

AN ETHNOCENTRIC STUDY: EMERGING THRUST AREAS OF TOURISM AT SHEKHAWATI REGION OF RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study highlights the different thrust areas of tourism in unlocking the potential of tourism in Shekhawati region. An attempt has been made to make a distinct regional identity in the context of rural growth through tourism, creation of closer relationship between local people and tourists. In Shekhawati region there are many places which can be developed and promoted as tourist destinations. Interconnections were found between tourism and growth of regional identity, increased socio-cultural benefits and better living style. This ethnocentric study focuses on the role of local residents' in creating a distinct image of the regions in new thrust areas of tourism such as Pilgrimage Tourism, Temple Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Eco- tourism, Heritage Tourism, Rural Tourism, Farm Tourism and Food Tourism. It also explores marketing and promotional strategies to extend tourists' interest in the region. Moreover, the study offers a SWOT Analysis of all the selected places for research study and snapshot of attractions of the Shekhawati. The key issues to emphasize on are marketing, promotion and branding strategies, collaboration with stakeholders, awareness, training, education and research. Keeping in mind the paper also highlights the important findings in context of cleanliness and hygiene on the places which are important from the aspect of tourism.

KEYWORDS: Ethnocentric, Hospitality, Food Tourism, SWOT

INTRODUCTION

Shekhawati region is one of the most happening tourist destinations of the state of Rajasthan. With the unique and wide array of heritage, culture, life style, sights etc. the region offers something to everyone. While doing this research the questions which were striking in my mind. *If we destroy our heritage, culture and traditions which are actual guides for us as well as for the generations to come than what will be the foundation of their future? What we will be able to show them? How we will make them aware about the irreplaceable past?* The tourism sector, which has most benefited from heritage should be the first needs to protect our cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.

SHEKHAWATI stands for me –

- S- Soulful + H- Heaven + E –Explore+ K- Keep-up+ H-Hope+ A-Accept+ W-Worth +A-Admire +T-Tradition + I-Incomparable = Shekhawati
- *The soulful heaven which needs to be explore to keep up the hopes and to accept the worth of the region, to admire the beauty and tradition which is incomparable makes Shekhawati region.*

Also known as open air art gallery [3].The region is wonderful destination for travel and tourism. It offers a distinct and diverse range of niche tourism products likewise eco-tourism, film tourism, rural tourism, religious tourism,

heritage and cultural tourism and food tourism. The history of the region is very interesting. The chief of Amarsar in Amber named Rao Shekha Ji (1433-88) refused to pay tribute to the Kachhawaha rulers of Amber (Jaipur). Thus breaking away, proclaiming sovereignty in 1471 AD. In the following years Shekhawati comprised of a disparate sequence of small fiefdoms locally known as thikanas, the notable of which were Sikar, Khetri Nawalgarh, Dundlod, Mandawa and Parasrampura[5]

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ethnocentrism refers to the conviction that one's own particular group (eg; ethnic, cultural, social) is the most critical and better than that of others. Ethnocentrism is an about widespread of attitudes and practices. The states of mind incorporate seeing one's own particular gathering (the in-gathering/in-group) as high minded and unrivaled and an out-gathering as disgusting and second rate. The demeanors likewise incorporate seeing one's own gauges of quality as widespread. The practices connected with ethnocentrism are helpful relations with the in-gathering and nonappearance of agreeable relations with the out gathering (LeVine and Campbell, 1972).

Enrollment in an ethnic gathering is normally assessed as far as one or more discernible qualities, (for example, dialect, accent, physical elements, or religion) that are viewed as showing regular drop (Sumner 1906, Hirshfeld 1996, Kurzban, Tooby, and Cosmides 2001). Ethnocentrism has been involved not just in ethnic clash (Chirot and Seligman 2001, Brewer 1979b) and war (Van der Dennen 1995), additionally purchaser decision (Klein and Ettenson 1999) and voting (Kinder, 1998). To put it plainly, ethnocentrism can be in-gathering bias or out-gathering antagonistic vibe. Ethnocentrism is a unique, however it is universal (LeVine and Campbell 1972). Ethnocentrism is a type of in-gathering bias and out-gathering threatening vibe in which participation is regularly assessed as far as one or more discernible attributes, (for example, dialect, accent, physical components, or religion) that are viewed as demonstrating basic plunge (Weber referred to in Guibernau and Rex, 1997).

