

Vol 4 Issue 5 June 2014

ISSN No : 2230-7850

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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FAIR FESTIVAL AND THERE RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN HIMACHAL HIMALAYA - A STUDY OF BUDI DIWALI OF NIRMAND

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Abstract:-Himachal Pradesh is also known as the land of god and goddess. It is situated in lap of western Himalaya and full of natural and cultural beauty. Budi Diwali fair is held on Maghar Amawasya for three days in Village Nirmand of Kullu district. It is associated with the battle of Mahabharata which is said to have started on that day. It is also associated to commemorate the killing of two demons Dano and Asur, who resided at Nirmand in the form of snake. It starts with a brief recital of Mahabharata and story of Raja Bali through folk songs. Present study is based on that how this Budi Diwali fair is celebrated, what are the religious beliefs behind it and why this is important to celebrate in Nirmand area.

Keywords:Budi Diwali, Nirmand, Mahabharata, Himachal Pradesh.

1.INTRODUCTION

India's thousands of years of history, its length, diversity and the variety of geographic features make its tourism basket large and varied. It presents heritage and cultural tourism along with medical, business and sports tourism. Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion and other elements that helped shape their way of life like cuisine, tradition, dances, folk songs, rituals etc. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world. Cultural tourism has been defined as 'the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. Tourism can also be a tool for the safety and loge time sustainability of these different resources of culture. The valleys of Himachal Pradesh occupy a special place in the India's history and geography. Dwarfed by sparking snow capped peaks, cut through by sparking rivers, and dense forest, the valleys have nurtured goldsmiths and architects, through the rise fall of Empire, religions and aesthetics across the Indian plains. Nature was more than generous when she gave the North Indian state of Himachal Pradesh her gift of natural beauty. The presence of Himalayan Mountain has had much to do with this rich and varied bounty- and the snow clad heights run diagonally across the state and divide it into two approximately parts. The monsoon rains, which water most of the India, are forced to remain south of this high barrier and the trance Himalayan tracts get practically all their water from the snow and glacier. The highest mountain range in the world is much more than the physical mass that most of the world recognizes. Stretching in an immense arc of 2500 kms in length, along the boundaries and covering parts of 5 Asian countries. The Himalaya is thus inhabited by a sizeable population of 75.57 million belonging to different indigenous tribes. Of this, 36.32 million reside in India (25% in Western Himalaya, 54% in central Himalaya and 21% in eastern Himalaya), 27.07 million in Nepal and 2.18 million in Bhutan. Himachal is situated in the western Himalayas. Covering an area of 55,673 kilometres (34,594 mi), Himachal Pradesh is a mountainous state with elevation ranging from about 350 metres (1,148 ft) to 7,000 metres (22,966 ft) above the sea level. Himachal is one of the few states that had remained largely untouched by external customs, largely due to its difficult terrain. With the technological advancements the state has changed very rapidly.

Himachal Pradesh is a multicultural as well as multilingual state like other Indian states. Some of the commonly spoken languages includes in Himachal are Hindi, Pahari, Kangri, Kulluvi, Kinnoure, Lahuali, Mandiyali, Chambyali, Pangayali, Sirmori, etc. Himachal in fact can be termed as a "mini India". Here people of different racial stocks have come

together and mingled in main stream of national life to make this land composite culture. Fair and festivals enliven social life and unite the people by bringing them together in joyful celebration of significant event and in shared remembrances of a common past. All the fairs and festivals celebrated in Himachal are the result of cultural values, economic needs of time, which have been realised by the inhabitants from time to time and later given the shape of tradition. The bulk population of Himachal is Hindu and thus why festivals and fairs have direct origin in religion and in the myths and legend of popular faiths.

