



Chapter 19

Tourism

British Tourist Authority defines tourism as “a stay of one or more nights away from home for holidays, visits to friends or relatives, business conferences or any other purpose, except such things as boarding, education, or semi-permanent employment.”

People travel for many reasons nowadays. These include

- Recreational travel
- Adventure and sports tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Health tourism
- Conference and conventions travel

Tourism has been one of the world’s fastest growing industries, and there are large societies entirely dependent upon the visitor for their sustenance. Spain with a population of about 10 million, has 40 million tourists per year, and Singapore with a population of 1.2 million has about 6 million tourists.

However, successful countries exhibit a great capacity to continuously change their product, and not get stuck in a mould. It is an eye opener that the highly acclaimed Singapore Tourism Board is re-packaging the destination for the 21st century tourist, and “re-formulating the tourism product”. In a policy statement, it emphasises:

“Evoke one’s memories of great cities and invariably, places like Paris, New York, and London come to mind. Cities like these leave deep impressions because they have one thing in common - they are world-class in many ways. From food to fashion to culture, they appeal to visitors in their own unique ways. More than a tourist attraction, these cities possess that magical sense of place, an evocative mixture of factors that spell the difference between a must-stay and stopover.

Singapore is a successful tourist destination in its own right. But it can and should be more - it should be able to reach out

to visitors on an emotional level in the same way as these world-class cities, and be a place where memorable experiences are created and cherished.”

HP tourism has to address this urgent need of re-formulating its own product and attendant strategy, to emerge as a serious player in the industry.

According to the Ninth Five Year Plan of Himachal Pradesh, the total number of tourists in the state in 2002 were 60 lakh. The actual achievement is in the region of 50 lakh, and HP will need a sustained initiative to improve.

National Tourism Policy 2002 and Tenth Plan

India’s share in the tourism industry is below par.

Tourist Arrivals Worldwide and India’s Share (1992-2001)				
Year	World Arrivals	South Asia	India’s Arrivals	% Share of India in World Arrivals
1992	500.9	3.6	1.8	0.37
1993	515.7	3.5	1.7	0.34
1994	550.3	3.9	1.8	0.34
1995	550.3	4.2	2.1	0.39
1996	597.4	4.4	2.2	0.38
1997	618.2	4.8	2.3	0.38
1998	626.5	5.2	2.3	0.38
1999	650.4	5.8	2.4	0.38
2000	696.7	6.1	2.6	0.38
2001	692.7	5.7	2.5	0.37

The Tenth Plan documents reveal a distinct shift in the government’s approach to tourism. While tourism is indeed a promoter of national integration (domestic tourism), it is also a facilitator of international

understanding (international tourism). At the same time, it is seen as having a large share of tertiary sector growth, with a great potential for development, especially for hill states, which are endowed with natural beauty.

The *National Tourism Policy 2002* document exhibits this changed approach. It recognises that tourism emerged as the largest global industry of the 20th century and is projected to grow even faster in the 21st century, and that India has immense possibilities of growth in the tourism sector with vast cultural and religious heritage, varied natural attractions, but a comparatively small role in the world tourism scene. It lays down its mission to promote sustainable tourism as a means of economic growth and social integration and to promote the image of India abroad as a country with a glorious past, a vibrant present and a bright future. This is based around six concepts of:

1. Welcome (swagat),
2. Information (suchana),
3. Facilitation (suvidha),
4. Safety (suraksha),
5. Cooperation (sahyog) and
6. Infrastructure Development (samrachana)

Public and Private Sector Partnership

A constructive and mutually beneficial partnership between the public and the private sectors through all feasible means is an absolute necessity for the sustained growth of tourism. It is, therefore, the policy of the government to encourage emergence of such a partnership. This will be achieved by creating a Tourism Development Authority consisting of senior officials of the government and tourism experts and professionals from the private sector.

Involvement of PRIs/ULBs

It will be the policy of government to encourage peoples' participation in tourism development, including the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, local bodies, co-operatives, non-governmental organisations and enterprising local youth to create public awareness and to achieve a wider spread of tourist facilities. However, attention will be focused on or given for the integrated development of identified centres with well-directed public participation.

