



ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF TOURISM ON HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT IN SHIMLA

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Abstract

Tourism is an important part of India's economy, and it is also an important source of income for the local communities. In recent times, there has been a growing awareness about the importance of preserving the country's cultural heritage. Tourism has brought many benefits to the region, but it has also posed some challenges. The paper aims to analyse the city of Shimla and the impact of tourism on its fragile ecosystems by studying the tourist inflow and current scenario. The rapid growth of tourism and accelerated urbanisation has placed significant strains on the region's fragile biodiversity and threatened the preservation of its historic landmarks. To address these challenges, the Indian government has implemented several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development and preserving its unique natural and cultural heritage for generations to come. In this study, a qualitative research methodology has been adopted in the context of Shimla as a case study for understanding the impact of tourism on cultural heritage and environment. A secondary survey was conducted to understand the current scenario of tourism on built heritage and environment. The results show that tourism has both positive and negative impacts on the built heritage and environment of Shimla. However, there are still significant challenges to achieve sustainable tourism development in this region. Through the promotion of responsible tourism practices, creating partnerships, adopting a collaborative approach, and with proper planning and management, the region can ensure a sustainable future for its tourism industry.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Heritage, Environment, Sustainable Tourism

1. Introduction

India is a land of rich cultural heritage, which is reflected in its art, architecture, music, dance, literature, and philosophy. The country has a diverse cultural heritage that has evolved over thousands of years, shaped by the influence of various religions, rulers, and civilizations.

India's cultural heritage was greatly influenced by the arrival of the Aryans around 1500 BCE, who brought with them their own traditions, language, and religion. Over the centuries, various other civilizations, such as the Mauryan, Gupta, and Mughal empires, have also contributed to India's rich heritage. India is home to a vast number of historical monuments and sites, such as the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort, and the Ajanta and Ellora caves. These structures not only showcase India's architectural brilliance but also provide a glimpse into the country's rich history and culture.

In recent times, there has been a growing awareness about the importance of preserving India's cultural heritage. The government and various organizations have taken several initiatives to protect and promote India's heritage, such as the restoration of historical monuments, revitalization of the Mall road, promotion of eco-tourism, preservation of forests and the promotion of traditional art and crafts. Heritage and environment are two intertwined aspects that play a significant role in India's cultural history. India is home to a diverse range of natural and cultural heritage sites that have evolved over thousands of years. These sites not only showcase India's rich cultural heritage but also provide important ecological benefits. India's natural heritage includes its vast forests, mountains, rivers, and wildlife. These natural resources are not only essential for the country's ecological balance but also for the survival of various indigenous communities that have lived in harmony with nature for centuries. The country's cultural heritage is equally important, with numerous historical monuments and sites that showcase India's architectural brilliance and rich cultural history. However, the preservation of



these sites and the environment in which they exist is a major challenge for India. India is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, and this growth has led to increased pressure on the country's natural resources and cultural heritage. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have resulted in the degradation of the environment, leading to issues such as air pollution, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity. To address these challenges, the Indian government has implemented several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development and preserving the country's natural and cultural heritage. For example, the National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) aims to develop heritage cities in a sustainable manner while preserving their cultural and natural heritage.

Additionally, the government has launched several initiatives to promote renewable energy and reduce pollution, such as the National Clean Energy Fund and the National River Conservation Plan.

2. Literature Review

Tourism is considered a force of sound as its benefit travelers and communities in urban and suburban areas. The study highlights the importance of studying Shimla as a case study for understanding the impact of tourism on cultural heritage and environmental. They provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by the city and the need for sustainable development strategies to preserve its natural and cultural heritage.

2.1 About Shimla

Shimla is a city located in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, and it is famous for its natural beauty, colonial architecture, and rich cultural heritage. The city has a unique blend of British colonial and traditional Indian architecture and culture, making it a popular tourist destination. Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India in the 19th century, and it played a significant role in the development of the hill stations in India. The British colonial rulers built several iconic buildings and structures in Shimla, including the Viceregal Lodge, Christ Church, and the Gaiety Theatre, which still stand today as symbols of the city's heritage. Apart from its colonial architecture, Shimla is also known for its natural environment, which includes dense forests, snow-capped mountains, and scenic valleys. The city is situated at an altitude of 2200 meters above sea level, and it offers breath-taking views of the surrounding Himalayan range.

However, Shimla's environment is also facing several challenges due to rapid urbanization and increased tourism. The city's infrastructure is struggling to keep up with the influx of tourists, which has resulted in increased pollution levels and environmental degradation. To address these issues, the government and local organizations are taking steps to promote sustainable tourism and conservation of Shimla's natural and cultural heritage. Efforts are being made to encourage responsible tourism practices, such as waste management and eco-friendly transportation options. Additionally, measures are being taken to protect the city's historical buildings and structures, including the development of heritage trails and preservation programs.

