

SCOPE OF YOGA TOURISM IN CHANDIGARH

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ABSTRACT

Background: Chandigarh is a well planned, clean and green city with various gardens and tourist attractions; still the city beautiful is not able to make its mark in the field of tourism due to higher number of day transits and single night stays. It certainly needs to add other important elements to attract tourists for tourism development. **Objective:** This paper outlines an analysis of strengths, opportunities and challenges in putting Chandigarh as a destination on the Yoga tourism map of North India. **Methodology:** The study was conducted on 98 tourists visiting various places in Chandigarh. Data was collected on the basis of the questionnaires filled by the tourists visiting Chandigarh. **Results:** Tourists admired the beauty of Chandigarh and see a huge scope of Yoga tourism in the city while accepting the fact that it might not be the first preferred city for Yoga in north India. 68% tourists accepted that they would prefer to visit Rishikesh for Yoga as compared to Chandigarh. 98% tourists accepted that cleanliness and greenery in Chandigarh is suitable for practicing Yoga and relaxation. **Conclusion:** Chandigarh can surely benefit in tourism sector by incorporating Yoga for the citizens and tourists visiting the city. Already available infrastructure allows easy start up of Yoga practices in various gardens and other tourist sites.

Key Words: Chandigarh, Clean and Green, Yoga, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The City Beautiful – Chandigarh lies in the laps of scenic Shivalik ranges and even today is known for its calm environment, cleanliness, gardens and still maintains a reputation of being modern, well planned and following urban lifestyle. It is also a city which has a close proximity from Delhi and NCR and also all the major towns of Punjab (Amritsar), Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (“Chandigarh Tourism - The Hub of North India”, 2018). The strategic location is one of the most important reasons to consider the development of Yoga tourism in the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

The Sanskrit word ‘Yog’ is referred to have originated in Pre-Vedic era and has been practiced in India since then as a discipline which integrates the body and soul. Though in previous decade many media channels and celebrities have popularised Yoga in the urban India, with the establishment of Ministry of Ayush – (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) and with a push from Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi and celebration of World Yoga Day on 21st June, last three years have seen a popularity and awareness on Yoga.

Yoga is popular in its four forms in general:

Yoga for wellness / healing / medicinal benefits – Yoga is visualised as a discipline to maintain general health, fight obesity, prevention of diseases, as a means to exercise various parts of body, recuperation etc. There is also a trend of using a term ‘Power Yoga’. Power Yoga is a style of Yoga created by Bryan Kest, in the late 80’s (Birch, 1995). This includes performing ‘Asanas’ at a faster pace as an exercise. This is popular among people aiming to control body weight, increases stamina, strength and flexibility. However, actual benefits or short comings between traditional Yoga asanas and power Yoga is a matter of debate.

Yoga for spiritualism / mental peace and harmony – Many practice Yoga for attaining a mental peace in today’s fast forward life. This includes mental relaxation, discarding negative thoughts, easing thought process, improving concentration, spiritually connecting with the supreme power, meditation etc. The sage Patanjali outlined eight aspects – or limbs of Yoga - Ashtanga Yoga in his Yoga Sutras (Swami Satchidanand, 2012).

Yoga as a sport among children – Yoga is an integral part of a school activity of students. Practising Yoga everyday keeps the body supple, healthy, exercises the joints and muscles and also helps to maintain an overall state of well being among school children. This aspect of Yoga is also aimed at promoting healthy habit among students and makes them aware of our rich cultural heritage in the form of Yoga.

Table 1: Limbs of Yoga

Limbs of Yoga	English meaning
Yama	Moral codes
Niyama	Self – purification
Asana	Posture
Pranayama	Breath Control
Pratyahara	Withdrawing mind from senses
Dharana	Concentration
Dhyana	Deep meditation
Samadhi	Union with the object of meditation

Yoga as a study – There is a good number of Institutes and Universities offering degree, post graduate and even Ph.D. levels in Yoga. Many government and private institutes are offering Yoga certificate or diploma courses - short term and long term for various strata of society. Customised corporate programmes are also on offer by various institutions. Yoga is a vast subject in itself.

Tourism:

Tourism is the fastest growing sectors of economy in India. As per WTO report, India has recorded a 14.6 million tourist arrival in year 2016 which is an increase of 9.7% from previous year (UNWTO Tourism highlights 2017). According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reports in April 2017, India's travel and tourism sector ranked 7th in the world in terms of its contribution to the country's GDP. India is a country with rich heritage and still holds a lots of unexplored potential for tourism. One of the less explored areas is Yoga tourism.