Linkage and Synergy in Policies

The government will aim to achieve necessary linkages and synergies in the policies and programmes

of all concerned departments/agencies by establishing effective co-ordination mechanisms at Central, State and District levels. The focus of national policy, therefore, will also be to develop tourism as a common endeavour of all the agencies vitally concerned with it at the Central and State levels, public sector undertakings and the private sector.

Role of the Government in the New Policy

Tourism is a multi-sectoral activity and the industry is affected by many other sectors of the national economy. The state has, therefore, to ensure inter-governmental linkages and co-ordination. It also has to play a pivotal role in tourism management and promotion. The specific role of the government will be to:

1. Provide basic infrastructural facilities including local planning and zoning arrangements.
2. Plan tourism development as a part of the over-all area development strategy.
3. Create nucleus infrastructure in the initial stages of development to demonstrate the potential of the area.
4. Provide the required support facilities and incentives to both domestic and foreign investors to encourage private investment in the tourism sector.
5. Rationalise taxation and land policies in the tourism sector in all the States and Union Territories and in respect of land owned by government agencies like the Railways.
6. Introduce regulatory measures to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability, as well as safety and security of tourists.
7. Ensure that the type and scale of tourism development is compatible with the environment and socio-cultural milieu of the area.
8. Ensure that the local community is fully involved and the benefits of tourism accrue to them.
9. Facilitate availability of trained manpower, particularly from amongst the local population jointly with the industry.
10. Undertake research, prepare master plans, and facilitate formulation of marketing strategies.
11. Organise overseas promotion and marketing jointly with the industry.
12. Initiate specific measures to ensure safety and security of tourists and efficient facilitation services.

13. Facilitate the growth of a dynamic tourism sector.

Thus, the government is moving from an active investor to:

- Infrastructure provider and manager
- Planner for tourism
- Regulator for conservation and preservation
- General facilitator

As a consequence to this new role of the government, it is expected that the private sector will expand, providing new direction to the industry.

The private sector has to consider investment in tourism from a long-term perspective and create the required facilities including accommodation, time-share, restaurants, entertainment facilities, shopping complexes, etc., in areas identified for tourism development. Non-core activities at all airports, major stations and inter-state bus terminuses such as cleanliness and maintenance, luggage transportation, vehicle parking facilities, etc., should be opened up to private operators to increase efficiency and profitability. The specific role of the private sector will be to:

- Build and manage the required tourist facilities at all places of tourist interest.
- Assume collective responsibility for laying down industry standards, ethics and fair practices.
- Ensure preservation and protection of tourist attractions and give the lead in green practices.
- Sponsor maintenance of monuments, museums and parks and provision of public conveniences and facilities.
- Involve the local community in tourism projects and ensure that the benefits of tourism accrue to them in right measure.
- Undertake industry training and man-power development to achieve excellence in quality of services.
- Participate in the preparation of investment guidelines and marketing strategies and assist in database creation and research.
- Facilitate safety and security of tourists.
- Endeavour to promote tourism on a sustained and long-term perspective.
- Collaborate with Government in the promotion and marketing of destinations.

These are moves in the right direction, based upon international experience in this regard.

Data on Tourist Arrivals in HP			
<i>(in lakh)</i>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Domestic Tourist</i>	<i>International Tourist</i>	<i>Total</i>
1997	38.30	0.63	38.93
1998	41.20	0.75	41.95
1999	43.52	0.91	44.43
2000	45.70	1.11	46.81

Source: HP Tourist Economic Survey 2002.

Published data for HP beyond this is not available, but <http://www.himsuchana.org> mentions that in 2002, tourist arrivals have been pegged at 1.44 lakhs for international tourists, and about 49 lakh domestic tourists, for a total of 50.44 lakh tourists.

Tourism Policy of Himachal Pradesh

The policy was laid down in 2000, and takes note of the fact that Rs 10 lakhs invested in tourism industry generates 47 jobs, whereas even a labour-intensive sector like agriculture provides 44 jobs only. There is the stark realisation that tourism contributes only two per cent to the state domestic product, in a state like HP, where the possibilities are endless.

The Mission Statement of HP's tourist policy is:

- To create prosperity for the people of Himachal Pradesh through travel and tourism;
- Tourism that is in harmony with the social and cultural values of the local communities and is environmentally sustainable;
- And to create direct, indirect and ancillary new employment opportunities for the people of this state.