2.1.1 Location

Shimla is located at 31.061° North Latitude, and 77.10° East Longitude on the national highway – 5 and is about 115km away from Chandigarh. It is connected by narrow gauge railway line from Kalka and by air from Delhi. Chandigarh and Kullu [1]. It is located about 343 kilometres (213 miles) north of the national capital, New Delhi, and is easily accessible by road, rail, and air. The nearest airport is Jubbarhatti Airport, which is located about 22 kilometres (14 miles) from the city centre. The city is also well-connected by road and rail, with several bus services and trains running to and from major cities in India. It is surrounded by Mandi and Kullu districts in north, Kinnaur and Uttarakhand state in the east, Sirmaur district in the south and Solan district in the west. It is situated in the range of the outer Himalaya and the lesser Himalaya with an average altitude of 2206 metres above the mean sea level[1].

The highest point of Shimla is Jakhoo hill, which is at a height of 2453 metres. It is spread over seven spurs viz., Summer hill Jakhoo hill, Bantony hill, Inverarm hill, Elysium hill, Observatory hill and

prospect hill. Shimla is characterized by rugged topography, steep slopes, deep valleys and elongated spurs[1].

Figure 1 Map of Shimla District



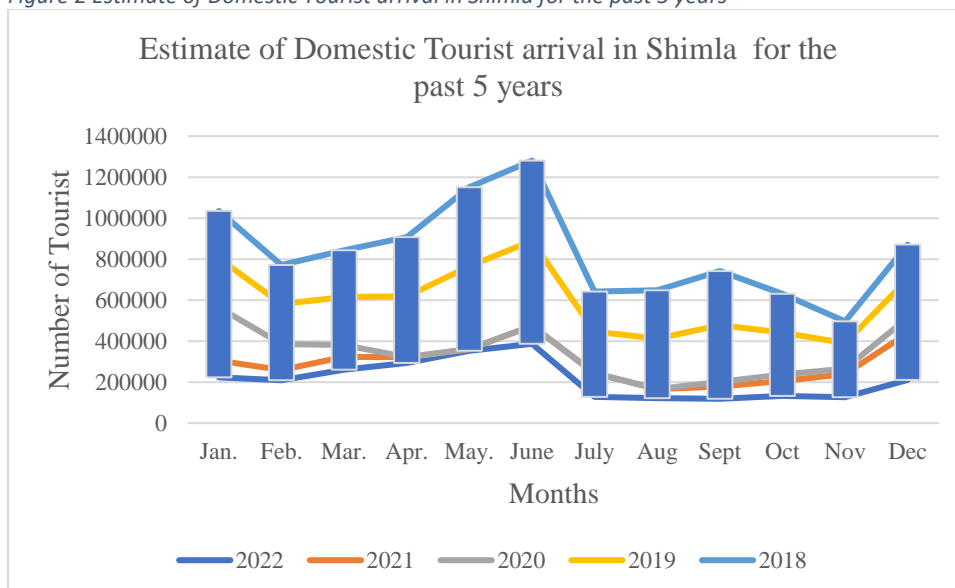
Source : <https://hpgeneralstudies.com/>

2.2 Tourist Footfall in Shimla

The city attracts a significant number of visitors each year, especially during the summer months when the weather is mild and pleasant. The influx of tourists to Shimla varies throughout the year, with the peak season usually from March to June and then again in December. During these times, the city can get quite crowded.

The city's top attractions include the Mall Road, Ridge, Jakhoo Hill, Christ Church, and the Shimla State Museum, among others. Shimla is also known for its adventure activities, including trekking, camping, and skiing. The city's scenic beauty and natural surroundings make it an ideal destination for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. However, it's worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted tourism in India and around the world, and travel restrictions and safety measures may still be in place. As such, visitors are advised to check the latest travel advisories and guidelines before planning a trip to Shimla or any other destination.

