Development of Adventure Tourism and Its Increasing Significance in Nature Based Tourism: Case Study of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: Adventure Tourism is mainly seen as thrilling activities tourism such as mountaineering, trekking, sailing, white water rafting, angling, ballooning, parachuting so on and so forth. Easy accessibilities of the communication gadgets and cheap data usages have allowed every second person to check out the desired destination and plan the holiday. Therefore, adventure tourism is becoming most favorite task for the younger generations, who wants to venture into and experience the unknown adventure world. Adventure tourism involves travel and leisure activities pursued with the expectation that they will produce a rewarding, adventurous experience. Adventure tourism can be defined as travel to a destination to participate in adventurous activities in a natural environment. Two categories of adventure are distinguished, namely soft and hard adventure. Soft adventure includes activities such as bird-watching, hiking, camping horseback riding etc., and it requires relatively little physical skill and little or no experience. Hard adventure includes activities such as rock climbing, mountaineering, survival games caving etc. Hard adventure has high levels of risk and participants are more likely to engage in physically and mentally challenging outdoor activities. In this paper an attempt has been made to define the adventure tourism in simple way, also attempt has been made to discuss adventure tourism in India and the products offered by the tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh, its scope and government efforts to boost this sector of tourism in India.

Keywords: Adventure Tourism, Changing Behavior, Exploring, Rafting, Paragliding, Zorbing, Mountaineering, Trekking, Angling.

INTRODUCTION

Adventure tourism is branch of ecotourism and is based on nature and natural environment and wilderness of the destination, involving exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveler expects the unexpected. Adventure tourism is rapidly gaining popularity as tourists seek unusual holidays, different from the typical sightseeing or just visiting any destination for a change. Adventure means different things to different people but for the people who have the nature of exploring new things and new areas, tourism word finds its place beside the adventure and the meaning of this combo gets changed, and the fore vision of exploring new destinations and the adventurous activities come in the mind automatically. Mountaineering expeditions, trekking, bungee jumping, sky diving, paragliding, parasailing, ballooning, rafting and rock climbing are the activities can be done under adventure tourism. Adventure travel is a type of tourism, involving exploration or travel with perceived and possible actual risk, and potentially requiring specialized skills involving physical exertion.

Although, it is not certain how adventure tourism has started in the past, but the merchants are considered to be the first adventure travelers. For example, North America was discovered by Erickson, and America by Columbus, and India was found by Vasco Da Gama. This happened at the time when the technology was not the part of the life and these travelers have limited resources but unlimited courage and strong will power to conquer the fear. Adventure traveling of today is considered to have started around thirty years ago when people from around the world begin exploration of the Himalayan ranges in Nepal. These people were only explorers who explored other destinations in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bali, Algeria, the Nile and the Alps. For the past decade or more, the term adventure has been used to advertise the holidays, equipments, clothing, adventurous activities, lifestyle etc. The term may vary tourist to tourist because for one it may be full of fear and thrill at the same time other one can get filled with boredom, and vice versa.

People around the world moving and exploring the destinations far away from their abode, people in India took to adventure traveling in recent times. While there was a steady rise in this form of traveling, India has now emerged amongst the leading adventure tourism destinations in the world. Adventure tourism has grown in recent decades, as tourists seek different kinds of vacations, but the growth is slow in proportion to the availability of natural terrains to explore and it has hampered due to the lack of a clear operational definition. Adventure tourism is nothing, but to experience and enjoy the product offered by the destination in this section by the industry. Adventure tours are retail-level commercial tour products which clients purchase to take part in an outdoor activity which is more
exciting than contemplative, and where the outdoor environment is enjoyed more as a setting for the activity than for its scenic views, flora and fauna. To define adventure tourism, U.S. based Adventure Travel Trade Association says that an adventure travels maybe any tourist activity, including two of the following three components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange or interaction and engagement with nature. Adventure tourists may give a motivation to the explorer to achieve the activity desired, or kill the fear of particular thing, and for that one has to step outside of his comfort zone. This may include activities such as mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, rafting, zip-lining, paragliding, rock climbing etc. Access to social networking and photography, inexpensive consumer technology, increasing use of smart phones with inbuilt Global Positioning Systems, cheep data use, and easy availability of the adventure gears in the market have increased the interest in adventure travel across the globe.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The boundaries of adventure tourism are not well defined. Simply, its core activity may be a multiday whitewater rafting tour, or a camp for mountaineering. Rock climbing, skiing, or Paragliding, where the tour operator provides all the equipment, the clients need no prior skills and the main attraction is running rapid in the river or the toughness of mountain or focusing on the thrill on a ski or a snow board or hanging in a parachute rather than riverside scenery or the scenic view of mountains and valleys. Climbing, Abseiling, Rafting and Whitewater Kayaking, Skiing and Snowboarding, Ballooning, Skydiving and Paragliding, Mountain Biking, Snowmobiling and off road Driving, Skiing, Heli-Skiing are the activities may also form the basis for adventure tourism.

