

# Dark Tourism - A Special Case of Hall of Fame in Leh (Ladakh)

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**Abstract:** This research paper on the theme, Dark Tourism - A Special Case of Hall of Fame in Leh (Ladakh) attempts to conduct a focused amount of research to answer the questions about how Hall of Fame can be taken as an opportunity to give an edge to the tourism sector in Ladakh. The paper looks at some historical background information relating to the concepts of dark tourism. Since Hall of Fame is only destination located in Leh (Ladakh) which can be used for dark tourism, the main purpose of the paper is to study the existing scenario of Hall of Fame and to come up with strategies to enhance overall development in the area under study. The method is descriptive in nature and research procedure is unstructured and flexible in nature. The study accomplishes the SWOT analysis on Hall of Fame in Leh. The selection of the destination has been made on the assertion that the dark tourism is one of the developing forms of tourism and Hall of Fame can act as a potential destination of dark tourism with respect to Ladakh in general and Ladakh in particular. Data collection for the study is both primary and secondary. To have a clear understanding of the conceptual framework of the theme, the information required for the study was collected by direct observation which constitutes the primary source of data collection. Hall of Fame needs a major makeover and government needs to pay attention to the war memorial museum development in the area.

**Keywords:** Dark Tourism, Hall of Fame, SWOT Analysis, Ladakh, Museum Tourism

## I. Introduction

Tourism is the biggest industry in the world claims (Jamieson, 2006). Rogerson and Visser, (2004) dark tourism gained prominence after the Second World War and (Holloway et al, 2009) suggest, that lengthy and underprivileged years of war directed to augmented wishes to travel to overseas destinations. As an outcome, in the post-war years, it developed as a vital sector of the worldwide economy (Rogerson & Visser, 2004).

One of the many themes of tourism is dark tourism. An increasing number of tourists are visiting tourist pulls that are connected with death, disaster, suffering and violence. This trend is evident in (Lennon and Foley, 1996) that there has been significant growth in tourism associated with death, disaster and depravity. The tourist's fascination with death and disaster is reinforced by strong appeal of the dark destinations in the world (Smith, 1996). In spite of growing concentration in dark tourism offerings among tourists, (Sharpley and Stone, 2009) Union Territory that the academic literature on dark tourism remains heterogeneous and tentatively brittle and subsequently considering the phenomenon of dark tourism it still remains inadequate.

Ladakh is a high-elevation desert, protected in between the massive mountains of the Himalaya, Karakorum, Zaskar and Ladakh Ranges and is one of the three Geo cultural sections of the Ladakh Union Territory. Leh is the capital city of this region and one of the widely known tourists and pilgrimage destination in the Union Territory.

Hall of Fame is a historical war memorial museum built by the Indian army with a single objective i.e. to remember the soldiers of Kargil war. The museum also embraces the valuable treasure of Ladakh including Culture, History, Flora & Fauna and many more. Hall of Fame will be themed under Dark Tourism. Dark tourism involves travel to sites historically connected with demise and catastrophe. It is the act of travel and visitation to sites, attractions and exhibitions that have real or reconstructed death, suffering as the main theme. Visits to past battlegrounds, slavery-custom pulls, jails, graveyards, particular museum exhibitions, Holocaust sites, or to disaster locations all constitute the broad realm of dark tourism.

## II. Review of Literature

To offer simplicity and conceptualize dark tourism, (Foley and Lennon, 1996) define it as a phenomenon that incorporates the exhibition and consumption of factual and commodified death and disaster places. (Novelli, 2005) the study stated that, dark tourism as visitations to sites where disasters or historically notable death has

happened and that still continues to influence our lives. (Sharpley and Stone, 2009) in their study explain dark tourism sites as, sites which are associated with death, suffering and the macabre. Accordingly, the study will throw light on what dark tourism is and how Hall of Fame can be turned into the dark tourist destination like other dark museums in the world.