Objectives

- To promote economically, culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
- To promote responsible tourism, that will be welcomed as both preferred employer and a community industry.
- To use tourism as a means of providing new employment opportunities in rural, tribal and remote areas.
- To increase private sector participation in tourism, both as a means of generating employment and providing new infrastructure.

- To develop activity-based tourism to increase the duration of tourists' visits.
- To develop adventure tourism by providing facilities and safety standards at internationally-required levels.
- To devote special attention to the promotion of religious tourism.
- To promote new concepts in tourism, such as time-share.
- To transform the role of the government into that of facilitator.

To be fair, the new HP Tourist policy mentions relevant and important areas for action. The strategy is based on:

- Breaking the seasonality factor: Himachal has always been a popular tourist destination in the summer. Tourism products must be diversified to attract visitors in other seasons as well.
- Dispersal of tourism to lesser known areas of the state: This includes promoting tourism in rural and tribal areas, and developing National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
- Developing pilgrimage sites: These can become important tourism destinations by improving access, internal roads, sanitation and drainage, and pilgrim facilities. In addition, other tourism activities can be developed in nearby areas.

For achieving this, the plan of action is based on:

- Basic infrastructure
- Tourism - specific infrastructure
- Entertainment infrastructure
- Accommodation, transport and catering
- Policy/Legislation

The HP government, in general is aware of the efforts needed to bring tourism on a professional level, as evident from directives laid out in its policy statement.

Tourism Clusters

The Department of Tourism will identify sites at new destinations in order to set up tourism clusters. These clusters will be designed and developed as tourism cities/tourist villages. The government will organise the civic infrastructure at these clusters such as water, road, electricity, communication etc. and will also meet

the full cost of preparing such projects and shall accord priority for allocation of funds for such ventures from the financial institutions. Activities like amusement parks, resorts, cafes, handicrafts, etc., will also be integrated into the projects. The plots in these clusters will be offered on the pattern of Industrial Plots.

Land Policy

The laws for the purchase of land are being simplified. A single officer will be made responsible so as to co-ordinate clearances from all the departments, thereby saving time and effort of the entrepreneurs. Government land, which is available in the state at important places, will be transferred to the tourism Department. The department will further lease-out these sites to private sector for the development of tourism-related activities in the state. The sites will be advertised in press to attract prospective entrepreneurs. The government will also create a land bank of private land, by inviting consent of owners to sell land for tourism projects. After initial scrutiny of possible use, the land will be shown in pool and put on the website. Parties themselves will enter into the transactions, but the department will impose a nominal fee as service charges from the buyer and the seller. Permission under Section 118 of the Tenancy and Land Reform Act will be readily given for such sales, approval provided for the concept of the project is summed in advance.

Tourism Development Councils

The State Government shall constitute Tourism Development Councils for specific areas or destinations of tourist importance. These Councils will have membership from the tourism and travel trade in addition to a few government officials and shall be entrusted with management of tourism destination within their jurisdiction. These Councils shall maintain and operate a Tourism Destination Fund and shall be allowed to raise resources for the development of the infrastructure and related facilities by way of fees, cess etc.

Tourism Development Board

A Tourism Development Board, under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister and with representations from amongst officials/non-officials, shall also be set up to formulate policy guidelines for the development and promotion of the tourism industry in the state and to advise the state government on matters regarding regulation and licensing in the tourism industry.

A Good Policy *Sans* Action

A policy is only as good as its follow-up, and this is lacking in this case. Some issues to consider are:

- There is little development of tourist clusters, or large-scale initiative for amusement parks.
- Land policy has to undergo a major overhaul. In fact, this is one single factor that can bring in tourism entrepreneurship and capital investment into the state, which it severely lacks today. The state was also to advertise sites for lease, and upload them on the HPTDC website. However, under a link called “investments”, the website places some photographs and maps, without any instruction on what to do, and whom to contact.
- To the contrary, the government sent a confidence-destroying signal to the investors, when the state Revenue Minister announced that Himachal Pradesh Government would screen all permissions given by the previous government for the purchase of land in the state in relaxation of Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act (The Tribune 27 April 2003). This sends a clear signal to the investor to stay away, as subsequent governments may strike down previous agreements.
- Tourism Development Boards and Councils were to be the future of tourism policy and strategy, with large-scale involvement of non-official members. This vital re-orientation has not been brought about.
- Himachal Pradesh still over-sells Shimla-Kullu-Manali circuit, and under-sells the rest of the state. As a result, while there is wasted capacity in other parts of the state, the entire infrastructure and facilities are under severe stress in this alignment. This causes water shortages, traffic snarls, and power outages, and lowers the overall impression about Himachal Pradesh, not inviting as many “return” or “recommended visits” as it should.
- Concrete action to sell Himachal Pradesh as a winter destination is still lacking, and the seasonal nature of tourism continues. It is also a fact that during winter, infrastructure facilities like power and transport get affected adversely.

