

ROLE OF AMUSEMENT PARK IN VALUE ADDITION TO THE TOURIST PLACE: CASE STUDY OF CHAIL, H.P.

* **Raj Kumar Gupta¹ and Ashutosh Sharma²**

¹Dean (Academics), ²Faculty, Institute of Hotel Management Catering and Nutrition, Pusa
drrkgupta.ihmpusa@nic.in

ABSTRACT

Background: *Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/ professional purposes. Tourism helps to assimilate culture and social bondage. Theme parks and amusement parks are very good tourist attractions. An amusement park is a combination of thrill rides, roller coaster rides, family rides, water attractions or rides in darkness in a covered train. Chail, a tourist destination in H.P is one of the popular tourist destinations. Opening an amusement park will help to attract more tourists. Objective: To identify the feasibility of opening a Amusement park in Chail, H.P. Methodology: The research instrument used was a questionnaire was 30 tourists visiting Chail. Results: Around 86% of the tourist population agreed that provision of Amusement Park would give opportunity to development of Chail and of the state overall. 76% agreed Amusement Park will be a value addition to Chail and help in the economic and financial upliftment of the state. Conclusion: Value addition of Amusement Park in tourist places would help in social and cultural development of the state. Such leisure activity acts as strong magnet for tourism industry.*

Key Words: *Tourism, Amusement park, Theme parks, Chail.*

INTRODUCTION

When we think of Tourism, we think primarily of people who are visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation and having a good time. They may spend their leisure time engaging in various sports, sunbathing, talking, singing, taking rides, touring, reading or simply enjoy the environment (Goeldner& Ritchie, 2000).

The word Tourism can be defined in different ways considering different aspects of it. The most authentic explanation of tourism is given by World Tourism Organization. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines Tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or nonresidents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure(cf.cdn.unwto.org).

The other way to define tourism is as people who travel “the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity”(Hunziker and Krapf, 1941).

Tourism is considered an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and their international relations(www.univeur.org).

Tourism is a popular leisure activity. This leisure activity can play important role in maintaining social harmony, reconciling conflicts and may part in enhancing excellence in community skills. Tourism also helps to assimilate culture and social bondage. It is noticed that cultural attraction and events acts as strong magnet for tourism(Das,2014).

Tourism activities have several beneficial impacts. However, it has also negative impact in culture, society and environment. Even in last decade, tourism was considered as pollution free economic sector. But in contemporary World, this scenario has been changed with promotion of mass tourism. Mass tourism is now great threat on ecology and sustainability. Excess practice of tourism can also hamper infrastructural establishment of a place. Shimla is a classic example of this scenario(Das,2014). Tourism has grown from the pursuits of a privileged few to a mass movement of people, with the — urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes in environment and to undergo new experiences (Raina, 2005).

Tourism is not only an economic activity of importance in as much as it earns foreign exchange for a country. It is an important medium of social and cultural development and also of promoting lasting goodwill and the regional development of the country and acts as a means of social education and better understanding among the people in different regions of the country (Bhatia, 2006).In the long run, the most important contribution to tourism is developing understanding among varied cultures and life styles. Tourism has become the world’s largest industry, generating wealth and employment, opening the minds of both visitors and visited to different ways of life. Worldwide the industry currently employs around 200 million people. Tourism as an instrument of economic development will steadily take an even greater importance in the future. There are grounds for optimism about what tourism can mean for poor nations in the 21st century (www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in).

Tourist Attractions

Tourist Attractions may be classified as **Natural Attractions**- Climate, scenic beauty, Beaches & marine Areas, Flora & Fauna, Special Environmental Features-Rock climbing, cave exploring, Parks & conservation Areas, Health Tourism or **Cultural Attractions**- Archaeological, Historical and Cultural sites, Distinctive cultural patterns, Arts and Handicrafts, Economic activities, Museums & other cultural facilities, Cultural festivals, etc. or **Special Types of Attractions**- Theme Parks, Amusement Parks, Circuses, Shopping, Meetings, Conferences & conventions, special events, Gambling casinos, Entertainment, Recreation & sports. (Inskeep, 1991)

Theme parks and amusement parks are very good tourist attractions nowadays. The modern concept of tourism involves activity oriented tourism where the tourists can participate in the activities. Theme parks and amusement parks are becoming part and parcel of any country's tourism attractions. Theme parks and amusement parks not only attract large number of tourists but also provide thousands of job opportunities. Disneyland, one of the pioneer theme parks and amusement parks employs about 3000 permanent employees and an additional 3,000 during peak season. (Howell, 1989)

An amusement park is a combination of various types of attractions which may be divided into several major categories: thrill rides, roller coaster rides, family rides, water attractions or rides in darkness in a covered train. Amusement parks and theme parks are terms for a group of entertainment attractions, rides, and other events in a location for the enjoyment of large numbers of people. An amusement park is more elaborate than a simple city park or playground, usually providing attractions meant to cater specifically to certain age groups, as well as some that are aimed towards all ages. Theme parks, a specific type of amusement park, are usually much more intricately themed to a certain subject or group of subjects than normal amusement parks (www.prezi.com). Most of the revenue in amusement parks comes from the sale of entrance tickets. There are discounts for children, students and senior citizens. The majority of parks also charge a fee for parking one's vehicle. An entrance fee does not include food and meals are anything but cheap. Nearly all amusement parks operate in accordance with two principles: "*Pay as you go*" (individual fee for every attraction) or "*Pay one price*" (a single entrance fee comprising all the attractions) (Kruczek, 2011). World Tourism Organization (WTO) predicted that theme park is one of the three trends of the development of international tourism right now and in the future.

