
ROLE OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS IN THE PROMOTION OF CULTURAL TOURISM - A CASE STUDY OF SAIR FAIR OF ARKI

Dr. Chander Mohan Parsheera

Director, Institute of Vocational Studies (IVS), Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla

Dr. Hiramani Kashyap

Project Fellow, Guest Faculty, Institute of Vocational Studies(IVS) & IIHS, H. P. University, Shimla

Abstract

Today we are living in a world where culture plays an important role in the promotion of tourism and upgradation of society. Culture is a vital component of tourism all around the world. Every country, region has their unique culture which represents how they look, they feel and they live. Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing global tourism markets. Culture and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. Many locations are now actively developing their tangible and intangible cultural assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace, and to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalisation. India is well known around the world for its unique traditions and rituals. Himachal Pradesh is blessed with incredibly distinctive culture which always considered as one of the biggest attraction among the Domestic and Inbound travellers. Himachal is the home of much cultural assortment, which is atypical to see anywhere in the nation. Himachal is filled with different fair and festival devoted to God and Goddess like Shivratri of Mandi, Dusharra of Kullu, Budi Diwali of Nirmand, Bhunda of Rohru and many more. These fairs and festivals are the prime attraction around travellers and now a day's these are the subjects of research among the scholars. Arki was once the capital of Bhagal princely state. Here Sair fair celebrated with great joy in the month of September each year for preserving traditions and rituals.

Key Words:- Arki, Sair Fair, Culture, sustainability

Introduction

India's thousands of years of history, its length, diversity and the variety of geographic features make its tourism basket large and varied. It presents heritage and cultural tourism along with medical, business and sports tourism. Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture,

religion and other elements that helped shape their way of life like cuisine, tradition, dances, folk songs, rituals etc. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world. Cultural tourism has been defined as 'the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. Tourism can also be a tool for the safety and loge time sustainability of these different resources of culture. The valleys of Himachal Pradesh occupy a special place in the India's history and geography. Dwarfed by sparking snow-capped peaks, cut through by sparking rivers, and dense forest, the valleys have nurtured goldsmiths and architects, through the rise fall of Empire, religions and aesthetics across the Indian plains. Nature was more than generous when she gave the North Indian state of Himachal Pradesh her gift of natural beauty. The presence of Himalayan Mountain has had much to do with this rich and varied bounty- and the snow clad heights run diagonally across the state and divide it into two approximately parts. The monsoon rains, which water most of the India, are forced to remain south of this high barrier and the trance Himalayan tracts get practically all their water from the snow and glacier.

Himachal is situated in the western Himalayas. Covering an area of 55,673 kilometres (34,594 mi), Himachal Pradesh is a mountainous state with elevation ranging from about 350 metres (1,148 ft) to 7,000 metres (22,966 ft) above the sea level. Himachal is one of the few states that had remained largely untouched by external customs, largely due to its difficult terrain. With the technological advancements the state has changed very rapidly. Himachal Pradesh is a multicultural as well as multilingual state like other Indian states. Some of the commonly spoken languages includes in Himachal are Hindi, Pahari, Kangri, Kulluvi, Kinnoure, Lahuali, Mandiyali, Chambyali, Pangayali, Sirmori, Panjabi.

Arki Sair Fair

Arki was the capital of the princely hill state of Baghal, which was founded by Rana Ajai Dev, a Panwar Rajput. The state was founded around 1643 and Arki was declared its capital by Rana Sabha Chand in 1650. The Arki Fort is a converted hotel and lovely to visit.

The Arki Fort was built between 1800 and 1805 by Rana Prithvi Singh, a descendent of Sabha Chand. The fort was captured by the Gurkhas in 1806. Rana Jagat Singh, the ruler of Baghal, had to take refuge in Nalagarh. From 1806 to 1815, the Gurkha General Amar Singh Thapa used Arki as his stronghold to make further advances into Himachal Pradesh as far as Kangra. The Gurkhas were, however, driven out by Rana Jagat Singh assisted by Sir David Ochterlony and the British forces during the Gurkha War in 1815–1816. Thereafter Rana Rana Jagat Singh regained control of Arki. Rana Kishan Singh, who ruled the state from 1840 to 1867, developed the town of Arki in a planned manner. The Rana was a far-sighted ruler and built horse and mule tracks to connect Arki with Shimla and Bilaspur. Many artisans, scholars and businessmen from other parts of India settled in Arki during his reign as he provided them with tax free land free of cost. The Rana was a patron of arts and had muralled interiors installed in the Arki Fort in 1850. The murals are a prime attraction among tourists today. The ruler of Baghal was Shri Raja Rajander Singh (1928–2010) he overhauled the administration and introduced radical constitutional reforms, M.L.A., Commandant General of Home Guards, Director of Civil Defence. During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Rana Kishan Singh assisted the British forces and for which he was presented the title of *Raja*. Another revolt was suppressed in 1905 with the help of the superintendent of Shimla Hill States. This was as payback for the support he had received earlier to drive Gurkha out (Wikipedia, 2015).

