

Dark Tourism: *Impulse of Indian tourists*

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Key words: *Dark Tourism, Motivations, Culture, History, Natural*

ABSTRACT: “Dark tourism” is a relatively new area of tourism which has grown significantly over the period of time and it is pedagogically related to Thanatourism. Tourists are attracted to visit destinations around the world to witness the chronicle death, atrocity or disasters happened in the past. Researcher likes to fill in the gap in literature related to Indian context of dark tourism. The main aim of this paper is to create literature review in relation to Dark tourism in India and to comprehend its tourist motivations. Specifically, its researcher’s objective to present definitions related to Dark tourism. Researcher has used mixed method research approach literature review, interviews and surveys as they have generated great results relating to Indian performing dark tourism.

Aim:

- Understand tourist’s motivations performing dark tourism

Objectives:

- To extract various kinds of dark tourist activities
- Study various forms of Dark tourism
- Identify various dark tourism destinations around India.
- Differences and similarities in Dark tourist behaviors with in the dark sector
- **Purpose of the study:**

- To comprehend tourist's motivations to performing dark tourism.
- To acquire knowledge on different forms of dark tourist activities.

Background of the Research:

According to Tom Bedford, (2018), the term 'dark tourism' was drafted and this type of tourism came into existence in the year 1996, but one can find the traces of dark tourism in various cultures. Friese, W (2010) and Ogden, D. (2001), stated that, according to the great Greek mythology natives used to travel for ceremonial reasons at Tumuli at Marathon¹ and the Nekuomanteion or Necromanteion of Acheron². According to Peter Hohenhaus, (2020), Roman Citizens used to travel to Coliseum in Rome to witness gladiatorial fight, where men and animals fight brutally and kill each other.

"Dark tourism" is a relatively new area of tourism that has grown in interest over the past decade and it is academically related to Thanatourism (Biran & Hyde, 2013; Lennon & Foley, 1999). Tourists are attracted to witness the chronicle of death and disasters that happened in the past all around the world (Yuill, Stephanie Marie, 2003). According to Caroline Bennett, (2018), tourists visit sites associated with death, disaster and atrocity as part of dark tourism. The number of tourists visiting dark tourist sites is increasing every year.

Literature review:

Dark tourism is a unique type of tourism, in which tourists travel to places associated with tragedy caused by nature or human. This is a special

¹ It is a burial mound (Greek tomb)

² It was located on the banks of the Acheron River in Epirus, near the ancient city of Ephyra. This site was believed by devotees to be the door to Hades, the realm of the dead.

tourism category in which, tourists are self motivated to gain information, paying condolence and understanding from ruined past (Jamal and Robinson 2009).

Tourist's motivations can be educational, ethical, philosophical, political, agony, astonishment (Gillian O'Brien, 2017, Robert Reid, 2016). According to Peter Hohenhaus, (2019), Most Tourists find the history or destination fascinating as they learn about the past through the key strategic role played by the destination during the particular event.

Like any other tourism dark tourism is a business comprises of commercial factor in developing any tourist sites and these destinations are commodification of products (destinations or history) through simplification of stories presented by others (Caroline Bennett, 2018). Robert Reid, (2016), Dark tourist destinations main objective needs to be enlightening tourist related to the destination. On the other hand, prime responsibility of the stakeholders to focus on destination's infrastructure, accessibility and interesting facilities (Gillian O'Brien, 2017).

According to John Swarbrooke and Susan Horner, (2007) Tourists prefer to experience a particular type of tourism are based on their typology in terms of destinations, activities and travel type. Dark tourism is very special type of tourism in which tourists are visiting destinations around the world to witness the chronicle death, atrocity or disasters happened in the past and witness the present events.

Tourism activities completely depend on the individual "tourist motivation" and it can be considered to be the most important aspect decision making (Oh et al., 1995). Pearce P. et al., (1998) Travel choices can define by tourist motivation and can be influenced by biological and

cultural factors as well as it provide values and directions to tourists, and influence tourist behavior and their experience”. Swarbrooke and Horner (1999) stated six main aspects that can influence individuals travel decision such as: physical, emotional, personal, personal development; status and cultural.

Methodology:

In order to complete the research on Dark tourism in India both primary and secondary research methods will be use. Researcher feels mixed method research approach is appropriate method of collecting data as it comprises of both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Shorten A, Smith J, 2017). Methods in exploratory research like documentary research, interviews and questionnaire are planning to adopt. However researcher feels that for this study interviews and surveys are suitable. In this research 173 participated out of which 52 (30%) are female and 121 (70%) are male participants. On the other hand researcher hand researcher has conducted one to one interview with 75 people of which 33 (44%) are Female and 42 (56%) are Male. We find that participants between age group 21 to 25 are more in number followed by 31 to 40 years old.

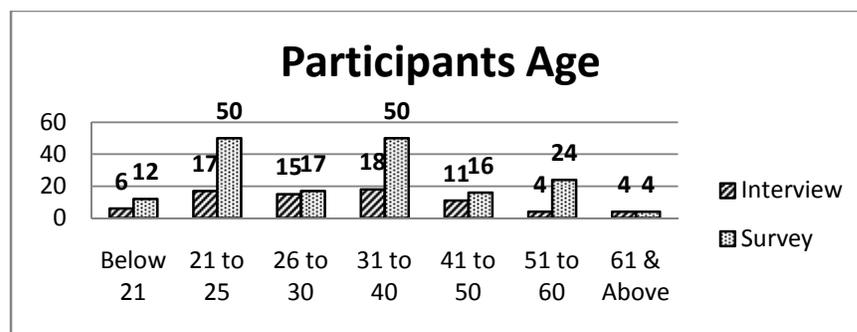


Table 1.1: Age of participants in the research.