Seaton, (1999) divided death tourism into, travel to watch death, travel to sites after death has occurred, travel to graves and monuments, travel to re-enactments, and travel to synthetic sites. Novelty, education, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relations and the facilitation of social interaction are travel motivations (Crompton, 1979). Lennon and Foley, (2000) put it; horror and death have become established commodities on sale to tourists who have an enduring appetite for the darkest elements of human history. Rojek, (1993) stated that everything is now viable as a travel activity. As a consequence, all arrangements of leisure have developed equal and all events and sites have converted the potential tourism destination. The focus of this study is to unearth one of the destinations for dark tourism and developing it for tourism activities for larger mass. In an era in which populaces have become more demanding of their museum involvements, visual interpretation has appeared as an innovative context for both museum custodians and tourism (Noussia, 1998). This inclination towards a more associated and interactive museum pedagogy has become so transformative (Hooper and Greenhill, 2000). This stress on museum interpretation is predominantly delicate when applied to dark tourism.

The literature review has revealed that no study has been directed on the dark tourism in Ladakh in general and Ladakh in particular. It is against this framework that the study seeks to recognize dark tourism destination in Ladakh and to further the growth of this particular destination by establishing a new museum on modern infrastructural guidelines. The Hall of Fame was built to serve as a representation of the untiring resistance and struggle.

Any object can be considered a war memorial. They can be shaped or established by anybody and they do not have to be officially revealed or dedicated, although many are. As long as the inscription and/or purpose behind the creation or erection of the object link it to the remembrance of a war or conflict then it is considered to be a war memorial (War Memorials Trust, 2009). Museums understanding of their role has shifted over the years, the traditional notion of a museum was as a Centre of scholarship and curatorial expertise and helping people to learn about society, culture, history and science, and providing entertainment thus moved towards a more explicitly public-oriented role over time (Travers, 2006). Collections and the active use of collections play a key role in delivering cultural experiences and enable museums to pass the benefit to the public (MLA, 2009 and Wilkinson, 2005). Evidence on the user and general public views on the role of museums also shows a focus on social or public benefit. Previous research studies have shown that public values museums for supporting learning, especially informal, family and life-long learning, as a social and recreational space and for shaping a sense of self and society through preserving cultural heritage and building understanding of other cultures (Usherwood et al, 2005).

From the above review of prior studies, it is revealed that not many studies are based entirely on dark tourism. Most of the studies have been done outside Union Territory and nation. However, the studies concerning the Ladakh in general are missing from the academia, which impulses the need for same.

## **2.1 Need for the Study**

The government of Ladakh has lately documented the role of tourism in the economic development of the Union Territory of Ladakh. The purpose of this paper is to present a descriptive evaluation of dark tourism as in case of Hall of Fame to developing the same destination as dark tourism museum and financial resources needed for developing it on world class infrastructure lines. Therefore, this study is timely and provides an understanding of the nature of dark tourism activity in Leh (Ladakh). In addition to adding to dark tourism and museum literature, this study adds another perspective to the tourism sector in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

## **2.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to look into dark tourism site and taking Hall of Fame as the potential destination for same. Dark tourism sites are sought-after destinations as found by (Foley and Lennon, 1996) who deliberate that, there has been substantial progress in tourism associated with sites of death, disaster, and depravity. (Smith, 1996) found in her study on war and tourism that, despite the horrors of death and destruction the memoir of warfare and allied product, perhaps constitutes the major sole group of tourist attractions in the world. Increasing volume of visitations and the nature of numerous of these sites had

imperative to recognize what dark tourism is. This study will attempt to understand the Hall of Fame and provide a comprehensive plan to develop it. This study will help administrators with a useful tool for management by making recommendations based on its findings.

### 2.3 Objectives of the Study

The mounting importance of dark tourism demands research actions into dark tourism sites such as the Hall of Fame. The objectives of this study are to understand the Hall of Fame and to make recommendations relating to the management of the site. Hall of Fame is one of the potential destinations which can be used for dark tourism if management is done efficiently.

- ✓ To study the existing scenario of war memorial museum in Leh (Ladakh).
- ✓ To study the reasons for the underdevelopment of the Hall of Fame as potential tourist destination.
- ✓ To identify tourism opportunities that the study will encompass.
- ✓ To suggest measures to make Hall of Fame major tourism destination.

### III. Research Methodology

The nature of the study would be both qualitative and quantitative in nature and will make use of secondary data. The proposed study will cover the analysis of a tourism industry in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The selection of the destination has been made on the assertion that the dark tourism is one of the developing forms of tourism and Hall of Fame can act as a potential destination for dark tourism with respect to Ladakh in general and nation in particular.