Fennell, (1999), Buckley, (2000): Adventure tourism products, however, form a relatively well-defined and recognizable sector of the tourism industry but definitions are not clear-cut, and in practice many tour products focus on nature and culture at the same time as adventure. This has been recognized through terms such as ACE, adventure-culture-ecotourism and NEAT, nature-eco-adventure-tourism. The distinctions between nature tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, adventure travel, commercial expeditions, outdoor recreation and outdoor education are blurred (Weaver, 1998; Fennell, 1999; Manning, 1999; Buckley, 2000; Newsome et al., 2001)

Travel Industry Association of America (2005): Adventure tourism has grown rapidly in recent years as outdoor recreation has become increasingly commercialized. The defining features of most adventure tourism products include the geographic setting as well as the adventure activity. Customer experience also depends on guides and service, so people are also critical to the commercial success of adventure tourism.

Littlefair and Medio: From a tourism management perspective, one of the critical issues is whether interpretation, especially by commercial tour guides, can successfully reduce visitor impacts. There seem to be only two relevant studies, by Medio et al. (1997) for divers and Littlefair (2004) for hikers.

Zuckerman (1990): According to Zuckerman, adventure tourists are motivated by risk, as risk forms the basis of their motivation when seeking sensation. Zuckerman defines sensation seeking as the need for a variety of novel and complex sensations and experiences where the tourists are willing to take part in physical and social risks for the sake of the experience. Participants have certain expectations of excitement and these are needs that should be filled by participating in adventure activities.

Fluker & Turner (2000): Alternative tourism offers forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social, and community values and that allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction, with shared experiences. Within alternative tourism, certain sub-categories are listed, such as cultural aspects, events and nature-based tourism. Nature-based tourism can be further classified into nature-based and adventure tourism.

Weber, (2001): Adventure tourism’s origins lie within traditional recreation, and include activities that require specific skills in an outdoor setting. The difference between normal recreation tourism and adventure recreation, however, lies in the sense of deliberately seeking risk, as in the case of adventure recreation, as well as in the uncertainty of the outcome. If risk is absent, the desire to participate will decrease because risk takes on the central role of satisfaction with the experience. Participants in adventure tourism accept a certain element of risk and danger that, while not fully compromising their safety needs, seek to satisfy higher-level needs through adventurous pursuits. Adventurers also seek risks to match their own skills and competence with the situational risk.

OBJECTIVE

Following are the objectives of the study:-

1. To understand the relation between environment and tourism.
2. To highlight the significance of adventure tourism in nature based tourism.
3. To highlight the efforts of government for the development of adventure tourism.
4. To know what products have been developed and offered to thrill enthusiasts and adventure seekers.

METHODOLOGY
The study is based on secondary sources of data and personal observations. I have concerned books on tourism, adventure tourism, planning of tourism and ecotourism, also concerned the research papers regarding adventure tourism and its development. To know the exact level of development of adventure tourism in the state and the facilities provided at host destination I visited the destination time to time in season and off season and observed and analyzed the circumstances. I have referred the basic minimum guidelines for adventure tourism document of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. I have concerned websites of international organizations and government of Himachal too to complete this research paper.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ADVENTURE TOURISM
According to Van der Merwe, the adventure tourism has always been present in the society, even though the participants of that time did not see it as adventure tourism, but rather as discovery of places. For them it was a way of life, instead of a leisure activity (Van der Merwe, 2009). Tourism dates back as far as ancient Greece and ancient Rome as there is evidence of tourism from these eras in terms of travel writing (Swarbrooke, 2003).