Tourist aged between 21 to 25 is willing to take part in tourism to evidence it inlive activities such as taking photographs during cyclone or floods or taking part in Jallikattuis very famous with in this age group. According to this age group it is a very popular as it can create admiration and recreation with in their groups.

From this research researcher has understood that dark tourism is categorized under 3 different categories(refer the following table 1.2) such as:

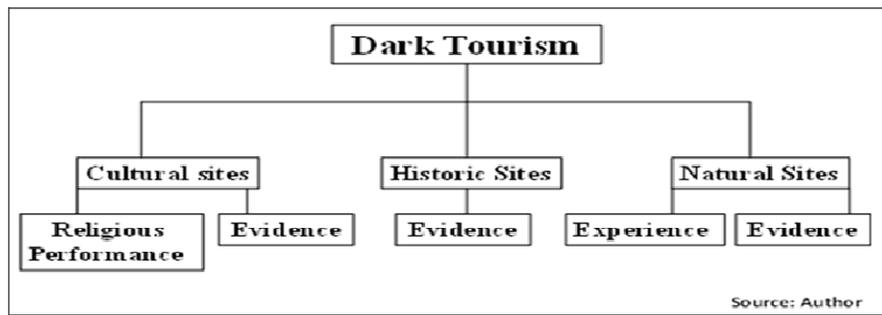


Table 1.2: Types of Dark Tourism in India

1. **Cultural or Religious:** According to the present study it is noticed that this type of tourism is common as (98%) have stated that they have knowledge of this kind of activities but only (76%) present physically either to perform activities or to view the dark activities. These tourists are performing various dangerous activities associated to religion or local culture and traditions.

Example: The most famous India cultural festival in recent times is Jallikattu festival of Tamil Nadu state, India, Agni Keli, Mourning of Muharram and etc. According to the research about 80% tourists are visiting to evidence the festival and around 20% tourists are participating in the traditional festival.

From the research it is clear that 98% those who performed in the dark religious or cultural activities are willing to perform the same activity again in the coming future. They stated that “it is thrilling, becoming brave after performing this activity and being blessed by their deity due to their religious performance”.

2. **Historic Sites:** These sites are most famous as they are most viewed by both local and international tourists. From the research it is understood that 92% of tourists have visited at least one of the dark tourist sites associated with history of India such as Jallianwala Bagh, Kargil War Memorial and many more. These sites are visited as tourists acquired knowledge from history books, movies, news articles and people visited these sites have motivated to visit these historic sites associated with assassination, death or torture during Independence movement or during war.

3. **Natural Sites:** These sites are associated with natural calamities such as earthquake, Tsunami, Cyclone, and other natural disasters. This type of tourism is popular among 32% (19) of the total participants and these tourists are self-motivated to participate in Dark tourism. This type of tourism is performed in two different forms such as: 86% (16) to

evidence the disaster after disaster occur second set of Tourist took part to experience 14% (3) such as standing next to rivers during floods, taking photographs, walking and watching live: cyclone near the sea shores and Snow storm in Himalayas. These 14% are willing to take part in more activities as they feel “that it is more adventurous, thrilling, learning new ways in survival and becoming brave after participating in this activity.

Indian tourists are performing dark tourism for different reasons such as: religion or culture 170 (98%), understand history of the destination or the country or for the educational purpose 159 (92%), amazement caused by the experiencing the tourism activities 38 (22%), for recreation purpose 64 (37%).

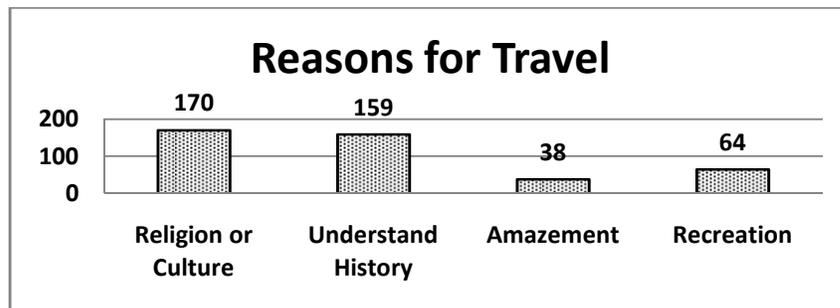


Table 1.3: Reasons for travel

Conclusion:

From this research, researcher understood that the most of the Indian tourists are not aware of the term ‘Dark Tourism’ but they are carrying out this tourism under the roof of different tourism activities such as religious, cultural or adventurous tourism. There is a great demand for dark tourism such as visiting sites, taking part in the dark tourism activities or to witness dark-touristic activities. It is even observed that there are 3 different

categories of Dark Tourists such as Religious or Cultural destinations, Historic destinations and Natural sites.

Researcher has observed that there is a connection between dark tourism and religious customs in India. People are following some of the dark touristic practices since generations. On the other hand, visits are made to various patriotic sites to gain knowledge about the destination or historic event. Dark tourism is generating livelihood and income to locals and government. Tourists are able to gain information and experience a different variety of tourism.

Recommendations:

- Tourism department needs to enlighten tourist about dark tourism.
- Places of dark tourism needs to provide more facilities and infrastructure.
- Local people needs to gain benefit out of dark tourism
- Tourist needs to provide information by local tourism authorities on safety measures while performing dark tourist activities as these activities may harm.
- Most of the destinations are lacking the basic infrastructure in and around the Dark tourist destinations
- Government needs to provide basic facilities for all tourists as well as needs to maintain standards to improve sustainable quality life balance of local people.
- Researcher recommends that further more research and literature review needs to be developed on the topic “Dark Tourism.”

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