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## **Analyzing Resource Potential for Nature Based Tourism:**

*A Case Study of the State of Himachal Pradesh (India)*

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“*Potential*” broadly insinuates something promising but not yet (fully) exploited; it symbolizes the sum total of qualitative and quantitative values of the given resources on which the degree and extent of its exploitability depends (Kandari, 1984). In the context of tourism, assessing the resource potential in quantitative terms is highly complex process, if not impossible, as it involves the physical, psychological and spiritual demands on the people belonging to diverse geographical, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds who travel under different motives, interests, preferences and immediate needs.

To quote Kandari (1984), “*potential for tourism development in any area depends on the availability of recreational resources in addition to the factors like climate, seasons, accessibility, proximity to market, political stability, state of economy and general infrastructure, quality of natural environment, attitude of the local people, travel trade entrepreneurs and tourism planners, the existing tourist plant facilities and the degree to which they can be further developed within the prevailing limitations of natural, cultural and financial environments. Healthy combination of all those and many other factors create an ideal tourismagnetic environment at a given destination if the touristic values of the resource are effectively translated into a saleable, but composite tourist product*”.

The exclusive feature of tourism industry is that there intrinsically exists potential in the form of conversion able resources ranging from a mountain, river stream, lake, waterfall, dam, forest, wildlife, beach, island, desert, historical site, museum, monument, art object, fair or festival, tradition and folk dress, to the fact that even a prominent personality can be a tourist resource. It can, thus, be conveniently observed that almost every place has some degree of tourism resource potential (Singh, 1999). Since psychological make-up and consequently the perceptions, interests,

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tastes and preferences differ from person to person, as also time to time, the relative touristic value of each of the resource is obviously diverse for different individuals (Kandari, 1984). Likewise, the use pattern with relation to a given resource varies from person to person i.e., the same landscape may be used by the individuals for photography, trekking, bio and geo-studies, nature spotting, wild life watching and so on. The best resources are those that have mass appeal or say, the strength to attract huge number of people from widest possible psychographic segments.

The authors have worked upon the following commonly used steps to carry out the study:

1. *Identification and mapping of available tourist resources in a given area.*
2. *Assessment of the degree of tourist preferences and tourist interests for each of these features; and*
3. *Finally, determining the resource value in qualitative or quantitative terms.*

Identification, enlisting and mapping of the tourist resources is the first step, and yet, the most important, one in planning and development of tourism. Obviously, tourism planners and developers ought to be ever keen to know the degree of attractiveness of a resource or a set of resources, though it is a challenging proposition as the touristic value of an attraction is dynamically changing factor owing to the consistently changing 'tourist demand trends' and the 'resource use patterns'. In this context, there is now a consensus view that the most effective way to assess the touristic appeal of the 'generic' and 'specific' attractions, is to consistently cross-examine the perceptions and priorities of tourists vis-à-vis the attractions in question. However, the result of such studies can not be applied to the similar type of resources or attraction distributed in different geographical and socio-cultural settings since the ultimate attractiveness of a natural and cultural feature not only depends on its quality but determined by a complex combination of many factors including additional resources / attractions besides the other features already stated above.

The mighty Himalayan ranges, enshrouded with captivating mystery and thrill, have been, and would continue to, fascinate not only the adventurers, voyagers, naturalists, bio & geo scientists and cultural anthropologists but the religious souls, as well. Its dramatic land architecture, fascinating vales and dales, and tranquil environ, all around, have the inherent strength to be the source of inspiration for men of literature, artists and the spiritual hearts. Talking from tourism view point, Himalayan System is a destination region *par excellence*. As such, every part of this

Grand Mountain Chain has its unique touristic personality, Himachal Himalaya inherits dramatic diversity in tourism potential on account of being located almost centrally in the long sweep of the Himalayas

*Figure: 1*

**Tourist Map of Himachal Pradesh**



While every part of this huge mountain chain is endowed with all the generic features of Himalaya, the study area, on account of its strategic central location in the long Himalayan sweep, is richly studded with towering white and black mountains, snowy slopes and glaciers, gurgling rivers and streams, shimmering lakes and springs, lush green forests and unique high altitude wildlife, verdant valleys and flower carpeted meadows, and above all, dramatically

changing land architecture all along. Himachal Pradesh is inherently bestowed with tremendous potential for promotion of such widely sought-after tourist pursuits like mountaineering, hard and soft trekking, ice skiing, wildlife watching, river running, aero-sports and eco-tourism beside various other mountain *vis-à-vis* nature based activities. Himachal, in fact is charming in summer but even more fascinating in autumn; with its terraced fields clear skies and thickly populated forests showing wonderful tints of crimson, green, blue and, of course, the ever charming red. During Winters skating, skiing, invigorating walks amidst stately deodars and pines, and in Spring hustle and bustle of quaint Tibetan bazars in Shimla, Dharamshala and Mandi, besides golfing, fishing, trekking, hiking, aero & water-sports, picnics and sight-seeing are great attractions all the year round.