For example the fighters who gave their services to far distant land like Gurkhas, who fought under the flag of Britain, Explorers and adventurers like Colombus, Maiglen, Basko Da Gama, who explored different parts of the world, pilgrims travel in search of peace of mind in the monasteries in far east to the Asia, Muslims travel to the Mecca, almost from all over the world, historians travelled to write the accounts, missionaries travelled to spread their religious beliefs etc. all these were the form of adventure tourism because the travelers has to expose themselves to the perceived risk.

With the help of such accounts and documents by historian and travelers, the interest for exploring new destinations raised and it became a status symbol to visit the destinations away from home to far other side of the globe. Earlier tourism was considered only roaming in a destination far away or near the home for overnight or for few days for leisure and it was limited, because of the economic conditions of the lager section of the people in the world. Very few people were in the condition to afford exploring new areas, that’s why in that era tourism was controlled and insignificant for the economy of the nations hosting it. As the economy grew, rolling over the wheels of industrialization, globalization, liberalization and development, economy or income per capita raised and it gave the vital energy and boost to the tourism industry.

As we know tourism industry grew suddenly after World War II, and the pace of this growth increased with the technological advancements in the field of transportations and communication. Eventually, the nature of tourism got changed in as mass tourism. This form of uncontrolled tourism started causing negative impacts on the nature and environment of the host destination and the need of alternative or nature based tourism has been felt, and introduced around 1960s.

Nature Based forms of Tourism in the late 1980s (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000), accounted for only 2% and by the end of first decade of 21st century, according to Buckley (2009a), it represented more than 20%. It is obvious that nature tourism nowadays is of high importance in the tourism industry due to its explosive growth over the last two decades. Nature tourism encompasses the following forms of tourism (Hall & Boyd, 2005):

- Tourism in natural settings (e.g. adventure tourism)
- Tourism about specific elements of the natural environment (e.g. wildlife tourism, agri-tourism)
- Tourism developed to protect or conserve natural areas (e.g. ecotourism).

Although ecotourism was the buzz word in late nineties of previous century and the first decade of this century, now the nature and the demand of the tourism are changing continuously. Travelers plan their holidays keeping thrill, excitement and outdoor activities in their mind. It is understandable that adventure tourism is unique and different from other mass tourism and even other forms of ecotourism that form part of nature-based or wildlife tourism, and therefore will affect the travel motives of participants (Weber, 2001; Fluker & Turner, 2000).

KINDS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM
Adventure tourism is totally different from traditional or typical tourism where roaming and sightseeing is not the main attraction but feeling thrill and gaining something remarkable by participating in such activities is the prime focus. There are many kinds of adventure tourism activities which are closely associated with the natural setup only. Adventure tourism activities can be classified into two broad categories, soft
adventure and hard adventure. Soft adventure is one of the fastest growing segments in tourism travel, and is enjoyed by anyone looking for more than just the typical vacation of sightseeing or wondering in a place away from home. These soft adventures include trips to destinations that offer ecotourism or special interest expeditions or themes. It can be a easy trekking, camping and tenting, nature trail, horseback riding, jungle safaris etc. Such activities do not require any experience or pre training; a tourist can just visit and be part of it. For the alternative traveler, soft adventure offers a wider range of activities and adventure experiences (Swarbrooke, 2003, Van der Merwe, 2009).

On the other hand, hard adventure activities, refers to activities associated with a high level of risk where participants must be physically and mentally fit to participate in these activities and where participants thrive when exposed to activities with high levels of risk. Being the part of hard adventure, an intense level of commitment is necessary, and weather conditions, sleeping accommodations and diet become of secondary importance. These kind of outdoor activities require skills, training, and experience because the risk level remains high and a trained and experienced one can control the risk and handle the situation in case of emergency. These activities include, sky-diving, white-water rafting or kayaking, rock climbing, cave exploration, survival games and mountaineering, skiing at high altitude, paragliding etc.