STRENGTHS OF ETHNOCENTRIC PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH FOR TOURISM

- Permit the researchers and other interested groups to find the assorted immense qualities of conduct and experience all through the world.
- Encourages scientists to be careful about expecting their way of life is predominant and making one-sided decisions about human conduct.
- Makes the people more confident about their culture and social values.
- Facilitates respect towards own culture, values and ethics.
- Highlights the positive factors of the place/destination as well as about the beliefs of local people.
- By conception the mechanism of ethnocentrism, the researchers might have the capacity to create progress of the society.

Weaknesses of Ethnocentric Psychological Research for Tourism

- Without local connect, communication and collaboration ethnocentric conduct does not develop.
- Language/translation troubles in culturally diverse research.

- Samples from studies might be modest and unrepresentative, and hard to sum up.
- Arrangement of individuals into gatherings has a tendency to be founded on elements that are seen to be comparative inside of gatherings, and distinctive between gatherings (Oakes, Haslam and Turner, 1994). The elements on which gatherings are separated may frequently be identified with the differential estimation of gathering participations for social and financial intrigues (Brewer 1979a, Barth 1969).
- A lot of research center and field work has been done on in-gathering/out-gathering forms. This is time taking and needs restless efforts.
- At the point when people consider themselves to be individuals from an in-gathering they are more liable to add to aggregate welfare even at the expense of individual favorable position (Brewer and Kramer, 1986; Kramer and Brewer, 1984).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is mainly based on survey of the research area and the details available on the websites. Thus, it includes the primary data as well as secondary data. The research was organized during 2015. Many small field trips were organized in different parts of the research field and in different seasons. Destinations were selected for research on the basis of availability of tourism products. These sites are Shakambhari, Jhunjhunu and Pilani. The selected places and the tourists' products were identified with the help of local people. Small interviews were organized during these surveys, in which local people of different age groups, local vendors/shopkeepers, pandits, villagers especially old age people, teenagers and ladies, etc. were included. From each place 50 respondents were selected randomly. In total 150 respondents were interviewed among these 125 have respond properly. Positive answers were found from 112 respondents including the villagers, illiterate, literate, male, female, old age and teenagers. Mainly the focus is on the local people to know about their views /feelings and knowledge level about tourism products of their destinations. More than it has been also focused on the attraction level of the villagers/local people towards tourism development.

LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

The hindrances while doing the survey faced by the researcher were related with the none awareness of people with the term tourism. Specially at Shakmbhari village. Language problem has been also faced at Shakmbhari, Jhunjhunu and the market areas of Pilani. Respondents were not able to understand English and many of them were not able to respond in Hindi. They were using the regional language while giving answers. It was difficult to search the historical monuments, forts, step well at Jhunjunu as there were no sign boards and many auto rickshaw drivers were not acquainted with the location of the places. Very unfortunate that at these places no one were available to provide the information. With the help of local people the information was gathered from Jhunjunu. On the other hand people at Sakhmbhari and Pilani were given lots of information about the temples and village/town. The pandits were very supportive in providing the in depth information of Shakmbhari Mata Temple at Shambhari village and Birla/Sarswati Temple at Pilani.

