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A PROSPECT OF SUFI TOURISM CIRCUITS IN HARYANA**PARDEEP KUMAR****LECTURER****DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM****K. M. GOVERNMENT P.G. COLLEGE****NARWANA****PARDEEP SINGH****HEAD****DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM****K. M. GOVERNMENT P.G. COLLEGE****NARWANA****ABSTRACT**

Haryana a state of India is known for implementing various innovative tourism typologies from Highway and Farm tourism to MICE and Medical tourism. But this state lacks together in developing a particular tourism circuit till the present. Though Haryana Tourism Policy 2008 lay stress to plan Sufi circuit, Heritage and Eco tourism circuit but this notion still is in air. In this regard, the paper focuses on the prospect of developing Sufi tourism circuit in the state of Haryana. It is also a well known fact that numerous towns and cities of this state were associated with the great mystic Sufis in medieval India which led the mushrooming of tombs and other monuments dedicated to them. The systematic study of these areas and concerned Sufi sites provides an input for designing and formulation of the Sufi tourism circuit.

KEYWORDS

Sufi, Tourism, Circuit, Tomb, Haryana.

INTRODUCTION TO TOURISM CIRCUIT

Tourism is an activity from the origin source to destination through enroute points. But today, this activity is not merely restricted to travel between pairs of origin and destination. Travel to one destination may be pooled with visit to other destination in which it is recognized as Circuit Tourism. From a general point of view, a tourism circuit is defined as a route on which at least three major tourist destinations are located in different areas in such a way that tourist can and would like to cover them in a sequence. A planned Tourism Circuit has well defined entry and exit points that motivate tourists to visit all destinations within the circuit once they entered the entry points.

At the very first time in India, the concept of circuit tourism was introduced in Tourism Policy 1982 in 6th five year plan where 61 tourist circuits were identified but nothing could be done in this regard to implement this scheme. It is only after the National Tourism Policy 2002 where number of state showed keen interest to identify, develop and promote their tourism circuit along with Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. In this connection the success story of Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Gujarat can be cited. Other states are also doing best like Uttrakhand is promoting its Chaar-dham pilgrimage circuit. The state of Bihar has also developed and promoting Buddhist circuit. West Bengal has identified circuit of historical places like Murshidabad and Plassey.

Haryana Tourism Policy 2008 also stresses to develop circuits with Public-Private Partnership but unfortunately this state hasn't exploited enough this scheme, as a result of which people are not attracted to the tourist sites in Haryana. Even the transit visitors passed through the state to Jaipur, Agra, Shimla, Manali, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Jammu etc. are not lured to this state, which continue to be in state of neglect. The major factor behind it might be lack of planned new tourism circuit to 'show and sell'. It should be added here that Haryana, a state of cultural diversity has quite unique place in the country from the historical, religious and cultural standpoint. Such unity in diversity stimulates a tourism planner to target religious tourism circuit along with their potential attractiveness. For instance, Haryana is home of several mosque, dargahs and tombs which can be turned into potential tourism resource through developing Sufi circuits in the state. What is need of, are adequate tourism infrastructure, co-ordination at different level, tourism master plan and flexible circuit planning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourism circuit is a widely used term in tourism domain, however it coined sometimes with the term of Tourism Cluster or tourism regions. The travel circuits are aimed at spreading tourism geographically so that every state in India is enabled to offer its attraction to the visitors (Gupta et al. 2002). On the other hand, for marketer tourism circuit are developed to maximize the return on the investment in tourism infrastructure (Tourism Working Report 2012). At the very first time in India, the concept of tourism circuit was introduced in Tourism Policy 1982 in 6th five year plan (1980-85) with meager fund allotment; hence, no tourism circuit had been developed to cite a good example (Ballabh 2005). However National Tourism Policy 2002 clearly emphasized to develop the tourism circuit as an international standard destination. Tourism circuit could be based on various themes (Sisodia 2011) but population strata from religious standpoint is the major stipulator in India that shows significant prospect in developing a religious tourism circuit (Kumar 2008). This is in connection with Haryana Tourism Policy 2008 that plans to have Sufi circuit along with other circuits in the state. According to the report of working group of tourism for 12th five year plan (2012-17) the Sufi circuit in Haryana are also purposed to be implemented.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The core objective of the paper is to make a blueprint of Sufi tourism circuits in Haryana in light of the Sufi sites and concerned places. However, the objectives of this study follow as

- 1) To investigate scope for implementation of Sufi circuit in Haryana.
- 2) To identify the potential Sufi tourism circuit/destinations.
- 3) To identify the challenges and other issues lying on the way to such initiative.
- 4) To provide suggestions for development of Sufi tourism circuits in state.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data. The data was collected from various sources of publications such as books, journals, reports, magazines, brochures and online data sources. The data was also collected from offices of Haryana Tourism Development Corporation and Department of Archeological Survey. Researcher personal observation and indirect oral investigations at the dargahs of Bu Ali, Panipat, Sheikh Jalaluddin, Thanesar and Sheikh Kamal, Kaithal were also found useful.

