

Impact of Economic Variables on Indian Tourism Sector: An In-depth Study

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the impact of economic indicators on the tourism sector, with particular reference to the state of Himachal Pradesh. Tourism is a growing industry in Himachal Pradesh. The state has beautiful Himalayan landscapes and excellent hill stations. The government runs infrastructure projects to improve road transport, air connectivity, railways, and communication networks. The study data comprises tourist flow and the state's GDP. The Hypotheses developed in the study are tested with statistical tools like regression analysis, ANOVA, and Student's t-test. The number of tourists inflow and the state's GDP are significantly correlated. Gross domestic product and the number of state visitors are increasing continuously, but were halted due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is also ascertained that the revenue generated from the tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh's GDP are significantly correlated.

KEYWORDS: Himalayan Mountain, Lakes, Hills Station, Tourism, GDP.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a multi-dimensional activity. It has two basics: demand for participation and supply of facilities. Travellers travel for different motives and reasons (Mann, 2017). Tourism has been classified as domestic and international. It is a complex and dynamic system. It has also been further classified into the needs, motives, and goals of travelling. Tourism and hospitality are indissolubly connected to each other (Kamal & Singh, 2022). Domestic tourism is the movement of residents of any country for leisure or business purposes. Leisure tourism is the reality of the 21st century. Local tourist attractions are the basis of leisure tourism. Free time and food are the major motivations of such tourism (Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). When travellers move to some other places for business purposes, it is called business tourism. Urban tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, and adventure tourism are known as leisure tourism (Bansal & Bansal, 2017).

Economic growth and development reflect the overall improvement of a country. Tourism is an important sector for expansion of the economy. It brings a drastic change in the growth of societies, infrastructure, standard of living, employment and general education level. It increases the job creation, consumer spending, and more (Gangotia, 2013). It connects people with people, places with places, and places with people. Tourism can contribute to a country's balance of payments. It is helpful to get recover foreign currency and investments. It is crucial for the growth of local economies

(Kumar, 2018). It helps in the expansion of local businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Construction of public facilities, parks, and highways benefits tourists and local residents. It stimulates the development of local infrastructure. It attracts investors, new businesses, and entrepreneurs. It also promotes local traditions, culture, and heritage (Dangi, 2018). This study augments the prevailing literature on tourism studies in the following manner: firstly, this paper is the first of its kind to identify crucial variables related to the GDP of Himachal Pradesh tourism. Secondly, the findings of this paper shall assist policymakers in formulating tourism and hotel industry policies to enhance the tourism economy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The tourism industry is growing in South Asian countries. Maldives, Nepal, and India are well-known among tourists. It contributes a substantial amount to national income. It creates jobs among the locals and reduces the rate of poverty. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is assisting intra-regional tourism by utilizing common physical infrastructures, shared culture, and common resources. Bureaucratic meandering and inadequate political commitment are basic challenges for this sector. There is a direct relationship between the growth of tourism sector and the growth of the economy. Tourism industries are job-oriented and help increase the demand of goods of various sectors. It has direct effects on the balance of

payments and standard of living (H. Liu and Song 2017; Paramati, Alam, and Chen 2017). This industry has a positive effect on the economy of any region. Revenue generated from this sector is a vital source for the economic and infrastructural development of a nation. The arrival of tourists depends on multiple factors. Proper marketing, accommodation, food, safety, and transport facilities are vital factors (Ekanayake and Long, 2012).

Tourism is dependent on anthropic and natural resources. Protected natural areas, numerous nature reserves, and monuments are the major attractions for tourists. The number of overnight stays of tourists is a vital component. Accommodation capacity for tourists increases when they arrive in large numbers. Economic crises also negatively affect the arrivals of tourists (Elizabeta & Dan-Marius, 2019). There is a relationship between the number of tourists and the poverty rate of a region. Intra-regional tourism can be increased in South Asia by utilizing the common resources, common physical infrastructures, and shared culture. Tourism can contribute to national revenue, foreign exchange earnings, and employment generation. Safety and security concerns, poor quality of management, complicated travel procedures, and inadequate infrastructure and transport facilities are the prime factors for reduced tourist numbers (Rasul & Manandhar, 2009).

Small and large-scale tourism has positive effects on community development, job creation, and revenue generation. It creates opportunities for the procurement of local items and the improvement of local labour standards. It also increases the activities of the private sector. Workers of the large resorts have more job security than workers of the small resorts. Inadequate job security and a lack of sustained governmental support are the basic challenges (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). Rapid expansion of the tourism industry has positive effects on the gross domestic product of Guizhou province of China. Local people and the traders are the immediate beneficiaries from the tourist income (Wang & Haiying, 2015).