**3.1 Sources of Data:** For the clear understanding of the conceptual framework of the theme, the information required for the study was collected by direct observation which is used as the primary source for data collection. The personal interviews were conducted through conversation with staff and other official records and files of the museum.

**3.2 Tools of Analysis:** Several tools were used during the study in order to make it more salutary and compact. For simple and visual interpretation data columns, histograms, pie charts and line charts were used.

### IV. Dark Tourism & Hall of Fame

While there is a long practice of individuals visiting fresh and earliest locations of death like travel to gladiator games in the Roman Colosseum, attending public executions by decapitation for example, and visitation to the catacombs, this has been considered academically only relatively lately. Rojek, (1993) talking about black-spot tourism. Academic consideration to the theme instigated in Glasgow Scotland. The term dark tourism was invented in 1996 by Lennon and Foley, faculty members at Glasgow Caledonian University. The term Thanatourism was first cited by A.V. Seaton in 1996, then Professor of University of Strathclyde Glasgow.

Death-related tourist sites consist of seven different types, ordered from light to dark: dark fun factories, dark exhibitions, dark dungeons, dark resting places, dark shrines, dark conflict sites and dark camps of genocide (Stone, 2005). Stone and Sharpley, (2008) hypothesized that coming together in places associated with grief and death in dark tourism represents immorality, so that morality may be interconnected.

Academia and media both gave increasing attention to the dark theme. Over the past decade or so, a growing body of interdisciplinary research has been undertaken that revolves around the concept of death-related travel. Furthermore, media attention in the notion of dark tourism continues to rise, the juxtaposition of the dark and tourism unquestionably providing an attention-grabbing momentum. However, theoretical works remain eclectic and theoretically fragile till date. Thus, understanding of production and consumption of dark tourism remains inadequate, specifically considering the relationships between dark tourism and the cultural condition and social institutions of modern cultures.

A narrative on the rich and intriguing cultural legacy of Ladakh as well as the account of war history, Leh's war museum, or Hall of Fame as it is known brings together the varied worlds that coexist in Leh under one small roof. While the facade of the museum gives it an appearance of a stupa from afar, the museum is geometrically shaped with sharp definitions, made shaper with the cannon placed in front of it. Alienated into different sections, one part of museum showcases the vibrant cultural and natural heritage of Ladakh, on display is the flora and fauna of Leh as well as its people- the lives they lead, rituals they observe and festivals they celebrate. Historical information on various monarchs of Leh, battles they fought is also on display.

Upper floor holds the record of the Indian army in its various battles with Pakistan is on display. Hall of fame has well-distinguished sections for viz history, culture, human life, flora and fauna and many more.

**Table 1**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Main Gallery	The main gallery has a demi of Ladakh showing all the mountain peaks of Ladakh. Flags of those regiments who have participated in Kargil war are present on walls of the main gallery.
History	This section comes on the left side of the main gallery, it showcases the ruling history of the Ladakh with special mention of Namgyal dynasty.
Flora & Fauna	This Flora & Fauna section is on the ground the floor. The fauna of Ladakh is in common with that of <u>Central Asia</u> and especially of the <u>Tibetan Plateau</u> .
Dedicated Wall	A wall is dedicated to the slain soldiers of Kargil War and army regiments. It provides the insights of the Kargil war
Heroes Gallery	This section is a showcase of Indian border over the Siachen glacier.
Pakistan Gallery	This section holds the information about the found Pakistani documents and it is also information of the weaponry used by Indian forces during Kargil war.
Operation Sadahbavhna	Operation Sadahbavhna was started in Ladakh in June 2000 pursuing the principle of human development. The key areas under this operation are Education with IT, Women empowerment, Educational, Motivational tours, Medical, health and Sanitation, Community development and Infrastructure development.
Souvenir Shop	A souvenir shop is in the museum where Kashmiri Shawls and other war memorial artificial objects are sold to the tourist.