SUFISM IN HARYANA

From the historical, religious and cultural stand point, Haryana has quite unique place in Indian subcontinent. Owing to its great geographical location and a long tradition of non-conformism, this region possessed a fertile cultural soil which readily accepted Islamic mysticism. The first Sufi to settle in the state of Haryana was Sheikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Sakar, popularly known as Baba Farid (d. 1265). He was said to be the founder of Faridabad city in Haryana near Delhi. With the passage of time, the prominent Sufi masters and their descendants came to be identified with the urban centers and vice versa e.g. Bu Ali Qalandar with Panipat, Sheikh Jamaluddin with Hansi, Sheikh Jalaluddin Thanewari, Sheikh Kamal Kaithali, Sheikh Nizamuddin of Narnaul, Shaikh Chai'in Laddah with Sohna (near Gurgaon) Miyan Mar Karnali etc.

Finding the life in Haryana among Hindus more congenial, the Sufis were popular in Hindu villages too. The villagers were happy to have Sufis and Sufi saintly persons known there as 'Shah Ji'. Two major trans-continental trade routes, which linked Delhi with Multan and Lahore, passed through this state which started to be dotted with Sufi Khanqahs. It may be added that the merchants, nobles and soldiers travelling from and to Delhi paid visit to the Khanqahs and tombs of various Sufi orders. Early in the fourteenth century, a traveler informed Shihabuddin Umari at Damascus that there were about two thousand Sufi Khanqahs in Delhi and the surrounding areas. It may be suggested that the reporter included the Khanqahs of Haryana in this number.

Sufism in Haryana was on great crux till the Mughal annihilation (1707) and natural calamities (Chalisa, 1783 & 1802) and even up to the revolt of 1857 that destroyed the socio-political structure. As the Sufi networks disintegrated, the folk literature and Sufi shrines especially the tombs survived the turmoil of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Having acquired their own spiritual power and legends the Sufi shrines continued to function as 'dynamic catalyst' but ultimately at the time of partition in 1947 caused the departure of many Sufi followers from present-day Haryana and as a consequence the Sufi shrines have ceased to be of even local importance.

SUFITOURISM: A PROSPECTIVE PRODUCT OF HARYANA TOURISM

Haryana a state in north India was carved out of the state of Punjab in 1966. It is bordered by Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north and Rajasthan to the west and south. Eastern border to Uttar Pradesh is defined by river Yamuna. Haryana also surrounds Delhi on three sides forming the northern, western and southern borders of Delhi. Consequently a large area of Haryana is included in National Capital Region (NCR). Tourism is one of the fastest and largest growing sectors of the Haryana state economy; therefore, tourism contributes largely in the development of the state. It is this very reason that motivates Haryana to diversify the forms of Tourism from Highway tourism to MICE and Medical tourism to meet the different needs and wants of the tourist. Sufi tourism is one of the very aspects of tourism that unfortunately has not given its due place by the tourism stakeholders in this state. The state governments of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have accelerated efforts to develop the Sufi tourism circuit to attract Sufi followers and general tourists to their state, Haryana, which was the abode of some most prominent Sufis, is not waking up to the significance of its rich Sufi sites. Thus, this paper will be on Sufi tourism focusing on Haryana and how its circuit can be potential resource to the tourism sector of the state. To begin with, Sufi Tourism can be understood as a religiously or spiritually motivated travel to explore and experience the Sufi sites such as tombs, dargah, Khanqah, baoli of saints, great scholars and righteous people along with fairs and festivals that held to pay homage to the memory of these famous personalities. A Sufi tour can also include meeting with the Sheikh (chief) of a Sufi school, talk and lecture on Sufism as well as learning, passing through some stages of zikr (meditation) and living in the Sufi center.

In the year 2006, one of the slots was to organize Sufi festival at Kurukshetra by Ministry of state for tourism, Government of Haryana through which a tourist circuit of important monuments of Sufism in the state like Sheikh Chaheli tomb at Thanesar was planned to be promoted.