In this article, the authors have made a sincere effort to prepare a comprehensive inventory of the existing and potential resources, analyzed their present usages *vis-à-vis* further untried options and endeavored to plan & propose some new tourism products & attractions based on the resources.

### **Resource Potential in Himachal Pradesh at a Glance**

<p><b>Water Bodies:</b>  <b>Rivers:</b> Beas, Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, Yamuna, Pabbar, Giri, Parvati, Baspa.  <b>Lakes:</b> Prashar, Khajjiar, Renuka, Gobindsagar, Dal, Pongdam, Pandoh, Manimahesh, Brighu, Chandratul.  <b>Waterfalls:</b> Rahla Water falls, Satdhara water spring, Dhanchho water falls, Kalika Kund, Chadwick fall, Bhagsunath water falls  <b>Hot Water Springs:</b> Tattapani, Mani Karan, Kasol, Vashisht, Jeori</p>
<p><b>Wildlife Parks and Sanctuaries:</b> Great Himalayan National Park Parvati Valley, Kullu. High altitude Pin valley National park, Spiti. Renuka Sanctuary, Pongdam Sanctuary, Sarahan Phasentry, Kufri and Gopalpur zoo</p>
<p><b>Skiing and Ice Skating</b> (January to March): Solang Nalla (Manali) Narkanda and Rohtang Pass. Ice Skating : Shimla, Heli-skiing : Manali.</p>
<p><b>Religious Tourism</b>  <b>Temples:</b> Jwalamukhi, Chamunda, Brajeshwari, Chintpurni, Baijnath, Laxminarayan, Chaurasi, Chhatrari, Taranadevi, Rewalsar, Raghunath, Bijlimahadev, Dhungri, Bhimakali, Hatkoti Jakhoo, Sankatmochan, Kalibari, Nainadevi and Baba balak nath, Deothsidh.  <b>Buddhist Monasteries:</b> Dharamsala Tashizong, Rewalsar, Manali, Kardang, Sashur, Key, Dhankar, Tabo, Nako, Pooh, Kanam, Jangi, Murang, Ribba, Reckongpeo.  <b>Sikh Pilgrimage Centres:</b> Paonta Sahib, Rewalsar, Bhagani Sahib, Badu Sahib and Manikaran.  <b>Churches:</b> Christ Church Kasauli, Christ Church Shimla, St. Johns Church, Mecleodgang, St. Francis Dalhousie.</p>
<p><b>Para &amp; Hang-gliding:</b> Bir, Manali, Bilaspur and Rohru</p>
<p><b>Lake sports:</b> Gobindsagar (Bilaspur), Pong dam (Kangra)  <b>River Rafting:</b> Sutlej, Beas and Chenab rivers, Shamshi (Kullu), Tattapani, Rampur and Jispa</p>