Figure 2 Estimate of Domestic Tourist arrival in Shimla for the past 5 years



Source: <https://himachaltourism.gov.in/>



Table 1 Estimate of Domestic Tourist arrival in Shimla for the past 5 years

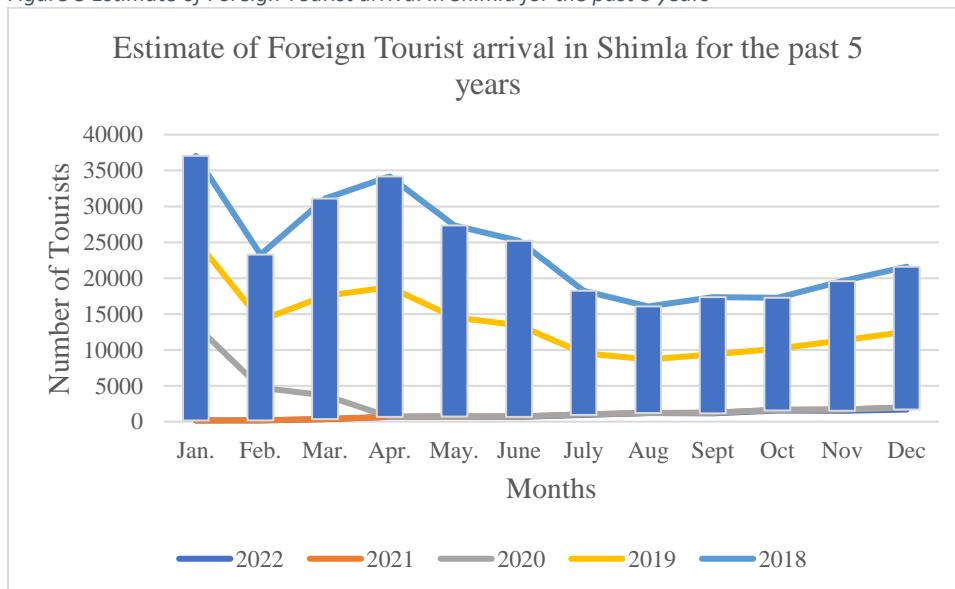
Month	Shimla				
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Jan.	223327	81296	259681	239920	230893
Feb.	209521	49773	126610	195497	189380
Mar.	261218	62271	57685	234169	228146
Apr.	293821	27245	23	297506	288253
May.	352817	8161	23	404056	385955
June	386845	87316	0	415386	391246
July	128342	115256	0	203490	194783
Aug	121224	45166	0	245636	236279
Sept	118791	59869	22727	277102	262856
Oct	132786	73746	31182	204817	188542
Nov	126147	113247	26185	124246	106292
Dec	210430	228446	75086	188421	169388
TOTAL	2565269	951792	599202	3030246	2872013

Source: <https://himachaltourism.gov.in/>

The figure 5 shows the estimation of domestic tourist inflow in Shimla for the past 5 years which helps in understanding that Shimla is the most and top priority of the people to visit during holidays.

The most preferred months to visit Shimla are March to June and again from December to January. According to Table 1 the tourist inflow in 2018 was 2872013 in total and it increased in 2019 to 3030246, and in 2020 it decreased to 599202 due to Covid-19 and it again increased in 2021 with a number of 951792 when there was partial lockdown but it didn't stop people from travelling. In 2022 the number increased to 2565269.

Figure 3 Estimate of Foreign Tourist arrival in Shimla for the past 5 years



Source : <https://himachaltourism.gov.in/>

Table 2 Estimate of Domestic Tourist arrival in Shimla for the past 5 years

Month	Shimla				
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Jan.	163	0	13252	11914	11724
Feb.	167	21	4534	9413	9164
Mar.	345	2	3323	13838	13576
Apr.	666	0	2	18061	15422



May.	696	0	0	13838	12834
June	673	31	0	12702	11792
July	931	75	0	8540	8703
Aug	1180	0	0	7491	7380
Sept	1145	90	0	8111	7997
Oct	1545	105	0	8497	7125
Nov	1504	205	0	9639	8222
Dec	1683	296	0	10564	9061
TOTAL	10698	825	21111	132608	123000

Source : <https://himachaltourism.gov.in/>

The figure 6 shows the estimation of Foreign tourist inflow in Shimla for the past 5 years which helps in understanding that Shimla is the most and top priority for the domestic tourist, but it also preferred by foreign tourist too.

The most preferred months to visit Shimla are March to June and again from December to January. According to Table 2 the tourist inflow in 2018 was 123000 in total and it increased in 2019 to 132608, and in 2020 it decreased to 21111 due to Covid-19 and it again decreased in 2021 with a number of 825 as foreigners were not allowed to enter India due to Covid-19 restrictions. In 2022 the number increased to 10698 as the restrictions were lifted.

2.3 Reason for tourism development and growth in Shimla

Shimla, a popular tourist destination in India, has seen significant tourism development and growth in recent years due to various reasons, including:

- Natural Beauty:** Shimla is surrounded by beautiful landscapes, including snow-capped mountains, lush green forests, and scenic valleys, making it an attractive destination for nature lovers.
- Colonial Architecture:** Shimla was once the summer capital of British India, and the city's architecture reflects this colonial heritage. Many visitors are drawn to Shimla to experience this unique blend of Indian and British culture.
- Adventure Sports:** Shimla offers a variety of adventure sports such as skiing, trekking, and paragliding, which attract adventure enthusiasts from all over the world.
- Accessibility:** Shimla is well connected by road, rail, and air, making it easily accessible to tourists from all over India and the world.
- Cultural Significance:** Shimla has a rich cultural history, with influences from the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities. Many tourists are drawn to the city to explore its diverse cultural heritage.
- Health and Wellness:** Shimla's cool climate and serene environment make it an ideal destination for people seeking health and wellness retreats. There are several spas and wellness centres in Shimla that cater to these needs.