Participants always keep challenging themselves physically and mentally in the outdoor activities to gain something new and if they were already part of such activities in the past, then to explore their own capabilities to the next level. Participants receive an adrenaline rush from taking risks even though most of the time they can control the risks because of their experience (Swarbrooke, 2003).

**ADVENTURE TOURISM IN INDIA**

The tourism industry in India has emerged as the largest sector in the service industry as it contributes over 6.2% of its GDP. In addition, it provides jobs to more than 8.7% of the employed people in the country. Every year, the number of tourists making to India grows by over 5 million. In addition to the foreign visitors, there are more than $25 million local tourists in the country. The overall size of the Indian tourism industry is around $100 billion and it is expected that it would grow to over $275 billion in the next decade. The Ministry of Tourism can be credited for this huge success rate because it is aggressively engaged in promoting the industry. It was in order to promote tourism in the country that the Incredible India program was started. The main tagline of this program, “Atithi Devo Bhava” compares guests to God.

Most of the adventure tourism favorite areas are in the Himalayan region in India. Tour operators opine that the best places, from their perspective, are hilly states like Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. But as every industry has problems, tourism industry is also having some. One of the major problems related to adventure tourism in India is the discrepancy between the safety standards and the way they are followed and implemented. The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATIOAI), which is the industry body for such tourism, has come up with rules and regulations and is trying to ensure that the various states accept and make them mandatory, because absence of proper norms means only minting the coins by money minded operators and increasing the risk to the life of tourists, which will put the credibility of the industry at stake.

**GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP ADVENTURE TOURISM**

As per the policy for the diversification of tourism product of India, special attention is being given for the development of Adventure Tourism in the country. The Ministry of Tourism has also issued Guidelines for Approval of Adventure Tour Operators, which is a voluntary scheme, open to all bona-fide adventure tour operators. The Ministry of Tourism has also formulated a set of guidelines on Safety and Quality Norms on Adventure Tourism as Basic Minimum Standards for Adventure Tourism Activities. These guidelines cover Land, Air and Water based activities which include mountaineering, trekking hand gliding, paragliding, bungee jumping and river rafting. Central Financial Assistance is being extended to various State Governments/ Union Territory Administration for development of Tourism Infrastructure in destinations including Adventure Tourism destinations these include facilities for trekking, rock climbing, mountaineering, aero-sports, water related sports, trekker huts, wildlife viewing facilities etc. Financial assistance for purchase of water sports equipment consisting of kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, fiber glass boats, hovercrafts, water scooters, etc. are also provided to State Governments.

The National Institute of Water Sports, another organization of Ministry of Tourism based in Goa, is getting a new building and facilities upgraded for training in water sports activities. The Ministry is working with the Indian Mountaineering Federation and Adventure Tour Operators Association of India to explore positioning India as an Adventure Destination. Ministry of Tourism has
been following up with concerned related Central Ministries with regard to facilitation for development of adventure tourism. As an outcome, the Government of India has given security clearance for opening of 104 additional peaks in Jammu and Kashmir (Leh Area) subject to stipulations and clearances form State Government, Home Ministry and other concerned agencies. The opening of the additional peaks will help in positioning the Indian Himalayas as Adventure tourism destination.

GUIDELINES TO MITIGATE RISK AND EMERGENCY

In case of emergency at any stage of the adventure activity, government has issued basic minimum guidelines to the tour operators such as adequate first aid medical equipment which has to be Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate or equivalent and stretcher, complete information of evacuation routes to the participant, means of communication, emergency equipments, drawing indicating paths of emergency routes, must be carried by the party or group, part of the adventure activity. All equipment on which life is dependent must be Union International de Alpine Association (UIAA) or European Union (EU) certified. A basic risk assessment should be conducted time to time on such adventure venues and trails intended for the use adventure tours and activities before participants are permitted to use such a route. In addition, basic medical must be available and the venue or route itself must be easily accessible. A detailed emergency procedure must be written that includes contact numbers of the available emergency services. Evacuation routes and emergency procedures must also be included in the companies risk assessment.

As the adventure tourism is closely related to the risk of physical injuries to even death in some cases. To mitigate such risks during the activities, the concerned authority has issued guidelines. According to the norms, participants must have medically examined, ensure that at least one or two members of the expedition have experience of high altitude climbing, ensure the availability of communication equipments and the signal to send and receive information in case of any emergency. To make an environmental friendly tour it is important to ensure that environment safeguards are implemented in their programme so that the area and peak visited by them suffers no damage, and is left clean for subsequent expeditions.