(Lahaul)
<b>Important Trek routes:</b> Rohru - Chanshal - Dodrakwar - Rupin - Sangla; Sangla - Badrinath; Jalori pass; Chandrakhani - Pass (Kullu Manali - Chandratal Manali - Parvati valley Dharamsala - Triuns - Chamba Bharmour - Manimahesh Chamba - Kullar over Sach pass; Bharmour - Baijnath; Bharmour - Lahaul; Chandratal; Barashigri glacier; Kinner - Kailash Bhaba - Pin Valley.
<b>Fairs:</b> Winter Carnival Manali, (Feb.) Mandi, Shivratri (March), Ladarcha fair, Spiti, (July) Minjar fair, Chamba, Manimahesh fair, Bharmour and Tribal Festival, Keylong (August) Phulech (festival of flowers), Kinnaur (Sept.) Kullu Dushera (October), Lavi fair, Rampur (Nov.), Renuka fair, (Nov.) Ice Skating Carnival, (Dec.).
<b>Museums:</b> State Museum, Shimla, Kangra Art Gallery Dharamsala, Bhurisingh Museum Chamba, Roerich art gallery Naggar, Sobha Singh art gallery Andreta
<b>Hill Resorts:</b> Shimla, Kufri, Chail, Kasauli, Manali, McLeodganj, Dalhousie
<b>Monuments:</b> Kangra fort, Taragarh, Rampur, Nalagarh, Arki and Jubbal palaces, Bhimakali Temple, Naggar Castle, Kamru fort, Gondla fort (Lahaul), Viceregal lodge, Christ Church, Chapslee, Wood Villa Palace, Chail Palace
<b>Season: Winter</b> (Dec-March) <b>Av. temp.</b> -5C to 25C in lower hills. -5C to 15C in mid hills <b>Summer</b> (April-June) <b>Av. temp.</b> 15C to 35C in lower hills. 10C to 25C in in mid/higher hills <b>Monsoon</b> (July 15th-Sept.) <b>Av. temp.</b> 15C to 30C in lower hills. 10C to 25C in mid/higher hill <b>Nearest Railway Station (Broad gauge)</b> Chandigarh, Kalka, Pathankot and Nangal. ( <b>Narrow gauge</b> ) Shimla, Jogindernagar.

### **Tourism Resources and Nature Based Touristic Activities in Himachal Pradesh**

#### **PEAKS, PASSES and GLACIERS**

This part of the Himalayas has been endowed with more than 40 Peaks with the diversity of altitudinal spectrum ranging from 3270 to 7025 mts posing variety of challenges, ranging from very soft to hard adventure, to the leisure tourists and adventure seekers thronging the state. Interestingly, all these peaks are clustered in six districts, namely Kullu, Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti, Kangra, Chamba and Shimla. A close analysis of the activity oriented touristic and adventurist movement to these peaks reveals the fact that out of more than 40 peaks, there are only a handful which are luring the brave souls. These include *Sarcha (3540 mts)*, *Pin Parbati (4800 mts)*, *Hanuman Tibba (5860 mts)*, *Solang (5975 mts)* & *Deo Tibba [Kullu District]*; *Pishu (5672 mts)*, *Kinner Kailash (6500 mts)*, *Shipki (6608 mts)* & *the highest in the state – Shilla (7025 mts)* [Kinnaur District]; *Lachalung La (5060 mts)*, *Mukar Beh (6070 mts)* & *Shikar Beh (6200 mts)* [Lahaul & Spiti District]; *Bara Kanda (5860 mts)* & *Pir Panjal (5972 mts)* [Chamba District]; and *Choordhar (3647 mts)* [Shimla District]. Once again, majority of these prominent peaks are

restricted to the close vicinity of the destinations or districts which are traditionally popular amongst the tourists.



The remote and, obviously, tough areas of the state can be accessed through an array of more than 60 **Passes** and **Jots** (as these are called in local language) ranging from an altitude of 2400 to 5440 mts.. Nothing much has been done in the study area to promote tourism or to enhance the usefulness of these barren, but gorgeously challenging, land forms, which would not only increase the economic status of these areas & the local population and be instrumental in the maintenance of the passes, but also improve the general civil and civic facilities & amenities that have always ensured better standards of living, in addition to enhancement of touristic appeal of the regions where such experiments have been done. Out of the available reservoir only few are frequented by the tourists, more so either because of their proximity to the known tourist destinations, or by virtue of being located enroute between places of touristic, social or commercial importance. Amongst these are *Sach (4395 mts)* & *Drati Pass* in Chamba; *Shipkila (4500 mts)* & *Kunzam La (4520)* in Lahaul & Spiti; *Shibling (3980 mts)* in Kinnaur; *Jalori (3135 mts)* in Kangra and *Tamsar (4572 mts)* in Kangra, in addition to *Indrahara (4320 mts)*; *Rohtang (3978 mts)* & *Hamtah Jot (4270 mts)*; *Kugti (4961 mts)*; *Barun Ghati/ Barua Pass (4578 mts)* & *Rupin Ghati (4625 mts)* connecting Kangra & Chamba; Kullu & Lahaul - Spiti; Lahaul & Bharmaur and Kinnaur & Garhwal in that order.