Overall, while tourism has brought significant benefits to Shimla, it is important to manage its growth in a sustainable and responsible manner to mitigate the negative impacts and ensure that the region continues to thrive for years to come.

2.4 Government Policies and frameworks to protect the heritage and environment of Shimla

Tourism generates wide-ranging benefits for the economy, community, and people. It contributes to the economy through revenue generation and shares responsibility with the Government to alleviate poverty alleviation, create opportunities for job placements, protect environments, and conserve natural ecosystems and biodiversity. It is assumed that if the tourism industry is left to its own, it will most likely prefer its business interests over environments or biodiversity[2]. To protect the heritage



and culture of Shimla, the government has implemented several policies and frameworks over the years. Here are some of the key initiatives:

- i. **Himachal Pradesh Ancient, Historical and Archaeological Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1976:** This act was enacted to preserve and protect the ancient, historical, and archaeological monuments, sites, and remains in the state of Himachal Pradesh, including Shimla. The act empowers the government to regulate the construction of buildings near protected monuments and to take appropriate measures for their preservation.[3]
- ii. **Shimla Heritage Conservation Committee:** The committee was set up by the Himachal Pradesh government in 2008 to identify, protect, and conserve the heritage buildings and sites in Shimla. The committee comprises experts from various fields, including architecture, history, and culture, and has been instrumental in preparing a heritage conservation plan for Shimla.[4]
- iii. **Shimla Development Authority:** The Shimla Development Authority (SDA) is responsible for planning and regulating the development activities in Shimla. The authority has designated certain areas of the city as heritage zones and has prescribed guidelines for the maintenance and restoration of heritage buildings in these areas.[5]
- iv. **Himachal Pradesh Tourism Policy, 2019:** The policy emphasizes the need for the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Himachal Pradesh, including Shimla, to attract tourists. The policy encourages the development of heritage tourism circuits and the restoration and conservation of heritage buildings and sites.[6]
- v. **Shimla Municipal Corporation:** The Shimla Municipal Corporation is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of public infrastructure in the city, including parks, roads, and heritage buildings. The corporation has initiated several projects for the restoration and conservation of heritage buildings in Shimla, such as the Town Hall and the Gaiety Theatre.[7]
- vi. **Shimla Heritage Conservation Committee:** The committee was formed to conserve the heritage buildings, monuments, and sites in Shimla. The committee was responsible for identifying the heritage buildings, enforcing the heritage by-laws, and recommending appropriate conservation measures.
- vii. **Himachal Pradesh Forest Policy, 2019:** The policy aimed to conserve and protect the forests in Himachal Pradesh, including those in and around Shimla. The policy recognized the role of forests in conserving the environment and biodiversity and promoting ecotourism.[8]
- viii. **Shimla Municipal Corporation Building Bye-Laws:** These bye-laws were formulated to regulate the construction, maintenance, and safety of buildings in Shimla, with a focus on conservation and preservation of the heritage structures.[7]
- ix. **Himachal Pradesh State Action Plan on Climate Change:** The action plan aimed to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the state, including Shimla, by promoting sustainable development, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems.[9]
- x. **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:** The scheme aimed to promote cleanliness and sanitation in Shimla, including the conservation of the environment and heritage sites.
- xi. **Himachal Pradesh State Biodiversity Board:** The board was constituted to conserve the biodiversity in the state, including Shimla, by preparing a biodiversity register, promoting sustainable use of resources, and monitoring the impact of developmental activities.
- xii. **Himachal Pradesh Fire Service Act, 1984:** This act provides for the establishment and functioning of a fire service in Himachal Pradesh, including Shimla.
- xiii. **Shimla Smart City Proposal:** This proposal outlines the development of Shimla as a smart city, with a focus on sustainable infrastructure, technology, and citizen engagement.