Confusion with Regard to Role of HPTDC

- The state talks of private sector initiative and participation as a corner-stone of future policy,

but wants to hold on to HPTDC. It states that HPTDC has been a catalyst, trend-setter and a prime mover for the promotion of domestic and foreign tourism, and has established, developed, promoted and executed various projects and schemes to facilitate and accelerate the development of tourism in the state. The government iterates that HPTDC will continue to play a pioneering role in the state to develop and open virgin destinations for tourists and provide healthy competition to the private sector.

- The state government will, however, “explore possibilities of privatisation and disinvestment of existing properties of HPTDC, to raise resources for development of new projects in hitherto virgin areas”. HPTDC will also prepare, organise and operate new packages and promote adventure activities. Further it will produce literature for disseminating information to tourists about Himachal Pradesh as a tourist destination.
- While confusion with regard to the role HPTDC continues, there are little signs of improvement of services in its establishments. The staff are not courteous and not multi-lingual. They are not even in a position to communicate with most of the guests. The status of provision and maintenance of services is poor, and there is little evidence of any standardisation of practices across the establishments.
- On Himachal Pradesh tourism websites, the following two nuggets, among others, of non-professionalism were found:
 - Police Orientation Programme in May was listed as a tourist calendar event! No description was available as to the justification for its inclusion here.
 - The information listed in boldest letters says “Luxury Tax Detail of Hotels”. It is actually a hyper-link to a facility where hotels can calculate their luxury tax due, but it has been placed in a public site where tourists are expected to visit!
- Food and Beverage practices in Himachal Pradesh need immediate upgradation. Even on the Mall at Shimla, the taste of Chinese cuisine is different in different establishments. There is no standardised, ratified authenticity in any cuisine offering, and this can be a serious deterrent for foreign tourists.

- Hotel accommodation is diverse, even within the same premises. The tourist has no idea of what accommodation to expect at what price.
- The Himachal Police, particularly the Traffic Police, perceive the tourist as a good “milking” opportunity. Tourist vehicles are stopped at random, repeatedly at different check-posts, and corruption is rampant. Himachal Pradesh has started an idea of forming a “tourist police”, but wants to induct regular policemen into this facilitating outfit. With police experience being what it is, there is going to be little help, and more harassment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Change Policy Focus to Tourists

Reading tourism policy statements and related policy documents, it becomes clear that the *focus of Himachal Pradesh tourism is on Himachal Pradesh itself*. Tourism is viewed as a socio-developmental necessity, in order to bring about the development of the state and its citizens. It is treated minimally in its five year plans, annual plans, and the *Economic Survey* – clubbed as “Tourism and Civil Aviation”, or a small part of “General Economic Services”.

This focus is not correct, and is leading to the formation of incomplete and mis-targetted policies on the tourism front.

The tourism sector has to be seen as an industry (not merely in government documents or taxation and accounting procedures), by re-orienting the entire philosophy to a marketing concept, focusing singularly on the customer, i.e., the tourist. There has to be a clear realisation that the development of Himachal Pradesh will take place as a by-product of looking after the tourist customer.

Disinvest in HPTDC

In its current state of focusing on itself, the state is talking in terms of continuation of the role of HPTDC in the tourism business, because it has employees, who are citizens of the state, who must continue to get their employment. But the moment customer focus is regained, there is realisation that only that is good for the HPTDC employee, which is in the interest of the tourist. In the long run, the Himachal Pradesh government cannot sustain non-professional business operations, and the company can sustain itself only upon customer support.

The existing properties of HPTDC should be put up for disinvestment, both on the national and international markets. If existing employees want to form cooperatives, and take over the properties, this should also be encouraged, and assistance from financial institutions should be facilitated.

