

A STUDY OF PROSPECTS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM IN KULLU-MANALI DISTRICT, HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, the adventure tourism is growing more and more in India and options are made available for tourists to get top quality adventure gears. District Kullu-Manali of Himachal Pradesh offers a good variety and options for the adventure tourism activities. New vendors and shopping centers are opening up to assist tourists and to help adventure tourism grow even more. For tourists, there are short adventure courses also available at different places across the country. Many of these 'Centers' are administered and maintained by the state governments of India. The destination offers various prominent sports activities related to adventure tourism namely river rafting, camping, trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, motor cycling, skiing and Heli-skiing. The present paper focuses on the various facilities related to Adventure Tourism activities in Kullu-Manali district and their current operational status. For the purpose of the study a sample size of 50 respondents has been taken through random sampling technique. From the analysis, it has been observed that it is not easy or convenient to operate, conduct and deliver services in the Adventure tourism/sports activities. A lot of logistics along with various materials/tools/equipment is required as an essential and important parts of the activity. Moreover, the availability of professional instructors and trainers is the one of the most important requirements for commencing adventure sports activities.

Keywords: Adventure, tourism, state government, activities, sports, professional, instructors and trainers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Hospitality and Tourism Industry encompass various tourism activities in different categories. The growth of tourism as a social phenomenon and the tourist industry as an economic enterprise has been dramatic during the last half of the twentieth century. Tourism is a major economic force in many countries throughout the world that has altered work patterns, living standards, consumption patterns and eventual earnings. The expansion of tourist activities has also coincided with the significant cultural, political, and environmental changes identified with post-industrial technology of the recent past. The effects of tourism development have been particularly conspicuous in regions and countries from which large numbers of tourists emanate, where tour operators, governments, and other economic interests compete through mode of advertising and image creation to attract tourism customers.

Today, India invites adventure lovers from all across the world. The varied topography and the climate in India give rise to a number of exciting adventure sports. Over the years, the scope of adventure tourism in India has increased, as well as the popularity of these sports amongst tourists. Whether you are looking for soft adventure sports or want to go for some extreme sports options, Indian tourism offers opportunities for all abilities. Adventure sports like river rafting, rock climbing, mountaineering, trekking, skiing, snow climbing, scuba diving and angling have now become an essential part of tourism in India. The best part about these high-adrenaline activities is that you have a good variety of locations to enjoy them. Wildlife tourism in India also gives you many options of enjoying adventure in the form of wildlife safaris.

As adventure tourism grows more and more in India, options are made available for tourists to get top quality adventure gear. New vendors and shopping centers are opening up each day to assist tourists and to help adventure tourism grow even more. For tourists, there are short adventure courses also available at different places across the country. Many of these Centre are run and maintained by the state governments of India.

Himachal Pradesh is bestowed with natural jewels that only compliment adventure tourism. With geographic features including low rolling hills, just few hundred meters above sea level to snow-clad peaks that are thousand meters high; visually stunning cold deserts of the Trans Himalaya; rivers in deep gorges and thick forests and acres of alpine meadows. Himachal Pradesh is India's outdoor adventure playground. From rock climbing on the deadly terrains of Kinnaur to rappelling on the mountains of Spiti valley to enjoying the treacherous Heli-skiing in Manali, if there is any adventurous activity, it can be done in Himachal Pradesh.

Coming to adventurers, fascinating experiences and thrilling activities in Himachal Pradesh, hills of Himachal Pradesh hold the feeling of a fairytale wonderland. The captivating hills can thrill and enthrall the groovy backpackers, making Himachal Pradesh a must visit destination for every mountaineer and trekker. River rafting, camping, trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, campaigning, motor cycling, motor biking, skiing and Heli-skiing are some of the prominent sports which can be enjoyed here.

Himachal Pradesh has several landscapes which offer excellent adventure options.