2.4.1 Government Supported Initiatives

Government and the citizens both are equally responsible for the preservations of heritage and the environment. Thus, it is the duty of national and local governments to design tourist development plans and carry them out with the help of local people it is necessary to enforce the principles and guidelines for the development of the built and natural environment of Shimla which will be environmental sustainability. Government should promote the growth of the tourist industry through institutional governance by offering funding, a set of regulations, land, physical resources, infrastructure, etc. Government-supported initiatives are necessary for the following:

- a) The regulatory framework for setting up tourism-related entrepreneurship and quality standards can support ecotourism and prevent environmental degradation on any account.[2]
- b) Provision of budgetary support for ecosystem conservation and regeneration of bio-diversity related projects.[2]
- c) Plan, rehabilitate if needed, promote conservation and protection of socio-cultural, historic, antique, and natural endowments in coordination with other public and private agencies, and deal with the defaulters, if any.[2]
- d) Promoting and undertaking afforestation alongside land conservation and discouraging deforestation, soil erosion, accumulation of solid waste, littering, and any direct or indirect loss or threat to biodiversity.[2]
- e) Setting restrictions for over-tourism beyond capacity and quality standards for transportation, restaurants, hotels, food and drinking water, etc.[2]
- f) Placing enforcement mechanism necessary to ensure application of the regulatory framework and quality standards applicable along with all activities inclusive to the Ecotourism value chain.[2]

These policies and frameworks have played a significant role in protecting and conserving the heritage and culture of Shimla. However, there is still a need for continued efforts and investments to ensure that the city's rich cultural legacy is preserved for future generations.

2.5 Popular Tourist's Attraction

Shimla is a popular tourist destination which is a must-visit as there are many places which are adversely famous for its rich cultural heritage value, natural beauty and ecotourism. Some of the top tourist attraction in and around Shimla are:

- i. **Gaiety Theatre** is a historic landmark located on the Mall Road in Shimla, India. Built in the late 19th century, the theatre has been a centre for performing arts and entertainment for over a century, hosting a variety of cultural events including plays, musicals, and concerts. The Gaiety Theatre is known for its elegant architecture and is a popular destination for both locals and tourists.
- ii. **Gorton Castle** is a historic building located in Shimla, India. Built in the early 1900s, the castle served as the headquarters of the British colonial government in the region for many years. Today, Gorton Castle is a popular tourist attraction and houses various government offices and departments. The building's distinctive architecture and rich history make it a must-visit destination for history buffs and architecture enthusiasts.
- iii. **Glen** is a beautiful valley located in Shimla, India. It is known for its natural beauty, serene surroundings, and picturesque views of the Himalayan mountains. Glen offers several trekking and hiking opportunities, making it a popular destination for adventure enthusiasts. The valley is easily accessible from Shimla and is a great place to relax and unwind amidst nature.
- iv. **The Vice Regal Lodge**, also known as the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), is a grand historical building located in Shimla, India. Built during the British colonial era, the lodge served as the summer residence of the British Viceroy of India. Today, it houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, a prestigious research institute dedicated to the humanities



and social sciences. The Vice Regal Lodge's impressive architecture and lush gardens make it a popular destination for visitors to Shimla.

- v. **Rothney Castle:** is a historic building located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. The castle was designed by British architect Charles Gerard and features a unique blend of Gothic and Indian architectural styles. It is spread over an area of 9 acres and is surrounded by beautiful gardens and forests. In recent years, the Himachal Pradesh government has taken steps to restore and preserve Rothney Castle. The building has been renovated and converted into a heritage hotel, maintaining its original architecture and features. The heritage hotel offers luxurious accommodation and modern amenities while preserving the building's historic charm.
- vi. **Chotta Shimla** is a residential area located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. It is known for its beautiful bungalows, lush green surroundings, and quiet atmosphere, making it a popular destination for tourists seeking a peaceful getaway.
- vii. **Sanjauli** is a small town located on a ridge above Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, known for its scenic beauty and tranquil atmosphere. It is home to several small temples and shrines, including the Kali Bari Temple and the Hanuman Temple, and is surrounded by lush green forests offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Sanjauli is also a popular destination for students and academics due to the presence of Himachal Pradesh University.
- viii. **Summer Hill** is a serene suburb located on the outskirts of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, known for its scenic beauty and peaceful atmosphere. It is home to the Himachal Pradesh University, known for its beautiful campus and academic excellence, and is a popular destination for trekking and hiking enthusiasts due to its surrounding hills and valleys.
- ix. **Potter Hill** is a small suburb located in Mashobra, near Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, India. It is known for its picturesque surroundings and peaceful atmosphere. Potter Hill is surrounded by dense forests and offers stunning views of the Himalayas. Visitors to Potter Hill can explore the area's natural beauty, go trekking or hiking, and enjoy the tranquil surroundings.
- x. **Thandi Road** is a scenic route located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. It is known for its cool and refreshing climate, even during the summer months. The road is lined with lush green forests and offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Visitors to Thandi Road can enjoy a leisurely walk, go for a picnic, or simply soak in the natural beauty of the area.
- xi. **Kusumpti** is a small town located in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, India. It is situated on the slopes of the Himalayas and is known for its scenic beauty and tranquil atmosphere. Kusumpti is surrounded by dense forests and offers breath-taking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, making it a popular destination for trekking and hiking enthusiasts. The town is also known for its colonial architecture and is home to several historic buildings and landmarks, including the Viceregal Lodge and the Gorton Castle.
- xii. **Annandale** is a picturesque flat terrain located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. It was once a playground for the British during the colonial period and is now used for various activities such as a helipad, golf course, and polo ground. Surrounded by dense forests, Annandale offers breath-taking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, making it a popular destination for nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts.
- xiii. **Hatoo Peak** is a popular trekking destination located near Narkanda, in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, India. It is situated at an altitude of 3,400 meters above sea level and offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The trek to Hatoo Peak is known for its challenging terrain, and visitors can enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings, including dense forests, mountain streams, and picturesque landscapes, making it a popular destination for adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers.



