

Chapter 8

Yoga Tourism as a Quest for Mental and Physical Wellbeing: A Case of Rishikesh, India

Nikhil Singh Charak
Ambedkar University, India

Priyanka Sharma
University of Jammu, India

Rajesh Singh Chib
University of Jammu, India

ABSTRACT

Yoga tourism has become an important part of the ‘travel to feel well’ trend. Yoga tourism can also be seen as a subset of wellness tourism. Yoga means the amalgamation of body, mind, and spirit. Yoga is widely believed as a source to diminish stress, improve breathing, strength, and improvement in flexibility. The data has been collected through primary and secondary sources (journals, articles, and newspapers). The current study is focusing on the linkages between wellness, spirituality, and yoga tourism through an examination of the motivations of tourists visiting Rishikesh, India. Present research is exploratory in nature conducted in 2019 in Rishikesh, India. The current study tried to explore this under-researched segment by interviewing and surveying yoga travellers visiting Rishikesh, India. Current research emphasized the effect of yoga tourism on the physical and mental healing of tourists at Himalayan destinations as well as the motivational characteristics of yoga tourists.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an ever-growing service industry with hidden vast growth potential and has, therefore, become one of the critical concerns of not only the nations but also of the international community as a whole. It has come up like an important link in gearing up the speed of socio-economic development globally. Therefore, tourism is generally inspected and addressed for its prospective to grant changes within the economic, biological, communal and hierarchy of a nation. Tourism is travel for happiness also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of working tours. Tourism may be worldwide or within the traveller's country.

Yoga tourism which is a subset of Wellness tourism is popular all over the world. In 1948 The World Health Organization (WHO) originally suggest that "health is not the mere absence of diseases but a state of wellbeing "(2014). People are inclined towards yoga, spa, meditation, and Ayurveda, etc as it relaxes the mind, soul, and body. Concept of yoga originated in India several years ago. The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word yoga is to yoke, its founders were great saints and sages. People have changed their lifestyle through yoga. Yoga techniques have now been changing to need and lifestyles. Meditation being one of the important subsets of Yoga tourism is a very unique universal phenomenon integrating all religions, traditions, languages, cultures, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, and nation. Every aspect of day to day human living involves one or the other form of meditation. In all religions, namely Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, meditation appears to be an integral part of prayer. Eminent sages have described meditation in different ways, depending evidently on their own experiences. This goes to confirm the Vedic saying "truth is one, but the wise interpret indifferently.

Yoga Tourism and Its Significance

Meditation and yoga can sharpen your mind confirming what yogis have claimed for long, new research has found that meditation and breath-focused practices such as pranayama can work as a fertilizer for the brain focused on the task. Many types of research in the past have shown that breathing- a key element of meditation and mindfulness practices directly affects the levels of a natural chemical messenger in the brain called noradrenaline. The way we breathe, in other words, directly affects the chemistry of our brains in a way that can enhance our attention and improve our brain health.

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