BUDI DIWALI OF NIRMAND

Nirmand is one of the biggest village in Himachal Pradesh. It lies in outer Siranj of Kullu District of Himachal. It lies at an altitude of 1800 meters on the left bank of river Sutlej. This is the land of Rishi Parshuram. Parshuram was the son of Rishi Jamdanagni. There is a huge temple in Nirmand dedicated to Parshuram. Budi Diwali is held on Maghar Amawas just after one month of Diwali. There are two stories behind this long procession. One is related with Mahabharata war and another one with the commemoration of killing of two demons Dano and Asur, who resided at Nirmand in the form of snakes. It is a religious procession remains for three days. Day one of this festival starts with the traditional songs dedicated to the local deity, people from whole region gathers at Parshuram Temple and people starts to prepare the dummy of Nag and Nagin with dry grass in an open field near to temple. In local language these snakes are pronounced as Bhand. (? ??). On first day the dummy of Nag destroyed by then people by cutting it from many places, and singing of traditional songs to fulfil that precession. In night all village people gather and sing the tradition songs. On next day people again gather in the compound of Parshuram temple and make the dummy of Nagin with dry grass. They destroy the dummy on Nagin in same manner as like Nag in open field. On the third day of this festival all people gathered at Parshuram temple and sings the traditional songs dedicated to Raja Bali. According to folklore about this Budi Diwali, it is said that it depicts the story of Mahabharata war which took place between Pandav and Kauravs variously from 6000 BC to 500 BC fought for 18 days. Is is said that earlier people perform the same ritual of war by dividing themselves into two groups and fought within, but today it is not performed.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Culture and its associates buildings, rituals and ways of life have long been used at both local and national level to diversify economies. According to WTO, 46% of international tourists are culturally motivated. Culture tourism reflects the difficulties involve in defining the concept of culture which as has pointed out in one of the most complicated word of English language (William 1983). In addition problem of definition actually increasing as our notions of culture expand through the process of identifies as the culturisation of the society and the culturisation of tourists practices (Urry 1990). Through such culturisation process of everyday life, there is a growing convergence of things and popular culture and widening of the concept of culture itself. The word culture is usually used to refer to a way of life or to the products of a popular culture or individual (Richards 1996). Culture tourism is thus considered to cover all form of culturally motivated tourism. Richards proposed the following conceptual definition (1996). According to this definition culture tourism covers visiting to all the type of cultural attractions, including discrete attractions such as museum and monuments, cultural performances and cultural manifestation, including the consumption of the way of life of other cultures. Cultural tourism has in recent years seen a shift away from hard culture resources such as built attraction towards soft resource such as performance. Culture and tourism constitute vita resource for tourism development and tourism in turn makes an important contribution to cultural development and to common development. Culture tourism in modern metropolis has a different way of development from that in small native society or communities while culture is only one of the overall attractions of a tourism region. Years after years many tourist choose to experience other culture by approaching some unique cultural landscape and cultural events and in so doing they learn about hoe those people live, work and play. This kind of tourism is known as cultural tourism. Both become the cultural inheritance and culture nostalgia, cultural motivation has been a primary factor in travel and tourism since it came into being. Some traveller take tours to destinations which similar to their culture here from a recall to the past (Yunjun Xi and Jufens Xu 2004). Some travellers travel to a place of heterogeneous culture with the purpose of gaining some new experience and broadening their mental horizon. In modern times when material wealth has become abundant and the education of the public has advance, leisure activities with cultural element are certain to be a consumption item of great potential. Tourism is doubtlessly a key form of cultural consumption. Cultural tourism as a topic of research has been discussed in depth for a fairly long time in the western world. In the prospective of Mac Cannel's (1976) paradigm tourism is essential a ritual and a myth, through which one purposefully searches for the authentic. Some authors more or less following Mac Cannel's footsteps, have postulated cultural tourism as the transient consumption of aesthetic' different' often of the exotic, other (Urry 1990 and 1995); (Graburn 1989). In their views, cultural tourists are usually person in the theories of nostalgia or curious about the exotic other. I this sense, cultural tourists are very different from those involved in the mass tourism. In a broader sense, cultural tourists also include live entertainment (Hunger 1996), including variety of music, hall shows, pantomime, pop, concerts, rock, rigger, jazz, folk music, dancing, circus, comedy and magic. (Cohen 2001), stats that tourists experience can be viewed as something having the spectrum tourist decided their choice of destination from nature relate tourism to cultural tourism, both being the opposite and of the colourful continuum of tourism category with many other possible choices in between. Culture is a concept that is constructed and represented symbolically (Linnekin, 1997). Representations not only reflect reality but help to constitute reality (Duncan, 2001). Cultural representation has received increased attention in tourism studies in recent years (Cornelissen,