Jhunjhunu

In 1730 Jhunjhunu was seized by Sardul Singh (ruled 1730- 52). The following year he allied with Sheo Singh (ruled from 1721), the powerful ruler of Sikar and evicted the Nawab of Fatehpur, Sardar Khan. Rohella Khan and Sardar Khan were descendants of Kaim Khan and therefore called Kaimkhanis. With their defeat, important regions of territory

thus got added to Shekhawati [3]. The diverse heritage havelis (mansions) of Jhunjhunu that were built by the Marwari merchants, magnificent stepwells, kua, chattris (cenotaphs), forts and temples are define the legacy of the destination. Major role was played by the merchants and rich people who transformed the desert land into a knowledge providing source through the fresco paintings on the walls of their havelis. This knowledge and art combination at the capital of Shekhawati attracts tourists not only from the purpose of visiting to admire the beautiful paintings and havelis but also to know about the past of the region. The physical artifacts are awesome. The monuments like Khetri Mahal, Cenotaph of Sardul Singh, Rani Sati temple, Mertaniji ki Baori (stepwell), Birdi Chand well, Badalgarh fort, Ajit sagar, Kamruddin Shah Dargaha and many havelis are wonderful masterpieces of Jhunjhunu. After visiting the research study area the researcher tried to make the SWOT analysis of the place which is given below:



Source: Researcher

Figure I: SWOT Analysis of Tourism in Jhunjhunu

The aforesaid SWOT analysis explains that Jhunjhunu is a place which have immense potential for tourism development but lack of facilities is making it on the back foot in tourism development.

SAKAMBHARI VILLAGE

Well known for the Sakambhari mata temple the village Sakambhari is located nearby Sikar district. The domestic devotees are coming at the village from all over India especially at the time of Navratra /Durga Pooja. To increase the duration of stay at Shekhawati architectural development plans for Saakmbhari, Kirodi, Kotdamand Lohargal have been prepared to create new sightseeing opportunities for tourist. The place offers great potential for Religious Tourism. [2]The village is having good agriculture land which makes it more green and beautiful. In rains the village looks like a hill station as it is surrounded by hills. Waterfalls add beauty to the mountains of the village

A VIEW OF SAKAMBHARI VILLAGE IN RAINY SEASON



Source: Researcher

The villagers celebrates many festivals likewise teej, gangaur etc. The villagers are adopting the traditional methods of cooking which are eco –friendly .maximum time they are using the bio –waste in the mud stoves (Chullas).

A VIEW OF GANGAU FESTIVAL CELEBRATE AT SAKAMBHARI



Source; Researcher

When surveyed most of the villagers showed their interest in tourism activities. As they want some permanent earning source at the village only. These points are reflected in the below SWOT analysis of the village:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Thrcats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenery • Villagers Motives for permant earning source • Traitional Cooking through the usages of Bio-Waste • Domestic Tourist is already arriving at the village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awerness • Lack of basic facilities • No planned development from the view of tourism • Lack of education • Only connected with Road ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-tourism can be developed • Food touirin and food park can be started • Rural tourism ,village walk etc can be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places like Khatu Shyam,Jeen Mata and Salasar Balaji are well developed with all basic facilities which are required for tourist.

Source : Researcher

Figure II: SWOT Analysis of Tourism in Shakmbhari

PILANI

Pilani is a hub for education. A very clean and eco-friendly town of Shekhawati region. It is well known on the map for its quality education. Students are coming from all over India to take education in the town. Pilani is a town which be focused from the aspect of tourism also. Sarasawati temple, Birla Museum, Shivganaga etc are must seen if visiting the town. The Birla Temple which is known as Sarsawati temple also is unique. The specialty of the temple is that other than the idols of god and goddess the temple have idols of Albert Einstein, Mary Query and her whole family, Tulsidas, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekanand, Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Mira, Lord Krishna, Lord Ram and Sita, Ravan, Lord Shiva, Jesus Christ, Mother Marry and many more. This temple is a masterpiece of architecture with full of emotions. The SWOT anlysis is as follow of the town for the development of tourism;

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenery • Motives for permant earning source • Students from all over India • High educational level • Well planned town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of tourism activities • No planned development from the view of tourism • Only connected with Road ways • Lack of hotels and resturants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco-tourism can be developed • Temple Tourism can be focused • Amusement park can be developed because of youths . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image of the town only as education hub /centre.

Source: Researcher

Figure III: SWOT Analysis of Tourism in Pilani

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey revealed about more than 13 places are being used to promote tourism at the region. More over six places are the hidden treasures which may be highly worthy from the aspect of heritage tourism in the Shekhawati region. Many innovations are possible to adopt in the region for tourism development.