Some of them are as follows-

- **Mountain biking/cycling:** The best location for this activity is in the areas of Kangra valley, Kullu valley, Spiti valley and other regions of higher Himachal Pradesh.
- **River Rafting:** The prominent location for this type of adventure activity is in the areas of “Beas river, Manali; Spiti river in Spiti valley; Sutlej river near Shimla; Ravi river in Chamba and Chandra in Lahaul.
- **Para Gliding:** Himachal Pradesh is known as the 'Paragliding capital of India, The prominent sites are in Bir Billing, Kangra: Solang valley in Manali: BundlaDhar in Bilaspur.
- **Trekking:** Himachal Pradesh offers numerous treks for the tourists. Some of the famous treks are in Dhauladhar and PirPanjal ranges, various treks between Shimla, Kullu-Manali, Lahaul&Spiti Valley.
- **Skiing:** The skiing sites of Himachal Pradesh are situated in Solang Valley in Manali, Kufri and Narkanda in Shimla. Recently Kufri, has also been designated as a year round skiing destination which will only help in reaffirming the local offering.
- **Mountaineering and Rock-climbing:** The famous mountains for the technical climbs are Reo Purgyl, Jorkanden, Rangrik Rang, Shilla which are revered by the enthusiast’s world over.
- **Still Water Sports:** This is a new activity/sport in Himachal Pradesh, compared to the other activities. The prominent locations for this are in Gobind Sagar Lake-Near Bilaspur, Chamera Lake-Near Dalhousie and Pandoh Lake on the Mandi-Manali highway.
- **Ice Skating:** The only Ice skating rink of Himachal Pradesh is located in the Lakkar bazaar, Shimla. This is also the only ‘Natural’ Ice skating rink in the entire Asia.
- **Angling:** The angling/fishing can be done in the various parts of Himachal Pradesh. We can have a variety of fishes here like Trout, Mahseer, Nemacheilus, Barilus sp, etc. Some of the famous locations are Tirthan Valley (Great Himalayan National Park), Rohru in the Pabbar valley-Shimla, Gobind Sagar

Lake near Bilaspur.

- **Heli-Skiing:** The Heli-skiing is an expensive and thrilling sport. The prominent sites for the sports are Hanuman Tibba, Rohtang Pass, Deo Tibba and Chandrakhani Pass near Manali.
- **Vehicle Safari:** In Himachal Pradesh, the vehicle safaris can be enjoyed in the areas and places of Kullu-Manali, Shimla and Lahaul & Spiti.
- **Nature Camping:** Himachal Pradesh offers countless natural camping sites as this state is blessed with numerous natural resources and sites.

Kullu is the capital town of the Kullu District, in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. It is located on the banks of the Beas River in the Kullu Valley about ten kilometers north of the airport at Bhuntar. Kullu is a famous adventure tourism destination. Kullu has a huge potential for all of the above-mentioned adventure tourist's activities.

Kullu –Manali has many adventures tourism sites which offers various adventure sports activities. The famous adventure tourism/sports site of the Kullu-manali are Solang Valley, Rohtang pass, Marhi and Pirdi. Solang valley is the biggest site which offers a number of adventure sports activities like, gondola ride, para-gliding, zorbing, skiing and snow scooters (in winters), zip lines, horse riding rock climbing, various treks etc.

Kullu has some of the best treks not just in Himachal, but in the country, ranging from easy to difficult; from short treks to long expeditions whatever may be the preferences are, Kullu has the right offering for tourists that take them to landscapes with indescribable beauty. Among the most exciting treks, one can take here are Hampta Pass Trek, Chanderkhani Trek, Bhregu Lake Trek, and Deo-Tibba Base Camp Trek.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ashutosh Sharma & Dr. Praveen Chauhan (2020). In the present research paper, *Role of Hospitality Sector in Promoting Adventure Tourism – Study of Himachal Pradesh*, the authors had provided the information's related to the present scenarios of the Tourism industry. They have mentioned how adventure tourism is becoming popular day by day and how it has become an important aspect for the hospitality and tourism

industry. A growing thirst for adventure and a rapidly growing interest in clean nature are generally considered to be the factors that support regions. As India is strategically located and has a tremendous natural and cultural wealth of tourism resources. Over time, adventure tourism is becoming a diverse tourism product. With the source of getting adventure tourists, this study focuses on the support and role of hospitality sector in promoting adventure tourism.

Dr. Subhash Chandra (2018). In his article, *Potential of Tourism in Himachal Pradesh*, the author has explained the various potentials of the adventure tourism and the other forms of tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Tourism industry in Himachal Pradesh has wide scope to flourish and provide a new direction to the economy of the state. Tourism potential is only next to hydro-electric power potential in the state. There are sufficient opportunities for wildlife lovers and sportsmen. It is a paradise for trekkers, climbers and other ardent devotees of the spirit of adventure on account of its topography and terrain. The adventure sports like trekking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, and heli-skiing, hang gliding, skiing, water sports including water skiing, river-rafting, fishing etc. can be perused here. These sports remained largely undiscovered by adventurers till fairly recently. Even, presently, it has been attracting some enthusiastic sportsmen from all over the world.

Ravi Kumar (2018). In his research paper, *Promotion of Adventure Tourism in Himachal Pradesh*, author has described the various aspects and tools related with the promotional activities of adventure tourism. The author has also mentioned various facts and announcements related to promote the adventure tourism and how it may contribute towards the socio-economic welfare and GDP of the state. Himachal Pradesh is a boon and bless of nature with its natural beauty, peaceful natural environment, thick forests and wildlife, sacred shrines and historical monuments. The state government has also passed Registration Tourist Trade Act, 2002 and Tourism Policy, 2015 to provide clear direction for the development of tourism infrastructure in the state. The government has also initiated new marketing strategy for the development of adventure tourism under the guidance and regulation of tourism department. The present research paper highlights some key aspects of adventure tourism in Himachal Pradesh.

