



THE VALUE OF DARK TOURISM: MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FOR PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Punjab is the Indian state positioned in the north-western region and the present Punjab came into existence on 1 November 1966. The name of the state has been derived from Persian words panj and aab which signifies the land of five rivers. This state strived a lot in the past then nurtured significantly with newfangled economic opportunities. The interconnection of Punjab and history could be seen evidently in all the tragic sites. Furthermore, it is necessary to reform the tourism industry in the region with the introduction of new market. Many players introduced the new types of tourism in the state to get more economic opportunities and employment. The latest trends of dark tourism doom tourism, film tourism, suicide tourism and grey tourism has been invented globally. Consequently, the state of Punjab should take a step forward with dark tourism by presenting its tragic, haunted, and paranormal and death sites. Dark tourism is special interest tourism for those who probably like to think differently. This niche market could abet to attain maximum profits out of the dark sites of Punjab. Moreover, there is a huge potential in every district of Punjab to offer the finest dark sites but no player is using it at its worth because of the ignorance from government.

KEYWORDS: DARK TOURISM, POTENTIAL, PUNJAB, SWOT ANALYSIS

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OBJECTIVES

- a) The core idea of this study is to exemplify the unleashing potential of Punjab as a dark tourism gem.
- b) Secondly, to provide an overview about the opportunities and threats involved in this segment by applying SWOT study.
- c) Furthermore, to present the glimpse of sites those are still untouched and can be used to boost economic revenues in the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

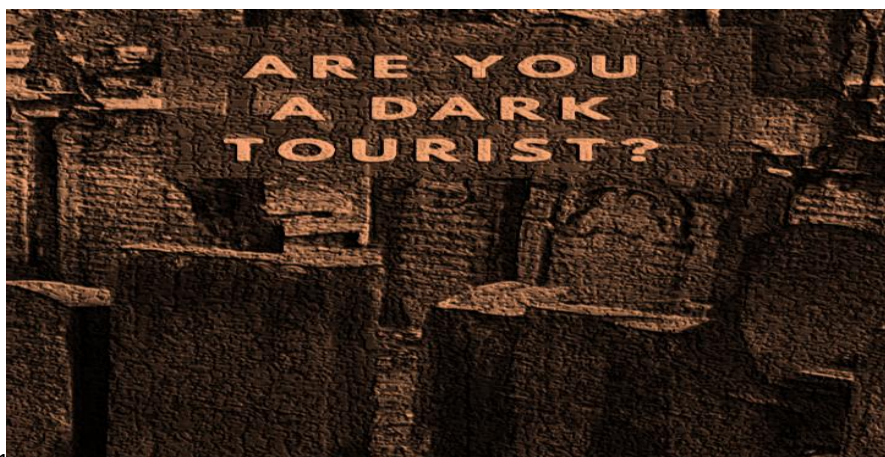
Dark tourism or grief tourism has been defined as tourism involving travel to those places which had been historically associated with death and tragedy. Dark tourism is also branded as Thana tourism and the word has been derived from the ancient Greek word Thanatos which states the peaceful death. Initially, this term was coined by academic scholars John Lennon and Malcolm Foley in 1996.

Rojak (1993) first introduced the concept of dark attractions by mentioning the ideas of Black spots or the growth of grave sites and locations in which celebrities or large number of people have met with sudden and sadistic death. Additionally, locations connected with war and homicides have long been reflected as heritage tourism resources. For Example, Uzell (1992) debates for the fiery interpretation of war and conflict words that is as strong or passionate as the site. It is a kind of transformation to convert meaningless to meaningful. According to Kang et al. (2012) attractions associated with natural disasters have become as an abode of tribute and globally famous as dark tourism sites and attractions in themselves. These types of tourism are commonly understood as the means of historical alertness and social justice; and as per the tourist's perception they attend dark tours so that they could learn about the harsh and cruel behaviour (Robb, 2009).

The major motivations for this niche market are the curiosity about uncommon, a craving for empathy, and self- identification with the sufferers of killings (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005, Rittichainuwat 2008). Dark tourism refers to visitations to places of death, disaster and outrages which increasingly form slice of the tourism resources. It has caught the attention of the global community (Foley & Lennon, 1996). Despite the mounting popularity, there is still incomplete knowledge of dark tourism as a multi-faceted trend (Biran et al., 2011).

INTRODUCTION

Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live.”