Risk assessment is also an essential part of the adventure tourism. To run this form of tourism activities smoothly it is required to conduct a basic risk assessment of the venue or trails, at least once per year, according to the format approved by the ATOAI. Documentary evidence of this risk assessment should be kept onsite. The risk assessment will give rise to the Security and Emergency Plan. Such plans consists of name and address of the operator and rescuer, means of communication, emergency equipments, drawings indicating the emergency paths, accesses and exits, procedures for evacuation due to injury or extreme weather, documentation for training in emergencies and reporting accidents and availability of First Aid kit and stretcher.

This is a highly risky form of tourism and to run or operate, operator and guides have to be well trained, qualified and experienced. For that Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has suggested the institution from where the training and certificate regarding adventure tourism can be acquired.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONS

The suggested list of institutions whose certificates would be recognized as guide or Trip leaders qualification for the specified activity are as follows :-

Land based

- Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Jawahar Parbat, Darjeeling.
- Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi.
- Western Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Manali.
- Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering, Gulmarg.
- Armed Forces Training Establishments (In respect of ex-servicemen).
- Any other equivalent institution from abroad recognized nationally or internationally.

Water based

- National Institute of Water Sports, Goa.
- Regional Water Sports Centre, Pong Dam, Himachal Pradesh.
- Armed Forces Training Establishments (In respect of ex-servicemen).
- Any other equivalent institution from abroad recognized nationally or internationally.

Air based

- Armed Forces Training Establishments (In respect of ex-servicemen).
Any other equivalent institution from abroad recognized nationally or internationally.

According to the guidelines there must be an accreditation committee to examine the working style of the tour operators, and if found any irregularity regarding documentation and safety measures, take action against such organization and tour operator. This committee will also be empowered to look into any complaint against any adventure tour operator. This committee may further keep upgrading the guidelines and safety regulations, as and when required on a yearly basis. This committee may also do training programmes/refresher courses and coordinate any relevant issues impacting the smooth running of the adventure activities in India.

CHANGING BEHAVIOR OF TOURISTS

Till the last decade of 20th century, Himachal Pradesh was only known for its natural beauty and people used to come here to take a closer look of the nature and picturesque sceneries of vast expansion of hills, mountains and valleys. Adventure tourism was negligible at that time, and the enthusiast of adventure activities were very few in number and were foreigners only, who used to come for the activities like trekking and mountain biking. Very fewer in number, domestic and international mountaineering enthusiast used to come to the concerned institutions in the state to get the trainings like mountaineering rock climbing, rappelling etc. With the help of growing technology and easy availability of information, tourism started the processes of changing its face and the behavior of tourists also got changed. Different kind of tourism activities have marked their entry in the demand list of visitors and adventure sports and outdoor activities are mostly demanded products. Earlier little number of treks and trail had been identified but with the growing popularity of adventure activities in domestic and international tourists, a large number of such tourist destinations have been identified and developed to meet up the demand of the visitors. In the year 2008, total no of tourists visited Himachal is 97,49,433 which consists 93,72,697 domestic and 3,76,736 foreigners, which has increased to a total of 1,84,50,520 visitor till the end of the year 2016, which is further categorized as 1,79,97,750 domestic and, 4,52,770 Foreigners. The statistics is inclusive of religious tourism, but the religious tourism is less in demand in the state. Above trend of increase shows that the demand of thrill, adventure and outdoor activities is increasing rapidly among domestic tourists and the months of summer breaks in the institutions across the country are providing favorable circumstances to develop this section of the tourism industry.

Summer camps and youth hostels are playing vital role in the increasing demand of the adventure activities in the state. Himachal Pradesh hosts large number of soft and hard adventure sports and outdoor activities which tourists are free to choose according to their strength and will. The districts, attracting the most numbers of tourists both domestic as well as international are Shimla, Kullu and Lahaul & Spiti. In the year 2016, the number of tourists attracted was 34,16,629 domestic, 1,65,476 international, 35,15,169 domestic, 1,22,064 international and 10,00,759 domestic, 15,278 respectively. These three districts are mostly visited by both kinds of tourists. Shimla attracts tourists for its status as Queen of Hills and has large number of historical monuments and outdoor and indoor sports activities are also offered here. But on the other side Kullu district and Lahaul and Spiti district are known for moderate to hard adventure activities. These three districts attract more than 66% of the total international visitors and almost 40% of the domestic visitors of the state.