The Sair Fair or Jhoto Ka Mela (Bufflo fight) is an annual two-day event held at Arki on sakranti of Ashwin (16/17 September). The fair is famous for buffalo fights. Local people train their buffaloes for the event. The fair is attended by thousands of people every year. Night programs in this fair are always different and people of Arki enjoy the day a lot. It is an extremely popular fair of the area and brings lots of liveliness and fun along with it. The Arki Sair festival of Himachal Pradesh is celebrated with extreme enthusiasm in the month of September. Himachal Pradesh

is already very famous in terms of its culture, fairs and festivals. Throughout the year there are number of fairs dedicated to different seasons that are observed in Himachal Pradesh. Sair fair is one such fair that makes Himachal proud. One of the main attractions at the Sair fair is the traditional bull fight. The bull fight done here reflects too strongly on the Bull Fight in Athens. This event is organized at Arki in Solan. Although both the bull fights in Himachal Pradesh and in Athens are quite similar, one biggest distinguishing feature is the viewership. In Athens, common men are not allowed to view the event at all, while it is just the opposite in Himachal Pradesh. The bull fight in Sair Fair is easily affordable for any common man as the entry fee is minimal. The credit for this largely goes to the administrative authorities of Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Apart from the famous bull fight, there are a number of interesting and entertaining events held during the Sair fair. Dance programs, Music performances, and many other forms of art are displayed by artists coming from far and wide to participate. A number of stalls and temporary shops are arranged for display and sale of handicrafts, pottery, utensils, garments etc.

Localities of Shimla celebrate the festival with immense joy and fervor. Women and children can be seen dressed in beautiful jewellery, garments adding a spectrum of colors to the celebrations. Fairs and festivals are the perfect opportunity for people to come closer, buy gifts for loved ones, enjoy with friends and relatives, participate in activities, and witness cultural and traditional art forms and much more. The festivals and fairs of Himachal Pradesh are especially famous for their uniqueness and tradition specialties. Sair fair is one such fair that brings the festive spirit of Himachal Pradesh to upfront.

Theoretical background

Culture and its associates buildings, rituals and ways of life have long been used at both local and national level to diversify economies. According to WTO, 46% of international tourists are culturally motivated. Culture tourism reflects the difficulties involve in defining the concept of culture which as has pointed out in one of the most complicated word of English language (William 1983). In addition problem of definition actually increasing as our notions of culture expand through the process of identifies as the culturisation of the society and the culturisation of tourists practices (Urry 1990). Through such culturisation process of everyday

life, there is a growing convergence of things and popular culture and widening of the concept of culture itself. The word culture is usually used to refer to a way of life or to the products of a popular culture or individual (Richards 1996). Culture tourism is thus considered to cover all form of culturally motivated tourism. Richards proposed the following conceptual definition (1996). According to this definition culture tourism covers visiting to all the type of cultural attractions, including discrete attractions such as museum and monuments, cultural performances and cultural manifestation, including the consumption of the way of life of other cultures. Cultural tourism has in recent years seen a shift away from hard culture resources such as built attraction towards soft resource such as performance. Culture and tourism constitute vita resource for tourism development and tourism in turn makes an important contribution to cultural development and to common development. Culture tourism in modern metropolis has a different way of development from that in small native society or communities while culture is only one of the overall attractions of a tourism region. Years after years many tourist choose to experience other culture by approaching some unique cultural landscape and cultural events and in so doing they learn about hoe those people live, work and play. This kind of tourism is known as cultural tourism. Both become the cultural inheritance and culture nostalgia, cultural motivation has been a primary factor in travel and tourism since it came into being. Some traveller take tours to destinations which similar to their culture here from a recall to the past (Yunjun Xi and Jufens Xu 2004). Some travellers travel to a place of heterogeneous culture with the purpose of gaining some new experience and broadening their mental horizon.