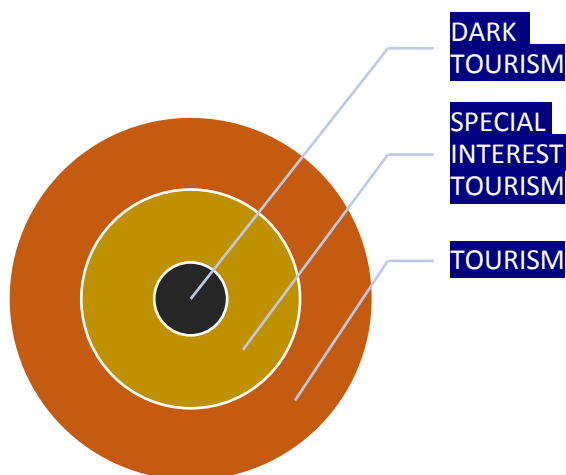
Robert Kennedy



Identification Complex CemeteryOpportunity truth
 Blood supernaturalBattlefield authentic paradigm
 Emotions blackspotDark Tourism War Players Funds
 heritage scope Grief planning SorrowRisk Marketing

Source: www.kasiawrites.com and Author

As special interest tourism many trends had been introduced so far. One of such gems is dark tourism which shares a strong bond with supernatural powers, battles, wars, tragedy, horror regions and other major accidental place. Besides, these types are providing an opportunity to experience the past events on those tragic places. This dark or black tourism is a subset of historical tourism and offers the existing battlefields, cemetery, tombs and tragic places but in a new style. It is the latest possibility under special interest tourism. Dark tourism is an amazing idea where people likely to experience the sites hardly hit by wars or battles. Additionally, this concept is famous under different names according to the desires of tourists like grief tourism, horror tourism, battle tourism and black spot tourism. This kind of phenomenon involves the emotions and attachment with the dark sites, so it is quite tricky to promote such tourism. There are many players who feel hesitate to shift to this unique tourism. However, this idea only needs an attention of tourism professionals, and it could lead to high returns. In the modern world, these forms of tourism act as an alternative to traditional mass tourism and provide ample opportunities. Dark tourism is the trump card that could take Punjab towards a bright phase. There are many global tourists who are trotting in search of dark tourism sites. Moreover, there is always a hope to shift the consumer demand and offer more diverse market. This tourism encompasses the massacre, assassination, incarceration, ethnic cleansing, war or disaster either natural or accidental. Moreover, this is not limited to the actual tragic sites but similarly unifies the museums and forts. Punjab which could offer a wide range of attractions under this shelter mainly lacks the support from government. Particularly, this tourism holds the emotional outlook it is the reason why players need to handle these resources with extreme care.



SOURCE: Compiled by the researcher



The battlefield tourism gives the scenes of human sufferings or the battles happened in the past. In addition to it, the tourists visiting to these bloodshed areas feel a sense of pride and connect themselves with the past. Consequently, to study the different facets of dark tourism the major technique to apply is SWOT analysis. Hence, the SWOT study of this particular tourism is as below and will present an abridgement of Punjab as a dark destination.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1 Punjab has plentiful dark tourism resources 2 Hospitality in this state is unmatched 3 All the locations are well-connected with transportation. 4 Abundance of historical museums are located within this region 5 Unspoiled and Realistic	1 safety or security is at risk 2 Absence of an active advertisement for these black sites. 3 Lack of integrated channel policy. 4 No or less support from government to proffer this dark market. 5 Shortage of funds to promote this concept at a large level 6 Remissness of maintenance of these sites 7 Erroneous writings and knowledge
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1 This can elevate the graph of revenues 2 Consumers' interest has been shifting to special interest tourism. 3 Currently is a secret: so, the state can get maximum mileage out of it. 4 Gaining attention of worldwide researchers.	1 Threat to life 2 Competition from other Indian states 3 Disaster if tourist pays no respect towards these dark sites. 4 Exploitation of dark sites. 5 Irreparable damage due to negligence. 6 Risk of emotional setback.

SOURCE: Compiled by the researcher

POTENTIAL IN PUNJAB

“The use of traveling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are”.
 Samuel Johnson

Tourism industry is one of the biggest industries and at its spire when we talk about the Punjab region. Punjab has unleashing potential in terms of dark tourism as this state is historically known for the extreme role played in numerous wars, battles, and tragedies. This region offers enormous resources and facilities to the tourist interested to explore this special interest slice of tourism. Further, dark tourism or black tourism is not the latest marvel but expanding nowadays. This tourism has the potential to generate maximum revenues and opportunities in the state. The reason behind this faith is Punjab's well-known history and battles which strengthens the state's dark reserve. Further, if we discuss the geographical divisions of Punjab, all the three regions Majha, Malwa, and Doaba has so much to offer to both domestic and international tourists. There are innumerable sites those possess the supernatural and horror stories. The table below represents the dark sites of Punjab:



DESTINATIONS	LOCATION
JALIANWALA BAGH	AMRITSAR
PGI BUILDING	CHANDIGARH
KAMAHI DEVI TEMPLE	HOSHIARPUR
BARKI MEMORIAL	FEROZPUR
VILLAGE BHAGTA BHAI KA	BATHINDA
WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM	AMRITSAR
HAUNTED HOUSE	PHILLAUR
HAUNTED HOUSE	TALWANDI SABO
GOLDEN TEMPLE	AMRITSAR
SUKHNA LAKE	CHANDIGARH
MUKTSAR SAHIB	MUKTSAR
CHAMKAUR SAHIB	RUPNAGAR

Source: Compiled by the researcher

The progress of Dark tourism or Thana tourism in the state entirely depends on the participation from local government, community and stakeholders. Consequently, the secrets of Punjab should be revealed by concentrating on the minute details of historical events. Once boosted this tourism could attract the individuals from different Indian states as well as from foreign countries. This century which is totally influenced by the usage of technology it is necessary to present dark knowledge with audiovisual aids. The tourist under this special interest visits the attractions to imagine the past events which could be best presented by the adaption of technology.

In Punjab, there are enormous sites of dark tourism where one can find the evidence of past historical events. Among these places the famous is Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar) known for the tragedy happened here on the occasion of Vaisakhi. This Amritsar massacre is a world known fact which had occurred on 13 April 1919 and during this time many innocents were killed by britishers, one can still find the bullet marks on the walls of this monument. Additionally, the other causality which was happened at Golden Temple is unforgettable and known by name of Operation Bluestar. Dark tourism is not only limited to these past events, but the term is a wider in scope which involves the sites that posses the haunted and supernatural element. The hand-picked example is the Gurudwara Jawand Sahib located in the premises of Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport (Amritsar) and renowned for its celestial powers. Additionally, every individual is aware of the historic battles in which the region of Punjab played a central role and its bloodshed attractions has been recognized so far.

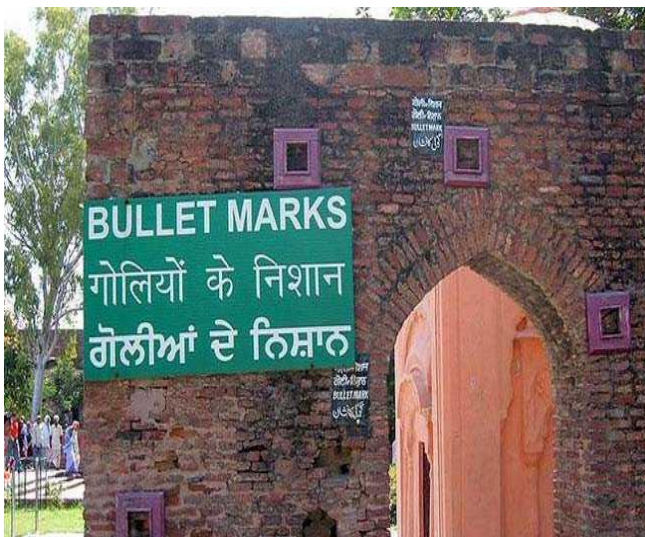




BHAI BHAGTA KA (BATHINDA)
SOURCE: WIKIMAPIA



HAUNTED HOUSE (PHILLAUR)
SOURCE: KIDDAAN.COM



JALLIANWALA BAGH (AMRITSAR)
SOURCE: PINTEREST

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is crucial that every player of this industry should grasp the up-to-the-minute tendencies and offers the same to specially desired tourists.



2. Besides, it is the responsibility to ensure that these black sites must be utilized for the growth of tourism and should not result in destruction.
3. Punjab's government should launch the dark circuits for the tourists like:
 - I. Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar) - Barki Museum (Ferozepur) - Muktsar Sahib (Muktsar)
 - II. Bhoot Bangla (Kapurthata) - Horror house (Phillaur) - Cemetery Ground (Chandigarh)
4. Additionally, these circuits require the appropriate promotion and advertisement strategy.
5. It is a precondition to synchronize the brand image of Punjab as the region of dark tourism or grief tourism.

CONCLUSION:

Punjab has ceaseless ability to develop as one of the hot places for dark tourism. This state is blessed with many attractive sites hence it could be converted as a priority place for black tourism. Equally, to attract consumers under this umbrella every player of the sector needs to accelerate the speed in terms of efforts. This niche tourism will surely flourish in the territory of Punjab as the state possesses abundant museums, battlefields or places associated with wars, graveyards, and haunted places. Lastly, by launching this segment the state will experience the high growth in tourist traffic both domestically and internationally. The motivation behind the dark tourists will compel them to locate the finest resources, and to meet the demand state needs to focus on the reflection of dark tourism image.

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