Jeena Gupta (2015). The author has focused on a number of important factors related to Kullu-Manali, in the Article titled “Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: A Study on Kullu-Manali.” The factors discussed are socio economic and political development in the state due to tourism activities, the development of various public utility services like roads, transport services, airports, communication networks and civil amenities etc. The

main objective is to know about the facility provided to the tourist and to conduct a SWOT analysis to know about the tourism potential in Himachal Pradesh. The author has also discussed the various problems which occur during tourist's peak season.

Suddhendu Narayan Mishra & Sapan Kumar Sadual (2008). In their book titled “Basics of Tourism Management”, the authors have given the introduction of tourism, its types and their managements. This book +will provide an essential reading for anyone interested in tourism. The book examines all the key elements of tourism like why it is important? Global business and how it affects our everyday lives. This book provides a clear and frank assessment that easy to follow and above all generates clear idea on the basics of tourism.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study attempts to attain the following objectives

1. To understand the prospects of adventure tourism in the areas of Kullu-Manali in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To identify preferred adventure tourism activities in Kullu and Manali.
3. To suggest and recommend various ways to promote the adventure tourism in Kullu valley.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 SAMPLING DESIGN

4.1.1 SAMPLING AREA: Kullu & Manali

4.1.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: Random Sampling Technique is used to choose sample from the population.

4.1.3 SAMPLE SIZE: 50 respondents engaged in the profession of hotels, tourist guides, cab drivers, local vendors and tourist information centers was chosen for the purpose of study.

4.2 SOURCES OF DATA

The study is based on both primary as well as secondary data.

a. Primary Data: The primary data will be collected from the various stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality industry of Manali area. This data was collected through personal interview and questionnaire method.

b. Secondary Data: The Secondary data will be collected from the various Books on History, Culture, Ecology, Adventure sports and Tourism at Himachal Pradesh. Different websites, and Government Journals on tourism along with different Magazines are referred.

4.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Collected data was analyzed using MS Excel, Pie chart, Percentage method and Bar graph. Keeping in view of the study, the data collected was analyzed and interpreted with the help of the

1. Statistical Methods.

2. Graphical Methods.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

Table No 1: Description of Respondents

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sr.No	TYPE OF RESPONDENT	Number
1	Hotel Employees	17
2	Booking/Information Counters	3
3	Tourist Guides	10
4	Cab Operators	12
5	Local Vendors	8

Source: Primary Data

For the purpose of the study, respondents those who are involved in the operations of delivering services related to the Adventure tourism activities in Kullu-Manali are considered. Total sample size of 50 respondents was taken into consideration, out of which 17 respondents are from hotel industry, 03 respondents are from government booking/Information Counters, 10 respondents are tourist guides, 12 respondents are cab operators and 8 respondents are local vendors.

5.2 Analysis and interpretations of questionnaire related to Adventure Tourism

Question1. In your opinion, which adventure sports activity is most famous among the tourists?

Table 2: Famous Adventure Sport Activities

FAMOUS ADVENTURE SPORT ACTIVITIES

Sr.No	ACTIVITY	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Paragliding	10	20
2	River Rafting	15	30
3	Heli- Skiing	5	10
4	Skiing	8	16
5	River Crossing	12	24

Source: Primary Data

Figure 1: Famous Adventure Sport Activities



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (2) and figure (1), it was found out that most preferred activity is river rafting with 30% weightage that is $n=15$, followed by the river crossing (24%) that is $n=12$ and least preferred activity is Heli-skiing with 10 % weightage that is $n=5$.

Question 2. In your opinion, which adventure tourism site/spot is most famous in Kullu-Manali?