ADVENTURE SPORTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

The state of Himachal Pradesh is blessed with immense beauty. True to its name, the state lies in the lap of the Himalayas, surrounded by splendid natural beauty. The state has been a popular tourist destination for years now due to its flawless beauty and scenic splendor. However, it is gradually emerging as a popular trekking destination among adventure enthusiasts. The diverse terrain of the state allows for a number of adventure activities, of which trekking is the most popular. Irrespective of experience at trekking, Himachal trekking trails tests capability and limits while offering some of the best panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain range. Adventure tours in Himachal Pradesh are for people of all ages and of varied tastes in terms of activities. Most of such activities make use of hills in some or the other way, as much of the state is mountainous. The altitude in the state ranges from roughly 450 meters to 6500 meters, accounting for a substantial variation in climate. Whenever a traveler comes to any of the places in the state, he will find some or the other activity being organized. With so much to explore and the beautiful landscape to encourage, the sense of adventure inadvertently boosts the travelers. There are so many adventure sports to choose from that keep one on his toes and leave feeling thrilled and filled with elation. So, given here are some of the adventure activities offered as the adventure tourism products by the industry in Himachal Pradesh.

SOFT ADVENTURE
Trekking: It is one of the most exciting and affordable adventure activities in Himachal Pradesh. The numerous paths amidst thick forests, with rivulets and snow clad mountains, make the trekking experience simply amazing. There are about 270 trekking trails in Himachal of which following are the most popular: In district Chamba, near Dalhousie, Dainkund Peak, (2755 m), is the highest mountain peak in Dalhousie. Khajjiar often known as the Switzerland of India, it is situated at an altitude of 1951 meters in the foothills, Kalatop Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary, Manimahesh Lake, are most visited and famous trails. In district Kangra, near Dharamshala, Kareri Lake also known as Kumbarwah Lake, is a high altitude lake south of the Dhauladhar range, Lahesh Cave Trek at an altitude of 3500 meters, Triyund Hill Trek, Bhagsunaag lake trek In district kullu Bijli Mahadev Temple at the hill top just above the kullu town at an altitude of 2460 meters, kasol in manikaran Valley at an altitude of 1640 meters, Sarolsar Lake, Tirthan Valley in Great Himalayan National Park, Beas Kund trek 4000meters. Brigu lake 4500 meters, Rohtang Pass 3978 meters, Solang Valley, Jogni Fall, Jana Full, Malana Trek, Hamta Trek and Hutu peak around 2475 meters in Shimla District are most visited treks and easy to moderate in nature and the part soft adventures in Himachal Pradesh.

Camping: Many beautiful open lands, riversides and forest clearings of the Himalayan landscape render it ideal ground for camping. The magnificent snow laden mountains, thick curtains of greenery and riveting streams and rivers paint a splendid image that attracts the tourists even more to stay close to the nature. Some, of the best camping sites in Himachal Pradesh are Chail in Shimla, Tabo in Spiti and Sangla valley. There are many camping projects organized by the Himachal government and private sector. Himachal Tourism camps are Sarchu in Lahaul, Sangla in Kinnaur, Kalpa in Kinnaur, Kazza in Spiti, Camps run by Youth Association of India are Dalhousie, Kullu, Manali, and Camps run by private sector are Baspa in Sangla valley, Kalpa in Kinnaur, Tabo in Spiti, Al Hilal, Taragarh in Kangra, Dharamshala in Kagra, Shoja near Kullu, Mashobra near Shimla, Baldian near Shimla etc. There can be lot more but the state has not explored its potential to the maximum level.