Do not Wait for Tourist, Get Him

Himachal Pradesh should not be under a mistaken impression that merely by participating in five annual tourism promotion events, and placing an occasional advertisement, it is going to attract the tourist. It is absolutely clear nowadays that the customer-tourist is looking for a complete-chain solution, from home, back to home. If Himachal Pradesh Tourism will begin from the borders of Himachal Pradesh, or Himachal Bhavan in Delhi, the paying tourist may never turn up. If the intervening roads are not good, or if the airlines are not offering reasonable fares, or the airport handling is inefficient, the tourist will not come.

Himachal Pradesh cannot afford to wait for the tourist to arrive – it has to pluck him from his home. This means marketing research to identify and target him, and reach him. It means tying up credit card companies, airlines, road transport, hotels and guides in one smooth logistics chain, such that the tourist has a re-visit plan, and also recommends the destination to others.

Destination Marketing

Himachal Pradesh has to be marketed as a macro destination, with micro points within it. Even the tourism brand name, brand ambassadors, sites and sounds – all have to be chosen after meticulous research, so that positive associations are permanently built up, and place HP as amongst first-choice destinations.

Even a random line sketch of Eiffel Tower or Statue of Liberty conjures up an image of a city and a nation, and attracts tourists. Malaysia started its “Truly Asia” campaign for the country and focused on Kuala Lumpur, using the Twin Petronas Towers as the icon.

Himachal Pradesh needs to generate these internationally recognisable brand icons. There are competing mountains slopes and pine forests around the world, and the Himachal Tourism logo does not promise anything different.

Devise a Marketing Campaign

The average budget allotment for tourism development has been in the region of Rs. 5 crore

annually, and this is too meager to sustain a cohesive destination marketing campaign. A mega input over a period of 10 years is needed to sell Himachal Pradesh in a professional manner, with inputs from trade professionals. The expectation sold must be fulfilled by actual experience on the ground, with a marketing campaign must be based on ground realities.

Himachal Pradesh Tourism Authority

The government should lay down tourism standards, and oversee their strict observance.

The Himachal Pradesh Tourist Board needs to grow into these roles of the Authority to oversee policy, accreditation, standardisation, and certification procedures. From the non-official side, the association of all concerned will be formalised, to broad-base decision-making (hotel and restaurant owners, transporters, guides, porters etc.) The Authority will sustain itself from the membership charges paid by various constituents. It will be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Coordination of tourism research, for information dissemination to members. Assist in development of market strategy.
 2. Interaction with other government agencies to ensure availability of adequate infrastructure in power, transport, telecom and municipal services.
 3. Representation in major tourist market points, and the running of information offices.
 4. Organisation of and participation in trade shows.
 5. Familiarisation trips for key partners from distribution channels and travel writers.
 6. Arrange support for new and small business.
 7. Consumer assistance and certification practices will form a major part of the Authority's work. The Authority will:
 - a. Ensure that tourist developmental activities are conducted in an environment-friendly manner.
 - b. Classify services – hotels, restaurants, taxis, guides, porters etc., into clear categories, based upon tourist requirement.
 - c. Standardise services, by devising a clear service criteria. For example, it may say that every restaurant must have at least one waiter on duty, who can converse in English and at least one foreign language (depending upon visitor profile), at all times when it is open for business. Standardisation will extend to both, infrastructure facilities fixed and moveable, and to services.
- d. After standardisation, certify the services provided.
 - e. For certification, the Authority will authorise training and certification centres across the state. A syllabus for the various services will be prepared, and the training centres will conduct training and certification on the Authority's behalf.
 - f. The Authority will ensure through checks that the training centres and their programmes are as per specifications. The training centres shall not become certification shops, where they start certification without training, to the detriment of industry.
 - g. Keep track of all individuals and organisations, and their certifications. Arrange certification renewal at a reasonable periodicity to refresh skills.
 - h. Withdraw certification upon failure to observe norms, and effectively enforce the withdrawal.
 - i. Bring out clear and concise certification information for the guidance of the tourist. The tourist would see certain simple certification graphics on hotels, taxis, porters etc., and know the exact service he can expect. For example, a taxi with the relevant symbol would mean that the driver can speak English, carries a rate chart, help line numbers, an identity card, and a mobile phone for emergency services.
 - j. For these services, the Authority will charge member organisations and individuals a reasonable sum to sustain its activities.
 - k. The hospitality industry will be encouraged to take membership by announcing suitable incentives and concessions. This will raise standards across the state.
 - l. Recommend the rationalisation of taxation and land policies affecting the tourism industry.
 - m. Ensure participation of local communities, and PRIs/ULBs.