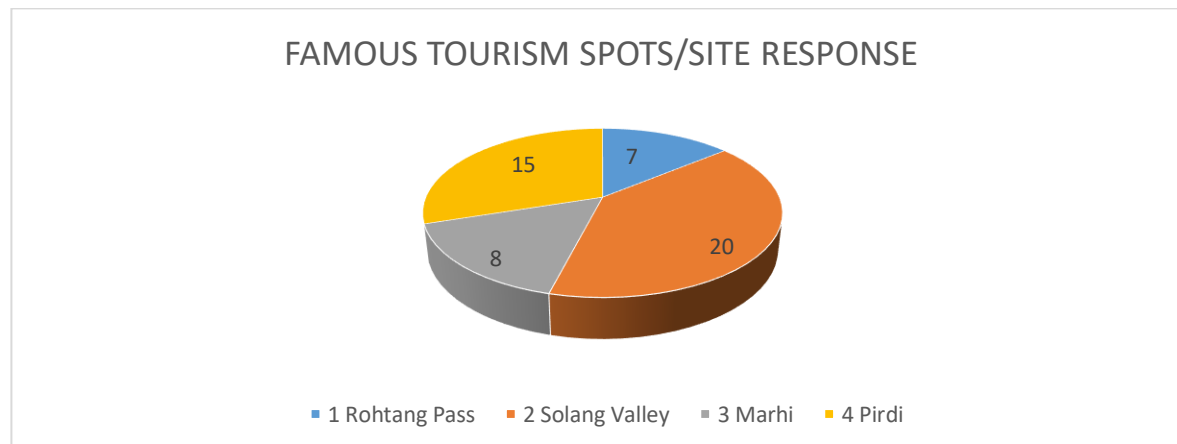
Table 3: Famous Tourism Spots/Sites

FAMOUS TOURISM SPOTS/SITES

Sr.No	ACTIVITY	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Rohtang Pass	7	14
2	Solang Valley	20	40
3	Marhi	8	16
4	Pirdi	15	30

Source: Primary Data

Figure 2: Famous Tourism Spots/Sites



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (3) and figure (2), it was found out that most preferred Adventure sports activity spot is Solang Valley (which is having multi adventure sports activities available at one site) with 40% weightage that is $n=20$, followed by Pirdi (famous for River rafting) with 30% weightage that is $n=15$, and least preferred adventure sport site is Rohtang Pass with 14 % weightage that is $n=7$.

Question 3. Tourists visiting Kullu-Manali are satisfied with the adventure tourism facilities provided by the service providers?

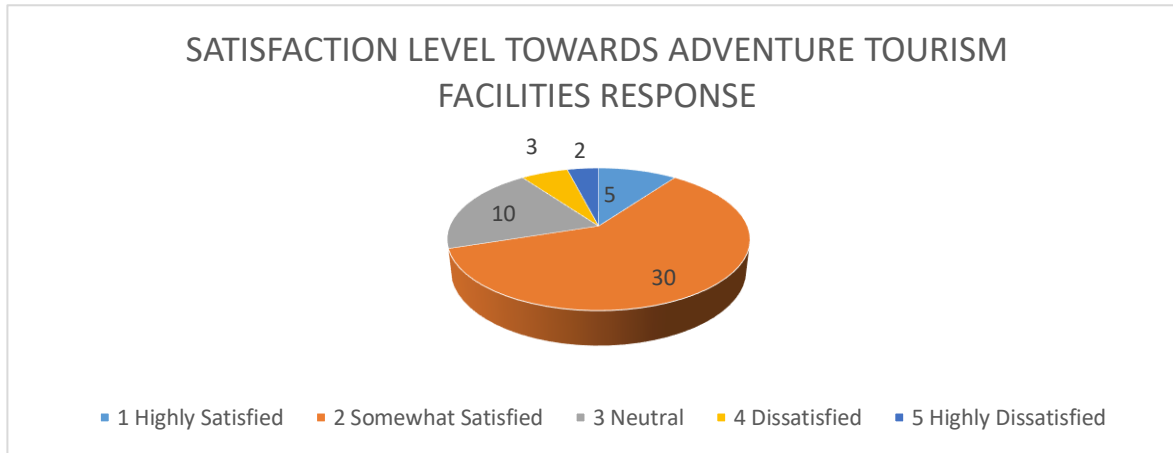
Table No 4: Satisfaction level towards adventure tourism facilities.

SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS ADVENTURE TOURISM FACILITIES

Sr.No	SATISFACTION LEVEL	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Highly Satisfied	5	10
2	Somewhat Satisfied	30	60
3	Neutral	10	20
4	Dissatisfied	3	6
5	Highly Dissatisfied	2	4

Source: Primary Data

Figure3: Satisfaction Level Towards Adventure Tourism Facilities



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (4) and figure (3), it was found out that satisfaction level related to the facilities available/provided, falls with somewhat satisfied with 60% weightage that is n=30, followed by neutral with 20% weightage that is n=10, and least preferred option in this case is highly dissatisfied with 4 % weightage that is n=2

Question 4. . In your opinion, how safe are the adventure sports activities in the region of Kullu-Manali?