The Himalayas which have nearly 15,000 **Glaciers**—are one of the largest continental areas under ice. It is estimated that about 33,000 square kilometers constituting about 17 per cent of the Himalayas are ice-clad. Giving way to innumerable rivers, streams and other waterbodies, this ice clad zone of the Himalyas has been vitally influencing the ecological, socio-economic and cultural environment of the Centarl Asia in general and Northern India in particular, all through the evolution of the civilization. Apart from this, the glacier zone of the Himalaya, on account of its dramatic land architecture, complex terrains and captivating natural grandeur, has also been fascinating the naturalists, scholars and adventurers from the worldover. It especially

offers unique opportunities for hard and soft trekking. As regards the study area, its Greater Himalayan part is occupied by a series of large and small glaciers. Locally known as *Shigri*, the important glaciers in the study area, particularly from tourism viewpoint, may be enlisted as ***Bara Shigri, Chandra and Bhaga, Bhadal Glacier, Chandra Nahan and The lady of Keylong.*** There are many other small and medium sized glaciers in the state which can be promoted for hard/eco trekking. Some of them are – Sonapani, Gora, Dudhon and Parbati, Perad, Miyar, Beas Kund, Tichu, Sara Umga, South Dakka, Chandi-Ka-Glacier, Sammuder Tapa, Taragiri, Rai Ghar, Bhadal, Tapni Lahuni, Sili Laluni, Shan, Tal and, Shiptying etc.

### **Prominent Valleys**

Valleys are the important feature of Himachal Pradesh. Physiographically these are the places where human civilization has flourished in this mountainous region. Some of the important valleys that are important from the point of view of touristic activities are given below:

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Valley</b>	<b>Commonly Performed Touristic Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Satluj valley</b>	Water based adventure tourism
<b>2</b>	<b>Kiarda-dun valley</b>	<i>Sikh</i> pilgrims, business and corporate tourists
<b>3</b>	<b>Kullu valley</b>	Research, pilgrimage & nature-based and adventure tourism.
<b>4</b>	<b>Kangra valley</b>	Pilgrimage, adventure and spiritual tourism
<b>5</b>	<b>Chamba and Pangi valley</b>	Wellness tourism and nature trekking
<b>6</b>	<b>Lahaul and Spiti valleys</b>	<i>Pilgrimage and adventure tourism</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>Baspa valley</b>	Angling, skiing and cultural trekking
<b>8</b>	<b>Pabbar valley</b>	River rafting and other adventure activities

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*The following activities have been identified by the authors that are, at present, being offered at the different locations possessing the above natural resources, or can be further promoted in order to be optimally benefited from touristic pursuits:*

### **Mountaineering**

There are several mountain peaks in the country, ranging from moderate to tough, that can be divided into different categories such as 'Open', 'Virgin', 'Border', 'Trekking' and 'Other Peaks' depending on their altitudes and accessibility.

Himachal Pradesh, by virtue of its topographical and geographical features; as discussed above; offers some of the best options scattered in Lahaul & Spiti, Kullu, Kinnaur, Chamba and Shimla districts. In fact, Mulkila (6517 m), Deo Tibba (6001 m) and Menthosa (6443 m) have become some of the most admirable peaks on international level. The other notable mountaineering destinations in the state consist of Murangla (5,060m), Lachalungla (5,060m), Thamsar (5,080m), Srikhanda (5,182), Shitidhar (5,290), Umasila (5,294), Raldang (5,499), Parangla (5,579), Gushu (5,607m), Saltu Da Par (5,650m), Kailash (5,660m), Pishu (5,672m), Bara Kanda (5,860m), Hanuman Tibba (5,860m), Maiwa Kandino (5,944m), Pir Panjal (5,972m), Solang (5,975m), Gepang Goh (6,050m), Mukar Beh (6,070m), Shikar Beh (6,200m), Indrasan (6,220m), Shigrila (6,230m), Phawarang (6,349m), Gyephang (6,400m), Dibibokri Pyramid (6,400m), Jorkaden (6,473m), Kinner Kailash (6,500m), Manerang (6,597m), Shipki (6,608m), Leo-Pargial (Riwo Phargyul) (6,791m) and Shilla (7,025m).