The Amusement Parks industry has grown strongly over the past five years, driven by a rise in international and domestic visitor numbers and rising consumer spending. Although the industry is highly competitive, the major amusement park operators have used their intellectual property rights to major film franchises and entertainment to their advantage. In recent years, operators of many of the major amusement parks have employed this tactic to propel revenue and increase profit margins. The industry is dominated by a small number of massive entertainment companies (Amusement Parks Market Research Report | NAICS).

Outdoor amusement parks and attractions have been among the most popular segments of the entire entertainment and recreation industry. Since Walt Disney World opened in Orlando, Central Florida's theme parks have been popular attractions in the last 20 years (Sun & Usyan, 1994).

Amusement parks also grew out of the pleasure gardens that became especially popular at the beginning of the Industrial revolution as an area where one could escape from the grim urban environment. The oldest intact still-surviving amusement park in the world (opened 1583) is Bakken (“The Hill”) at Klampenborg, north of Copenhagen, Denmark. The best known of the parks in London, was Vauxhall Gardens founded in 1661 and closed in 1859. Another long-standing park is Prater in Vienna, Austria, which opened in 1766. This park was conceived as a place where the common person could enjoy a respite in a pastoral setting and participate in the musical culture of the city. Tivoli Gardens, Copenhagen is another example of a European park, dating from 1843, which still exists. These parks consisted of booths, entertainment, fireworks displays and some —rides such as introduction to the modern railroad. The parks grew to accommodate the expectations of their customers—who were increasingly familiar with the mechanical wonders of industrialization. Rides became a required part of the pleasure garden and by 1896 there were 65 such pleasure parks in London (www.tititodorancea.org).

Disney parks in the United States, Europe and Asia made up nine of the top 10 parks and held 11 of the top 25 spots. Universal Studios’ theme parks came in a distant second with just one park in the top 10 list and four in the top 25 list. SeaWorld held two spots. Visits to North American and Asian parks keep increasing, and not just at the top 25 parks: There were 135 million visits to the top 20 North American theme/amusement parks last year, up 2.7% from 2012. There were 117 million visits to the top 20 Asian theme/amusement parks last year, up 7.5% from 2012 (www.edition.cnn.com).

In India, the capital city of Delhi recently opened the Delhi Eye to public, a 200-foot-tall Ferris wheel adjacent to KalindiKunj in Okhla. Delhi and Chennai host the largest number of Amusement, theme and water Parks in India, few of them are Appu Ghar (now closed), MGM Dizzee World, VGP Universal Kingdom, Kishkinta Theme Park, Dash n Splash, Niccopark and Black Thunder theme park (www.walkthroughindia.com).

Appu Ghar was India’s first and most popular amusement park in Delhi (now closed) and was the first of its kind in India when it started. Kingdom of Dreams, Adventure Island, Splash Water Park and Wet’n’Wild Amusement Park are few more famous fun parks for entertainment in Delhi NCR. The other are Essel World –Mumbai, Wonderla–Bangalore, Veegaland–Kochi, Adlabs Imagica -Pune/Mumbai, Queens Land –Chennai, Aquatica–Kolkata, Maniar Wonderland –Ahmedabad, Ramoji Film City –Hyderabad, Funtasia Water Park –Patna, AppuGhar–Jaipur, Worlds of Wonder –Noida etc. (www.walkthroughindia.com).

Shimla, ‘Jewel of the Crown’ (Pubby, 1996) is one of the famous tourist destinations of India. It was developed and nourished by British rulers for their own needs. Shimla is famous for its’ pleasant climate, panoramic beauty and colonial heritage. It is not only famous among the Indian tourists but also to the foreigners who visit India. In 2011-12 total 3608020 tourists visited Shimla city (Final

Report for Himachal Pradesh – Tourism Survey, 2012). Shimla is also a week end destination for Delhi, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Ambala, Jalandhar etc. north Indian cities (Das,2014).Chail is small town near Shimla. Generally the tourists visiting Shimla are also going to Chail. Chail is the important segment of any itinerary of Shimla Tourism.

When Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala was expelled from Shimla - The Summer Capital of the British India, he decided to create his own capital for the warm months. The little village of Chail was perfect. It lay surrounded by magnificent deodar forests, Shimla was in direct vision and most importantly, Chail at 2226 mtrs was somewhat higher than British controlled Shimla. Today, the Maharaja's creation can be experienced by everyone. And for Himachal Tourism, now owner of the gracious mansion, every visitor is a Royalty(www.hptdc.nic.in).