The available resources can be used in various types of tourism like heritage and cultural tourism, film tourism, rural tourism, temple tourism and food tourism, etc. This study shows that the local people were interested to develop the areas as tourists’ destination.

FINDINGS

- Most of the places have potential to develop tourism in the region.
- Local people are very much interested to join their hands for tourism development.
- The biggest motivation of the residents behind development of tourism is employment, regular earning/income, perseveration of their art and culture.

- Image and identity is also a factor which boosts up the moral of the local people towards tourism development.
- Local people and the group of the people of the selected destinations were confident about their values and culture that it is best and could be prompted as tourism products. Be it handicraft, food, folk songs and dances or living style.
- Pilani and Shakhambhari were found very clean on the other hand the capital of Shekhawati *Jhunjhunu* was not that clean.
- Seasonal factors do impact the tourism at these places. Shakhambhari is a village which looks awesome in the rainy season as it is surrounded by hills. Waterfalls and dams look beautiful in rainy season of the village.
- Tourist guides were not available at the tourist spots like Cenotaph of Sardul Singh, Kherti Mahal, Virdichand ka Kua at Jhunjhunu.
- The RTDC hotel was not at all up to the mark in terms of providing services and hygiene at Jhunjhunu.
- Shakhambhari was quite rich village from the aspect of greenery. Although the village have Dharmshala with facilities of air conditioner but it needs to be kept clean. The outer area of the Shakhambhari Mata Temple was not clean at the time of the visit.
- Among the selected places for the research study Jhunjhunu is having the highest potential. As it is rich in heritage, temples and monuments. The basic amenities are available here and it is well connected with road and railways from Jaipur and Delhi.
- Lack of awareness about the benefits of tourism can be the biggest hindrance in tourism development at these places.
- Lack of tourism education at the higher level is also found.

SUGGESTIONS

- Using heritage and culture as a vehicle for tourism development can be proved as boon for the places of the region.
- Intangible culture and art should be prevented and promoted likewise crafts, festivals, traditional skills, cuisine making methodology.
- Work on grass root level can make wonders for tourism awareness at the places.
- Expansion of tourism activities are needed at the places.
- Rather than focusing on any one particular tourism product of the place researcher would suggest making a group of tourism products which can be developed at the places.
- Along with religious tourism efforts can be made to develop eco-tourism, food tourism and rural tourism at the village Shakhambhari.
- Pilani could be also developed as a destination for religious as well as education tourism.

- Accommodation with all facilities can be developed at the places.
- Celebration of small festivals must be promoted for attracting the tourists.
- Tourist guides must be appointed at the places.
- Sign boards must be established at the tourists spots.
- Awareness camp should be organized at the places to motivate the local people for participation in tourism activities.
- Tourism education courses may be offered to make more professionals in tourism sector.
- The launch of branding and marketing impetus for growth should be focused upon by Government, private sectors and other stakeholders of the industry.
- Ethnocentric approach could be adopted for the tourism development.

CONCLUSIONS

The study provides important information which can be used for tourism development and promotion at these places. The Shekhawati region of Rajasthan has very harsh climate. Summers are very hot and winters are very cool here. So, seasonality is a major factor which could be kept in mind while planning the trip at the region. Secondly, some areas of Shekhawati region have rich flora, whereas some areas have less. It has been also concluded that the old age people are more knowledgeable in context of the history and importance of the places. The women and men are equally skilled in terms of intangible heritage. They are fanatics in singing of folk songs, drawings (old mandane), wall paintings and cooking etc. The community at large is in high need of employment. It is concluded that tourism at these places can change the entire pictures of the places as tourist destinations. The only need is to take a step forward. Tourism could be prove a powerful economic development tool for the region. It creates job opportunities, new business avenues and development of our culture and protection of our heritage. However, much more efforts needs to be done to search and promote the hidden tangible and intangible treasures of Shekhawati.

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