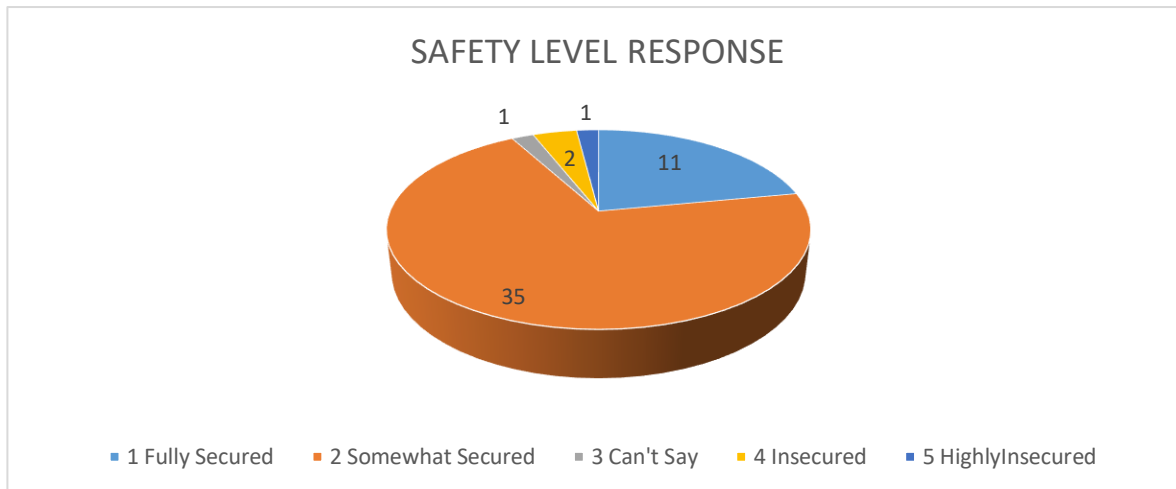
Table No 5: Safety Level

SAFETY LEVEL

Sr.No	SAFETY LEVEL	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Fully Secured	11	22
2	Somewhat Secured	35	70
3	Can't Say	1	2
4	In-secured	2	4
5	Highly In-secured	1	2

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4: Safety Level



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (5) and figure (4), it was found out that 70% respondents that is n=35 says that they feel somewhat secured while practicing tourism activities, whereas 22% that is n=11 says they feel fully secured and only 2% that is n=1 says that activities are not secured.

Question 5. In case of medical emergency, how frequently the medical helps was made available to the tourists.

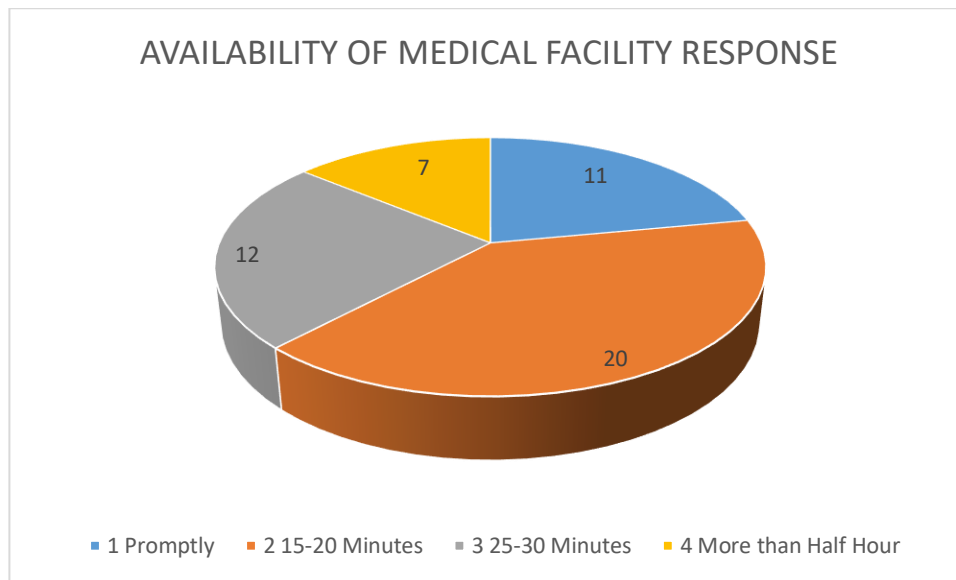
Table No 6: Availability of Medical facilities

AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL FACILITY

Sr.No	TIME TAKEN	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Promptly	11	22
2	15-20 Minutes	20	40
3	25-30 Minutes	12	24
4	More than Half Hour	7	14

Source: Primary Data

Figure 5: Availability of Medical facilities



INTERPRETATION: Table (6) and figure (5) indicates that, 40% that n=20 respondents says that it took at least 15-20 minutes for medical professional to reach the spot, whereas 22% that is n=11, says that medical professionals reach the spot in quick succession and 14 % respondents that is n=7 says that medical facilities reach the spot after half hour.

Question 6. How do you rate the quality of material/ sporting equipment/tools used for the activities?