The tourism sector plays a vital role in island countries. There is a strong relationship between the tourism industry and the economic development of the small island developing states. Such countries have unique natural environments and cultural heritage, which attract more tourists compared to any other country. Long coastal areas are an additional advantage for such countries. Tourists can enjoy relaxing on the serene beaches. It strengthens the local economy, creates jobs, conserves the natural environment and cultural assets and traditions, contributes to the local infrastructure development, and reduces poverty and inequality (Bojanic & Lo, 2016). It generates multiple incomes for the local communities. It increases economic activities and expands the transportation sector (Pratt, 2015).

Tourism is important for job creation and economic development throughout the world. Its direct contribution can

be felt to the national income of any country. A slowdown in consumer spending is a major challenge before this sector. Global spending power depends on inflation rate, debt servicing costs, and slowdown in job creation. Promotional efforts, infrastructure investments, opening borders, and prioritisation of tourism are vital for expansion of the tourism sector. Regional tourism and climate change are interconnected. Ecosystem change, sea level rise, extreme weather, precipitation, and temperature are closely associated with the availability of market segments (Sofronov, 2017).

Tourism is a vital source of economy of Sri Lanka. It is the third largest and fastest growing source of foreign currency for the country. It contributes in foreign exchange earnings and reducing poverty through employment opportunities to locals. The study shows the positive relation between the tourism sector and the economic growth (Anandasayanan, S., Balagobei, S., & Amaresh, M., 2020). Brazil is vibrant and captivating destination for its stunning landscapes and friendly culture. Natural areas are suitable for leisure and recreation. Tourism is a growing sector of the country. Revenue from tourism sector contribute immensely to the national income of the country (Silva, T., Neto, P, & Tabak, B.2022).

A tourists decision to purchase goods and services depends on many factors. Sound government policies and proactive management practices are significant positive outcomes towards mutual success of tourism sectors (Shafiai, 2021). Tourism is considered as the growth engine for the economic development of India. It contributes in foreign exchange earnings, and employment generation. It increases the standard of living and contributes to the nation's overall economic progress. It also benefits the agricultural, arts & crafts, wholesale, manufacturing, transportation, retail and other services (Tripathi, 2023).

In order to have a visible insight into the problem, the researchers have adopted explorative research by which the gaps have been identified regarding the impact of economic variables. Several studies have already taken place on the said topic. However, based on an exhaustive study related to both national and international contexts, the researchers have identified the gap and formulated hypotheses which have been later tested using different statistical techniques.

Significance of the Study

Since Himachal Pradesh is considered a tourism hub of India, the economic significance of the tourism sector of this state has been a subject of considerable debate. Resolving this debate requires reliable and rigorous information on the precise nature of tourism spending and its impact on different sectors of the economy. One problem, which has always been faced by those seeking to analyse the economic contribution of tourism, is that tourism simply does not exist as a distinct sector in the systems of national accounts. There are other sectors that have the characteristics of tourism, such as

transport, hotels, and accommodation, where tourists spend their money across a range of different sectors, but the national accounts do not track this spending.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this paper are:

1. To know the relationship between the Gross Domestic Product of the State and the tourists volume,
2. To study the relationship between the Gross Domestic Product of the State and the revenue generated by the tourism sector, and
3. To identify the challenges before the tourism sector in Himachal Pradesh.

Hypotheses of the Study:

Based on the objectives as defined above, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H₀₁: There is no relationship between the number of tourists' inflow to the Gross Domestic Product of Himachal Pradesh.

H_{1a}: There is a relationship between the number of tourists' inflow to the Gross Domestic Product of Himachal Pradesh.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between the revenue generated by the tourism sector and the Gross Domestic Product of Himachal Pradesh.

H_{2a}: There is a relationship between the revenue generated by the tourism sector and the Gross Domestic Product of Himachal Pradesh.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Study area Description

This study is based on the impact of economic variables on the Indian Tourism Sector. For this purpose, the researchers have purposefully selected the state of Himachal Pradesh, a

Tourism Hub of India, which contributes significantly to the development of the economy of the state as well as the country. Himachal Pradesh is a state in the northern part of India with a geographical area of 55,673 square kilometres. It has an extreme landscape, having numerous peaks and widespread river systems. It is the northernmost state of India. It borders the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. It also shares an international border with China. It is situated between 30°22'N and 33°12'N latitude and 75°47'E and 79°04'E longitude. It is known as the “Land of the Gods.”