2005, Hoffstaedter, 2008, Pritchard and Morgan, 2001, Santos and Yan, 2008, [Smith and Robinson, 2006](#) and [Tang, 2005](#)). Tourism exerts a powerful influence shaping cultural images of ethnic groups in many countries ([van den Berghe & Keyes, 1984](#)). Today, cultural tourism generally refers to tourism motivated by a tourist's search for exotic cultural experiences, including visiting ethnic villages, minority homes and ethnic theme parks, being involved in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for ethnic handicrafts and souvenirs (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008). It has been promoted and widely adopted as a strategy for regional socioeconomic development (McIntosh & Johnson, 2005). As modern tourists become more interested in close contact with locals and experiencing authentic culture, images of ethnic peoples are increasingly used to attract tourists to cultural attraction settings such as heritage sites, museums, galleries, folk villages, cultural theme parks, performing arts venues, and festivals. These attractions stage "otherness" and organize diverse cultural elements into complex collections and representations ([MacCannell, 1976](#) and [MacCannell, 1984](#)). Traditional life-styles and tourists are brought face-to-face by ethnological exhibits; however, when culture and traditions are transformed into tourism products by using labels, guides, mannequins, and living re-enactments of traditional activities, a composite representation of minority people is formed ([Ryan & Aicken, 2005](#)). Rural communities and peripheral areas such as islands face the challenge of continuous economic development. Where primary traditional industries such as fishing and farming are in decline, tourism often becomes another tool to help create jobs and to raise the standards of living ([Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000](#), [Hill, 1993](#) and [Sharpley et al., 1997](#)). These areas realize this potential through development of local resources, culture, and heritage ([Kochel, 1994](#) and [Lewis, 1998](#)). The integration of such alternative sources may help to sustain local economies and to encourage local development ([Prohaska 1995](#)). Actually many tourists seek rural destinations which offer pleasant experiences related to the natural environment, historic heritage, and cultural patterns Butler and Hall, 1998. It is this culture and heritage that are often well preserved between generations in rural areas and it is in periods of economic decline that their residents seem to cling more to a distinct heritage. Culture and tourism then become resources for socioeconomic development in rural and peripheral communities. This has been observed in studying cultural tourism in many of the small islands of the North Atlantic ([Jolliffe and Baum 1999](#)). The concepts of culture, rural, and tourism are multidimensional and interrelated. [Fredericks \(1993\)](#) discusses tourism as building on perceived and existing local amenities like historical sites, natural beauty, and clean air, all similar to those in rural areas. [Millar \(1989\)](#) refer to heritage tourism as cultural traditions, places, and values that groups conserve. Similarly, [McNulty \(1991\)](#) and [Weiler and Hall \(1992\)](#) consider culture to include family patterns, folklore, social customs, museums, monuments, historical structures, and landmarks. Others include wilderness areas, valued landscapes, natural history, buildings, and artefacts as part of cultural tourism ([Prentice, 1993](#) and [Tassell and Tassell, 1990](#)). Cultural tourism can be regarded as a subset of ecotourism in that defined it as concerning small groups of tourists seeking to know about and sustain natural environments, and also wishing to learn about the cultures associated with such places and the need to sustain local communities. Given the relationship between land and indigenous peoples, the two components of environmental conservation and cultural development are closely entwined. Cultural tourism has been perceived as both a growth market and an alternative form. Ruiz-Baudrihay (1997) argued that it could be considered as "an intellectual, quality form of activity which inspires respect for local cultures and regions"

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

This research and findings are based on the personal visit to the Nirmand during this Budi Diwali festival. This Budi Diwali is recognized as one of the most important and impactful in Nirmand region. People of whole village are mandatory to take part in this festival. People of all casts are socially bound with this three day long procession as they take part in making of Dummies of Nag and Nagin and singing the traditional songs. One of the important finding is that, which people are take fasts for three days and they eat only once in a day, but with the passage of time it is changing as only those people who are directly related with this procession takes fasts and rest eat as according to their needs. Another one important finding is that, the traditional songs they sung in the night these are not in written form. People who sings these, they learnt those from their elders and now they are teaching these to the younger's for the future. Specially old people gather at a place and sings these traditional songs and younger share rhythm with them with dancing.

CONCLUSION

Fair and festivals are an integral part of the Indian way of life and land locked hill state of Himachal Pradesh is no exception to this. Himachal is known as the land of god and goddess. It is also called Dev Bhoomi, where all valleys, mountains, rivers are associated with and god and goddess. Year around many fair and festival celebrated here like Kullu Dussehra, Shivratri of Mandi, Navaratra Festivals etc. It is clear from the study that Budi Diwali is the most important festival in the Nirmand Region where people from whole village gathers and take part in whole procession.

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