### **Trekking**

There is no denying the fact that Himachal is a trekkers' paradise due to the panoramic canvas of routes, pleasant & welcoming indigenous rural folks and the professional services & facilities the state offers to the guests. Himachal Tourism with collaboration with the Mountaineering Institute at Manali offers a range of exciting treks. To mention some of these: *Chanderkhani-Malana in the Manali region, Baralacha trek across Lahaul through Chandertal, Manali-solang, Manali-Deo Tibba, Keylong-Manali, Keylong-Udaipur, Kaza-Keylong, Tabo-Kaza, Kalpa-Tabo, Sangla-Kalpa, Sarahan-Sangla, around Mani Mahesh and Shimla-Sarahan, Khara Pathar (Jubbal)- Chanshel Peak, Pul Bahal-Churdhar, Nauradhar-Churdhar and Mashobra-Shalli Peak (near Shimla), the treks through*



*Dhauladhar, Palampur and Shimla Hills* are extremely popular amongst tourists. Additionally, Kangra Valley offers numerous mountain ranges for trekking to cross over to Valleys like Kullu, Chamba, Lahaul- Spiti, Kinnaur and Pangi. The Passes from East to West are comparatively unspoilt, unfrequented, rough, difficult and short trekking routes. These include Chauri (3150 m) , Bohar (3535 m) , Baleni (3730 m) , Minkiani (4299 m) , Gag (4552 m) , Indrahar (4320 m) , Toral (4360 m) , Talang (4660 m) , Singhar (4310 m) , Waru (3870 m), Jalsu (3450 m) , and Thamsar (4922 m) . All these passes are easily accessible from the main Kangra Valley. Besides, peaks like Lantern, Drmbey, Camel, Slab, Mon, Christmas, Toral and Dharamshala Matterhorn provide good training ground for novice mountaineers as well as experienced climbers. *Rohru - Chanshal - Dodrakwar - Rupin - Sangla; Sangla - Badrinath; Jalori pass; Chandrakhani - Pass (Kullu), Manali - Chandratal - Manali - Parvati valley; Dharamsala - Triuns – Chamba; Bharmour – Manimahesh; Chamba - Kullar over Sach pass; Bharmour - Baijnath; Bharmour - Lahaul; Chandratal; Barashigri glacier* are some of the other popular treks in Himachal.

HPTDC, too, has explored new treks in Kinnaur and Spiti areas. In a marked contrast from the beautiful alpine meadows in Kinnaur, Spiti potentially has the barren terrain of the "Cold desert". The following are some of the well marketed packages offered by HPTDC:

#### **Kinner Kailash Parikrama Trek:**

The Parikarma begins from Kalpa via Thangi, Kunnu, Chhitkul and terminates at Kalpa via Sangla valley. Spanning over 8 days (4 days by bus 4 days by Trek). The majestic Mount Kinner Kailash (6050 m) has religious significance and changes colors several times a day with change of weather conditions. The circuit around the whole range attracts many trekkers and pilgrims every year.

#### **Bhaba-Pin Valley Trek:**

This trek starts from Kafnoo (Bhaba Nagar) in District Kinnaur and passes through lush green meadows and grazing fields on the bank of river Bhaba and extends to valleys of monasteries i.e. Spiti Divisions of District Lahul Spiti through the picturesque land, high passes, glaciers, wide pastures full of medicinal herbs and seasonal flowers. Geologically and archaeologically, Spiti valley is a living museum. The barren rock mountains are devoid of

any vegetation due to erosion by wind, sun and snow over thousand of years.

### **Chandigarh-Chur Dhar**

This 3 days soft adventure involves trekking from Naura Dhar to Mount Chur Dhar (11966 Ft). Beginning from and terminating at Chandigarh, this package has gained a lot of popularity.



### **Skiing**

Alongside various other adventure activities, there lies immense potential for ice skiing in Himachal Pradesh on account of the fact that most of its higher reaches are either perpetually snow covered, or remain under snow for most time of the year. There are some excellent ski slopes particularly in district *Kullu, Lahaul and Spiti, Kinnaur, Shimla, Chamba, Kangra* and *Sirmaur*, in that order. As of now, *Narkanda and Kufri* (District Shimla), *Solang Nala* and *Rohtang* (Kullu), *Pin Valley* (Lahaul and Spiti), *Kinnar Kailash* and *Vaspa Valley* (Kinnaur), *Bharmaur* and *Pangi* (Chaba), *Churdhar*(Sirmaur) and *Indrahara Pass* (Kagra) are the sites where skiing is practiced at some scale. However, in all these sites, except Solang Nala, there is no provision of Chair Lift, Ski lift or ropeways. An encouraging aspect in this direction is the introduction of *The Ski Village* in Kullu district, which is being developed by an NGO as a community oriented project with the help of international agencies.