In modern times when material wealth has become abundant and the education of the public has advance, leisure activities with cultural element are certain to be a consumption item of great potential. Tourism is doubtlessly a key form of cultural consumption. Cultural tourism as a topic of research has been discussed in depth for a fairly long time in the western world. In the prospective of Mac Cannel's (1976) paradigm tourism is essential a ritual and a myth, through which one purposefully searches for the authentic. Some authors more or less following Mac Cannel's footsteps, have postulated cultural tourism as the transient consumption of aesthetic' different' often of the exotic, other (Urry 1990

and1995); (Graburn 1989). In their views, cultural tourists are usually person in the theories of nostalgia or curious about the exotic other. In this sense, cultural tourists are very different from those involved in the mass tourism. In a broader sense, cultural tourists also include live entertainment (Hunger 1996), including variety of music, hall shows, pantomime, pop, concerts, rock, rigger, jazz, folk music, dancing, circus, comedy and magic. (Cohen 2001), states that tourists experience can be viewed as something having the spectrum tourist decided their choice of destination from nature relate tourism to cultural tourism, both being the opposite and of the colourful continuum of tourism category with many other possible choices in between. Culture is a concept that is constructed and represented symbolically (Linnekin, 1997). Representations not only reflect reality but help to constitute reality (Duncan, 2001). Cultural representation has received increased attention in tourism studies in recent years (Cornelissen, 2005, Hoffstaedter, 2008, Pritchard and Morgan, 2001, Santos and Yan, 2008, Smith and Robinson, 2006 and Tang, 2005). Tourism exerts a powerful influence shaping cultural images of ethnic groups in many countries (van den Berghe & Keyes, 1984). Today, cultural tourism generally refers to tourism motivated by a tourist's search for exotic cultural experiences, including visiting ethnic villages, minority homes and ethnic theme parks, being involved in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for ethnic handicrafts and souvenirs (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008).

It has been promoted and widely adopted as a strategy for regional socioeconomic development (McIntosh & Johnson, 2005). As modern tourists become more interested in close contact with locals and experiencing authentic culture, images of ethnic peoples are increasingly used to attract tourists to cultural attraction settings such as heritage sites, museums, galleries, folk villages, cultural theme parks, performing arts venues, and festivals. These attractions stage "otherness" and organize diverse cultural elements into complex collections and representations (MacCannell, 1976 and MacCannell, 1984). Traditional life-styles and tourists are brought face-to-face by ethnological exhibits; however, when culture and traditions are transformed into tourism products by using labels, guides, mannequins, and living re-enactments of traditional activities, a composite representation of minority people is formed (Ryan

& Aicken, 2005). Rural communities and peripheral areas such as islands face the challenge of continuous economic development. Where primary traditional industries such as fishing and farming are in decline, tourism often becomes another tool to help create jobs and to raise the standards of living (Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000, Hill, 1993 and Sharpley et al., 1997). These areas realize this potential through development of local resources, culture, and heritage (Kochel, 1994 and Lewis, 1998). The integration of such alternative sources may help to sustain local economies and to encourage local development (Prohaska 1995). Actually many tourists seek rural destinations which offer pleasant experiences related to the natural environment, historic heritage, and cultural patterns Butler and Hall, 1998. It is this culture and heritage that are often well preserved between generations in rural areas and it is in periods of economic decline that their residents seem to cling more to a distinct heritage. Culture and tourism then become resources for socioeconomic development in rural and peripheral communities. This has been observed in studying cultural tourism in many of the small islands of the North Atlantic (Jolliffe and Baum 1999). The concepts of culture, rural, and tourism are multidimensional and interrelated. Fredericks (1993) discusses tourism as building on perceived and existing local amenities like historical sites, natural beauty, and clean air, all similar to those in rural areas. Millar (1989) refer to heritage tourism as cultural traditions, places, and values that groups conserve. Similarly, McNulty (1991) and Weiler and Hall (1992) consider culture to include family patterns, folklore, social customs, museums, monuments, historical structures, and landmarks. Others include wilderness areas, valued landscapes, natural history, buildings, and artefacts as part of cultural tourism (Prentice, 1993 and Tassell and Tassell, 1990). Cultural tourism can be regarded as a subset of ecotourism in that defined it as concerning small groups of tourists seeking to know about and sustain natural environments, and also wishing to learn about the cultures associated with such places and the need to sustain local communities. Given the relationship between land and indigenous peoples, the two components of environmental conservation and cultural development are closely entwined. Cultural tourism has been perceived as both a growth market and an alternative form. Ruiz-Baudrihay (1997) argued that it could be considered as “an intellectual, quality form of activity which inspires respect for local cultures and regions”

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to get an idea about the positive impact of Arki Sair fair on the culture of the princely state and locals, their livelihood, their participation.