The government may grant the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Authority a one time corpus of a reasonable amount, and then it grows on its own as a professional organisation.

Change in Land Laws

It is necessary that the best professionals and entrepreneurs be brought in from around the world, to invest in Himachal Pradesh, and upgrade the level of tourism technology to international levels.

Change in land laws remains central to the possibility of inducting large private capital into HP. As a first step, long term lease exceeding fifty years can be offered, so that the investor can work on a secure business model.

Current Indicators

(i) India gets 25 lakh foreign tourists, and thus HP taps into this at 1.44 lakh, which is a share of 5.76 per cent. This needs drastic enhancement by reaching out to the tourist.

Country-wise distribution of tourists in HP is as under:

Country	Percentage
USA	9.8
UK	16.1
France	5.1
Canada	3.9
Australia	4.3
Germany	6.6
Holland	3.5
New Zealand	1.6
Sweden	2.0
Nepal	2.0
Iran	0.8
Japan	3.1
Pakistan	1.2
All Others	40.0

Source: HP Tourist Survey 2002

The major countries contributing to tourist arrivals in HP are US, UK, Germany and France.

In the domestic tourist sector, the break-up of arrivals is as under:

Zone	Percentage
Eastern Zone	7.96
Western Zone	12.99
Northern Zone	73.31
Central Zone	3.39
Southern Zone	2.35

The major arrivals are from North zone, with potential to market in East, South and Central zones. This also displays the known fact of domestic arrivals from Punjab, Haryana, Jammu areas for religious tourism in the Kangra belt.

(ii) The tourist in Himachal Pradesh has the following reason of the visit:

Reason	Indian (%)	Foreign (%)	Total (%)
Climate	23.42	17.91	22.85
Peaceful Atmosphere	15.19	19.40	15.63
Natural Beauty	40.33	48.26	41.15
Less Expensive	0.58	2.49	0.77
Publicity	1.67	1.49	1.65
Other	18.81	10.45	17.95

It is worth noting that only 1.65 per cent of the tourist felt that he has been drawn by marketing and publicity, highlighting the need for this aspect.

(iii) District-wise patronisation pattern shows the Kullu-Manali-Shimla-centric tourist strategy.

District	Percentage of Tourists
Bilaspur	3.6
Chamba	7.3
Hamirpur	4.6
Kangra	14.5
Kinnaur	2.1
Kullu	24.5
Lahaul & Spiti	3.1
Mandi	3.8
Shimla	24.8
Sirmaur	5.9
Solan	4.0
Una	1.8

Thus, the two districts of Kullu and Shimla account for 50 per cent of the total tourist traffic. Even in these districts, the arrivals are not uniform spaced, but concentrated over 3-4 months in a year. There is a need to highlight all-HP all-season tourist product availability to the customer.

(iv) For accommodation, the pattern of stay is as under:

Type of Accommodation	Indian %	Foreign %	Total %
Private Hotel	51.2	47.2	50.9
HPTDC	6.4	7.5	6.5
Dharamshala	13.3	3.0	12.2
Govt Rest House	8.6	3.0	8.0
Other places	20.5	39.3	22.4

Two facts have emerged from this data:

The high percentage of private stay is because of the greater availability, but HPTDC accommodation is preferred by the tourist. This highlights the need for security and standardisation in the provision of tourist services. The tourist first attempts to stay in HPTDC hotels, because he has a perception that he will get standard service at a reasonable price. The tourist is wary of private hotels. This is also seen from the fact that ratio of private-HPTDC accommodation is 17:1, but the tourist ratio is only 8:1. Thus occupancy ratio for private hotels is half of HPTDC.

“Other places” includes camping sites, which are an important element in hill tourism. Safe and clean camp sites need to be proliferated.

(v) Tourists largely visit HP for leisure tourism, or “pleasure trip”, as classified by HP.