Chail is 44 km from Shimla and 45 km from Solan. The Chail Palace is well known for its architecture, the palace was built as summer retreat by the Maharaja of Patiala during the British Raj, on the land allotted to him by the British for former's assistance in the Anglo-Nepalese War. The cricket ground and a polo ground which is there at an altitude of 2,250 mtrswere owned by erstwhile royal family of Patiala. It is the world's highest cricket ground.Chail is also considered as the hiker's paradise. The area is away from the bustling life of the state capital Shimla.Chail is situated at an altitude of 2,250 m. The place is surrounded by the forests of chir pine and gigantic deodars. Shimla, Solan and Kasauli can also be viewed at night from here. Chail is pleasant in summers and cold in winter. Average annual rainfall is about 150 mm(www.hptdc.nic.in).

Chail is full of tourist attractions and an addition to these like an amusement park will help to attract more tourists. The Amusement park will add value to this tourist place. The objective of the current study is to identify the feasibility of opening a Amusement park in Chail, H.P

METHODOLOGY

The study was done in and around Chail, & Shimla region of Himachal Pradesh. The study was based on sample survey. The tourists, local andworking people belong to the tourism industry were identified as sample for collecting data. A random sampling was done to identify the sample. The research instrument used was a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed comprising 9 questions. The tourists in Chail, Locals living there and the Hotel staff working in Chailwere taken as sample and was selected randomly. The questions related to their perception regarding the tourist destination (Chail) that their knowledge about the tourist place Chail, how it attracts the tourists, what possible reasons to create an Amusement park in Chail, how an Amusement park can attract a large number of tourists there and how much it would be helpful in generating more revenue and will enhance the market value of Chail as tourist attraction were asked in the questionnaire.

The data was collected by the researchers themselves. The period of study was December 2015 and January 2016.The data collected was statistically analyzed.

RESULT& DISCUSSION

Thirty number of sample were approached to collect data and everyone filled the questionnaire making it 100% response. Such data collected was compiled and analyzed to find out the results. The responses on the study and the findings are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses for the various attributes

S.No.	Questions	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Have you ever taken any amusement park services?	Yes	22	73%
		No	08	27%
2	Is this your first visit to this tourist destination	Yes	18	60%
		No	12	40%
3.	Where do you go most often?	Hill Station	15	50%
		Beach	06	20%
		Dessert	03	10%
		Historical significant places	06	20%
4.	Do you think that amusement park ready to attract large number of tourist in Chail?	Yes	25	83%
		No	05	17%
5.	Where did you hear about this tourist destination?	I already knew of it.	5	16.67%
		Internet	6	20%
		Friends & Relatives	9	30%
		Magazines	4	13.33%
		Media	4	13.33%
		Any Other	2	6.67%
6.	Do you think that the Amusement park will do the value addition to Chail?	Yes	23	77%
		No	07	23%
7.	Do you agree that the Amusement park at Chail will increase the tourism activity & hence more revenue generation?	Agree	27	90%
		Not Agree	03	10%
8.	Do give overall rating of Chailhas to offer as a tourist destination	Excellent	18	60%
		Good	6	20%
		Average	5	17%
		Poor	1	3%
9	How much you agree that an Amusement park at Chail would give an opportunity to a huge employment to the local people living in chail?	Agree	26	86.67%
		Not Agree	3	10%
		Can't Say	1	3.33

From the above analysis, it was observed that most of the respondents came to know about this destination from their Friends and relatives.50% of the respondents like to prefer to go to a hill station, where 20% like to go to Beach or Historical places and 10% prefer to go to dessert.Most of respondent (90%) agreed that anAmusement park at Chail will increase the tourism activity & hence more revenue generation and 10% of respondent replied in negative.More than 60% of respondent said that Chail is an excellent tourist destination.

86.67% of the respondents agreed that by creating an Amusement park there at chail would give a huge employment to the local people living in Chail as the manpower for creating and operating the park would be available from there only, whereas 10% of respondents did not agreed.77% of respondent think that the Amusement park will do the value addition to the tourist place.

The theme park is a creative garden tour clues which is built in order to meet the demand of tourist's diversifiedentertainment and the modern tourist destination formation of planning activities. Under the background of thecreative economy, theme park is a tourism economy complex syncretizing creative elements (Hu, 2013). The development of theme parks contributes in the level of economic development and the distribution of wealth, increased transport and national culture. It also helps in increasing foreign visitors.

CONCLUSION

A detailed and inclusive research is necessary to investigate the role of amusement park in terms of tourist turnover, facilities and services provided, price etc. The above mentioned result may be interpreted as for the locale as these are neither adequateto be generalized for all kinds, business models or concepts of theme parks nor forthe diverse destinations. This research can be complimented with new and wider sampling and data gathering techniques to represent a wider range to describe the role of amusement park in value addition to a destination.

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