Among the existing popular ski slopes, **Manali** environ is mainly known for heli-skiing. Deo Tibba, Hanuman Tibba, Rohtang Pass and Chanderkhani Pass are the places in the vicinity of Manali where this sport has been introduced though at a very limited scale. About 13 km from Manali, **Solang Valley** has good skiing slopes equipped with lift, also offering a splendid spectrum of glaciers and snow-capped mountain peaks. The Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali offers ski courses throughout the winter alongside extending assistance as well as advice on where and how to go for skiing, as also, providing skiing equipment on hire basis.

**Kufri**, as observed in the foregoing, is oldest skiing sites in the state, and perhaps the most easily approachable, as well. Located at a distance of about 10 km from Shimla – the state capital, Kufri is a small rather a sleepy township located amidst a spectacular natural setting, which transforms into a skiers' paradise once the snow starts falling. There are also some outstanding slopes along the Mahasu Ridge, just above Kufri. **Narkanda**, about 64 km from Shimla and occupying an average altitude of 8,100 ft is yet another popular ski resort in the state.

**Hattu Peak**, 6 km from Narkanda, also has popular ski slopes. Himachal Tourism manages all the skiing facilities at Narkanda including accommodation, transport and provision of equipment on hire. It also conducts training courses in close coordination with the Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports.

There is no dearth of alternate ski sites in the state both in terms of span and ideal slope gradient but suffer from lack of support infrastructures on account of the remoteness and complexity of terrain. However, all such stretches can be effectively promoted for cross country skiing, down hill skiing, wilderness skiing and eco and wilderness skiing, if not for traditional type of organized and closely guarded skiing. Indeed, it would require highly professional marketing strategies which could lure those skilled skiers from the worldover who relish the daunting challenges.

With the objective to popularize the sport in Himachal, HPTDC organizes special, all inclusive, packages for the daring beginners at Manali and Narkanda. The training is imparted through qualified instructors and these packages have started attracting youths and middle-aged adventure seekers in large numbers.

#### **Para-Gliding and Hang Gliding:**

Himachal Tourism is consistently taking initiative to introduce innovative and non-traditional high altitude based adventure sports, particularly heli skiing, para gliding and hang gliding. Consequently it sponsors training programmes and events at various times of the year at different places. There is an Adventure Sports Hostel at Dharamshala and an Aero Sports Complex at *Bir* (Kangra). The bald peak of *Billing*, above the Buddhist Monastery of *Bir* is said

to be among the finest sites for hang gliding in the world. It has been the venue for five national and three international hang-gliding rallies since 1984. The site is perfect for para-gliding too, which is infact a mix of sky-diving and hang-gliding. Places where para-gliding is done regularly are - Bundla Dhar near Bilaspur, in the Kullu valley and at Intkali in the Pabbar valley near Rohru. A fairly recent sport that is steadily gaining popularity, para-gliding can be promoted at multiple sites in almost every part of the study area in view of the availability of splendid valleys effectively coplemented with ideal para gliding and hangliding take off venues.

### **Golfing**

Golf is variously taken by its ardent practioners from a pleasure pursit to an adevture sports that reuquires highest degree of skills, patience, will power and risk taking nerves. No more is it the privilege of the elite class of society as happened to be a few deacades back. Thoug yet to actually come within the reach of the commoners, this sport has gained comprehensive popularity over the years. Tourism, to some extent, has been a cause and effect in this context, as provision of golf is now being increasingly taken as a priority area by the destinations both in the country and abroad. Incidentally golf has been popular in Himachal Pradesh since Raj days when this sport was introduced at Khajjiar, Annadale, Chail and Naldehra. It can be introduced even in some of the high altitude meadows like Churdhar and Kalpa where heli-golfing on the lines of heli-skiing can be promoted.

### **NATURAL LAKES**

Himachal Pradesh with its beautiful hills, in the lap of lofty snow-clad mountains, has myriad lakes with cool and serene water, which reflect the immense beauty of this Paradise on earth. Following are the well-known lakes in Himachal Pradesh:

**Govind Sagar, Khajjiar Lake, Lama Lake, Manimahesh Lake, Dal Lake, Rewalsar Lake, Prashar Lake, Renuka Lake, Suraj Tal, Chandra Tal, Pong Lake, Pandoh Lake and Chamera Lake**

### **HOT SPRINGS AND WATER FALLS**

The origin of hot spring may be either magmatic— originating from magma, the hot molten crust of the earth or meteoric— ground (meteoric) water meets the magmatic surface and the

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heated liquid emerges as hot spring. Most of the springs are generally rich in minerals like calcium, silica and sulphur. Himachal Pradesh has been endowed with a number of natural hot springs, majority of these being located in the Satluj and Beas valleys. Generally three types of water springs are found in Himachal Pradesh, viz. ordinary springs, mineral springs and thermal water springs. The main attraction of springs used to be their mystic curative powers, but over the period these have become very popular amongst the tourists, as well, due to their inherent natural appeal and touristic activities that are being offered around these. All springs have one common feature i.e. there is natural fluctuation in the quantity of water which is attributed mainly due to climatic conditions in the area. Some of the major water bodies in this category from the point of view of tourism are **Tattapani, Mani Karan, Vashisht, Jeori** etc.