Amalgam of Yoga and Tourism:

A formal definition or scope of Yoga tourism is not standardized as yet. However, the term is commonly used by various stakeholders in the tourism industry. Some research has however been conducted in this field within India and an attempt to describe it has been done (Smith and Puczko, 2009).

As per Smith and Puczko (2009), Yoga Tourism is an act in which people from all around the world travel to other countries to obtain salvation and medical care while at the same time touring, vacationing, and fully experiencing the attractions of the countries in which they are visiting.

The key words that define Yoga tourism fall in the scope of the famous broad category of Wellness Tourism. Smith and Puczko have suggested the following table with a 'Body-Mind-Spirit Spectrum' as a part of wellness tourism.

Table 2: Body-Mind-Spirit Spectrum

BODY	Medical Tourism	Leisure Spa Tourism		SPIRIT
	Thalassic Tourism	Medical (surgical) Tourism		
		Holistic Tourism	Yoga and Meditation Tourism	
		Occupational wellness tourism	Spiritual Tourism	
MIND				

The research proves that when it comes to uniting body mind and spirit, Yoga Tourism is the answer. This unified approach is what makes this tourism unique.

Chandigarh as a tourist destination:

Chandigarh is a contemporary urban city blended with the old world charm of green areas all around its sectors.

Location: A small city of an area about 114 sq kms, it is located at the foot hills of Shivalik. It is about 250 kms from New Delhi and 230 kms from Amritsar in Punjab. Being capital of two states Punjab and Haryana, it is surrounded by both the states and near Himachal Pradesh.

A transit location and a business hub: Chandigarh is both a destination in itself for business or pleasure and also a transit city to travel further to Punjab or Himachal Pradesh. As per Ministry of Tourism – ‘Tourism survey for UT of Chandigarh; Final report (May 2014 to April 2015)’ a total of tourists who stayed overnight in Chandigarh was 568507 while the tourists who moved on or returned the same day was 3325019.

Weather: Chandigarh has cold dry winter (November to January 2°C to about 18°C) and hot summer (April to July 27°C to about 45°C) hot summer and sub tropical monsoon. Evaporation usually exceeds precipitation and the weather is generally dry.

Planned city: Chandigarh was formed after the Indian independence, as the first planned city of post-independence India. Known internationally for its architecture and urban design, the master plan of the city was prepared by architect Le Corbusier. The planning is such that each sector is a self sufficient unit in itself and has a green belts, parks and market place. Le Corbusier, the planner of the conceived the Master Plan of Chandigarh as analogous to a human body with a clearly defined Head (Capital Complex), Heart (City Centre), Lungs (Leisure Valley and Gardens), the Limbs (Cultural and Educational Institutions) and the Circulatory System (7 Vs). The conception of the City has been formulated on the basis of four major functions: Living, Working, Care of the Body and Spirit and Circulation.

Green Chandigarh: Apart from most heritage buildings, bustling markets, shopping malls, cinema halls, restaurants and bars etc which signify the urban culture, there are gardens all over the city. Travel enthusiasts are attracted to the city for its cleanliness and lush greenery. The structural design of the city is a pragmatic blend of progressive design and functional development. Nature lovers from different parts of the country flock here to view the beautiful theme gardens of the city – Rose Garden, Terraced Garden, Bougainvillea garden, Japanese garden, Garden of Fragrance, Shanti Kunj, Garden of Silence, Smriti Upvan, Palm Garden, Hibiscus Garden, Topiary Park, Botanical Garden, Traffic Park, Rock Garden, Fitness Trail, Leisure valley etc. There are also two lakes surrounded by green areas in Chandigarh. The city also has a base infrastructure in terms of Yoga education - The Government college of Yoga education and health and various other centres where Yoga classes are already being held.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore institutions and sites already available that can be developed as centres for Yoga Tourism.
- To analyse the acceptance of Chandigarh as Yoga destination in North India for tourists visiting the city.
- To identify the challenges in establishing Chandigarh as a destination for Yoga Tourism.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative and qualitative research design. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed based on an extensive review of literature. The questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic details like name and places, age, purpose of visit, etc. It consisted of 08 questions which asked about the various aspects on scope of Yoga tourism in Chandigarh. Statistical analysis was done using bar graphs.