Methodology/ Findings

Present study is based in the results derived from the collection of primary data. Primary data is collected from the local people and entrepreneurs through questionnaire, who are working for tourism and who are earning their livelihood through tourism. The numbers of respondents were 120 for the collection of primary data of different peoples related to different field of tourism like hoteliers, restaurant owners, organiser, shopkeepers, taxi operators, tourists and local resident of Arki and surrounding area.

There were 5 same questions for each segment and results are drawn on the basic of responses provided by the respondents. These results shown are in % (percentage) out of 100 % maximum. The result shown in the table are in 'Yes' only, rest of the left up to 100 is in negative. There were no responses with can't say option.

SN	Questions	Hoteliers/ Home stay Owner	Restaurant / Dhaba owners	Organiser	Shopkeepers	Tourist	Local resident
1	Do you think that Sair Fair increase the number of tourists?	90	100	90	90	80	100
2	Do you think that these kind of activities are attracts tourists?	90	100	100	90	100	100
3	Do Sair Fair have positive impact on the tourism of Area?	80	80	100	80	90	90
4	Do you think that that these kind of activates are able to sustain the culture of state?	80	90	100	80	90	100
5	Do you think that in Sair Fair local are getting adequate participations?	70	80	100	70	100	80

Source: Primary Data through Questionnaires.

On the basis of the results derived from Primary data 90% of the hoteliers and Home stay operators said that they are increase in the number of tourists with this fair. 90% of Hoteliers and Home stay operators were

agreed that these kinds of fairs are attracting large number of tourists. 80% of Hoteliers and Home stay operators said that Sair Fair has a positive impact on the environment of the area. Again 80% Hoteliers and Home stay operators said that these kinds of fairs are sustaining the culture of the area. 70% of Hoteliers and Home stay operators said that locals are getting adequate participation in Sair Fair.

100% Restaurant/ Dhaba Owners were agree that fair increases the number of tourists in the area. All Restaurant/ Dhaba Owners said that more and more people are attracted by Arki Sair fair. 80% Restaurant/ Dhaba Owners said that there is a positive impact of Sair fair on the environment of Arki. 90% Restaurant/ Dhaba Owners said that Sair fair sustain the culture of the Arki. 80% Restaurant/ Dhaba Owners said that locals are getting adequate participation in Arki Sair fair.

90% of Organiser said that Sair fair increases the number of tourists in the area. All were agreed that it attracts a large number of tourists. All organiser said that this fair has positive impact on the environment of the Arki and all agreed that it is sustaining the culture of Arki. All organiser said that locals are getting the adequate participation in Sair fair.

90% of Shopkeeper said that due to Sair fair more tourists are coming at Arki. 90% Shopkeeper mentioned that Sair fair attracting a large number of tourists. 90% shopkeeper said that Sair fair has a positive impact on the environment of Arki. 90% Shopkeeper said that Sair fair is sustaining the culture of Arki. 100% Shopkeeper said that locals are getting adequate participation in Sair fair.

100% tourists said that in Arki Sair fair is the main attraction in that area and they wait for it all around the year. They agreed that it attracts a large number of tourists. 80% tourist said that Sair fair has a positive impact on the environment of Arki. 90% tourists said that Sair fair sustain the culture of Arki. 100% of tourists were agreed on that locals are getting adequate participation in Sair fair.

100% locals said that Sair fair attracts a large number of tourists. 90% locals were agreed on this that Sair fair has a positive impact on the environment of the Arki and 100% said that it is sustaining the culture. 80% locals said that they are getting the adequate participation in Sair fair.

Conclusion

Culture is very important component of tourism. Himachal is a known as the 'Devbhoomi' where one can find things associated to it everywhere. Arki Sair fair has its own importance in the heart of locals as well as people who want to be here again and again. Today time is changing very quickly but these kind of unique fair has the potential to bond the people and to gather them at one place and recall the days of glory of past. It is clear that most of the travellers are coming to a specific place because they found a special charm in that area which is closely associated with the culture, rituals, beliefs, and traditions. Today Hon'ble High Court has banned the activity of buffalo fighting in the fair but it has its own uniqueness and importance in the minds of people.

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The logo for Pratibha Spandan is a large, stylized circular emblem. It features the words "Pratibha" and "Spandan" in a light purple, cursive font, stacked vertically. The text is surrounded by several concentric, overlapping rings of color, including shades of orange, green, blue, and pink, creating a dynamic, swirling effect.

Pratibha
Spandan