- xiv. **Kiar** is a beautiful village located in the Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, India, surrounded by lush green forests and offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. It is a popular destination for nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts, who can enjoy trekking, hiking, and camping in the area.
- xv. **Craigneno** is a colonial-era bungalow located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. It was built in the early 20th century and is known for its beautiful architecture and stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Today, Craigneno has been converted into a heritage hotel, and visitors can experience the charm of colonial Shimla by staying in this historic building.
- xvi. **Christ Church** is a historic landmark located at the Ridge in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. Built in the mid-19th century, it is one of the oldest churches in North India and is known for its beautiful stained-glass windows and Gothic architecture. The church is a popular tourist attraction and a must-visit for those interested in the history and culture of Shimla.
- xvii. **Jakhoo Temple** is an ancient temple located on Jakhoo Hill in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. Dedicated to the Hindu deity Hanuman, it is one of the most popular and sacred temples in the region, and visitors can enjoy panoramic views of Shimla from the hilltop. The temple is also known for the world's tallest statue of Hanuman, which stands at a height of 108 feet.
- xviii. **Shri Dhingu Mata Mandir** is a Hindu temple located in the Chirgaon area of Shimla district in Himachal Pradesh, India. It is dedicated to the goddess Dhingu Mata and is a popular pilgrimage site for locals and tourists alike. The temple offers beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, making it a serene and picturesque place to visit.
- xix. **Kali Bari Temple** is a Hindu temple located in the heart of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. Dedicated to the goddess Kali, the temple is a popular destination for both devotees and tourists.
- xx. **Kamna Devi Temple** is a popular Hindu temple located in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. Dedicated to Goddess Kali, it is situated on top of a hill and offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The temple is known for its beautiful architecture and is a popular pilgrimage site for devotees.
- xxi. **Tara Devi** is a common name in India, and it can refer to a few different people, places, and things. However, Tara Devi is also the name of a Hindu goddess, who is an incarnation of the divine feminine energy.
- xxii. **The Mall** in Shimla is a famous commercial and social hub in the city, located at the heart of the town. The Mall in Shimla is known for its colonial architecture, with several buildings dating back to the British era. It features a range of shops, cafes, restaurants, and other attractions, including the famous Christ Church and the Ridge, making it a popular destination for visitors to Shimla.

Considering the above, the present tourist places brings out the initiatives taken by the Government to increase tourist inflow which helps in generating economy of Shimla. By increasing the activities, it has a positive and negative impact on the built heritage and environment in Shimla. To address the gap that exists between heritage conservation, the government should look into the management policies as well as the local urban development frameworks for an integrated and sustained development process.

3. Analysis

A qualitative research methodology has been adopted in the context of Shimla for this study. Secondary Survey has been adopted as survey tool. For the secondary studies, the current scenario of built heritage of Shimla has been studied through the news reports and research papers to document the following aspects –past and present use, cultural significance, present condition, and the threats and risks that the heritage properties are exposed to. The intention of the secondary survey was to comprehend the initiatives taken by the GoHP to identify, prioritize and conserve the built heritage conservation in

Shimla. Data's were collected and compiled from different secondary sources. The secondary sources include historical documents, survey reports, publications, news articles and plan documents.

3.1 Current Status of Built Heritage in Shimla

Over the years, Shimla's built heritage has faced several challenges, including natural disasters, urbanization, and lack of maintenance. In recent years, there have been concerns about the deterioration of many of Shimla's historic buildings due to neglect and lack of proper upkeep.