This study consists of tourists visiting Chandigarh who were given questionnaire to fill up. Random Sampling method was followed to get the questionnaire filled. The questionnaires were completed within 3 months. Altogether 116 questionnaires were distributed and 98 were collected, representing a response rate of 84.5%. A number of 15 were discarded because of incomplete information and mistakes. Thus, a number of 83 usable questionnaires were obtained. Simple random sampling was conducted.

The demographic details of the research are as follows:

- Gender : 37% Female and 63% Male
- Age group
- Annual Income (of family)

Table 3:Age group of Sample Tourists

S. No.	Age Group	Percent of Sample Tourist
1	15-24 years	23%
2	25-34 years	27%
3	35-44 years	17%
4	45-54 years	12%
5	55-64 years	12%
6	65 years and above	9%

Table 4: Family Income of Sample Tourists

S. No.	Age Group	Percent of Sample Tourist
1	Upto 3 lakhs	9%
2	3-5 lakhs	25%
3	5-7 lakhs	21%
4	7- 10 lakhs	32%
5	Above 10 lakhs	13%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research represents quantitative as well qualitative finding and the results are analysed as below:-

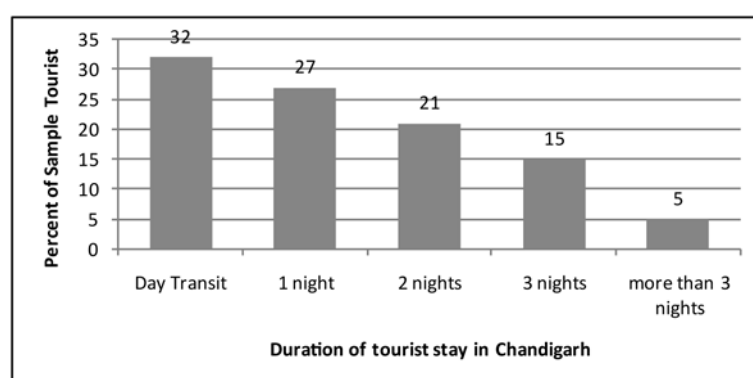


Figure 1: Duration of tourist stay in Chandigarh

Figure 1 gives a brief of the duration of stay in Chandigarh. It becomes very clear from the data that the city is popular among tourists for either day transit or for 1 night stay. When tourists were further asked regarding this short duration of stay, small city with limited attraction came out as a reason for the

same. Majority of tourist i.e. 32% of the tourists visit Chandigarh only from morning to evening. These individuals were either business travellers or the ones residing in nearby city who can complete the city tour early and return home by evening. 27% tourists stayed only for 1 night. These tourists were usually the ones who are taking halt in Chandigarh for a night and moved to their main destination on the next day. Rest of the tourists stayed for 2 or more nights. These were the tourists who were visiting their family and friends on different occasions. In this category also, the tourists who were staying for more than 3 nights are as few as 5% only. It becomes clear from the above mentioned data that being small and new city, Chandigarh does not have many attractions or history to increase the duration of stay. If the tourist inflow is to be increased in Chandigarh, it must incorporate other elements to attract tourists and Yoga can be one such element which can be added with ease to increase the tourist inflow as well as their duration of stay.

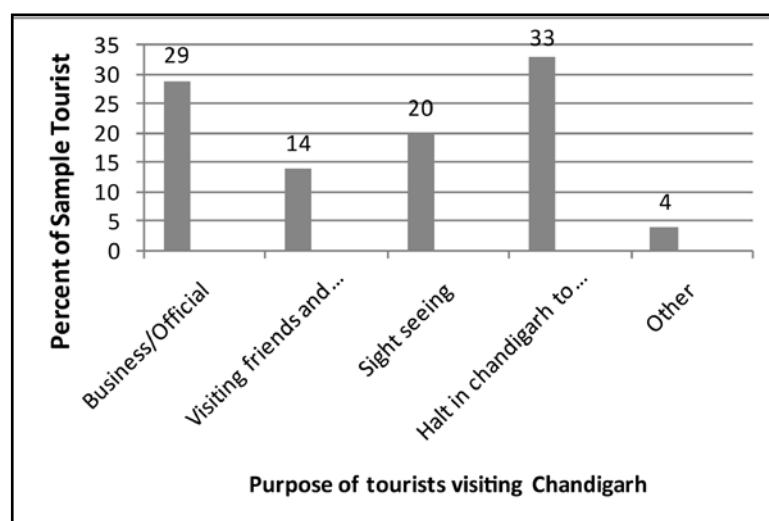


Figure 2: Purpose of travel to Chandigarh.