Mountain Biking: Mountain biking is relatively new to our country. It comprises of cycling on unmetalled tracks of the state or even cross country. The sport infuses excitement and gaining popularity because of the uneven and challenging terrain of the stated fortified with the breath taking scenic beauty it offers. Some of the best trails for cycling in the mountains are Leh-Manali highway, Manali-Dimphug, Tabo-Kaza, Kaza-Losar, Shimla-Rampur and Rampur-Sangla are offered for mountain biking.

Jeep Safari: Jeep safari is yet another enthralling way to experience the Himalayas. Running through up and downs of mettalled and kaccha tracks of Himachal countryside, crossing over bridges and rivulets, trans Himalayan jeep safari should be on every travel enthusiast’s bucket list. The safari track commences from Shimla, passing through Kinnaur, Spiti, up to Lahaul needling through the Kunzum pass.

Ice skating: This is an elegant, safer and comparatively much easier sport. Ice Skating along with figure skating and ice hockey can be enjoyed in Shimla. It is the oldest ice skating rink in the whole of Asia and made up of natural snow. Months from December up till February make the best time for enthusiast to test their talent at it. Shimla also holds annual winter sports festival where participation can also be done to test ice skating enthusiasm.

Angling: Angling or fishing is done both as a means of living an as a sport in Himachal Pradesh owing to its abundance of fresh river water, making it ideal for it. There are many fishing farms constructed over the various rivers around the state that allow angling. Angling enthusiast can enjoy fishing mainly for Trout and Mahaseer fishes here. The important fishing farms where the angling can be enjoyed are following:

For Trout fishing the farms are located at Rohru, Saandhsu, Seema, Dhamwari, Mandil, Saandhsu and Tikri.

For Mahaseer fishing, it can be enjoyed at Dehra and Pong Dam Reservoir, Sari Marog (River Beas), Largi (7 km from Aut), Kuru Village, Chamba Pattan, Stretch between Harsi Pattan and Nadaun.

Zorbing: Zorbing is one of the newer adventure sports of India but quite fun and exciting. Zorbing is typically rolling down a hill slope in a fairly large and light ball called a zorb. It can be enjoyed at Solang valley in Manali.

HARD ADVENTURE

Trekking: Bara to Bhangal trek, Pin Parvati trek (Starting from Manikaran to Parvati river, continued till Pin Parbati pass, spiralling around the river and crossing the Spiti valley), Kheer ganga trek, Deo Tibba Trek, Great Himalayan National Park Trek, Kinnaur to Kailash trek, Spiti to Garhwal trek, Bharour to Padum trek are difficult treks. That’s why I have put these treks in the category of hard adventure.

Mountain Motorcycling: One of the most challenging and yet promising adventure sport that
the state of Himachal Pradesh has on offer, Mountain Motor biking is very popular among the bike enthusiasts and avid travelers. The rugged terrain with most of the route accompanied by the whirling mighty Indus in addition to the diverse landscape that that changes from varied shades of green to those of brown. Most popular routes for mountain motor-biking are Manali-Leh route and Lahaul-Spiti route.

**River Rafting & other water sports:** The presence of several glacial rivers in Himachal makes it ideal for multitude water sports like river rafting, rowing, canoeing, water skiing etc. The thrill of indulging in these fast paced adventure sports in the white water is beyond what words can explain. Here are some places where you can enjoy these sports. Satluj River in Shimla, Chenab in Lahaul valley, River Beas near Kullu valley, Ravi near Chamba, are some famous destinations for river rafting. Rafting requires the skill because in case of emergency initially customer is on its own to mitigate the risk. Having a level high of risk, rafting is a hard adventure.

**Skiing:** This is one sport that draws tourists and adventure seekers to Himachal Pradesh. There is Alpine kind of skiing which is skiing down the steeply inclined slopes and there is Nordic type of skiing that is more challenging and and consists of cross country skiing and jumping. The snow draped slopes of Himalayas like Shivalik, Pir Panjal and Dhauladhar are ideal for the sport. Best time for skiing is winters, especially the months of mid December to February. Skiing enthusiast can satiate himself at Kufri in Shimla (annual winter sports festival held here in February), Solang valley in Manali, Narkanda, 64 km away from Shimla, which is the trickiest slopes for skiing. Lahaul and Spiti district, as called as cold desert, is having nice and longer slopes but the accessibility and the road connectivity is hampering its skiing potential.