Importantly, Sufism as it was in Haryana distinguishes it from other states, which makes it a desired destination for tourists who are looking for spiritual and historical journeys. Equally important, Sufi tourism in Haryana has picked up steam over the past few years because of a galaxy of tombs and mausoleums that draw thousands of committed followers and general tourists yearlong.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROSPECTIVE SUFI TOURISM CIRCUITS IN HARYANA

After recognizing the growing importance of tourism in the state the Ministry of Tourism (2012) identified four tourism circuits in Haryana but these were focused on overall tourism development instead of focusing a particular tourism circuit. As far as Sufi tourism circuit in Haryana is concerned, one cannot speak of its existence. It's still an idea. The term Sufi tourism circuit is still on the air. No maps, brochures, personnel, agencies, institutions, laws have been created and developed to create such a tourism circuit.

A study on the history of Haryana along with its trade and commerce unable us to understand the various trade routes that were passed through this state. Although the state of trade in Haryana was not sublime in middle age but even than it had a great importance in the history of trade in medieval India. Its only main reason was the strategic location of this state. Merchants had to pass through this state and as mentioned earlier the trade routes of this state were dotted with Sufi Khanqahs to provide them hospitality and protection in return the merchants supported these Khanqahs financially to function and to build the tombs of the eminent Sufis. It is interesting to see that many of these tombs and Sufi sites still exist on these routes turned to state and national highways to form the 'Sufi Tourism circuit'.

First understand the two major trans-continental trade routes, which linked Delhi with Lahore and Multan were passed through this state. The former was *Delhi-Lahore route*: in fact it was not single route but double one. First, was passed through Delhi, Sonipat, Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra (Pipli), Ambala, Sirhind, Fillaur, Nakodar, Sultanpur and up to Lahore. Second, was passed through Delhi, Sonipat, Panipat, Thanesar, Kaithal, Tohana, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rania and Bhatner up to Lahore. The latter was *Delhi-Multan route*: this route was also used for trade and commerce in middle age and passed through Delhi, Dadri, Narnaul, Bhiwani, Hansi, Hissar and up to Multan. Beside it, there were two inter-continental route i.e. *Delhi-Agra route* which was passed through Delhi, Ballabhgarh, Faridabad, Palwal, Hodal up to Agra and *Delhi-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Ahmadabad route* was in fact a multi route and was passed through Delhi, Gurgaon, Sohna, Tawdu and Rewari as a single one but after on segregated into different routes.

Based on these trade routes, the following Sufi circuits have been identified:

- Circuit 1: Sonipat – Panipat – Karnal – Thanesar
- Circuit 2: Ambala – Kaithal – Kalayat – Narwana
- Circuit 3: Hansi – Hissar – Tohana – Jamalpur
- Circuit 4: Mahendergarh – Madhogarh – Narnaul – Rewari
- Circuit 5: Gohana – Rohtak – Meham – Bhiwani
- Circuit 6: Faridabad – Sohna – Nuh – Ferozput Jhirka

It should be noted that present study is limited to identify Sufi circuits based on said trade routes. Calculating potential values for given circuits through any methodology is beyond the presenting efforts. A brief discussion on the circuits is furnished herewith.

- 1) *Sonipat-Panipat-Karnal-Thanesar* circuit obtained the highest score for overall potential. Strategic location of these destinations gets advantage of railway junctions, National highways and public amenities due to closeness of the national capital of India. National Highway 00 which connects these destinations is the lifeline of Haryana and is studded with all facilities and amenities for the tourists and passer-by people. Tombs of Khizar Khan and Imam Nasir in Sonipat, Dargah of Bu Ali and Ibrahim Lodi tomb in Panipat, Tombs of Kalandar Sahib, Miran Sahib and Pucka Pul in Karnal and famous Sheikh Chaheli tomb in Thanesar are major attractions in this circuit. Hence, little intervention like attractive hoardings, tagging of local souvenirs, parking facilities, theme transport like tonga are necessary.
- 2) *Ambala-Kaithal-Kalayot-Narwana* circuit is interconnected with National Highway 00. Sufi shrines located in this circuit attract thousands of visitors on major occasions. Ambala, a gateway of this circuit is close to Chandigarh a state capital and famous tourist destination, an added advantage to target the potential tourists for this circuit. Kaithal is being developed as a tourist hub and land of famous Sufi saint Sheikh Kamal, Kalayat is an historic town with a dargah of Baba Shah Kamal Kadri and Narwana is well known for dargah of Baba Gaibi Sahib. These spots have never been developed as a tourism circuit. Though, it deserves high future potential and requires extensive development in physical infrastructure and advertisement.