Figure 2 represents the purpose of travel to the city and it becomes clear that 29% of the tourists visited for official purposes while 33% were travelling for official purpose and taking halt in Chandigarh respectively. Only 20% were coming for sightseeing and rest 14% visiting their family and friends. The 14% who were visiting their family and friends could be motivated for attending Yoga sessions by their relatives and friends if Chandigarh is developed and popularized as a Yoga hub.

Figure 3 represents popularity of different places amongst tourist. Undoubtedly Sukhna lake, Rock Garden and Rose Garden were found to be the most popular places in Chandigarh among tourists. 52% of the tourists had visited open hand monument as well. Leisure Valley, Govt. Art Museum and Gallery, International Doll Museum, Japanese Garden and other places in Chandigarh were the least visited places by tourists. This data reveals that when tourists are planning to visit the city, they have major 4 to 5 destinations in mind which they want to see during their visit to Chandigarh (“Chandigarh Tourism - The Hub of North India”, 2018). These popular tourist attractions have the potential that can

be developed as Yoga Centers of Chandigarh. Commencement of Yoga sessions at these places will help in faster word of mouth as almost every tourist is visiting these places.

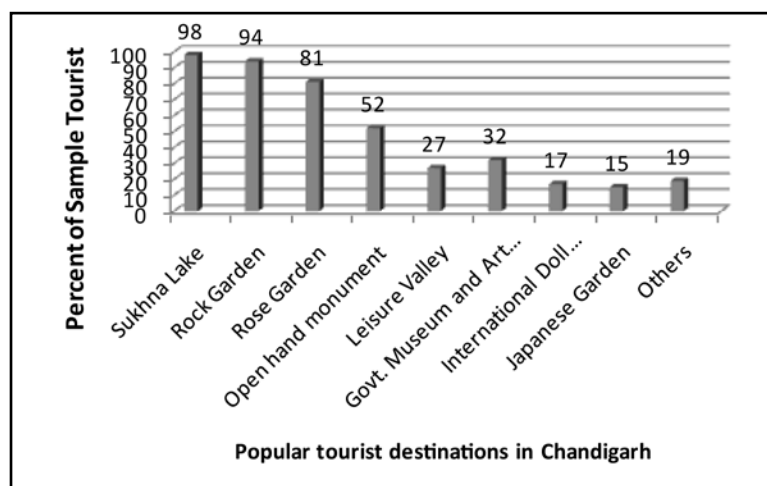


Figure 3: Attractions in Chandigarh popular among tourist.

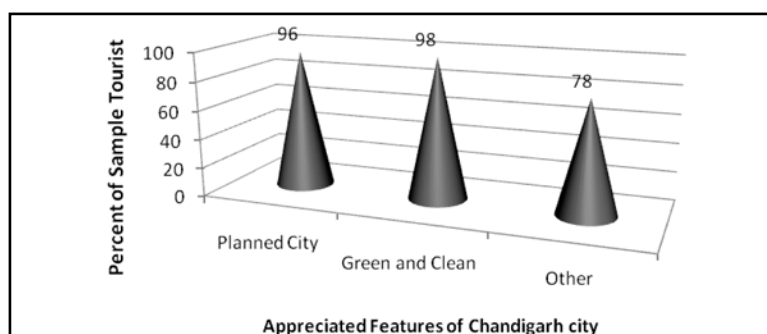


Figure 4: Positive aspects of Chandigarh in comparison to other cities of North India.

When people were asked to compare Chandigarh with other major cities of north India and give positive aspects about the city beautiful, 96% appreciated the planning of city and 98% were mesmerized by its greenery and cleanliness. 78% of the tourists also considered some other positive factors like lesser traffic, lesser pollution, law and order and lesser crime rate. These findings revealed that Chandigarh has been unanimously accepted as a planned, clean and green city not only by observation of tourists but also by Swachh Survekshan-2017 according to which Chandigarh was 11th in the cleanliness ranking of 434 cities and the cleanest city in North India.

Figure 5 represents the interest level of people to attend Yoga sessions for rejuvenation during their travel to the city beautiful. 34% of the tourists were interested in attending the Yoga sessions whereas 27% of the tourists did not wish to attend any Yoga sessions. Rest 39% were not very sure whether they would like to attend Yoga sessions or not. These 39% tourists did not have a fixed opinion and with some efforts can be motivated to attend Yoga sessions. The world's population is becoming more aware of alternate health care options in which Ayurveda and Yoga are most common in India and people are inclined towards Yoga (Kumar, 2017).