Rapid in-migration and increasing floating population owing to the high tourist influx have been one of the major concerns in the state of Himachal Pradesh with the problem accelerating in Shimla Though several measures have been adopted by the State Archaeology Departments through the Himachal Pradesh Department of Language, Art, and Culture and urban local bodies.[10]

Figure 4 The Ridge, the most photographed wide-open street located on the side of Shimla Mall Road, is sinking



Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/himachal-pwd-seeks-37-crore-additional-fund-to-save-sinking-ridge-101674155965264.html#:~:text=The%20Ridge%20is%20the%20most,on%20the%20Ridge%20developed%20cracks.>

The figure 2 Shows the Ridge which is the most photographed wide-open street located on the side of Shimla Mall Road, which is sinking and the PWD had undertaken a project to restore the Ridge last year in June after a 60m stretch between Heritage Town Hall and the Padam Dev Market Complex on the Ridge developed cracks. Amid the emergency evacuation of residents from Joshimath in neighbouring Uttarakhand, the Himachal Pradesh public works department (PWD) sought an additional ₹37 crore from the urban development department to restore Shimla's "sinking heart", the historic Ridge[11].

Due to over commercialisation and unnecessary construction it has increased the stress on the ridge thus affecting the built heritage. The sinking ridge is a geological phenomenon that occurs due to the excessive pumping of water from the underground aquifers for tourism-related activities. Tourism has led to the construction of several hotels, resorts, and commercial buildings in Shimla, which has put a tremendous strain on the natural resources of the region. The indiscriminate use of water resources, particularly for maintaining lawns and gardens, has led to the depletion of the underground water table, causing the sinking of the ridge. The sinking ridge has also resulted in the loss of green cover, which has had a severe impact on the local ecosystem. The reduction in the forest cover has led to soil erosion and landslides, further exacerbating the problem of the sinking ridge.

Figure 5 Rothney Castle



Source : <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/shimlas-heritage-rothney-castle-slipping-into-oblivion/397188>

The figure 3 Rothney Castle shows the most parts of the buildings are crumbling due to neglect. The wooden panels are rotting away due to continuous seepage of rainwater and melting of snow. The place is abandoned, and the sprawling lawns are frequented visited by a few young drug addicts who slip away quietly. As of now this fascinating heritage property dying a slow death. [12]

The large number of tourists who visit the castle each year can lead to overcrowding and damage to the castle's infrastructure and surroundings. The increased foot traffic has caused wear and tear on the floors, stairs, and other parts of the castle, which can be costly to repair. Additionally, the growth of tourism has led to the development of commercial establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, in the vicinity of Rothney Castle. While these establishments provide convenience to tourists, they can also have a negative impact on the castle's heritage value and aesthetic appeal.

Figure 6 Minto Court



Source : <https://himachalwatcher.com/2014/11/03/shimla-losing-heritage-buildings-due-to-lack-of-firefighting-equipment/>

The figure 4 shows that another heritage building in Shimla named Minto Court near Indian Institute of Advance Studies, was lost in a fire break out. The building presently houses the office of Project Deepak of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), an inter-services organization under the defence ministry[13]. According to government officials this is the second major fire in Shimla since last year when heritage Gorton Castle, a marvellous work of Neo-Gothic architecture, burnt to ashes. Before that many other heritage buildings have fallen victim to the same fate due to lack of maintenance and carelessness on the part of Govt. and related offices these building housed.

The large number of tourists visiting the hotel can lead to overcrowding, which can cause wear and tear on the building's infrastructure and surroundings. Additionally, the increased foot traffic can lead to littering and damage to the gardens and other natural areas surrounding the building. The development of commercial establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, in the vicinity of Minto Court has also had a negative impact on the aesthetic appeal of the building. The commercial establishments can obstruct the view of the building and detract from its historical significance.

To address these concerns, the state government has launched several initiatives, such as the Himachal Pradesh State Cultural Policy, which aims to preserve and promote the state's cultural heritage, and the



Smart City Mission, which includes provisions for the conservation and restoration of Shimla's heritage buildings.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Impact of tourism on the culture and heritage of Shimla

Shimla is a popular tourist destination known for its scenic beauty, pleasant climate, and colonial-era architecture. The impact of tourism on the culture and heritage of Shimla can be seen in both positive and negative ways.

Positive impacts of tourism on culture and heritage of Shimla:

- a. **Preservation and promotion of cultural heritage:** Tourism can help to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Shimla. The government and local people have made efforts to restore the colonial-era buildings and monuments in the town to attract more tourists.
- b. **Economic benefits:** Tourism generates employment opportunities for local people, which helps in the economic development of the area. It also creates demand for locally made handicrafts and products, which helps in preserving the local traditions and customs.
- c. **Exchange of culture:** Tourism provides an opportunity for locals and tourists to exchange culture, customs, and ideas. Tourists can learn about the local way of life, cuisine, and festivals, which helps in preserving and promoting the local culture.
- d. **Promotion of local culture:** Tourism can promote the local culture of Shimla by showcasing its arts, crafts, music and food. This can help to preserve these traditional practices and pass them on to future generations.