**Brief Description of Distinguished Sections**

Table 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hall of fame is famous for the war history of the country.</li> <li>• Museum has emotional touch attached to it, so local tourist pay homage to the Kargil war soldiers.</li> <li>• Hall of Fame adds unique features to Ladakh tourism.</li> <li>• The museum is built on the main road and the airport is also near to it, which makes it easily accessible.</li> <li>• It is the showcase of Ladakh history, culture, flora &amp; fauna and many more, and acts as a one-stop for tourists to get insights into Treasure of Ladakh.</li> <li>• Well-differentiated sections make it more attractive for tourist to find the information separately according to their taste.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor infrastructure, which makes its exquisiteness and reputation fade away.</li> <li>• Unsuitable infrastructural model of museum leading to problems in various aspects.</li> <li>• Less floor space available to absorb more information with respect to every section.</li> <li>• An amusement park which is not fully operational, a restaurant with the limited menu is another hurdle to touristic activity.</li> <li>• The museum not being under the tourism authority of the Union Territory is hindering the developmental process.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hall of Fame has a potential to become a dark tourist destination.</li> <li>• With proper infrastructure and use of well-formulated promotional strategies, it will consolidate its position in Ladakh tourism</li> <li>• It will increase the number of visitations by local and foreign tourists.</li> <li>• Will ensure the safety of the history, culture and other important aspects.</li> <li>• Will boost the tourism activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can violate the norms of social life by exploiting the emotions of the Indian citizens.</li> <li>• It can act as a catalyst to make people remember the war conditions and sacrifices and will be a hurdle for the peace process of India and Pakistan.</li> <li>• It may promote hatred and act against the peace process.</li> </ul>

### SWOT Analysis of Hall of Fame

#### V. Major Findings

Ladakh region has unique tourism products to offer in terms of history, culture, adventure and many more. Hall of Fame is adjacent to main road and airport making it easily accessible to visitors. The museum contains well-differentiated sections, showcasing cultural, natural, historical heritage of Ladakh. Adventure Park which is inoperative, lack of eatery, less floor space available are some reasons for poor development. the museum still being under the army and not tourism authority. Hall of Fame has poor infrastructure as it is not built and maintained like other war memorial museums. Lack of security measures is visible inside and outside the museum, complete security measures are missing. As far as Hall of Fame is concerned, it has not evolved as a major motivator for tourists.

#### VI. Suggestions

The museum must be bought under the purview of Union Territory tourism authority so that it can be developed as a dark tourist destination. Infrastructure must be developed as the other war memorial museums are developed. expanding area, more floor space, full-fledged eatery, a well-established facility for keeping belongings of tourists are to name some. Adventure Park must be made fully operational and Security must be placed in every section (CCTV) etc. can be steps towards making it travel motive for visitors.

#### 6.1 Comprehensive Developmental Plan

Ladakh region is totally bereft of any museum. This is astonishing since this region is complete of evidence of its ancient past and also because it was the doorway to Central Asia and China through ancient Silk Route. Leh town was a key marketable transit point for all merchants who started their expedition from the locality

of Ambala and finish often in Central Asia, while goods they carrying reached Beijing and in the court of Genghis Khan.

We recommend the development of a new series of local museum devoted to as ethnological museums which assimilate big galleries occupied with models illustrating the various dresses worn by the people in the region in the past, showcase of broad war history, display local items of interest for tourists like firearms scripts, flora and fauna models a typical local area, geological examples and material on local vernaculars and jewelries etc. These ethnological museums should be accommodated in existing local land. The museum should have a committed restaurant, parking places and a shop with local handicrafts. Its location should also be acknowledged prominently through signage mounted on the side of the main highways.

These local museums should be supervised by professional museum Curators/Directors. The maintenance of these ethnological museums will be handed over to the Department of Tourism and not by other departments normally associated with such activities. We are particularly endorsing the expansion of this museum to generate opportunities to the visiting tourists in the region to fill up their time successfully when they are visiting the local area.

The tourism sector has the potential to encourage other economic aspects through forward and backward integration with several allied sectors like hospitality, aviation, railways, banking, manufacturing, health and education, among others. The expenditure of tourists generates more employment and causes a multiplier effect on the economy. Henceforth, the progress and augmentation of the tourism sector will help to alleviate poverty and lead towards lucrative development.

## 6.2 Key Objectives of the Proposal

- Positioning and maintaining Hall of Fame as a national priority activity.
- Enhancing and maintaining the museum's competitiveness as a dark tourism destination.
- Creation of world-class infrastructure.
- Developing sustained and effective marketing plan.
- Developing human capital and capacity building of service providers.