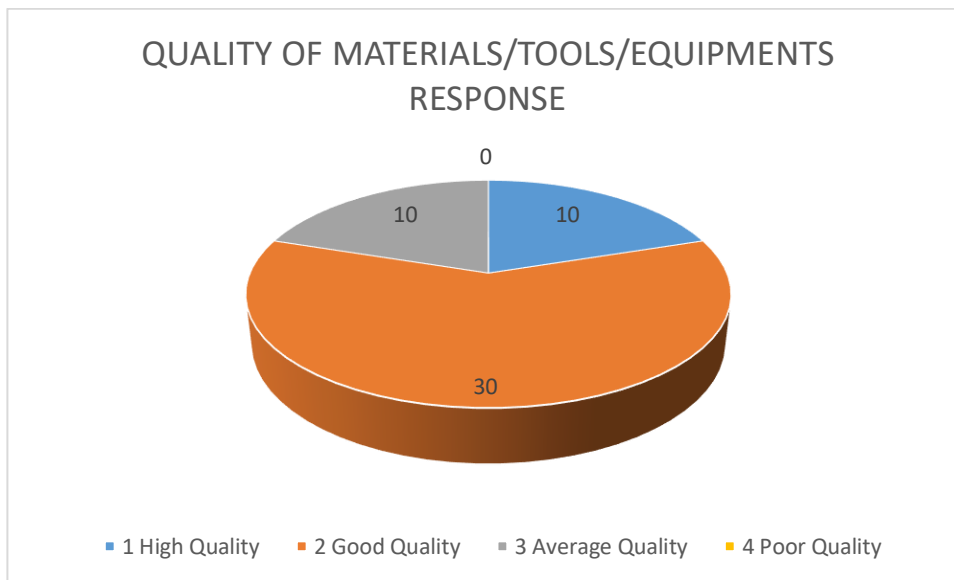
Table No 7: Quality of Material/tools/equipment

QUALITY OF MATERIALS/TOOLS/EQUIPMENTS

Sr.No	QUALITY LEVEL	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	High Quality	10	20
2	Good Quality	30	60
3	Average Quality	10	20
4	Poor Quality	0	0

Source: Primary Data

Figure 6: Quality of material/tool/equipment



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (6) and figure (5), it was found out that the quality of the tools and equipment can be considered of Good quality with the 60% weightage that is $n=30$, followed by the options of High quality and Average quality with 20% weightage each, that is $n=10$.

Question 7. How helpful and supportive is the Government body in organizing adventure sport activities in Kullu- Manali?

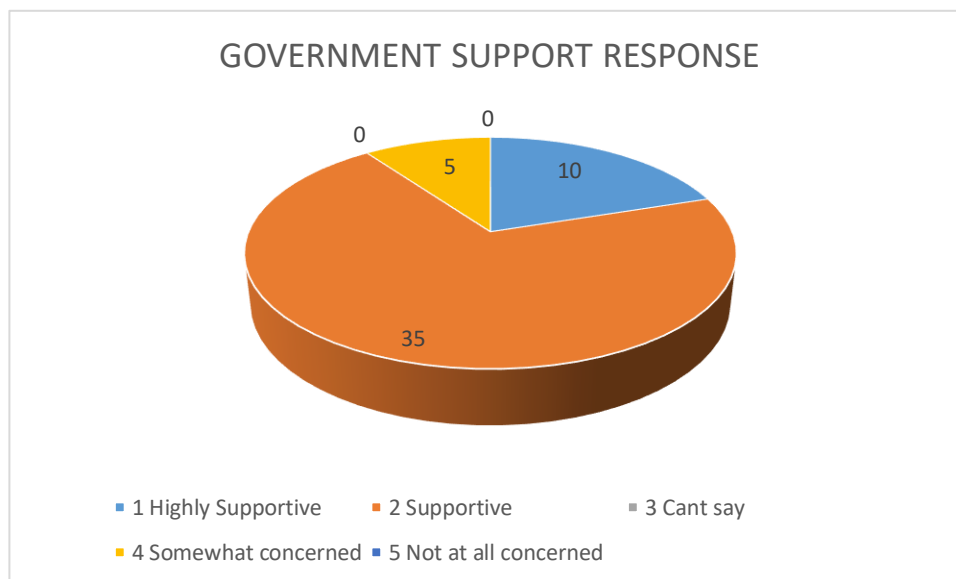
Table No 8: Government Support.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Sr.No	CONCERN	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Highly Supportive	10	20
2	Supportive	35	70
3	Can't say	0	0
4	Somewhat concerned	5	10
5	Not at all concerned	0	0

Source: Primary Data

Figure 7: Government Support



INTERPRETATION: From the above table(8) and figure (7), it was found out that the Government is having good contribution as the most respondents chosen the option supportive with 70% weightage that is n=35, followed by highly supportive with 20% weightage that is n=10 and least responses are for somewhat concerned with 10 % weightage that is n=5.