Design and Approach

This study is descriptive in design and has utilized qualitative and quantitative approaches. The secondary data used in this study have been collected from various government reports, reports of international agencies, research papers, published or unpublished theses, articles, etc. The researchers have collected 13 years of data i.e., from 2009 to 2021, on tourists' inflow, segregated over domestic and foreign tourists, and the details of tourists during 2022 and the facilities available as by 2022. The overall relationship of tourist flow with the GDP has been established over a 10-year data i.e., from F.Y 2009-10 to 2019-20. During the COVID period, the tourism sector was seriously affected. The impact of COVID on the tourism sector prolonged for a period of 3 years. In this context, the researchers have decided not to consider the data of the COVID period as well as the post-COVID period.

Method of Analysis

To reveal the tourism practices in general and the future prospects in particular, different methods of quantitative and qualitative analyses comprising of regression analysis, F-test, ANOVA test, descriptive analysis, content and text analysis, have been performed.

RESULT DISCUSSION

Table 1: Relationship between Gross Domestic Product and the Tourist Inflow

Year	GSDP Total*	Number of Tourist (in million)
2010-11	5698033	13327602
2011-12	7271983	15089406
2012-13	8281977	16146332
2013-14	9476416	15129835
2014-15	10377232	16314400
2015-16	11423910	17531153
2016-17	12563412	18450520
2017-18	13835101	19601533
2018-19	15384511	16450503
2019-20	16547239	17212107

Source: Annual Reports of Directorate of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, 2010-11-2019-20. Note: * is Rupees in Lakh.

Table 2: Output Summary of Regression Analysis

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R			0.720295116		
R Square			0.518825055		
Adjusted R Square			0.458678187		
Standard Error			2603442.648		
Observations			10		
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	5.84661E+13	5.84661E+13	8.62597	0.018795711
Residual	8	5.42233E+13	6.77791E+12		
Total	9	1.12689E+14			
	<i>Coefficients</i>		<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	-12345307.38		8020333.092	-1.539251205	0.162305507
Number of Tourist	1.417900633		0.482771735	2.937000098	0.018795711

Source: Calculated by Authors

Table 2 shows that R-squared is found to be 0.518825055, which shows the degree of relationship between the dependent variable Y, i.e. Gross Domestic Product, and the dependent variable X, i.e. inflow of tourists. The value of the t-stat has come out to be -1.539251205, and the P-value has come out to be 0.162305507. Since the value

of p-stat is higher than the t-value, *the null hypothesis-1 has been rejected, and the alternative hypothesis has been accepted*. So, it has been concluded that the number of tourists inflow and Himachal Pradesh's GDP are significantly correlated.

Table 3: Relationship between Gross Domestic Product and Revenue from Tourism

Year	GSDP Total*	Tourism Share in GSDP*
2010-11	5698033	612649
2011-12	7271983	739274
2012-13	8281977	825804
2013-14	9476416	912969
2014-15	10377232	989465
2015-16	11423910	788250
2016-17	12563412	866075
2017-18	13835101	913117
2018-19	15384511	1015378
2019-20	16547239	1096725

Source: Annual Reports of Directorate of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, 2010-11-2019-20. Note: * is Rupees in Lakh.

Table 4: Output Summary of Regression Analysis

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R			0.839558		
R Square			0.704858		
Adjusted R Square			0.667965		
Standard Error			2038976		
Observations			10		
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	7.943E+13	7.943E+13	19.10559171	0.002377313
Residual	8	3.32594E+13	4.15742E+12		
Total	9	1.12689E+14			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	-7207258.721	4234521.361	-1.70202441	0.127162601
Tourism Share in GSDP*	20.88339508	4.777721808	4.370994361	0.002377313

Source: Calculated by Authors

Table 4 shows that R square is found to be 0.704858, which shows the degree of relationship between the dependent variable Y, i.e. Gross Domestic Product, and the dependent variable X, i.e. revenue of the tourism sector. The value of t-stat has come out to be -1.70202441 and the P-value has come out to be 0.127162601. Since the value of p-stat is higher than the t-value, *the null hypothesis-2 has been rejected* and the alternative hypothesis has been accepted. So, it has been concluded that the revenue from the tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh's GDP are significantly correlated.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to one state, but can be extended to study different states of India. Twelve Districts of Himachal Pradesh have been taken into consideration for the study as it has been (convenience sampling) considered adequate to meet the requirements for the purposes. However, an in-depth study can also be conducted at the micro level to have a clear picture of the impact of the economic variables. The researchers have relied on secondary data for the purpose of the study. However, a questionnaire could also be prepared by the researchers to get more information on the subject of the study. Due to the dynamic nature of the time, the empirical results and interpretations of the findings could not be generalised.