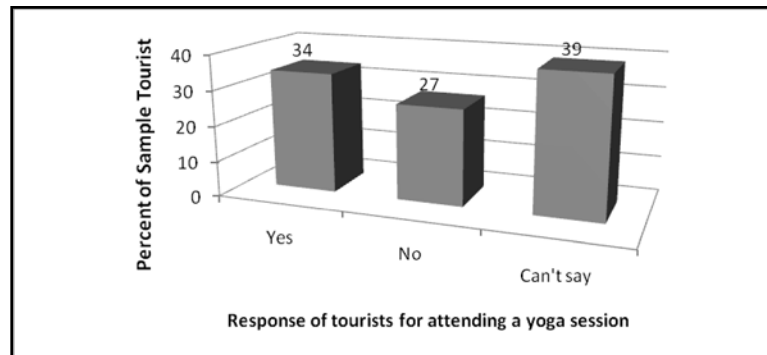


Figure 5: Interest in attending Yoga session Yoga session for rejuvenation during stay in Chandigarh

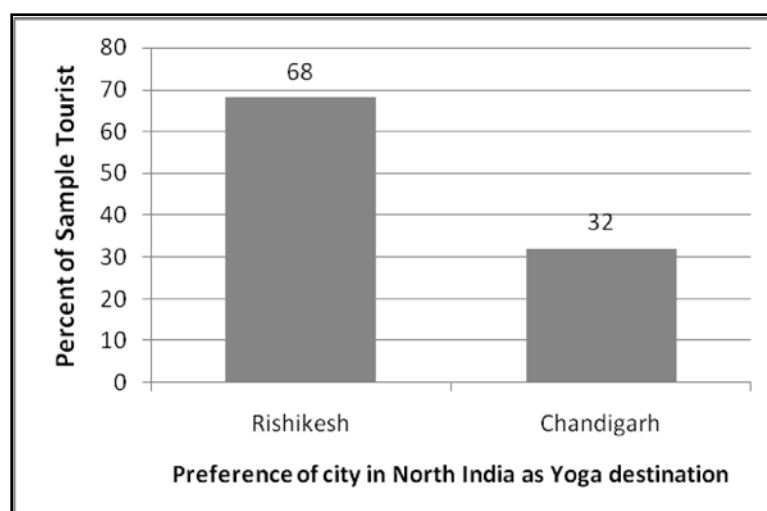


Figure 6: Tourists' selection of destination for Yoga

Figure 6 represents tourist's selection of Yoga destination between Rishikesh which is the current hub of Yoga in the country and Chandigarh which is known as planned clean and green city. 68% of the tourists selected Rishikesh and 32% of the tourists selected Chandigarh.

Tourists were also asked the reason for selecting the particular city. The ones who chose Rishikesh had various reasons for their selection which are as follows:-

- It is the known hub for Yoga in India
- Rishikesh has many famous ashrams for Yoga
- It's a hill station with scenic beauty
- It's the best place if one is doing Yoga for spiritualism
- Rishikesh and surrounding cities also cater to adventure tourist so one can actually experience both aspects of tourism together
- Tourists' who chose Chandigarh gave reasons for their selection which are as follows:-
- Better connectivity to commute from Delhi

- Its planned, clean and green city with pure air specially in the places like Sukhna Lake, Rose garden and Open hand monument
- After experiencing Yoga in Chandigarh, one can always move to nearest hill station.