Besides the above mentioned hot water springs, there are also few well known water falls and Kund (Springs) in Himachal Pradesh. They are: Rahla Water falls near Manali in Kullu district; Satdhara water spring near Panjpulla in Chamba district; Dhanchho water falls, near Bharmaur in Chamba district, Kalika Kund at Man in Chamba district, Chadwick falls near Summer Hill in Shimla district and Bhagsunath water falls near Macleodganj in district Kangra. In Kangra valley there are a good number of hot water springs containing a good quantity of salt and iodine. Two springs, one at Kopra (near Nadaun) and other at Jawalamukhi on the bank of river Beas were discovered on 10th Dec. 1854. There is also a spring at Lunani. The Salol spring in the Kangra valley, was discovered by the then chief medical officer of Kangra, captain A. Colman. In the plum valley there is a spring near Baijnath.

### **RIVER SYSTEM**

The Himalayan mountain chain has a dominant influence on the climatic conditions prevailing over Indian sub-continent. They lie in the path of rain-bearing monsoon winds and thus bring rain to a large part of India. The Himalaya houses a vast reservoir of moisture in the form of ice, fresh-water and underground water. The rivers draining the Himalayas sustain life in the Northern part of the Indian sub-continent. The drainage system of Himalaya is very complex. It is composed both of rivers and glaciers. Himalayan river criss-cross the entire mountain chain. In fact a number of rivers are older than the mountain system. They have cut across the various mountain ranges.

According to *Rig Veda*, four out of the five rivers which flow through Himachal Pradesh, found mention, viz, Asikni (Chenab), Purushani (Ravi), Arjikiya (Beas) and Sutudri or Shatadru (Satluj). The fifth river Yamuna, which rises from Yamunotri, has mythical relation to the Sun. Today not Punjab, but Himachal Pradesh is to be called the land of five rivers. These are only big rivers systems; in addition to these, numerous small rivers and thousands of waterfalls, streams, rills and rivulets provide water for irrigation and cool drink for weary wayfarers.

*The following water-based activities had, and will have, potential to lure national and international tourists to the state:*

### **Lake sports**

With the amalgam of so many lakes having different topographical characteristics, there is lot of scope for lake sports in the state. Though presently these are being offered only at Gobindsagar (Bilaspur) and Pongdam (Kangra), yet there are many more; like Rewalsar, Parashar, Renuka lake etc. where many water sorts activities can be planned.

### **River Rafting**

The state is zig-zagged by many moderate and big rivers having different grades and almost all types of rapids. Presently river rafting is being practiced in Sutlej, Beas and Chenab rivers. The popular starting points are Shamshi (Kullu), Tattapani, Rampur and Jispa (Lahaul).

### ***Water Healing/ Natural Spas***

The hot water sulphur and non-sulphur springs, scattered at many places in Kullu, Shimla and Kinnaur districts, are being utilized as natural spas. Though there are excellent facilities at Vashisht Kund, Manikaran and Tatta Pani, Jeori and many other places in Kinnaur district are catering mostly to the localites at not-so-organized level. If properly planned in combination with yoga & meditation, these have potential to become a strong pull factor.

### **Angling**

Angling is a source of recreation to innumerable naturists belonging to different strata of the society. In Western Countries, fishing as a sport is being increasingly recognized

by the medical authorities and more and more people are coming out of indoors to try their skill for this outdoor hobby. Himachal Pradesh is endowed with numbers of fast flowing rivers and streams originating from glaciers, rumbling and swirling along the rugged mountain passing through awesome gorges, canyons, alternating with pools and fiery rapids. The icy-streams harbour country's richest cold water fish- fauna including world famous mahseer, array of catfishes and trout. Each year a large number of anglers both from home and abroad visit the State in the pursuit of fishing and practice age-old are of angling with varying degree of success. The literature is replete with records that Himachal Pradesh rivers and streams provided exciting fishing to large number of sport lovers/ anglers and fishermen. Thomas (1897) brought a book "*Rod in India*" which incorporated his experiences of mahseer fishing in Northern rivers.