- 3) *Hansi-Hissar-Tohana-Jamalpur* circuit is ruined exhibit of some world famous Sufi saints especially Chahar Qutub of Hansi which is a tomb of four renowned Sufi saints namely Sheikh Jamaluddin, Sheikh Burhanuddin, Sheikh Qutabuddin Munawar and Sheikh Nooruddin Jamal. There are number of other Sufi tombs in Hissar, Tohana (five in number) and Jamalpur in which mostly are abandoned in state of neglect. Preservation and beautification of these monuments is need of hour to develop this circuit as a tourist hub. Moreover two proposed railway line which would connect Hansi with Hissar and Tohana with Hissar and a purposed airport in Hissar would increase potentiality of this circuit.
- 4) *Mahendergarh-Madhogarh-Narnaul-Rewari* circuit is located in the south-west part of the state. In this circuit Narnaul has a high potentiality to develop as a core tourism destination. There are some beautiful tombs including one of the oldest tombs dedicated to Shah Vilayat Khan. Rewari is an historical town which houses tomb of Turkiawas and three other tombs. Madhogarh was recently in news for having a visit of Tourism minister who assured to preserve and develop its tomb as a tourist centre. Mahendergarh is a district headquarters having some heritage spots including a baoli. This city can be developed as a gateway to this circuit by tagging any new tourist spot.
- 5) *Gohana-Rohtak-Meham-Bhiwani* circuit is especially known for age-old mosque in which Shishe wali masjid, Deeni masjid and Lal masjid located at the city of Rohtak are quite famous. Dargah of Pir Jamal at Gohana is visited by every section of society with equal devotion. Meham is a sub-division of Rohtak district, situated 25 Km away on Rohtak-Hissar road. There are 12 tombs still existing in this town. It is no less than a wonder that how such unguarded and unprotected destitute tombs survived till now. Bhiwani, mentioned in Ain-i-Akbari is a historic city having tomb of Loharu and several other ruined tombs. These destinations are well connected with each other and bear high potentiality due to closeness of Delhi.
- 6) *Faridabad-Sohna-Nuh-Firozpur Jhirka* circuit is Muslim dominated circuit and studded with numerous tombs and mosques. Faridabad, a sister city of Delhi is said to be named after famous Sufi saint Shaikh Farid. Nuh town houses a tomb of Shaikh Musa, grandson of Shaikh Farid. The town of Firozpur Jhirka was founded by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 14th century and is known for its tombs, six in number. In Sohna, there are as many as 11 magnificent tombs scattered at different locations all round the town. This circuit obtained second highest score for overall potential. The proposed railway line connecting Sohna, Nuh and Firozpur would further increase its potentiality.

CHALLENGES AND MAJOR ISSUES

It is our common experience that major archeological remains, which have become places of tourist attraction, have been often spoiled by the visitors themselves. The neglect is more visible in the scattered rural hamlets, where small structures are vulnerable to vandalism by local elements, who lack the consciousness regarding the preservation of our common heritage. The wave of commercialization of agriculture land and the relentless expansion of urbanization, which have assumed a fast pace in the last two decades, have posed new challenges to this heritage. In many cases, the governmental agencies have failed to protect medieval monument from damage, owing to natural and human factor. Besides, issues related to professionalism, lack of entrepreneur's confidence, financial constraints and lack of awareness are major hindrance to project the prospect of Sufi tourism circuit on grass root level.

SUGGESTIONS

Haryana has abundance of Sufi spots in form of tomb, dargah, mosque and baoli. Implementing the identified circuits especially Circuit 1 and circuit 6 on priority basis, providing basic facilities and amenities and subsequently overcoming the issues are essential for paving the way for development of this niche tourism in a way so that it can become a major USPs of Haryana tourism. Circuit 1 requires little necessities to develop like advertisement, day-shelters with toilet facilities, tagging of local souvenirs, theme-based transport facilities etc.; on the other hand, Circuit 6 can be developed through creating Faridabad an attractive travel node. Other suggestions are given as follow:

- Organizing Sufi culture festival every year.
- Organizing Qawwali show on regular interval.
- Organizing workshop on Sufism.
- Managing system of Light and Sound show on major Sufi sites.
- Building community participation.
- Creating proper linkage with Tour Operators.
- Drafting a master plan for preserving Sufi shrines and other monuments.
- Building co-ordination among concerned organizations and other stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Haryana is considered a Sufi state par excellence because of the rich presence of the tombs and mausoleum that make it a perfect destination to the visits of different and many religious people. Obviously, this state has a great potentiality for Sufi tourism circuits and therefore the development of the state. We think that Sufism is a great asset on which Haryana tourism can intelligently expand to potentially reach its goal.

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