**Heli Skiing:** A more exigent form of skiing, heli skiing is done at much higher altitudes on the mountain slopes that are far less explored and far more taxing an difficult to tame with trickier terrain and soft snow as compared to the harder one as seen in case of normal skiing. If an enthusiast wants to take skiing to a higher level and test his skills even more he can explore the places like Deo Tibba, Rohtang pass, Chanderkhani pass, Hanuman Tibba and Chandrakhani pass.

**Para Gliding & Hang Gliding:** Para gliding and hang gliding are two sports that give thrill and a feeling like a carefree wandering bird, soaking in the fresh and mystical air of the mountains. If travelers are interested, Himachal Aero Institute in Bilaspur would prove great to give a head start. Here are some places where visitors can engage in these sports Bir in Kangra valley, Intakali near Shimla, Bundla dhar in Bilaspur, Bijli Mahadeo in Bhunter, Manali, Pabbar valley, Arhual Solang valley in Kullu.

**Mountaineering and Rock Climbing:** The mountainous topography of Himachal Pradesh has blessed the state with ample cliffs, hills and rocks that are ideal for rock climbing and mountaineering, most of which is done in Manali itself. Manali also has an institute named Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute for Mountaineering and Allied Sports where one can get training for the same. It also carries out many mountaineering expeditions from time to time, viz. Shitidhar Expedition, Deo Tibba Expedition and Hanuman Tibba Expedition, Friendship peak expedition etc.

**Rappelling:** It can be seen as the opposite of rock climbing. This is an adventure sport where one has to descend a steep incline or cliff in a controlled manner utilizing the help of a rope. Mostly the places where rock climbing is done also made for rappelling. Some of the places where these two sports are carried out are Manali, Shitidhar peaks, Beas Kund region, Chandrabhaga range, Pir panjal, Dhauladhar range, Foot hills of Hanuman Tibba, Deo Tibba etc.

Since the early adventurers, adventure tourism has grown into a popular niche and has become a rapidly expanding sector of the tourism industry (Swarbrooke, 2003). One reason for this growth can perhaps be closely tied to the fact that modern-day living and work life can lack clear meaning. Thus, people opt to search for meaning and through active participation in leisure activities and tourism. Participants are seeking for that deep embodied experience unavailable in everyday life (Van der Merwe, 2009). They believe that adventure tourism can provide such experiences, as well as assisting to overcome certain fears of life. Through adventure, new skills can be learned and developed, so assisting in maintaining an exciting and creative life with great experiences and challenges.

**CONCLUSION**

The adventure component of such tour products is recognizable by the activity and sometimes also by the location. Whitewater rafting and kayaking, skiing and snowboarding, hiking and biking, climbing and mountaineering, sailing and paragliding all of these form the basis for adventure tours. Here, the term adventure tourism means a guided commercial tour, where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized sporting or similar equipment, and is exciting for the tour clients.
There are tens or hundreds of thousands of individual adventure tourism products worldwide, and many millions of tourists buying them each year. And adventure tours are rarely cheap, not least because they commonly require expensive specialist equipment like hiking boots, backpacks, tents etc. It can’t be affordable to an average tourist that’s why it is important to know how adventure tourists are different from tourists in general. For tourism to be adventure tourism tourists have to take part in activities where risk is involved and a challenge is perceived, in a natural environment. To operate the activities in a successful manner customer has to be satisfied and it depends on guides and service, so people are also critical to the commercial success of adventure tourism.

In my research I have found that the development of adventure tourism in India is comparatively new phenomenon as comparing to the neighboring nation Nepal. In spite of starting and adopting the adventure tourism so late, India has emerged as one of the best adventure destinations in the world. Maximum of the activities are carried out in the Himalayan region because the natural set up for the adventure activities is best in this region. Ministry of Tourism is also greatly concerned to develop adventure tourism in the country. For that the authority issues guidelines and establishes norms time to time. Long stretch of the Himalayan range makes the nation a most favorite destination for the adventure activities and attracts millions of foreign as well as domestic tourists. But here I found problem which is hampering the growth of this form of tourism in the nation. The problem is gap between the demand and service. Demand is higher but the accommodation and the capacity still has to be developed.

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