Managerial Implications

The results that have been obtained have some managerial implications, as these support the findings of the previous research, which indicate that economic growth and development as a reflection of overall improvement of the country. In general, it is important for managers to identify the relevant intrinsic and extrinsic variables of the economy and to study the impact on tourism sectors of any country. Therefore, a managerial priority should be to identify the most important economic indicators and, thereafter to ensure that these identified indicators have a significant impact on the growth of the economy contributed by the tourism sector. The implication of this research is to design a system that promotes tourism sector in any state for enhancing the economy of that state.

CONCLUSION

Himachal Pradesh has a well-developed tourism sector. The Himalayan state is blessed with beautiful landscapes. Its tourism sector is expanding and contributing expressively to the economic prosperity of the state. The state has popular destinations for both domestic and foreign tourists. Every year large number of domestic and foreign tourists arrive in

the state to enjoy its wonderful landscapes. Lockdowns and travelling restrictions due to the corona pandemic have impacted negatively on the tourist arrivals. The volume of tourists to Kangra, Kullu, and Shimla districts are higher than the other districts. The number of domestic and foreign tourist arrivals vary among the districts. The time of July to October is generally the peak period for arrivals of the foreign tourists. On the other hand, April to June, and October to December are generally the ideal period for the domestic tourists. Majority of the tourist facilities are available in Kangra, Shimla, and Kullu districts. Shimla, Kangra, Solan, Kullu, and Lahaul-Spiti districts have more home stay facility units. Visitors are drawn to the hill state because of its historical significance, and the new tourism niches.

The state is referred to as "Dev Bhoomi" in many ancient Hindu texts and has large number of ancient temples. It is known for its religious tourism, rural tourism, and adventure tourism activities. Travellers can involve in water skiing, sailing, rowing, canoeing, and swimming activities. Himachal Pradesh is enriched with tradition, culture, hospitality, fairs, and festivals. Still than there are many unexplored places in Himachal Pradesh. River rafting, still water sports, mountain cycling, ice skating, paragliding, angling, trekking, skiing, golf, vehicle safari, camping, and day hikes are the major thrust in adventure tourism. There are many monasteries, temples, and residences of heritage prominences in the state. There is a huge opportunity of rural tourism, adventure tourism, agro-tourism, religious tourism, eco-tourism, sports tourism, medical tourism, and heritage tourism in the state. A variety of festivals are celebrated by the locals. The state is well known for its handicrafts local music and dance are the cultural identity of the state.

The number of tourist inflow and the GDP of the state are significantly correlated. Gross domestic product and number of visitors of the state are on rise continuously, except the period corona pandemic. The revenue from the tourism sector and the GDP of the state are also significantly correlated. The share of the tourism sector in GDP of the state was 10.8% in 2010-11, and was 9.5% in 2014-15, which reached to 6.6% in 2019-20. Geographical isolation, lack of transport facilities, and adequate infrastructural support are the major challenges before the state today, and these need to be addressed. This study shall enhance the existing literature on the tourism industry by providing information on crucial variables in the GDP of Himachal Pradesh tourism. Further, policymakers can use this article as a reference for formulating strategies for the tourism and hotel industries.

Scope for further research

There are several opportunities to extend this study. Further studies can identify the other economic indicators that can influence the economy of this Sector. It can be also pointed out that, a researcher can attempt to address the impact of demographic variables of the residents of Himachal Pradesh and how these variables have relationship with the economic variable of the State. Another factor that might have to be considered in future research is whether the economic indicators proposed in our study is valid in other sectors like health tourism, automobile, education, hospitality etc. Other research may also look out whether the contribution of the identified economic indicators influence the tourism in other states in the country. The researcher in this study has made an attempt to ascertain the impact of economic variables on the tourism sector of Himachal Pradesh. Further avenues to extend this research would be to perform comparative studies of identified economic indicators in tourism sectors of other states of the country, too. The researcher hopes that the present study will act as a foundation and spur further research work in this direction.

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