Question 8. Rate the fare/charges charged by the vendors for the adventure sports activities on the below mentioned scale:

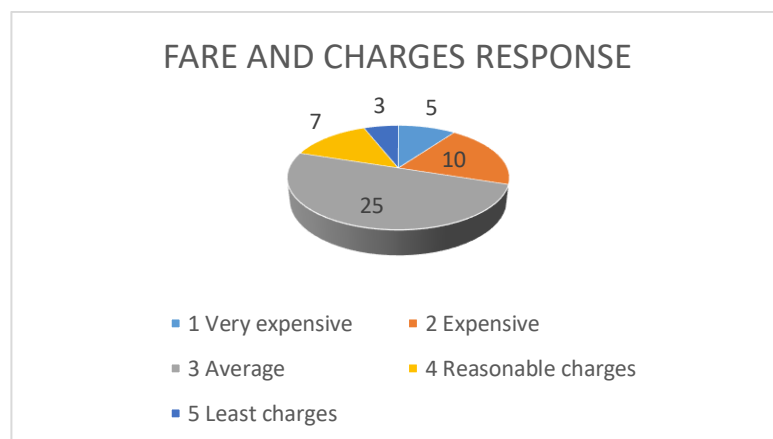
Table No 9: Fares and Charges.

FARE AND CHARGES

Sr.No	CHARGES	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Very expensive	5	10
2	Expensive	10	20
3	Average	25	50
4	Reasonable charges	7	14
5	Least charges	3	6

Source: Primary Data

Figure 8: Fare and Charges



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (10) and figure (9), it was found out that the fares and charges for the commencement of these activities are nominal. The option 'Average' stands at the top with the 50% weightage that is n=25, followed by the option 'Expensive' with 20% weightage that is n=10, and least preferred option is 'Reasonable Charges' with 14 % weightage that is n=7.

Question 9. How much professional are the trainers and instructors who carry out the adventure sports activities?

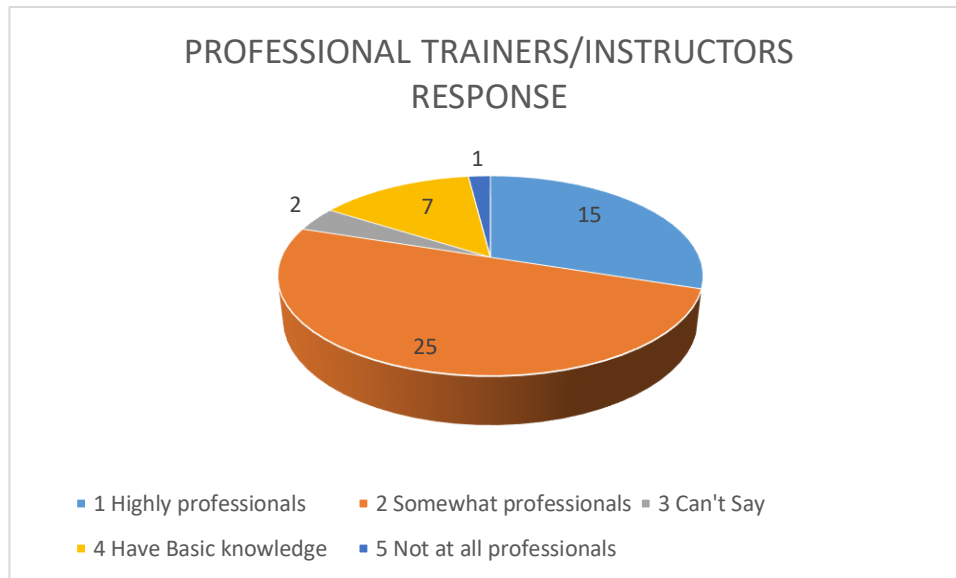
Table No 10: Professional Trainers/Instructors.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINERS/INSTRUCTORS

Sr.No	PROFESSIONAL LEVEL	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Highly professionals	15	30
2	Somewhat professionals	25	50
3	Can't Say	2	4
4	Have Basic knowledge	7	14
5	Not at all professionals	1	2

Source: Primary Data

Figure 9: Professional Trainers/ Instructors



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (11) and figure (10), it was found out that the level of the professional instructors/trainers available is ‘somewhat professionals’ with the 50% weightage that is n=25, followed by the option ‘highly professionals’ with 30% weightage that is n=15, and least responses are for the option ‘Not at all professionals’ with 2 % weightage that is n=1.

Question 10. Rate the adventure activity sites based on their accessibility from the town:

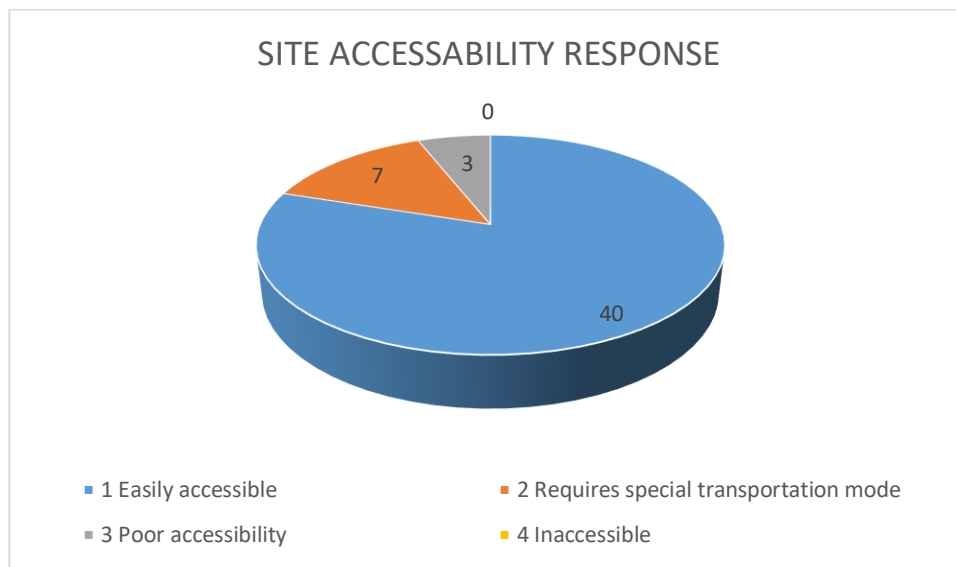
Table No 11: Site Accessibility

SITE ACCESSABILITY

Sr.No	ACCESSIBILITY	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Easily accessible	40	80
2	Requires special transportation mode	7	14
3	Poor accessibility	3	6
4	Inaccessible	0	0

Source: Primary Data

Figure 10: Site Accessibility



INTERPRETATION: From the above table (13) and figure (12), it was found out that the accessibility to these adventure sports site is good and ‘Easily accessible’ with the 80% weightage that is n=40, followed by the option ‘requires special transportation mode’ with 14% weightage that is n=7, and least preferred option is ‘inaccessible’ with 0 % weightage that is n=0.

6.FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings:

After the research, following findings has been observed for various Adventure tourism/sports activities for Kullu-Manali regions:

- From the analysis it was found out that the Solang Valley and Pirdi are the two busiest adventure tourism/sports activity sites in Kullu-Manali.

- It was observed that, amongst the various adventure sports activities, River rafting and River crossing are the most preferred and liked sports activities amongst tourists/participants.
- It was found that the satisfaction level related to the various facilities provided for adventure tourism falls in somewhat satisfied category.
- It was found that the concern of the safety level for these adventure sports activities also lies near to the option somewhat secured. Some of the respondents also feels that the safety level is fully secured.
- It is observed that the Government bodies are supportive in organizing the various adventure sports activities, officially and financially too.
- It is found out that the quality of the material/tools/equipment used for the commencement of these adventure tourism activities are of good quality. Some of the respondents says that it is of high quality.
- It is analysed that the medical facilities provided by the organizers are very prompt and provides good assistance in case of the emergency.
- From the evaluation, it was observed that the fares and charges levied for these activities are nominal. The tourists may not hesitate to participate due the fares and charges demanded.
- It is found that the Instructors and Trainers available on the adventure tourism sites are well qualified and experienced.
- It is found out that the most of the adventure tourism sites are easily accessible for the tourists and visitors.

6.2 Conclusions:

Adventure tourism activities are becoming very much famous and popular part of the tourism industry nowadays. It has been observed that the number of participants are increasing every year in case of adventure sports activities. As the previous data suggests, adventure tourism is attracting many new tourists or participants for last two decades.

On the other hand, it is not easy or convenient to operate, conduct and deliver services in the Adventure tourism/sports activities. A lot of logistics along with various materials/tools/equipment is required as an essential and important part of the activity. Moreover, the availability of professional Instructors and Trainers is the one of the most important requirement for commencing adventure sports activities. Therefore, it is mandatory to be equipped with the latest technological gazettes and tools, which enhances the safety features at these sites. And the instructors or trainers appointed for operating these activities should be strictly professionals, acquiring good experience of the related sports/fields. There is always an element of risk of life or accidents involved in these types of tourism/sports activities, so we must take care of the various safety related aspects for the proper operations of the adventure sports tourism activities.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Keeping in view, it can be said that the present conditions of the adventure sports activities in Kullu- Manali is good, but can be better in many ways. Of course, the logistics and instructors are most important aspects in this, but to enhance the standards and quality of services, like we see in the foreign countries, the government bodies (Central & State both) needs to take more interest and involvement in Adventure Tourism sector. Government bodies need to create more awareness regarding the government schemes, subsidies, policies related to the adventure tourism amongst the new entrepreneurs, investors and local people. Most of these activities are operational with help and support of local unions. The local unions are not the part of government bodies or officials, so there is a need to set up a few monitoring bodies at these adventure tourism sites by the State government. They will be

very handful/helpful in checking and monitoring whether these all activities and operations are properly operated by the various stakeholders or not. In case of emergency /accidents, whether proper protocols and measures are practiced or not. Whether there is provision for imposing fines on stakeholders against the violations of the rules or not. We may also practice the book-keeping of tourists/customers feedback, filled by the tourists after participation or commencement of the adventure sports activities, which will help us in improving the standards of the services provided.

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