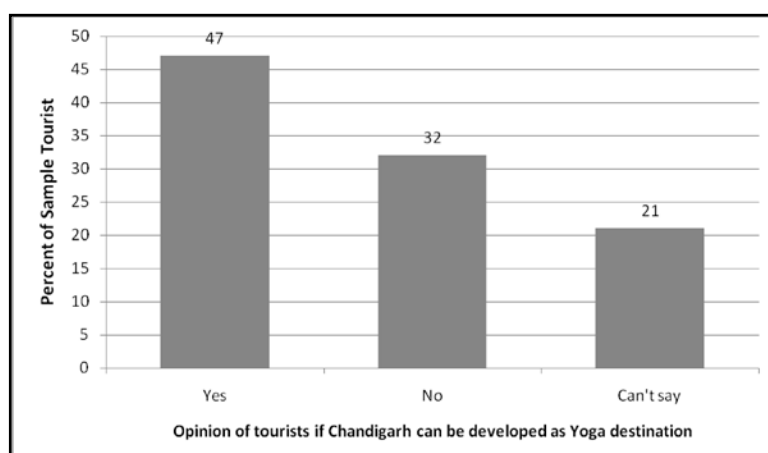


Figure 7: Tourists' opinion on developing Chandigarh as a Yoga destination

Figure 7 shows tourists' opinion on developing Chandigarh as a Yoga hub to increase tourist inflow. 47% of the tourists gave a positive response and firmly believed that Chandigarh has a huge potential for Yoga tourism. 21% were not sure if the same is possible and rest 32% believed that Chandigarh won't be able to compete with Rishikesh as both of these cities are almost equidistant from country capital New Delhi. As many national and international tourists land in Delhi and then move on for various destinations, this is a factor that needs consideration. According to these 32% even if Chandigarh tries to compete with Rishikesh, it will be the second choice and not the first one. Even if this perspective of people is to be accepted, it will be beneficial for the city to hold that rank because ultimately it will make Chandigarh famous as the 2nd most popular destination for Yoga in north India and tourists will surely get attracted towards it.

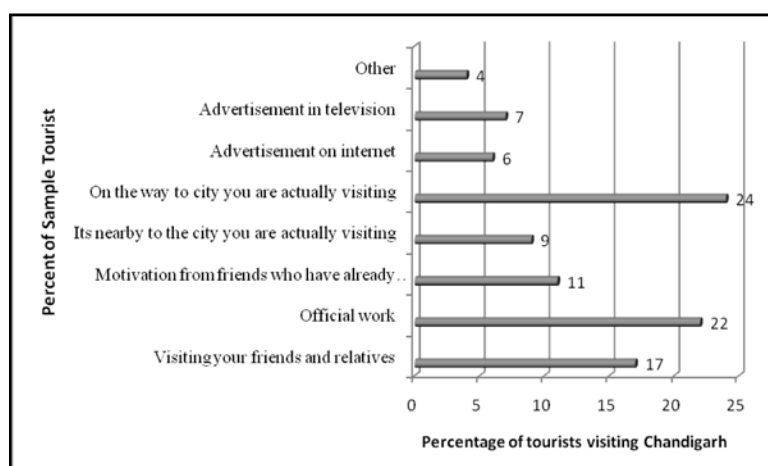


Figure 8: Mode of motivation for travelling to Chandigarh

Figure 8 shows factors which directly or indirectly motivated people to visit Chandigarh. 24% are

actually taking halt in the city and 22% are on day transit or single night stay due to official work. 17% are visiting their relatives and 11% have got motivation from the friends who have been to Chandigarh before. Only few have got motivation through advertisement on television or internet which becomes alarming that despite being the clean and green city, it has not been marketed enough to be popular among tourists for sightseeing.

CONCLUSION

It is quite understood that now a day's people are so much disturbed with their hectic work schedule and stressful working culture and they want a peaceful and healthy life. Yoga is the best tool to ease out the body and mind from this busy schedule. This study shows that there are positive chances that 'Yoga Tourism' could be positively accepted by Chandigarh as the city has a numerous positive features like green city, healthy air, good infrastructure and pleasant sightseeing that attract good number of tourists. Most of them are transit tourists but at the same time the tourists which stay for one or more nights could be an interested client towards the Yoga tourism which can help in leading the Chandigarh as one of the destination for Yoga amongst others in this category. In North India there are very few destinations which are famous for Yoga tourism like Rishikesh in Uttarakhand (Aggarwal, 2008). Chandigarh might not be able to compete with this Yoga destination in early stages but this study signifies that Chandigarh has a potential to create its own identity as a Yoga destination and it can also make an addition to the growth of tourism in Chandigarh. According to tourists, best suitable sites for Yoga are Capitol complex, Sukhna Lake and various gardens of Chandigarh – Rose Garden, Leisure Valley, Topiary Park, Terrace Garden, Garden of Fragrance, Bougainvillea Garden, Garden of Palms, Garden of Silence and Hibiscus Garden. Electronic media is an important marketing channel that should be widely used in marketing of tourism services (Sotiriadis, 2013). An effort from UT Administration and various private and government organisations to form an e-network and schedule various programmes of Yoga under trained masters is required. The courses can be of various durations, cover the topics related to general health, recuperation, mental relaxation and education for both young and old.

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