Negative impacts of tourism on culture and heritage of Shimla:

- a. **Over-commercialization:** The rapid growth of tourism has led to the over-commercialization of the area. This has resulted in the loss of traditional architecture and culture, as more modern structures are built to cater to tourists' demands.
- b. **Damage to historical monuments:** The influx of tourists has resulted in the damage to historical monuments and buildings due to overcrowding and lack of proper maintenance.
- c. **Cultural dilution:** The influx of tourists from different cultures can lead to a dilution of the local culture as people adapt to cater to the tourists' demands. This can result in the loss of traditional customs and practices.

4.2 Environmental effects on Shimla due to tourism

Tourism in Shimla, like any other tourist destination, has a significant impact on the environment. Shimla is in the Himalayan region and has a fragile ecosystem. The environmental effects of tourism in Shimla can be seen in both positive and negative ways.

Positive impacts of tourism on the environment in Shimla:

- a. **Conservation efforts:** The government and local people have made efforts to preserve and conserve the natural environment of Shimla. This has resulted in the creation of protected areas and wildlife reserves, which helps in the conservation of biodiversity.
- b. **Alternative energy sources:** In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on using alternative energy sources in Shimla. Many hotels and guesthouses are now using solar energy to power their facilities, reducing the reliance on fossil fuels.
- c. **Environmental awareness:** The increase in tourism has also led to an increase in environmental awareness among tourists and locals. Many organizations and individuals are now working towards reducing waste, conserving water, and protecting the natural environment.

Negative impacts of tourism on the environment in Shimla:



- a. **Air and water pollution:** The increase in vehicular traffic and the use of fossil fuels has led to air and water pollution in Shimla. This has resulted in the degradation of the natural environment and has had an adverse impact on the health of locals and tourists.
- b. **Deforestation:** The increasing demand for land and infrastructure for tourism has resulted in deforestation and land degradation in Shimla. This has had a significant impact on the local flora and fauna and has led to soil erosion and landslides.
- c. **Waste management:** The increase in tourism has led to an increase in waste generation, which poses a significant challenge for waste management in Shimla. Improper disposal of waste has resulted in the degradation of the natural environment and has had an adverse impact on the health of locals and tourists.

Tourism has both positive and negative impacts on the environment in Shimla. It is important to strike a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the need to protect the natural environment.

5. Suggestions and Way Forward

Shimla is a unique blend of history, culture, and nature, making it a must-visit destination for anyone looking for a memorable vacation. However, there are still significant challenges to achieve sustainable tourism in Shimla. One of the most pressing of these is the need to preserve environment and cultural heritage of Shimla. To address these challenges, policymakers and stakeholders must work together to develop a holistic and collaborative approach to tourism development in Shimla. This approach must prioritize the sustainable development of the region's natural and cultural resources, while also ensuring that the needs of local communities are met. Through the promotion of responsible tourism practices with the help government regulations using modern tools and techniques Shimla can become a Sustainable tourist destination and thrive over the years to come. The collaboration between tourism organizations, local communities, and other stakeholders is also crucial to find solutions to heritage and environmental issues in tourism. By promoting responsible tourism practices, creating partnerships, adopting a collaborative approach, and with proper planning and management, Shimla can ensure a sustainable future for its tourism industry while preserving its unique natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Here are some suggestions for sustainable tourism in Shimla:

- a) **Promote eco-tourism:** Encourage tourists to engage in activities that have minimal impact on the environment, such as nature walks, bird watching, and local cultural experiences.
- b) **Implement waste management:** Develop and implement effective waste management systems to reduce the environmental impact of tourism on Shimla.
- c) **Encourage responsible tourism practices:** Promote responsible tourism practices such as reducing plastic usage, conserving water, and minimizing the use of energy and other resources.
- d) **Protect the natural environment:** Take measures to protect and preserve the natural environment of Shimla, including reforestation programs and conservation of water resources.
- e) **Promote local culture and heritage:** Encourage tourists to learn about and appreciate the local culture and heritage of Shimla through guided tours, cultural festivals, and events.
- f) **Promote heritage walks:** Organize heritage walks to promote the rich cultural heritage of Shimla and raise awareness about the need for its preservation.
- g) **Promote sustainable transportation:** Encourage the use of sustainable transportation options such as bicycles, electric vehicles, and public transportation to reduce the environmental impact of tourism.
- h) **Develop eco-friendly accommodations:** Encourage the development of eco-friendly accommodations that are in harmony with the natural surroundings and use sustainable materials.



- i) **Implement conservation measures:** Implement conservation measures to protect and preserve the natural environment, such as promoting reforestation programs, reducing carbon emissions, and minimizing the use of natural resources.
- j) **Foster awareness:** Foster awareness among tourists about the importance of heritage and environment conservation through educational programs, guided tours, and interactive experiences.

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