations rather than adventurous, historical, or exotic destinations.
- Lack of sanitation Tourist amenities, including tourist information centres, safe drinking water, seats, kiosks, clean and sanitary restrooms, and sufficient parking spaces, must be provided.
- Every time there is an increase in population, the places of ganga become more contaminated.
- One of the problems caused by the absence of tourist circuit buses was that domestic tourists demanded an increase in the number of buses dedicated to spiritual tourism in Rishikesh.
- observing fraud involving foreign tourists that travel to Rishikesh for the Char Dham Yatra. Objective 2: To study the potential and prospects of spiritual tourism in Rishikesh.
- The things that contribute to the pleasure of spiritual tourists, such as attractions, accessibility, accommodations, amusement activities, quality of service, and shopping facilities, should be made more affordable and accessible to every class of member.
- A major issue in obtaining competent employees. The travel and tourism business would undoubtedly benefit from greater labour. Objective 3: To study the tourist behaviour of foreigners in Rishikesh.
- Lack of security and safety. The main reasons are internal community disturbances and terrorist strikes. The country is hazardous for females, has inadequate discipline, and is politically unstable.
- Lack of promotion of desirable tourist locations among tourists and a lack of training for locals in receiving and hosting visitors.
- The facilities that are offered to tourists from other countries in Rishikesh do not meet their high expectations at all. International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, Vol 4, no 9, pp 3416-3422 September 2023 3421 Suggestion
- The developed infrastructure will undoubtedly lead to an increase in the number of people visiting holy sites.
- Tourist information centers, safe drinking water, lounging areas, kiosks, clean and sanitary restrooms, and ample parking are required.
- In this circumstance, teaching the local populace in environmental management might be a model method.

- Attractions, accessibility, lodging, entertainment, service quality, and retail facilities all need to be handled more consistently.
- The values, norms, habits, practices, traditions, and beliefs of an area must be maintained. Only by preserving these local values, traditions, and practices can one engage in authentic religious tourism.
- Improved connectivity is required to transform distant religious locations into financially viable tourist destinations.
- It is necessary to govern the ticketing and guiding systems.
- More patrolling is needed for safety reasons.
- They ought to show greater concern about the pollution of the Ganga.

IX. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this research is to develop spiritual tourism, and a secondary objective is to investigate the gaps that exist between the expectations and experiences of weekend tourists with regard to tourism facilities and factors that are specific to the Rishikesh destination. Both objectives will be accomplished through the course of this investigation. The findings of the poll indicate that the great majority of people who travel for spiritual reasons are pleased with the numerous tourist amenities and characteristics that are unique to the locations they visit. The potential and prospects of spiritual tourism, as well as tourist behaviour, are the two key categories of components that primarily define the challenges and possibilities that spiritual tourists face. Present Rishikesh as a spiritual, mediation, and yoga destination. Rishikesh, the world's yoga centre, still has a lot to offer tourists, especially foreigners who come to India to practice yoga and explore their spiritual side. In addition, factors such as modes of transportation, accommodations, facilities at the destination, cultural and spiritual attractions, shopping, entertainment, water sports, and other tourist amenities all played a role in the level of satisfaction that weekend travellers who visited Rishikesh reported feeling. The findings of the study have shed light on the key characteristics of those who participate in spiritual tourism. The results of the study have not only helped to clarify the reason for taking time off during holiday and festival periods, but they have also shed light on the travel habits of spiritual tourists as well as the prospects and possibilities of the tourism industry. The research has helped to clarify the reason for taking time off during holiday and festival periods. It is predicted that giving this sector a greater focus via the execution of suitable policy interventions will play a significant part in the integration of regions that are varied in a range of elements of life. This is because it will play a critical role in the creation of new jobs.

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