#### **Natural Vegetation/ Flora in Himachal Pradesh**

Owing to a wide range of altitude and climatic conditions, Himachal Pradesh has a diversified and rich flora. Here we come across every type of West Himalayan Flora from Himalayan meadows and high-level birch and rhododendron down to tropical scrub and bamboo forests of the low foothills. As per the Central Board of Forestry, the forests cover an area of 26,768 km<sup>2</sup> or about 48% of the total area.

The richness and diversity of the flora can be estimated from the fact that, out of total 45,000 species found in the country as many as 3,295 species (7.32%) are reported in the State. More than 95% of the species are endemic to Himachal Pradesh, while about 5% (150 species) are exotic, introduced over the last 150 years.

#### **Wild Life/ Fauna in H P**

Wide altitudinal ranges and varied topography of Himachal Whereas, Snow Leopard, Ibex and Snow Cock have made cold deserts their home, the cold temperate regions of the state form natural habitat of Musk Deer, Himalayan Tahr, Brown Bear, Monal and Western Tragopan. The lower reaches of the state abound with Sambhar Deer, Barking Deer, Wild Boar, Ghoral and Leopard amongst mammals and pheasants including Cheer and White Crested Kaleej. The state has an inventory of more than 3,500 higher plants, many of which are endemic to the region and many form the basis of local health traditions.

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### **WILD LIFE SANCTUARIES AND PARKS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

To conserve the entire range of flora and fauna and rich biodiversity *in situ*, the state has established a network of protected areas, comprising **two national parks and thirty two** Wildlife Sanctuaries. Appropriate legislation related to wildlife conservation has also been put in place. Since 1972, all parks and sanctuaries in the state are being set up under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Some of the National Parks and sanctuaries which have enormous potential to attract tourists, obviously in a regulated and controlled manner can be The Great Himalayan National Park located in District Kullu; Pin Valley National Park in Lahaul-Spiti; Chail Sanctuary in districts Solan and Shimla; Churdhar Sanctuary in district Sirmaur; Shimla Govind Sagar Sanctuary in district Bilaspur and Mandi; Kalatope Khajjiar Sanctuary Situated in district Chamba; Manali Sanctuary in district Kullu; Pong Lake Sanctuary in district Kangra and Renuka Sanctuary Situated in district Sirmaur.

#### **Wild Life Tourism in Himachal Pradesh**

Though the least explored area yet has tremendous potential keeping in mind the numerous exotic faunal and floral species that are available in abundance throughout the state. It is proposed that the planners should develop softer forms of activities in the protected areas, like trekking, research expeditions etc. in close association with the experts from relevant fields, forest department, environmentalists and the naturalists.

### **PANCHKARMA**

Panchkarma means 'five therapies'. This is a treatment for the healthy as well as the unhealthy. It forms a curative line of management for all diseases, which are not amendable to palliative management. In these five therapies, 'Panchkarma', always begin with a pre-procedural treatment and eliminative measures such as Snehana (oleation) and Swedna (sudation). The purpose of the pre-procedures is to prepare the person for the main five therapies. After Panchkarma therapies, the Sansarjana Karma,



the past operative procedure is followed to get a complete cure by achieving the well stimulated 'agni' (digestive fire), and to enhance the body resistance of the person.

**THE BENEFITS OF PANCHKARMA:**

- Eliminates toxic matter from the body.
- Enhances the power of digestion and metabolism
- Gets rid of disease from the very root of the system
- Restore normal health
- Helps the body gain strength and increase virility
- Gives a clearer complexion
- Increase the power of sense and motor organs

Conclusively, the overall observation and assessment points out to the fact that whether we take into consideration the natural or cultural or built or developed resources, there is tremendous scope of conversion of new and, importantly, geographically wide-spread resources into touristic appeals and introducing innovative products. The new thrust areas could be *medical & wellness tourism, spiritual tourism, MICE oriented touristic activities, new forms of high-value adventure tourism, wildlife tourism and, never the less, orchard tourism*. The prime need is to motivate and involve the hill community in these noble ventures, which not only fight against the problem of exodus created due to insufficient marginal hill-side farming, but also pave way to better civic amenities & education alongwith higher standards of living.

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