It has been observed that, compared to the situation in many other countries, our museums have a relatively wide mix of funding sources (Fresh Minds, 2008). The museum sector as a whole uses a range of funding sources. Local authority-run museums incline to rely on public allowances for the majority of their income. Among other types of museums, public grants are a substantial funding source and other funding sources are quite diverse, including open market happenings and humanitarian funding.

**Table 3**

Item	Cost
Capital infrastructure*	Rs 2 - 5 Crore 6000 – 16000 Sq. Ft
Non-recurring cost of developing displays*	Rs 1 Crore & Above
Recurring Administration & Maintenance charges **	Rs 10- 15 lacs

### Financial Outlay for New Museum

\* One-time investment

\*\* Administration and Maintenance are yearly expenses

## 6.3 Strategic Expansion and Marketing Strategy

This strategy document deals with and proposes ways of taking advantage of the latest trends in tourism with a particular emphasis on the museum, tourism marketing and tourism product development. It points to the current problems, challenges and numerous as yet unrealized opportunities in the area of tourism. It includes a development scenario which not only defines fundamental programme and strategic marketing orientations but also suggests an optimum way of taking advantage of opportunities for the development of tourism.

The main purpose of the Strategic Development and Marketing Plan is to develop a marketing model which will include,

- Ensure a successful sustainable development and marketing of the tourist destination of Hall of Fame and contribute to the development of quality offerings and a balance between the needs of visitors and local residents.
- Take maximum advantage of the features and competitive edge of the tourist destination of Hall of Fame.
- Take into consideration the current trends in the museum building and museum tourism markets.

- Base the development of tourism offerings and marketing on active public-private-civil partnerships.
- Appropriately rank tourism among the development priorities of the Tourism Ministry of the Union Territory.

The emphasis should be paid on strategy development and the marketing of the museum by utilizing the latest tools of marketing and promotion.

#### 6.4 Strategy Purposes

- To enhance recognition of the significance of tourism for the Ladakh administration and ensure its appropriate strategic ranking.
- To analyse Ladakh tourism offerings, assess its market and competitive position and establish the value of its core tourism assets and resources.
- To define the vision and objectives for Hall of Fame as a tourist destination.
- To develop a strategy for the improvement of the competitive position of the tourist destination of hall of Fame and devise a corresponding marketing strategy.
- To devise an optimum development model and a corresponding management model.
- To identify priority development and investment projects.
- To develop a brand identity for the tourist destination.

#### VII. Implications

Although Ladakh is one of the sought-out tourist destinations around the world and among local tourists, the full potential of the region has not been tapped yet. Ladakh has diverse tourism products to offer, which can be realized and utilized to gain competitive advantage and establish it on world tourism map. The implicit of this paper is that Hall of Fame must be handed over to the tourism department and new policy must be bought in to tap the potential of division and Hall of Fame explicitly. Ensuring sufficient and timely financial resources into the museum is the first step towards opening new opportunities for local populace and satisfying experience of visitors. hall of Fame can play a vital role in advancing the touristic experience and goals of diverse products can be apprehended consequently.

#### VIII. Conclusion

Tourism is the lifeline of Ladakh and all possible efforts need to be commenced for recollecting, preserving and sustaining the same. Tourism unlocks up fresh doors for resources, both investment generation and revenue generation leading to employment generation as well as the socio-economic development of the local populace. This study presents an overview of the dark tourism and Hall of Fame in Ladakh. Dark tourism is the new focal point for academic and tourism opportunists alike. From this study, it can be concluded that Ladakh is gifted with diverse tourism products of which dark theme can be the new one added to the products basket. In spite of coming up with tourism policy, it still lags comprehensive strategy related to tourism products. In nutshell, the Union Territory is losing revenue due to the neglect of dark tourism potential. Hall of Fame tends to come up with opportunity and challenge as well. Therefore, it is inevitable that all stakeholders come up to take this task and dispose the challenge and capitalize on the opportunity which will benefit all alike. Hence, findings emphasize the requirement for more consistent tourism development strategies and programs to be executed by the Government of Ladakh to take full benefit of the potential of tourism.

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