Purpose of Visit	Indian	Foreign	Total
Business/Official	15.13	4.98	14.08
Pleasure Trip	55.81	68.16	57.09
Sports	3.91	7.46	4.28
Social/Religious Functions	5.41	4.98	5.36
Pilgrimage	11.22	8.45	10.93
Health	1.90	1.49	1.86
Other	6.62	4.48	6.40

There is a potential for health and sports related tourism in HP, which is waiting to be exploited.

(vi) Quality of services needs quantum upgradation.

For public buses and private taxi, 10 per cent of the tourist rated them as “below expectations”, while 50 per cent rated them as just “good”.

The following ratings were received for hospitality industry:

Attribute	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Expectation
Behaviour	383	625	854	24
Food	127	687	967	93
Beverages	130	631	1002	61
Cleanliness	150	616	932	160
Total	790	2559	3755	338

Thus, 10 per cent excellent, 35 per cent very good, 50 per cent good, and 5 per cent poor ratings were received. As any hotel industry manager can see, these ratings are not good enough, and do not reflect well for repeat visits.

(vii) Availability of Accommodation

The following accommodation is available:

Private Hotels	714
HPTDC Complex	42
Dharamshala	85
Rest Houses	135
Others	295

A Focused Tourism Strategy for Himachal Pradesh

While missions are the statements of an organisation’s intent and vision, objectives lay down achievement targets, and how to get there is strategy. If the objectives are confused, the defined strategy will be difficult to lay down. It is always desirable that after a general vision statement, the objectives – as the word itself indicates – must be *objective*. This is a missing element in the Tourist Policy of Himachal Pradesh. A reading shows general issues of:

- To promote economically, culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism in Himachal Pradesh.
- To promote responsible tourism, that will be welcomed as both preferred employer and community industry.
- To use tourism as a means of providing new employment opportunities in rural, tribal and remote areas.
- To increase private sector participation in tourism, both as a means of generating employment and providing new infrastructure.
- To develop activity-based tourism to increase the duration of tourists visits etc.

Instead, HP should lay down clear and unambiguous objectives. A draft objective statement is indicated below:

- (i) Himachal Pradesh has currently 50 lakh tourists, 1.44 lakh in the foreign segment. By 2010, this will be enhanced to 1.5 crore tourists, with a component of 15 lakh foreign tourists.

(in lakh)			
Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2004	58.5	1.5	60
2005	77.5	2.5	80
2006	95.5	4.5	100
2007	113.0	7.0	120
2008	121.5	9.5	130
2009	128.0	12.0	140
2010	135.0	15.0	150

- (ii) For domestic zones, we will focus on central and eastern sectors, enhancing their percentage in domestic tourist segment to 10 per cent each from 2007 onwards.
- (iii) In the foreign segment, Himachal Pradesh will concentrate on its high contributing countries (US, UK, France, Germany) and raise the numbers of tourists from them by 15 times each by 2010.
- (iv) By 2010, no district shall have less than 5.5 per cent of overall tourist traffic.
- (v) Place specific focus on health and sports tourism, and increase their share. For health tourism, 1 lakh domestic and 3000 foreign visitors were recorded for 2002, and this will be enhanced to 3 lakhs and 1 lakh respectively.
- (vi) The Himachal Tourism Authority will be established by March 31, 2004, with clearly defined role, and powers. It will start performing its functions by June 1, 2004.
- (vii) Put in place a land laws regime for encouraging tourism industry, by involving all stakeholders, by March 31, 2004.
- (viii) Disinvest in HPTDC by March 31, 2005, by involving all stakeholders.
- (ix) Enhance the share of tourism in SDP of Himachal Pradesh to 6 per cent by 2010.

For achieving these draft objectives, the desired strategy could be:

- (i) Set up distribution partners in US, UK, France, and Germany. Hire market research teams to identify tourist segments and their needs, and match it to facilities available in the short run. In the long run, plan for ensuring availability of desirable facilities. Offer door to door packages through distribution partners, tying up airlines, airport transfers, road/rail transport, hotels, guides, equipment suppliers etc.
- (ii) Organise an investor meet in New Delhi, and other metros, inviting industry representatives. This will be preceded by groundwork to announce changes in land laws and concessions, and gathering complete details of the proposed projects and properties. This programme should commence in June 2004, and be followed by site visits. Every serious lead should have an identified Himachal Pradesh officer to chase with the party and provide information, till the agreement is finalised.
- (iii) Market HP as a health destination. Bring in foreign and domestic investors to set up health resorts and spas, preferably as part of an international chain. The investors will be given required assistance through land law and tax concessions. A policy statement in this regard will be issued by March 31, 2004, after consultations with investors.
- (iv) Ensure total establishment of certification practices by December 31, 2004, and bring the tourism sector under effective supervision of HP Tourism Authority. The tourists will be offered guaranteed service standards, with the guarantees clearly specified.
- (v) Set up an easy system of tourist grievance registration, with quick-response handling and redressal, under the overall superintendence of the Authority.
- (vi) Set up distribution partners in Central and Eastern states, and offer door to door packages.
- (vii) Start English, French, and German language courses, in keeping with targeting of US, UK, France and Germany for tourism promotion. Lay down norm of knowledge of two out of three languages spoken as a criteria for certification by HP Tourist Authority. Set up Tourist Facility Certification regime, implemented through private partner training institutes.
- (viii) Commence state-wide consultation process for change in land laws, and disinvestment if HPTDC.
- (ix) Select a mascot (building etc), to publicise as the symbol for future icon marketing.
- (x) Continuous marketing research exercise is conducted to define requirements, and then feedback to measure satisfaction levels.
- (xi) Facilitate the private sector to set up two entertainment parks of international standards, to be in place by 2008.
- (xii) Encourage tourist service providers to offer net-bookings, and acceptance of payments on the net through credit cards, and secure payment gateways. Encourage acceptance of

plastic money through the State, to facilitate the tourist.

- (xiii) Allocate required funds for tourist promotion. The quantum will depend on the final strategy, but Rs. 5 crore per annum needs quantum enhancement.
- (xiv) For manning and managing the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Authority, select the best talent from across the nation. They will be employees of the Authority, not the Himachal Pradesh government, and the jobs will be time-bound and performance-bound contracts.

The Basis of the Strategy

The strategy is based on the following assumptions:

Differentiation

Through market research and analysis, Himachal Pradesh will define its distinctive appeal for the foreign and domestic tourist sectors. This is based upon a realisation that Himachal Pradesh is not the only place in the world with mountains, snow, and pines. Our promotion will have to be based on more than this, and attempt to carve out a different niche, which can be used as a marketing pitch.

Focus

Himachal Pradesh will focus on those foreign countries, where it is most popular already, because the top four tourist-contributing nations of US, UK, France, and Germany are also having high per capita income. The tourist will have a higher spending propensity.

In the domestic sector, the focus will be on generating more tourists from hitherto low contributing central and eastern zones of India. The North already contributes 73 per cent of tourists to Himachal Pradesh, and they will continue to patronise, for reasons of proximity, and familiarity.

Security

The tourist dreads insecurity. Himachal Pradesh will remove this insecurity absolutely by launching door to door tourist packages that take care of complete logistics.

Standards

Tourists dread non-standard practices. The Himachal Pradesh Tourism Authority through a standardisation

and certification regime will remove this fear from the tourist experience, encouraging repeat visits, and recommendations as a preferred destination.

Conclusion

The more one thinks of the idea of how the entire tourism policy is NOT focused on the customer-tourist, the greater is the clear realisation of why we are failing to attract him. *In a way, we have become obsessed with "tourism", but forgotten the "tourist".* It appears we want him so that our need for economic development is satisfied, while he can manage with just some good views of nature. There is an immediate need to focus on the tourist, find out what he needs, and make arrangements to provide it.

- Amend Himachal Pradesh land laws to bring in entrepreneurship, technology, and capital.
- Himachal Pradesh Government to move out of tourism as a business activity, and shift to become a facilitator.
- Set up Himachal Pradesh Tourist Authority to oversee policy, accreditation, standardisation, and certification procedures.
- There should be clear, unambiguous, and objective targets laid down for achievement, backed up with a milestone-based strategy for implementation. This study has proposed a draft objective and strategy statement, and the same can be suitably modified.
- Currently, Tourism has a narrow focus on the development of the state. This must be re-oriented along marketing lines, and clearly target the tourist as a customer. The satisfied tourist will automatically look after the State's economy.

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